THE INEXTRICABLE CONNECTION OF THE
PERSONAL AND THE POLITICAL IN
TRANSITION-ERA SPAIN

by

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ABSTRACT

During the last years of the 1970s, Spain faced a shift from dictatorship to democracy upon the death of dictator, Francisco Franco. This period of change from dictatorial regime to democracy is referred to as the Transition. This era inspired new political ideas and reflection on societal attitudes. Most specifically related to this thesis, feminism began to gain ground. The two works that I explore, the magazine, *Vindicación feminista* and the novel, *Crónica del desamor* exemplify the idea that the personal is political, and particularly for women living in this time through their exploration of highly politicized and at the same time, quite personal themes.

This thesis establishes that there is an indivisible link between the personal and political by analyzing the themes shared by the two primary works that elucidate this connection: reproductive rights, sexuality, women’s writing, labor, and the constructs of motherhood and family. *Vindicación feminista* and *Crónica del desamor* demonstrate the multidimensional face of feminism through their respectively non-fictional and fictional approaches while sharing language and themes. The magazine considers the Transition through an explicitly political lens while highlighting the personal and the novel does so through an intimate point of view, interweaving the political. Ultimately, both texts advocate the focus on the personal, daily aspect of the political and the importance of this connection in achieving societal progress.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the women in my life and in the world who share my dream of true equality and progress on a global scale.
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INTRODUCTION

“Fue la vanguardia que anunciaba la voluntad de muchas mujeres de participar activamente en la creación de un nuevo orden de convivencia.”
–Carmen Peña Ardid, 2015

In 1975, Spaniards were tasked with the formation of a new governmental order in the wake of the death of their dictator, Francisco Franco. This period of change from dictatorial regime to democracy is referred to as the Transition. The Transition in Spain fomented an era of great social reflection, particularly because thoughts and ideas that were subjugated during Franco’s reign came to light. With the opportunity to voice alternative perspectives more freely, progressive ideas arose. However, change came slowly and this delay necessitated activism. One group that championed collective action to improve the lives of marginalized peoples, principally women, was feminist activists. These feminists worked towards change on the personal and political level, proving these components to be inextricable.

This thesis establishes the link between the personal and the political through the lens of Second Wave feminist theory. More particularly, I concentrate on the themes of reproductive rights, sexuality, women’s writing, and labor and the ways in which these topics emerge within the two primary texts of focus. I also illustrate the bond of private, daily existence and public, political life in Transition-era Spain. I view these two facets as inseparable and crucial stimuli of social progress, specifically from the perspective of collective action.

Two works in particular epitomize this connection between the personal and the political and delve into each of the themes outlined above. These works are *Vindicación Feminista*, a
feminist magazine founded by Lidia Falcón and Carmen Alcalde that circulated from 1976 to 1979, and the novel *Crónica del desamor* written by Rosa Montero and published in 1979. These two works clearly demonstrate that in this era, daily life in an environment such as the Transition is political in itself. The texts have not been studied in juxtaposition before, despite sharing many themes such as explorations of abortion and contraception, sexuality and violence, women’s writing, and labor (both salaried and unsalaried), Montero’s involvement in the magazine, and the representation of the lived experience of women during the Transition. Although *Crónica del desamor* is fictional, it provides a portrait of daily life during Franco’s dictatorship and into the Transition. Through its journalistic nature, *Vindicación feminista* provides a similar, yet non-fictional perspective. More specifically, I have chosen these two works in particular because they have not been compared previously and they share similar language and an irreverent tone that employs humor. There are more works that could enter into this study; for example, future research might include novels by Montserrat Roig and Ana María Moix who also feature prominently in *Vindicación feminista* in both writing and editing and whose works utilize a satirical mood. However, this thesis focuses on *Crónica del desamor* and *Vindicación feminista* because the two texts are most representative of the multifaceted face of feminism in Spain through their exploration of similar themes through distinct approaches that unite the political and the personal from each side of the spectrum. This thesis determines that *Crónica del desamor* relates the intimate and personal side of politics, while the writings in *Vindicación Feminista* are explicitly political with a very strong tie to the personal.

**The Dismantling of Francoism: Historical Context of the Transition in Spain**

The feminist activism growing in mid-1970s Spain was characterized by the ideas of Second Wave feminists and Marxist theory. This thesis centers more squarely on feminist theory,
particularly that of women such as Kate Millett, Carol Hanisch, Adrienne Rich, Hélène Cixous, and Lidia Falcón. Specifically, this work focuses on the concept that “the personal is political,” a phrase that was coined in 1970 in Carol Hanisch’s eponymous essay. The idea that the personal is political summarizes that, “personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions…there is only collective action for a collective solution” (Crow 114). The political-personal and collective action go hand in hand and particularly, the Second Wave Spanish feminists who Celia Valiente describes, “took part in collective action in order to achieve not only the advancement of women’s status but also the political transformation of the country” (Banaszak 34). That is to say that Spanish feminists not only worked towards women’s advancement, but also had to work on the governmental shift from dictatorship to democracy, intertwining private and political further.

Spanish feminists confronted a country that had been altered by Franco’s laws and ideologies. “La ideología del franquismo se basaba en ensalzar el papel tradicional de la mujer como madre y esposa recluida en el ámbito doméstico. El dogma propugnado era tener muchos hijos y no incorporarse al mercado laboral porque esa era la función del padre de familia” (Peréz Acosta 5). These pronatalist, anti-feminist beliefs dictated the culture of the country for 36 years, from 1939, when Franco seized control of Spain, until his death in 1975. In the almost four decades of power, policies that inordinately targeted and punished women took hold and as such, the task of dismantling not only a dictatorship to create a democracy, but also of altering the legislation was certainly not a simple one. “After 1975, policymakers began to dismantle the discriminatory legislation inherited from Franco’s time and to promote women’s rights and status” (Banaszak 42). Examples of such legislation that disadvantaged women include laws that punished women, but not their husbands, severely for adultery and laws criminalizing abortion
and contraception. The patriarchal and Catholic legacy of Francisco Franco’s regime did not extend to legislation alone; his systematic oppression of women encompassed cultural policies like the segregation of sexes in schooling and discouraging women to join the labor force. “The regime promoted an ‘ideal’ image of womanhood as ‘eternal’, passive, pious, pure, submissive woman-as mother for whom self-denial was the only road to real fulfillment” (Graham 184). This construction of womanhood that Graham mentions didn’t make room for single mothers, working women, or any type of woman who did not rely on a man or might not fit within the rigid patriarchal Catholic definition of what she was supposed to be.

With the cumbersome challenge of transitioning to democracy and undoing the damage of Franco’s regime, Spanish feminists relied on collective action. The period of transition in Spain was not an epoch of easily won reform, but rather a constant battle to establish a position of equality for women and to concretely change the laws imposed under Francoist rule that did not automatically disappear with his death. In Rosa Montero’s piece, The Silent Revolution: The Social and Cultural Advances of Women in Democratic Spain, she asserts that,

Francoism cannot be understood without taking into account the fact that until 1975 […] a married woman in Spain could not open a bank account, buy a car, apply for a passport, or even work without her husband’s permission. And if she did work with her husband’s approval, he had the right to claim her salary. (381)

Montero’s description of women’s status under Franco’s regime further establishes the complete lack of control women had over their personal and political lives.

Beyond what Montero elucidates, in more than one tangible case, we see the laws that penalized women specifically for adultery, abortion, and contraceptive use did not change for years after Franco’s death. Divorce was not legalized until 1981. Abortion was legalized in Spain in 1985 in the Ley Orgánica 9/1985, but only in three specific situations: when the mother’s life is in danger, when the fetus’s life is in danger, and in cases of rape. In the case of adultery, the
law punishing women specifically was eliminated in 1978 and the sale and advertisement of contraceptives was decriminalized in 1978.\textsuperscript{1} Despite its decriminalization in 1978, contraception was not completely legalized and accessible until 2010, with the Ley Orgánica 2/2010.\textsuperscript{2} The legacy of Catholic, authoritarian Spain remained for years, reflected as well in the disproportionately low employment rate of women, particularly when compared to other European countries: “In 1970 only 18 percent of the country's women were employed, compared with 26 percent in Italy and 30 to 40 percent in northern Europe” (Meditz). Women were confronted with the remnants of dictatorship in every facet of their lives, making the political explicitly personal as it permeated their daily existences.

**Theoretical Frame: The Personal is Political and Beyond**

This connection between the personal and political is exemplified by Kate Millett’s theory of sexual politics. Published in 1970 as an extension of her doctoral dissertation, *Sexual Politics* is considered a seminal text in the second wave of feminism. Millett’s book is a feminist literary criticism of three male authors, D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Norman Mailer and the way they write about sex and women. Most relevant to this work is her chapter entitled “Theory of Sexual Politics,” which outlines her theory on politics and the patriarchy. She states that “[t]he term ‘politics’ shall refer to power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another” (23). She goes on to develop this theory by stating that the power-structured relationships she sees are ones in which men control women. She

\begin{itemize}
  \item Adultery for women was decriminalized in 1978. Before, it was punishable by prison sentence. It was illegal for men as well, but not punishable by prison sentence and was viewed much more leniently.
  \item This law relaxed restrictions on abortion (although women still have to wait three days to abort between telling their doctors they desire the procedure and thus being informed of other options) and included birth control as part of the common covered services for the National Health System.
\end{itemize}
explains the root of this power structure as one acquired by birthright and that the structure (what she refers to as politics) reflects the true nature of power between the sexes. For Millett, women have a distinct lack of representation in political structures. She cites Max Weber’s concept of *Herrschaft*: “a relationship of dominance and subordinance” (25), a relationship that Millett saw reflected in her society between males and females.

Millett establishes that in the 1970s, society was a patriarchy and that every aspect of life was influenced by constructs reinforced by the hegemony of masculinity. In Millett’s opinion, the essence of politics was power and due to the nature of society, power rested exclusively in male possession. Her chapter on theory goes on to support this idea as she focused on the “avenues” of power exclusively in male custody. The first of these is “Ideological.” Millett posited that, “sexual politics obtains consent through the ‘socialization’ of both sexes to basic patriarchal policies with regard to temperament, role, and status” (26). Essentially, she saw sexual politics as maintaining its power through socialization in that males and females were both educated to follow and stay within their traditional gender roles, roles that supported the superiority and power of males and the submission and inferiority of females. Participation in these gender roles constituted consent for Millett and in turn, that consent legitimized the oppression and higher status of men.³ The binary nature of culture experienced by the sexes led to the power division between males and females and bolstered the male hold on power and control.

This male grip on power and dominant position in society is something that Millett also attributed to sociological structures. The principle of these institutions within patriarchal society was the family. She explains that the family was a mirror of larger society and a tool used to

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³ Millett is criticized for failing to credit the originator of this idea, Simone de Beauvoir. Toril Moi specifically outlines this criticism in her book, *Sexual/Textual Politics*. 

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foment conformity from the ground up. This section of her theory is particularly relevant to this work in that during Francisco Franco’s dictatorship, family and pronatalist policies were specifically used to encourage conformity and to return power to the patriarchal state. According to Helen Graham the family unit was a reproduction of governmental order and, “[t]he family, as envisaged by the regime, was unthreatening because it connected vertically with the state…Thus it reinforced the unity and power of the state” (184). Even further, the regime handed out prizes to mothers who had many children, sometimes even given personally by the dictator himself. Millett cited census practices of naming males as the head of household, essentially giving them ownership over their wives and children, as reducing other members of the family to property (33).

She also criticized family structure by referring specifically to the “Catholic precept that ‘the father is head of the family’” (33), particularly pertinent to Spain’s Catholic society. She elaborated, “Serving as an agent of the larger society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state which rules its citizens through its family heads” (33). For Millett, family reinforced traditional gender roles and allowed men more power not only in the public sphere but in their private lives as well, offering limited outlets for women to find any semblance of power at all. In the family structure, the role of mother and father was to inculcate their children in societal roles and this socialization as typically pertinent to the role, temperament, and status that the patriarchy imagines for each sex. The nuclear family structure encouraged the stability of the established societal order. Francisco Franco ascribed to this concept of the family as a prototype for patriarchal society, evidenced through his championing of policies that encouraged female deference to their fathers or husbands.
In the same realm of gender inequality, Kate Millett also explored labor, both salaried and unpaid. Especially germane to this thesis, she wrote, “In modern reformed patriarchal societies, women have certain economic rights, yet the ‘woman’s work’ in which some two thirds of the female population in most developed countries are engaged is work that is not paid for” (Millett 40). To be treated in this thesis, this concept is explored in depth in *Vindicación feminista*, particularly in reference to domestic, unpaid labor by mothers.

Motherhood is included as part of the family structure and explored in depth by Adrienne Rich. This thesis consults Adrienne Rich’s *Of Woman Born* and her conceptualization of motherhood as possessing a two-fold meaning. She makes the distinction “between two meanings of motherhood, one superimposed on the other: the potential relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children; and the institution, which aims to ensure that that potential—and all women—remain under male control” (13). She clarifies that “[t]his book is not an attack on the family or on mother, except as defined and restricted under patriarchy” (14). This idea connects concretely with Francoist, pronatalist Spain that encouraged higher birth rates to bolster the Catholic dictatorship and thus confined mothers to the domestic space and to only exist within their roles as mother and wife, not as woman.

Nancy Chodorow explores these theories as well in *The Reproduction of Mothering*, particularly viewing motherhood as an institution that reinforces patriarchal norms as well as recognizing the unequal female labor involved in mothering. “Women’s mothering also reproduces the family as it is constituted in male-dominant society. The sexual and familial division of labor in which women mother creates a sexual division of psychic organization and orientation” (209). Chodorow reflects Millett’s concept that family is a mirror of society but goes further. In patriarchal societies, the burden of parenting falls squarely on the shoulders of women
without recognition of their disproportionate emotional and physical labor. Chodorow also proposes that, “The social organization of parenting produces sexual inequality, not simply role differentiation” (214). These theories highlight the inequality in labor, but also the way in which motherhood as an institution was used to keep women out of the workforce and at home in Francoist Spain.

While Kate Millett probes the theme of sexuality, the theory and exploration of the theme carried out by Pilar Escario, Inés Alberdi, and Ana Inés López-Accotto is most relevant here for a Spanish feminist perspective. Their consideration of the topic is organized in the context of Spain during the Transition.

La liberación sexual fue uno de los temas sobre los que se hicieron reflexiones más profundas y revolucionarias en el movimiento de mujeres. Se trataba de cuestionar la sexualidad femenina tal y como se había entendido a lo largo de la historia, en toda su extensión no limitándose únicamente a cuestiones individuales de la sexualidad sino que se enlazaba también, con la denuncia de la familia patriarcal y de la sociedad capitalista. (Escario 175)

The authors elaborate that the first step towards sexual liberation in Spanish society presented a confrontation with social norms that rejected a female sexuality not directed towards reproduction. They also mention the “sometimiento ancestral al placer masculino” (177), which is developed in this thesis as the prevalence of male pleasure manifested both publicly and privately. This examination of sexual pleasure extends to a discussion of vaginal orgasm or rather, the perception of penetrative sex as the only way to obtain sexual pleasure. Through this, “el clítoris se transformó en un emblema de la nueva sexualidad que negaba el orgasmo del varón en la vagina como un ejemplo de la ‘cultura falocrática’ que ataba a la mujer a los anticonceptivos, al aborto o al parto no deseado” (178). Of the documents that the book cites, most purport the domination of male sexuality in patriarchal societies and the necessity of sexual liberation for the empowerment of women sexually and socially.
Women’s writing presents another site of female empowerment. This thesis uses Hélène Cixous’s perspective, introduced in “The Laugh of the Medusa” in 1976. She writes, “Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement” (875). In both Crónica del desamor and Vindicación feminista, iterations of this conception of women’s writing appear. Montero’s novel features a metafictitious element and female characters who write. The magazine is written exclusively by women and pertains to the feminist movement and women’s issues, incarnating the principles posited by Cixous. Even more importantly, the writing in the two works of focus in this thesis subvert patriarchal norms and give women a voice, a concept championed by Cixous, “woman has never her turn to speak – this being all the more serious and unpardonable in that writing is precisely the very possibility of change, the space that can serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursory movement of a transformation of social and cultural structures” (879). This “transformation of social and cultural structures” relates concretely to this thesis: through Rosa Montero’s novel and the writing by Spanish women in Vindicación feminista, the Transition in Spain finds a distinctly female voice that goes against traditional systems and institutions and forms a marked, collective space for women. In this way, the personal act of “writing her self” becomes a political exploit: it dismantles the political structures that oppress women and gives them a space to begin.

In the context of Spain’s transition from dictatorship to democracy, the idea that “the personal is political” was imbued with an even deeper meaning. “Desde el punto de vista ideológico, considerar como políticos los temas relacionados con la vida personal tenía un

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4 A useful introduction to Cixous’s oeuvre can be in found in Sexual/Textual Politics by Toril Moi, “It is largely due to the efforts of Hélène Cixous that the question of an écriture féminine came to occupy a central position in the political and cultural debate in France in the 1970s” (Moi 100). Although Moi highlights the French authors series of writings, this thesis centers on the text mentioned above, “The Laugh of the Medusa” because of its integration of metafiction.
carácter totalmente innovador y un sentido revolucionario, ya que significaba ‘hacer descender’ a
la política al terreno de lo privado, romper con la dicotomía entre lo privado y lo público que
dejaba fuera de la política aspectos fundamentales de la vida de las personas, abriendo la
posibilidad de plantear un tipo de reivindicaciones impensables hasta entonces” (Escario 118).

Throughout all of the themes explored by *Vindicación feminista* and *Crónica del
desamor*, as well as the theoretical framework outlined above, there is one undercurrent that
needs to be named specifically. This is the idea of woman as a social and economic class. Lidia
Falcón, editor of *Vindicación feminista*, prominent feminist activist, and lawyer elucidates this
concept in her 1981 volume *La razón feminista*. She writes that, “La tesis de esta obra es la de
que la mujer es una clase social y económica, explotada y oprimida por el hombre, que, en
consecuencia, se constituye en clase antagónica para ella” (Falcón 413). She establishes that
women have suffered a distinct oppression as a collective throughout history and across the
world. Falcón compares this oppression with that of the slave, but with an important difference.
“[L]a mujer es la esclava o la sirvienta del padre, del marido, de los hermanos, de los hijos
varones más tarde. Ella es la paria, el esclavo o el siervo nunca manumitido, porque la mujer no
puede jamás comprar su libertad, lo que la diferencia en su contra del esclavo” (415). This point
of view is particularly useful to this thesis as Falcón sees reproduction, sexuality, and domestic
work as the three exploitations of women and her ideas provide context for the feminist writings
the reader will encounter in the following chapters.

Armed with this theoretical background, this thesis compares the manifestations of
reproductive rights, sexuality, women’s writing, labor, and the patriarchal construct of
motherhood and family in each of the primary works, *Crónica del desamor* and *Vindicación
feminista*. The texts share motifs and styles that are illuminated in the following chapters. These
chapters highlight how the political permeated daily life, making private aspects part of public, political discourse. I preliminarily conclude that through these themes, the works show the indivisible link between the personal and the political, specifically for women living during the Transition in Spain.
VINDICACIÓN FEMINISTA: TOWARDS POWER AND FREEDOM

“Romper la alienación de los acostumbrados tutelajes.
Reconocernos, y hacernos reconocer,
hacia el poder y la libertad.”
-Vindicación feminista, 1976

The magazine, *Vindicación feminista*, founded by Lidia Falcón and Carmen Alcalde in 1976, provides a tangible example of radical, gendered activism that flourished in the late seventies in Spain. It exemplifies Kate Millett’s idea that the personal is political. While the magazine is explicitly political, it addresses the problems that women confronted in their daily lives. Its total of thirty issues, published from July 1976 to July 1979, explore the themes of reproductive rights (abortion and birth control); sexuality; women’s writing; labor, both domestic and salaried; motherhood and family. The all-female staff wrote with an often irreverent or sarcastic tone and was explicit in its radical feminist activism as a result of the severe oppression of political ideologies that did not fit within the Catholic, patriarchal structure of Franco’s regime. I posit that life during the Transition, particularly for women, was political in itself and that *Vindicación feminista* offers an instance of the strong connection between the political and the personal. *Vindicación* provides a window into the more activist, militant side of Spanish personal life. The magazine is the epitome of post-Franco radical reaction against the repressive, patriarchal policies that infiltrated everyday life.

It is important to note the role of Lidia Falcón, the magazine co-founder and editor, in Transition-era politics and the development of the feminist movement in Spain. Although the
dictatorship in Spain had ended in 1975, the continued violent, patriarchal nature of Spain’s
government and society that continued into the Transition necessitated the activism carried out
by Falcón and women like her. Falcón founded Spain’s first Feminist Party in 1979 and
championed collective activist work by feminist groups. Her founding of *Vindicación feminista*
was part of this activism, and in her own words,

> Era preciso disponer de la revista que fuera el núcleo de unión de todas las
> mujeres que quisieran compartir el ideal feminista…Véía con claridad que el
> inmediato paso que yo tenía que dar…era fundar un medio de comunicación entre
> las mujeres españolas, de debate de los diferentes temas feministas que no se
> habían estructurado ni ordenado todavía. (Falcón 54)

The purpose of the magazine was to create a space for women to talk about the issues that
affected them and to give them a forum to unite these ideas. Unfortunately, the magazine was
only published for three years due to economic crisis and a lack of popular readership.

*Vindicación* primarily circulated among feminist and activist groups, a rather small segment of
Spanish society at that time. I consider this 3-year run to be successful, bearing in mind the
almost four decades of dictatorship and the novelty of the magazine. Its ending is largely
attributable to economic crisis.

In this chapter, I outline and analyze each theme studied in the magazine’s issues through
the theoretical lens of Second Wave feminism and with attention to historical context. Of
particular interest to this thesis, I establish that the personal is political through the ways in
which the magazine addresses various facets of personal life with the primacy of political
perspective. I develop the manifestations of patriarchal control and the rejection of those
iterations with special consideration to Adrienne Rich, Kate Millett, and to the concept that
political-personal results in a collective activism that is a trademark of Spain’s feminist movement in the 1970s.\(^5\)

Reproductive Rights: Who Controls a Woman’s Body?

Prior to Francisco Franco’s rule in Spain, abortion was legal and the legal alterations that came with his ascension to power constituted a shocking change: “In 1936, the second Spanish Republic recognized women’s rights to decide whether or not they wanted to abort. Five years later, Franco’s regime re-established stiff penalties for abortion” (Rigaudias 23). During both Franco’s regime and the Transition, women were denied access to safe and legal abortion. While this theme is explored on a very intimate level with personal stories in *Crónica del desamor*, *Vindicación feminista* addresses the issue in a more multi-faceted way. The editors and authors of the magazine released a special edition entitled, “Aborto: el clamor que no cesa”, which contains articles with names like “Abortar: un desafío a la España tradicional,” “Indefensas ante la carnicería,” and “La ceguera de las leyes” (La Vanguardia 1978). The pieces in the edition and writings on abortion throughout the magazine’s publication include political criticism, analysis, and connections to personal experiences.

In Nuria Beltrán’s article, “El aborto delictivo en España,” Beltrán first establishes that abortion, although controversial and taboo throughout various historic periods, “ha existido siempre para la realidad oficial o clandestina” (Larumbe 180). She asserts that women have dealt with this issue since the beginning of time and until there are conditions in which a woman would not be forced to have an abortion (which do not exist in Transition-era Spain), the procedure must be accessible. Typical of *Vindicación feminista*, Beltrán talks about issues of

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\(^5\) Importantly, this thesis cites María Ángeles Larumbe’s anthology, *Vindicación feminista: una voz colectiva, una historia propia* and no the CD that includes the digitized archive. The anthology arrived without the CD included. Citations cite pages of the anthology and don’t include date, volume, or page number.
class and access within her essay. She cites statistics from October 1974 that show that, annually, Spanish women had around 100,000 clandestine abortions. The author admits that concrete statistics on termination outside of the law are almost impossible to find but that the National Health Service of England has a statistic in the year 1971 wherein 174 Spanish women went to England to terminate pregnancies (181). Beltrán problematizes these statistics by incorporating class: she is outraged at the thought of women who do not have access to clinics in places like England and Switzerland and the conditions that they must suffer. In order to make her political point, she imagines herself as a woman with no money, the options she might have in making a decision whether or not to abort, and the conditions she will face if she chooses to end her pregnancy. This style of political analysis that considers the day-to-day reality of the lives of Spanish women represents the pinnacle of Millett’s theory that the personal is political and expresses a collective voice for Spanish women that was previously silenced.

The magazine delves even further into the personal nature of policies with an interview with a group of feminist women in Asturias about abortion. Empar Pineda, the coordinator of the interview, introduces the piece by expressing a sentiment often misunderstood about the topic: no woman wants an abortion. Pineda writes, “[el aborto] es un mal menor que ninguna mujer desea, pero al que muchas veces se ve obligada a recurrir” (Larumbe 178). She reinforces that women endure the procedure because they feel they have to and that it is the only option, not because they want to. Pineda’s interview expounds on the idea of class that Nuria Beltrán’s article touches on. Some Spanish women had the ability to leave the country or to go to clinics in order to abort safely and legally. However, these women are not the norm. Pineda writes, “el mundo de los barrios es otra cosa: aquí no hay médicos, ni clínicas, ni dinero, ni viajes” (178).
She emphasizes the lack of recourse and resources that the average Spanish woman faced in safely terminating a pregnancy particularly through her inclusion of tangible cases.

The interviewer asks the women about the status of abortion in their neighborhoods, the methods they see women use to abort, and what they hope to do about it. The women answer the questions honestly: they see countless women turning to the practice and they try to support them by taking up donations so that they can access safe conditions. They also share that some women try to give themselves an abortion with needles or self-inflicted injuries. The group states that they know many who have died from attempted terminations and that, even though they may know about other options, such as contraception, legal, safe access is non-existent. The interview concludes with optimism about changing the law on abortion and contraceptives, but with truth about the sad reality for many women: “[b]astante sufrimiento es el tener que recurrir al aborto para evitar un hijo que no se puede tener” (178). As mentioned in the introduction, abortion was legalized in Spain in 1985 in just three cases; however, this law still left women with few options. Once again, we encounter the idea that terminating a pregnancy is not so much of a choice for a woman but rather, and especially for working class women, essentially the only route. The interview deftly weaves a story of political activism and everyday reality coexisting and the dependence that each side of the coin has on the other.

Abortion not only posed a problem in that its restriction represented the control of female bodies and the limitation of women’s sexual and maternal autonomy, but it also posed a problem of class. As mentioned previously in this section, clandestine abortions were carried out frequently; however, safe, extralegal terminations were only available to women at a high price. “Lo que pedían las feministas es que ello fuera posible para todas las mujeres, sobre todo para las mujeres con menos medios económicos” (Escario 182). Feminist groups responded to this need
by opening family planning centers, and as Empar Pineda mentions in her interview, activists proposed immediate action for solution, “conseguir una educación sexual adecuada, mediante charlas y asambleas en los barrios. Además, estamos realizando una campaña por la legislación de los anticonceptivos y del aborto” (Larumbe 179). These plans were aided by local feminist groups like the Asociación Feminista Democrática Asturiana, establishing the link between collective feminist action and the highly personal topic of abortion and contraception.

Perhaps the most emotionally harrowing of the articles is “Las mil tristes maneras de abortar”. This piece that ends in a call to action begins with the hypothetical sixteen-year-old girl María who decides to terminate her pregnancy. The author of the article, who remains anonymous, describes abortion as a “palabra maldita en una sociedad en que la mujer no es dueña de su cuerpo y en qua la maternidad se planifica por razones de estado, de un estado en que todos son hombres” (Larumbe 174). This description nods at the pronatalist policy of Franco’s Spain and the relationship between the body and politics. Helen Graham writes that, “[t]he patriarchal family was seen as representing the corporate order of the state in microcosm” (184). During the years that Spain lived under Franco’s dictatorship, pronatalist policy epitomized Kate Millett’s idea that the family is a mirror of society. The objective of these policies, subtly explored in this Vindicación feminista article, was to maintain order in society and to have the governmental “order” permeate every stratus of life for citizens of the State.

The author questions the established order as well as the societal construct of motherhood through a teenage girl, presenting another facet of radical feminism. The story goes on to outline the girl’s experience in obtaining an abortion through whispers to her trusted friends and the complications associated that required hospitalization. Doctors and nurses refuse to help her until she is forced to confess her “crime.” The story ends as well as it can for María: she lives to see
another day. But the focus of this hypothetical situation is actually the reality of secret abortions during the Transition: an vast number of women die as a result of abortive procedures received outside of the law, in unsafe, unsanitary conditions. The law on abortion reflects the remnants of the fascist government that made it illegal and the work left for the feminist activists to do.

“Llevar a cabo una larga y profunda denuncia de los millares de malos abortos clandestinos es una de las primeras tareas que debemos imponernos las feministas, es el más grande acto de solidaridad que podemos hacer las mujeres entre sí” (Larumbe 174). This call to action emphasizes the collective solidarity required to make progress and to find justice for the women who suffer under a law that controls their bodies and forces them to make dangerous decisions because the Spanish State left them with no other option.

Every avenue of birth control for women was restricted during the regime. Despite the change from dictatorship to democracy, the law governing women’s bodies was not amended. As seen in the introduction, contraception remained illegal until 1978 and was not completely accessible until 2010. In a short but informative piece, Magda Oranich presents Article 416 of the Penal Code, the article that prohibits the propaganda, sale, and distribution of contraceptives. She states that, “España es de los pocos países en el mundo donde está prohibida toda propaganda, venta y difusión de anticonceptivos” (Larumbe 179) and goes on to include the exact text of the law. The law outlines the conditions that violate it and the punishment for violation. Breakers of the law could expect imprisonment up to six months and a fine between 10,000 and 20,000 pesetas, a significant amount for the time. The Penal Code specifically forbids “medication, substances, objects, instruments, devices, forms or procedures capable of provoking or facilitating abortion or of avoiding procreation” (179). The Article equates abortion and

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6 Translation is mine. Translated for clarity and flow.
contraceptives and thus leaves women without many choices regarding their reproductive health and without any semblance of power over their own bodies.

The antiquated law stemming from Franco’s time as leader of Spain continued into the Transition. Representatives petitioned for amnesty for women related to this law,\textsuperscript{7} in July of 1977, but were voted down 156 against, 119 in favor (Larumbe 151). Not only does the continuation of the law into democracy denote the patriarchal nature of Spain’s society at large, but it also demonstrates the disregard for women as both citizens of the State and private individuals. There is nothing more personal than sex and the Penal Code punished women for taking possession of their sexual and reproductive lives.

\textbf{Sexuality: Violence and Liberation}

Many articles in \textit{Vindicación Feminista} address female sexuality and women reclaiming ownership of their bodies. The pieces centered on sexuality deliberate a variety of topics of which I consider pleasure, daily aggressions, and rape to be the most directly relevant to this work. The writing related to pleasure concentrates on one theme: viewing sex as more than a reproductive act and viewing women as more than reproductive beings. Regina Bayo and María Encarna Sanahuja summarize this: “[f]inaliza considerando el verdadero valor de la sexualidad femenina \textit{que no es reproducción}” (Larumbe 206). The writers are concerned with the fact that “el beneficio que el hombre obtiene en placer está todavía más garantizado,” or that even in sectors where sexual liberation for women is considered important, male sexual pleasure takes precedence over female. This highly personal issue is addressed in a political way as well: Bayo and Sanahuja posit that the nature of coital relations in Spain stems from Franco’s dictatorship, especially the lack of consideration for female pleasure: “sin embargo, este modelo ha sido el

\textsuperscript{7} The law also asked for amnesty for adultery.
impuesto por la dictadura heterosexual” (206). Not only do sexual expectations negate pleasure for women, but they also fail to incorporate sexuality that may fall outside of the heterosexual norm.

The authors liken heterosexual sex (penetration, specifically) to foreign invasion and point out that the dearth of male concern for female satisfaction constitutes a negation of their existence as human beings, or rather, as anything other than an empty vessel to be filled with his progeny.

No es necesaria la invasión/penetración de nuestro cuerpo para obtener placer, que a la mujer se ha negado su existencia, incluso y sobre todo como ser sexuado, y que el hombre es el primer beneficiado al mantener esta forma de relación – que sólo conduce a la reproducción, o a los anticonceptivos, o al aborto, pero en ningún caso a la satisfacción de la mujer. (Larumbe 206)

Another important element of this particular quote is the collective attitude it takes towards women’s bodies. With the use of the word “nuestro” or “our,” it fuses the private realm of sex with a collective and distinctly political one. This joining of the personal and the political with a communal attitude links to the vindications carried out by Spanish feminists encouraged by the concept that the private and public were not separate entities. This allowed women to fight for “el derecho al propio cuerpo, a una sexualidad independiente de la maternidad” (Escario 118).

The shared experience of being a woman led to the creation of neighborhood groups, bars, bookshops, and family planning centers that provided spaces for women to experience and strengthen their mutual reality under a patriarchal State and to embody the sense of “nuestro”.

Other references to female pleasure pepper the magazine’s 30 issues. A page that elucidates the views of Italian art critic and significant feminist activist and writer, Carla Lonzi, contains the bullet point, “La mujer clitoríca y la mujer vaginal,” referencing the separation of women as sexual beings and reproductive beings as well as exploring the female orgasm.
(Larumbe 330). This sentiment summed up a large section of the feminist movement centered on sexual liberation. Pilar Escario, Inés Alberdi, and Ana Inés López-Accotto, address this point well in “Lo personal es político”: “El mito del orgasmo vaginal fue durante mucho tiempo el leiv-motiv de la libertad y de la autonomía sexual de las mujeres feministas, una vez superados los tabúes tradicionales de la virginidad y de la pasividad femenina” (178). The twenty-eighth edition of Vindicación feminista, published in July 1979, specifically discusses feminine sexuality. The cover of this issue contains the phrase “El placer es mío, caballero” (Larumbe 203). This slogan is a play on words; it engages with the submission and obedience inherent in saying, “You’re welcome” while exacting a repossession of female sexual pleasure.

In her 2015 article about Vindicación feminista and its treatment of sex, Carmen Peña Ardid probes this subject further. She asserts that the magazine treats sexuality “desde múltiples parámetros” (104). Further, the critic elaborates on the themes addressed by Vindicación, concurrent with this thesis, “la subordinación de las mujeres a la estructura familiar por dos vías principales: mediante el control médico de su actividad sexual y de la reproducción” (104). While this point is further explored in other places throughout this work, Peña Ardid highlights what I consider to be the magazine’s most significant contribution to the criticism of the violence of patriarchal conceptions of sexuality. In her analysis of the magazine’s pieces, she notes that, “Constante fue también la denuncia de la violencia sexual y sexista contra las mujeres, así como la de los mitos que la consideraban inevitable, y se apuntó no sólo a sus manifestaciones más visibles como la violación… sino a las agresiones ocultas en la relación familiar/sentimental privada” (105). The fusion of these two realms of private/hidden and public/visible in the magazine reinforces the presence of “the personal is political” and its prevalence in a topic as intimate as sexuality.
The magazine goes beyond the fight for feminine sexual gratification with its analysis and exposition of the daily aggressions that women suffered during Franco’s regime and into the Transition. The everyday and quite public nature of this experience makes it political. Male sexual pleasure extends from the bedroom to the street. Spanish society privileged this over the safety and comfort of women. One piece, titled “Las agresiones contra mujeres son una constante” (Larumbe 196), explores the quotidian character of street harassment and sexual aggression against women, as well as rape. Another piece, “Miles de niñas y mujeres violadas diariamente” studies the endless suffering of women, “violadas, maltratadas, golpeadas, insultadas” (185). The article by Assumpta Soria I Badia discusses the “explotación y dominación [que] son la base de supervivencia de muchos hombres” (185). The very existence of many men is based on the subjugation of women through harassment and rape according to Soria I Badia. Her commentary provides descriptions of specific instances suffered by women harassed and raped in the streets and in their homes. She reinforces that this type of daily abuse leaves women without refuge from physical and mental violation.

An entire edition in the magazine is dedicated to domestic violence, another iteration of daily abuse and aggression suffered by women at the hands of men. The January 1978 edition highlighted the title, “Mujeres golpeadas: el miedo de vivir” or “Battered Women: The Fear of Living” (Larumbe 189), an article by Marisa Hijar. The edition highlights the daily nature of the problem with a piece by Lidia Falcón, “Cada día puede morir una mujer.” She illustrates the frightening nature of spousal abuse in Transition-era Spain and describes a woman, “sentada frente a mí, lleva gafas oscuras que ocultan parcialmente los hematomas que rodean un ojo. Las mismas señales se repiten en la mejilla y en los brazos” (190). The woman is covered in bruises and cries as she outlines the daily abuse she suffers at the hands of her husband. She has come to
inquire about what possibilities she might have to escape her marriage and the endless aggression against her. Lidia Falcón communicates the quotidian experience the woman endures: “[d]os, tres, siete años, la relación matrimonial, amor, realización sexual, comunicación, dificultades compartidas y alegrías comunes, se resumen para ella en la repetición mecánica y despersonalizante del trabajo doméstico y el miedo, el constante miedo, del reencuentro diario con su amo” (190). Here, Falcón emphasizes her view of marriage as a relationship between owner and property with the use of the word “amo.” This point also ties back into the idea of economic liberty that feminists sought and the way in which they viewed marriage as a restrictive, patriarchal institution. Simultaneously, she demonstrates one of the more horrifying aspects of domestic abuse: the constant fear the victim undergoes on a daily basis. The concept of fear is another iteration of male control over females, particularly within a relationship defined by societal parameters that limited women.

Falcón expands her argument with another section, “Cuando la marcha nupcial termina en el depósito de cadáveres” (Larumbe 191). She further develops the issue of cruelty in the home through her emphasis on the slaughters that have resulted from this specific type of abuse. She begins her argument with the fact that in a five month span in 1978, the Barcelonan press alone reported nine murders at the hands of a spouse or a boyfriend with reasons cited such as “el novio o marido decidió castigar severamente su desatención afectiva o la supuesta infidelidad conyugal”. She outlines the circumstances in the murders of these women at the hands of their “lovers” and goes on to explain rape and attempted rape as another manifestation of aggression. This quote also connects to another way in which women’s bodies were violently controlled: by law a woman could be punished much more harshly than her husband for adultery. Falcón’s writing emphasizes the lack of autonomy that women possessed during the Transition. Not only
did they lack reproductive control, but they also had no legal way to defend their bodies from a husband’s physical violence. The excerpt evidences the situation in which women suffering abuse found themselves: subject to the aggression of society towards their sovereignty over their bodies and safety, as well as vulnerable to sadistic punishment at the will of their spouses.

The writer makes the stories personal, adding details that allow the reader to connect to each murdered woman and her circumstance. Falcón ends on a collective note, “y todas somos víctimas diariamente de la agresión menor: el piropo obsceno, los comentarios insultantes o despreciativos, el roce furtivo en el Metro y en la calle, el enfrentamiento verbal y la humillación constante a nuestra dignidad de personas” (191). She highlights the regular state of aggression that a woman living in the Transition experienced. Women are violently accosted in their homes and they find no escape from the harassment and violence, whether it is physical or emotional, explicit or subtle.

These two pieces written by Lidia Falcón present a satirical tone towards domestic violence and its perpetrators. She writes “La ayuda de familiares, amigos y vecinos se concreta en los sabios consejos milenarios de paciencia, resignación y mano izquierda, habilidades que una mujer debe poseer desde el principio de su existencia en razón de su sexo” (Larumbe 191). Falcón does not offer solutions or take legal action in these articles. Rather, in my interpretation, the intention of these pieces is to express the communal experience of the societally imposed gender norms and the manifestation of this imposition in domestic violence. Falcón expresses the resignation of previous generations, but through her satirical tone, attempts to make a difficult subject more bearable while still inciting anger towards a horrific experience with the purpose of inspiring a societal shift in attitudes towards domestic abuse.
Another article depicting gender violence takes an even stronger position, condemning it as torture and, further, a State-sponsored torture device used to keep women in their expected roles. In “Tortura en el hogar,” Regina Bayo Falcón and María Encarna Sanahuja summarize their report as exposing “el ámbito de la tortura aplicada a las mujeres al exclusivamente gubernamental, es decir, apoyada por un sistema político y utilizada para la represión política” (Larumbe 193). The authors view torture in the home as another manifestation of governmental control and political oppression. They describe spousal violence as, “el trato brutal, sádico, premeditado o espontáneo” (193) and therefore qualify it as torture. The report includes detailed accounts of abuse and violence and is a strong condemnation of such violence. They state that physical violence against women,

Constituye la expresión última del desprecio y el antagonismo contra la mujer en nuestras sociedades patriarcales…es la afirmación del poder machista y de la autoridad masculina sobre los que está fundada la sociedad patriarcal, que no podría sobrevivir sin la apropiación y la explotación del cuerpo de la mujer y de su fuerza de reproducción (193).

Bayo Falcón and Sanahuja expand on this point by explaining the excuses that patriarchal society has created for male violence, citing the “stupid myth” that masculine sexuality is “irrepressible, uncontrollable, urgent, and virile” (193). Domestic abuse is another manifestation of the constructed superiority of male sexuality and the objectification of women, viewing them only as objects that serve above all the needs of men rather than as human beings.

There are numerous pieces in Vindicación that address rape specifically. The 1977 October edition is titled, “Violación: Fascismo en alto grado” (Larumbe 183). This title pointedly connects a personal and political issue, rape, with a governmental structure, fascism. Throughout the copy, the female authors reinforce the sentiment that rape and its lack of serious legal consideration is a manifestation of fascism in its worst form. In an editorial, one writer poses the
question, “¿Cómo gritar al mundo que sólo cambiando nuestra sociedad capitalista por otra socialista, no desaparecerá el fascismo sexual que nos agota?” (184). The author views rape and sexual violations/abuse as a social indication of the fascism that persists from Franco’s regime and lingers in the Transition. Not only does the editorial highlight the perceived dictatorial nature of rape in Spain, but it also analyzes the subject as an iteration of power: “Tanto en la cantidad, como en las maneras salvajes y vejativos en que se cometen, se pone en evidencia, cruda y trágicamente el poder machista en su grado más álgido” (184). The patriarchy invades every aspect of life in the Transition but its most impactful offense can be found in rape and the negligence of the government to tangibly combat it. The continuance of the fascist and patriarchal power structure relates to one of the purposes of the magazine: to bring attention to the problems and to execute a call to action for addressing them either through legal means or through personal, individual shifts in attitude that could result in collective change.

**Women’s Writing: Creating a Space Outside the Domestic Sphere**

*Vindicación feminista*’s outrage and protest about Spain’s patriarchal power system and the ways in which it oppressed women were palpable in another way: the magazine was in every single regard a solely female-led endeavor. Only women wrote for it, only women edited it and thus its pages offer a reflection of the myriad female voices repressed during Franco’s regime. The issues not only represent a unique place for women to express their collective sentiments, but also provide a path to success for many Spanish women writers. Its emphasis on their writing during the Transition is summed up by Rosa Montero, who wrote for the magazine and authored *Crónica del desamor*, “[h]ay un fenómeno de aparición de muchas escritoras a partir de los finales de los sesenta y principios de los setenta” (Montero & Talbot 90). Lidia Falcón, the editor and founder of the magazine makes a critical point about the importance and novelty of a
woman-only magazine, that “era la primera vez que una revista estaba escrita exclusivamente por mujeres” (Falcón 60).

*Vindicación* as a work in its entirety constitutes an homage to female writing starting with the title. The magazine’s name originates from early feminist Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, published in 1792. Lidia Falcón, Carmen Alcalde, and their team intended to take possession of the verb “to vindicate.” “En la primera página del número 1 se aclaraba que el término *vindicación* se quería utilizar en su sentido etimológico latino de *vindicari*: ‘obtener la libertad’, o en su significado en inglés *vindication*: ‘defensa, justificación’” (Larumbe 25). Through the repurposing of an early feminist work and more significantly, through the dedication to bringing the resurgent feminism of the Transition to the general female population, *Vindicación* emphasized the criticality of a space for the female voice and its commitment to providing it. Hélène Cixous is particularly relevant here as she encourages woman writing her self, “An act that will also be marked by woman’s seizing the occasion to speak, hence her shattering entry into history, which has always been based on her suppression…To become at will the take and the initiator, for her own right, in every symbolic system, in every political process” (880). *Vindicación* represents the entry of feminist voices into Spain’s political discourse and the radical altering of that discourse by including strong, feminine voices that undermine patriarchal structures at every turn.

The editors also carried out efforts to specifically incorporate the voices and writings of their readers. They published letters to the editor such as Rosa María Gracia’s letter entitled, “La mujer maestra también está discriminada” (Larumbe 349). In her short piece, Gracia criticizes the Ministry of Education and Science for their privileging of male teachers with placements in better schools with better resources and elaborates on the status of the Spanish woman as
“esclava en esta sociedad racista” (349). One contest prompted the readers to send in the best feminist slogan. An entire page of the slogans is published, with highlights such as, “Mujer, el feminismo es tu revolución,” “Por la total liberación del feminismo, destruyamos la ideología impune del machismo,” and “¿Quiénes se duelen y escandalizan de nuestras aspiraciones? Aquellos para quienes siempre fuimos objeto de uso y esclavas” (Larumbe 349). When Vindicación provided a platform to its readers, they responded with slogans condemning the “slavery” of women and encouraging females to fight collectively for their liberty.

The importance of words and the power that they have is not lost on Rosa Montero, a contributing writer to Vindicación as well as author of the other work around which this thesis centers. She writes, “Ahora, se habla mucho de los derechos de la mujer –qué remedio les queda, ya que somos un elevado porcentaje de votantes, de compradores, etc. – pero todo se queda en eso: en palabras” (Larumbe 374). She elaborates that the next generation is being educated with sexist language and includes a comic strip to support her point. Within the same collection of articles penned by Montero, she illuminates a case in which a husband strangled his wife because she “obligaba al marido a realizar tareas domésticas, al mismo tiempo se burlaba de él” (374). With the characteristic satirical tone of Vindicación, Montero critiques the court system’s favoring of the husband in this case with a light punishment of 10 years and one day in prison due to the fact that he was in a “restricted situation” and the way in which his wife humiliated him. Montero focused on the language of the court and the inherent patriarchal nature of societal linguistics. However, her piece turns this concept on its head with a repossession of language through humor and female writing, or that woman must write her self. Again, one can turn to
Hélène Cixous when she states that, “A feminine text cannot fail to be subversive” (888)\(^8\).

Through feminine writing, Montero in this case disrupts the masculine and traditional with her distinctly feminine voice and thus challenges the established order.

The magazine also advances women’s writing in that it profiles female writers, directors, and artists. Of particular interest to this work, Kate Millett, whose theories scaffold the main ideas that permeate this thesis, is featured. The article about her, written by Ana Becciu, focuses some criticism on Millett’s writings on prostitution, but outlines *Sexual Politics* as avant-garde; she establishes that Millett “dice por primera vez lo que nadie en su país se había atrevido a decir sobre los autores sagrados del siglo” (Larumbe 324). Becciu views her attack on the authors D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Norman Mailer as brave and pioneering. Additionally, she lauds her fighting spirit and fight against the patriarchy in written words: “[l]as ideas de Kate Millett son radicales, ha combatido y combate sin concesiones las estructuras sociales tradicionales de su país” (324). Although Becciu views her as representative of North American feminism specifically, in her sketch of Millett she offers a summary of radical, feminist ideas to which many *Vindicación* articles ascribe.

Millett is not the only feminist author who receives a biographical treatment in the magazine’s pages. Other women include Virginia Woolf, Doris Lessing, Marguerite Yourcenar, and Gloria Fuertes. However, the most novel aspect of the encouragement of women’s writing remains the fact that the magazine was entirely written and published by women and that it launched and supported the careers of Spanish women writers like Rosa Montero and Ana María Moix.

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\(^8\) Cixous defines writing through sexual difference. For her, the traditional and canonical is the masculine voice and the feminine can be seen as woman’s voice that interrupts this. I use these Second Wave distinctions between feminine and masculine in this section.
**Labor: The Quest for Economic Liberty**

The magazine probes another way in which the power structure oppressed women: labor, both domestic and salaried. The writings that discuss salaried labor approach the issue of unequal payment and treatment in the workplace, as well as the way that the workplace itself reflects the traditional structure of a family in a domestic sphere: the father (male boss in this case) has hegemony. One article by Montserrat Roig, an established Catalan author, likens this organization of labor to a microcosm of Catholic patriarchy: “Pero el que unas trabajadoras sean tratadas como niñas de colegio de monjas no levanta ninguna clase de polvareda. Se trata de un hecho casi normal” (Larumbe 66). The piece, entitled “Padre y patrón” examines the punishment that female hotel workers received for starting what she called “un movimiento reivindicativo”: they were made to face a wall for some days. She parallels this chastisement to the way that little girls are treated in a Catholic school run by nuns and, in this way, ties the penalty back to its root: the Catholic, patriarchal nature of Franco’s regime. She also compares the relationship between worker and supervisor to the one between a father and a daughter: “en los talleres y en las fábricas, en los hospitales y en los hoteles, la relación patrón-trabajadora traduce, de alguna manera, la relación padre-hija” (66). This statement in particular reinforces Kate Millett’s theory that family reflects society. It also brings “the personal is political” to another level in that it connects with the idea that “el feminismo rechazaba radicalmente la institución de la familia. Se partía de considerar a ‘la familia patriarcal y nuclear’, institución organizada secularmente en torno a la figura de padre, como el origen de la opresión de las mujeres en el ámbito familiar” (Escario 160). The father-daughter connection is a distinctly personal one, but in the realm of labor, manifests quite politically as a parallel connection. Roig imagines this father-daughter affiliation to be one of control and reprimand of the daughter by the father.
Montserrat Roig goes further in her analysis by taking a step back. She writes, “Si el hombre está hecho para el trabajo, la mujer ha sido una intrusa. El trabajo no es cosa suya, la familia sí” (66). This excerpt establishes that in Spain’s Transition society, women who worked outside of the home or who were not fulfilling their “intended purpose” of procreation and taking care of their children were intruders in the male-dominated workforce. Quite specifically, these women were rejecting the idea that they needed to “stay in their place,” not only searching for freedom to fulfill a role beyond that of mother, but also seeking financial liberty and thus control over their own lives that had not been available before. For Roig, this pursuit also involves destroying the world of capital as she advocates distinctly communist and anti-capitalist views. Her feminism is thus even more radical as it ties in communist sentiment.

The actual situation of the working woman in the late sixties and early seventies in Spain is best reflected by a statistic from 1968: 23.8% of women were active in the labor force. María Ángeles Larumbe in her study on feminism during the Transition expounds,

Esta <<ausencia>> de la mujer del mundo laboral, incluso de aquella que poseía una titulación que la capacitaba profesionalmente, sólo se explica por razones psicosociales, propias de una sociedad que considera o utiliza a la esposa o hija que no trabaja como muestra inequívoca de la buena situación familiar y de la capacidad del varón para garantizarla en exclusiva. De este modo y al mismo tiempo se reforzaba y se proyectaba socialmente su carácter protector y su virilidad. (141)

Larumbe reinforces that the labor position of women in Spain was due to a society centered on patriarchal constructs and that favored the demonstration of male power, tied to its apparent fragility, over the economic equality of women and men. She explains that men needed to be the main providers and that masculinity and “virility” were damaged when they shared this responsibility with wives or daughters. Women’s position in the labor force requires this social

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9 Statistic comes from Larumbe’s study.
context to best understand the unequal treatment and the idea that women were straying from their assigned societal place.

The reporting in *Vindicación feminista* regarding the unfair conditions and treatment in the workplace for women does not describe a helpless female workforce. Instead, the articles laud the women laborers, and in many cases encourage their fight. In February of 1977, more than 6,000 women workers for the textile company Induyco took to the streets to protest unfair working conditions and underpayment. In “Induyco: <<A la huelga madre voy yo también…>>;” Lola Canales describes the unreasonable circumstances that women endured, including five extra working hours a day and required labor both Saturday and Sunday. This seven-day workweek was compensated at 5,033 or 4,783 pesetas (or $35.63 and $33.86 in USD per week) and the discrimination went even further, “salarios discriminados, puestos de responsabilidad sólo para hombres, destajos y política de primas” (Larumbe 214). Women protested the half hour lunch break they were afforded during their nine-hour workday (not including the five extra hours imposed) and thus demanded 50 pesetas more a month for women with children to go towards educational support. Specifically, their demands demonstrated class-consciousness and female solidarity: they aimed to help the women who needed it most and refused to be trampled yet again in the face of an unjust situation.

One interview illuminates the struggle of a female lawyer to find employment, her eventual dismissal, and her opinions on discrimination. Maria Jesús Alameda, a woman with a degree in law, upon starting her job search, received numerous letters advising her that she had forgotten to specify her sex in her application and consequently upon learning her sex, that women were not admitted. Some would offer her secretary positions despite her degree and she eventually found work at an investment business. After fifteen days of working there, she was let
go, and her supervisor explained to her that, “no había nada contra mi, simplemente que yo era el *trapo roto* y existían todo tipo de rivalidades” (Larumbe 223). Essentially, her presence was deemed harmful to the company and upon further questioning, she discovered that a letter had been sent from a company executive, outlining her disobedience of societal norms and the company’s refusal to play a role in her defiance. “Habiendo entrado a trabajar en la secretaría de Madrid una abogado [sic] en contradicción con las directrices de la sociedad…dicha persona deberá dejar de trabajar en la sociedad con los efectos inmediatos” (223). Alameda was accused of disregarding societal guidelines and as such, let go due to her sex and perceived rebellion against patriarchal norms.

Like many other women profiled in *Vindicación feminista*, she expressed the sentiment that all she wanted was to work. Spain’s social order refused to allow her the opportunity to earn a living fitting for her degree and Alameda attributes this to *machismo*. She states that, “[l]os hombres, protegidos por la ley y por la tradición, han tenido todas las prerrogativas” (223). She describes the way in which men have been privileged and protected by law and tradition and how these very same laws and traditions facilitate discrimination against women and the favoring of men. The interview exposes the prejudiced and unequal labor market that women faced and the fact that even those who wanted to work could not find any job that was not subservient in nature, or employment that respected their level of education.

The treatment of labor extended to domestic labor as well: “En el análisis feminista del trabajo doméstico, se unía el rechazo del patriarcado a la denuncia del capitalismo como sistema que coadyuvaba a la explotación de las mujeres. El encierro de la mujer en el hogar y la sujeción al mismo a través de sus responsabilidades domésticas se presentaba como la razón estructural básica de la condición de las mujeres” (Escario 161). That is to say, communist theory connected
concretely with the idea of women’s liberation from the home and domestic labor. More relevant to the focus of this thesis, Spanish feminists viewed the familial institution as the origin of oppression in society. Additionally, domestic work and female confinement to that labor realm held women back from other employment opportunities that might potentially allow them to be independent of men, whether that man was their husband or their father.

The critiques that address unpaid labor evaluate the traditional role of women and domestic work, how this labor is unfairly uncompensated, and the amount of control that this role offers society and men. Additionally, the women writers advocate a salary for domestic work. In one article, entitled “La lucha internacional sobre el salario al trabajo doméstico,” the author describes the various feminist movements and groups that support salaried domestic work. She establishes that in Spain in 1968, the theory that domestic work should be paid by the State, separate from a husband’s salary, became more publicly known. She elucidates the reasons that woman asserted as justification for compensated work in the home through the final deliberations from a 1973 feminist convention organized by Ann Cools in 1973 in Canada, attended by almost 1,000 women,

Porque el trabajo de producción y reproducción de la fuerza de trabajo depende principalmente de la mujer; porque el trabajo de procrear y educar a los hijos (además de realizar, en algunos casos, un trabajo fuera de la casa) es una función social; porque el trabajo hecho en casa no está pagado, se ha deliberado que el Estado pague un salario a las amas de casa (Larumbe 113).

The women cite their productive and reproductive labor in creating the work force, the effort of educating and birthing children, some while still working outside the home, and the fact that their domestic labor is unpaid work as reasons for a State paid wage to women for domestic work. This questioning of domestic labor, previously an exclusively private issue, reframes the topic as political and does so concretely with proposals to solve the problem. Further,
Vindicación feminista’s incorporation of the international feminist struggle reinforces the ubiquitous patriarchal system against which the women fought.

Although Spanish feminists were not the only ones fighting for salaried domestic work, their effort was tied specifically to their liberation from Franco’s dictatorship and from the policies and societal roles that persisted after his death. Some women tied their struggle with unsalaried domestic work to the patriarchal structure of marriage. According to Pilar Escario, “La institución familiar se interpretaba como la responsable de la opresión de las mujeres en dos sentidos, por la autoridad paterna y masculina que sometía a las mujeres en su seno y por la carga de trabajo doméstico que no permitía a las mujeres dedicarse a actividades laborales, emergiendo la división tradicional entre ‘lo público’ y ‘lo privado’ en función del género” (160).

In the piece, “Mi marido no me pega, pero tampoco me paga,” or “My husband doesn’t hit me, but he also doesn’t pay me,” Marisa Hijar scrutinizes marital structure and its connection with labor and the economy. The title itself equates domestic violence with lack of economic freedom or rather, asserts that the lack of economic power that a wife finds in a marriage in Transition-era Spain constitutes another form of violence.

The article probes the inherently violent nature of power structures as well as the economic humiliation women endured, clarified through three street interviews with wives about the manners in which their husbands limited their economic power. This occurred primarily by not allowing them to work outside the home and secondarily by distributing an allowance to their wives for expenses considered “necessary.” One interviewee, Marta, says, “Tengo que pasarme con lo que él considera que es necesario y que la mayoría de las veces no lo es” (Larumbe 201). Wives and mothers must get by with what their husbands considered sufficient without their own economic recourse and thus, live existences condemned to the domestic space with little to no
opportunity to meet with friends or enjoy themselves outside of their defined gender roles. This article connects back to the concept of salaried domestic work and the liberty that this policy might afford women. It also explains the aversion to such an idea that men might hold: economic liberty either through salaried domestic work or entering the workforce offered women independence from marriage.

**Motherhood and Family as Patriarchal Trademarks of Control**

The idea of liberation from the domestic space and thus the concrete, patriarchal gender roles of mother and wife connect significantly with the theme of motherhood that *Vindicación feminista* explores. Many articles center on family structure and marriage, largely on divorce and adultery. The idea of marriage is closely related to the patriarchal construct of motherhood and the ways in which this construct manifested during the Transition. One article, entitled “No hay madres de segunda división”, reports on a protest coordinated by a feminist group in Barcelona on the first of May. The demonstration fought specifically for recognition of single mothers and against their discrimination “en la actual legislación machista” (Larumbe 145). The author, Maite Goicochea describes Mother’s Day as a consumer holiday dominated by the tyranny of capitalist production, linking labor and maternity. The protestors “denunciaban la particular opresión que ejerce el sistema sobre las mujeres que deciden concebir un hijo fuera del matrimonio codificado” (145) and goes on to describe the signs that the one hundred odd women carried. The signs exhibited slogans such as “sexualidad no es maternidad” and “mujer, el mito de la maternidad destruye nuestra maternidad”. These sayings evidence an attitude towards maternity that expressed that in some way, the patriarchy had created an ideal that did not include single mothers or mothers who did not submit to the designed role of dutiful wife and procreator within a marriage. This reporting again demonstrates the class-consciousness of feminist groups’
protests: they fought for women outside the patriarchal norm and denounced the specific discrimination against them.  

Here I would like to emphasize the lens through which I examine motherhood, or rather, motherhood as hallmark of patriarchal domination. I ascribe to the distinction that Adrienne Rich makes between the experience of mothering and motherhood as a patriarchal institution, mentioned in the introduction (Rich 13). Various women in Vindicación feminista further elaborate upon this distinction between the experience of maternity and the system of motherhood as it is politically implemented. A folk singer named Julia León speaks to the oppression of her own mother by the maternal institution: “[u]na de mis canciones La bella Lola, la hice pensando en la historia de mi madre, sin salida, como única salida la desesperanza” (Larumbe 335). This quote comes from an interview subsection with the title, “La familia debe desaparecer.” León interprets her parent’s life as one in which she was confined with no escape. This interpretation translates to family’s (and thus motherhood’s) function as a prison for women and another way for society to govern them.

As mentioned previously in this work, during Franco’s regime, maternity was utilized specifically by the State to control women and to bring “order” to society. According to Helen Graham, “Francoism projected…an ultra-conservative construction of ‘ideal’ womanhood, perceived as the fundamental guarantor of social stability, or indeed stasis” (182). Ideal womanhood included the traditional place of women in society: constrained to the domestic space and to the roles of mother, daughter, and wife, all subject to male hegemony. Graham goes even deeper, “the Franco regime’s object…was to obliterate women as independent social beings” (184). The social construct of motherhood incarcerated and limited women and this view

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10 This class-consciousness ties back to Falcón’s idea of woman as a social and economic class.
of women did not simply disappear with Franco’s death in 1975. *Vindicación* clearly demonstrates that the idea of the perfect woman-as-mother persisted into the Transition.

The concept of keeping a woman in her place, and specifically, within the domestic scope of male supervision and superiority, is addressed in one feature as stemming from childhood. Children in Spain were inculcated to the ways of the gender-divisive world at an early age. “Niños, a la guerra. Niñas, a la cocina: El juguete inductor” (Larumbe 288) advocates this perspective. Specifically, the article outlines the culture of masculine violence that is cultivated from infancy for male children and the how female children are conditioned to the ways of the culture of domestic femininity. Gumer Fuentes, the author of the piece, analyzes the effect of advertising and toys on these constructions of femininity and masculinity. She finds in advertisements directed at women, “una mujer de rostro sonriente y blanca melena rubia, a cuyo lado aparece casi siempre el hombre con apariencia de ser dichoso de tener una mujer tan sumisa, tan sonriente y tan blanca” (Larumbe 289). This description elucidates the expectations of Spanish society for the role of women: submissive, happy, and subservient to a man. It also demonstrates a race-consciousness through the use of the word “blanca”. She even more clearly delineates the anticipated function of the two genders in society as, “[e]l niño luchador y la niña hogareña, el hombre-acción y la mujer-elemento pasivo” (289). Again, there is a reinforcement of the relegation of women to the domestic space and to fulfilling the desired attribute of passivity. The article highlights the way in which the expected positions of men and women in society are developed from infancy on and how these ideals permeate the societal structure at the most basic level. Related to Kate Millett’s *Sexual Politics*, the writing connects to the socialization of the genders within the family structure. Millett asserts that within the family
structure, children are taught their conventional roles within society and that this inculcation is the base of patriarchal political power.

Through these pieces, one can interpret the patriarchal construct of motherhood as yet another manifestation of male violence. Particularly, the way in which male violence oppressed women during the Transition is explored in an interview coordinated by Vindicación feminista in an edition dedicated to divorce. The interview is entitled, “Las feministas: Proceso a la familia” and offered a platform for five feminist experts to express their opinions on the institution of family in its state in 1978 and their perception of divorce as a liberating action. In a sub-section of the interview entitled “La familia: un punto conflictivo,” the coordinator expresses a shared idea among the interviewees that “la familia tal como está planteada ahora oprime a la mujer” (Larumbe 159). Family as an institution is seen as a manifestation of power disparity rather than an equal partnership and even further, Laura Freixas, writer and one of the featured feminists in this interview, introduces the idea that family is the exploitation of a wife by her husband. A husband limits his wife’s economic freedom as well as her freedom in general.

The women assert that “nosotras no cuestionamos a la familia, pero sí la familia patriarcal y autoritaria. Exigimos una familia en que todos los miembros tengan los mismos derechos y deberes” (Larumbe 160). They take the political idea of equal rights and apply it at the very personal level of family, incarnating the Second Wave feminism idea that the personal is political. Additionally, this interview in particular supports quite explicitly Kate Millett’s idea that the family is a microcosm of society: the interviewees desire equality within the family and an organization of family that is not patriarchal and authoritarian. The desired family structure is also the desired societal structure, one free of masculine domination and that supports gender equality. The distinction they make in the above quote parallels Adrienne Rich’s theory of the
two meanings of motherhood quoted at the beginning of this section; they do not question the idea of family but rather the way in which it is used as an institution to control and oppress women.

*Vindicación feminista* took on the role of encouraging solidarity and activism, exposing injustices, and describing the daily lives and struggles of women during the Transition. Although its publication only spanned three years, its issues illuminated the private lives of women and their desire for freedom and power in a society that for so long refused to give them either. The relevance of the pages today rings true as the patriarchal system persists. Serving as a call to action in the late 1970s, the magazine forcefully merges the political and the personal and demonstrates that as a woman living in Transition-era Spain, a political life was unavoidable. Sex, labor, and reproduction, all very personal issues, constituted public, political topics deliberated on by men. Through *Vindicación*, women found a way to retake possession of their bodies, assert their rights, and find a collective voice in their feminist activism.
CRÓNICA DEL DESAMOR: THE POWER OF THE PERSONAL

“In sé es una novela estrechamente pegada a una realidad generacional.  
Un retrato en directo de aquellos años ardientes de la Transición...  
Tengo la rara sensación de que esta novela la hemos escrito  
de algún modo entre todos.”
–Rosa Montero, 2009

In 1979, Rosa Montero published the first of many novels, Crónica del desamor. The commercially successful book centers on the lives of Ana Antón and her friends, women in their thirties and forties during Spain’s Transition. Ana is an editor at a newspaper, a single mother, and boasts an eclectic group of friends, whose experiences in patriarchal Spanish society are chronicled through remembrances of their adolescence to experiences in adulthood, addressing a myriad of highly personal issues without much explicit political rhetoric. The reader accompanies Ana and friends to doctor’s appointments, the workplace, the bedroom, and beyond. Through Montero’s intimate portrayal of daily life for women who lived some part of Franco’s dictatorship and into the Transition, we find an exploration of the same themes that are so deftly probed in Vindicación feminista: reproductive rights; sexuality; women’s writing; labor, both domestic and salaried; and motherhood and family. These central topics are examined through a more personal approach, centered more squarely on the daily narratives of Montero’s characters.

Vindicación feminista tackles these ideas with an unambiguously political purpose while Crónica del desamor focuses on the private lives of women, intertwining subtle political commentary and opinions through the characters and their experiences. That is not to say that
Crónica does not possess a similar degree of revolutionary, progressive ideologies, but rather that the consideration of said ideologies takes on a more personal and intimate tone. Importantly, attributable to its fictional nature, Crónica elicits an emotional response in the reader and serves a different purpose in the dissemination of feminist ideals, less focused on activism and more centered on story telling. Rosa Montero’s role as a prominent and successful journalist for the newspaper El País lends itself to a concrete connection with the journalistic style of Vindicación feminista. Additionally, this relates to the title of the novel: the book chronicles and observes the lives of its characters and expresses Spanish women’s collective disillusion with the supposed changes brought by the Transition.

In this chapter, the progressive but indirect political stances towards the outlined topics will be addressed. Additionally, Montero’s portrait of patriarchal structures and focus on the daily lives of women during the Transition will be examined. Through engagement with critical texts on Montero’s works and the use of Second Wave feminist theory, the private side of the political will be determined and connections will be drawn between the personal-political and the idea of a collective lived experience among women facing the reality of Transition-era Spain.

Reproductive Rights: Who Controls a Woman’s Body?

One of the most poignant themes in Crónica del desamor is the topic of reproductive rights. Specifically, the characters endure situations related to clandestine abortions, IUDs and other methods of contraception, and female reproductive healthcare during the Transition. Reproductive rights also provide the clearest instance of direct political opinion. Crónica del desamor presents the polemical state of womanhood during the Transition: women are no longer living in Franco’s Spain. However, despite the change of regime and political system, laws impacting women have not changed, particularly those related to abortion and contraception.
When considering this theme, it is important to know that before Franco came to power in Spain, abortion was made legal in 1936. Upon his ascent to leadership in Spain and in line with his aim to reestablish a Catholic Spain, abortion was made illegal again, as was access to contraception. These laws remained in place, relics of Francisco Franco’s fascist regime, until the birth control pill was made legal in 1978 and abortion was legalized in 1985.

Anny Brooksbank Jones explores abortion and contraception further in her book *Women in Contemporary Spain*. She elaborates on abortion statistics and the prevalence of the practice within Spain. In 1960, the official abortion total was 24,140 or 3.7 percent and in 1970, it fell to 16,810 or 2.6 percent “as alternatives became more readily available” (85). Brooksbank Jones expresses that these statistics do not reflect the actual figures, which “were no doubt much higher” (85). For Brooksbank Jones, “[u]nder-reporting was encouraged by the fact that, until 1985, anyone deliberately inducing an abortion was liable to between 6 months and 12 years imprisonment. Health professionals [...] were automatically given the maximum sentence” (85). Perhaps the part of the abortion law of Franco’s era that is most indicative of the patriarchal and Catholic structure was that a woman who aborted “‘si el motivo del aborto ha sido ocultar su deshonra’” (86) faced a reduced sentence with a minimum of one month and a maximum of six months.

Through the female characters in her book, Rosa Montero addresses the problems related to abortion and contraception. In the novel, we see illegal and international terminations of pregnancies as the only options for women. Montero’s contemplation on this topic does not include her characteristic humor, but instead, she deftly explores the heavy emotions experienced by women who decide to terminate. Ana explains the experience that a friend of hers had with her international abortion, “[a]bortó con amargura, como todas, como siempre” (Montero 27). In
this way, Montero considers the two aspects of the theme: the political and the personal. She writes about the fact that Spanish women had to clandestinely leave the country to obtain access to safe abortion, but she does so in a way that connects the reader to the character’s intimate feelings. She not only observes the political situation but also speaks about the sentiments connected to the theme. She explores the combination of emotions that women who make the choice to abort can face by using the word “amargura.” In using the word bitterness, she elicits a distinct reaction in the reader, one that encompasses grief and sorrow while evoking a memory associated with taste most often linked to poison. She expresses eloquently that abortion is not a decision that a woman makes lightly and that every woman who makes that choice expresses some measure of sharp sadness. Her description allows the reader to develop an affective understanding of the characters and their choices while processing the political decision required of women to have control of their own health and body during the Transition.

Importantly, her deliberation on the topic of the emotions associated with the termination of a pregnancy connects concretely with the explicitly radical *Vindicación feminista*. As mentioned in a previous chapter of this thesis, multiple writers within the magazine express the sentiment that no woman wants to abort, but that women feel it is the only option to resort to when dealing with an unwanted pregnancy. Due to its illegality in Spain until 1985, and then only under specified circumstances, a Spanish woman could only turn to either unlawful or international abortions. The fact that these were the only options for women is obvious from anecdotal and statistical evidence, and as stated in the introduction, this procedure as a forced choice lasted from 1939 to 1985, when abortion was decriminalized in three cases. A study that focuses on international clandestine abortions by Spanish women in the years 1974-1988 concludes that “[d]urante estos años, casi 200,000 españolas viajaron al Reino Unido para
abortar. Las cifras anuales varían desde 2,978 en 1974 hasta 22,002 en 1983. En 1988, a pesar de la despenalización parcial del aborto en España, todavía 3,188 mujeres viajaron a Inglaterra y Gales por este motivo” (Peiró 57). That is to say that thousands of women, even reaching into the tens of thousands, traveled to England and Wales to abort during the Transition. The reality of these statistics is that they represent women of means and not women who could not afford to travel abroad for the procedure.

This lived experience is best reflected by Montero’s character, Teresa. Ana explains the illegal abortion that the sister of her ex has. This event occurs during Franco’s dictatorship, before the Transition. Montero’s narrator describes the procedure and the process of finding someone to perform it outside of the law. The narrator also provides a brief description of the operation as well as an explanation of the consequences of the illegal termination. She portrays the house of the abortionist, “la casita deteriorada de la vieja comadrona, el olor a verdura y aguas residuales, el techo bajo y sucio, ulcerado por ampollas de humedad, que pudo observar mientras permanecía tumbada boca arriba con las piernas abiertas y manos ajenas hurgando dolorosamente dentro de ella” (Montero 30). The house is represented as dirty and damp, certainly not a hygienic place for a medical procedure. In fact, the termination occurs on the dining room table. The setting also establishes the melancholy and desperate tone of the situation. The house is deteriorating; it is smelly and unclean. Despite these things, Teresa continues with the procedure, because she feels she must. The revolutionary nature of the novelist’s text is in its elucidation of the reality that women experienced, an entirely clandestine existence endured only by women in Spain.

The protagonist, Ana, also talks about the political aspect of this personal matter. “Piensa Ana que si los hombres parieran el aborto sería ya legal en todo el mundo desde el principio de
Ana’s comments here contain very obvious traits of feminism: lamenting the state of inequality between men and women and observing the patriarchal structure that allows the needs of women to be neglected. She makes a comparison between men and women and the power and control that each has politically. She denotes the patriarchal system in which the women in the novel reside and in which actual Spanish women live. I consider this quote to be on the more explicit side of the spectrum of political expression because this situation was a real problem at the time and one that politicians and activists in Spain were discussing.

Kate Millett’s theory that the personal is political is especially relevant here; Ana speaks plainly about the difference between the sexes and how that difference manifests in laws. For Millett, “sex is a status category with political implications,” and Montero’s observation of the status category of women through Ana Antón demonstrates that a greater power to change and influence laws lies with the male sex (24). Ana expresses irritation towards the fact that because pregnancy is an exclusively female experience, and more specifically, unwanted pregnancy, safe and legal means to terminate are unavailable due to an imbalance of power. This feminism, characteristic of the second wave, is another iteration of the protagonist’s exasperation with the patriarchal society in which she is trapped.

Rosa Montero further develops the theme of reproductive rights with her descriptions of doctors/medical professionals and their behavior related to abortion and contraception. Ana Antón’s perception of the doctors that are supposed to help her and her friends is captured here: “[h]ay algo en común en muchos ginecólogos: ese desprecio por la persona, la grosería de grandes machos que ven-y-curan-coños” (35). She reflects on the treatment she has received from doctors. Gynecologists express disdain and contempt towards her; they don’t view her as a person. This quote comes after a visit with a male gynecologist who had never seen a diaphragm
and reacts with revulsion upon seeing one. The doctor suggests that women not use a form of contraception that requires the interruption of sex in order to use it. In this way, Ana criticizes the concept that women are the only ones responsible for contraception. The burden of the prevention of pregnancy rests on the shoulders of women and ironically, so does the task of ending the pregnancy or caring for a child once it is born. She also expresses that a doctor doesn’t accept a basic and safer (than an IUD) form of contraception, even though he is a gynecologist.

Kristin Kerbavaz summarizes this attitude well when she writes, “a las propias mujeres les consideran subhumanas, nada más que ‘hembras’ de cualquier especie. No reconocen que hay más implicado en un acto sexual que la posibilidad de encontrarse embarazada” (58). In Montero’s book, men view women’s role in sex as one of getting pregnant or preventing said pregnancy and thus views them as reproductive vessels rather than human beings. The protagonist, Ana, comments about the manifestation of inequality that exists day to day and in this case, the medical treatment of women related to reproductive rights. The doctor’s disgust at contraception and the possibility of interrupting male pleasure during sex highlights the disregard for women as human beings and rather demonstrates the patriarchal attitude in Spain towards sex: women serve a biological purpose and beyond that, all else is forgotten.

The interaction with the gynecologist correlated with contraception is not the only negative experience Ana and other female characters in the book encounter with male health professionals. After Teresa’s illegal abortion goes wrong, she and Ana go to the hospital and a man who works at the hospital threatens Ana: “pues ándense ustedes con ojo porque en esta ocasión no les denuncio no sé por qué, pero como vuelva a pasar algo semejante van ustedes a la cárcel” (Montero 32). While Teresa is suffering post-abortion in the hospital, both physically and
from her overwhelming sadness, she also suffers intimidation by those who are meant to take care of her. The position of women and their control over their bodies were precarious, and this quote reinforces the idea of men controlling women with laws and threats. It also demonstrates the insecure relationship between women and the doctors whose obligation should be to take care of the health of the patient, but who instead express doubt and repulsion towards their patients and menace them while they are in vulnerable positions.

**Sexuality: Violence and Liberation**

The view of women’s role in sex as females meant for reproduction and the blatant disregard of pleasure develop into the theme of sexuality that saturates the novel. Both Ana and her friends describe their sexual relations in the past and present of the novel. These revolutionary discourses on sex are from a woman’s perspective and they highlight the multifaceted nature of these interactions: men’s negligence of the female orgasm, instances of rape, and women’s sexual liberation. Particularly through the eyes of the protagonist Ana Antón and two other women, Elena, a professor and close confidante, and la Pulga, a secretary at a movie company, Montero explores the intricacies of women’s sexuality during the Transition.

Rosa Montero elucidates these sexual encounters through small, daily interactions that emphasize the adage that the personal is political. By presenting a relevant political movement of the time through quotidian exchanges like phone calls and conversations with friends, she underlines the particular relevance of politics to personal life. Montero also unearths the shared and collective nature of these lived experiences.

La Pulga suffers one instance of violation, and certainly a more controversial one for Transition-era Spain. La Pulga is a victim of marital rape. She marries at 19, and on her wedding night has her first actual sexual experience: her new husband rapes her. “Y la Pulga llegó virgen
y asustada a la ya bendecida cama del hotel. Él la violó sin palabras, dolorosa e inhábilmente, y a la mañana siguiente la Pulga despertó en una almohada mojada en lágrimas sintiendo tirantez y escozor entre las piernas” (Montero 92). Here, the author explicitly labels the sexual experience a rape by using the verb “violar” (to rape) in Spanish. Montero includes another reference to the ignorance and negligence of medical professionals: la Pulga’s doctor tells her she has a psychological vaginitis instead of taking her pain seriously. The author focuses on the personal in this case and explains how la Pulga and her rapist divorced after three years without ever having sex again. She could only bring herself to try a sexual relationship again at age 27, eight years later. Through this example, Montero explores the psychological consequences of a societal mindset that oppressed and failed to protect women. The author highlights the ways in which the disparity of power between the sexes permeated Spanish society and directly connected to the idea that the personal is political. According to Kate Millett, “every avenue of power within the society is entirely in male hands” (25), literally and figuratively. Her assertion here links pointedly to the lack of power la Pulga found in her marriage initiated by rape and the refusal of doctors to consider her genuinely. She struggled to find a path to control her own life, marriage, or body and was thwarted by men in her attempts.

Montero adds to the image of sexuality in Spanish society through her narrator’s description of Elena’s first sexual experience coupled with her desperation to lose her virginity. This story takes place in Elena’s youth with her friend from school Miguel Ángel when she “llegó a la decisión de dejar de ser virgen” (Montero 51). This phrasing indicates that the reader will find a situation in which Elena has the power as she made her own decision about her sexuality. The two leave Madrid and drive up to his summer house, where Elena confesses her virginity and her desire to lose it to him. At first he doubts her, even accuses her of tricking him,
stating, “no es posible… ¿por qué me engañas?” (Montero 53). He eventually rejects her, telling her she deserves better, but not before forcing her to perform fellatio on him in his car before they return to Madrid.

Some critics have interpreted this forced oral act as rape, and I am inclined to agree. Kristin Kerbavaz posits, “Miguel Ángel viola a Elena para reclamar su propia subjetividad sexual, y para hacerlo literalmente le tapa la boca. Suprime completamente sus deseos e intereses; la silencia totalmente”(58). To further build on that, I assert that this act constitutes rape and also represents the patriarchal hegemony of male pleasure. Miguel Ángel denies her sexual desires in their encounter, accentuating his complete disregard for her orgasm and self-determination. For him, she must be sexual but only in order to attend to his gratification. This scene is described in detail, but the most significant portion is as follows, “chúpamela’, insiste, Elena duda, le da asco, Miguel Ángel empuja suave pero con firmeza su cabeza, ella opone al principio alguna resistencia pero al fin consiente” (Montero 56). In this way, Miguel Ángel serves as a metaphor for Spain’s patriarchal society: he has power in the situation despite her efforts to take control of her own sexuality, and through forcing her to perform oral sex, he ignores her right to self determination and control over her sexuality.

The prevalence of male pleasure is a theme that appears throughout the novel. The protagonist and her friends explore this topic through their interactions and relations with men that occur throughout the novel. In one case, Ana’s friend Candela travels to London for a clandestine abortion due to the improper placement of an IUD. Immediately following her abortion, the doctor places a new IUD, and she has to be hospitalized for an infection. While in the hospital, Candela ponders the ways in which she feels her body has been viewed as an object and how her “liberation” has only resulted in further objectification: “pensó en la liberación de la
mujer, o mejor dicho, en esa supuesta liberación que a ojos de muchos hombres solo se concentraba en lo sexual, en tener hembras más dispuestas, en olvidar el odiado condón, el coito interrumpido” (Montero 33). Candela questions the Women’s Liberation movement and male perception of what it means; for her, men view women’s newfound freedom as a step towards women who are more available rather than who take possession of their agency. Candela criticizes men and their understanding of women’s sexual liberation. Particularly through the lens of her negative experience with doctors and birth control, she offers a point of view that addresses the idea of birth control as a female-only burden. She elaborates later, “La píldora, el DIU, son problemas de mujer. Es ella quien las toma, quien lo sufre. El diafragma, sin embargo, es algo más cercano a la pareja: ¿ha de interrumpir el varón sus acaloramientos previos para que ella pueda colocarse el disco de caucho? ¿Qué horror” (35). She examines how liberation and birth control create another layer of inequity in Transition-era (and Franco’s) Spain: women still bear the brunt of the consequences. They must endure unsafe, unsanitary procedures to find some semblance of control.

This interpretation aligns with an obstacle for the feminist fight for sexual liberation, “el choque con las normas sociales, con ellas la sociedad negaba a las mujeres todo el derecho a una sexualidad que no estuviera dirigida a tener hijos” (Escario 176). Ana also considers women were not viewed as sexual beings through the lens of desire, but rather as objects that served to pleasure men. As Pilar Escario establishes, society denied women the right to form their own sexual agency. Although she only states the society’s predetermined purpose of female sexuality as maternity, a point that will be addressed later in this chapter, she also determines that social norms did not allow women to define their desires for themselves. Literary critic Concha Alborg seconds this sentiment: “Las situaciones que recogería resultarían tan triviales como las
conversaciones telefónicas con hombres, demostrando que a pesar de su supuesta emancipación, la mujer está dispuesta todavía a olvidar sus responsabilidades para acomodar al posible pretendiente” (Alborg 68).

Ana analyzes the perception of sexual liberation and the consequences that it has for women. They had found some bit of freedom, but they were also imprisoned again by the pleasure of men. “Y por ello Ana finge, como fingen también millones de mujeres sin decirlo, sin atreverse a contestárselo las unas a las otras, tan prisioneras están de su papel de amantes” (Montero 225). Ana’s musings reflect popular feminist thought of the era, particularly, the myth of vaginal orgasm as the only way to obtain sexual pleasure (Escario 178). The protagonist evaluates the patriarchal nature of heterosexual relations. She touches on the collective essence of the female experience in Spain during the Transition through her emphasis on millions of women who shared the same experience. She also states that they felt like prisoners in their sexual existence that lacked actual consideration for their pleasure. Ana goes so far as to call an orgasm “tiránico” reflecting the imbalance of power in sexual relations and connecting to Kate Millett’s definition of sexual politics, “power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another” (Millett 23). For Millett, politics shows the true nature of status between sexes, and this inequity that extends even to the bedroom (one of the most private aspects of life) reflects the way in which systems of patriarchal power affect women on personal and political levels. Even though it seemed that there was progress during the Transition, Ana’s thoughts demonstrate that oppressive and patriarchal ideologies continued.

Montero delves further into the idea of sexuality and its connection to an imbalance of power and the daily lives of women. She develops this in her accounts of street harassment and
the sexualization of young girls in the streets. She writes about how females learn to have their innocence and ignorance exploited:

Después se hizo, se hicieron conocedoras de estos asaltos incruentos y cotidianos. De las manos que pellizcan culos, de los restregones de autobús, del asco a intuir algo duro --- pobres de ella, ignorantes de erecciones --- contra tu muslo o tu mano. De esas sombras fugaces ...que se precipitaban sobre ti en mitad de la calle, los ojos brillantes, susurrando palabras desconocidas y brutales, te-lo-voy-a-meter-por-no-sé-dónde, te-voy-a-llenar-de-leche, te-cogería-y-te (150).

The author describes the quotidian nature of the sexualization and abuse endured as a female at any age. And Montero interprets this intimidation as a war, “Así, poco a poco, año a año, Ana y las demás se fueron haciendo veteranas en esta lucha de guerrillas” (150). She writes about this experience as a war by calling them veterans of a war against the established patriarchy. She also stresses the daily, relentless essence of street harassment in Madrid. By calling this mistreatment a war, she highlights its inherent violence. This quote demonstrates how society also privileges public male pleasure over the safety of females who only want to get home or to school.

In Crónica del desamor, Rosa Montero explores the varying manifestations of the political in the realm of sexuality through her analysis of liberation, rape, and daily abuses endured by Spanish women during Franco’s regime and into the Transition. Through the intimate portraits of her characters that develop from their adolescence into their adulthood, she cements the relationship between private, daily life, and the state of political affairs.

**Women’s Writing: Creating a Space Outside the Domestic Sphere**

Throughout Crónica del desamor, Montero establishes the ways in which systematic patriarchal policies infiltrate daily life, making the political and personal inseparable facets of daily life. In a 1988 interview, Lynn K. Talbot asks her if Franco’s death and the new government have had an effect on the literary world. Montero replied that, “Hombre, sí, rápidamente. Quiero decir que tiene un efecto en tu vida personal; tiene efectos incalculables en
tu vida cotidiana. Y luego, además, en cuanto a escribir, no tienes la censura que tenías antes.
Puedes escribir lo que quieras. Yo, mis libros, no los hubiera podido escribir con Franco” (91). In this quote, Montero solidifies the influence of political and personal life on writing and particularly because this thesis focuses on Montero’s first book, published in 1979 directly after the fall of Franco’s regime, provides an apt segue into this chapter focused on women’s writing.

Montero represents women’s writing through her presentation of female lived experience during the Transition as well as her empowerment of her characters as writers in her novel. The employment of metafiction manifests in more than one way in Crónica del desamor and with more than one character. Most prominently, Ana Antón, who works as an editor at a newspaper, expresses her desire to write about the experiences of women like her. This case is Montero’s most tangible foray into metafiction because she describes the book that the reader is reading while she is reading it. At the beginning of the novel, Ana thinks:

que estaría bien escribir un día algo. Sobre la vida de cada día, claro está…Sobre manos babosas, platos para lavar, reducciones de plantilla, orgasmos fingidos, llamadas de teléfono que nunca llegan, paternalismos laborales, diafragmas, caricaturas y ansiedades, Sería el libro de las Anas, de todas y ella misma, tan distinta y tan una (Montero 16).

This thought precisely outlines the novel that follows. Rosa Montero treats each of these topics in the subsequent pages, including some that are specifically highlighted in this thesis. Through her use of metafiction, Montero links her reality with the reality inside of Crónica del desamor,

11 The definition of metafiction used in this analysis is Patricia Waugh’s: “Metafiction is a term given to the fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text” (2).
allowing the reader to imagine that the book can serve as a reflection of Spanish society at the time.

The author also gives power to her female characters, and in this case, to Ana, through their writing. However, this power is something that they encounter later on. The protagonist doubts herself at first and runs into obstacles in her journey towards authorship. “Pero escribir un libro así, se dice Ana con desconcierto, sería banal, estúpido e interminable, un diario de aburridas frustraciones” (19). She discounts herself, an echo of the society that surrounds her and its doubts about the capabilities of women. These doubts are best summarized by her son once Ana begins her writing journey. On summer vacation at the beach, she sits, writing, and her son asks what she is doing. She responds that she is writing and he asks why. She responds, “‘porque me gusta’, añade ella mientras le abraza. Pero el Curro calla un momento mirando las hojas cubiertas de menuda letra, luego se deshace del abrazo, joven, cruel y poderoso, y ya en el suelo comenta con tajante y sabio tono: ‘Pues es una tontería’” (154). El Curro, Ana’s son, shows that he already believes in patriarchal standards and reinforces them from a physically inferior position. Even positioned in his seat on the ground, he imposes his perceived authority and power over his mother. His cruel condemnations of her work serve as a microcosm for Spanish society and reflect the myriad of influences that oppress women: the construct of motherhood; fingerprints of emotional abuse; and the constructed superiority of male over female.

Later in the novel, Ana and her co-worker Mateo talk about how she was not nominated for a writer position at the newspaper. Mateo explains that the paper reached out to a (male) specialist and she responds, “Y claro, una mujer sólo puede dedicarse a escribir chorradas” (245). She expresses this with sarcasm but through the humor, carries out a criticism of the perception that no one takes her seriously because she is a woman. Ultimately, however, Ana is
not discouraged from her authorial attempts. At the end of the novel, the reader finds that she has decided to continue writing her novel. While detailing a sexual encounter with her boss, she describes the way he takes off his tie and how it has inspired her again to write.

Un gesto cruel y poderoso que, quién sabe, recapacita ella con ácida sonrisa, puede ser un buen comienzo para ese libro que ahora está segura de escribir, que ya no será el rencoroso libro de las Anas, sino un apunte, una crónica del desamor cotidiano, rubricada por la mediocridad de ese nudo de seda deshecho por la rutina y el tedio.\textsuperscript{12} (253)

These are the lines that close the book and they highlight the metafictitious nature of the novel quite explicitly, as the title of the book appears verbatim. This excerpt also emphasizes Ana’s evolution and empowerment throughout the novel; at the beginning, she questioned herself and at the conclusion of the novel, she is now “segura.” The reader finds a capable and confident protagonist who takes control of her own story by writing it.

Concha Alborg observes the metafictitious phenomenon in Rosa Montero’s works in a similar light, “Al final de la novela, Ana ha cambiado, se siente más contenta con su vida, por imperfecta que sea, y quiere dejar testimonio de su realidad, de esa mujer nueva, contemporánea, liberada” (69). This analysis connects tangibly to Patricia Waugh’s definition and its inclusion of the joint questioning of reality and fiction. Due to the fact that Ana evaluates her own fictional reality, she epitomizes metafiction. However, Alborg’s examination of metafiction in \textit{Crónica del desamor} lacks crucial elaboration. Her piece lacks profound exploration of any characters aside from the protagonist, and in this way, she misses an opportunity to deepen her argument.

Rosa Montero further explores women’s writing in other characters. In doing so, she embraces Hélène Cixous’s conception of women’s writing (l’écriture féminine). In Cixous’s

\textsuperscript{12} This is not Ana Antón’s nor \textit{Crónica del desamor}’s only appearance in Rosa Montero’s novels. In her most recent novel, \textit{La carne}, she returns to Ana Antón, featured as a neighbor who dreams of writing, and concludes the book with the protagonist suggesting to Ana, “Llámalo \textit{Crónica del desamor}” (231).
1976 piece “The Laugh of the Medusa,” she provides this definition, “Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies” (Cixous 875). Montero does precisely this as demonstrated through Ana Antón, but also through her enablement of Elena as a writer. Elena works as a professor in the male-dominated field of academia. She finds success in her position, but she attributes it to her fellow academics view of her as a “mascota” (Montero 103) due to her status as one of the only women among many male professors. In this same reflection on her career, her current writing project is outlined, “Y piensa Elena en ‘Pares e impares’, el pequeño ensayo que está escribiendo, un trabajo sobre los roles sociales, sobre un mundo hecho de estereotipos, de casilleros contrapuestos. Sobre la dificultad de ser impar y diferente, de escapar al papel tradicional o al par opuesto” (103). Here, Elena considers the reality of the society that surrounds her and also writes to combat it or at minimum, illuminate it. She stands out because she defies the norms of her profession by being a woman and by observing the inequality in Spain during the Transition. In accordance with Cixous’s idea, she puts herself into the text and writes about women to create a space for collective voice and rejection of restrictive patriarchal roles.

**Labor: The Quest for Economic Liberty**

The female characters in *Crónica del desamor* find power not only through their writing, but also through their labor. This power is not easily obtained and presents a portrait of the patriarchal domination of the workforce and the difficulty that women had in attaining gainful employment, keeping the job once they secured it, and moving up in their companies. The protagonist, Ana Antón, provides the clearest picture of the discrimination and oppression that women faced within the workforce. As a first example, Ana tells the story of how she lost her job
at a bank when her employers learned that she was pregnant, which she compares to being
passed over for a job at the magazine where she currently works. Ana thinks to herself,

Como cuando la echaron del banco por quedarse embarazada. La llamó el jefe de
personal…Comprenderá usted, Ana, le dijo con untuosa voz, comprenderá que
usted no puede seguir en el trabajo…Pero no vuelva usted a venir por aquí… y
búsquese después otro trabajo, tiene tiempo para hacerlo y con su valía no le será
dificil. Y Ana supo morderse los labios, mantenerse, no darle las gracias que el
miserable esperaba: él, claro está tenía siete, o ocho, o nueve hijos, quién sabe la
cifra exacta, una manada de niños bendecidos, legales, religiosamente concebidos
sin placer. (Montero 243)

There is much to unpack in this quote that is relevant to the section of this chapter that addresses
motherhood. However, I find motherhood and labor to be interconnected topics, and here, Ana
observes the inequality between men and women in the labor market related to maternity.

Montero’s writing is full of sarcasm, particularly in her description of the head of personnel’s
children. She calls them “blessed, legal, and religiously conceived without pleasure.” In this
case, she criticizes the pronatalist, Francoist platform outlined in the introduction and relates it to
the labor situation of women in Spain. Ana loses her job not because she is not qualified, which
the man firing her highlights by telling her she shouldn’t have difficulty finding other
employment opportunities, but because she is a woman and she is pregnant outside of marriage.
She faces discrimination because she will be a single mother and her child was not
“religiosamente concebido”.

This is not the only occasion that Rosa Montero emphasizes the status or lack thereof of
women in the workforce. The flashback to Ana’s firing occurs in the midst of her failure to be
promoted. Other critics have noted her marginalization in the labor market: “Ana permanece en
el diario con la promesa de ser contratada a final de año, pero el plazo la sorprende nuevamente
en la indefensión laboral, desplazada de la planta por la contratación de los amigos y favoritos de
siempre” (Ahumada Peña 40). Lacking in these readings is a deep analysis of Ana’s societal
position and her word choice. After being promised a promotion and working hard at the
newspaper for two years, she addresses her coworker Mateo,

Y todo por dos duros, sin sueldo fijo, sin que me hayáis pagado los reportajes
encargados que por cualquier problema vuestro no han salido publicados, vamos,
es que me tenéis de esclava y de tonta, y cuando protesto me decís, bueno, chatita,
pero eres vital para nosotros, el próximo invierno te meteremos en plantilla
(Montero 243).

Here, Montero highlights layers of injustice. Ana is passed over for promotions despite being
promised them; she doesn’t receive a fixed salary, and is called gendered, diminutive names in
her place of work. Perhaps the most powerful word from this quote is “esclava.” Ana views
herself without power in the workplace and feels that her labor is undervalued, abused, and taken
advantage of. In this case, Ana’s situation illuminates the position of women in the workforce
during the Transition and Francoist Spain and how little change had occurred within those two
time periods. Ana highlights the unequal pay and treatment that Vindicación feminista’s articles
emphasize.

Anny Brooksbank Jones’s chapter in Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction: the
some context for the unequal treatment that the reader sees Ana Antón experience in Crónica del
desamor. She writes, “Throughout the 1960s much of this increase was concentrated in the
service industries, particularly tourism, which were deemed appropriate to women’s social role
and segmented enough to fit around their domestic commitments” (Brooksbank Jones 386). The
growth to which she refers is that of women’s percentage of Spain’s working population from
14% to 25% from 1939 to 1959. However, women were still quarantined to segments of the
workforce that allowed them to fulfill familial obligations and that aligned with their traditional
gender roles. One can see how this societal perspective might explain Ana’s struggle to maintain
gainful employment, both at the bank and at the newspaper as well as to receive appropriate respect and compensation for her work. Elena encounters this inequality as well as explained above in the section on women’s writing: her coworkers regard her as the token “mascota” and she finds herself in a situation of more precarious employment within academia than her male colleagues.

Through the use of the word “mascota”, Montero introduces a layer of submission and domesticity. Elena is the pet in her workplace and this relegates her to a position of inferiority and tokenism. In *Women in Contemporary Spain*, Brooksbank Jones offers context:

[M]any professional women continue to endure working conditions evolved by and for men who could count on the total domestic support and career servicing of wives. The combination of unsocial hours and a ‘second shift’ of domestic responsibilities when they get home, exposure to forms of sexual abuse and harassment, tokenism (or ghettoisation in areas of traditional over-representation), and senior staff’s tendency to demand more of women than men […] has been well documented. (81)

Elena faces unjust working conditions and the continued patriarchal attitudes of Spain’s Transition-era society.

**Motherhood and Family as Patriarchal Trademarks of Control**

The discourse on motherhood and family in *Crónica del desamor* is distinct from that of *Vindicación feminista*. The magazine contains explicit criticism, while the novel focuses more on the daily nature of the experience as well as the institution of motherhood. Montero’s book stresses the views of society towards maternity and in particular, single mothers. I consider this to be a particularly progressive element of *Crónica del desamor* due to the fact that these female characters are not solely defined by their roles as mothers. The author also subtly subverts the notion of conventional, patriarchal family structure and provides two tangible examples of women who epitomize motherhood outside of its traditional conception, and particularly, the
institution of motherhood in Spain under Franco’s dictatorship. Ana Antón and her friend Candela are women who defy these norms.

Ana Antón is the parent of el Curro, her four-year-old son. In the first page of the novel, the reader is confronted with the protagonist’s single motherhood. Ana explains to her coworker Mateo that he has to pick up her son after work and he responds, “Lo que sufrís las madres, Dios mío, sobre todo las solteras” (Montero 13). She responds with a short laugh and tells him how clever that statement is. She addresses his shallow understanding of the situation of a single mother in Transition-era Spain with humor, both as a protection mechanism and a way to avoid further discussion of the topic. Mateo represents a societal, patriarchal view of mothers: that having a child is difficult, but even more so for single mothers without much profound reflection on the topic.

Throughout the novel, Ana reflects on her status as the only active parent of her son. Largely, her thoughts focus on loneliness and “Curro’s need for a father figure” (Davies 99). But Montero also criticizes unsalaried, domestic labor and the status of single mothers during the Transition. The protagonist considers her motherhood an economic obligation and is particularly frustrated with her societal status, “Esto de ser madre soltera, reflexiona sonriendo con amargura, es verdaderamente una proeza, tienes todas las servidumbres del padre de familia y no se te reconocen los derechos” (Montero 244). Ana aptly critiques the traditional, patriarchal familial structure that affords men power and rights and leaves her as a single mother without recourse to properly provide or be recognized as a provider within Spanish society.

Candela is single mother as well, and Montero portrays her as living her life happily with her two children from different fathers and her job as a psychologist. This in itself encompasses a feminist statement: Candela is a successful mother and psychologist without the help of a man,
which the traditional, Francoist familial structure portrays as an impossibility. Candela tells Ana, “De todas formas, sí, creo que soy bastante feliz…en realidad estoy bastante satisfecha de mí misma” (Montero 134). In this same conversation, Candela more explicitly asserts her independent, feminist, attitude, through her rejection of dependence on a man for happiness, “Proyectas los deseos de felicidad en un hombre…Y yo no quiero, sabes Ana, yo no quiero seguir perdiendo vida” (135). Importantly, this entire conversation occurs while Ana drudges through the chore of ironing clothing, underlining the unequal burden of domestic labor on women and the lack of support for women outside of the conventional family structure.

Later in the narration, Candela reflects on her maternity. Specifically, she talks about the birth of her second child, Jara, and the societal perception of her single motherhood.

Con Jara, además tuvo que afrontar curiosas reacciones de la gente: tal parecería que en esta sociedad ambiguamente liberal se admite la existencia de la soltera que es madre de un hijo. Pero si la soltera reincide, si la mujer insiste en su desorden…si se atreve a tener más hijos de diferentes padres y pretende aun así permanecer independiente, entonces, ah, entonces se convierte en caso inadmisible, ‘esta pobre Candela’, empiezan a decir con voz meliflua, ‘qué desastre de vida’, añaden, arrugando sus escrupulosas narices con gesto de desagrado. (Montero 204)

Candela’s rejection of societal norms and her criticism of the “sociedad ambiguamente liberal” of the Transition reflect Montero’s political commentary. For context, in Transition-era Spain, feminists criticized obligatory maternity, but they also respected the life-giving powers of women. For Pilar Escario, “El único compromiso considerado como válido entre ambas tendencias se alcanzaba con la maternidad libre y voluntaria” (164). We can see this in Montero’s discourse on contraception and abortion, outlined in the above section, as well as the fact that Candela is a character who has aborted and who is a vocal proponent of birth control methods while also happily mothering two children.
Through Rosa Montero’s intimate portraits of the lives of Spanish women under the Franco regime and their lives during the change from dictatorship to democracy, the reader gains a sense of the multidimensional face of Transition-era feminism. The unifying factor in these feminisms is their foray into the personal and the political as a single unit. The author’s subversive discourse on the unseen side of reproductive rights and sexuality, the empowerment of her female characters through writing as well as her own self-empowerment, her exposure of labor discrimination and the prejudice endured by single mothers illuminate the power of the personal and its role in dismantling and exposing the oppressive, patriarchal structures of the time.
CONCLUSION

“Las mujeres deben ser las protagonistas
de su lucha, coma toda clase tiene la
responsabilidad de liberarse de sus cadenas.”
-Lidia Falcón, 2009

During the Transition in Spain, life for women interwove the political and the personal inseparably. Issues and lifestyles that had been oppressed and kept secret during the long decades of dictatorship emerged as matters of public discourse. This thesis established that these themes, more specifically, reproductive rights, sexuality, women’s writing, labor, and motherhood, were areas desperate for gender equality. Through Vindicación feminista and Crónica del desamor, the reader has been made aware of the multidimensional nature of feminism and the varying approaches towards these topics. The Transition brought legal changes, but social attitudes remained to be challenged.

Crónica del desamor reflects the angst and frustration, the desamor, that women experienced during the change from dictatorship to democracy and particularly in the absence of a collective outlet such as Vindicación feminista that closed its doors the year Crónica del desamor was published. The novel relates an extremely intimate, personal look into the lives of Spanish women: their private emotions, their struggles, their hopes, and their dreams.

Vindicación feminista created a communal space to address these frustrations and merged the political with the personal, demonstrating how each side truly connected with and strengthened
the other. This thesis has demonstrated the confluence of the private and the public spheres of life and how this inextricable joining of the personal and the political led to legal changes in the Constitution of 1978 and beyond as well as some progress in the attitudes at-large of Spanish society.

The reader has seen the similar language shared between the works. In addressing reproductive rights, both the magazine and the novel liken clandestine abortions and abortionists to butchery or butchers. *Vindicación* ran an article entitled, “Indefensas ante la carnicería” (La Vanguardia 1978) and the protagonist in *Crónica del desamor* reflects on illegal abortion: “y sin embargo, estos guardianes del orden genital ajeno pagarán sin duda un raspado internacional a sus hijas descarriadas, mientras otras mujeres han de someterse a carniceros españoles e ilegales” (Montero 28). Both works criticize the established order and the way in which it subjected women to unequal and frequently unsafe conditions, a status not far removed from the position of women in the world at present. They present the class dichotomy in access to abortion and birth control and criticize this inequity. The magazine and the novel establish the necessity of accessible contraception exclusive of class barriers in order to truly liberate women both sexually and from the restraints of traditional family life in order to make choices about their bodies and their maternity.

In terms of sexuality, both texts expose the tyranny of patriarchal standards in relation to pleasure; the magazine and the novel address women being left unsatisfied in their sexual relations as well as the violence inherent in a society that favored male desire over female security, seen through the excerpts of writing on rape, domestic abuse, and street harassment. Despite the fictional character of the novel, the metafictitious overtones support the outlined experiences as a lived reality for women during the Transition, backed by the statistics and
articles included in the magazine. Both Crónica and Vindicación brought the innermost domain of the bedroom to the forefront of political demands.

Women’s writing spoke these problems into the public consciousness and marked a change: women would not be silenced and would use their powerful voices, stifled for almost forty years of dictatorship, to expose the inequality and oppression they suffered and continued enduring into the Transition. In this way, they created spaces for the marginalized and a place to be heard. Vindicación’s entirely female writing and editing staff epitomized this and Rosa Montero’s own literature as well as her inclusion of female authors in her novel formed an important step in the evolution of female narratives. These narratives were no longer dictated by men; women writers reclaimed them and through this, found agency to create and encourage societal changes.

Vindicación feminista and Crónica del desamor consider the gender inequities in the workforce endured by Spaniards, but from unique perspectives. Through pieces that exposed exploitation of female workers in a factory or the demands of mothers for salaried domestic work, Vindicación feminista demonstrated the multilayered discrimination against women within both salaried and unsalaried labor markets. The novel focuses on the precariousness of employment for women and the discrimination and belittling they faced in juxtaposition with their perceived domestic responsibilities and maternity.

Motherhood itself is considered through the lens of sexuality and labor in both works, but most importantly, Vindicación feminista conveyed a criticism of the family structure as a tool of the patriarchal, Catholic dictatorship, while Crónica del desamor exposed the societal discrimination persistent in mothering models that fell outside the norm. Both champion women’s autonomy in making choices about family and maternity and draw the connection
between the personal and the political: Spanish society interpreted motherhood as a public matter that solicited opinions from strangers or the State. The Franco regime used maternity and family to subjugate women in their intended place in society, privileging convention and order over freedom and agency. Both texts reject this concept and move forward with a progressive notion of motherhood in which women are free to make their own decisions about their bodies and lives.

Even though *Crónica del desamor* is more explicitly personal (and also fictional), its message is a political one based in reality: “Después llegó la muerte del dictador, la supuesta democracia, la desgana…Está de acuerdo Ana con lo que dice Elena, claro que está de acuerdo: los partidos ya no sirven, han de ser nuevos los métodos de lucha, es el momento de las agrupaciones feministas, ciudadanas, comunales” (46). The protagonist in the novel views collective, political action by feminist groups and communities as the way out of the darkness of dictatorship and into a true mode of democracy based on equality. She expresses the disillusionment women in Spain experienced during the Transition but this disenchantment highlights the ray of hope that *Vindicación feminista* embodied. Within its pages, *Vindicación* lauds feminist groups for their activism in the streets and their communities while providing information on how to participate in these groups. One article, “Asociaciones de vecinos de Madrid: las mujeres en lucha” (Larumbe 232), shares identical language with the assertion made by Ana Antón in *Crónica del desamor*, championing new, collective methods to fight for progress. Both texts advocate for the focus on the personal, daily aspect of the political.

In the reading of this thesis, one might be reminded of present-day society in Spain and the United States. However, we can draw on Spanish feminists and women during the Transition in steps forward to dismantle the patriarchal systems that oppress women. By maintaining the
convergence between the personal and the political and working collectively, there is hope yet for a world that considers women equally and justly in all realms of society, both public and private.
REFERENCES


