

FROM ANGELS TO AGENTS: WOMEN, TRAVEL, AND NATION-BUILDING IN  
NINETEENTH-CENTURY ARGENTINE LITERATURE

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how women were represented in nineteenth-century Argentine literature through the evaluation of the societal functions of women in literary texts and by investigating what power women employed in these writings. I explore what challenges were made toward traditional female characterizations and gender roles to analyze what advancements occurred for women of this time period as reflected in the literature. I also investigate if this literature contributes to a feminist perspective.

The main objectives of this study are to further develop our understanding of women as active participants in the public/private sphere, to demonstrate how literature of this time period can be a tool to exercise female agency, and to explore how these literary works contribute to the renegotiation of traditional binaries such as public/private and male/female. I study *antirrosista* texts and travel narratives to assert that some women authors employed these genres to destabilize conventional gender roles and identities to rebel against patriarchal attempts to restrict and control female identity and positions in society.

The findings of this research offer insight into how female agency was established in nineteenth-century Argentine literature through the position of heroine and the construction of alternative female models of identity through gender inversion, blurring gender lines, or, in some cases, directly contesting gender divisions. This research also affirms that *antirrosista* literature and travel narratives are mutually informing and co-implicating due to their status as resistance literature.

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## Introduction

Throughout literary history, many writers have explored women's roles in society and female identity. However, the characterization of women in literature has historically contributed to the establishment and reinforcement of traditional gender roles for females that restrict their identity to being wife and mother. Indeed, much literature confines women's positions and limits their personal agency based upon gender. Nonetheless, nineteenth-century Argentine literature offers a variety of texts that challenge these limitations and restrictions through the assertion of personal agency. I will examine Argentine literature from 1837-1889 due to the abundance in this period of "antirrosista"<sup>1</sup> literature and travel narratives, both of which display unconventional and to some extent liberating roles for women throughout this time period. I intend to address this issue by examining one epic poem, one short story and five novels from nineteenth-century Argentina with the purpose of demonstrating how authors prescribe a variety of non-traditional female characterizations. In some cases representations of women promote patriarchal political ideals while others advocate for capable and intelligent women who exercise agency and their free will.

In order to address these concerns I must evaluate several questions in regards to women, starting with the following: how are they represented in nineteenth-century Argentine literature, what are their societal functions in literary texts, and what power do they employ in these

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<sup>1</sup> "Antirrosista" is a term that describes the literary works written in opposition to the dictatorship of the nineteenth-century dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas. See Halperín Donghi's *Historia contemporánea de América latina* (198-203).

writings? After considering answers to these questions, I will analyze the implications of women's representation in nineteenth-century Argentine literature, asking: what challenges are made toward traditional characterization and gender roles, are there any advancements made for women of this time period as reflected in the literature, and does this literature contribute to promoting and circulating feminist perspectives? We must remember that during the nineteenth century, traditional roles were confined to daughter, wife, or mother of a male, but some authors nonetheless challenge these conventional roles through their literature by creating strong and capable female protagonists who assert their agency both within and outside of the family unit. Therefore, while promoting these typically domestic roles authors also depict women as non-traditional heroine figures.

These questions draw attention to the exploration of how gender roles were changing throughout nineteenth-century Argentina. This work is significant because it will reveal how particular authors used literature to establish and exemplify alternative models that promotes female empowerment. This dissertation will examine the work of both men and women authors. Although nineteenth-century Latin American literature is male dominated (Davies, Brewster, and Owen) many women were writing in this period. This work will also further our understanding of women as active writers, showing their literature as a tool for exercising agency, and modeling new female characterizations that were empowering and contributed to feminist thought.

My original contribution to the critical/theoretical field of nineteenth-century Argentine literature is the proposal that "antirrosista" literature and travel narratives are mutually informing and co-implicating, a thesis I will demonstrate by exploring the negotiation between the public and private spheres, examining personal agency through the position of heroine, and analyzing

alternative female models of identity through gender inversion, blurred gender lines, or, in some cases, directly contested gender divisions, in which protagonists' depictions blend masculine and feminine characteristics. The analysis of literature produced by various nineteenth-century authors will allow for investigating the foundation and construction of varying levels of individual agency and alternative female representations.

Resistance literature and travel narratives are interrelated in that both literary genres promote the freedom of expression and personal emancipation. These types of writings address diverse topics and disciplines due to the complex nature of their subject matter. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs explain that in travel writing “[t]he subjects of ‘race’, colonialism, and gender cut across any single discipline, and within the academy evidence of the centrality of travel is the spread of its study across several fields” (9). These examples of common themes found in travel literature are also prevalent historical issues that connect travel narratives and resistance literature. Barbara Harlow states that “[t]he resistance novels seek different historical endings and these endings are already implicit, contained within the narrative analysis and construction of the conditions and problematic of the historical situation itself” (79). The subversive nature of particular travel writings produces the bond between resistance and travel literature.

While both male and female authors produce these types of literature, women employ these genres to destabilize conventional gender roles and identities in order to rebel against the restrictions and oppression of patriarchy. The dominant social order of the time created a hierarchy of inequality among people based on gender, race, and class, which excluded certain people from being considered citizens and limited their rights as a human being. However, literary categories, such as travel writing and resistance literature, depict women as heroines who take control over their own lives by implementing female agency. From Juana Manso's *Adelaida*

in *Los misterios del Plata* to Juana Manuela Gorriti's *Laura of Peregrinaciones de una alma triste*, these authors offer protagonists that modify the standard female representation. These characters actively participate in both the public and private spheres of society while physically and mentally challenging typical gender traits. These authors assert individual agency in travel writing and "antirrosista" literature by the very act of publishing their thoughts, ideas, and opinions for the public. Their characters embody the rejection of female oppression in society and promote the acknowledgment and appreciation of women as strong, capable, and smart individuals, who have the ability to live daily life independently from male authority and control. In this way, women's resistance literature and travel writings become instruments of change that advocate for female advancement and emancipation from patriarchal constraints.

To facilitate the exploration of these questions I will study one epic poem, one short story and several novels by authors of nineteenth-century Argentina. I chose these literary works for their representation of female figures that, in distinct ways, challenge the traditional societal norms of women's roles and identity by asserting power. Consequently, these figures create advancements for women by promoting and allowing for a variety of new and liberating female images. I will evaluate all texts in Spanish, and any direct quotes will remain in Spanish in order to retain the original and accurate meaning as intended by the authors. I am emphasizing novels in particular due to the rich narrative content that displays the socio-historical context of nineteenth-century Argentina.

This dissertation's initial focus on the epic poem *La cautiva* (1837), by Esteban Echeverría, will forefront gender roles and female characterization with its display of gender inversion between the male and female protagonists. This literary work is significant due to the abundance of gender representations and the theme of gender inversion, unusual for the time

period. I will also examine the novel *Amalia* (1851) by José Mármol. Later chapters will analyze *Los misterios del Plata* (1852), by Juana Manso, in addition to Juana Manuela Gorriti's short story "El guante negro" (1865) and her novels *Peregrinaciones de una alma triste* (1876), *El pozo del Yocci* (1876), and *La tierra natal* (1889). I selected these texts due to their representation of women during nation building in nineteenth century Argentina. National conflicts such as the Argentine War of Independence and the Argentine civil wars offered opportunities for women to actively participate in nation building both within and outside of the home. The novels *Peregrinaciones de una alma triste* and *La tierra natal* are significant in this dissertation because they are travel narratives that allow the study of the relationship between women, travel, and the boundaries between the public and the private spheres. These topics demonstrate how women could negotiate between the private and public spheres in order to assert themselves in society and construct alternative female roles and identities. Because the length and complexity of the selected works permit the characters to develop at length and in detail, their portrayal is more nuanced, which allows for a more in-depth analysis of the characters and what they represent. All of these texts play a vital role in the shaping of my understanding of women's social positions and characterization for the time period.

Most of the abundant scholarship on nineteenth-century Latin American literature is androcentric and contributes to the continuing disparate circulation of writing by male and female authors. It is crucial to recognize this because this gap adds to a historically male centered interpretation of history and literature, which produces male-dominated perspectives and knowledge claims that risk marginalizing and even excluding female authors, scholarship, and viewpoints. It is also important to note that, although fewer women than men were able to participate in creating literary works, female perspectives throughout literature do exist and are

vital to understanding women's positions and identity. Though this is a truly male-dominated field, my work will participate in the continuing exploration of the wealth of literature produced by particular female authors, so as to investigate what contributions were made (if any) to nation building of the time and female advancement. In *South American Independence: Gender, Politics, Text* (2006), Catherine Davies, Claire Brewster and Hilary Owen confirm the lack of investigation of female authors and their works when they state that "women's writings of the first half of the nineteenth century have been largely unexplored" (5). While there is advancement in this area, neglect persists regarding female Argentine authors and their literature, especially when compared to their male counterparts. The authors argue that the deficiency in this particular area of research is due to the fact that "women were excluded as a social sector because ultimately gender (rather than class or caste) was the criterion for political exclusion...[in which] men speak in the stead of women" (Davies, Brewster, and Owen 4). Their research analyzes the evidence that women's writings have been neglected in favor of male authors' writings due to the historical exclusion or marginalization of females and their work. While *South American Independence: Gender, Politics, Text* centers on South American independence and politics, it also investigates the active participation of women in politics and independence.

My own research will expand upon themes from these subject areas by incorporating women's travel narratives as a genre of agency for women. Nation-building, national consolidation, and travel are intertwined because each of them provides opportunities for women to participate in the public sphere of society, negotiate multiple female identities instead of being confined to a traditional few, take agency over their lives and others, and pave the way toward female advancement and emancipation. Emancipation from patriarchal constraints on individual

identity and the imposed restrictive positions in society are motivating factors behind the texts that I will explore in this dissertation. The goal of emancipation leads to the production of subversive literary works that produce examples of how fictional women and the author's themselves defy patriarchy by exemplifying the multiplicity of personal identity, challenging strict gender boundaries, and by actively participating in society.

The indispensable text *Women, Culture, and Politics in Latin America: Seminar on Feminism and Culture in Latin America* (1990), by Emilie Bergmann, Janet Greenberg, Gwen Kirkpatrick, Francine Masiello, Francesca Miller, Marta Morello-Frosch, Kathleen Newman, and Mary Louise Pratt, reaffirms my own concern about a lack of investigation into women's writings of nineteenth-century Latin America. In this book the authors assert that "the partial and often biased record of women's thought and activity in that cultural region [Latin America] has limited our historical perspectives and our understanding of feminist contributions" (Bergmann et al 1). This statement points to the exclusion of women's writings from the mainstream archive of nineteenth-century Latin American literature and history. Indeed, my own research examines this point by presenting various texts from female authors that display their personal perspectives toward society, historical events, and female positions.

The lack of attention to women's writings is also addressed in Lea Fletcher's essay, "Patriarchy, Medicine, and Women Writers in Nineteenth-Century Argentina" (1990). The author describes how "the disappearance of the female author" (91) is associated with the patriarchy, in which males overshadow females, and consequently "women writers are simply invisible to the masculinist eye" (91). This is problematic, because traditionally males have dominated research, which, historically speaking, has produced male centered knowledge claims based upon the common exclusion of women and their contributions. In "Women and the

Spanish-American Wars of Independence: An Overview” (2005), Brewster supports this idea by explaining that in both history and literature, “women, if mentioned at all, are said to have played minor, supporting roles in the struggles” (Brewster 21). However, in this dissertation I will demonstrate that while this has been a traditional viewpoint, the reality is that women actively participated in nation building and conflicts of the time.

Scholars such as Francine Masiello and Regina A. Root have previously addressed this very issue of female identity and position in nineteenth-century Argentina. Masiello’s critical book *Between Civilization & Barbarism: Women, Nation, and Literary Culture in Modern Argentina* (1992) explores the various roles of Argentine women from 1830 to 1930 through literature and journalism. Masiello states that “a vast world of women’s responses to nationhood and culture remains to be unearthed. By focusing on the creative responses provided by Argentine women, this book responds, in part to that challenge” (*Between* 3). In this manner the author argues that women’s responses exist and in the past were little studied. Masiello also elaborates on how Argentine women of the nineteenth century were active participants in nation building through their literature. I will draw from this work and expand upon it by incorporating the theory of “performativity,”<sup>2</sup> established by Judith Butler, to examine how particular female characters negotiate the standard female roles of nineteenth-century Argentina. Whereas Masiello focuses on literature and the female author, I will focus on the female characters, from literature produced by both men and women, in relation to national conflict and travel. Regina A. Root’s historiographical book *Couture and Consensus: Fashion and Politics in Postcolonial Argentina* (2010) is important to my dissertation because it demonstrates how clothing was

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<sup>2</sup> In *Gender Trouble* Judith Butler states that “performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effect through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration” (xv).

involved in national politics. It explains how manner of dress reflected political beliefs and was also a way to rebel against mainstream society. Root also demonstrates how clothing for some women was a way to “assert their presence in public, against the political vanity of 19<sup>th</sup> century male leaders who had fought Spanish oppression but then denied women their emancipation” (xvii). Her investigation of clothing will enable me to further explore the significance of gender roles and the importance of gender performativity in nineteenth-century Argentina. Masiello’s and Root’s books are vital to understanding the socio-historical context of women’s roles and identity in nineteenth-century Argentina, which I will investigate in this dissertation as well.

This dissertation will also study the constant negotiation of women’s roles in nation-building, national conflict, and national consolidation. I will examine for whom and for what purpose within society women take part in politics and the public sphere. I will study the active literary construction and deconstruction of women’s social role throughout this century in Argentina. I will also explore how female authors assert themselves as women and how women constantly negotiate power in order to change and advance the characterization of women and their roles in society. For example, throughout the nineteenth century, Argentine women play a vital role not only in national conflicts, but also in the public sphere through educational initiatives, philanthropy, travel, print culture, and literary as well as political *tertulias*.<sup>3</sup> These platforms for women demonstrate their active negotiation of power in the private and public areas of society and their participation in the development and consolidation of the nation. Scholars including Marifran Carlson, Marysa Navarro, Virginia Sánchez Korrol and Kecia Ali analyze women’s roles as they progressed throughout Latin America and specifically in

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<sup>3</sup> A *tertulia* is a social and political gathering in a person’s house in which men and women could discuss and debate a variety of social issues, educational initiatives, and politics. See *El taller de la escritora: Veladas literarias de Juana Manuela Gorriti: Lima-Buenos Aires (1876/7-1892)* by Graciela Batticuore (28-31).

Argentina. Carlson's text, *Feminismo: The Woman's Movement in Argentina From Its Beginnings to Eva Perón* (1988), emphasizes active female involvement in public issues and spaces such as war, politics, education, and philanthropy. In *Women in Latin America and the Caribbean* (1999), Navarro, Sánchez Korrol, and Ali also address female activity in the public sphere and investigate gender equality and feminism in nineteenth-century Latin America. These books are vital to the understanding female roles and positions in nineteenth-century Argentina. My analysis of these secondary sources is incorporated into the exploration of my primary texts, which enables me to demonstrate how authors and their female protagonists negotiate gender boundaries to transform traditional spaces of relegation into unconventional spaces of rebellion and emancipation.

To analyze travel writings in my dissertation, I will draw upon research from scholars such as Mary Louise Pratt, Mónica Szurmuk, and Marta Sierra. Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) presents the history of travel writings and focuses on the European perspective of Latin America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Pratt explains her idea of "contact zones"<sup>4</sup> and discusses the objectives of the capitalist vanguard in Latin America. Moreover, the author points out how female travel narratives are different from those of their male counterparts. This will be a foundational text for my chapter on travel writings and women because it will lay the groundwork for my own interpretation and investigation of female travel narratives. Women's observations and interpretations of travel in South America will empower the female voice and women's experience of travel. This will enable me to evaluate the distinctiveness of female travel narratives and female perspectives along with the role of female

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<sup>4</sup> In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* Mary Louise Pratt defines "contact zones" as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (7).

independence and agency within both the private and public sphere of society. Szurmuk's *Women in Argentina: Early Travel Narratives* (2000) is of special interest in this dissertation because the author focuses on the relationship between travel, writing, and female identity. This information will be fundamental for my own research because it will allow me to explore these topics in relation to Judith Butler's idea of gender performativity. A common theme of investigation here too is the role of domesticity and women. I will address this throughout my study and in particular in the travel narrative chapter. In *Gendered Spaces in Argentine Women's Literature* (2012), Sierra delves into domesticity and its displacement due to female travel, focusing on women's literature in Argentina between 1920 and 2000. In this text Sierra concentrates on "the role of space in establishing gendered relations and the ways in which literature addresses the production of gendered spaces" (3), in addition to how female Argentine authors create their own spaces within their literary works, in order to be included within literature and society. Although I will be concentrating on the negotiation of domesticity and travel within female roles and identity throughout 1837-1889, Sierra's text is crucial to my own research because it solidifies the connections between the literary representation of space and the formation of alternative social positions and identities for women.

These and other secondary sources will contribute to my examination of the primary texts, previously mentioned, to allow for a profound exploration of my own research questions. My research questions all relate to the representation of women in nineteenth-century Argentine literature and to the lack of attention to female authors of that corpus. I contribute to the scholarship on female authors in nineteenth-century Argentina by exposing how both male and especially female authors contested the traditional social construction of female identity. This enables the promotion of a distinctive and unconventional female identity that pushes the bounds

of women's roles or, more radically, that reconceived these roles through the position of author and by sharing their own ideas and perspectives about gender. In this way, unconventional female roles in literature presented women readers with diverse and less restricting models of female identity.

In this study I will use feminist theories including those of Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter*, of Elizabeth Grosz in *Volatile Bodies*, and of Julia Kristeva in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. It is important to note that while I am researching nineteenth-century Argentine literature I will be using feminist theory from not just the nineteenth century, but from the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries as well. In doing this I will be able to make connections between nineteenth-century female advancements and twentieth and twenty-first-century feminisms. These works will allow me to investigate changing female characterization in nineteenth-century Argentine literature and to evaluate to what extent and how women challenged the historically standard female relegation to the private sphere, which excluded them from actively participating in the public sphere.

In my first chapter I analyze female characterization during national development in the literary works *Amalia* and *La cautiva*. I explore the traditional and non-traditional positions of women during nation building, as reflected in the literature, and the negotiation of private and public spaces for women in society. This chapter further develops the understanding of woman as participants in the public sphere. In chapter two I examine shifting female roles and identity in Juana Manso's *Los misterios del Plata*. I focus on the female protagonist exercising female agency as she embodies the position of heroine. I find that some nineteenth-century authors challenged traditional roles for women through their female protagonist and in doing so contributed to the establishment of alternative and even radical female identity that represented a

feminist proposal. Next, I investigate the fantastic elements of Juana Manuela Gorriti's *El pozo del Yocci* and "El guante negro" in chapter three. I also examine how war affects the personal relationships of the individual characters, causing destruction and a breakdown of personal bonds. This chapter illustrates how women were active participants in the public sphere through their work in the private sphere and through the position of author. In my last chapter I evaluate Gorriti's *Peregrinaciones de una alma triste* and *La tierra natal*, analyzing the negotiation of private and public space through travel and the displacement of domesticity. I also explore the role of nostalgia and its significance in Gorriti's travel narratives. In this chapter, I conclude that "antirrosista" literature and travel narratives are forms of resistance literature that share some of the same theoretical principles pertaining to female agency and characterization. Each chapter investigates women's changing roles and identities through Argentine literature and illustrates how the development of female protagonists contributes to female advancement through the challenging of fixed gender boundaries in relation to space, identity, and position.

## Chapter One

### From Captive Angel to Agent of Change: The Female Protagonists of *La cautiva* and *Amalia*

In the national development of nineteenth-century Argentina, female characterization in literature became a vital political tool that prescribed particular roles and identities for women. Women were often depicted as the angel of the house or as the republican mother. The angel of the house and the republican mother emphasized the roles of wife and mother.<sup>5</sup> These models of female domesticity were promoted during the consolidation of Argentina and offered women an important space within society that created a foundation for female activity from within the home that affected society. National conflict was leading to major changes that impacted everyone in Argentina, challenging traditional gender boundaries. In this chapter I will investigate how women are represented in foundational, canonical texts of nineteenth-century Argentine literature, what their societal functions are in these texts, and what power female characters employ in them. I will explore what challenges are made toward traditional female characterizations and gender roles, and I will evaluate what advancements were made for women of this time period as reflected in these important literary pieces. I will also analyze how nineteenth-century literary works, including such canonical works as *La cautiva* and *Amalia*, depict a variety of female identities that both fulfilled and defied the ideal female characterization of nineteenth-century Argentine women.

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<sup>5</sup>See Masiello (53-80).

Women were expected to embody traditional female values as idealized female caretakers whose function in life was to marry, have children and raise their children to be productive citizens of the newly formed homeland. Although these roles were the standard positions for women and were promoted throughout politics, literature, and society, Francine Masiello has argued that “gender issues in nineteenth-century Argentina were not simply a matter of consciously positioning women within the home or in public activity. The emphasis on nuclear family life, childbearing, and female participation in civil society was subject to shifting interpretations” (*Between* 10). These “shifting interpretations” are present in the literature of nineteenth-century Argentina and display diverse depictions of how women could negotiate between traditional and unconventional roles, such as can be seen with the character of María in *La cautiva* and various female figures in *Amalia*.

Theories of gender performativity and gender roles play a large part in analyzing the shifting interpretations to which Masiello refers. Such gender theories enable my own critical analysis of female protagonists’ characterizations and positions as portrayed in particular literary works. Judith Butler and Elizabeth Grosz expose false binaries that are perpetuated by the patriarchal structure of society, to reveal how conventional ideology about the relationships between gender, sex, mind, and body constrict female identity. In the groundbreaking book, *Gender Trouble*, Butler presents her own concept of sex and gender and their implications within society. The author departs from the notion that sex and gender are biological factors and illustrates the constructedness of both sex and gender. Thus, one is not born a woman or a man, but becomes a product of the socio-cultural standards and expectations within society, which creates a prescribed form of gender. This difference between sex and gender is vital to gender studies. While society must take into account the diversity of all people and their unique beings

and experiences, historically, there has been a lack of recognition of the multiplicity of gender. Butler argues that “any feminist theory that restricts the meaning of gender creates exclusionary gender norms within feminism” (*Gender* viii) and consequently contributes to the limitations placed upon gender. The challenges and restrictions placed gender are prevalent anywhere and, in this dissertation, will be analyzed in the context of certain political literary works from nineteenth-century Argentina.

The literature of Esteban Echeverría and José Mármol reinforces the misogynistic idea of women’s worth being based upon their reproductive functions in society. These male authors stress the vital need for Argentine citizens to populate and expand the nation, while emphasizing women’s roles as wife and mother. This goal dominates over women’s personal wishes and perpetuates an environment where women are expected to procreate for the future of society. Through such means as literature, politics, and propaganda, “the female power of production is taken over by the phallogentric economy and remade into its own exclusive and essential action” (Butler, *Bodies* 16). Thus, the generative power of women to reproduce is manipulated into a factor of oppression for females by the male-dominant society and used to support the patriarchal hierarchy. The significance of reproduction is that it contributes to the national consolidation of nineteenth-century Argentina with the goal of increasing the number of future citizens and expanding the nation. The goals of national consolidation are to establish a centralized government that is supported by and represents Argentine citizens while developing infrastructure and establishing a united population.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the idealized mother figure, as an angel with divine powers achieved only through motherhood, becomes a part of the political

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<sup>6</sup>See Acree Jr. and González Espitia (1-10).

texts of the Generation of 1837.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, this depiction opens the door for women to have an active role in national development, and in return these women can expand upon the traditional female identity and contribute in their own ways to nation building. Female protagonists such as María and Amalia fulfill traditionally prescribed female traits while they simultaneously offer images of unconventional female attributes that challenge traditional gender stereotypes. While both women are portrayed as appropriate models for the angel of the house, they each exercise female agency in their own ways to either invert gender roles or to renegotiate the standard female role and identity.

Popular female images of nineteenth-century Argentina, such as the angel of the house or the republican mother, have the potential to restrict female functions to being wife, mother, caretaker, nurturer, constraining women's daily lives to center around the family and the home. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's promotion of the republican mother emphasized the need for women to be well educated, not for the purpose of working outside of the home or gaining personal independence, but to properly civilize and educate the children of the new nation. In *Educación popular* (1849) Sarmiento states "[s]i no hubiese la sociedad de ocuparse, entre nosotros, de repartir igualmente la educación de los dos sexos, cierto número muy crecido de mujeres debiera en todo caso recibir una buena educación, para server de maestras para enseñar a los pequeñuelos los primeros rudimentos de lo que constituye la enseñanza primaria" (107). As a result, the discourse of republican motherhood created more inequality between men and women. The differences between the sexes were being highlighted as justifications by political figures and governing bodies, for why women should be subjugated by men. However, some female

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<sup>7</sup> The Generation of 1837 was an organization of Romantics with Unitarian ideologies and who promoted their political goals through their literary works. See Davies, Brewster, and Owen (77-8).

protagonists such as Echeverría's María and Marmól's Amalia challenge the typical female behavior by pushing the boundaries of gender roles and by renegotiating their individual positions in society, using such tools as gender inversion. Although María and Amalia represent alternative models of female identity, these characters are still confined to embodying a variety of traditional female qualities, due to the authors' restrictions placed upon women of this time period.

The foundational works of national literature prescribed particular molds for model citizens, for both men and women. The Generation of 1837 produced literature to convey their political messages and visions for the future with the goal of inspiring the ideal Argentine citizen and revolutionaries against Juan Manuel de Rosas<sup>8</sup> based on Unitarian<sup>9</sup> ideologies of developing a civilized nation through a well-mannered and well educated population. A text's messages were based on "an allegorical relationship between personal and political narratives" (Sommer 41) that promotes romantic love and love for one's country. Consequently, "this mutual incitement of love and country is felt in the Latin American novels that helped to train generations of patriots in the appropriately productive passions of liberal intercourse" (Sommer 41), which, in some cases, contributes to certain literary pieces' classification as political propaganda. The encouragement of strict gender roles affected the personal development of identity of all people during Argentine national building, but was especially restrictive for women.

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<sup>8</sup> Juan Manuel de Rosas ruled Argentina in 1829-1832 and in 1835-1852. See Lynch (1-10).

<sup>9</sup> The Unitarian political party in Argentina fought for a centralized government in Buenos Aires. The Federalist political party, supported by Juan Manuel de Rosas, believed in a establishing a federation of independent provinces. See Lynch (33).

These protagonists are also representations of the standardized, yet ever changing, female characterization in nineteenth-century Argentina. One of the most prominent images of Argentine female identity is the angel of the house. Coventry Patmore's poem *The Angel in the House* (1854-1862), published in London, England, is one of the best known literary works to establish the basis for the figure of the angel of the house.<sup>10</sup> During the colonial period in Latin America traditional women's roles such as mother and wife were vital to the establishment of new homelands. Susan Migden Socolow explains that "[w]omen were seen as 'civilizers'; it was they who would teach proper behavior and social forms to their menfolk, and act as the conservators of social gentility. Indeed, women were a metaphor for rootedness, and were portrayed as carrying the seeds and the plants of the Old World to the New" (53). These qualities were the basis for the image of the angel of the house, whose domestic duties were imperative to the well-being of society. Therefore, colonial women played important roles in the establishment and creation of new colonies through these traditional roles, just as María and Amalia depict conventional, yet crucial, female positions for nineteenth-century women.

In unique ways María and Amalia represent the angel of the house and expose the limitations of this role by portraying complex individuality, which challenges the constrictive characterization of angel of the house. Bonnie Frederick defines the angel of the house of nineteenth-century Argentina as "[h]idden away in her house, entirely involved with domestic matters, and discouraged from expressing anything but happy thoughts that would please her husband, a genuine domestic angel could never hope to be a literary scientist, a worldly gentlewoman, a Romantic hero, or indeed much of anything beyond a columnist on household hints" (48). Society and specific literary works promoted the idealized image of the angel of the

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<sup>10</sup> See Ian Anstruther's *Coventry Patmore's Angel: A Study of Coventry Patmore, His Wife Emily and The Angel in the House*.

house, which María Arrillaga condemns as “una imagen inauténtica de feminidad que los hombres imponen a las mujeres o las mujeres se imponen a sí mismas como resultado de su condicionamiento social” (360). Indeed, this is the image that was suggested and encouraged by many significant and influential politicians and writers of the time, such as Echeverría and Mármol.

Amalia represents the angel of the house due to her classic beauty, education, and social graces. The image of the angel of the house originated in Europe, but became a very common concept that contributed to the standard female identity. Irene S. Coromina explains the history behind this ideology and its popularity when she states, “Jean-Jacques Rousseau en particular tuvo una influencia decisiva en la elaboración del mito de la mujer como ‘ángel de la casa’ que en la práctica limitaba la vida útil de las mujeres a las funciones de esposa y madre. Este mito fue el estandarte del ideario burgués europeo y rioplatense” (14). Amalia physically represents this European model, because she is “una mujer de veinte años, una fisonomía encantadora, una frente majestuosa y bella, unos ojos pardos llenos de expresión y sentimiento, y una figura hermosa, cuyo traje negro parecería escogido para hacer resaltar la reluciente blancura del seno y de los hombros” (Mármol 84). The emphasis on her physical qualities represents her fertility and desirability. Mármol’s focus on the corporeal aspects of Amalia prioritizes women’s function as a mate for the male sex. This description also alludes to her intelligence and caring nature that a republican mother would embody. Her position of angel of the house is also clear due to her preference to spend the majority of her time in her home. Amalia favors the private space of home over the public space of society because of the security and freedom that she can enjoy in her own space as a Unitarian living under the Rosas dictatorship. In these ways, she embodies the perfect female for Mármol and the Generation of 1837. The influential scholarly organization

known as the Generation of 1837 promoted the figure of the angel of the house in their political and literary texts to establish and perpetuate an idealized and conventional role for women during national consolidation.<sup>11</sup>

The Generation of 1837 produced various literary works with the purpose of inspiring and organizing an opposition to Rosas and the installation of a centralized government built on European enlightenment values. *Amalia* is one of the most important pieces of literature produced by an author from this intellectual association. The idea of a united Argentina under Unitarian rule was the ultimate goal for the Generation of 1837. Their quest was to transform the old Argentina under Federalist power, from a “territorio extranjero, como tierra *alienada*, ajena, de *otros* que la destruyen y corrompen hasta el punto de que resulta inhabitable para toda vida civilizada” (Curia 9) into a harmonious, safe, and most importantly “civilized” nation, that is, defined by European enlightenment ideals. Mármol’s literary construction of the chaotic and dangerous public sphere in nineteenth-century Argentina reflects this political group’s fears of the “barbarism” (or savagery) that the Rosas dictatorship perpetuated. To overcome the cruel and brutal atmosphere, this organization used their literature as a political weapon to develop and disseminate their Unitarian ideology. This unification was vital to the establishment of the liberal utopia that the Generation of 1837 strived to produce. It was understood that only under the unification of citizens through Unitarian ideology would the Unitarian party sustain power and establish a new Argentine nation. These ideas of political and national unity were central motivating factors for Mármol’s *Amalia*.

It is important to realize that women throughout nineteenth-century Latin America pushed the boundaries of conventional standards of female identity during the fight for

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<sup>11</sup> See Masiello (53-80).

independence and other national conflicts.<sup>12</sup> María and Amalia are characters who reflect the challenge of customary female depiction during the dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas and depict complex portrayals of nineteenth-century Argentine female identity. Navarro, Sánchez-Korrol, and Ali call attention to colonial female participation during the struggle for independence by pointing out that women “chose to lend their support as combatants, spies, couriers, or informants. Others served as hosts and organizers of political meetings, as quartermasters and camp followers” (60). These angels of the house actively participated in society through various means, just as María and Amalia are forced to do. Iona Macintyre concludes that the consequence of female participation in the Argentine battle for independence is that “in 1820s Buenos Aires women were still regarded as icons of physical beauty, of which the city could be proud, yet at the same time the wars had precipitated some into armed combat and new activities. The new liberal agenda allowed elite women a space in public life but this new role resulted in public debate and contention and was highly criticized in some quarters” (39). Thus the depiction of the angel of the house can be controversial and both reinforce and contest customary gender roles. Through active societal participation the angel of the house gains agency and changes the limited image of wife and mother, to eventually include a variety of possibilities for female representation and identity.

The degradation of female power and position in society results from the fear of women’s reproductive power and from the threat of the heterosexual hegemony in dominant society.

Butler addresses this fear by drawing on Jacques Lacan’s theory that “sex is a symbolic position that one assumes under the threat of punishment,” which is castration (Butler, *Bodies* 60). This

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<sup>12</sup> Women fulfilled important roles in the military in war time and did not only occupy a supportive role, but also fought alongside men during battle. See Davies, Brewster, and Owen (3-32).

fear of castration articulates the fear of becoming the abject which according to Julia Kristeva is anything or being that “disturbs identity, system, order” (Kristeva 4).<sup>13</sup> From the perspective of the heterosexual phallogentric male, the feminization of a masculine figure embodies the abject by being a loss of status and power in society. Through an exploration of various theorists, Butler argues that the “matter” of bodies, gender, and sex is created from the ideology of hetero-normative forces that are perpetuated in society through the manipulation of what constitutes bodies, gender, and sex in a hetero-normative and hegemonic society. The feminization of political discourse of the time created an opportunity, as Masiello states,

to offset barbarism in men themselves. This mode of gender shifting resulted in a fluid representation of sexuality for men and women. Often, the center of family authority—assigned to the husband or father—became highly feminized in representation, while the traditionally feminine roles of wife and mother became invested with patriarchal power. (*Between* 20)

Female qualities were viewed as civilizing tools that had the power to overcome barbarism.

Unitarians were often associated with civilizing qualities, and even deemed effeminate, whereas the Federalist regime represented barbarism. Gender binaries perpetuated strict oppositional characteristics that were ascribed to men and women and in part dictated their roles in society.

The constant negotiation of standard male and female characteristics can be found in *La cautiva* and *Amalia*, which brings the question of gender roles and identity to the forefront of the national consolidation of Argentina.

Esteban Echeverría’s epic poem *La cautiva* (1837) offers one example of how literature of nineteenth-century Argentina promotes particular political ideologies and how males and females are represented in the political discourse of the time period. Tulio Halperín Donghi asserts that Echeverría’s literary works are of great importance due to “una formación literaria

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<sup>13</sup> See Kristeva (1-31).

romántica, que precisamente por serlo, por ser una imagen de la historia literaria que se resuelve en historia universal, no dejará de influir en la imagen del mundo que se construirá Echeverría” (27). The author employs a Romantic style to focus on the struggles of María and Brian, devoted spouses who overcome adverse conditions in order to stay alive and remain together. Echeverría addresses the dichotomy of civilization and barbarism throughout the couple’s fight to survive and escape from an indigenous group in the inhospitable and sparsely populated Pampas. Their travails also illustrate the inversion of traditional gender roles in a patriarchal Argentine society.

This poem is also important because of how it portrays female identity and questions of gender performativity. Judith Butler explains the struggle of gender identification in *Bodies That Matter* by stating that “identifying with a gender under contemporary regimes of power involves identifying with a set of norms that are and are not realizable, and whose power and status precede the identification by which they are insistently approximated” (86). This is also true of gender construction in nineteenth-century Argentina due to the prescribed nature of identities that restrained individuals to particular categorical characterizations. Authors such as Juana Manuela Gorriti and Juana Manso protested against such restrictive gender constructs by producing alternative and liberating models of female identity in their literary works. This section of the dissertation will examine if the inversion of conventional gender roles actually creates a feminist figure of María or if she reinforces the customary ideas of femininity and thus replicates traditional female positions within society. The thesis of this investigation is that although María makes advances for female roles and identity by embracing what are thought of as traditionally masculine functions, she still does not embody a feminist rebellion against patriarchal ideology. Instead she is a manipulated female figure that projects a constricted

identity and limiting position for women while promoting a patriarchal system within the political goals of the author.

It is crucial to examine the inversion of gender roles between the protagonists, María and Brian, because unusually for nineteenth-century Argentine literature, she fulfills the characterization of the “mujer varonil,” or the masculine woman. This term for a woman has a rich history and was very popular in Spanish Drama of the Golden Age. Melveena McKendrick defines “mujer varonil” as “the woman who departs in any significant way from the feminine norm of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She can take the form of the *mujer esquiva* who shuns love and marriage, the learned woman, the career woman, the female bandit, the female leader and warrior, the usurper of man’s social role, the woman who wears masculine dress or the woman who indulges in masculine pursuits” (ix). I would argue that, in this case, her definition can be expanded to include any woman who deviates from the feminine norm of other historical periods and centuries as well, such as the nineteenth century.

María represents the “mujer varonil” is due to a variety of factors, such as her active participation and successful execution of her own escape from her Native American captors. She also daringly rescues her husband who originally is supposed to rescue her but is incapable of doing so. María’s rescue of Brian epitomizes the inversion of typical gender roles because she is depicted as mentally sharp, brave, and physically strong. All of these traits were most often associated with men and not women, historically speaking, because the binarization of the sexes was already established.<sup>14</sup> This logic only strengthens the falsely innate distinctions between males and females. At this point it seems as though María depicts a woman who escapes the reduction of her self-identity to being based exclusively upon her female corporeality, instead of

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<sup>14</sup>According to Grosz in *Volatile Bodies*, “the binarization of the sexes, the dichotomization of the world of knowledge has been effected already at the threshold of Western reason” (5).

being recognized for her intellect and rationality. Her husband's identity could be thought of as hyper-masculine because he is a soldier; however it would seem that María is not only as strong as her military spouse, but perhaps even stronger in a variety of ways. Even after María escapes her captors and saves her husband, she demonstrates her physical strength by carrying Brian through the desert while enduring the physical and mental anguish of the journey to seek help. In fact, Brian's extreme weakness is displayed during the excursion when he loses his will to live and decides to give up. He states:

déjame solo morir;  
este lugar es un horno:  
huye, ¿no miras en torno  
vapor cárdeno subir? (Echeverría 187)

It is María, who encourages Brian to live by responding in a manner traditionally reserved for men, when she says,

—Dios, largo tiempo, no esconde su divina protección.  
¿Crees tú nos haya olvidado?  
Salvar tu vida ha jurado  
o morir mi corazón.— (Echeverría 187)

María enacts a certain model of heroism for females that both fulfills the identity of heroine and also presents an alternative model of female characterization for other women of this time period. However, her motives endorse patriarchal ideology because she lives for her family and to take care of the males in her life.

Echeverría presents María's captivity as a conflict between civilization and barbarism, which can be compared to the fixed gender binary of male/female where historically, males are associated with barbarism and women with civilization. This now-classic dichotomy, later elaborated by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in his famous *Facundo* (1845), "included the struggles of urban and rural life, literature and oral culture, centralism and federalism, the

modern secular nation versus a religious state of Spanish influence, admiration for the United States versus rejection of the neighbor to the north, and the rights of conquest set against indigenous survival” (Kirkpatrick and Masiello 3). The brutal environment that María faces in the Pampas, is inhabited by the indigenous people and viewed as a wild and uncivilized land that reflects all that is wrong in Argentine society under dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas. In *La cautiva* the threatening environment is described as vast, unknowable, and wild:

Era la tarde, y la hora  
en que el sol la cresta dora  
de los Andes. El Desierto  
inconmensurable, abierto,  
y misterioso a sus pies  
se extiende; triste el semblante,  
solitario y taciturno  
como el mar, cuando un instante  
al crepúsculo nocturno  
pone rienda a su altivez. (125)

This mysterious and undomesticated environment represents danger for civilization and can be correlated to the fear of the untamed nature in women. It seems as though Echeverría’s epic poem is a cautionary tale that, through the embodiment of the “mujer varonil,” depicts how an uncultivated society instigates the uncontrollable within women. For the author, this lack of domesticity ultimately leads to the collapse of traditional gender binaries and perpetuates the downfall of the family unit, which is vital to the national consolidation of the time period.

This initial description sets the stage for conflict in the vast, desolate, and unknown territory, seemingly far away from any city or sign of human life. However, Echeverría quickly emphasizes that there is life in the Pampas, but only savage and barbaric people can live in such an uncivilized space, which from Echeverría’s perspective are the indigenous people. He

describes the indigenous people as inhumane, barbarians, and cold-blooded killers who behead their enemies with great pleasure. The indigenous men are illustrated in the following excerpt:

Así el bárbaro hace ultraje  
al indomable coraje  
que abatió su alevosía;  
y su rencor todavía  
mira, con torpe placer,  
las cabezas que cortaron  
sus inhumanos cuchillos,  
exclamado: —Ya pagaron  
del cristiano los caudillos  
el deudo a nuestro poder. (130)

Their untamed nature links them to abjection because they do “not respect borders, positions, [or] rules” (Kristeva 4) and present a violent threat to the Argentine people. This section clearly situates the indigenous people opposite of María and other Christians by describing them as terrifying embodiments of barbarism and a violent threat to the well-being of the rest of Argentina.

María’s goal is to persevere to find her way to salvation within a civilized society. She must be reunited with her husband and child to fulfill her roles of wife and mother. This is significant because it illustrates how women were viewed as civilizing agents that were caretakers of the nation. Davies, Brewster, and Owen explain, “the sign of civilisation in women is their care of men” (84), which is a vital characteristic in the promotion of female domesticity. Gender roles and characterizations play a great part in the illustration of Unitarian ideology by depicting how men and women should act. The poem addresses this topic by explaining the relationship between the indigenous men and women as one of fear and violence. While the men are off fighting, the women wait to soothe and calm their loved ones when they return. However, upon returning from battle with their bloody weapons the indigenous men resist the loving

comfort and support of their women and continue to fight and shout at the women. Echeverría describes the scene as the following:

Sus mujeres entretanto,  
cuya vigilancia tierna  
en las horas de peligro  
siempre cautelosa vela,  
acorren luego a calmar  
el frenesí que los ciega,  
ya con ruegos y palabras  
de amor y eficacia llenas,  
ya interponiendo su cuerpo  
entre las armas sangrientas  
ellos resisten y luchan,  
las desoyen y atropellan,  
lanzando injuriosos gritos; (142-143)

In this scene the narrator suggests that the indigenous men do not treat their women properly with respect, but that the women devote themselves to their men and are also victims of their brutality. This is another sign of barbarism according to the Unitarian ideology that woman, “as adjunct to man, provides a standard by which to judge him: the good man has a good mother, and the civilized man treats women with respect” (Garrels 287). Indeed, María is in the space of barbarism and savagery and must escape or there will be no hope for her or the future.

María represents conventional criolla women of the time by fulfilling the roles of wife and mother. However, she is a distinct character due to her position as captive to the indigenous people and her embodiment of the *mujer varonil*. She is determined to fight and escape from her captors with her husband. Her fortitude is motivated by her desire to keep her family alive, because without them she has no will to live. Masiello asserts that “[o]nly when María reverts to the feminized mode, upon learning of the death of her son, does her masculinized dignity collapse; she then dies from loss of love” (*Between* 28). If she were to survive, she would lose her identity of wife and mother and be forever labeled as captive by society.

María desperately wants to escape the threat of mestizaje,<sup>15</sup> because as Susana Rotker explains, “against the background of the body of the captive, the map of the abject and the discourse of progress are drawn; upon her (textual, pictorial) body the identity of what we are not and do not wish to be is constructed” (97). In this instance, mestizaje is viewed as the abject and seen as an inevitable consequence of captivity that carries a strongly negative social stigma for female captives of this time period. The fear of mestizaje, social rejection, and abjection are additional motives for María to strive to maintain racial purity, which reflects Echeverría’s belief that the Argentine nation should be a civilized one through European influence and by eliminating barbarous factors that have the potential to corrupt society. Davies, Brewster, and Owen establish the connection between the female protagonist and the importance of racial identity in the national consolidation of Argentina by stating that “[t]he sine qua non of the ideal femininity represented by María is not only family love but also a white, Christian, creole identity” (84). Therefore, Echeverría is promoting a very specific Argentine female identity based upon religious and racial standards that the Generation of 1837 deems proper and civilized. Fernando Operé clarifies what mestizaje signifies in Echeverría’s poem by asserting that “la carga ideológica del poema caracteriza a María como un ser sublime en una gesta de tonos epopéyicos cuyo fin mediato es salvar al amante y salvarse a sí misma de los horrores de una posible mutación o mestizaje, que en la perspectiva romántica podría interpretarse como pérdida de la pureza racial y cultural” (549).

My work takes this statement further by affirming that the relationship between mestizaje and abjection in Echeverría’s formulation “disturbs identity, system, order” (Kristeva 4) and deconstructs the normative racial and cultural heritage that particular hegemonic governing

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<sup>15</sup> In English mestizaje means miscegenation, which refers to interracial procreation. See Sommer (77-8).

bodies encouraged. The indigenous people were already in a process of genocide and viewed as uncivilized due to their racial and cultural differences from the dominating European and bourgeois population. In *La cautiva* the narrator describes the indigenous as violent and savage people with barbaric customs that embody blood-sucking vampires:

por donde ronca y resuella,  
y a borbollones arroja  
la caliente sangre fuera,  
en pie, trémula y convulsa,  
dos o tres indios se pegan  
como sedientos vampiros,  
sobren, chupan, saborean  
la sangre, haciendo mormullo,  
y de sangre se rellenan. (Echeverría 137)

The demonization of this group serves to exemplify a clear divide between the good (white, Christian, criollos) and the bad (indigenous tribes) in Argentina. Dorothy McMahon states that “Esteban Echeverría uses Indians as the complicating incident in *La Cautiva* (1837), devotes a relatively large amount of space to them, and casts them as the villain of the piece” (17). Their role as villain serves to further exemplify the binary of civilization and barbarism. Furthermore, Davies, Brewster, and Owen assert that the narrator establishes a connection between the Federalists and the Indians during nation building, stating that “[d]isorder, lack of control, lack of reason (exacerbated by drunkenness) and lack of compassion equate the Indians en masse not only with savagery but also with the devil and superstition. The savagery and mob mentality of the Indian masses connote that of the federalists” (85). The grotesque, inhumane, and untamed nature of the Indians creates their abjection.

Julia Kristeva articulates the various forms of abjection and describes their functions in everyday life, from objects to human beings. Kristeva declares that “the abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside,

misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them” (Kristeva 15). Echeverría’s Indians embody the abject due to their physical and cultural differences from Argentine and European standards. The indigenous tribes of nineteenth-century Argentina were made into the abject because they threatened the homogeneous cultural and racial construction of a unified nation. Therefore, if María were to have sexual contact under captivity, she would be converted into an abjected body and produce abjection through *mestizaje*. This would threaten the idealized image of a civilized and racially pure Argentina that the Generation of 1837 and other political sectors promoted. It is María’s responsibility, as a role model for the perfect female subject, to avoid contributing to *mestizaje*; her refusal to become a symbol of abjection is one of the main driving forces behind her inversion of gender roles.

Another motivation for María’s escape is to save and unify her family. Her goal is to keep Brian alive and find her missing son in order to preserve the family unit, regardless of the adversity that she must face. María’s life is dedicated to and revolves around the men in her family. She exemplifies the role of caretaker, even outside of the home, because she protects and cares for Brian in the Pampas. Echeverría describes how she puts her husband first and tends to his needs in the hostile environment by emphasizing her care for his physical comfort:

Brian sigue inmóvil; y María,  
En formar se entretenía  
De junco un denso tejido,  
Que guardase a su querido  
De la intemperie y calor. (195)

This exemplifies Echeverría’s overall proposal for what women of nineteenth-century Argentina should embody. When María’s family and life are located in a civilized space outside of the wild space she currently occupies, the narrator reinforces the significance of the family by highlighting her distance from them: “Allí, allí está su universo, / de su alma el espejo terso, / su

amor, esperanza, y vida” (Echeverría 151). She is desperate to escape the desolate and barbaric Pampas in order to rejoin civilization and Argentine society. Her universe, love, hope, and life are her husband and son. This verse clarifies that without them she has nothing, because she loses her position in life, her identity, and her social security based upon these roles.

María represents the angel of the house due to her angelic description, devotion to her family, and role of savior of her husband. Echeverría depicts her as a woman with celestial attributes and angelic qualities to inspire the traditional woman to fulfill the role of a religious, moral, and ethical figure for her family. When her husband asks who she is, María describes herself as his guardian angel:

¿Eres espíritu errante,  
ángel bueno, o vacilante  
parto de mi fantasía?  
-Mi vulgar nombre es María,  
ángel de tu guarda soy;  
y mientras cobra pujanza,  
ebria la feroz venganza  
de los bárbaros, segura,  
en aquesta noche oscura,  
velando a tu lado estoy: (154)

From these verses María’s Marian protection and vigilance for her husband are clear. She identifies herself to her husband by stating her name to reinforce her saintly identification with the Virgin María. Furthermore, María becomes the spiritual protector of her family and embodies the angel of the house in this way. Echeverría uses the image of the dutiful wife and self-sacrificing mother to endorse his beliefs and propose a standard model of female characterization for the time period.

María’s dependence upon her family to justify her self-worth and identity is epitomized by the nature of her own death. When her husband passes away she becomes an immobile statue

of grief and suffering that can no longer go on living. Despite her best efforts, Brian dies before they reach civilization. His death is expressed as:

Nace del sol la luz pura,  
Y una fresca sepultura  
encuentra; lecho postrero,  
que al cadáver del guerrero  
preparó el más fino amor.  
Sobre ella hincada, María,  
muda como estatua fría,  
inclinada la cabeza,  
semejaba a la tristeza  
embebida en su dolor. (Echeverría 206)

After Brian dies, María loses her optimism and begins to feel defeated and question God. Her angelic appearance fades and she becomes a ghostly figure who has lost her faith, courage, and hope. Despite her husband's death, she still has motivation to live because of her son. Echeverría communicates the message that the angel of the house should never abandon her family and in particular her children.

María's ultimate responsibility in life is to nurture and protect her children; therefore she must be strong, persevere, and find her son to fulfill the role of mother. She wanders through the desert searching for him when a group of soldiers spots her. This presents an opportunity for her to survive, but upon learning from the soldiers of her son's death, she dies instantly:

Y al oír tan crudo acento,  
Como quiebra el seco tallo  
El menor soplo del viento  
O como herida del rayo,  
cayó la infeliz allí; (Echeverría 213)

She loses her will to live, because she no longer has anything to live for. Through María's sudden death, according to Masiello, "Echeverría posits a curious paradox: in an age when opposition to Rosas can spell only certain defeat for men, women carry the burden of responsibility and survive in masculine pose-but succumb to external threats when they recover

to the traditional role of mother” (28). Since her identity and status rely on her positions of republican mother and the angel of the house, she no longer holds a definite position in society without her family. Therefore, strategies of gender inversion and gender performativity seemingly create liberating models of female roles or identity, but these are only temporary positions that cannot be sustained by the ideal and traditional female figure. Echeverría’s political message to all citizens, and in particular to women, conveys that the crucial roles of mother and wife are the most important positions that females can fulfill, and without the embodiment of this identity, the nation as a whole, including both men and women, is lost. Therefore, while gender inversion and gender performativity are present in *La cautiva*, they are used as tools to advocate for traditional patriarchal values within civilization and to promote the conventional female roles of angel of the house and the republican mother.

*Amalia* is one of the earliest Argentine dictator texts and has become the national novel<sup>16</sup> of the country. This book also contributes to the debate on civilization versus barbarism. According to Irene S. Coromina, “la lucha entre unitarios y federales fue la reducción de un enfrentamiento mayor el de la civilización contra la barbarie. La fórmula ‘civilización y barbarie’ con la que Sarmiento subtitula el *Facundo* encierra la esencia del conflicto sociopolítico que inspiró las primeras obras auténticamente nacionales en el país” (14). In this literary work, barbarism is represented by the Federalist political party and the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas. On the other side, the Unitarians symbolize all that is good and civilized. The descriptions of the primary political heroes of each party are illustrated in very different fashions due to their embodiment of conflicting ideologies. For example, Rosas is portrayed as “un hombre grueso,

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<sup>16</sup> In *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* Sommer points out that “The concept of the national novel hardly needs an explanation in Latin America; it is the book frequently required in the nations’ secondary schools as a source of local history and literary pride” (4).

como de cuarenta y ocho años de edad, sus mejillas carnudas y rosadas, labios contraídos, frente alta pero angosta, ojos pequeños y encapotados por el párpado superior, y de un conjunto, sin embargo, más bien agradable pero chocante a la vista” (Mármol 119). This harsh image of the dictator physically displays his cruel interior and barbaric qualities both inside and out.<sup>17</sup> The Unitarian hero, Daniel Bello, is described as:

veinticinco años de edad; de mediana estatura, pero perfectamente bien formado; de tez morena y habitualmente sonrosada; de cabello castaño, y ojos pardos; frente espaciosa, nariz aguileña; labios un poco gruesos, pero de un carmín reluciente que hacía resaltar la blancura de unos lindísimos dientes; este joven, de una fisonomía en que estaba el sello elocuente de la inteligencia, como en sus ojos la expresión de la sensibilidad de su alma. (Mármol 104)

This illustration suggests that, as a Unitarian, Daniel embodies an intelligence and sensibility that the author locates in civilized people and considers lacking in those who live in and are part of barbarism. Although Mármol sets the action of the novel in Buenos Aires, the city is not representative of the civilized Unitarian utopia that the author desires for the future of Argentina. Instead the city is ruled by the Federalist dictatorship that represents barbarism, which can be perceived as “a metaphor for the spatial conception of a culture: they are on the other side of the border; in order to get to know them, it is necessary to enter (like the unitarian) into their world; to move within one’s mind to that enigmatic territory which begins beyond the confines of civilization” (Piglia 133-134). This is precisely what Daniel must accomplish. He cunningly subverts the Federalist party as a double agent, entering into the world of barbarism in an attempt to further the Unitarian cause. This dichotomy of good versus evil or civilization versus barbarism is present through this novel and aids in exemplifying the political ideologies of the time that create the historical foundation for the national consolidation of Argentina.

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<sup>17</sup> In *Amalia* physiognomy is indicative of characters’ interior and identity. See Ponisio (61-76).

Regardless of the positive or negative characterization of the male protagonists, each of them actively participates in the public and private space life, exercises individual agency, and is not restricted by society due to gender. However, for the female characters of *Amalia* there are various restrictions due to being female. One key conception of gender and the construction of identity in Butler's formulation is that the "association of the body with the female works along magical relations of reciprocity whereby the female sex becomes restricted to its body, and the male body, fully disavowed, becomes paradoxically, the incorporeal instrument of an ostensibly radical freedom" (*Gender* 16). This freedom is denied females due to their restriction to corporeal identification, which contributes to the containment of women to the private sphere and their limitation and at times outright rejection in the public sphere. For example, Amalia is depicted as a beautiful angel of the house who rarely ventures into the public sphere and is illustrated as the perfect model for womanhood. Her physical attributes are commended throughout the book and Mármol epitomizes her as the ultimate symbol of femininity when he states that Amalia is an "ángel de tentación que se llama mujer" (245). The author implies that women are temptresses due to female corporeal physiognomy, while reducing women's importance to their sexual attractiveness. Furthermore, the significance of the angel of the home and the republican mother relies on their bodily functions of procreating and their status as mothers. Against these formulations, Butler argues that gender is actually a learned social performance that constitutes mimicry or a masquerade. Gender performativity involves "acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires [which] create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality" (Butler, *Gender* 185-186). Gender performance and the standards that construct the illusion of a fixed gender contribute to

maintaining social order. For women, this masquerade or social performance traditionally does away with masculine identification and constrains women to embody visions of ideal femininity, further preserving and promoting the differences between men and women.

The establishment of a unified nation is a significant theme in *Amalia* and various other texts from nineteenth-century Argentina. In *Imagined Communities* (1983) Benedict Anderson states that the nation “is imagined as a *community*, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately, it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (7). The fraternity of this nation raises questions about the inclusion or exclusion of women pointing to an imbalance of power and status between sexes. The implication is that women would be excluded from this male-dominated union based upon their sex, and therefore a woman can never be a fully accepted part of the alliance that solidifies a nation. However, in *Amalia* women do play a significant role in national consolidation due to their participation in the public and private spheres as well as their political activeness. The political aspect of the nation is the focus in *Amalia*, which focuses on the struggle between the Unitarians and the Federalists. Mármol presents a harsh critique of daily life under the oppressive Rosas dictatorship and outlines Unitarian beliefs and hopes for a better future. He illustrates a society in which Juan Manuel de Rosas seems to have unlimited power that stretches over borders to encompass the whole country and more. However, the Unitarian uprising aspires to challenge this authority in order to construct an enlightened society that reflects a political ideology based on the consolidation of Argentina while creating a well-educated and civilized society.

Anderson's description of "limited imaginings" is on target due to the restrictions of who is included or excluded in the nation. While Anderson is addressing the limitations of physical national borders, I address the political and social limitations of people living within Argentina's borders, but who are still not included as full citizens of the nation. Anderson's description signals the limited power and positions that particular people within the nation possess. The established relationship of comradeship also presents a challenge due to the marginalization of certain individuals and groups that live in the nation. For example, *Amalia* displays amity among members of the same political parties, but the overall tone establishes a lack of solidarity among Argentine citizens due to the rule of the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas. This illustrates Sommer's and Anderson's points that the nation was constructed, and that some of the constructing was done in literature. The rival relationship between these political factions is clearly defined and followed throughout the book, which shows that there is not always solidarity among the nation, but a great divide that the Unitarians and the Federalists fight to eliminate. Another commonality these two sides demonstrate is their willingness to fight and die for their country and their beliefs. This separation among the people is even more pronounced, because men are the characters who play the active roles in the public sphere and especially in the political realm of this novel. Women do play a role, but their roles are less active than those of the male characters, reflecting the imbalance of power and status between men and women of nineteenth-century Argentina.

When analyzing the role of women and other marginalized people, one can claim that, while they may not always have individual autonomy, they can still exercise some type of agency to escape the oppressive and often silencing environment of their imagined community or nation. The constant conflict of the time led to various changes and instability in conventional

ways of daily life. These transformations presented positive opportunities for some of the population, such as women. Masiello explains that:

The unitarian opposition, however, perceived women as agents of resistance. They became identified as experts in feelings, refusing the trenchant rigor of male domination; they brought values of virtue and family ethics to a land ravaged by fratricidal war. This reception of woman was also part of a feminization of discourse, a liberal, bourgeois way of pacifying the barbarism of Rosas. (22)

National conflict afforded women the chance to shift through the boundaries of gender norms to challenge their traditional and strictly defined gender positions. Women could gain agency and social visibility through the political thinking behind the Unitarian concepts. However, restrictions still limited what literary female figures could embody, and if particular gender lines were crossed, these characters were depreciated and even diabolized.

*Amalia* includes strong female characters who, though not the main focus of the action like Daniel and Eduardo, do participate in the public sphere and political life. Female characters such as doña María Josefa and doña Marcelina represent strong, vocal, and intelligent women, but due to these types of characteristics they are ridiculed. Mármol mocks these two women because they do not properly represent the Unitarian ideals of the angel of the house or the mother of the republic. He describes doña María Josefa, the politically active sister-in-law of Rosas, as defined by violence: “actividad y el fuego violento de pasiones políticas debían ser el alimento diario del alma de esa señora” (Mármol 180-181). She is a public figure who, in the novel, boldly breaks with traditional gender norms by publically exercising female agency in politics. The narrator’s physical description of María Josefa criticizes her as a “mujer de pequeña estatura, flaca, de fisonomía enjuta, de ojos pequeños, de cabello desaliñado y canoso, donde flotaban las puntas de un gran moño de cinta color sangre; y cuyos cincuenta y ocho años de vida estaban notablemente aumentados en su rostro por la acción de las pasiones ardientes” (Mármol

182). As a result of her brazen authority and power the narrator demonizes her as a witch-like figure, and, throughout the novel remains a strong yet disparaged individual.

The narrator similarly derides doña Marcelina, the manager of a brothel, because she endeavors to appear well versed in literature and politically active. In the novel she cites various literary works from philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Argentine writers such as Juan Cruz Varela. In one instance after doña Marcelina cites Rousseau, “Daniel conteniendo la risa que le hervía en el pecho al oír aquel nombre y aquella citación en los labios de doña Marcelina” (Mármol 197); he ridicules her attempts to quote intellectual works. In *Amalia*, she often misquotes these important texts, which indicates Mármol’s own thoughts on the limitations of female intelligence. She is not taken seriously, yet Daniel uses her as a political agent to aid him the Unitarian cause. Her open political activity is another quality that should be respected, but she is still deemed an inappropriate figure in society due to her status as a madame for prostitutes. Doña Marcelina realizes this and explains to Daniel how she has been demonized in society for her public actions and political opinions. She declares that she cannot forgive such hypocrisy in society and compares politics to prostitution:

“Otros tienen más pecados que yo y ganarán el cielo”-dijo doña Marcelina meneando la cabeza.

“¿Por ejemplo?”

“Por ejemplo, los que usted sabe.”

“Hay ciertas cosas que yo las olvidé con facilidad.”

“Pues yo no, y si viviera doscientos años no dejaría día de recordarlas.”

“Mal hecho; perdonar a nuestros enemigos es un precepto de nuestra religión.”

“¡Perdonarlos! ¿después del bochorno que me hicieron sufrir, después de haberme hecho perder mi reputación, confundíendome con las mujeres públicas? Jamás. Yo tengo un corazón de Capuleto.”

“¡Bah!”-exclamó Daniel conteniendo la risa al oír la comparación de doña Marcelina-, “usted exagera siempre cuando habla de esas cosas.”

“¿Qué dice usted? ¡Exagerar! ¡Pues no es nada! ¡Meterme en una carreta junto con las demás; confundirme con ellas; a mí, que jamás había recibido en mi casa sino la flor y nata de Buenos Aires! No, no crea usted que fue por mi conducta; fue una venganza

política, porque mis opiniones eran conocidas de todos. Mis primeras relaciones fueron con unitarios.” (Mármol 195)

The message is clear; women who read beyond the Bible and Romantic poetry, women who put on literary airs, and women who engage in overt and public political activity are on some level akin to the other kind of “public women,” that is, to prostitutes.

The rationale behind the degradation of women active in the public sphere could be what Elizabeth Garrels calls “an identification (perhaps unconscious) with a long misogynist tradition that has taken shape in a metaphorical/mythological language associating women with the terrors of an uncontrolled nature” (288). Women characters such as doña Josefa and doña Marcelina are females whose nature is not controlled by mainstream society, because these women openly and unapologetically do what fulfills them in life. They are not the typical angel of the house and perhaps have no desire to embody that image. This means that these characters do not fit into the civilized Unitarian utopia ideal and as a consequence they are devalued and ridiculed.

Other female characters such as Amalia, Manuela de Rosas, and Florencia are presented in a more positive manner, because they represent the way in which the narrator believes women should embody femininity and contribute to the nation. For example, Amalia is idealized as the perfect model for womanly qualities:

Aquella fisonomía tan dulce a par de bella estaba bañada por una luz tenue de melancolía y sentimiento; y en el cristal límpido de aquellos ojos, que se entreabrían en medio de un éxtasis del alma había más de ilusión que de mirada mundanal; mezcla indefinible de abstracción de la vida y de esa claridad sobrenatural que se difunde en la pupila cuando el espíritu está más arriba de la tierra, y absorbe, en sus raptos de poesía, los detalles de la luz de cielo. Y puede decirse que en ese raudal de luz que se desprendía de sus ojos, las gracias, la belleza material de esa mujer, se espiritualizaban a su vez, sublimándose de este modo cuanto la naturaleza tiene de más perfecto y encantador en los pinceles con que delinea y pinta ese hermoso ángel de tentación que se llama mujer. (Mármol 245)

Mármol attributes angelic qualities to Amalia's physical beauty, which, for the author, reflects her strength in spirit. He emphasizes women's beauty both inside and out to fulfill their role of inspiring desire. Women who possess these feminine qualities, such as Amalia, Florencia, and Manuela de Rosas, present the potential to fulfill the images of angels of the home and republican mothers. Amalia does not have the authority, like men, to outright exercise personal autonomy or agency in a public manner due to her sex. However, she has the intelligence, social skills, and grace to covertly exercise female agency and to actively participate in the political arena through the private sphere. While social limitations existed on female identity and positions in the Argentine nation, Mármol's depiction of Amalia demonstrates how females can attempt to manipulate their traditional societal roles to achieve some level of autonomy and exercise female agency.

Amalia presents a distinct version of the angel of the house who negotiates between conventional and unconventional female qualities and activities. She has an unusual degree of independence due to her status as a widow. She possesses her own home, has her own money, and does not have any children. All of this affords her a rather high degree of freedom that women of her time period typically were not accustomed to having. This is very important for a woman; as Virginia Woolf points out almost a century later in 1929, men receive certain liberties, but women must take them, and in order to do that, "a woman must have money and a room of her own" (6). The private space that Amalia occupies in her home allows her to pursue political and educational activities that women were historically denied. Amalia's home represents a civilized and feminized environment as opposed to the barbarous and violent public space of the city under Juan Manuel de Rosas's regime. Although women were historically excluded from civil society, they were viewed as agents of civility and decorum who, therefore,

were a necessity to nation-building and conflict resolution.<sup>18</sup> Nancy Hanway contends that “Mármol uses private space to signal his characters’ significance to the nation. Nation-space is created by Mármol as a ‘museum of feminine delicacies,’ suggesting that the struggle over national identity was both gendered and related to historiography” (36). Amalia’s private space, her home, represents the fusion of a feminized and civilized environment that is eloquent, beautiful, and tranquil. Even in a moment of conflict the luxurious, comfortable, and European elements of her decor stand out:

Daniel colocó a Eduardo sobre el sofá, Amalia, pues ya distinguiremos por su nombre a la joven prima de Daniel, pasó corriendo a un pequeño gabinete contiguo a la sala, separado por un tabique de cristales, y tomó de una mesa de mármol negro una pequeña lámpara de alabastro, a cuya luz la joven leía las *Meditaciones* de Mr. Lamartine cuando Daniel llamó a los vidrios de la ventana, y volviendo a la sala, puso la lámpara sobre una mesa redonda de caoba, cubierta de libros y de vasos de flores. (Mármol 84)

Mármol illustrates his ideal of a civilized and luxurious space that is comfortable and decorated with crystal, marble tables, alabaster lamps, mahogany furniture, and flowers. The refined setting of Amalia’s home displays her political beliefs by reflecting her rejection of the Federalists and her support of the Unitarian cause. The European influences and the delicate beauty of the flowers and French poetry books in her home reflect Unitarian ideals of what a proper living environment should be. The description of her space is one way in which the narrator illustrates what the future nation-space for Argentina should look and feel like: orderly, sensitive, and European in origin and style.

The concept of space plays a key role in Amalia’s daily life as a female and as a subject under Juan Manuel de Rosas. It is important to establish what the private and public spheres represent and how Amalia negotiates between the two. They can be thought of as physical and concrete spaces that are visually detectable within a society. This distinction can be observed in

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<sup>18</sup>See Garrels (272-88).

the difference between one's private space, such as a person's house, and public space, such as a street or sidewalk. On the other hand, these spheres of society can be viewed as intangible concepts that are used as subliminal tools of social control and regulation. The ideology behind who is allowed to participate in particular spaces can limit and exclude some sectors of the population from access to certain places in society. Indeed, the public and private spheres contribute to the organization of society as factors in social hierarchies that can potentially marginalize particular groups of people. The historical exclusion of women from the public realm and the traditional confinement of women to the private space of home is one example of how an entire segment of the population can be marginalized through the division of these concepts. Furthermore, this division adds to the limitation of female roles and identity by restricting female positions to the personal space of home and therefore attempting to control and regulate female identity and agency.

Extensive scholarship on the public and private spheres continues to this day, and feminist researchers and activists have investigated this dichotomy in order to examine the exclusionary effects of this binary within society. One such activist is Mariarosa Della Costa who, along with fellow feminist activist Selma Jones, published *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* (1972) as a call for change. Della Costa studied the division of labor and the societal undervaluing of women's labor in the space of one's home. In this work she specifically advocates for the positive recognition of female participation within the private sphere. In nineteenth-century Argentina, women who fulfilled the role of angel of the house were expected to work within the home performing daily chores such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children, or overseeing household staff that performed these chores. However, they also deserved recognition for their educational, social, and political initiatives that they carried out

within their home. Authors including Sarmiento and Matto de Turner promoted these projects as responsibilities of the angel of the house, which provided opportunities for women to participate in the public sphere from the private sphere. Amalia is one fictional example of how women could become active agents of change and support political causes that directly affected them.

Carole Pateman, a feminist and political theorist, explores the public/private binary in relation to politics and how this divide restricted female participation in society and specifically in the political arena. Her books *The Sexual Contract* (1988) and *The Disorder of Women* (1989) address the relationships between men and women, how both sexes are differently located within society, and how these traditional binaries contribute to inequality and the domination of women by men in a patriarchal society. False binaries contribute to the identification of men with the public sphere and women with the private sphere, which leads to the restriction of women as wives, mothers, and caretakers of the home. *Amalia* represents the constraints placed upon women living under patriarchal rule, while at the same time imagining that women's exercise of female agency by covertly and at times openly challenging patriarchal authority and actively participating in politics.

In *Volatile Bodies*, Elizabeth Grosz presents various theories that explore the relationship between mind and body and the biological limitations of body that may be overcome due to its own power and capacities. The author presents different perspectives on the issue of biological restrictions due to a person's sex and how these affect constructions of gender. However, the author's clarification that historically "a notion that women's oppression is, at least to some extent, biologically justified insofar as women *are* less socially, politically, and intellectually able to participate as men's social equals" (16), has contributed to the imbalanced relationship between the private and public spheres for women and their limited participation in these

spheres. Grosz's point is significant in my analysis of *Amalia*, a nineteenth-century novel, because these alleged biological restrictions factored into male domination over women and their inequality in patriarchy. According to Grosz, philosophers from Plato to Aristotle established and promoted such false binaries, and, in my view, nineteenth-century authors such as Marmol and Sarmiento perpetuated these ideas.

Grosz makes the point that "women's bodies are regarded as an inherent limitation on women's capacity for equality" (15), and so much so that "as woman adopts the role of mother, her access to the public, social sphere is made difficult if not impossible" (15). It is interesting that while women are praised for their reproductive power, through such images as the republican mother and the angel of the house, they are also oppressed by the female identification with the body. This paradox allows dominant hegemonic powers to rationalize and uphold patriarchal values and structures in society. The marginalization of women due to the supposedly natural differences between males and females is reflected in literature, which was one tool of propaganda for patriarchy. Doris Sommer explains the relationship between national development and literature when she states, "Romantic novels go hand in hand with patriotic history in Latin America. The books fueled a desire for domestic happiness that runs over into dreams of national prosperity; and nation-building projects invested in private passions with public purpose" (7). Authors, including those from the Generation of 1837 embedded their personal goals and ideology for the future of the nation and, in this case, stipulated particular roles for men and women in society.

Political theorist and gender researcher Barbara Arneil also explores the role of the public/private split in connection to gender and politics. Arneil's *Politics and Feminism* (1999) offers a comprehensive analysis of the historical and contemporary debate surrounding these

spheres. In this critical work Arneil states that “the second great duality which demarcates politics from what is not politics is the public/private distinction. Politics, from its inception, has existed in the public domain” (28). This assertion contributes to the understanding of how and why women were traditionally prohibited from participating in supposedly exclusive masculine activities such as business and politics. Arneil asserts that politics exists in the public sphere; we must acknowledge that the political is personal and therefore has lasting effects not only in the open, but in private as well. This motivates women of nineteenth-century Argentina to be active political participants, as Mármol explores in *Amalia*. Since women’s participation in the public sphere was restricted, they used their homes as spaces of resistance to be involved in typically male ventures.

The feminist theorists Chris Beasley and Carol Bacchi expand upon this argument in their article “Citizen Bodies: Embodying Citizens – a Feminist Analysis” (2000). This work evaluates the role of citizenship and participation in society along with its connection to the public and private spheres. Beasley and Bacchi explain that “the distinction between a model citizen and a mere subject is built on an ‘active/passive’ duality and participation is registered by an active political agent” (340). The historical tendency to associate politics solely with the public realm affects the position of citizen for women, who are traditionally confined to the private sphere. The female characters in *Amalia* represent Argentine subjects, but do not have the full status and liberties that male citizens possess. However, these women engage in politics through their personal space and therefore should be recognized as full citizens and be afforded the same opportunities as their male counterparts to be politically active in society as well. The problem of full citizenship and the public/private divide calls for the rethinking of the relationship between

this binary in order to demonstrate how active participation in the private sphere can contribute to active political and public participation as well.

The public space is typically thought of as containing the area in a society that is outside of the home and that allows for interpersonal communication. The significance of “the word ‘public’ [is that it] has long served as the place maker for the political ideal of open, inclusive, and effective deliberation about matters of common and critical concern” (Ryan 195) that affect every individual in society. Therefore, this space can be conceived as a vital place that provides opportunities for people to participate in business, travel, education and politics. Researcher Ali Madanipour defines the public sphere more specifically as “the realm of society as a whole and of the state. A public space is provided by the state and used by society. In other words, it is controlled by the public authorities, concerns people as a whole, is open or available to them, and is used or shared by all members of a community” (134). However, if civic authorities have the power over communal space which creates the public sphere, then these powers that be also have the capacity to regulate who is allowed to actively participate in the common realm. In theory the angel of the house was limited to active participation in the home and had restricted access to the public sphere. In the case of nineteenth-century Argentina, the power of the state fluctuated over time due to national conflict and consolidation. Furthermore, agency was also located within the patriarchal institutions of Argentine society that diffused particular political ideologies and social norms.

During the rule of Juan Manuel de Rosas the political authorities established power over the people through strict rules and regulations that even had widespread effects on the fashion of the time. Regina A. Root explains that clothing was significant because it was a physically visible symbol that displayed an Argentine’s political stance as either a Federalist or a Unitarian.

Root describes the typical dress of the Federalist as a crimson uniform. The Unitarian style of dress was viewed as more European and feminine in styling. In fact, some Unitarians clearly rebelled against the Federalist government by refusing to wear the black ribbon or by wearing light blue or green colors, which stood for liberty and hope, instead of the Federalist-favored crimson. Root sums up the power of colors by stating that “color served as symbolic ammunition used by male political rivals for the purpose of psychological domination” (7) by the governing authorities over the citizens of the state. Blue and green became dangerous to wear due to their significance and the fact that Rosas had the power to punish and kill anyone who wore colors or other clothing that did not promote Federalist politics.

Women had to adhere to the dress code of Rosas’s time by wearing the appropriate colors and the red ribbon that symbolized the Federal political party. In one scene, Amalia covertly and yet openly demonstrates her Unitarian beliefs and rejection of Federalist ideology by attending a society ball in:

un traje de raso color lila muy bajo, o más bien color torcaz, y sobre él, otro de blonda negra, más corto que el primero. Su talle, redondo y fino como el de la estatua griega, estaba ajustado por una cinta del mismo color que el viso, cuyas puntas tocaban con la orilla del vestido negro. Su escote era también de blonda; y en el centro del pecho, un pequeño lazo de cinta igual a la del talle completaban los adornos de su sencillo y elegante traje. Sus cabellos estaban rizados, y sus rizos finos y lucientes caían hasta su cuello de alabastro; y entre ellos, en su sien derecha, estaba colocada una linda rosa blanca. El resto de sus hermosos cabellos castaños circundaba la parte posterior de su cabeza, en una doble trenza que parecía sujeta solamente por un alfiler de oro a cuya extremidad se veía una magnífica perla; y bajo la trenza, en el lado izquierdo de la cabeza, se descubría apenas la punta de la cintita roja, adorno oficial impuesto bajo terrible penas por el Restaurador de las libertades argentinas. (Mármol 302-303)

Amalia surreptitiously protests Rosas and his regime by wearing a violet gray and black dress, instead of the popular and almost obligatory crimson, and has the mandatory red ribbon almost hidden in her coiffure. This description illustrates that upper-class women were obligated to

physically show signs of support for the dictatorship in the public sphere. For Amalia and other Unitarians this makes the public sphere an uncomfortable and even dangerous space.

In order to understand the differences and interrelations between the public and private spheres, I must clarify the meaning behind the latter. Madanipour has defined the private sphere as “a part of life that is under the control of the individual in a personal capacity, outside public observation and knowledge and outside official or state control. It follows that private space is a part of space that belongs to, or is controlled by, an individual, for that individual’s exclusive use, keeping the public out” (40-41). Personal space can be viewed as a space of refuge and protection as well as for individual agency. *Amalia* depicts home as a place of refuge for the female protagonist away from the prying eyes of mainstream society. Mármol describes the physical barriers in Amalia’s home: “Las dos ventanas que daban al patio de la casa estaban cubiertas por dobles colgaduras, unas batista hacia la parte interior, y otras de raso azul muy bajo hacia los vidrios de la ventana, suspendidas sobre lazos de metal dorado, y atravesadas con cintas corredizas que las separaban o las juntaban con rapidez” (93). The double window hangings and their ease to open and close preserve her privacy and give Amalia the control of opening her home to the outside world or keeping it covered. As was previously explained, in open areas Amalia and every person must demonstrate their support of the Rosas regime through dressing and acting in a certain manner. In Amalia’s home she is free to dress and act as she pleases and is protected from the constraints of society. Her home reflects her anti-Federalist attitude and her pro-Unitarian politics that in the public realm would bring a hostile reaction from the dominant governing body.

Amalia's personal space symbolizes Unitarian distinctiveness through the elegant, European, and civilized nature of the décor. The narrator paints a very detailed image of the space:

El piso estaba cubierto por un tapiz de Italia, cuyo tejido verde y blanco era tan espeso que el pie parecía acolchonarse sobre algodones al pisar sobre él. Una cama francesa de caoba labrada, de cuatro pies de ancho y dos de alto, se veía en la extremidad del aposento, en aquella parte que se comunicaba con el tocador, cubierta con una colcha de raso color jacinto, sobre cuya relumbrante seda caían los albos encajes de un riquísimo tapafundas de cambray. Una pequeña corona de marfil, con sobrepuestos de nácar figurando hojas de jazmines, estaba suspendida del cielo raso por una delgadísima lanza de metal plateado, en línea perpendicular con la cama, y de la corona se desprendían las ondas de una colgadura de gasa de la India con bordaduras de hilo de plata, tan leve, tan vaporosa, que parecía una tenue neblina brillantada por un rayo del sol. Entre la cama y el muro de la pared, había una pequeña mesa cuadrada, cubierta por un terciopelo verde, sobre la que se veían algunos libros, un crucifijo de oro incrustado en ébano, una pequeña caja de música sobre una magnífica copa de cristal. (Mármol 93)

The colors of white, blue, and green represent Amalia's opposition to the Federalist color of crimson red. The French and Italian elements in her home add to the refinement of this unique space. The books on the table allude to Amalia's being well-versed, which was an important educational quality that the Unitarians promoted. The luxuriously rich furnishings and decorations in her home produce a space of resistance where Amalia can rebel against the dictatorship by displaying her support of the Unitarian cause. In this manner, she is expressing herself in the private realm about public political issues. This space becomes a tool of resistance and affords her the opportunity to express herself freely.

For Amalia her home is the only space that is her own, because it reflects her identity, and in this space she exercises her own free will by collaborating with others against the Federalist dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas. In one of the very first scenes of the novel Amalia's home becomes the stage for political activity when her cousin, Daniel Bello, brings an injured Unitarian, Eduardo, to hide there. When Daniel states, "[o]cupa mi lugar, Amalia; sostén a este

hombre que no puede andar solo” (Mármol 83), she immediately takes Daniel’s place and acts as the rescuer for Eduardo. Not only does Amalia let her home become a place of escape for Daniel and Eduardo, but she offers her physical strength and takes action by nursing Eduardo back to health. From that point on Daniel uses her home, among other places, to conduct political business and to convene with Eduardo. She willingly provides this space for them and participates in treason. Consequently, Amalia’s home is a private space in which activities associated with the public sphere take place, such as the conducting of political business, in which Amalia actively participates. Her private space is what affords her the opportunity to covertly participate in the public space, such as in the political arena and the Unitarian and Federalist conflict.

In fact, it is Amalia’s political involvement that leads to the invasion of her private space by the public authorities. Although her home represents protection, refuge, and resistance, it is invaded and becomes a space of conflict due to the subversive activities taking place there. When the police arrive to search the house, she realizes that she must take action to save herself. In this scene it is Amalia, not Daniel or Eduardo, who confronts the police and defends herself against Victorica and Mariño. Don Bernardo Victorica is the Federalist chief of police in Buenos Aires, who works for Rosas and carries out his orders. In this scene Victorica accuses Amalia of using her position as a woman to prevent him from carrying out his duties as police officer. General Nicolás Mariño commands the Night-Watchmen and has a romantic interest in pursuing Amalia. Amalia exercises female agency in the following dialogue:

“¡Señora!”-exclamó Victorica, mirando con ojos amenazantes a Amalia  
“Qué hay, caballero?”  
“Que usted abusa de su sexo.”[This means that Amalia is taking advantage of her position as a woman]  
“Como usted de su posición.”  
“¿No teme usted de sus palabras, señora?”

“No, señor. En Buenos Aires solo los hombres temen; pero las señoras sabemos defender una dignidad que ellos han olvidado.” (493)

This exchange demonstrates the aggressiveness of the police and the cleverness and restraint that Amalia displays during the argument. While he accuses her of taking advantage of her position as a female, she makes the point that all people, regardless of gender, should act with courtesy and respect toward others. She clarifies that it is women who possess the dignity and intelligence to overcome adversity and to avoid violent or barbaric reactions, as certain men in Buenos Aires do. This is an insulting reference to Rosas and the Federalist forces in particular. In her daring statements she displays courage, strength, and astuteness.

In this episode, Amalia exercises female agency even further by refusing to allow a Federalist man to save her from Victorica’s wrath. She rejects the help of Mariño, who wishes to gain control over her as a romantic interest, during the invasion of her home:

“Mi querido amigo –dijo [Mariño] a Victorica-, yo salgo garante de que en los papeles de esta señora no hay ninguno que comprometa nuestra causa; ni diario, ni carta de los inmundos unitarios.”

Victorica retiraba su mano de la llave de la papelería, y ya Mariño creía conquistado el derecho a la gratitud de aquel corazón rebelde a sus ternuras, cuando Amalia se precipitó a la papelería, la abrió estrepitosamente, tiró cuatro pequeñas gavetas que contenían algunas cartas, alhajas y dinero, y con una expresión marcada de despecho, se volvió a Victorica, dando la espalda a Mariño, y le dijo:

“He ahí cuanto encierra esta papelería, registradlo todo.”

Mariño se mordió los labios hasta sacarse sangre.

Victorica paseó sus miradas por los objetos que le descubrió Amalia, y sin tocar ninguno, dijo:

“He concluido, señora.” (493-494)

This episode is significant, because Amalia defends herself and proves that she has nothing to hide. She boldly rebuffs male Federalist intervention on her behalf and instead independently resolves the situation through her own fearlessness. Throughout the novel Amalia is characterized as a traditional angel of the house and in this case she defends herself and her home, because it is the most important place for her in society. Her identity is reflected

throughout her house, and this is the only place where she can exercise her own free will while living in Buenos Aires under the Rosas dictatorship. Through the self-protection of her home Amalia becomes actively involved in the political arena of society, which is crucial to her well-being and to the future of the nation? In this manner Amalia participates daringly in political conflict from a socially acceptable personal space, undermining the strict division of public and private spheres in society.

The role of exile in this novel also contributes to Amalia's status as a political figure. For Amalia, self-exile affords her the opportunity to exercise free will and be politically active. Amalia leaves her birthplace of Tucumán after the deaths of her husband and mother, to live in the outskirts of Buenos Aires. She isolates herself from the general public, due to her unusual status of being an independent and wealthy female from the province, and makes a new life for herself. In the novel, Daniel describes Amalia's uniqueness to Eduardo by stating that she is "la linda viuda, la poética tucumana de que te he hablado tantas veces, y que de su regreso de Tucumán hace cuatro meses vive solitaria en esta quinta" (85). Her cousin establishes two vital aspects about her: she is from Tucumán and she is a woman who chooses to live alone. These qualities separate her from the other women in Buenos Aires society and from the mainstream population. Interestingly, Daniel's description implies an ambiguous origin, as if she is partly from Buenos Aires or has previously established connections with the city. This is one way in which she represents the union of the province and the city. Although she lives in a large city, she isolates herself due to the threat of outside forces under Juan Manuel Rosas's dictatorship. Her Unitarian political beliefs and practices put her at great risk and therefore she is obliged to seclude herself inside of her home. This is another reason why domesticity and the home are significant in this novel.

Tucumán plays a central part in Amalia's identity as a woman from the province, which the narrator emphasizes with descriptive parallels between the two. Mármol illustrates Tucumán as a beautiful paradise that is fertile, lush, and full of prosperity and hope when he writes, "en Tucumán, como en todas esas latitudes privilegiadas, entibiadas por la luz de los trópicos, el corazón participa con el aire, con la luz, con la vegetación, de esa abundancia de calor y de vida, de armonía y de amor, que exhale allí superabundante la Naturaleza" (239-240). From this description the reader can conclude that for the narrator Tucumán is a locus amoenus that is viewed as place of refuge in comparison with the hostile environment of Buenos Aires. Amalia chooses to live away from the city center to escape some of the danger and chaos of the city produced by Rosas and the political strife of the time. Tucumán represents a beautiful and tranquil space, similar to Amalia's home. However, Mármol describes the public outdoor space of Tucumán as a calm that is to be reveled in and that does not pose threats, unlike the public space in the capital. There are also strong similarities between the descriptions of Amalia and her place of origin. The narrator portrays the province of Tucumán as "[s]uave, perfumada, fértil, y rebosando gracias y opulencia de luz, de pájaros y flores, la naturaleza armoniza allí el espíritu de sus creaturas con las impresiones y perspectivas poéticas en que se despierta y desenvuelve su vida" (Mármol 239). In the first line this depiction of a place shares qualities used to describe people and in particular women. From this description Amalia is reflected in the province and personifies the locus amoenus, because she is the idealization of female identity. The beauty and nature of Tucumán is significant because, as Cristina Ponisio writes,

Amalia representa en la novela la capacidad, la posibilidad "mediadora" entre una naturaleza que forma una parte consistente del país y la civilización (identificada con la cultura europea transplantada a América) que sólo puede contener y contrastar el salvajismo personificado en la brutalidad de la familia Rosas. En Amalia confluyen, pues, las ideas del autor: una revolución pacífica que pueda ajustar el orden natural sin neutralizarlo. (74)

The beauty of both Amalia and Tucumán inspires men to fall in love, such as Eduardo with Amalia and man's heart with the abundance and nature of the tropical Tucumán. Mármol expresses this love when he writes, "esas pasiones de amor que nacen, se desenvuelven y dominan en el espacio de algunas horas, de algunos minutos también, decidiendo luego del destino futuro de toda una existencia" (240). The narrator promotes this type of love to inspire patriotism and a desire for the unification of the nation under Unitarian rule.

Amalia's power is exercised in her domestic space, in which she has the freedom to act autonomously. She is willing to delve further into a state of segregation, as long as she is with her beloved Eduardo, and eventually they leave her compromised home in Buenos Aires to flee to a hidden and even more isolated home. In most dramatic fashion the narrator states, "[I]a mano del joven [Eduardo] rodeó la cintura de la bien amada de su alma, mientras el brazo de ésta reposaba sobre el hombro; y, asidos de ese modo, los dos amantes empezaron a ascender la barranca, paso a paso, hablando con los labios y los ojos, hasta que llegaron a la aislada y desierta *Casa Sola*" (Mármol 627). The image of the couple adoringly traveling to exile together suggests that as long as they are not exiled from each other, but with each other, that there is still hope for unification. It also ties together love, man, woman, politics, and nation;<sup>19</sup> because as Civantos points out, "[i]n *Amalia*, love of country is fomented to authenticate and support concrete political interests. Although the foundation of the nation is not mythologized, its existence is legitimated by the emotions felt for the *patria* and these feelings are cultivated by linking patriotism with romantic love, by equating love of country with the love of a woman" (68), and, I would also argue, with the love of a man. Toward the end of the novel, when Amalia's female companions, such as Florencia and Madame Dupasquier, decide to leave

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<sup>19</sup>See Sommer (30-51).

Buenos Aires for Montevideo, she refuses to join them in exile from the country. Daniel explains to Eduardo that “Amalia tiene más valor que Florencia, y otro carácter también. No habría poder humano que la separarse de tu destino. Aquí estás tú, y aquí está ella; es tu sombra” (Mármol 734). She will not leave Argentina because she will not leave her lover’s side. They validate each other and cannot exist separately, just as Mármol’s vision for Argentina could not exist without its citizens uniting and bringing expatriates back to their home country.

Mármol’s protagonist presents an alternative identity for women of the time due to her exercise of female agency through political activeness, defense of herself and home, and her negotiation of the public and private spheres. She is the perfect model of the angel of the home, who supports the Unitarian cause, is well versed in literature, civilized, and physically beautiful, and prefers to dwell in the private realm. Through these characteristics she has the potential to become the perfect Argentine wife and mother, similar to María in *La cautiva*. These female protagonists are created as figures of Unitarian literature to encourage certain political ideologies and model the ideal female identity to aid in the consolidation of the nation. Amalia’s identity reflects the expectations of society for Argentine women of this time and the constraints that were placed upon them, while simultaneously advocating for female positions and contributions in the political arena.

Amalia and María share many similar qualities, such as representing images of ideal female beauty, maintaining modesty and honor, performing the role of caretaker, and symbolizing the perfect female characterization for this time period. These traits present the female protagonists as versions of the Virgin Mary, while offering them space in society to occupy and participate in unconventional female positions. Jane Ackerman clarifies that “Mary’s beauty and endless ability to give substance [are] two aspects of her nature” (23-4). Amalia and

María both possess physical beauty that reflects an angelic nature and symbolizes their capacity as nurturers and protectors, similar to the Virgin Mary, for the future Argentine nation. Their characteristics represent the virtues and honor of the Unitarian ideology of sustaining a civilized country while creating another parallel with the Virgin Mary. Amalia offers salvation for Unitarian men through her willingness to participate in politics and support their fellow constituents in a multitude of ways. María also represents salvation for the men in her life through her attempt to rescue them from the indigenous captors. They are also self-sacrificing women who risk their lives and well-being for their husbands, sons, and other male family members, because these men are the future citizens of Argentina. The selfless actions and the salvation they offer correspond directly to the characterization of the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, the limitations placed upon the Virgin Mary are also encountered by Amalia and María. As Julian Weiss explains, “The Virgin’s power is autonomous and yet limited; she is a free subject, yet also subject to a higher authority” (66). Although these female protagonists break with tradition and push the bounds of typical female roles and identity, they face restrictions that they cannot fully overcome, such as having to answer to and obey patriarchal authority.

Both Amalia and María are important tools for promoting Unitarian political thought and advancing female roles in society. Foundational novels, such as *Amalia*, reinforce particular stereotypes and limits on female identity while simultaneously presenting alternative female identities by challenging traditional female roles in society. Through the civilizing of the nation, women gain status as agents of change and opposition to the Federalist political party. This creates various opportunities for women to challenge their traditional roles and exercise female agency in society and specifically in politics and the development of the country. Although María’s identity is dependent upon her status as wife and mother, she presents an alternative

image of the strong and courageous *mujer varonil*, which acknowledges that women can possess the power and strength that is normally attributed to men. The “mujer varonil” is a representation of female identity developed during a period of national conflict that depicts women as civilizing agents who have power to save society, through caring for and educating as well as rescuing and saving the men of Argentina. Amalia represents a distinct yet still limited version of unconventional female behavior as she negotiates between her positions as angel of the house and free subject in order to embody an active political agent.

## Chapter Two

### From Captive to Liberator: The Female Protagonist as Heroine in Juana Manso's *Los Misterios del Plata*

This chapter explores how the nineteenth-century Argentine author and feminist Juana Manso challenged traditional constructions of female identity to display liberating models of female characterization through literature. The author and activist spent her lifetime advocating for female advancement and denouncing the patriarchal structure of society that oppressed women. In *Juana Paula Manso (1819-1875): Una mujer del siglo XXI* Lidia F. Lewkowicz explains that Manso outlines the need for emancipation by emphasizing the importance of “la acción y definición de la misma como sujeto social y no solo como victim de sus circunstancias. Es en ese [su] análisis donde observa que, en su rol de subordinación, los mecanismos le impiden o dificultan su participación” (61). In her various publications she promoted female emancipation from patriarchal restrictions through promoting women’s education, and condemned sexism, racism, and slavery, which she perceived to be the main contributors to human subjugation in a patriarchal society. I will investigate how nineteenth-century Argentine women are represented in Manso’s novel *Los Misterios del Plata*, what the societal functions of women are in her texts, and what power women employ in the author’s literary work. I will also examine Manso’s challenges toward traditional female characterizations and gender roles, the author’s contributions to advancements for women of this time period as reflected in the literature, and how this literature contributes to a feminist perspective.

Juana Manso presents a unique voice in a male dominated era presenting a female perspective on political and domestic issues related to national conflict and nation building in nineteenth-century Argentina. Her novels and journalism represent an alternative feminine voice among the prevailing male viewpoints in a patriarchal society. Male produced literature, still to this day and age, can have a tendency to overpower women's writings. Mary Louise Pratt explains the disproportionate representation of male and female authors in literary canons by stating that "critical scholars have explored the ways canons and canonization processes are socially determined, along lines that correspond to lines of social hierarchy. Even many traditionalists concede the constructedness of canons. They may agree that canons *are* built around the interests and ideologies of ruling classes, genders, and races" (11). Historically, researchers and scholars credit male authors with the development of literature and recognize their contributions to society. For instance, Noé Jitrik's clarification into the importance of the objectives behind literary works and the significance of Romantic literature in Europe and Latin America is male dominated. Jitrik asserts the following:

Hay que hacer, sin embargo, una distinción: las novelas románticas europeas exaltan casi sin variantes el pasado, cuando se salen hacen, como es el caso de Stendhal y aun de Balzac y de Dickens, realismo crítico; las latinoamericanas tienden a profetizar un porvenir más venturoso y en ese gesto establecen un acuerdo importante con la prosa que podemos llamar programática, que estaría ya en Bolívar y en Simón Rodríguez pero aun más románticamente clara en Echeverría, Sarmiento, Hostos y Alberdi. ¿Qué hacer con el futuro? (46)

In this list of European and Latin American authors there is not a single female author mentioned. Jitrik is only one example of various scholars who inadvertently or knowingly exclude women authors from literary prestige. There are, of course, various female authors who

produced Romantic prose,<sup>20</sup> among other categories, that deal with the same preoccupations of the future, but from a woman's standpoint and with their own personal goals.

The content of Juana Manso's literature is also significant because her literary works are radical in comparison to those of her male counterparts, advocating for female advancement and emancipation from patriarchy. Her promotion of female empowerment supports her ideas of feminism and how women should be active members of society. Argentine author and scholar Julyan G. Peard concludes that Manso:

emphasise[s] ideas embodied in a new domesticity, especially the notion of the home as a site of women's empowerment, even a springboard for action beyond the home, an emancipator impulse that Manso saw as an antidote to the colonial enclosure of Argentine women. A second strand led her to highlight the importance of *private* rights, particularly in the lives of women for whom, Manso argued, the assumption of the domestic as a sheltering oasis in an agitated world was false. It was the braiding of these two strands that made hers one of the most trenchant of voices in her time. (455)

Many women authors offer distinct ideas about social change and the formation of society and its effects on people and specifically women. Thus, it is vital to recognize and appreciate the alternative outlooks and attitudes from female authors, because readers can gain insight from them to better understand the literary world.

Juana Manso's life experiences play an important role in forming her political stances, which are reflected in her literary works. Manso was born June 26, 1819 and grew up in post-independence Argentina. Her parents were politically active and did not support Juan Manuel de Rosas, which, in 1840, forced the family into exile in Montevideo.<sup>21</sup> In 1841, she and her family were again forced to flee their home by the pro-Rosas government in Uruguay, this time to exile in Brazil, where she eventually met and married her husband Francisco de Saá Noronha (Peard

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<sup>20</sup>See Kirkpatrick (1-23).

<sup>21</sup>See Lidia F. Lewkowicz's *Juana Paula Manso (1819-1875): Una mujer del siglo XXI* (49-51).

456). Manso dedicated her time to travelling with her husband to support his career as a violinist, but in 1852, after the death of her father and the family's benefactor, he abandoned Manso and their two daughters, leaving Manso to fend for her family by herself.<sup>22</sup> This experience could be one motivating factor behind the author's fight for female education and independence. She personally endured the hardships of a single mother and realized how women were forced into reliance on their fathers or husbands. This prompted Manso to fight for the emancipation of women from patriarchal restrictions in society and in the home.

Manso dispersed her political beliefs through periodicals. For this author journalism was a tool of rebellion used to educate people and expose them to different ideas in the hopes of developing an alternative discourse about female advancement and women's roles. Nancy Saporta Sternbach explains the significance of journalistic female advocacy during national consolidation by pointing out the new opportunities that periodicals offered women following Rosas' demise:

[w]hen Rosas fell in 1852, the political gap that suddenly appeared gave birth to a luminal moment: Argentines found themselves in the position of being able to create the nation that they had imagined forty years earlier. In no small measure, such an imagining was enabled by the sudden proliferation of periodicals of every kind and every political persuasion. Many of those often short-lived, always urgent newspapers or journals not only contained articles by women but were founded, headed, and run by women who used the periodical press as a means to further their cause, voice their opinions, and break the silence of political and sexual oppression. (46)

In fact, Manso did found, head, and run her own periodicals. During 1852-1854 she produced *O Jornal das Senhoras* in Brazil and in 1854 she established *Álbum de Señoritas* in Argentina.<sup>23</sup>

While living in political exile, in Montevideo, Manso wrote under a pseudonym, but through most of her life she assumed her own name. In Batticuore's phrasing "se atreve a exponer su

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<sup>22</sup>See Davies, Brewster and Owen (241-67).

<sup>23</sup>See Area (149).

nombre completo al frente del semanario, siendo en este caso prácticamente ella sola quien cubre casi todas las columnas [Álbum de señorita] (y en ellas aborda casi todos los géneros literarios) con trabajos de su autoría” (*La mujer* 131). These journals expressed Manso’s opinions and offered a public method of dispersing her works to society. She incorporated her feminist messages into her literary works by advocating for women’s participation in society and outside of the home and the family unit, while promoting female education. These periodicals are often the foundation for the author’s novels by featuring her novels’ first editions in serial form, which also present her opinions and arguments regarding social issues of the time. Thus, Manso daringly conveys her feminist ideologies and contributes to nation building through her participation in the production of her public periodicals.

*Los misterios del Plata*, published in 1852 by Juana Manso, is one example of resistance literature that presents the conflict in nineteenth-century Argentina between the Unitarians and the Federalists. The author employs the genre of resistance or anti-Rosas writing to destabilize conventional gender roles and identities in order to rebel against the patriarchal order of society. The novel exemplifies her use of known tools for new purposes in nineteenth-century Argentina. Manso began writing the novel in 1846, and its original, serialized version appears in Portuguese in the author’s *O Jornal das Senhoras* in 1852. A serialized second edition of the novel was published in Spanish in the periodical *El Inválido Argentino* during 1867-1868. However, this version of the novel was unfinished, and in 1899 Manso’s daughters published a third and completed edition of the novel in Spanish, which was book form. Finally, in 1924, Ricardo Isidoro López Muñoz produced a fourth edition and took the liberty of incorporating his own writings into Manso’s novel.<sup>24</sup> This fourth edition of *Los misterios del Plata* is most widely

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<sup>24</sup>See Davies, Brewster, and Owen (248-50).

circulated today and is the foundation for the 2005 Stockcero version. *Los misterios del Plata* is a significant literary work due to the political content of the novel, which denounces the Federalist political party while advocating for female advancement through emancipation from the patriarchal restrictions constructed and maintained by dominant society.

While there are many books published about this specific political conflict from various authors, such as Esteban Echeverría and José Mármol, this is one of the few that is written by a female author. Manso's resistance literature goes beyond an anti-Rosas campaign to encompass the fight for women's rights. As Lewkowicz explains, "su lucha se centró en la prolongación de los espacios de participación de la mujer en el campo de la educación y en lograr desestimar distinciones impuestas por su condición de género" (*Juana* 49). The author's anti-sexism proposal is what distinguishes her work from that of other nineteenth-century Argentine authors. Although the majority of the characters in Manso's text are men, the novel's female protagonist, Adelaida Avellaneda, is a heroine who plans and carries out the salvation of her husband from Juan Manuel de Rosas and the Mazorca. Adelaida is an especially unconventional female character for the nineteenth century because she represents a distinct model of female identity by renegotiating the traditionally prescribed boundaries of female roles. This female protagonist is exemplary due to the fact that she takes on the role of heroine, actively participates in both the private and public spheres of society, challenges typical gender traits both physically and mentally, and therefore establishes liberating positions and alternative female identities in nineteenth-century Argentine literature.

In *Los misterios del Plata* Manso presents the well-regarded and much respected Unitarian family of Adelaida Avellaneda, her husband Valentín Avellaneda and their son, Adolfo. The Avellaneda family is based on the real Alsina family who was active in Argentine

politics and opposed Rosas.<sup>25</sup> The family faces a variety of dangerous and dramatic events in the novel, including the journey of self-imposed exile from Buenos Aires to Montevideo; the Federalist attempts to capture the Avellaneda family; and the daring rescue of the Unitarian doctor Valentín Avellaneda by his wife. These events are central to the political critique that Manso offers against the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas and the Federalist government of the period. While the focus of the text is on the Avellaneda family as a whole, the novel interestingly singles out not only don Valentín, but his wife as well. His wife is not a secondary character, but fulfills a leading role in the novel. The family serves as an example of an alternative and unified Argentine nation that takes a stand against the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas. During various conflicts throughout the novel, each member of this family fights against Federalist forces to uphold Unitarian ideology and to remain intact as a family unit.

Traditionally the role of the masculine figure was to safeguard the family in both the private and public spheres of society and consequently embody the role of hero. However, in this novel the female protagonist shifts roles from being wife and mother to being liberator and heroine. The conventional female roles of wife and mother worked to women's advantage by creating a powerful space for them within the home and family. The traditional role of caretaker gave women a significant position in society and national construction, which consequently extended past the space of domesticity into the public space of society. The vital female participation in the private realm, as wife and mother, offered opportunities for female participation in the public realm by locating women at the center of the nation-building project of the time. Manso's female protagonist exemplifies this in the form of Adelaida. The narrator depicts Adelaida as a strong and capable agent of resistance and change to represent new hope

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<sup>25</sup>See Davies, Brewster, and Owen (248).

for national consolidation by outright rejecting Federalist politics and upholding Unitarian ideology, while advancing female participation in society.

Indeed, Adelaida is not the conventional female character, nor is she the standard Romantic hero, but rather a unique female who symbolizes the constant negotiation and renegotiation of customary gender roles and characteristics for nineteenth-century Argentina. Francine Masiello explains that Argentine women of this period were expected to adhere to strict gender roles, in which they were supposed to represent “proper angels of the house, [who] were thought to be invisible caretakers of the nation” (*Between* 54). The historical confinement of women to the private realm, such as the home, and their restriction from the public realm, such as the political arena, contributes to the limitation of female positions and alternative identities. These spatial constraints promote the model of the proper “angel of the house,” whose most important functions in life were to be mother and wife. Elizabeth Grosz points out that the foundation for these traditional female responsibilities and characterizations is that “women’s corporeal specificity is used to explain and justify the different (read: unequal) social positions and cognitive abilities of the two sexes. By implication, women’s bodies are presumed to be incapable of men’s achievements, being weaker, more prone to (hormonal) irregularities, intrusions, and unpredictabilities” (14). Grosz exposes these rationales for exclusion and argues against them by exposing their falsity.

Adelaida navigates the boundaries of the public and private spheres by fulfilling her motherly and wifely duties in both the private space, such as in her home, and the public space, such as on the journey with her family to Uruguay. In this way the text proposes that the private/public divide is a false binary that is constructed and is not a natural division. This female protagonist uses her position as wife and mother for motivation to save her son, her husband, and

herself from Federalist powers. On the journey to Montevideo the family is captured by the Juez de Paz, a cruel accomplice of Rosas, who plans to take the doctor, don Valentín, directly to the brutal dictator, where he will in all likelihood be tortured and killed by the Mazorca. Adelaida realizes she must take action and escape with her family. In doing so she and her son Adolfo are separated from don Valentín and left behind by Rosas' men to die in the Paraná River. Adelaida steadies herself in the water without showing any signs of fear and embraces her son while planning how to reunite her family. The narrator describes the scene by stating that “[I]a valerosa mujer se internaba en el agua sin el menor viso de temor y su hijo abrazado de su cuello sonreía inocentemente pensando de que de esta manera se reunirían a su padre” (Manso, *Los misterios* 52). Adelaida's bravery, fortitude, and self-reliance serve her well as she saves herself and her son from the Federalist forces and the harsh and wild environment around them.

Before conflict even begins Adelaida instinctively fulfills the role of protector and is astutely aware of the danger that she and her family faced from Federalist soldiers, who pose as sailors helping the family escape to Uruguay. The following episode illustrates Adelaida's perceptiveness and her desire to guard and defend her husband against Caccioto, an unknown sailor who claims that Avellaneda's trusted friend, Lostardo, sent him to help with their escape. The narrator states “[a]sí, Avellaneda había creído lo que muy hábil y astutamente le había contado Caccioto; pero su mujer sintió una especie de angustia que muchos llaman presentimiento y que raras veces engañan: Así, ella no perdía movimiento al patrón y al ver la balandra amarrada a tierra se acercó a su marido instintivamente como si temiera verlo desaparecer de su lado” (Manso, *Los misterios* 25). Throughout the novel Adelaida strives to protect and defend herself and her family from danger. Her actions convert her role from captive to heroine and create hope for her future liberation of don Valentín. While the motivating factors

for taking action may seem somewhat conventional, the fact that Adelaida successfully rescues herself and her family is a female accomplishment not often depicted in nineteenth-century Argentine literature.

In the novel diverse figures from the nation come together to aid Adelaida and her family. Manso incorporates gauchos, women, and characters from various social classes to broaden the field of valuable national players in nation building. For example, Miguel and Simón are gauchos working for Rosas who are depicted as morally sound and motivated by reason. The author describes Miguel as well-groomed, well-liked, and smart, characterizing him as a civilized gaucho, which for the time period is an unusual description. The narrator states that

[s]u estatura alta, su talle flexible y delicado y sus maneras suaves al paso que tenían la natural tinte selvática debido al medio, a su estado y educación. Con todo, su aire era distinguido y su fisonomía triste al paso que regular, no carecía de un cierto tinte poético. Era demasiado blanco para un campesino; sus cabellos finos y rubios le caían sobre los hombros en rizos naturales; sus ojos grandes, azules. (Manso, *Los misterios* 4)

Both Miguel and Simón are depicted as sympathetic men who try to help Adelaida and her husband, even though they work for Rosas. Manso's Unitarian alliance does not limit her treatment of the population and her belief in inclusion of all people from the nation, which suggests her own message that for a united Argentina all people regardless of gender, race, or socio-economic class must be included in the nation.

Additional manifestations of Adelaida's uniqueness can be found in her distinctive physical and mental attributes. Women in nineteenth-century Argentine literature were classically depicted as physically beautiful creatures that embodied the supposed ideal model for the madre republicana (republican mother). The duty of the republican mother, much like the angel of the house, is to perform the roles of wife and mother to the best of her ability. The main

difference between these two identities is that the republican mother is expected to embody the role of educator for the children in the family. This position was established and promoted by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, who believed that education of the future citizens of Argentina was vital to the progression of society and that women were better equipped than men to educate young children due to their role of caretaker and nurturer.<sup>26</sup>

Manso and Sarmiento met in 1859 and bonded over their intellectual interests and profound concern for the future of the post-Rosas Argentine nation (Peard 458). They both promoted the image of the republican mother to encourage the education of males and females. As head of the Elementary Schools Department, Sarmiento appointed Manso to various educational posts throughout her career and tasked her with overseeing the development of public education in the nation (Peard 458). With each appointment Manso strived to create change for a better society based on her principles and beliefs. Lewkowicz points out that Manso was her own person and “[n]o es cierta la versión de que ella cayó delante de Sarmiento como una sombra. Él ya había leído los contundentes raciocinios que ella hiciera acerca de la educación en los periódicos. Muy seguro de sus propias ideas y ya director de Escuelas Bonaerenses, en 1860, ve en esta mujer la oportunidad de difundirlas” (Lewkowicz, “Juana” 576). Indeed, Manso and Sarmiento differed in some of their thoughts on social problems of the time. Manso’s fight for female advancement expanded beyond female emancipation to fight also against slavery and racial discrimination. For Manso education was a civilizing tool that led to the enrichment of the nation through educated citizens. Sarmiento’s thinking on racial minorities of the time is much more close-minded and, by today’s standards, reflects a racist attitude. Sarmiento used literature as a means of dispersing his political ideology to society. His texts

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<sup>26</sup>See Garrels (272-93).

attempt to establish a new nation with the objective of shaping and molding the future of Argentina. In *Facundo*, Sarmiento addresses his concerns for the country based on the binary between civilization and barbarism. He argues that the gauchos, indigenous people, and other racial minorities do not meet his criteria of civilized citizens and therefore are excluded from the nation. In comparison, Manso's stance is more radical and progressive by including women and gauchos into the nation space, as reflected in her literature. Even though they both agreed on the usefulness of the republican mother, they differ in the extent to which this image represents female autonomy.

The identity of the republican mother has various implications for women of nineteenth-century Argentina. For Manso the republican mother was a figure that promoted female education in society, while for Sarmiento the republican mother was a symbol of female domesticity and motherhood. Ana Forcinito explains that “más allá del rol educativo que se le asignó a las mujeres en la Argentina liberal de Sarmiento, rol que se relaciona con la reproducción simbólica del proyecto patriarcal liberal y, por lo tanto, al servicio del patriarcado, a la escritura de mujeres en el siglo XIX desestabiliza la noción misma de romance nacional” (226). Women were expected to be wives, mothers, and caretakers to produce a civilized nation. Elizabeth Garrels asserts that Sarmiento's *Prospecto de un establecimiento de educación para señoritas*<sup>27</sup> praises and simultaneously condemns women's feminine qualities, which he considers a predisposition toward becoming perfect wives, mothers, and educators, while she explains that for Sarmiento the female figure's “influence is considered so profound as to hold young ladies responsible for the backwardness ‘of youth in general’ and to blame bad mothers

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<sup>27</sup> This text addresses women and education and was originally a speech that Sarmiento presented July 9, 1839 at the Santa Rosa school for girls in San Juan, Argentina. It was also published in the San Juan newspaper *El Zonda*. See Garrels (272 and 288).

for the misconduct of their sons in adult life” (Garrels 273). The image of the republican mother was circulated not only by Sarmiento, but by the Generation of 1837 as a whole, who believed that “[e]l hogar doméstico es una pequeña maquinaria que necesita de una mujer educada para hacerla funcionar correctamente. Aplicada a la crianza y formación de los hijos, a la colaboración con el esposo y también a la economía hogareña, su buen sentido construye el porvenir de la familia, la sociedad y la república” (Batticuore, *La mujer* 37). Therefore, the responsibility for the future advancement of the nation, through the production of proper and well-educated citizens, was placed on women who were expected to embody the republican mother.

Their role as educator to future Argentine citizens was also a way in which women could participate in public life. Although Elizabeth Garrels asserts that particular texts by Sarmiento show “acceptance of the need to subjugate women, to deny them the same freedom of movement etc. that society allows men” (Garrels 273), other proponents of the republican mother perceived this position as a way to gain power and exercise personal agency. For example, Juana Manso encouraged women to become educators as the republican mother within the family unit and to work outside of domestic space as teachers in Argentine schools. She saw education as a tool for female advancement and a means by which women could earn incomes and thus gain individual freedom and independence.<sup>28</sup> According to Bonnie Frederick, Manso also “claims that lack of education has perverted women from their natural liberty and morality, that a woman’s true worth is based on her intelligence rather than on her physical beauty, and that the oppression of women within the structure of the family is harmful to the nation’s well being” (21). These ideas challenged the standard patriarchal thought of the time to create a distinct version of the

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<sup>28</sup>See Peard (460-71).

republican mother that lived and worked outside of the realm of domesticity, while contributing to the national consolidation and improvement of Argentina. Manso's version of the republican mother could be called the "civic woman" because of her advocacy for women to participate in society by fulfilling national duties within their own city or region through social, education, and political initiatives.

Though it promoted female education, the model of the republican mother constrained women to preformulated roles as wife, mother, and educator of children. This image created a standard that all women in the nation were expected to embody, but identities were by necessity much more variable. For Judith Butler, even the common identity denoted by the term "woman" is problematic:

[i]f one 'is' a woman, that is surely not all one is; the term fails to be exhaustive, not because a pregendered 'person' transcends the specific paraphernalia of its gender, but because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. (*Gender* 4)

Individuals of all sexes need their diverse qualities to be recognized and appreciated in society. In *Los misterios del Plata* the female protagonist's role goes beyond wife, mother, and educator to present an individual determined to fight against the tyranny of Rosas and who "[h]izo entonces, esta noble mujer, uno de esos juramentos que cuando los ejecuta consigo mismo una alma fuerte llevan generalmente al éxito o al heroísmo" (Manso 110). For the female protagonist to take action and be successful she must go beyond prescribed gender roles to rebel openly against the Federalist forces and save her family. She does this through her embodiment of a Unitarian heroine. In this way Juana Manso advocates for the recognition of alternative and diverse female identities with her depiction of the female heroine, Adelaida, in *Los misterios del Plata*.

Traditionally, patriarchy and society have promoted the corporeal aspects of women as the most important qualities of a female, because physical beauty is what society valued and esteemed most in women. Argentine political and literary groups emphasized wifely and motherly duties due to their importance in producing and caring for a unified nation. It is crucial, as Doris Sommer suggests, to “consider *why* eroticism and nationalism become figures for each other in modernizing fictions and then to notice *how* the rhetorical relationship between heterosexual passion and hegemonic states functions as a mutual allegory” (Sommer 31). The message located in the image of the female figure exhibits the political connections between desire, romantic love, and love of country. However, Adelaida does not represent the stereotypical beautiful female of nineteenth-century Argentina. Manso’s description of Adelaida states that “su rostro no era bello, pero poseía el difícil don de expresar todos los sentimientos con la misma facilidad de la palabra, con la misma rapidez del pensamiento, y si las circunstancias lo exigían, sabía tomar también una tal expresión de estupidez, de indiferencia y de intranquilidad que engañaría al observador” (Manso, *Los misterios* 11). This portrayal highlights Adelaida’s intellect over her degree of physical attractiveness. Manso emphasizes that physical beauty is not vital for a female and suggests instead that intelligence is needed to overcome daily obstacles and accomplish daring feats. Adelaida exemplifies this by cleverly planning and executing her husband’s rescue from oppositional political powers.

Adelaida is also unique in that she pushes gender boundaries in order to suggest that gender is not fixed and that women could find empowerment and liberation by traversing through unstable gender constructs. If, as Judith Butler proposes, “gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be” (*Gender* 34), then Adelaida offers new and radical possibilities for female characterization in nineteenth-century Argentina,

while she challenges the traditional construction and enactment of gender. One example of Adelaida's capability and willingness to forgo typical gender roles is when she saves her husband from Federalist forces. She models how women have enacted and are still capable of enacting their individual agency in the public sphere, in order to take control, exchanging the role of the angel of the house for that of a strong and intelligent heroine. Adelaida creates the plans to save don Valentín and, although other characters help with the execution of the plan, she is one of the minds behind the proposed strategy. The collaboration of diverse figures coming together to save don Valentín illustrates Manso's own belief that the nation needs participation from all sectors, and that women have a major contribution to make. The narrator clarifies that the complex plan of escape is to "conseguir una orden de Rosas, o falsificarla, que indicara el jefe del Pontón que el preso debía trasladarse a la cárcel de la ciudad para, una vez obtenida la entrega, fugar al extranjero" (Manso, *Los misterios* 112). Thus Adelaida breaks with tradition and displays how women, rather than suffer marginalization, should be recognized and commended for their positive mental attributes.

Not only does Adelaida challenge the normative gender standards of nineteenth-century Argentina through her clever and active participation in the public sphere, but she also depicts elements of performativity and parody that contribute to her status as heroine. Judith Butler defines performativity as "acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means" (*Gender* 185). With the figure of Adelaida, Manso proposes that women can be more than angels of the house or republican mothers by asserting herself and taking agency in the public sphere, displaying what would traditionally be deemed male behavior and enacting new models of female identity.

Adelaida's actions display her willingness to go against patriarchal confines, even though not everyone condoned her choices. For example, her mother dissuades her from telling her father about her elaborate plan to save Valentín due to the likelihood of the father's disapproval of such non-conventional, and even inappropriate, behavior. If Adelaida's endeavors supported the traditional ideology behind the republican mother or the angel of the house, there would be no reason to hide them from her father, the patriarchal figure, and her mother would support the plan. Manso thus makes it clear that Adelaida is willing to go against the broad tenets of patriarchy.

In this case, for her to participate in the public realm it is necessary to adapt to the environment and in order to gain access to this space she must dress and act as a man. She dresses as a military man and acts like one, as if she is a stage actor. With the goal of liberating don Valentín, "Adelaida se dirigió a casa de la fiel Marcia, se vistió de militar, se colocó un kepis de capitán, bigote postizo negro, botas granderas, sable y una ancha capa que envolviéndola completamente disimulaba su cuerpo de mujer" (Manso, *Los misterios* 115). In this scene Adelaida knows that she must not only challenge gender limits, but cross the lines of male and female gender bounds by disguising herself as a man and performing activities identified with men. For nineteenth-century Argentine literature, Adelaida's actions are most radical and rare.<sup>29</sup> Manso utilizes male characteristics to establish her female protagonist as a heroine. Adelaida embodies various characterizations from wife and mother, to captive, to liberator, and ultimately to heroine. She becomes a unique heroine due to her willingness to occupy both the private and public spheres, the exercise of her individual agency, her resourcefulness and dependence upon her intelligence, her challenging of traditional gender traits

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<sup>29</sup>Juana Manuela Gorriti's *Peregrinaciones de una alma triste* includes instances of cross-dressing with the female protagonist, Laura.

and her overall active participation in the public sphere. These qualities and in particular the blurring of gender boundaries protest the confinement of women to one common characterization and advocate for the recognition of the multiplicity of female roles and identities. This scene also shows Manso's concern with the lack of space for women in society, which forces Adelaida to disguise herself as a man to gain access to a particular place. Therefore, one of Manso's main concerns is to promote a radical restructuring the social and political systems, to rebuild them from the ground up, because in their current state (Manso's time period) they by definition exclude women.

Juana Manso's *Los misterios del Plata* offers a rare message of female empowerment through a Romantic novel that also serves as resistance literature against Juan Manuel de Rosas and female marginalization. The political goals of this "antirrosista" text go beyond what Echeverría's and Mármol's political literature presents for the women of Argentina by offering a more liberating and diverse image of the Argentine female figure. The authors of the Generation of 1837 and other political groups have used pride, love, and patriotism as tools of manipulation in order to benefit their own agendas, and with the purpose of promoting their political ideas.

Elena Grau-Lleveria explains:

En efecto, la literatura, como enunciaron Echeverría, Sarmiento y Alberdi, debe ser ante todo útil, debe registrar la realidad argentina y proponer un nuevo modelo social y político para la realidad argentina y proponer un nuevo modelo social y político para la nación que sea capaz de superar los antiguos enfrentamientos. La novela se convierte de este modo en arma política y en un medio de difusión sociofilosófica, por lo que el escritor no es sólo un artista, sino también un intelectual, un guía, cuya misión es la de educar, formar al pueblo y, llegado el momento, movilizarlo contra la tiranía. (3)

The Generation of 1837 used literature, specifically the novel, as a political weapon to promote their ideologies and to gain support of the Unitarian cause. In nineteenth-century Latin American literature love and nationalism were used as allegories for national romances, in which, Sommer

explains, “both romantic love and patriotism can be mistaken for natural givens, although we know them to be produced, perhaps, by the very novels that seem merely to represent them” (31). This literature dictates the ideal national identity based on the authors’ viewpoints and simultaneously promotes their personal political agendas. The literature of this time is not just a work of art, but also a significant tool of nation building. The political ideology associated with nation building is reflected in the literature of patriarchal authorities, such as Sarmiento and the Generation of 1837. Their beliefs of what the future of the nation should be, shaped the foundation for the national consolidation of Argentina and dictated who would be deemed a proper citizen of the new nation.

The ideological process of selecting which bodies can have access to full citizenship contributes to the constriction of female identity of the time. The foundation of nation building establishes a clear love and obligation to the nation-state, which illustrates Sara Ahmed’s belief that love can influence all bodies “through an active identification with the nation as well as a core set of values” (122). The angel of the house and the mother of the republic are materialized through literature and these figures are endorsed through political propaganda, with the stipulation that these are the mainstream normative female identities during national development. Literature helped these philosophies of national consolidation and the characterization of the people in the nation to spread throughout the populace. As Sommer points out, nineteenth-century Latin American nation building and certain novels of the time, such as national romances, were based on three principles promoted by love: heterosexual relationships, Roman Catholic marriages, and same-caste/race unions that produce offspring in order to build the nation (6). These factors all play a part in the establishment of a standard female identity that as Sommer writes, would create an “almost airless culture that bridged public and private spheres

in a way that made a place for everyone, as long as everyone knew his or her place” (29). Some authors fostered the constrictive and even discriminative political ideologies of the time by using the emotion of love and the manipulation of its positive elements to contribute to national consolidation.

Consequently, Ahmed evaluates the manipulation of love and how “love is crucial to how individuals become aligned with collectives through their identification with an ideal” (124). The ideal identity for Argentine women of this time period was to embody the prescribed identity that the patriarchy considered appropriate for women; the republican mother or the angel of the house. Mainstream society encouraged the roles of wife and mother as the only socially acceptable positions for women, which Manso argues against in her portrayal of Adelaida. The author combats the negative effects of the predetermined and idealized female identity and offers female characters as models of opposition and liberation that cross gender borders suggesting that the binaries between male/female and private/public could not only be constructed, but deconstructed and then reconstructed such that women could exercise female agency in diverse manners.

Additionally, Judith Butler explores and accounts for how bodies, and in particular female bodies, are made into the Other or the abject based upon the “matter” of bodies. This is another factor that plays a role in the limitation of female identity during nation building. Butler argues that the matter of bodies, gender and sex is created from the ideology of hetero-normative forces that society perpetuates. The hegemonic powers distributed their own patriarchal beliefs through political literature of Manso’s time to prescribe the standard gender roles for mainstream society. Butler explains how a person’s identity, based upon race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, is directly correlated with being deemed the Other, the abject, or representing the

alleged normative model of a person within society. Women were historically made into the Other due to their supposedly inherent and inferior qualities that created the basis of female subjugation. These purportedly natural female traits contributed to a stable, yet falsely stable, signification of the materialization of gender and the false binary of male/female. Butler asserts that performativity can never completely define any one identity due to the false binaries that construct gender:

For the imperative to be or get 'sexed' requires a differentiated production and regulation of masculine and feminine identification that does not fully hold and cannot be fully exhaustive. And further, this imperative, this injunction, requires and institutes a 'constitutive outside'—the unspeakable, the unviable, the nonnarrativizable that secures and, hence fails to secure the very borders of materiality. The normative force of performativity—its power to establish what qualifies as 'being'-works not only through reiteration, but through exclusion as well. And in the case of bodies, those exclusions haunt signification as its abject borders or as that which is strictly foreclosed: the unlivable, the nonnarrativizable, the traumatic. The political terms that are meant to establish a sure or coherent identity are troubled by this failure of discursive performativity to finally and fully establish the identity to which it refers. (*Bodies* 140)

The enactment of performativity lacks the capability to fulfill a person's identity completely, because of the diverse qualities that exist within an individual and contribute to the complex identities of each person. An exhaustive and cohesive description of individual identity is impossible due to the multiplicity and ever-changing nature of identity. Thus one prescribed identity based upon gender is unlivable, nonnarrativizable, and traumatic because it is a false construct. Considering Butler's proposal in the context of nineteenth-century Argentine literature, we can see that a woman cannot only be the angel of the house or the mother of the republic because there is a diversity of identities that encompass a variety of qualities and attributes that reflect the person and the multiple roles an individual can embody. Manso's goal of female emancipation from patriarchal oppression calls into question the limiting and traditional models of female identity to challenge the established social order in the hope of

spurring change and a reconfiguration of the old hierarchy that was based on exclusion, instead of appreciation and inclusion of the diverse people of the nation.

The literary works produced by the authors of the Generation of 1837 prescribed limited female characterizations that reflected their male, patriarchal, political agendas. Ana Forcinito explains that male authors “desde la masculinidad dominante distribuyen las leyes de configuración del espacio doméstico como proyección del espacio público nacional. La identidad nacional es una ‘identidad masculina,’ es decir, pensada por y para el patriarcado” (225).

Through her literature Juana Manso challenges this historically patriarchal construction of female characterization by presenting female characters that exercise female agency, participate in the private and public sphere, and embody a multiplicity of identity. The female protagonist, Adelaida, models this multiplicity with her variety of roles, from caretaker and heroine to wife, mother, strategist, and rescuer. The narrator describes how Adelaida embodies these identities by stating that “[s]i Juana de Arco se inspiró en la divinidad de su misión y la realizó, Adelaida buscó fuerzas, astucia y medios en el amor a su marido y en el cariño de su hijo a quien no concebía que tuviera que criar huérfano, y, como la heroína francesa, ésta heroína esposa salió triunfante en su empresa, sin pagar con la existencia la temeridad de su propósito” (Manso, *Los misterios* 110). The protagonist goes beyond the bounds of fixed gender traits to suggest that in reality women are more diverse than just the angel of the house or the republican mother.

Through the breakdown of traditional gender norms Juana Manso proposes that women of this time period must challenge the limits of the male/female binary by contesting fixed gender roles and conventionally prescribed identity through transgression and the blurring of conventional gender characteristics.

Throughout anti-Rosas literature female positions play a central role in nation building, which calls upon women as well as men to take action for the Unitarian cause and against the Federalist government of nineteenth-century Argentina. Female roles were a reflection of the struggle between these oppositional forces and represented the fight between civilization and barbarism. Bonnie Frederick illustrates the connection between the angel of the house and civilization and barbarism:

Throughout the nineteenth century in Argentina, there was widespread agreement that history had elevated the role of woman from savagery to a noble, even divine place as the 'angel of the house,' the benevolent ruler of the family. Her role was crucial in forming the Christian family, the building block of civilized society itself. Forces that thwarted her fulfillment of this destiny were, therefore, pagan, devolutionary, and destructive to society. (85)

Authors' depictions of female activeness and agency vary and female models range from upholding traditional female identity to presenting alternative and non-conventional female models. Although Esteban Echeverría's female protagonist María from his epic poem *La cautiva*, challenges traditional gender traits through gender inversion, he places strict limits on María's female agency that prohibit her from embodying a heroine. The female protagonist of José Mármol's romantic novel *Amalia* exemplifies female political agency from the private sphere. Amalia demonstrates how women of high society could live independently and participate in public arenas through their homes. However, Amalia is ultimately subject to male authority and in the end, like María, she is unable to fulfill the role of heroine. The position of heroine is represented by the exercise of female agency through the manifestation of complex female identities that are not limited, but instead aid in the accomplishment of the female character's varying domestic and political goals. The limitations and restrictions placed upon these female characters demonstrate the lack of female power and freedom of the time period. As previously described in this chapter, Juana Manso defies these standard social boundaries for women and

contests conventional female identity by developing female protagonists that take power and embody the role of heroine.

Although in nineteenth-century Argentina it was the masculine figure's role to protect the family unit, all three of these female protagonists valiantly defend their loved ones against oppositional groups, such as indigenous warriors and the forces of Juan Manuel de Rosas. As Regina A. Root points out, "[p]ostcolonial Argentina had experienced a temporary repositioning of gender roles, due in part to the domestic role attributed to women in raising young, upstanding patriots, and to a shift in the representation of the sexes" (68). The traditional duties of men and women were being inverted due to the emphasis on female participation to aid in the development of a unified Argentina. This is exemplified in *La cautiva*, when María takes charge of her situation of being a captive and enacts her own escape alongside her husband Brian. She desperately tries to preserve her family, but Brian dies in her arms in the desert and her son has already been killed by the indigenous people. Thus, she fails to save her family and dies soon after her husband and son, due to her lack of will to live without them. The destruction of this family unit highlights the dubious and unpredictable status of the development of a unified Argentine nation. In *Amalia* the female protagonist takes action to save herself and her home from Federalist forces. She also hides her future husband Eduardo while aiding her Unitarian cousin, Daniel. In the end she is left alone when Federalists kill Daniel and Eduardo. With the deaths of the male protagonists Mármol puts the destiny of Argentina into question. While all three women strive to save others, Adelaida is the only successful female protagonist who saves herself and her family. The failure of María and Amalia exemplifies the lack of solidarity among the population during nation building and communicates the authors' fears of an uncertain future for Argentina. Their defeat also reflects the authors' limited vision of female agency and

characterization, which prevent the female protagonists from achieving their individual objectives. This could be perceived as a call for women to be more radical and active figures in the Unitarian and Federalist conflict, but it can also be interpreted as a call to action for the men of the nation and for women to take on secondary supporting roles. Juana Manso's *Los misterios del Plata* avoids this ambiguity and proposes that there is hope for the Unitarian cause and national consolidation if everyone in the nation, with an emphasis on including women, actively participates in the fight. Through Adelaida the author suggests that women can fulfill vital roles in national politics, contributing to the resolution of some of the conflicts facing Argentina during this time period.

Another factor that promotes agency in Manso's novel is her negotiation of the public and private spheres. Female authors of the time were challenging the confines of women to domesticity. Root explains that nation building presented a variety of opportunities for women's participation in national development, stating that in "this uncharted moment in the public sphere, women stood to gain a more pronounced access, despite numerous obstacles and male anti-sentiments regarding their political participation" (69). In *La cautiva* the action takes place outside of the home and away from civilization in the wilderness, yet Echeverría ultimately encouraged the traditional role of women. María's failure to save her family in the wilderness emphasizes the need for female domesticity to recreate conventional family organization. She cannot successfully function outside of the home and without a family. Echeverría's message is that women's place in society and nation-building is in the home and with the family. José Mármol also limits the participation of his female protagonist in the public sphere. Amalia does not make the conscious decision to become actively involved in the public sphere or politics, but hegemonic figures from both the Federalist and Unitarian sides compel her to cooperate or to

defend herself. Alternatively, Manso's Adelaida successfully negotiates between the private and public spheres. She fulfills the traditional duties of wife and mother in both realms and eagerly exercises female agency in the public sphere to save herself, her son, and her husband. Although their journey to Montevideo is due to the family's exile, Adelaida's actions suggest that she and her family control their own destiny and that through her actions in the public sphere she embodies the figure of heroine.

Furthermore, Adelaida is the only female protagonist of these three to accomplish the goal of keeping the family unit intact. Her conventional motivation of family is what prompts her to take on the untraditional role of heroine. She is a rare female model because her abilities are not as limited as those of other female characters in nineteenth-century Argentine literature, and she uses her strength and cleverness to achieve her goals. She strives to ensure the security and welfare of herself, her family, and their future together. Unlike in *La cautiva* and *Amalia*, the female protagonist's family represents hope for the future of Argentina by offering an effective model of a Unitarian family in which each member, regardless of sex, plays an integral role and contributes to the family and society. Through this ideal family unit Manso points out that women play a crucial role in the traditional family structure as well as in society. Manso's literature also differs from that of her male counterparts because she, as Forcinito explains, "intenta rearticular el ingreso de las mujeres a la historia a través de este grito desesperado. La mujer no es ya solamente el espacio en el cual el imaginario masculino liberal proyecta a la nación" (233). In this way the author conveys that women, just as men, have the capability to save the future of the nation, and that this must be recognized to establish a unified and consolidated Argentine nation.

Echeverría's María, Mármol's Amalia, and Manso's Adelaida come into being during the development of a unified Argentine nation after colonial rule. The social messages contained in their stories and actions communicate the personal political ideologies of the authors while elaborating upon the necessity of developing the nation through civilized citizens. While chapter one of this dissertation examines who can be considered a citizen, chapter two expands upon the relationship between nation and citizenship by investigating how the conceptualization of the nation directly influences citizenship. During nineteenth-century nation building, people of the nation were defined by their role in the nation, which was dependent upon their sex, which, as a consequence, generated a division between who could be a true citizen and who could not be a true citizen in the nation. Benedict Anderson defines a nation as "an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (6). Anderson proposes that the nation is imagined because it is impossible for everyone in the nation to know each other personally, and yet each individual in the nation shares the same visions of identity, which means they identify as part of the same whole. Nonetheless the concept of a nation can go beyond the physical borders and space to be perceived as limited due to the marginalization of women and other minorities living within the nation, but who are not considered to be full citizens. Pratt explains the exclusionary factors that established a definition for who was and who was not a citizen:

Euro-American men resolutely privileged themselves as the only full bearers of culture and citizenship. Women were to be denied the power to speak *as* citizens *for* all citizens. Needless to say, this discursive situation reflected women's legal and judicial status under nineteenth-century republicanism. Historians have described the processes by which women (along with many other sectors of American society) were denied full citizenship in the American republics, denied such powers as property rights, voting rights, reproductive rights, education, access to public office (even to public speech!), and equality under the law. ("Don't" 14-15)

The nation is an imagined community because, in terms of nineteenth-century Argentine, it has not materialized into a tangible unified society based upon its own patriarchal foundation and structure of exclusion and marginalization.

María, Amalia, and Adelaida are all representations of Echeverría's, Mármol's, and Manso's varying beliefs about citizenship during nation building. The people that embodied citizenship for Echeverría in his manifesto *Dogma socialista*<sup>30</sup> are, according to Davies, Brewster, and Owen's summary:

individuals who are rational and independent in body and mind. Society is composed of such individuals and social contract guarantees freedom, independence and equality. But not all people are considered to be rational, independent individuals; some are irrational and/or dependent on others, and they must be tutored and educated correspondingly. Some people are unequal by nature; they are essentially, irreparably, different and subordinate. (Davies, Brewster, and Owen 95)

This explanation clarifies María's failure to survive after the deaths of her husband and son. She represents the naturally irrational, totally dependent, and irreparably subordinate woman who cannot exist without patriarchal authority in both the public and private spheres of life. Beasley and Bacchi clarify that the standard "distinction between model citizen and a mere subject is built on an 'active/passive' duality and participation is registered by an active political agent" (340), which in the end María fails to embody. For Echeverría the female figure remains a subject of the nation instead of a citizen, due to her gender.

*Amalia* also establishes the divides of citizenship based on gender among the male and female characters, and specifically through Amalia and Daniel. Amalia is the central character because she symbolizes the Argentine nation and the ideal angel of the house. She represents hope for the future and the hope of marital bonds and reproduction to bring community members

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<sup>30</sup> *Dogma socialista* (1837) by Esteban Echeverría is an Argentine political text that calls for social and political reform. See Davies, Brewster, and Owen (93-6).

together to form families and reproduce future citizens. However, due to the patriarchal hierarchy of the nineteenth century, it is Daniel who has the ability, based upon race, gender, and social status, to be a true citizen and participate with other male citizens in society and politics. As Pratt confirms, “[w]omen inhabitants of nations were neither imagined as nor invited to imagine themselves as part of the horizontal brotherhood” (*Women* 51) into which male citizens were born and expected to partake. While Amalia does not participate in the political space, she does engage with the political sphere in a covert way in the private space and never in public space of society. During the period female political participation in the nation was not just improper but forbidden, due to gender inequality. Specific qualities, only attributed to women by mainstream society, relegated them to the male-dependent role of wife and mother in the private sphere. However, if political participation is one traditional benchmark for citizenship, then Amalia is one step closer to becoming a citizen, because the body is what “materializes the operations of power in social life. It literally *is* what is social, since subjectivity is always embodied. Subjectivity, including political subjectivity is fleshy, is made out of flesh” (Beasley and Bacchi 344). Although female bodies were restricted from exercising their political subjectivity in public space, because they were relegated to the domestic space of home, this power could be and in deed was exercised in the private space. Female participation in public topics and issues that affected the nation occurred where private space overlapped with the public sphere, such as in private social gatherings. While Amalia does not physically embody Echeverría’s standard citizen due to her gender, she does challenge the standard presentation of citizenship due to her political agency in the private space, which contributes to her status as an individual who is viewed as a subject of the nation that lacks true citizenship.

Juana Manso's beliefs on citizenship differ from those of her male counterparts, as we can see in her literature and in the actions of her female protagonists. Adelaida is a groundbreaking female character, due to her display of how women are in fact capable of participating in the "horizontal brotherhood"<sup>31</sup> of society by exercising female agency. The body and personal agency are vital tools that Manso uses to argue not only for female emancipation, but for citizenship as well. An individual is not just a physical body, Beasley and Bacchi argue, "but the political self or subjectivity of the citizen is distinct from the body such that the agenda of full citizenship is to reclaim rights (property rights) over that body. The body is largely conceived as the *object* of political control in the public domain" (343). The female protagonist reclaims the rights over her body and demonstrates her political subjectivity to take action as an autonomous individual and fight against the oppression of oppositional political powers. It is clear that Adelaida is also a mother and a wife, but those roles do not fully define her. She is not dependent upon her husband and acts as an individual to save him, herself, and her son. Adelaida does not embody the irrational, dependent, or subordinate woman, and instead presents an empowering image of a clever, strong-willed, and independent woman who can participate in the public sphere of society, just as any citizen would. This female protagonist "is not dependent or controlled by her husband; as with 'La Cautiva', his survival depends on her, she is the woman patriot fit for citizenship" (Davies, Brewster, and Owen 255). She challenges traditional gender binaries while taking power in the dangerous and unstable environment surrounding her to create stability and security for herself, her family, and for their future with the capability and authority of a true citizen. Although in nineteenth-century Argentina women were not considered full

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<sup>31</sup> See Pratt (49-52).

citizens, Manso is clearly advocating for full citizenship and female emancipation from the patriarchal confines of society.

Emancipation is the motivation for Manso's second novel *La familia del Comendador* (1854), which does not focus on the conflict between the Unitarians and the Federalists but advocates for her own political message against the patriarchal oppression that people faced due to their race, ethnicity, or gender. Lea Fletcher asserts that

*La familia* propone un cambio revolucionario del mismo [del orden establecido]. Además, ejemplifica su postura, su estrategia: dirigirse a las mujeres. Según su entender, la labor consistía en dos etapas, ambas concebidas desde género mujer: 1.-la emancipación moral e intelectual de las mujeres (Manso escribía sobre la necesidad de: educación popular, libertad del dogma católica, instrucción filosófica, psicología, homeopatía, arte), 2.-la integración de las mujeres así emancipadas para renovar el país y corregir sus malas morales y modalidades imperantes en la familia y en el Estado. (*Mujeres*109)

Although this novel is not an “antirrosista” text such as *Los misterios del Plata*, there are many commonalities between these two literary works that contribute to their categorization as resistance literature. Manso fights for the recognition of intellect and rationality as qualities that exist not only within men but within women as well. She promotes equality of the sexes and condemns the position of women as “una máquina reproductora que no alcanza el rol de esposa ni madre, porque le niega lo que Dios le concedió: ‘sentimientos e inteligencia’ (Lewkowicz, *Juana* 71). In her literature Manso exposes how the limitation of female identity and roles has lead to the marginalization and objectification of women as a reproductive commodity for the Argentine nation. She strives for female advancement by depicting women as diverse individuals who possess free will and exercise their personal agency to participate in society in a variety of ways. Furthermore, both of Manso's novels promote female advancement and denounce the subjugation of any individual by destabilizing conventional gender roles and identities. The author strongly emphasizes the thoughts and feelings of her female characters as signs of their

intelligence and inspiration. Their depiction as strong and capable women encourages the reader's recognition of the multiplicity of female identity and the diverse capabilities of women.

In *La familia del Comendador*, the commander and his wife are in charge of their family and make all final decisions related to their children. As a parental unit they take on the responsibility of safeguarding their children as well as organizing their futures. Marriage becomes a central topic, due to the parents' arranging whom their children will marry based upon economic advantage rather than the children's choice. In this manner Manso criticizes the institution of marriage as an economic transaction that promotes the ideologies of the patriarchy and overall constitutes "un contrato social" (Lewkowicz, *Juana* 70). When the parents tell the female protagonist, Gabriela, that she will marry her older, deranged, but incredibly wealthy uncle she is disgusted and refuses to do so. Gabriela's mother explains the benefits of this arrangement when she states "¡Oh!, no seas tonta, no se muere una mujer porque la casen contra su gusto, y mucho menos cuando por ese casamiento adquiere una enorme fortuna" (Manso, *La familia* 82). Her mother's nonchalant response communicates the regularity with which women were married not for love, but money and social status. Consequently, Gabriela becomes her own defender. Gabriela must protect herself against a forced marriage that her family demands and even believes she will ultimately enjoy due to the positive financial outcome of the union. In this case, the author displays how the family unit can promote patriarchal values with harmful effects, especially on women. Furthermore, the mother's role in forcing her daughter to marry her own uncle suggests that a woman participating in decisions does not protect other women from the damage of patriarchy, because at times they function as a part of the same.

Gabriela is confined to living her daily life in her parents' home and only attends social events such as dances with the entire family, so that she is always under the watch of her parents.

Gabriela exercises her own free will and goes against her family's commands to marry her uncle, falling in love instead with Ernesto de Souza at a dance. Furthermore, she exercises female agency when she courageously escapes her parents' house and her arranged marriage to Juan by running away in the middle of the night to a convent, where she believes she will be safe.

Gabriela cunningly devises her escape route, which is only known to her servant Alina, and as "los esclavos jornaleros fueron saliendo uno a uno, Gabriela contó el último, y cerca de las tres sería cuando abrió la ventana, levantó la vidriera y seguida de Alina bajó la ladera; llegadas a la puerta se arrojaron una en los brazos de la otra" (Manso, *La familia* 83). Just as Adelaida organizes and executes the escape of her husband, Gabriela organizes and executes her own escape from her impending arranged marriage. Interestingly, the female protagonist does not run into the arms of her love interest Ernesto, but instead acts independently to gain her freedom from her parents' patriarchal control. Nevertheless, the convent becomes another place of captivity for Gabriela. She is strictly monitored by the nuns and is eventually locked away from society to devote her life to religion. Thus she has inadvertently exchanged one patriarchal institution for another and has not gained freedom or the right to exercise her free will in that space.

As in *Los misterios del Plata* the author depicts the female protagonist of *La familia del Comendador* in atypical fashion for the Romantic style of the time. Lea Fletcher affirms that Manso creates her female protagonists to be "heroínas [que], sin poseer nunca belleza física, poseían belleza de espíritu" (*Mujeres* 114). Gabriela is not illustrated as a physically radiant angel of beauty whose image promotes the idealization of female bodies. Instead, she is described as a girl who stands out not for her physical attractiveness, but for her kind heart and

thoughtfulness. Once again Manso advocates for an appreciation of a woman's character instead of her physical attributes. The narrator portrays Gabriela as:

Melancólica y concentrada, leal y sincera en sus afecciones, compasiva con los esclavos, y abrigando un alma altamente templada, debajo de un exterior delicado. Era alta, y su talle flexible y gracioso tenía una cierta pereza adorable en sus movimientos. El color de su tez no era blanco alabastrino de la raza anglosajona, ni el trigüeño de los trópicos, era uno de esos suaves morenos pálidos, animados por un colorido casi imperceptible. Sus grandes ojos negros estaban coronados de largas pestañas y bien arqueadas cejas, su frente era ancha y lucían en ella los negros bandos de su cabello de azabache fino y sedoso, su boca era regular y una cierta risita melancólica, dejaba ver dos hileras de perlas. (Manso, *La familia* 48)

Gabriela is a distinct image of an intelligent and compassionate person whose brown hair and dark eyes could represent many creole females of the time. She is not the celestial "angel of the house" or the beautiful "mother of the republic." She is a regular creole who fights to have power over her destiny by making choices for herself, and who becomes a model for other women of her time.

Perhaps one of the novel's most radical aspects is the challenge of traditional gender traits and the destabilization of gender roles. Gabriela challenges traditional gender traits with her qualities of intelligence, determination, rationality, and her overall exercise of female agency to escape from the constraints of home and then from the oppressive convent. In the novel Ernesto's only objective is to save his beloved Gabriela and free her from the convent. While in *Los misterios del Plata* Adelaida disguises herself as a man to gain access to the military space in which her husband was being held captive, in *La familia del Comendador* it is Ernesto who must dress as a female to gain access to the space of the convent to save Gabriela. The narrator explains that Ernesto goes to the convent "perfectamente vestido con sus cejas pintadas, su peluca, su enorme cofia que le ocultaba el rostro, su pañuelo y su caja de abalorios" (Manso, *La familia* 139), all of which disguise him as a female vendor and therefore allows him to enter the

convent to find Gabriela. Both Adelaida and Ernesto feel that there is an obligation in particular spaces within society to perform as a different gender and therefore act out what has been deemed as the standard for the opposite sex. This construction of identity and the ability for either males or females to perform a transformation into another gender suggests that Manso considered gender to be unfixed and a social construction. As Butler asserts, “[i]n no sense can it be concluded that the part of gender that is performed is therefore ‘truth’ of gender; performance as bounded ‘act’ is distinguished from performativity insofar as the latter consists in a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer’s ‘will’ or ‘choice’” (*Bodies* 178). This proposal helps us to consider the gendered qualities in Ernesto’s disguise as a woman as societal standards that he reproduces in this situation. Indeed Ernesto’s and Adelaida’s acts of performativity challenge typical gender traits and roles to illustrate the constructed quality of essentialized and naturalized gender norms that supposedly only one sex can exemplify. Gabriela also challenges traditional gender standards by asserting her individual agency and strong will when she refuses to allow Ernesto to save her from the convent, because she does not want to owe him anything or inadvertently be committed to him. Gabriela saves herself by writing to a third party of authority, the Archbishop of the church, who orders her immediate release and frees her from the convent. By taking control of the situation and exercising female agency Gabriela negotiates the hegemonic religious powers of the patriarchy to gain freedom for herself. Through her female protagonist Manso advocates for female advancement and the recognition of women’s ability to exercise female agency in their own lives and in society.

Juana Manso has been deemed a feminist writer, whose texts can be classified as feminist literature, by various scholars due to her fight for female emancipation from patriarchal repression. Julyan G. Peard asserts that

[t]he first woman to be appointed to an official government position and arguably the most radical feminist in nineteenth-century Argentina, Manso was school teacher, inspector and principal; the first female member of the Board of Public Instruction (the lead institution in education reform); and author of the first textbook on Argentine history, editor of three feminist journals, as well as novelist and poet. (454)

Peard uses Manso's job positions as one manner of categorizing the author and her work as feminist. Manso's actions in these roles and in her promotion of female advancement also contribute to this feminist classification. However, Iona Macintyre argues that identifying historical authors or their texts with the term "feminist" is problematic because

[f]or uncritical ideologues, the term 'feminist' is taken to have a self-evident meaning. However, there are many variations of feminist thought; since its first appearance the term 'feminist' has been given several meanings and definitions, and has been put to diverse uses and inspired different movements. Given that no single universal definition of feminism exists, the unqualified use of the term is problematic and over-simplistic. After all, the term was coined during the struggle for women's right to vote and therefore surely feminism supposes belief in some kind of gender equality, or explicitly combats injustice. Using any ideological term retrospectively leads to distortion and can imbue past ideas with alien present-day values, ignoring historical and cultural specificity. (198)

Macintyre presents a valid point, that scholars have the responsibility to study literature with care and attention while considering historical, social, economic, racial, and cultural factors, which affect the interpretations of past literary works. Therefore, is it appropriate to consider Juana Manso as a feminist writer and her texts as feminist literature?

In nineteenth-century Argentina women were at the center of political discourse concerning what their roles in national consolidation would be. This debate was especially prevalent during and after the Federalist and Unitarian conflict, when male politicians and authors dictated what women should represent and what their positions in the nation would be.

However, through literature, journalism, and *tertulias*,<sup>32</sup> some women of the time were able to rebel against these patriarchal restrictions and produce alternative models of diverse female identities and roles. In the context of nineteenth-century Argentina, the word “feminism”/ “feminismo” does exist in the national discourse about women. Maxine Molyneux explains that in Argentina during the 1880’s “in the anarchist press critiques of the family appeared together with editorials supporting ‘feminism,’ by then a term in current usage” (17). The term “feminismo” appeared not only in anarchist journalism, but in mainstream periodicals as well. Clorinda Matto de Turner’s *Búcaro Americano* (1896-1901, 1906-1908) “showcased women writers from all over Latin America and was one of the first periodicals in Argentina to use the newly coined term *feminism*” (Frederick 15). My own definition of “feminism” is the advocacy for female advancement in society, for women’s rights, and for gender equality. Based on these criteria Manso can be considered a feminist due to her own fight for female advancement and her challenge of the patriarchal social order that oppressed women. While feminism was not a mainstream term or idea during nineteenth-century Argentina it is important to recognize that this term did come into existence during the nineteenth-century and perhaps female authors and activists including Manso contributed to the inspiration of the usage of this term in Argentina through their fight for female advancement and emancipation.

In the twenty-first century feminism is a well-known term that can be polarizing and powerful. Caroline Ramazanoğlu and Janet Holland define contemporary feminism as

an unstable intellectual, political and practical activity grounded in some sense of women having common political interests across their social divisions, and so having some potential interest in acting together to transform unjust gender relations. Various theories of male dominance that take relations between women and men to be political and are

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<sup>32</sup>*Tertulias* were social gatherings in which political and educational topics were discussed. See Batticuore’s *El taller de la escritora: Veladas literarias de Juana Manuela Gorriti: Lima-Buenos Aires (1876/7-1892)* (28-34).

entwined with political activity on behalf of women. There is no unified feminist theory of power or political movement, and so there are a range of political strategies for transforming the specific representations, power relations and practices that are taken as subordinating women. (171)

This current definition aids in my evaluation of what feminist criteria Juana Manso fulfills. I have previously affirmed that she produces literature with the objective of changing society through the denouncement of unjust gender inequality during her time. She also fights for female political agency and participation in the private and public spheres of society, while arguing against patriarchal repression. Furthermore, Manso's actions and literary works coincide with my own definition of feminism. I assert that feminism is the promotion of female advancement through the advocacy of equal rights among the sexes and female emancipation from the forms of patriarchal repression from the past and the present. Therefore, it is possible and most appropriate to consider Juana Manso as a feminist writer and her texts as feminist literature.

Through her literary work Manso inspires and empowers women. With her female protagonists she presents a multiplicity of female identities and develops an alternative model of characterization for women of her time. The author herself exercised female agency throughout her life by writing and being involved in political and educational initiatives. Manso and her female colleagues, such as Juana Manuela Gorriti and Clorinda Matto de Turner, asserted themselves by actively participating in the private and public spheres of society through their personal literary production. Sommer affirms that in this period, "writers like Rosa Guerra, Juana Manuela Gorriti, Mercedes Rosas de Rivera, and Juana Manso were taking issue with their Unitarian fathers and husbands over the unitary and limiting language that was sure to reproduce some of the same abuses they opposed in Rosas" (315). Consequently, not only do the female protagonists of this literature represent women's defiance to patriarchal standards of female positions in society, but the writers themselves offer radical models of female agency. Manso's

novels are significant because they are a form of resistance literature due to the author's struggle against patriarchal oppression and the feminist ideology that she promotes within these texts, which challenge the nineteenth-century standard of female identity and go beyond Echeverría's and Mármol's female characterizations. They produce radical models of strong and intelligent women who exercise female agency and actively participate in national development. It is important to remember that Manso's career as an author is exceptional not only due to the progressive content and her eloquent style of writing, but also because in the Generation of 1837, "[e]l arquetipo ideal de 'escritor' para este grupo debe ser el de organizador, legislador, reformador y guía de la nación argentina, y las mujeres no tenían formas de acceso a los aparatos de poder que les permitieran participar de forma directa y activa en estas actividades" (Grau-Lleveria 3-4). However, as a female Manso takes power and through her literature acts as an author, organizer, legislator, and reformer who advocates for women and female advancement in the nation. Both the author and the female protagonists of her literary works exercise female agency by actively participating in society, challenging conventional gender models, and rebelling against patriarchal authority. Her assertion of power and independence creates alternative models of female roles and identity in nineteenth-century Argentina.

### Chapter Three

#### The Fantastic Transgressions of Women: Juana Manuela Gorriti's "El guante negro" and *El pozo del Yocci*

Juana Manuela Gorriti is one of the best-known female authors of nineteenth-century Latin America. She is remembered for her literature, educational initiatives, and her popular literary social gatherings. Despite her challenge of patriarchal conventions of the time and her unconventional life style as a public female figure, she was well respected by her peers and played an active role in society. She is a significant woman writer due to her emphasis on the female perspective and memory, which is a constant theme in her literary works. Furthermore, her writing incorporates Romanticism with fantastic and gothic elements that produce expansive and distinctive literary texts. Gorriti uses her literature and female characters to focus on women and their vital roles in national consolidation and conflict. She presents alternative models of female protagonists that differ from those of her male counterparts of the time. The women in her literature assert themselves by taking control, transgressing borders and boundaries, and exercising female agency. In Gorriti's depiction, female protagonists' nontraditionalism results from the volatile and hostile environment of national struggle during the nineteenth century. In this manner she explores the instability of nations and of women's positions in the new Latin American republic.

Juana Manuela Gorriti (1818-1892) was born in Horcones, Salta, Argentina in 1818 to an upper-class family with strong political and military ties.<sup>33</sup> Her mother, Feliciano Zuviría, and her father, José Ignacio Gorriti, were both of Spanish descent. Her father was a military man who fought for Argentine independence from Spain and later fought against the Federalist political party as a Unitarian general. He was directly involved in politics as a delegate in the congress of Tucumán and was governor of Salta during two different periods. (Berg, “Juana” 231). The Gorriti family’s active role in national consolidation and conflict has an obvious influence on Juana Manuela Gorriti’s literary works, the majority of which contain elements of historical memory about these important past events.

Juana Manuela Gorriti did not have a significant amount of formal education. When she was between six and eight years old she studied in a convent in Salta, but quickly returned to her family’s home where she was constantly reading and learning on her own in the home library.<sup>34</sup> This makes her literary success all the more impressive. Furthermore, Gorriti faced hardships such as her family’s exile to Bolivia as a consequence of the defeat of her father by the Federalist Facundo Quiroga in 1831.<sup>35</sup> While living in Bolivia she met and married the future president of Bolivia, Manuel Isidoro Belzú (1808-66) (Meehan 6). Despite creating a family and having two daughters, Edelmira and Mercedes, their marriage was very unconventional for the time due to personal conflict between Gorriti and Belzú. Eventually, they separated and Gorriti lived apart from her husband in Lima, Peru where she wrote much of her literature and traveled.

It is in Lima that Gorriti enacted her educational initiatives by opening the first coeducational school in the city and then founding a secondary school for girls. She also

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<sup>33</sup>See Poderti (262).

<sup>34</sup>See Berg’s article “Juana Manuela Gorriti (1818-1892) Argentina” (231).

<sup>35</sup>See Meehan (4-7).

published various literary works such as her first short story, “La quena” (1845), and her first periodical *El Álbum* (1874). Gorriti lived in Lima for many years and traveled to Bolivia and Argentina, until she permanently moved to Buenos Aires in 1885. Throughout this time she published *Sueños y realidades* (1865), *Panoramas de la vida* (1876), *El pozo del Yocci* (1876), *Peregrinaciones de una alma triste* (1876), and *Misceláneas* (1878). In 1877, while traveling through Argentine, she founded the periodical *La Alborada del Plata* in Buenos Aires (Martin 441), Argentina and once Gorriti moved to the Argentine capital she published *La tierra natal* (1889), *Cocina ecléctica* (1890), *Oasis de la vida* (1890), and *Lo íntimo* (1897). She lived in Argentina until her death in 1892.

Gorriti is also known for her literary social gatherings, *las veladas literarias* held in her home in Lima from 1876-1877.<sup>36</sup> Both male and female writers and students attended these sessions, including notable authors such as Ricardo Palma and Clorinda Matto de Turner. Gorriti planned various activities for each weekly velada:

light-hearted entertainment alternated with more serious political essays related to women’s rights, racial oppression, prison reform, and programs of education for the new republics. Serious literary debates, such as those that argued the relative merits of romanticism and realism, found their way into *velada* programs. Of particular significance were the numerous essays that pondered the importance of creating a national literature. (Martin 441)

It is most notable that, as a female writer, Gorriti conducted such popular politically- and academically- motivated social gatherings that were well regarded and attended by both men and women. This was an inclusive space allowing for a true exchange of ideas, where public issues

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<sup>36</sup>See Martin (440-442).

were discussed and debated by both genders within Gorriti's home, thus converting this private space into a public forum for men and women.<sup>37</sup>

Another way Gorriti participated in the public sphere was through print culture. In nineteenth-century Argentina, women's periodicals were a popular means of dispersing knowledge, ranging from domestic topics to political issues that directly affected women. It is important to note that Gorriti was a professional author who earned a living from her writing career. In nineteenth-century Argentina it was rare for middle- or upper-class women to have a career and to work in the public eye. Gorriti's profession is radical for the time, because:

[t]he image of women writing...can be threatening. It involves women producing in the public sphere, often from within the domestic center, who introduce domestic issues into the place of public discussion and insist on making visible the activity of women in workplaces, politics, and commercial and social life. Once the literary-journalistic activity of women is examined, cherished boundaries between public and domestic instantly blur. (Bergmann et al 175)

Gorriti published many of her literary works in well-known magazines, such as *La Revista de Lima* and *La Revista de Buenos Aires*. In 1874 she established the periodical *El Álbum* in Lima, to which she contributed heavily. Her writings often critiqued the Federalist political party of Argentina and denounced the policies of and life under Juan Manuel de Rosas, while promoting women's education and female advancement in society. Francine Masiello highlights the broad range of themes in women's periodicals of the time by affirming that,

[u]nlike the first round of female cultural publications in the 1850s, when relief from the Rosas tyranny brought demands for education and freedom, the later journals revealed a shift in argument; having achieved certain public benefits such as minimal educational reform, the next stop was to engage women in a critique of modernization practices, especially with respect to science and technology. (*Between* 94)

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<sup>37</sup>See Batticuore's *El taller de la escritora: Veladas literarias de Juana Manuela Gorriti: Lima-Buenos Aires(1876/7-1892)* (25-37).

The transformation of common subject matter in women's periodicals reflects the improvement of women's positions within society. Gorriti was building on the work and successes of other female authors who sought improved conditions for women and women writers during the nineteenth-century.

In 1877 Gorriti founded the journal *La Alborada del Plata* with co-editor Josefina Pelliza de Sagasta. The main topics in *La Alborada del Plata* are science, technology, history, and travel, which differ from the traditional focus of women's journals on fashion and domesticity.

What makes this periodical stand out from others of the time is that:

[w]hile under Gorriti's leadership, *La Alborada* was less concerned with the theory of advocating women's writing than with its practice: it places women's writing side-by-side with men's with no apologies. It assumes that women will be interested in what interests men, and more radically, that men will want to read women's writing too. (Frederick 27)

In this case, Gorriti exercises her agency in multiple ways: through discursive means in her writing, through her actions as a professional author, and by creating public forums for men and women to communicate their ideas. Gorriti's actions continually break down false binaries of separation between the sexes by providing outlets that combine interests, ideas, and beliefs that affect everyone.

Juana Manuela Gorriti's novels and short stories are significant due to the abundance of female protagonists and their characterization. In her literary production she emphasizes women's positions in society by fictionally depicting their participation in nation building and national conflict, creating a literary space where women are recognized and valued for their active roles in society. She published a plethora of short stories and novels throughout her career. Many of her short stories originally appeared in periodicals before being compiled into books, one of the most significant of which is *Sueños y realidades* (1865). This literary work contains a

variety of short stories that critique the Rosas dictatorship and display the various roles that women fulfilled during that time of conflict. Her novel *El pozo del Yocci* (1876) also focuses on the lives of the female characters during the Wars of Independence in 1814, continuing to 1839 when Argentina and Bolivia were at war over territory. Through her historical fiction, Gorriti illustrates how women were affected, just as men were, by these events. In doing so, she portrays women as strong and intelligent, personally and politically motivated to participate in society, and exercising of female agency. Gorriti's depiction of the female characters displays women as politically active and advocates for the recognition of female achievements and the inclusion of women into the Latin American republics.

The short story "El guante negro," first published in *Sueños y realidades* (1865), presents the conflict between the Unitarians and the Federalists during the Argentine civil wars (1814-1880). Gorriti specifically focuses on the Unitarian and Federalist political factions, the Rosas dictatorship, and the effects of this crisis on men, women, and their interpersonal relationships. The male protagonist, Wenceslao, is a soldier whose family has strong connections to the Federalist political party. His father, Ramírez, is a high ranking military officer committed to Rosas and fighting for the Federalist cause. The two female protagonists also represent their respective political parties: Manuela as a Federalist, and Isabel as a Unitarian. Both women are connected to political parties through their families. Manuela is the dictator's daughter and Isabel is the daughter of a Unitarian who was killed by the Mazorca. These three characters form a love triangle that leads to deception, treason, and death. Graciela Batticuore affirms that "aquí el amor y la política están enfrentados, divorciados definitivamente puesto que héroes y heroínas se enamoran de los adversarios, enemigos acérrimos de su familia. Por eso la felicidad no tiene cabida en el mundo de estos enamorados, o más bien, como veremos, el sueño de la felicidad no

se apoya nunca en el Bien” (291). The struggle between romantic love and family loyalties demonstrates Gorriti’s interest in the personal consequences of national politics and in the universality of political experience in her time and place.

The love between Wenceslao and Isabel creates a story similar to that of Romeo and Juliet. In fact, the narration alludes to this in the opening scene when the narrator states that “[d]e repente, vino á mezclarse á estos rumores de la naturaleza una voz humana, una divina voz de mujer, que elevándose suave y cautelosa del fondo de una de esas espesas avenidas de árboles, comenzó á cantar con indecible melodía aquella adorable música de Julieta y Romeo: ‘Sei pur tu che ancor rivedo?’<sup>38</sup> (Gorriti, “El guante” 91). This reference sets the stage for a story that pits politics, family, and personal love against each other. Wenceslao’s love and devotion to his family contributes to his position as a Federalist soldier. However, his love and devotion to Isabel, a Unitarian, causes treason and deception. As soon as the reader is introduced to this male protagonist, his strengths and weaknesses are revealed. The narrator describes him as

[...] un joven de bella y simpática fisonomía. Su frente alta espaciosa llevaba el sello de la altivez y de la inteligencia, en sus grandes ojos negros sombreados por largas pestañas, había relámpagos que revelaban el choque de pasiones fuertes y encontradas. Sus brillantes cabellos caían en abultados bucles sobre su cuello, y un bigote negro y sedoso, capaz de matar de envidia á todos los leones del mundo, se retorció graciosamente sobre una boca que habría hecho palpitar á una mujer de miedo ó de amor. (Gorriti, “El guante” 92-93)

Wenceslao is described as a Romantic hero who is handsome and intelligent. However, this physical description foreshadows the conflict to come, due to his “choque de pasiones fuertes y encontradas” (Gorriti, “El guante” 92). His divided loyalty and inability to fully commit himself to one side will lead to the destruction of his family, his future, and his very life.

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<sup>38</sup> This means “Is it you whom I see again?” in Italian.

For Wenceslao, Manuela and Isabel represent very different personas and convictions, which lead to his indecisiveness. Although Isabel is his true love, Manuela provides an opportunity for him to achieve glory and prosperity for his country and the Federalist Party. Manuela represents his past and his connection to his family and childhood friends. His inability to give all his devotion to one woman reflects the instability of the time and the great divide between the Argentine people. Wenceslao maintains a friendship and flirtation with Manuela, while supposedly committed to Isabel, a woman of great strength and character who, unlike her lover, knows where her loyalties lie and takes a stance with her political beliefs and with him. Upon learning of his deceit, Isabel visits Wenceslao, and he refers to her as his guardian angel, declares his love for her, and inquires as to why she is acting differently toward him. She poignantly states that:

Nada ha cambiado en torno mío [...] nada ha cambiado; el sol ha sido brillante; las flores me han enviado sus más suaves perfumes; los pajarillos me han hecho oír las melodías que han callado en mi arpa desde que tu sufres; las hermosas estrellas de nuestro cielo me sonríen como siempre; tú, á quien amo con idolatría, estás ahí, cerca de mí, y yo leo en tus ojos tu amor; y sin embargo ha habido en ese sol, en esos perfumes, en esas melodías, en la noche, en las estrellas y en tus ojos, algo de lúgubre que pesa como plomo sobre mi corazón. (Gorriti, "El guante" 98)

Isabel demonstrates her devotion to Wenceslao as well as her astute awareness of his indiscretion of maintaining a close bond with Manuela. She differs from him, because she has the strength and courage to assert herself by taking control of the situation and her destiny by confronting him. She clarifies that while she has not changed, circumstances have, and his dishonesty and untrustworthiness are the cause. Wenceslao deceives Isabel, Manuela, and his family with his own inability to carry out his free will and take control of his life and destiny.

Due to his disloyalty, Wenceslao also betrays his family and shows his weakness through his fickle political stance, which at times reflects his family's interests and at others fulfills

Isabel's wishes. At first a Federalist soldier, he changes throughout the story, deserting to join the Unitarian cause and then returning to the Federalist side. In a letter to Isabel he explains his treason and writes, "[e]l ejército de Lavalle se halla á dos jornadas de aquí, y el sol de mañana me verá en sus filas, volviendo mi espada envilecida contra la causa que tenía mis simpatías, contra mi protector, y contra mi mismo padre" (Gorriti, "El guante" 109).<sup>39</sup> He makes the point that he knowingly and willingly is defying Rosas, the Federalist cause, and his own father. He does all of this for Isabel, his one true love. However, when he suffers grave consequences from this decision, he immediately renounces Isabel and returns to the Federalist military.

Upon learning of his son's treason, Ramírez plans to execute him for the crimes of desertion and treason, but Wenceslao's mother, Margarita, desperately tries to dissuade her husband and begs for her son's life. Margarita takes control of the situation and, when her husband refuses to let their son live, she kills her own husband to save her son. She explains to her son that "[m]i esposo había jurado matar un traidor-dijo ella,-ese traidor era mi hijo, y yo he matado á mi esposo para salvar á mi hijo" (Gorriti, "El guante" 117). Wenceslao forsakes his father for Isabel, but once he sees the deadly consequences of his actions he expresses his deepest loyalty to his mother by immediately switching sides and renouncing Isabel. After his father's death Wenceslao "pálido, sombrío, y llevando en el corazón un triple duelo, marchaba á reunirse con el ejército del general Oribe. El deber había interpuesto entre él y la felicidad un voto terrible. Sobre el cadáver ensangrentado de su padre, y en las manos de su madre moribunda, había jurado olvidar para siempre á Isabel" (Gorriti, "El guante" 117).<sup>40</sup> He has precipitated his mother's murder of his father, initiating also his mother's death from the shock and pain of committing such a violent act against one loved one to save another. From this

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<sup>39</sup> Juan Lavalle is a Unitarian general.

<sup>40</sup> Oribe is a Federalist general.

narration, the reader can conclude that Wenceslao blames Isabel for the negative consequences of his decisions, including his father's death. He does not admit responsibility for the effects of his actions; instead he abandons Isabel and returns to the ranks of the Federalist military. This display of dysfunction and violence illustrates how Wenceslao and his family are impacted by the chaotic and brutal environment around them, created by the conditions of war and the Rosas dictatorship.

“El guante negro” displays conflict between the Unitarians and the Federalists destroying families and relationships by dividing loyalties between the love of an individual and family, with the love of country and allegiance to a certain political faction. Referring to Gorriti's work, Beatriz Urraca asserts that “[h]er heroines tend to be loyal to individuals rather than to political factions. Following their feelings rather than rigid political beliefs, these female characters embody criticism and praise of both the Federalist and Unitarian causes” (159). In “El guante negro” both male and female characters are equally steadfast and fickle in their loyalty toward their respective political factions and their families. Although Wenceslao's weaknesses cause his vacillation, Isabel does not waver in her commitment to the Unitarian cause. Isabel's family was always aligned with the Unitarians and because of this allegiance, her father was killed by the Mazorca.<sup>41</sup> Isabel explains her struggle between her love of Wenceslao and her devotion to her Unitarian father:

¡Ah! ha sido necesario que él me arroje de su corazón, para que vuelvan al mío el recuerdo de vuestra funesta muerte y el sentimiento de mi deber. Pero aún no es tarde, padre mío. El juramento que os hice bajo las negras bóvedas de vuestro calabozo, no habrá sido hecho en vano: yo renuevo aquí el voto de consagrar la sombría existencia que me espera á vuestra venganza, y al triunfo de esa causa, cuyo testimonio sellasteis con el martirio. (Gorriti, “El guante” 101)

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<sup>41</sup> The Mazorca was the secret police of the Federalist regime and terrorized those who did not support Juan Manuel de Rosas. See Root (31-3).

She realizes that her father would view her love for Wenceslao as treacherous, but Isabel never switches political sides. Isabel is a model of female wisdom and courage through her loyalty to herself, her family, and her political views. In this case, it is the male protagonist who falters and goes against his family and his political ties as a consequence of the struggle between good and evil. The narrator illustrates that both men and women were affected by the turbulent times of national conflict and nation building and that women, just as men, asserted their political beliefs.

This short story also depicts how civil war and national instability led to death and destruction within the family unit and other interpersonal relationships. Ultimately, Wenceslao dies in battle fighting for the Federalists, both the Federalist and the Unitarian fathers have died, and the women are left in the midst of devastation. Margarita suffers the loss of her husband and son, while Isabel loses her father and her lover. Both women are devastated by war and political strife. In contrast, Manuela Rosas and her father Juan Manuel de Rosas remain untouched by the violence, though Gorriti depicts both as enemies of the Unitarian cause and to blame for many deaths. The narrator describes a bloody and cadaver filled battlefield:

A lo lejos, y al cabo de aquella vía sangrienta, rodeado de cadáveres, de fusiles descargados, de lanzas y espadas rotas, yacía el cuerpo de un guerrero, cuyo noble y hermoso rostro conservaba aún después de la muerte una expresión de amenaza. Aunque todo indicaba que era él quien había hecho aquel estrago en las filas de sus enemigos, el acero de éstos no había osado acercársele; pues aquel cuerpo esbelto y elegantemente vestido estaba ileso, una sola bala le había muerto, atravesándole el corazón. Su mano estrechaba aún la guarnición de su espada, y el viento de la noche hacía ondear sobre su pecho esa terrible divisa roja, que contenía el retrato de Rosas, y la sentencia de la muerte de los unitarios. (Gorriti, "El guante" 122)

This scene romanticizes the death of the brave soldier Wenceslao and places the blame on the Rosas dictatorship for the battles and killings. Rosas represents the enemy that is the root of the death and destruction around them.

For Isabel, Manuela embodies the enemy, the dictatorship, the Federalists, death, and discord through her status as the dictator's daughter, in contrast to Wenceslao, for whom Manuela presents an opportunity for Wenceslao to gain respect and honor from his family. One night, after visiting Wenceslao, Manuela leaves her black glove for him as a token of their friendship, an item that causes Isabel's rage when she finds it in Wenceslao's room with Manuela Rosas's initials. For Isabel this glove represents her lover's deceit and is a sign of the Rosas dictatorship and the death and devastation it has brought to the Argentine people. The black glove symbolizes the destruction of their relationship and Wenceslao's death. On the battlefield, the place of Wenceslao's death, Isabel explains what the black glove signifies for the couple: "¡Oh! ¡Dios!...su pecho está frío é inmóvil, sus labios pálidos y yertos, su mirada fija y velada por una sombra siniestra...¡Ah!! Es eso funesto talismán, ese funesto guante negro cuya vista introduce el dolor en el corazón, y cuyo contacto trastornó mi ser" (Gorriti, "El guante" 123). The "sombra siniestra" that Isabel describes is the omnipresent enemy and dictator that no one in Argentina can escape. Even those who are on the Federalist side suffer with the fighting between the two political factions.

For Isabel, Manuela Rosas is a threatening figure that represents the Federalists and the dictatorship. Isabel directly blames Manuela for Wenceslao's death and the conflict created in their relationship. The relationship between Isabel and Wenceslao is thus a microcosm, reflecting the political strife happening around them on a national scale. Manuela plays a role in separating them and contributing to the death around them, just as on a larger scale she supports her father and his dictatorship. Isabel describes Manuela and her actions as those of the enemy who is culpable for the deaths of Argentine citizens:

¡Oh!-gritó señalando una herida profunda de forma circular y bordes negros.-¡He ahí la mano de Manuela Rosas, que le ha destrozado el pecho para robarme su corazón! Hela

allí que se acerca para disputármelo todavía, para arrojar otra vez entre él y yo, como un desafío á nuestro amor, ese guante negro que nos separó. ¡Atrás!-gritó alzándose y extendiendo sus brazos sobre el cadáver,-¡atrás! ¡mujer fatal para los que te aman! ¡tu blanco velo de virgen está salpicado de sangre! ¡sobre tu cabeza está suspendida una nube de lágrimas! ¡Aléjate! (Gorriti, “El guante” 123-124)

The Mazorca and Manuela have caused Isabel’s pain and grief with her father’s and Wenceslao’s deaths. This narration illustrates Manuela Rosas as a culpable figure who in supporting her father’s Federalist regime contributes to the death and destruction that the Argentine people faced during the conflict between Unitarians and Federalists.

This literary work demonstrates how this conflict breaks up families and further divides the Argentine population, instead of uniting it. The love between Isabel and Wenceslao models that of a Romeo and Juliet love story, because the young couple comes from families with two different political affiliations who are fighting against each other for their beliefs. This is significant, because Gorriti’s story provides a fictional account of the historical past that did destroy families and separate friends and lovers. The personal is political throughout this short story, just as the personal was political for the actual people fighting for the Unitarian or Federalist cause. The internal struggle of choosing between loyalty to family and political ideology, versus devotion to one’s true love affected not only men, but women as well. The Romeo and Juliet theme is prevalent throughout the story, with Isabel singing the Romeo and Juliet theme at the beginning and at the end: “De repente, el eco de una voz dulce y triste, hizo callar la lúgubre melodía del insecto. La voz se aproximaba entonado el último canto de Julieta: ‘Oh! Sfortunato atendimi...Non mi lasciare arcor...’<sup>42</sup> (Gorriti, “El guante” 121). The references to Romeo and Juliet throughout the narrative symbolize the forbidden love between a Federalist

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<sup>42</sup> In Italian this means “Unfortunate one, wait for me...Don’t leave me yet.”

and a Unitarian. The love story of Isabel and Wenceslao ends with death and ruin of both their families.

“El guante negro” bears many commonalities with Gorriti’s novel *El pozo del Yocci* (1876), originally published as a story in *Panoramas de la vida* (1872) and later as a novel. *El pozo del Yocci* is set during the Wars of Independence, in 1814, and in the War of the Confederation, in 1839. The author demonstrates how both sexes were affected by these conflicts and how women fulfilled active roles, as did men, during national consolidation. The narrator also presents the conflict between devotion to an individual and loyalty to a political faction. In this novel, as in many of her literary works, Gorriti illustrates how, as Masiello puts it, “fratricidal wars have annulled the achievements of the revolution against Spain. The message was intended, of course, to describe the Argentine situation, in which families had been destroyed by conflicting versions of how to construct the new state” (Masiello 49). In this way the personal is shown to be political, such that the two cannot be separated. This tension between the personal and the political contributes to the death and destruction produced by nineteenth-century Argentine nation building.

In *El pozo del Yocci*, Aurelia, the female protagonist, struggles internally between two men who represent different political sides and two different countries. Her betrothed (and later husband), Aguilar, is a colonel in the Argentine military and together the couple support Argentina in a territorial conflict with Bolivia. In one scene Aurelia, Aguilar, and their traveling companions are taken prisoners by Bolivian commander Castro, who represents a grave threat for his enemies. Mysteriously, there is an instant connection between Castro and Aurelia. Upon hearing their captor speak, Aurelia and her sick mother have unexplained reactions to his presence. The narrator states that “éste con voz que hizo estremecer a Aurelia, sin que pudiera

acordarse dónde la había oído otra vez; y por una extraña coincidencia, allá en el fondo de la silla de manos, una fuerte emoción sacudió el cuerpo desfallecido de la enferma, y un débil grito se exhaló de su pecho, y sus párpados cerrados se agitaron” (Gorriti, *El pozo* 36). Aurelia recognizes Castro’s voice, almost as if it is a memory. Neither Aurelia nor Castro knows they are siblings until much later in the novel when Aurelia discovers the secret from their mother. Once they see each other their instant bond is solidified, and “Dios solo conoce el misterio de esas simpatías repentinas, atracción invencible que arrebató el alma en un acento, en una mirada, y obligó a la joven y al desconocido a llevar la mano al corazón para interrogarlo” (Gorriti, *El pozo* 37). This encounter sets the stage to test Aurelia’s loyalty between her husband, who represents Argentina and matrimonial union, and Castro who represents Bolivia and familial bonds.

Eventually, Aurelia and the others are free of the Bolivian military and no longer Castro’s captives. However, something has changed within Aurelia due to her encounter with Castro. Even after she is set free Aurelia “sintió una emoción penosa; algo indefinible, desconocido, que llevó a su alma una extraña duda” (Gorriti, *El pozo* 39). Her confusion illustrates her internal conflicts between her devotion to country and her love of two different individuals. Her mysterious and inexplicable feelings display the struggle to maintain relationships between lovers and family without having to choose one political side over another. Graciela Batticuore explains that family ties form the basis for political ties, but love disrupts these:

se reitera el esquema de los amantes enemigos y se esboza una imagen demoníaca de la política, que representa aquí la condena del amor-placer, del amor-felicidad. La política se inscribe en el marco de una *ley natural*, de un legado de sangre que remite a los hijos a un orden partidario determinado por los padres y al que no es posible renunciar sin convertirse en traidores. Desertar la causa implica desconocer los lazos familiares, la lealtad filial. (292)

In this case, it is not the parent-child relationship that is at stake, but the marital bond. Aurelia must choose between her familial attachment to Castro and her union with Aguilar. Aurelia is at

the center of this conflict, with the author demonstrating that nation building and war affect all sexes and families and relationships were destroyed by these turbulent times. There is no compromising between the two factions and Aurelia's decision to help her brother against the Federalists condemns her to die at her husband's hand.

After escaping the Bolivian forces, Aguilar and Aurelia are united in marriage over her mother's deathbed, in a "lúgubre ceremonia de la *extremaunción*" (Gorriti, *El pozo* 46) where Castro appears, presumably to be reunited with Aurelia, but he becomes a prisoner of the Argentine military. Aurelia's devotion should be to her husband and to Argentina, but she desperately devises a plan to save Castro, the Bolivian enemy, and succeeds in rescuing him from her husband and his troops. After she carries out her escape plan, she explains to Castro, her brother, that "[e]n nombre del cielo, Fernando, alejémonos de estos sitios donde cada minuto es para ti la muerte, la muerte de cuyas garras he venido a arrebatarte a riesgo de mi vida, a riesgo de mi honra... porque ya sé, ¡oh!, tú a quien he amado desde la primera mirada, ya sé qué nombre dar a ese sentimiento invencible que me lleva a ti" (Gorriti, *El pozo* 60). The narrator reveals Aurelia's desire to escape the fighting and death that condition her emotional attachments and put her life at risk. Ultimately, Aurelia makes her decision and chooses her love for her brother, Castro, over her love for her husband. However, she does not realize that the consequences of her actions will lead to death. She is willing to go across political lines and forsake her marriage to Aguilar, a Federalist, for her brother, the enemy to the Argentine Federalist. In this novel, the female protagonist chooses an individual over her country and exchanges one kind of family for another one, regardless of politics.

Aurelia fights to save Castro from Argentine forces, because he is her brother. However, Castro does not realize this and believes their mysterious connection results from a unifying

amorous love. In an unexpected twist the narrator finally clarifies their relation and Castro's abandonment as an infant by his mother:

Y acercándose a Fernando fijó en él una tierna y dolorosa mirada, y le dijo, alargándole un papel:

¿Quieres conocer la naturaleza del sentimiento que nos une un lazo tan estrecho, y más dulce que el del amor? ¡Lee! Y besa mi frente, caigamos de rodillas, oremos juntos, y ¡parte!

El joven tomó el papel con mano ansiosa y lo desdobló a la luz de la luna.

Pero a medida que leía, su frente se tornaba pálida, en sus ojos se pintó el espanto, y sus cabellos se erizaron.

¡Era mi hermana!-exclamó en una explosión de dolor y de cólera-. ¡Oh!-continuó, arrojando lejos de sí aquel papel-, yo iré a buscarte más allá de este mundo, mujer cruel, que, esclava del orgullo humano, abandonaste impía al hijo de tu oprobio para ornar con la aureola de la virtud tu frente mancillada; que, alejando al hermano de la hermana, eres causa de que el amor santo que debió unirlos, se convirtiese en un sentimiento criminal, en una fuente de eterno dolor; yo iré a buscarte hasta el infierno mismo, para decirte: ¡Maldita seas! (Gorriti, *El pozo* 61-62).

This scene displays the damage between families and the confusion that wars and national instability cause. Castro was willing to risk his own political ties and honor for his personal love of a woman he believed to be his future wife. Aurelia willingly chooses family over personal love and politics and, likewise, Castro willingly chooses personal love over politics.

Aguilar views Aurelia's act of saving the captive Castro from the Argentine military as treason and as deserting her country, political affiliation, and husband. Her divided loyalties and betrayal of her husband lead to her death and Fernando Castro's as well. When Aguilar questions Aurelia about her actions and Castro's whereabouts, his anger and jealousy violently overwhelm him. The ensuing physical fight reflects the struggle between good and evil as well as fighting on the civil war's battlegrounds. Gorriti writes, "[e]ntonces hubo una lucha, corta, pero atroz, encarnizada, horrible, entre el ser fuerte y el ser débil, entre la fuerza física y la fuerza sublime de una voluntad enérgica. Aguilar hizo esfuerzos inútiles para arrancar aquel papel de entre los dedos crispados de Aurelia que lo retenían como una tenaza de hierro" (*El pozo* 63). The

physical fight between husband and wife is a metaphor for the political battles and wars that have separated Argentina and its people. With this description, the narrator highlights the horror and brutality that people faced during national consolidation, due to the effects of war and political upheaval.

This physical altercation ends when Aguilar kills his own wife and immediately discards her body in the “pozo” of the novel’s title. During these times of conflict women, like men, faced the threat of violence and death and Aurelia suffers both for saving the Bolivian enemy. Lucía Guerra Cunningham clarifies that these themes recur frequently in Gorriti’s work: “la violencia funciona como un sustrato básico en varios de sus relatos folletines donde el argumento explícito se nutre de la típica intriga amorosa con sus triángulos y dolorosas separaciones en el escenario bélico aunque simultáneamente dicho escenario presenta una confrontación de valor estructurante entre el vencedor y el vencido, la víctima y el victimario” (62). Gorriti uses Aguilar’s character to demonstrate how violence occurred on and off the battlefield, against men and women, and against enemies and family. Aguilar returns to the military where, on the battlefield in Montenegro, the Argentine Confederation and the Bolivian-Peruvian Confederation engage in battle. Aguilar redoubles his violent rage against the enemy:

vio cejar a los suyos ante aquel formidable guerrero [Castro]; y arrojándose a él, alcanzóle al momento en que retiraba la espada humeante del pecho de un enemigo, y lo atravesó con la suya.

El incógnito [Castro] volvió sobre él como un tigre; pero las fuerzas le faltaron de repente; el acero se escapó de su mano, extendió los brazos y su cuerpo inanimado se deslizó del caballo, que siguió su rápido curso y desapareció.

Aguilar, fiel a su bárbara costumbre, se inclinó sobre el arzon para contemplar su víctima. Pero al fijarse en el rostro del cadáver, sus ojos se dilataron de horror y sus cabellos se erizaron.

“¡¡Fernando de Castro!!”-exclamó inmóvil. (Gorriti, *El pozo* 67)

The death of Castro only reminds Aguilar of what he has lost, Aurelia. For Aguilar, Castro is a Bolivian enemy on a political level and, on a personal level, Castro is responsible for creating the

divide between husband and wife. With her depiction of the external and internal conflicts of her characters, the author illustrates the volatility of the political and the personal. In Berg's interpretation the narration reveals how

las mujeres (mujer e hija) que se enamoran de soldados no solo sufren a causa de la incertidumbre militar y los peligros físicos, sino también por las vicisitudes de las guerras que enfrentan a sus amantes con sus familias. La estabilidad de las relaciones humanas está destrozada por las emociones exaltadas de las épocas de guerra y tanto hombres como mujeres observan una conducta destructiva. ("Juana" 238)

Gorriti offers a critique of war and the destruction it produces in the public and private spheres of life. The politics and ideologies that perpetuate warfare and supposedly lead to peace, cause the collapse of personal relationships and people's lives along the way, which, consequently end in irreversible damage.

The female protagonists in "El guante negro" and *El pozo del Yocci* exercise personal agency through their political stance and actions to save their loved ones. Isabel, like María, Amalia, and Adelaida, is motivated by romantic love and family bonds. Her Unitarian convictions present conflict in her daily life that she struggles to overcome. Unlike Manso's Adelaida, Isabel is unable to save her loved ones, which depicts a denouncement of war and violence. Aurelia faces similar challenges between devotion to her husband and to her family. She exercises female agency to enact her free will to save her brother, Castro, from her husband, Aguilar. In this manner, Aurelia, like Adelaida, represents a heroine who risks her own life to save another man. However, Aurelia is punished for her radical actions when she is killed by her husband for saving Castro. The consequences of her actions is another way in which Gorriti critiques the systematic violence of war and the male perpetuated abuse of women. Like Manso, it seems as though, through her female protagonists, Gorriti's literary works are used to condemn the patriarchal oppression of social order during the nineteenth century.

Gorriti's writing is a combination of Romanticism with fantastic elements that blend together and contain supernatural themes, such as in "El guante negro" and *El pozo del Yocci*. She often incorporates subjects of love, death, ghosts, and insanity in her literary works' plot. Trinidad Barrera explains that the author's use of "[s]ueños, extravíos neuróticos, locura, alucinaciones, telepatía, comunicaciones macabras con el más allá, espiritismo, hipnotismo, etc., constituyen un buen manual de los motivos más utilizados del género que Gorriti maneja con destreza" (111). Thomas C. Meehan affirms that Gorriti's writing style encompasses traits of Gothic fiction through her use of "el sueño; el delirio; la locura; el efecto de una droga" (14). He also asserts that she is "[...] el primer autor argentino en experimentar, de manera auténtica, con temas y técnicas fantásticos" (Meehan 4). Thus Gorriti's literature is not only significant due to its content, but also for her original style.

Gorriti employs these various techniques to narrate fictional stories about real historical events. The unification of the Romantic, the fantastic, and the Gothic creates a subcategory within Gorriti's literary works, which coincides with the historical fiction she writes. The fantastic and the gothic can be deemed as tendencies within Romanticism. Chris Baldick explains that in Romanticism the "chief emphasis was upon freedom of individual self-expression: sincerity, spontaneity, and originality" (222). Gorriti's style reflects Romantic elements due to her emphasis on the experiences and emotions of her female protagonists that are communicated through creative and imaginative fictional works that incorporate fantastic and gothic elements, which contribute to her original writing style. Baldick also clarifies what criteria must be met for a novel to be categorized as Gothic. He states that a Gothic novel is "a story of terror and suspense, usually set in a gloomy old castle or monastery (hence 'Gothic', a term applied to medieval architecture and thus associated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with superstition)" (106).

He also affirms that novels lacking a medieval setting may still be Gothic due to a sinister or grotesque atmosphere or because it is a romance that focuses on an endangered heroine (107). Furthermore, Baldick defines the fantastic as “a mode of fiction in which the possible and the impossible are confounded so as to leave the reader (and often the narrator and/or central character) with no consistent explanation for the story’s strange events” (105). Gorriti’s “El guante negro” and *El pozo del Yocci* present emotional and imaginative fictional romances that focus on endangered heroines in sinister and supernatural environments that prompt the reader to hesitate and question the veracity of the story.

Gorriti’s weaving of the fantastic and Gothic into Romanticism add to the complexity of the stories contained in her literary works. Herminia Terrón de Bellomo explains that “[l]a habilidad de la narradora consiste en manejar dos tipos de relato al mismo tiempo y en filtrar la Historia 1 (macro-relato) en la Historia 2 (cuentos fantásticos). Los considerados relatos centrales (cuentos fantásticos) esconden de modo fragmentario la verdadera historia central: el rol femenino en la sociedad de la época” (115). In *El pozo de Yocci*, for example, the “macro-relato” is the Wars of Independence and the War of the Confederation. These events are settings for the “cuentos fantásticos.” In “El guante negro” the fight between the Unitarians and the Federalists is the backdrop of the short story and precipitates the fantastic elements of the narration. For Gorriti, these two categories are inseparable, because the historical events cause the fantastic events in her writing.

*El pozo del Yocci* and “El guante negro” are examples of Gorriti’s fantastical fiction. Both of these literary works intertwine love, madness, ghosts, and death. However, ominous and paranormal themes alone cannot entirely embody the fantastic. Tzvetan Todorov defines the fantastic as a genre that

is based essentially on a hesitation of the reader – a reader who identifies with the chief character – as to the nature of an uncanny event. This hesitation may be resolved so that the event is acknowledged as reality, or so that the event is identified as the fruit of imagination or the result of an illusion; in other words, we may decide that the event *is* or *is not*. (157)

This openness to reader interpretation could relate to the double-voiced discourse of race and gender-inflected writing and to the insistence that the political is personal and truth is subjective, not universal. In “El guante negro” the fantastic is prevalent throughout the narration, such as in the mysterious descriptions of the setting and characters; Isabel’s characterization as a ghost-like figure; the superstitious tale that Isabel relates to Wenceslao; the deaths of Wenceslao and his father; Isabel’s madness; and the curious legend that results from the union of historical events and the fantastic elements in this literary works. These uncanny events present the reader with an instance of interpretive debate, creating hesitation and uncertainty of the reality of such mystical occurrences. “El guante negro” ends with Isabel at her dead lover’s side, amidst a battlefield covered in blood and dead soldiers. The author writes:

es fama que todas las veces que el tirano de Buenos Aires iba á decretar alguna de esas sangrientas ejecuciones, alguna de esas horribles carnicerías que la desolaron, se aparecía en las altas horas de la noche una mujer de aspecto extraño, que cubierta de un largo sudario, y con los cabellos esparcidos al capricho de los vientos, daba vuelta tres veces en derredor de la ciudad, cantando con voz lúgubre la sombrías notas del ‘De profundis.’ (Gorriti, “El guante” 125)

Isabel’s divining talent and her death places this short story in a tradition of the fantastical. The ghostly and supernatural description of Isabel on the battlefield contributes to the fantastic in this story by contributing to the mysterious legend that brings into question what is and what is not reality.

*El pozo del Yocci* also contains fantastic features in the secretive connection between the protagonists, Aurelia and Castro, which is not explained until the end of the novel; the deaths of Aurelia, Castro, and Aguilar; Aguilar’s madness; and Aurelia’s transformation into a ghost.

Aguilar's murder of his wife and her memory relentlessly haunt him, instigating his descent into insanity and creating fantastic depictions. The following scene illustrates how Aguilar suffers from nightmarish visions of Aurelia as a ghost, which produce his guilt and rage and contribute to his delusions and insanity:

Pero entre los vapores de la orgía como entre el humo de la pólvora, veía [Aguilar] siempre levantarse la pálida sombra de Aurelia; en medio a las báquicas canciones, un eco lejano remedaba su último gemido. Entonces, arrebatado por un extraño frenesí entregábase a furiosos excesos, rompía, destrozaba cuanto se le ponía adelante; apuraba sin resultado el opio y los licores espirituosos; así por la garganta a la más bella de sus compañeras de disolución, estrechábala en sus brazos hasta ahogarla y ensangrentaba sus labios con rabiosos besos. Y aquellas mujeres, gastadas por el vicio, ávidas de emociones, y fascinadas por el misterioso ascendiente de ese hombre a quien creían un ser sobrenatural, sufrían con placer, y se disputaban la tortura que él se dignaba imponerla. (Gorriti, *El pozo* 69)

This scene exemplifies the fantastic and the Gothic with Aurelia's ghost, drugs and liquor to alter one's mental state, violence, death, blood, mysterious and yet fascinating descriptions, which all lead to the supernatural qualities of Aguilar and his madness. This scene also puts domestic violence front and center and evaluates the psychology of the abuser, attributing the origins of the abuse to factionalism, divided loyalties, and disappointment in love. Aguilar is characterized as a devil that terrorizes women and, although he is haunted by his victim, Aurelia, he continues his rage and violence against others. These fantastic depictions represent how the historical conflicts presented in the novel destroy relationships and lives and how the violence of war produces lasting effects on both men and women.

The female protagonists in Gorriti's literature tend to represent ghost-like figures that draw on the tradition of the fantastic. The female characters are central to Gorriti's literary works, because through these figures the author illustrates how women are affected by national consolidation and conflict. For Coromina, the connection between Gorriti's female specters represents the development from an earlier condition of insanity:

las heroínas gorritianas no son fantasmas en el sentido estricto de la palabra, puesto que no hay ningún índice textual de su muerte. Se transforman en figuras espectrales, sí, pero no provienen de un más allá ni se proponen aterrorizar a los vivos. Dado que la locura es el preludio a la conversión en fantasma, se la puede considerar como el recurso fantástico principal empleado por la autora, mientras que el estado espectral pasaría a ser una suerte de seña exterior de la falta de razón. (Coromina 4)

In *El pozo del Yocci* Aurelia's memory haunts Aguilar and plays a factor into his death. Her trauma and murder are channeled through her ghostly depiction after death, which could be explained as a figment of Aguilar's imagination. The illusions of his dead wife, his experience in war, and his guilt over his culpability in her death expose the trauma he suffers that contribute to his suicide at the "pozo," where he killed his wife. In "El guante negro" Isabel becomes a legendary ghost to warn against the cruelty of war and to remember the tyranny of the Rosas dictatorship. Both women characters represent Gorriti's own focus on historical events and how these affected women. Furthermore, they represent the precarious state of a woman whose ambiguous status was in between: not recognized as citizens, yet participants in nation building and who were directly affected by it.

The transformation of the female characters from human beings to ghosts or ghost-like figures results from their suffering in past historical events and their lack of citizenship in society. In *Trauma Culture: Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature*, E. Ann Kaplan explores trauma theory from the late nineteenth century to the twenty-first century, analyzing how trauma affects individuals, cultures, and nations. She addresses Freud's early theories on trauma and explains that in his work war is connected with trauma through the fear of death, which perpetuates the constant threat of losing one's personal identity. The link between war, trauma, and identity affects male and female characters alike and is reflected in Gorriti's development of fantastic settings and plots. Urraca proposes that Gorriti's "ghosts perpetuate the influence of the past into the present, providing continuity for women's experience at a time

when men have laid down their weapons and gone on to political action, leaving woman's concerns largely unaddressed and their war suffering unredressed" (166). The instability and unrecognized social and political roles of women are reflected in their depiction as ghostly beings that are living in an ambiguous position between inclusion and exclusion based upon the needs and desires of a patriarchal society. The lack recognition of females as autonomous beings in society is a conflict which further illustrates the in-between state of women in the volatile nineteenth-century Argentine nation.

The ghostly characters represent Gorriti's concern for female status in a patriarchal society and the consequences women faced when they strived for female advancement. The author's female characters who dare to transgress conventional gender boundaries are punished for their individuality and their exercise of female agency. María Cristina Arambel-Guiñazú points out that in some of Gorriti's narratives the "protagonistas que, impulsadas por ideas y deseos propios, desafían las costumbres y las instituciones que las controlan. En ambos casos, sin embargo, la rebelión concluye en castigos irrevocables: ambas caen en un estado de ensoñación fantástico, signo de locura. El fracaso acusa la falta de posibilidades que tiene la mujer en la sociedad de la época" (219). Gorriti advocates for female diversity and alternative female positions by illustrating how the lack of opportunities and independence for women produce internal conflicts, which contribute to the trauma of a lack of social position of authority and are manifested in signs of mental instability.

Gorriti's female characters that transform into ghosts most often represent nonconformist women who challenge tradition and transgress conventional gender roles. This transformation from a celestial angel of the house into a mystical ghost could represent the descent from a traditional and socially acceptable embodiment of female identity to a nontraditional and perhaps

radical model of female identity that is condemned to wandering through purgatory in the fantastic settings in Gorriti's literature. Cormina proposes that "la locura en la mujer subraya la necesidad de respetar los límites que la separan del hombre" (5), asserting that the ghostly transformation of the female characters is a warning not to cross gender boundaries. However, I argue that these gender limitations confine women's space and identities and produce insanity from the frustration of being restricted and oppressed. Furthermore, male dominance over women converts these women into ghost-like figures who are eternally searching for a female space of recognition within the new republics as citizens who desire a peaceful future with their loved ones. The "locura" or insanity the women encounter is due to society's marginalization and exclusion of women. This is a call for action, for women to exercise female agency, to resist the "locura," and fight against patriarchal tyranny to gain female emancipation.

The role of ghosts in Gorriti's literature could also signify a type of freedom that the angel of the house, who is relegated to the private sphere, does not enjoy. Gorriti attempts to create her own space for women within the nation from her writings, which reflects a desire for women to gain access and power in other spaces in society. Ana Forcinito explains that "[e]n la proyección del deseo en la escritura se configura el espacio nacional a través de un juego de inclusiones y exclusiones, que habilitan la identificación del sujeto nacional, mientras que se desplazan las marginalizaciones y se borran las exclusiones" (225). Gorriti highlights female marginalization through violence in *El pozo del Yocci* and displays how women who transgress supposedly fixed gender boundaries destabilize female identity for mainstream society and become a threat. Therefore, society demonizes or reduces women to figures with few civil rights. However, the figure of the ghost in Gorriti's literature exercises female agency to expose female mistreatment and inequality and the effects on women and society. After breaking with the social

regulations of what is deemed proper female behavior and identity these women are converted into ghosts and roam freely. Although they are still in an in-between state of identity, they have already broken with patriarchal standards and their state of purgatory, as I mentioned earlier, could actually be the beginning of their emancipation and transformation into autonomous beings.

Gorriti's challenge of patriarchy and hegemony in nineteenth-century Argentina uniquely combines a variety of genres to express her alternative perspective to national politics, literature, and identity. The turbulent background of national consolidation in a fantastical and gothic setting utilizes superstitious components to create an environment that mixes with violence, trauma, insanity, and human nature. Specifically, Gorriti focuses on the psychology of the mind and how trauma affects her characters. In *El pozo del Yocci* Aguilar's violence is a characteristic of his masculinity and need to dominate Aurelia and take ownership of anything or anyone he wants. Gorriti gives a distinct look into the mind of an abuser when Aurelia is murdered by her husband Aguilar:

La voz de Aurelia se perdió en un sordo gemido. El puñal de Aguilar se había hundido en su seno.

El asesino se hizo dueño de aquella carta precio de su crimen; y con la sangre fría de una celosa rabia satisfecha, descifñóse la faja roja que contenía sus armas, ató con ella una piedra al cuello a su víctima y la arrojó al pozo. (Gorriti, *El pozo* 63)

The narrator describes violence that is perpetuated by a desire to own and dominate others.

Raewyn Connell explains that “[v]iolence is part of a system of domination, but is at the same time a measure of its imperfection. A thoroughly legitimate hierarchy would have less need to intimidate” (261). Aguilar acted as what Connell refers to as a “patriarchal owner” (261) who owned his wife and made himself owner of her life and possessions. This scene also denounces domestic violence perpetuated by male-dominance against women in a patriarchal society.

The late nineteenth century was a time of industrialization that ushered in modernization and prompted a growing focus on science in society. Francine Masiello explains the link between the emergence of scientific studies and the nation building as determinant of women's role in society:

Hygiene, public medicine, sanitation, and criminology were designed to control the national ego and produce individual subjects both clean of mind and body and free of all traces of barbarism. But science also served to articulate a fear of difference and, supported by evidence amassed from new technologies, applied gender distinctions to the new boundaries separating elite and popular culture. Thus, women were assigned a position as inferior political and civil subjects. (*Between* 88-89)

Through science women were further marginalized and subjugated by patriarchy. However, certain authors such as Gorriti use their literature to contest the limitations placed upon women in the name of science. Gorriti's "El guante negro" and *El pozo del Yocci* depict women who become irrational and mentally ill due to their suffering through subjugation in a patriarchal society that does not allow for diverse female identities. The figure of the scientifically-defined madwoman is directly related to women's characterization as sentimental, emotional, and therefore illogical beings. However, Gorriti's attempt to articulate the precarious position of women in society and their struggle to overcome hegemonic repression produces the fantastic literary works.

Gorriti's blend of Romanticism, gothic and fantastic elements intermingle to denounce patriarchal confinement of women to a limited and traditional identity that marginalizes women based on their sex. Rachel Haywood Ferreira further emphasizes this point by asserting that "[t]he dominant theme in Gorriti's writing is the need for change in the power structures of nineteenth-century Latin American society. Her two most frequent targets were criollo men [men of European descent], who occupied positions of power at all levels from the household to the state, and the Catholic Church, which dominated both religion and education" (147). Ferreira's

point can be expanded to specifically include science and the male dominated ideologies that were presented as fact and used to implement false binaries that further oppressed women and controlled their roles in society.

The female protagonists in “El guante negro” and *El pozo del Yocci* represent alternative models for female characterization for nineteenth-century Argentina. Gorriti’s depiction of strong female characters is a call for recognition of female participation in society from the past, present, and looking toward the future. Francine Masiello asserts that “Gorriti’s women confuse unitarian and federalist discourses, upset regionalist and urban conflicts, and undermine the authority of print culture in order to insert a feminist alternative in the field of knowledge” (*Between* 51). In this manner she destabilizes male dominated productions of truth and fact, presenting a more inclusive approach to knowledge that validates female perspectives and explores alternative and innovative methods of doing so. Isabel and Aurelia are active in the private and public spheres; are personally and politically motivated; exercise female agency; take control of their lives and destinies; and, in doing so, transgress traditional gender limits. Gorriti’s literature challenges traditional notions of historical events to include a space for women, and consequently contributes to her denouncement of patriarchal dominance over women and society as a whole.

## Chapter Four

### Women, Travel, and Rebellion against Patriarchy: Female Agency in Juana Manuela Gorriti's

#### *Peregrinaciones de una alma triste* and *La tierra natal*

Historically writing as a hobby or as a profession, has been a male-dominated pursuit. In nineteenth-century Argentina male writers produced a plethora of political and social literature pertaining to the development of the Argentine nation and greatly influenced society in this manner. Writers such as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Esteban Echeverría, and José Mármol contributed to the construction of a new Argentine nation through their literary works, which promoted patriarchal ideology and hierarchies in the social order. Female protagonists were fictional tools of masculinist discourses that were manipulated by these authors to assert their own visions of gender roles in nineteenth-century Argentina. However, women were not only idealized literary productions of men, they were authors too. It is vital to recognize that in contrast with androcentric viewpoints of the time period, women offered their diverse perspectives through their literary works, and in particular in travel narratives.

In her article "Patriarchy, Medicine, and Women Writers in Nineteenth-Century Argentina" (1990) Lea Fletcher addresses the lack of attention to women's writings. The author describes how "the disappearance of the female author" (91) is associated with the patriarchy, in which males overshadow females, and consequently "women writers are simply invisible to the

masculinist eye” (91). This is problematic, because traditionally males have dominated literature and research, which, historically speaking, has produced male-centered knowledge claims based on the common exclusion of women and their contributions. In “Women and the Spanish-American Wars of Independence: An Overview” (2005), Davies, Brewster and Owen support this idea by explaining that in both history and literature “women, if mentioned at all, are said to have played minor, supporting roles in the struggles” (21). The reality is that women actively participated in society, nation-building, and national conflicts in a variety of ways and in particular through their literary works.<sup>43</sup> It is important to note that although fewer women than men were able to participate in literary production, female perspectives throughout literature do exist and are vital to the understanding of women’s positions and identity. Authors such as Juana Manuela Gorriti and Juana Manso became agents of change and power through their authorship. In this chapter I will analyze the travel writings of Juana Manuela Gorriti to investigate how this genre of literature impacts female roles and identity.

I will explore how Gorriti uses her travels and personal mobility to produce stories of female empowerment that display alternative female characterizations and promote female agency in society. Gorriti’s literature is useful because it depicts various ways in which female characters can subvert patriarchal control through travel and mobility. Her literary works suggest that women can gain a particular amount of freedom and independence through travel that may not be possible in the private sphere. Her literature also proposes that it is possible for women to gain some measure of control and power over their own lives that perhaps would not have been possible without travel. Therefore, Gorriti’s travel writings are valuable when analyzing the

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<sup>43</sup> See Davies, Brewster, and Owen (268-76).

connections between female positions and characterization in comparison to female agency and independence through travel and mobility.

First, it is useful to investigate the field of travel literature and ask what this category entails. The very term “travel literature” can be problematic due to the complexities found within the diverse themes of the genre. Travel writing contains various topics from personal and sentimental accounts of survival and captivity to scientific explorations that address subjects such as geography, anthropology, and ecology. The broad scope of subjects contained within travel writing makes each travel account unique. For example, a travel account from a geographer on an expedition would be very different from the travel writing of a non-professional travelling for a vacation. For this reason it is difficult to establish one exhaustive definition for travel literature, but a distinction should be made between the themes that can be found in travel literature. In the *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, Mary Baine Campbell asserts that

‘[t]ravel literature’ is the significantly *generic* descriptor that has succeeded the Modern Language Association Bibliography’s pre-1980s ‘travel, treatment of’. But as a tool it cannot complete a search for relevant critical and theoretical materials. Very early in the contemporary resurgence of interest in travel writing, relations with the analysis of ethnography, thus with the history and function (and future) of anthropology in the West, and with postcolonial theory generally, became vital and generative. (261)

Therefore, it is important to recognize the range of subject matter contained within travel literature, because these diverse topics should be analyzed as unique elements that can distinguish travel accounts from each other. This way scholars and readers can avoid generalizing travel writing as one-dimensional texts that all meet the same criteria to be classified as travel literature.

In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* Mary Louise Pratt presents the history of travel writing and focuses on the European perspective of Latin America from the eighteenth century through the nineteenth century. She analyzes various travel narratives from mostly male authors, but some females as well, and focuses on Alexander von Humboldt's attempt to "reinvent popular imaginings of America, and throughout America, of the planet itself" (117). Pratt describes how Humboldt's documented journeys influenced a new wave of Europeans to travel to the Americas, called the capitalist vanguard, who were motivated by European economic expansion and consequently the potential exploitation of the land and people of South America. The expansionists of the time and their travel writings reflected predominately masculine perspectives because "[t]ravel writing, like colonizing [...] was mostly a male endeavor" (Szurmuk 6). Women also participated in travel literature, not only as passive objects being observed through the male gaze, but as authors offering their distinctive perspectives about the world, humanity, and about themselves in relation to society.

The style and subject matter of travel writings differ in many ways among male and female travel writers. Women writers emphasize themes of self reflection and the positioning of women and of the author herself as an individual in the world. While males' travel writing may be more inclined to focus on science, economic expansion, and exploitation, women's travel narratives tend to present autobiographical and fictional works that grapple with female subjugation and restrictions under patriarchal authority. Furthermore, women's travel narratives are, as Imbarrato explains, "distinguished from texts that represent experience solely within a data driven empirical framework. For the integration of literary allusions into a travel account suggests that the traveler sought context not readily apparent and therefore attempted to contextualize self and travel in a more imaginative manner" (132). Women writers such as

Gorriti and Flora Tristán both ignore empirical data charts and offer their real and fictional accounts of their personal experiences while traveling. The travel writing produced by these and other women tends to challenge patriarchal rule and depict how women exercise female agency through travel and in their daily lives.

The integration of feminist theory in the analysis of female travel literature reveals not only the divergent content, style, and motivations of female travel authors when compared to their male counterparts, but also the oppression and marginalization that these female authors resisted. When evaluating female travel writings the role of the patriarchy cannot be ignored, because it was an integral motivating factor that prompted women not only to write about their journeys, but also to explicitly address the injustices produced by patriarchal authority. This is similar to resistance literature, in which conflict typically arises from opposition to government rule or against an unjust political faction. In resistance literature, such as in “*anitrosista*” texts, the rebellion is against the figurehead or ultimate ruler, such as the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas. In the case of travel literature produced by women, the rebellion is against the patriarchy as a whole and the patriarchal ideology perpetuated in society that oppresses women.

Women writers of nineteenth-century Latin America rebelled against patriarchy in many ways, from subtle actions to obvious protests within both the private and public spheres. The purpose of challenging and defying the patriarchal construction of society was to gain female advancement through exercising female agency. Female activists, such as Juana Manso, spoke out against patriarchy and promoted female rights in public demonstrations and in their literary works. A variety of women, like María Eugenia Echenique<sup>44</sup> and Josefina Pelliza de Sagasta,<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> María Eugenia Echenique (1851-78) was an Argentine writer. See Frederick (159-160).

<sup>45</sup> Josefina Pelliza de Sagasta (1848-88) was an Argentine author and editor. See Frederick (164).

wrote and in magazines and women's journals to promote female empowerment and change in the traditional treatment of women by society. This journalism addressed issues of female education, societal reform, and women's advocacy.<sup>46</sup> Women defied patriarchal rule through authorship and readership by taking part in a socio-political discourse that directly affected them as individuals. Women's consumption of print culture spurred the popularity of women's journals and spread awareness of the problems women faced in the new Argentine nation.

Women also challenged female restrictions in society through their manner of dress. Women began to assert their presence and demand recognition in society and enfranchisement in Argentina through their way of dress, with a noticeable change in daily fashion. Women's style of dress was important, because it was a manner of expression that symbolically asserted female rights and individuality. Although women had participated in gaining independence from Spain, they were still marginalized and relegated to the private space of home and not accepted in the public sphere of society. Therefore, some women felt that it was necessary to "assert their presence in public, against the political vanity of 19<sup>th</sup> century male leaders who had fought Spanish oppression but then denied women their emancipation" (Root xvii). In order to rebel against being silenced and not recognized women forced men to notice them in public spaces with their style of dress, including "mutton sleeves and enlarged hair combs that endowed them with the status of unavoidable public participants. Self-fashioning served to challenge the discriminatory system that excluded women's participation in political life" (Root 47). In this way women literally invaded public space and took it over with their enlarged figures in order to demand attention and show their desire for social acceptance of female participation in society.

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<sup>46</sup>See Frederick's *Wily Modesty: Argentine Women Writers, 1860-1910*, Masiello's *Between Civilization and Barbarism: Women, Nation, and Literary Culture in Modern Argentina* and Masiello's *La mujer y el espacio público: el periodismo femenino en la Argentina del siglo XIX*.

Women's fashion conveyed various messages about their social and political beliefs, in a public and obvious way.

Although all of Gorriti's literary works are important in analyzing female roles and characterization, her travel writings stand out because of the very nature of that genre. Historically, travel literature was a male-dominated category due to the freedom of mobility that men commonly enjoyed and women traditionally lacked. It is through her real-life and fictional travel accounts that Gorriti and her female fictional protagonists defy conventional gender restrictions by traveling alone, participating in the public sphere of society, presenting unconventional female travelers as protagonists, and writing and publishing these texts for society. The space Gorriti encounters while travelling provides her with the freedom to express herself, to obtain mobility, and to achieve a level of independence and power over her own actions and life that women did not typically experience in the customary spaces in a patriarchal society, such as in the home. This space that Gorriti writes in and about is significant, because, "through seizing literary representations of space, women writers in Argentina [and other Latin American countries] create alternative or virtual spaces as sites of possibility and resistance against the social positions women have historically occupied" (Sierra 3). A connection is thus clear between resistance literature and travel literature, both of which are intertwined due to the shared goal of defying oppressive social policies and proposing diverse opportunities for change and advancement in society as a whole.

In travel literature the public space in which travel occurs leads to a private space in which experiences are recorded or drawn upon for travel texts that are made available to the public. An author's personal travel experiences are just as significant as scientifically mapped data that appears in charts and graphs that certain travelers, mostly males, provide in their own

travel narratives. In writing, records and data should not be given more prestige than a person's thoughts and feelings. Gorriti does not use scientific graphic organizers to document her journeys; instead she employs memory and experience as the foundations for her literature and her travel writings. Drawing from one's personal experiences to evaluate relations between knowledge and power and women's positions is a writing strategy that is typically associated with a feminist standpoint.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, Susan Bassnett clarifies that "a feminist concept of geography sees the world differently: here the goal is not to map every detail, but to reinsert a physical dimension into the discourse, to engage with the everyday as an end to itself, not as a means to be a different end" (Cambridge 230). Gorriti incorporates this feminist approach in her travel texts *Peregrinaciones de una alma triste* (1876) and *La tierra natal* (1889), which reflect her own unique viewpoint of the world around her and communicate that women have diverse roles within the private and public spheres of any nation, culture, and society.

In previous chapters, I explained that in relation to nineteenth-century Argentina, female positions were limited to fulfilling the positions of wife and mother, and women were commonly restricted to the private space of home. Political and literary figures from the Generation of 1837, such as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Esteban Echeverría, and José Mármol, promoted traditional models of female identity, namely the "angel of the house" and the "republican mother," as I have discussed earlier in this dissertation. These figures promoted female domesticity through their emphasis on women caring for home and family. Francine Masiello asserts that "[b]y enforcing woman's duties to the home and by emphasizing her empathetic qualities, leading intellectuals molded an image of the Argentine spouse and mother to suit their projects of state" (*Between* 54). Although the angel of the house and the republican mother were

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<sup>47</sup> See Ramazanoğlu and Holland (60-1).

promoted as the ideal models of female identity, alternative representations of female characterization emerged within particular literary works and challenged traditional female roles.

Through female protagonists Gorriti presents the multiplicity of female identity and develops an alternative model of female characterization for women of her time. The author herself exercised female agency throughout her life by writing and being involved in political and educational initiatives. Gorriti and fellow female authors of the time, such as Juana Manso,<sup>48</sup> Rosa Guerra,<sup>49</sup> and Clorinda Matto de Turner,<sup>50</sup> asserted themselves by actively participating in the private and public spheres of society through their literary production and tertulias. Masiello affirms that “[t]hrough their tasks as homemakers and mothers Argentine writers claimed a role for themselves within the projects of the nation. At the same time, the home allowed new concepts of female independence, providing a space for female authorship and an emerging dialogue about letters and politics” (68). Consequently, not only do the female protagonists of this literature embody women’s defiance to patriarchal standards of female positions in society, but the lives of the writers themselves offer radical models of female agency.

Juana Manuela Gorriti’s *Peregrinaciones de una alma triste* (1876) presents one example of how the female protagonist, Laura, renegotiates gender norms and offers an alternative model of female identification. In daily life Laura depends on her family and personal doctor to help cure her of tuberculosis. Weakened by the disease she is unable to do anything for herself.

However, Laura demonstrates her mental strength and intelligence through her realization that

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<sup>48</sup> Juana Manso (1819-75) was an Argentine author, editor, educator, and activist. See Davies, Brewster, and Owen (241-67).

<sup>49</sup> Rosa Guerra (early 1800s-94) was an Argentine writer and teacher. See Saporta Sternbach (46-56).

<sup>50</sup> Clorinda Matto de Turner was a Peruvian author who is prominent in Argentine literature due to living and writing in Argentina from 1895-1909. See Berg’s “Writing for Her Life: The Essays of Clorinda Matto de Turner” (80-9).

neither her family nor her doctor can cure her; she must be the one to cure herself. She does this by embodying the role of heroine and escaping from the oppressive control of her doctor. Laura challenges the typical female identity of nineteenth-century Argentina because she does not exemplify the angel of the house or the republican mother. Instead, she defies social norms and leaves her home and family to travel, meet new people, explore new places, and learn about the world around her. She does not embody the conventional image of women for this time period, because those models are incapable of encompassing her identity as a feminist heroine, rebelling against patriarchy. As Judith Butler clarifies, “if one ‘is’ a woman, that is surely not all one is; the term fails to be exhaustive, not because a pregendered ‘person’ transcends the specific paraphernalia of its gender, but because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently” (*Gender* 4). Though Butler asserts that gender is always excessive, Gorriti draws attention to the bounded qualities of gender through the characterization of her female protagonist. Through Laura, Gorriti depicts how the promoted female qualities of the time prove to be limiting and restrictive.

Laura exemplifies the role of heroine with her active participation in society, her challenge of conventional gender characteristics, both physical and mental, and due to her actions of saving herself from the danger of certain patriarchal powers. Gorriti seems to present a critique of Descartes and the Cartesian dualism of the separation between mind and body, which many feminists also critique as a false binary that has historically been used to justify masculine dominance over females. According to Elizabeth Grosz, “[p]atriarchal oppression justifies itself, at least in part, by connecting women much more closely than men to the body and, through this identification, restricting women’s social and economic roles to (pseudo) biological terms” (14). This reinforces the idea that women do not have the same physical or mental capacities as men,

which further marginalizes females and confines them to certain domestic roles based on the body and reproduction. However, the narrator of this novel describes how Laura refuses to be cast aside to die from her physical illness and devises her own plan to escape from the inept doctor who represents the oppression of dominant patriarchal authority. She explains that the supposedly rational doctor attacks the patient's illness without investigating the cause, specifying that Laura understands the cause and the proper solution. Laura points out that she knows what is best for her when she compares her illness to that of a fellow tubercular who was cured by travel: "como en mí, en él también, la dolencia del alma produjo la del cuerpo; y por ello más razonable que el doctor, que atacaba el mal sin cuidarse de la causa, recurrió al único remedio que podía triunfar de ambos: variedad de escenarios para la vida, variedad de aires para el pulmón" (Gorriti, *Peregrinaciones* 5). It is clear that the cure for Laura is travel, not only for her tuberculosis, but also to provide her with the opportunity to live and enjoy her life to the fullest. Although Laura is still ill, she demonstrates her strength in both mind and body by rejecting patriarchal control and fleeing to travel throughout South America.

Laura's illness is a construction that results from her existence under patriarchal authority, a symptom of patriarchal oppression that is also used as an excuse to further marginalize and suppress her. Grosz explains the importance of the correlation between the female body and female autonomy by stating "what is at stake is the activity and agency, the mobility and social space, accorded to women. Far from being an inert, passive, noncultural and ahistorical term, the body may be seen as the crucial term, the site of contestation, in a series of economic, political, sexual and intellectual struggles" (19). Laura's assertion of power over her body, her actions, and her life contributes to her freedom and toward presenting an alternative female characterization. When Laura boards a train to leave Lima behind, she takes the least

visible seat, avoids interaction with anyone, and is scared of her surroundings so much that she describes herself as “hundida, y como sepultada en mi asiento, me había desmayado... aquella fue mi última debilidad” (Gorriti, *Peregrinaciones* 12). Upon waking from a faint Laura realizes that she is safe and has successfully left Lima behind. She decides that she must have confidence in herself now that she is self-sufficient and is no longer dependent upon the domineering doctor. In this manner, Laura exercises female agency through mobility to create an unconventional space for herself in society.

Her self-reliance develops even further while she travels by boat and states that “yo había resuelto cerrar los ojos a todo peligro; y asiendo mi valor a dos manos, puse el pie en la húmeda escalera del vapor; rehusé el brazo que galantemente me ofrecía un oficial de marina, y subí cual había de caminar en adelante: sola y sin apoyo” (Gorriti, *Peregrinaciones* 13). In this manner Laura rejects any form of patriarchal support by asserting herself and her independence. Laura no longer doubts her capabilities and now revels in her newfound freedom. For this time period, Laura presents a radical model of female identity, in which a woman rejects male intervention into her life and instead promotes female self-reliance. The characterization of Laura is one way that Gorriti advocated for female independence from patriarchy and for the recognition of the restrictions that patriarchy placed on gender and identity. Butler states that

identifying with a gender under contemporary regimes of power involves identifying with a set of norms that are and are not realizable [...] this being ‘a man’ and this ‘being a woman’ are internally unstable affairs. They are always beset by ambivalence precisely because there is a cost in every identification, the loss of some other set of identification, the forcible approximation of a norm one never chooses, a norm that chooses us, but which we occupy, reverse, resignify to the extent that the norm fails to determine us completely. (*Bodies* 86)

With her characterization of Laura, Gorriti shows how traditional models of femininity were too rigid to adequately describe women’s experience. On the contrary, society must recognize and

appreciate diverse mental and physical qualities not as exclusively male or female, but as individual qualities that anyone may embody, regardless of their sex.

Laura's rebellion against the doctor is a total rebellion against patriarchy and the restrictive environment in which she is forced to live. Laura describes how she exercises her own will by stating that "rompí el método del doctor, y comí, bebí, corrí, toque el piano, canté y bailé: todo esto con el anhelo ardiente del cautivo que sale de una larga prisión...y olvidaba del todo la fiebre, la tos y los sudores, esos siniestros huéspedes de mi pobre cuerpo" (Gorriti, *Peregrinaciones* 14). Throughout her pilgrimage through the Sierras and the Amazon rainforest she continues to exercise female agency by empowering other women to escape from certain negative circumstances caused by living under patriarchal rule. In one instance Laura releases a female slave from her cruel master by giving the woman money to buy her own freedom and that of her children. The male slave owner is one example of patriarchal authority that Laura rebels against to strive for emancipation. The issue of slavery also brings into question conflicting definitions of subjectivity and humanity, which were used as justifications for repressive patriarchal social hierarchies that were often based on exclusion. Lea Fletcher confirms that during the nineteenth century "women did not exist, unless of course they were the daughter, sister, mother, wife, or chinita (young woman from the Pampa) of someone important" (94), and therefore women were dependent upon the male figure in their lives. In this case, the female slave was dependent upon her master until Laura sets her free. Gorriti challenges this social standard by conveying the message that regardless of race or social status all women are important and entitled to respect and freedom. Now that Laura has successfully freed herself of her own prison she is able to liberate other people and help them to fight against patriarchal suppression. Gorriti inspires and empowers women in this novel and in her other literary works.

In *Peregrinaciones de una alma triste*, Gorriti draws on her personal travels throughout Argentina, Peru, and Chile to create a fictional travel narrative about her experiences and encounters. The importance of Gorriti's travel literature is clearer when we consider that, as Pratt puts it, "women's access to travel writing seemed even more restricted than their access to travel itself. Often women published their travels in occasional forms such as letters" (Pratt, *Imperial* 168). Furthermore, this novel is significant because it represents a form of resistance literature due to the depiction of Laura's struggle against patriarchal oppression. In this travelogue the female protagonist's individual struggle against patriarchy is a reflection of the author's own political beliefs and rebellion. Gorriti demonstrates the challenge and renegotiation of traditional gender roles and conventional female characterization throughout her literary works and in particular in the actions of her female protagonists. Both the author and the female protagonist exercise female agency by actively participating in society, challenging conventional gender models and rebelling against patriarchal authority. This assertion of power and independence creates alternative models of female roles and identity in nineteenth-century Argentina.

Gorriti's travel narrative *La tierra natal* (1889) depicts the memories and experiences of her homeland as she travels through the province of Salta in Argentina. Her personal encounters and emotions contribute to the reminiscence of her birthplace and create a travel memoir. Her travel account incorporates topics of history and nostalgia that exemplifies autobiographical travel writing. In true Gorriti fashion, her travel writings also include stories of love, betrayal, and death. The author incorporates these topics in her stylistic use of fantastic elements to narrate the text. *La tierra natal* is also important due to the author's independent travels in the public space of society without a male chaperone such as a father, husband, or son. This travel memoir recalls the past and examines how historical events still affect the present and the future of Salta.

Furthermore, the author depicts how the past impacts the individuals who continue to live there and contributes to the nostalgia of those who left and long to return to their birthplace.

The position of the female traveler was precarious in nineteenth-century Latin America, because of her non-traditional position in society. The female traveler abandoned her conventional position in the private space of domesticity to pursue adventurous journeys in the public space of the world. In *La tierra natal* the narrator describes people's surprise and awe of a lone female traveler by writing that, “[ú]nica de mi sexo, y también á causa de mi edad, rodeábanme atenciones y cuidados” (Gorriti 7). In this case, her unique position as a female traveler instigates kindness and support from the male travelers around her. However, this rupture with the customary female position could also lead to criticism and disapproval from society and particularly from male-dominated political and governmental factions. For example, writers from the Generation of 1837, such as Sarmiento and Echeverría, encouraged women to live within the private space of domesticity and to fulfill the traditional roles of mother, wife, and caretaker of the home and family. Echeverría's *La cautiva* and Sarmiento's *Facundo* warn about the dangers women face once they leave the space of domesticity and inevitably encounter barbarism. Elizabeth Garrels explains Sarmiento's characterization of women as based on a binary with:

two types of women in the *Facundo*: the supposedly civilized ladies, both married and single, who tend to be figured as the prey of barbarism (e.g., the young girls from Tucumán), and the evil and/or humble women who somehow form a tie with—or are part of—barbarism itself (e.g., Rosas's mother, Santos Pérez's treacherous mistress, the black women who support Rosas). But beyond this obvious dichotomy, which clearly betrays political, racial, and class prejudices, there is an identification (perhaps unconscious) with a long misogynist tradition that has taken shape in metaphorical/mythological language associating women with the terrors of an uncontrolled nature. (288)

Women's subjugation and restriction of their mobility were shared goals that many male politicians promoted in nineteenth-century nation building. This ideology aided in the campaign

to populate the country and civilize it through marriage between current Argentines and the reproduction of future Argentine citizens.

Nevertheless, some elite Latin American women, like Juana Manuela Gorriti, rebelled against anachronistic ideologies of proper women's roles and endeavored to travel and record their voyages throughout South America and specifically in Argentina. Despite the apparent risks associated with these excursions, such as personal safety and health dangers, traveling provided new opportunities for women to gain levels of independence and self-reliance. Most importantly these expeditions enabled women to explore their individual identity and to question the confines of the patriarchal characterization of women that was so commonly promoted throughout the country. In one instance, a fellow male traveler asserts of Gorriti, "[m]uy valiente es la señora" (Gorriti, *La tierra* 14) because she is a female who is out of her traditionally condoned zone of domesticity. Gorriti displays bravery and courage to challenge patriarchal standards of the time to travel and write. It is through travel that she escaped the limited positions of angel of the house or the republican mother to embody variety of roles, both traditional and unconventional. Women traveled "as wives, sisters, daughters of missionaries, diplomats or envoys, as scientists or naturalists, as explorers seeking to prove something to themselves, as individuals in search of the unexpected, or of leisure or instruction, alone or accompanied, for personal or professional reasons" (Bassnett 231). In Gorriti's travel memoir she travels unaccompanied for a period of the trip and at times is accompanied by family members. She travels as an observer, historian, author, and individual who longs to be in her birthplace once again.

In *La tierra natal* the narrator describes her homeland of Argentina in detail, with physical descriptions of the cities and the people who inhabit them. The author expresses her emotions through her written illustrations of the land and people of Argentina. For example,

while traveling through Córdoba to reach Salta, Gorriti writes that the beauty of Córdoba is enough to erase her obsessive desire to see Salta. The narrator states that “[l]a visita de Córdoba con su fisonomía graciosa y original, el aspecto heterogéneo de los pasajeros y la belleza característica de los diversos paisajes que atravesábamos, pudieron apenas borrar aquella obsesión” (Gorriti, *La tierra* 3). The description of the place and people as diverse and beautiful demonstrates the narrator’s appreciation for the beauty that is found in the multiplicity of people and their land. The author also stops in Tucumán and declares, “¡Qué delicioso paraíso es Tucumán!” (Gorriti, *La tierra* 5). Interestingly, Gorriti also observes and records the negative when she states that “[l]ástima grande que esa valiosa producción, la caña de azúcar, llevada hasta las puertas de la ciudad, haya infestado su perfumado ambiente y engendrado esas legiones de horribles cucarachas que invaden los elegantes salones y las lujosas alcobas, cuyos artesanos roen y devastan...” (*La tierra* 5). Although Gorriti deems Tucumán a paradise, her negative description of details gives readers insight into the wealthy economy of the city which supports the elegant buildings and homes in Tucumán. Another Argentine town that she portrays as blissful is El Río de las Piedras. Gorriti states that “El Río de las Piedras, es en verdad, un paraje bellissimo, cubierto de huertos y alegres caseríos. El río que le da su nombre, tan temible en sus crecientes, corre apacible, cristalino y bullicioso entre dos verdes orillas” (*La tierra* 10). In this description, the details of the river create a clear image of the town that produces an ideal and tranquil country scene. The representations of the cities that Gorriti traverses are complimentary and lead to the depiction of her birthplace in Salta.

Along her travels Gorriti encounters places of her childhood that constantly remind her of people she once knew. Her remembrance of old homes and former friends and neighbors produces a nostalgia that establishes the tone of her depictions of the past. Batticuore proposes

that Gorriti's writing style "nos *revela* [...] algo que en verdad ya conocíamos por el tono y los giros de sus ficciones más autobiográficas: la *nostalgia*, la *melancolía*, el espíritu 'triste' de un alma que afecta alegría pero que confiesa no tenerla porque vive del pasado o mejor, porque busca siempre en él una felicidad irrecuperable en el presente" (*La mujer* 318). In Río de las Piedras the narrator describes a home and its past inhabitants while incorporating nostalgia, sorrow, and melancholy to illustrate what she sees and what she feels. Gorriti writes that "[l]a casa solariega de doña Nicolasa Boedo, aquella matrona tan santa, y como hija, esposa y madre, tan desaventurada; la casa vetusta como yo la conociera, estaba todavía como antes, con sus galerías de gruesos pilares cuadrados y sus techos de tejas rojas; pero otro dueño moraba en ella: sus antiguos habitantes habían desaparecido..." (*La tierra* 10, ellipsis original). The description of the home's present state recalls the past and, although the home is the same as it was in the old days, there is a sad and mysterious quality in the account due to the missing owners and the unfortunate life of Nicolasa Boedo. The reader can practically feel Gorriti's own blend of excitement, sorrow, and longing for a past that can never fully exist in the present or the future. The role of sentiment not only creates images for the reader, but elicits a response from the reader as well. The reader is able to understand and even feel the emotions that Gorriti incorporates into her literature.

The climax of the pilgrimage home is when Gorriti arrives in Salta. She conveys her elation and pure joy in her reaction of disbelief when she first sees the city: "¡A su pie, en la opuesta vertiente, allí cerca ya, álzase Salta la heroica, la Hermosa, la amada! ¿Es cierto? ¿No sueño? ¿No deliro?-preguntábame. Y, como al comenzar esta deseada peregrinación, estrechaba una contra otra mis manos y palpaba mi frente, no sin gran miedo de despertar" (Gorriti, *La tierra* 15). The sentiments of excitement and uncertainty communicate Gorriti's personal fear of

never returning to her homeland and never seeing Salta again. Her physical reaction is comparable to symptoms of an illness or an anxiety attack, emphasizing the importance of the trip for Gorriti and her overwhelming desire to be in her birthplace. The author goes on to describe Salta in detail:

¡Qué bella estaba! ¡Qué engrandecida! Sus calles, doradas por el sol de medio día, extendíanse desde las vertientes del cerro hasta las lomas del Oeste; desde las dilatadas planicies del Campo de la Cruz, hasta las orillas del Arias. De sus blancas azoteas, de sus verdes huertos, mundos de recuerdos alzábanse como bandadas de aves cantando y gimiendo... (Gorriti, *La tierra* 16, original ellipsis)

Gorriti describes a calm and picturesque scene of Salta. For Gorriti this is her true paradise due to her memories of childhood, home, and family. She does recognize, however, that certain things have changed in Salta, such as the people and the structures in the city.

The author's memory of the beauty of Salta coincides with the reality of the loveliness found in it once she returns. The present state of the city harks to the past and causes her to reminisce about historical events in Argentina. These beautiful cities are important because they illustrate Gorriti's idealization of her homeland and the past that is produced from her own experiences and nostalgia, which contribute to her feminist standpoint. She recognizes the changes that have occurred, but is reluctant "to accept the present as anything other than a trace of the past and to imagine the future at all [leads] her to find threads of continuity in a world constantly changed by men's violence" (Urraca 166). Gorriti remembers the people and the buildings of Salta as they once were and reacts to the differences in the past and the present state of the city by stating, "¡Salta! ¡Salta! —exclamaba—. Y mis ojos vagaban sobre aquella aglomeración de edificios desconocidos que se asentaban en el área de otros que yo dejara y que ahora reclamaba la memoria" (*La tierra* 16). Her memories of the past produce a nostalgia that is bittersweet because of the feeling of contentment to be home while being forced to process all of

the transformations in the city. Although Salta is forever changed and will never be exactly the way she remembers it, Gorriti does incorporate the historical past in her illustration of the present image of Salta. When recalling the past city while observing the present city, she describes both simultaneously: “Una cuadra más allá atravesábamos la plaza de armas, en otro tiempo sitio de revuelta, fusilamientos y fechorías revolucionarias; hoy un ameno jardín, donde los azahares, los jazmines y las rosas, mezclando sus perfumes, embalsaman el aura y llevan al alma anhelos de paz, de concordia y de amor” (Gorriti, *La tierra* 16). The historical past of national conflict and international war gives way to a now peaceful time that suggests a future of harmony and love for people in Salta and for the entire country of Argentina.

This travel memoir documents Gorriti’s return to Salta and specifically to her family’s old home. The memories produced by visiting her birth home lead to feeling of melancholy due to the mix of want and desire for a time and place that can never be duplicated in the present. The imagining of her childhood home produces sad memories and causes her to emphasize the emptiness of the space, now that the home has been torn down. The mix of joy and longing are clear when the narrator exclaims,

¡Más allá estaba nuestra casa!.. hoy...de otro dueño; había sido echada abajo y el lugar que ocupaba hallábase vacío como, en la vida, el de sus antiguos moradores. Haciendo ángulo á ese sitio de tristes memorias, en el solar donde en mi tiempo obstinábase en durar un vetusto edificio coronado de un balcón que la gente llamaba el Pretorio de Pilatos, un bello teatro con su elegante peristilo da frente á la Escuela Normal, construcción moderna de buen gusto, ocupado por un excelente plantel de educación. (Gorriti, *La tierra* 16-17, ellipses original)

In this example the proud image of the past of the family home and the author’s childhood is mixed with the wistfulness of nostalgia, because in reality she can never return home. What is left of her home is her memory of it and the surrounding city of Salta. Salta is significant for the author for the reason that she can physically return to her hometown, while she can only return to

her birth home through memory. Through her memory she is creating a space in time that rejects male perpetuated war and violence caused by patriarchal rule to produce a space of refuge that represents an imagined community free of hostility, instability, and destruction. The past is also important to Gorriti because she only gains access to those earlier times through her memories, and by returning to the physical land mark of her past, which generates her recollection of another time.

The nostalgia and longing for home is not unique to Gorriti, but is also experienced among her fellow travelers. She documents their mixture of melancholy and relief upon their arrival to their birthplaces. In one instance she highlights a conversation between the narrator and a man returning to Tala, who expresses his excitement to be in his homeland, while the narrator asserts that she will most likely never return her beloved homeland. He exclaims,

“¡Gracias á Dios! Ya estoy en mi tierra!”

“¡Ay! Yo dejaba la mía!”

“¿Volvería á verla más?”

“Probablemente, no.” (Gorriti, *La tierra* 69-70)

Their dialogue reveals the mix of positive and negative emotions associated with nostalgia and Argentina. The constant flow and change from the past to the present through their own arrival, departure, and return leads to the future in which new lives are established in and away from their homeland. However, as Gorriti states, “al dejar aquella tierra bendita, algo traje conmigo de su beatífica atmósfera” (*La tierra* 69). She will always carry a piece of her native country with her, no matter where she is in the world, due to the memories and nostalgia produced from her homeland.

During the entire journey Gorriti evokes the past through historical events and the effects of political conflicts that permanently changed Argentina. The issue of violence and the past is

prevalent in Gorriti's literature and is significant in this travel memoir, because of the effects of the aggression and fighting upon her homeland. In Gorriti's literature it is traditionally the male figure who displays violent behavior against others, especially in battle. It is important to recognize that the female characters who suffer wartime violence are not characterized as victims, but as survivors. Mary G. Berg has pointed out that "[g]ran número de los relatos más interesantes de los días de las guerras civiles muestran la fuerza y la perseverancia de las mujeres que logaron sobrevivir en una época de violencia, incertidumbre y alboroto" ("Juana" 241). The author characterizes the violence of the past as a consequence to the man-made battles of history that affected everyone, male and female. While making the trip to Salta, Gorriti's fellow male passengers, and in particular a "gauchi-político,"<sup>51</sup> recollect the fighting between the Federalist and Unitarian factions. Gorriti expresses her dismay toward the gruesome stories of war and death, and in response to her reaction the gauchi-político rationalizes the violence:

en aquel entonces, todo eso era nada más que hechos diarios. Poco después, muy poco después, aquel que ordenó esa doble ejecución, traicionado por uno de los suyos, cayó en manos de los federales; y... ¡qué casualidad! Precisamente en este mismo paraje que atravesamos, allí, bajo ese quebracho que ahora se divisa caído, él y seis de sus compañeros fueron degollados en presencia de Oribe, que se divertía con los refinamientos de crueldad empleados por el degollador, mandado venir expresamente para esto de Chilcas, donde todavía se ve en pie el rancho en que vivía, y donde murió paralítico, secos los brazos desde las uñas hasta el hombro [...]. (*La tierra* 9)

This war story displays the vividly brutal past, in which men kill and injure other men through the violence of war caused by political strife and who, from Gorriti's perspective, are responsible for the past proliferation of bloodshed. The neighbors and friends gone missing, along with the altered state of the cities and towns of Gorriti's homeland are heartbreaking consequences of

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<sup>51</sup> A gauchi-político was man that worked as a cowboy in the Argentine plains as a gaucho and who, in this case, was politically active. Juan Manuel de Rosas promoted the gaucho way of life and many gauchos were Federalist supporters.

civil war and remind Gorriti of the impossibility of returning to a childhood time and place for which she so desperately longs.

In *La tierra natal* Gorriti also addresses the differences in the old and the new generations living in Salta. She emphasizes the importance of not forgetting the past in order to understand and appreciate the sacrifices that many people were forced to make and the suffering of the Argentine population to attempt to build a united nation. Urraca proposes that this travel text, in particular “was one of Gorriti’s last attempts to cling to a memory that was by then a blurred series of tragic episodes. For the first time, she described the War of Independence and the civil war as a continuous process that contrasts with a peaceful present inhabited by younger citizens ignorant of their bloody past” (Urraca 169). Gorriti’s concern for the present generation and their ignorance of the past is clear when she writes

[e]n los siguientes días, miríadas de jóvenes, la segunda generación de los contemporáneos que yo dejé, vinieron, trayéndome al recuerdo la historia de sus padres; historia para ellos ignorada, y que, á esa hora, sus nombres despertaban en mi memoria con todos sus trágicos acontecimientos. Allá, en sombrías lontananzas, aparecíanme las encarnizadas luchas de aquellos dos partidos fratricidas: *Patria nueva y patria vieja*, [que dividieron á los hijos de Salta, retardando]<sup>52</sup> tantas glorias y causando tantos desastres. (*La tierra* 22)

For Gorriti, the new generation is a reflection of the old that evokes memories of Argentine history but simultaneously is far removed from experiencing or embodying the earlier period. Gorriti’s travel memoir is a unique means in which she writes about the present state of Argentina while reflecting on the past. This is important because of her thoughts and feelings about how war has changed the country and affected the older generation of Argentina much more than the current Argentine citizens.

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<sup>52</sup> Note that the Stockcero publication of this novel omits part of the original text. For the entire original version, see the Harvard University collection in American Libraries at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org).

Gorriti's fixation on how war has changed Argentina is a symptom of her nostalgia that gives way to her veneration of her homeland. For the writer, the people of the old generation were heroic and brave, regardless of gender, due to their participation in political conflicts. Both men and women suffered through war and were directly affected by the political strife that destroyed many families and resulted in the many deaths of people. Gorriti outlines what separates the old and new Argentine populations by writing, "[p]atria nueva: agrupación de ilusos y de mal intencionados que, al frente el enemigo, siempre pronto á invadir el suelo patrio, pedían instituciones cuando no era todavía posible dar sino combates. Patria vieja: falange de héroes, que, sin tregua ni descanso, guerreaban, hacía diez años, contra las poderosas huestes españolas" (*La tierra* 22). Gorriti's reverence for those who fought in the Wars of Independence is obvious in this comparison between the old and the new homeland and communicates the author's disdain for the present generation's new ways. It is because of Gorriti's travels in Argentina that she is able to compare and contrast the old ways of Argentine life with the current ones in a firsthand account. Her journey through the present state of Argentina evokes her memories of the past condition of Argentina, which allows her to travel through space and time. Her travel writings, and specifically this memoir, are important literary works that document the past and the historical events that produced a new version of Argentina and gave way to national development and growth.

Although *La tierra natal* is a travel memoir, Gorriti incorporates characteristics of fantastic literature into this text as a way to highlight the sorrowful consequences of war.

Fantastic literature includes a variety of features such as

[s]ueños, extravíos neuróticos, locura, alucinaciones, telepatía, comunicaciones macabras con el más allá, espiritismo, hipnotismo, etc., [que] constituyen un buen manual de los motivos más utilizados del género que Gorriti maneja con destreza con ciertas dosis de

humor y con una insistencia en la utilización de la primera persona narrativa que confiere verosimilitud a lo narrado. (Barrera 111)

In *La tierra natal* the author includes various tales of love, betrayal, and death which are common themes in her other literary works, such as “El guante negro” and *El pozo del Yocci*. The use of ghosts, dreams, and superstition all contribute to the fantastic quality of this literary work and demonstrate the author’s struggle with the violence of the historical events of the past and reality in the aftermath of the brutal experiences of war that changed Argentina forever. Gorriti also uses fantastic elements to rebel against patriarchy by creating dream-like scenes of death and strange events that contribute to an unsettling feeling within the reader, forcing the reader to question the scenes and examine the broader issues contained in her fiction.

During the author’s trip she invokes images of the past in her dreams and memories of the people and the city of Salta. Her thoughts lead her to compare the forgotten past to an empty present time that represents death and uncertainty. Gorriti seems to begrudge the loss and sacrifices that she and others made for their country, which, from her viewpoint, the new generation does not appreciate or even remember. Gorriti suggests that the new Argentine population is not willing to fight for progress, but still expects national advancement without doing the work. Gorriti expresses these feelings in *La tierra natal* during a night of insomnia:

[i]mposible dormir aquella noche. Las escenas del largo pasado invadieron mi mente en prolongadas series. Veíame en ellas parte integrante, actuando entre ese mundo de seres desaparecidos. Cuando sentí la casa en silencio y que todo en ella dormía, me levanté, abrí la puerta que daba al salón y apoyada en la reja de una ventana, pasé las horas de la noche contemplando el cielo de Salta, resplandeciente de estrellas y aquella fracción de la ciudad, aquella larga calle que de sur á norte la atraviesa familiar para mí, en otro tiempo, hoy desconocida, con sus casas renovadas y, á esa hora, silenciosas como los mausoleos de un cementerio. (20)

This description produces a mysterious tone and morbid images that employ silence, death, the unknown, the missing, and mausoleums. The use of these fantastic characteristics depicts

Gorriti's sentiments and worries about the past and present of Salta. In this case she subtly reveals her fears and emotions through fantastic elements that represent her feelings and emotions about how her homeland has changed.

In another instance of Gorriti's fantastic style, the narrator recounts the life and death of Agustín Zuviría from his childhood to manhood and his life in Salta, using strange dreams and premonition to foreshadow Agustín's death. On one occasion, strange dreams disturb Agustín at night:

á pesar de las rientes ideas con que se adurmió, un extraño ensueño vino aquella noche á visitar su mente. Vio de repente, saliendo de entre una niebla, posarse delante de él a Joaquín Zuviría. Su padre mirolo fijamente; y poniéndole una mano en el hombro: —*Oreinc*<sup>53</sup>—dijo, con voz tan vibrante que lo despertó. Agustín sonrió, recordando que había prometido á su padre una visita, llevándole á su primogénito —que era ahijado de Joaquín— cuando hubiera cumplido cinco años. Atribuyó aquel sueño á la misteriosa comunicación de los pensamientos, á través del espacio, entre seres que se aman. (Gorriti, *La tierra* 54-55)

This episode exemplifies the style of fantastic writing due to the employment of the protagonist's dream as an omen for the danger that lurks in the future. His father's appearance in the dream is that of a ghost-like figure who comes from the fog to warn him to prepare for an unidentified threat. Agustín rationalizes the puzzling vision by attributing it to telepathy between loved ones, which is another common trait found in fantastic literature.

Agustín's death is also an example of Gorriti's use of fantastic characteristics extending into her travel writing. Agustín dies unexpectedly, even though he was forewarned about his death, due to a ruptured artery. Gorriti mixes a grotesque description of his death with fantastic elements when she writes, “[s]obre vinieron vómitos de sangre alternados con síncope, anuncio de un desenlace fatal. La fiesta se tornó en llanto y confusión. Agustín fue llevado á Salta,

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<sup>53</sup> This means “preparate” or “prepare yourself” and is from the Basque language Euskara.

moribundo; al amanecer de aquella noche, á la misma hora que la visión había venido á decirle —¡Oreinc!— expiró, repitiendo con triste sonrisa la fatídica frase: —¡Oreinc!” (*La tierra* 56).

The uncanny concurrence of his vision and his death contribute to the mysterious account of his fate, all of which craft this scene into an illustration of fantastic literature. These fantastic factors,

que permean casi toda la producción de Gorriti invitan a explorar su relación con la realidad que describen. Ya sea que ocupen un espacio mínimo o que determinen el desarrollo completo de la narración; ya sea que se inserten en un contexto incaico remoto o en ambientes contemporáneos de la autora, todos buscan crear un sentimiento de extrañeza, postulador de inquietudes en el lector. (Arambel-Guiñazú 216)

The confusion and displacement the author experiences upon returning to her homeland is the same sentiment that the author attempts to produce in the reader. Gorriti’s desire to create a familiar and comfortable space for herself in the new and changing Argentine nation prompts her use of a fantastic style in her literature. Gorriti’s use of fantastic elements illustrates her feelings of melancholy, her obsession with another time period, the deaths of her friends and family, and the destruction and violence of war. This technique best conveys her fears about Argentine society and how to situate herself within the present, while clinging to the past.

In *La tierra natal* Gorriti also addresses the themes of love and betrayal. These are common subjects in her literary works that depict how national conflict impacts individual relationships. Gorriti’s insistence on using the unstable time periods of war for the setting to most of her narratives stems from her background “como descendiente de una familia de labor destacada en las luchas de la Independencia y la forjación de la nueva república, sus evocaciones de la niñez giran precisamente alrededor de circunstancias bélicas que modifican el espacio lárco tradicional” (Guerra Cunningham 62). Her depiction of interpersonal relationships between the sexes often reflects the damage done to individuals and their families by political

fighting around them. In this way Gorriti's literature illustrates the interpersonal and emotional consequences of the instability of war.

In *La tierra natal* the narrator recounts the love triangle between Martita Castellaños, Felipe García, and Irene Laas. Felipe and Martita meet in Salta and apparently fall in love, but their relationship is complicated, because he is a military man who must fulfill his obligations to fight in war. The narrator describes their ill-fated relationship within a context of war:

Martita lo amó desde el primer momento, con una pasión fanática que él también parecía participar. Era ese pícaro un bello capitán del ejército que una equivocada maniobra derrotó en Vilcapugio. Verse, amarse, y cambiar promesas, todo esto tuvo lugar y se acentuó en los cortos días de paso al Perú, en busca del ejército realista, llevando en perspectiva batallas y diarios combates. Martita quedose llorosa, el alma dividida entre el dolor y la esperanza. (Gorriti, *La tierra* 27)

This narrative emphasizes the couple's physical separation by war and demonstrates the resulting hardship not only for the men who had to fight, but for women too. Instead of crying in vain while Felipe is away, Martita decides to take action and undertake the responsibility to help Felipe return safely from war.

The couple's separation contributes to Martita's desperation and concern for her beloved, prompting her to take action to attempt to save Felipe from death. She endeavors to salvage their relationship by taking an oath before Christ. Gorriti writes that "[a]gitada por tales terrores, Martita hizo un Cristo: ofreció el Cristo venerado en el santuario de Sumalao, ir de rodillas las nueve leguas que median entre Salta y ese lugar de oración, para hacer en él una devota novena, si su amado volvía sano y salvo de aquella terrible campaña" (27). Despite her efforts, Felipe is reported dead in Vilcapugio and Martita, "aislada y sola, preparábase á dejar patria, hogar y familia para ir á encerrarse en un convento" (Gorriti, *La tierra* 28). The only way for Martita to escape the pain and reality of losing her loved one is to remove herself from society and to

devote her life to God. For her, the convent is a space of peace and refuge in which she is protected from the negative effects of war and the political turmoil that permeated Argentina.

In a twist of fate, Felipe returns to Salta after almost dying on the battlefield. An indigenous man saved him: “lo llevó á su choza, donde curó sus heridas y le dio vida y salud con una yerba maravillosa, secreto de los indígenas” (Gorriti, *La tierra* 29). This scene displays the author’s interest in and appreciation of native people, culture, and medical and scientific capabilities. In celebration of Felipe’s homecoming, Martita’s childhood friend Irene visits the couple in Salta. While Martita is overjoyed to have Felipe at her side and to see her old friend, she suspects something is amiss: “le sucedía encontrar á estos juntos, lado á lado y hablando quedo: —de mí se ocupan —pensaba— de seguro conciertan alguna dulce sorpresa á mi felicidad. Y era esta tan grande, que Martita comenzó á sentir un miedo supersticioso y recordó su voto y la nueva promesa que hiciera de inmediato cumplimiento” (Gorriti, *La tierra* 29). The superstitious premonition is another example of how Gorriti uses fantastic elements throughout her literary works, including travel literature. The fear that Martita experiences upon finding Felipe and Irene together foreshadows the future events that will change their lives.

Even though Martita fulfills her religious promise and makes the pilgrimage to spend nine days in worship, she loses Felipe to the army again. Upon her return to Salta she learns that he went back to the army and that Irene returned home to la Frontera. She is devastated and confused by their strange conduct of not waiting to say goodbye and by their lack of response to her letters that she lovingly sends to each of them. However, the mystery is solved when Martita learns that Felipe and Irene have betrayed her and are now husband and wife. Therefore, Martita’s fear and premonition was not caused by Felipe’s death or return, but his deception and abandonment of Martita. This is one example of how Gorriti’s love stories are bittersweet and

include fantastic characteristics, while often ending in tragedy. The misfortune that takes place reflects the time period's war and instability, displaying how the volatility of the nation affected individual relationships with negative consequences, sorrow, and regret.

Gorriti's nostalgia and description of beauty found in the various cities of her homeland demonstrate her desire to return to the past that she illustrates through literature. She idealizes the past while critiquing gender roles, social hierarchy, and the violence caused by war while under patriarchal rule. In these travel narratives Gorriti denounces slavery and patriarchy, while addressing issues of female advancement and individual emancipation. In this sense her travel literature is also a form of resistance literature, because the dissenting nature of the content. Gorriti's resistance literature and travel literature are mutually informing and co-implicated because both genres take a stance against particular regimes of power and provide subversive means to criticize them. Gorriti incorporates a feminist proposal into her resistance and travel literature by specifically rebelling against patriarchy, by offering alternative female identities, promoting women's mobility, and by encouraging women to exercise their power as individuals.

Juana Manuela Gorriti's *La tierra natal* provides readers with a blend of fictional and first-hand accounts of nineteenth-century Argentina that give insight into the effects of war and political instability on the Argentine people. The author's writing style mixes sentiment, historical fiction, and fantastic elements to create a unique approach to literature that illustrates her distinctive depictions of the past. Her travel writings provide a space in which women characters strived for their autonomy through exercising female agency in their personal mobility, which allowed women the freedom to travel and experience life in society's public sphere. Furthermore, Gorriti's occupation as an author challenged traditional female positions of

the time. Her female advocacy and rebellion against the patriarchal oppression of women is a prevalent theme throughout her literature.

This dissertation evaluates the progression of women's roles and characterization in nineteenth-century literary works and highlights the development of alternative and empowering descriptions of female characters. The previous chapters have revealed how, in nineteenth-century Argentine literature, traditional female identity and roles have developed and expanded to include unconventional and alternative characterizations of women. The first chapter analyzed how the "mujer varonil," the "republican mother," and the "angel of the house" contributed to the social construction of female identity. These figures have the potential to offer empowering portrayals of women, but they are also restrictive because the authors, Echeverría and Mármol, use these figures to promote their own political agendas in national consolidation and in doing so reinforce the positions of wife and mother. Chapter two of the dissertation takes the representation of women further by illustrating women as heroines that not only are active political agents in the space of domesticity, but in the public sphere as well. Juana Manso's protagonist Adelaida could be considered one of the most radical female protagonists from all of the texts studied in this dissertation because the author depicts her as exercising female agency to save herself and others, she participates in the private and public spheres, and challenges gender boundaries to present an unconventional and empowering model of female identity. The third chapter also offers alternative female characterizations through the protagonists Isabel and Aurelia. Gorriti uses these characters to denounce patriarchal oppression and male-perpetuated violence in society, while illustrating the bravery of women during brutal times of national conflict. In many ways Aurelia and Adelaida share commonalities because they both fulfill the position of heroine. These protagonists exemplify strength, intelligence, and free

will by their efforts and success to save their loved ones. Although Aurelia is killed by her husband, her death further intensifies Gorriti's condemnation of men's violence and the oppression of women. The final chapter of my dissertation analyzes how, in *La tierra natal* and *Peregrinaciones de una alma triste*, Gorriti demonstrates that travel presents liberating opportunities for women. Laura and the narrator of *La tierra natal* use travel to move and participate in private and public spheres of society. Gorriti's Laura is a representation of how an oppressed and subjugated woman can empower herself by believing in her own capabilities. This protagonist's transformation from powerless to empowered is developed through Gorriti's writing in which the character challenges dominant conceptions of gender identity, exercises her free will and agency, and in doing so presents an alternative model for female identity and positions. In conclusion the texts studied in this dissertation gradually create spaces of rebellion and advancement for women by intertwining women, travel, and nation-building in nineteenth-century resistance literature.

## Conclusions

This dissertation demonstrates how literature of nineteenth-century Argentina contributed to the social advancement of women through rebelling against traditional gender roles. Specifically, this dissertation explores literary works' reflection of constant negotiation of women's positions and identity within society as one manner of development and progress for this period. We see that particular elite nineteenth-century Argentine writers contributed to defying patriarchal restrictions through their literary texts. Their writing affected females' social construction in nineteenth-century Argentina by modeling more varied and liberating roles. Although there were still limitations enforced upon female positions and functions in society, these advancements led to positive changes and gave women more freedom as individuals to broaden their daily activities and interests by participating more in the public sphere of society. This research displays how certain authors defied patriarchal standards to create a variety of alternative models for change that advocate for the recognition of the multiplicity of female identity. Furthermore, this work demonstrates that despite their historical marginalization, women played a vital role in the development of the nation and did not leave the formation and progress of Argentina only to the men; women were eager and active participants as well.

In foundational texts of nineteenth-century Argentina, male politicians and authors used female figures as symbols of civilizing agents and domesticity. *La cautiva* and *Amalia* are examples of how male writers incorporated women into the struggle of nation building to promote the men's personal ideologies. The characters in these literary works depict the

limitations of female identity, as we can see in the writings of Mármol and Echeverría. To a certain degree their protagonists also represent models of advancement through their unconventional actions in society. As civilizing agents, women gained importance in the time of national development. This led to opportunities for women to challenge their traditional positions and to exercise personal agency. The female protagonist in *La cautiva*, María, embodies the *mujer varonil*, characterized by her endurance and strength that is more often ascribed to men, but her identity is limited by her role of wife and mother. María is forced to act as a *mujer varonil* to save her family, representing an alternative female identity for the time period. Mármol's protagonist, Amalia, also represents an unusual, yet limited, model of non-traditional female behavior. Amalia depicts the proper angel of the house, yet she negotiates between this position and that of an independent person who enjoys an uncommon amount of freedom due to her status as a wealthy widow. With Amalia and María, Mármol and Echeverría offer restricted versions of alternative female identities as they depict traditional and non-traditional female roles in nation building.

Radical models of female identity in which women exercised their agency to consequently embody the role of heroine opposed the conventionally constrained feminine characterizations of the time. Juana Manso's *Los misterios del Plata* is one example of how an author dared to rebel against patriarchal restrictions to contest society's marginalization of women and to fight for emancipation from patriarchy. The protagonist, Adelaida, represents an intelligent and strong woman who saves her husband from Federalist forces. This inversion of gender roles, in which the heroine saves the male captive, is unique for the time period and encourages the recognition and appreciation of women's participation in national consolidation.

*Los misterios del Plata* participates in gendered resistance literature because it destabilizes conventional gender roles to rebel against the patriarchal order of society to promote advancement. Manso's literature goes beyond what Echeverría's and Mármol's literary works offer because she not only defies the Federalist political party and Juan Manuel de Rosas, like her male counterparts, but she contests the patriarchal hierarchy of society that perpetuates inequality and conflict in society. Through resistance literature Manso's heroine illustrates how women can rebel against political regimes and the social structures that oppress them.

Juana Manuela Gorriti's literature also focuses on the depiction of women's identity and their roles in national conflict. In "El guante negro" and *El pozo del Yocci* she focuses on the effects of war on interpersonal relationships and how national conflict can destroy families and friendships and further divide the Argentine population, instead of consolidating the nation. The capable female protagonists in these literary works are involved in the political strife of the time. Gorriti's illustration of these figures as active political agents is an appeal for society's appreciation for women's participation in national conflict and the acknowledgment that they are not passive observers in the process of nation building. These texts are also forms of resistance literature because they contest strict gender positions that limit women's positions in society, and they denounce the violence and inequality perpetuated by patriarchal ideology and male dominance in society.

Gorriti's travel literature is another form of resistance literature that deplores patriarchy and its oppression of women. Her travel narratives, such as *La tierra natal*, imagine a unique space in which the female characters exercise individual agency and independence through personal travel. This displacement of domesticity allows women greater freedom and challenges stereotypical gender roles. In *Peregrinaciones de una alma triste* Gorriti criticizes male authority

through the depiction of the relationship between the protagonist, Laura, and her male doctor. Laura must take control over her life and take action to escape the confinement of patriarchy. She languishes near death under the doctor's authority and realizes that the only chance of survival, and perhaps to even thrive, is to break free from his power and to travel. Once she liberates herself from this patriarchal figure her life is revitalized. Through this defiance of patriarchy, Gorriti demonstrates the renegotiation of gender roles and identity through her female protagonist. This alternative model of personal agency represents a distinct example of advancement and rebellion against patriarchy to assert female power and autonomy.

One of the implications of this research is that advancement occurred in nineteenth-century Argentina through the expansion of models of female identity in the literature of various authors. Although the degree of progress varies from each author, there was a considerable number of alternative and, at times, radical female characterizations depicted in literary works that contributed to promotion of liberating female identities. The recognition and perpetuation of the multiplicity of women's individuality can be identified as a feminist perspective for advancement in nineteenth-century Argentina.

Another implication of this dissertation is that resistance literature and travel narratives are mutually informing and co-implicated. Authors employ these genres to destabilize conventional gender roles and identities to rebel against the patriarchal order of society that restricts and oppresses women. These types of literature depict the negotiation between the public and private spheres; demonstrate how individual agency is established through alternative positions, including that of the heroine; and illustrate the construction of alternative female models of identity through gender inversion, blurring gender lines, or, in some cases, directly contesting gender divisions by blending masculine and feminine characteristics in the depiction

of the protagonists. These genres are significant in promoting advancement for women and are tools of a feminist rebellion to patriarchal oppression of women in nineteenth-century Argentina. Although these authors did not achieve full emancipation for women through their literature, they were able to expose false binaries, promote the multiplicity of female identity, and advocate for the recognition of the diverse and important roles women fulfilled in nineteenth-century Argentina.

This research concludes that authors such as Juana Manso and Juana Manuela Gorriti promoted a feminist perspective that encouraged female advancement in society. This finding creates further research questions to explore. An investigation into what other literary genres, in addition to resistance literature and travel writings, contribute to the advancement of women in this time would be beneficial to the expansion of this research. Moreover, studying non-literary forms of writing, such as that of journals and newspapers, would reveal more detail into how these fields contributed to a feminist perspective. Lastly, analyzing this literature with that of other Latin American countries during the nineteenth century would illuminate unique correlations or divergences that would perhaps contribute to a better understanding of women's roles and characterizations in society.

In conclusion, the conception of female identity is expanded through the literary challenging of traditional female roles in society, which created female advancement for the time period. Both male and female authors of nineteenth-century Argentina produced a wealth of literature that contributes to and demonstrates the progression roles of women in Argentina during this time period. Female authors promoted feminist perspectives that challenged patriarchy in their literature and in their own daily lives. This research asserts that nineteenth-century Argentine literature intertwines women, travel, and nation building to produce a space of

female advancement that recognizes the diversity of women and encourages female participation in society.

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