

ABSTRACT

Male Characters in *Nada* (1945) and *Entre visillos* (1958)

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This study demonstrates how male characters in *Nada* (1945) and *Entre visillos* (1958), two twentieth-century novels written under Francisco Franco's dictatorship, play a pivotal role in the development of two impressionable adolescent protagonists. While these protagonists have received the majority of scholarly attention, the male characters that function in a variety of roles such as mentor, close friend, father or other relative merit closer scrutiny. These men are more than subordinate characters. They function as foils for the protagonists by either helping or hindering in her efforts to mature by either limiting her agency through treating her from a patriarchal stance or encouraging her development through a more liberal, progressive treatment.

Male Characters in *Nada* (1945) and *Entre visillos* (1958)

by

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DEDICATION

For my daughter Madrid
and
in loving memory of my granny

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

A Brief Overview of Franco's Spain and Two Novels that Survived the Censors

Economic hardship, starvation, gender inequality, dissension and general unrest characterize Francisco Franco's military regime and dictatorship that dominated Spain for thirty-six years and left a ravaged country in search of a more democratic government. The regime's policies affected all realms of life including the literary world in which men dominated women, relegating them to traditional roles as housewives and mothers. Not only did inequality influence who wrote novels, but this inequality also shaped the presentation of characters and plots within works such as *Nada* (1945) by Carmen Laforet and *Entre visillos* (1957) by Carmen Martín Gaité, two seemingly apolitical novels by two young women in post-Civil War Spain. Living and writing under Franco's reign, these women dealt with the adversity surrounding them not only by using the female protagonist to offer models of conduct at variance with the regime's ideals for women but also by creating secondary male characters to support them and offer models for male behavior antithetical to the regime's propaganda. Critics have frequently utilized Feminism, Deconstruction and Reader-Response theories to study the female protagonists. However, they have paid little attention to Laforet and Martín Gaité's male characters, probably because of the female authors and the overt feminist characteristics of these works. Both authors present a variety of male characters to expose traditional

male roles as well as to suggest subtly how males could help women gain more opportunities to realize their full potential.

The years following the gruesome Spanish Civil War (1936 – 1939) proved just as difficult as the war years, as Franco gained control of the country and his bloody dictatorship began. Those with dissident views were punished with a variety of tortures such as concentration camps, forced labor, execution by firing squads and lengthy prison sentences while the dictator-implemented censorship established complete control over what the citizens of Spain read and thought.¹ Censorship offered a powerful tool that kept many works from being published and often altered those works that were published so that they supposedly reflected the dictatorship's conservative, Catholic and patriarchal values. It was in this environment that Carmen Laforet and Carmen Martín Gaité successfully published *Nada* and *Entre visillos*. Therefore they were encouraged, if not forced, to create characters that provide both reflections of the times while at the same time not overtly calling attention to their ulterior functions of social and political criticism within the protagonist's life.

While the oppressive environment in which they wrote forced them to find new ways to introduce ideas contrary to those permitted by the censorship, the literary trends of the 1940s and 1950s also assisted in the successful introduction of male characters as important subordinate characters in the protagonists' development throughout each novel. Published in 1944, *Nada* embodies the definition of *Tremendismo*. An offshoot of nineteenth century Naturalism, *Tremendismo* attempts to portray real life by providing

¹ For a thorough account of life in Franco's Spain, see *Fear and Progress: Ordinary Lives in Franco's Spain, 1939 – 1975* by Antonio Cazorla Sánchez in which primary sources provide a first-hand account of life under the dictatorship.

graphic, grotesque details to picture most accurately what life was like in Spain after the Civil War but without direct references to the conflict. It differs from Naturalism of the previous century, however, by its inclusion of a pervasive and disturbing thread of violence that is completely unnecessary and excessive. *Tremendismo* then offers a portrait of the grim reality of 1940s Spain compounded by gratuitous violence, a reaction to the horrors of the Spanish Civil War.

The continual inclusion of violent episodes in conjunction with grotesque scenes leaves a lasting impression on the reader, so much so that other elements often pass unnoticed. For example, while most readers are appalled at the scenes in *Nada* in which Juan, Andrea's uncle, abuses his wife Gloria, and readily take a stand in support of Andrea as an orphaned, female protagonist, they may not consider the importance of the roles played by the numerous less psychotic and less violent male characters introduced throughout the novel – Pons, Gerardo, Jaime, Iturdiaga, et al. Thus in *Nada*, the combination of the “in-your-face effect” of the *Tremendista* style and the presence of non-patriarchal attributes in some male characters allowed these secondary male characters to pass by the censors unrecognized as key components in the critique of the dictatorship. In their second report on the novel, two censors agreed to a total lack of literary importance by commenting, “¿Ataca al dogma o la moral? No. ¿Al régimen? No. ¿Tiene valor documental o literario? No. Novela insulsa, sin estilo ni valor literario alguno” (Abellán 160). Among critics there is no doubt that these censors committed a gross error and that this novel is rich in complexity as exemplified in the numerous studies devoted to it and its ability to encompass a variety of academic studies. Furthermore, without these male characters, the feminist interpretation frequently applied

to *Nada* might lose much of its strength as the juxtaposition and opportune placement of these male characters provides much of the novel's critique of patriarchal, Francoist values.

By 1958, when *Entre visillos* earned the Premio Nadal, the literary world had transitioned to another way of portraying daily life now almost twenty years into the Franco dictatorship. The "slice of life" novel, also called Neorealism, objectivism or social realism, offers a brief glimpse into the superficially mundane happenings in the life of its characters. Neorealism's primary characteristic is that of functioning like a camera lens or a tape recorder to create an enduring replica of the moment without the overt intrusion of a narrator. On the surface, *Entre visillos* appears to be preoccupied with the frivolous lives of a group of young girls in a provincial capital as they focus on their relationships with male and female characters within their social class while often giving less attention to their education. The failure of the censors to comprehend the meaning beyond the superficial, ordinary plot allowed the novel's publication. As Torrente Ballester once said, "los censores no podían ver más allá que las narices."²

However, if one delves into the innuendos offered by the interplay between male teacher and female student, the choice of narrative voice for each chapter and the subject matter of conversations among characters, one readily begins to comprehend the complexity woven into the seemingly simple subject matter. The preoccupations of the group of female students, together with the primary focus of the novel seeming to be their daily conflicts and issues, distract the reader and censors alike from paying attention to the subordinate male characters and their important role within these disagreements as

² Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, interview with Frieda H. Blackwell, recorded on six 90 minute cassettes (Salamanca, Spain: May, 1981), Tape 1.

well as the development of the female protagonist, Natalia. Through analyzing a variety of these male characters in both works, this study will validate the importance of the juxtaposition of these male characters with the female protagonists in order to provide a more well-rounded presentation of the protagonist as well as demonstrate her progression from a naïve adolescent to a “chica rara” contradicting society’s expectations for her behavior and creating her own path.

Although different in style and literary movements, both *Nada* and *Entre visillos* employ secondary male characters as foils to assist in exposing characteristics of the female protagonist while offering an authentic portrayal of life in their respective decades. Spaniards of the 1940s and 1950s faced a multitude of economic and social issues created by an iron-fisted dictator who did not care to recognize the dreadful plight of most of his citizens. Although “autarky is a policy which, in theory, seeks to achieve total national economic self-sufficiency,” under Franco’s autarkic government, “the majority concentrated on surviving hunger, rationing, and other daily miseries” (Graham 186, Cazorla Sánchez 20).³ In the years 1939 – 1945, approximately 200,000 deaths were attributed to starvation as Spain suffered unreasonable rationing made worse by a black market created by regional politicians (Cazorla Sánchez 9). While hunger and famine continued throughout the regime’s control, the worst effects occurred during the early 1940s. As Antonio Cazorla Sánchez summarizes, “the years of hunger and repression – preceded by the years of civil war rife with horrific killings between republicans and Francoists [...] fundamentally shaped the lives and values of the

³ For more information on autarky and additional details about Franco, consult the first chapter of *A Time of Silence: Civil War and the Culture of Repression in Franco’s Spain, 1936 – 1945* by Michael Richards in which he details the various aspects of Francoism.

generations that experienced these events” (12). The effects of this hunger and repression forced many into exile where oftentimes the conditions were not significantly better, but were at least safer, since Franco utilized terror to maintain submission. Approximately 300,000 fled the firing squads and false imprisonment by exiling to neighboring countries – France, Africa, Belgium, the United Kingdom, et la. (Cazorla Sánchez 38). For those that managed to survive the oppressive decade, the 1950s offered little solace even though those returning from exile were surprised at the welcome they received by authorities (39).

Commonly referred to as “los años grises,” the 1950s in Spain were marginally better than the preceding decade thanks in part to the change in economic policy from autarky to a more capitalistic form of managing the country’s scattered agrarian areas and the newfound desire to industrialize. The ability to industrialize originated with the United States’ assistance when President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a pact with Franco who had recently denounced communism, which allowed the United States to establish military and naval bases on Spanish soil in exchange for military and financial aid (Phillips 268). This bilateral treaty, known as the Pact of Madrid, opened the door for Spain to once again belong to the United Nations as well as other key international programs that would assist in Spain’s return to the world stage (267). While regaining some lost standing in the international community, Spain was still a country in the middle of a slow recovery. Citizens protested against government services in groups numbering into the thousands because “widespread misery could not be silenced in a people used to speaking their minds” (Pierson 163). Republicans in particular suffered greater hardship than the bourgeois and upper class that had supported the Nationalist uprising. As

Pierson summarizes, “the notion of autarchy was scrapped, labor gained a greater voice in the syndicates, and conditions improved sufficiently by 1952 that Spain could end rationing” (163). Furthermore many remote villages received electricity and paved roads, highways were improved throughout the country and a train connected Madrid to the French frontier (Pierson 164). While Spain advanced with these accomplishments and improvements, the Franco regime still discriminated against women.

To ascertain fully the situation of Spanish women under this regime, one must consider that contraception, abortion and divorce, three decisions usually considered basic human rights, were illegal (Montero 381). All the rights women had gained under the Second Republic (193 – 1936), including the right to vote, were all swept away by Franco’s government. Married women were not allowed basic privileges such as buying a car, obtaining a passport or establishing a bank account without their husbands’ permission. Essentially “forty years of dictatorship did more than halt the process of women’s emancipation; the imposition of a traditionalist National-Catholicism and ultra-reactionary social norms set the clock back dramatically for Spanish women” (Montero 381). However, as women worked to help support their family financially, they were able to ever so cautiously enter into previously closed realms of male control. Although speaking more to the 1970s and later, Montero’s comments also apply to the Franco era when she explains, “the other cultural sector where women have made spectacular incursions is that of literary production. It is logical that women, in leaving the confines of the home for the public sphere, should have opted for the media and fiction, both of which give them a public platform” (383). This public platform is what both Carmen

Laforet and Carmen Martín Gaité obtained with the publication and positive reception of their works.

Carmen Laforet and Carmen Martín Gaité experienced firsthand life under Franco and comprise part of those whose lives were fundamentally shaped by the dictatorship, especially as females in a patriarchal society. Antonio Cazorla Sánchez clarifies that “hunger was not only a question of politics but also of gender” (63). Continuing his argument with regards to education, he states “students were told that not only were women and men different but that women had to obey their fathers and husbands, and could never aspire to be equal to their brothers” (92). Laforet and Martín Gaité have a shared history as victims of a society in which women were often silenced and powerless. Their works contain similar elements in the presentation of their young, female protagonists creating their identity in the middle of a repressive society. Thus, *Nada* and *Entre visillos* create a suitable pair of works to be studied together. Feminism, Deconstruction and Reader-Response theories offer useful tools in understanding the importance of the secondary male character by providing different theoretical viewpoints from which one can more clearly perceive the variety of functions these male characters fulfill aside from the obvious designations as friend, uncle or teacher.

Feminism, as a literary theory and analytical tool for works written by and about women, serves an integral role in bringing critical attention to previously overlooked works. Nevertheless, the popularity of Feminism has fostered an erroneous use of the theory necessitating a clarification of its use in this study. One of feminism’s primary goals is to make everyone, especially women, aware of the subversive and oppressive nature of many policies, popular traditions and even the overarching structures of society

that affect their everyday life, usually without the individual's being aware of their deleterious effects on women. In order to achieve this goal, Feminism takes into consideration that "gender issues play a part in every aspect of human production and experience, including the production and experience of literature, whether we are consciously aware of the issues or not" (Tyson 92). In other words, as we read that the female character prepared dinner while the male character toiled in the fields but do not recognize the stereotypes at play, we have fallen prey to the gender roles set by society.

The subordination of women and the exaltation of men are a noticeable result of these gender roles in effect on a daily basis. Women are typically portrayed as "emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive" while being "rational, strong, protective, and decisive" is reserved for men (Tyson 85). These characteristics are so readily accepted as part of an inherent code of conduct common among all societies that one usually does not pause to think about the implications. As Lois Tyson explains, "the patriarchal ideology has a pervasive deeply rooted influence on the way we think, speak, see ourselves, and view the world in which we live" (92 – 3). This is to say that it has become one with our subconscious level of thinking. The Catholic Church, as well as political regimes, encourages this mentality in Spanish-speaking societies. The patriarchy, coupled with modern methods of disseminating ideologies such as the popular press and online communication methods, force the subordinated female author to implement new, subversive elements in her work in order to escape the limitations of the society in which she lives and express herself through these creative, artistic endeavors.

The female protagonists of feminist works receive the majority of critical analysis while the subordinating characters, especially the men, tend to be received as

superfluous. Furthermore, the male characters in novels written by women rarely influence scholarly work as if women somehow lack the ability to construct such a figure properly. Joan L. Brown notes that “the authority of male writers to create characters of the opposite sex has never been questioned” because society accepts that male writers create acceptable female characters but questions female writers’ ability to create male characters with verisimilitude (55). Brown is not expressing that women were previously unable to create male characters, but rather that critics are finally recognizing that female authors develop a variety of male characters that go beyond traditional stereotypes so as to utilize the character for their literary purposes. Peter Prieto more generally postulates that these authors “rechazan la subyugación de la mujer y subvierten el tradicional discurso patriarcal establecido” which concurs with the feminist idea that the sexes should be treated equally (ix).

While Feminism serves as an impetus for study, coupling other theories with it allows a more in-depth analysis of the male characters. Through deconstructing elements of the text, the reader may uncover underlying meanings or truths. Deconstruction, a method most often associated with Jacques Derrida and first laid out in his seminal essay “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences (1967),” proposes that “any text inevitably undermines its own claim to have a determinate meaning,” leading the reader to produce his or her own response and meanings (quoted in Lodge 108). Although first introduced by Derrida in the late 1960s, Deconstruction did not garner attention by U.S. critics until the late 1970s. Lois Tyson best expresses the theory in layman’s terms by explaining Deconstruction “can improve our ability to think critically and to see more readily the ways in which our experience is determined by ideologies of

which we are unaware because they are ‘built into’ our language” (249). This emphasis in both theories on bringing to light ideologies and stereotypes that the reader does not initially recognize facilitates the simultaneous application of both theories to two politically and culturally charged works.

Both of these theories, if not all critical theories, focus attention on the function of language. As defined by Lois Tyson, “language is not the reliable tool of communication we believe it to be, but rather a fluid, ambiguous domain of complex experience in which ideologies program us without our being aware of them” (249). By thinking of language as an unstable tool of the author, the reader better understands the task of deconstructing the work at hand in order to decode the underlying message ingeniously interwoven within the text. This semantic freeplay may include deciphering the specific meaning of a common word such as “tree” or going so far as to examine the function of each word within a sentence to arrive at a better approximation of the underlying meaning.

The process of deconstructing is represented by three terms associated with Structuralism as well as Deconstruction. The addition of the signifier to the signified produces the sign. The signifier is the sound, gesture or image from which one derives the signified, and together the signifier and signified create the sign or word (Tyson 251). For example, upon reading the word “character,” people may immediately conjure an image of a specific character be it from their favorite literary work or a more non-specific definition such as the attributes of a person. This specific image of a particular character is the signified while the letters that compose the word “character” are the signifier. The conjured image in combination with the letters creates the sign. The signs interpreted by the reader create meaning. In other words,

meaning is not a stable element residing in the text for us to uncover or passively consume. Meaning is created by the reader in the act of reading [...] Furthermore, the meaning that is created is not a stable element capable of producing closure; that is, no interpretation has the final word. Rather, literary texts, like all texts, consist of multiplicity of overlapping, conflicting meanings in dynamic, fluid relation to one another and to us. (Tyson 258 – 59)

Therefore, through deconstructing the text in search of this unstable meaning, we, the readers of literary language, attempt to understand more fully the ideologies at play as created by the author at the same time realizing we are simply learning from the tensions within and not attempting to overcome them (Tyson 265).

The reader of the literary text quite obviously plays an important, necessary role in deconstructive theory by not accepting the usual association of the written word but researching alternative connotations. Thus, the reader becomes an active participant and creator of the text because language employed by an author can and will be construed in a variety of different manners depending upon the reader's interpretation (Tyson 170). Readers' reception of a text varies depending on an infinite number of factors including but not limited to social, cultural, religious and educational experiences. A reader well versed in critical theory may immediately question how the reader's role differs between deconstruction and reader-response theories. The primary distinction between the two is the level of analysis required of the reader and his or her role in the reception of the work. Thus, while language or the text itself takes center stage in deconstruction, the reader becomes the focus in reader-response theory.

Alongside feminism and deconstruction, reader-response theory plays an important role in the interpretation of these works because of its verification that the reader is expected to and should bring his or her own personal experiences and prior knowledge to the text so as to ascertain best the meanings of the text. Interest in the

reading process gained attention in the 1930s but Reader-Response theory as it is known today did not come to the forefront until the 1970s when it was finally agreed that “what the text is cannot be separated from what it does” (Tyson 170). Like Feminism, Reader-Response theory has several different facets. The overarching principles shared by all branches of the theory include the idea that under no circumstances can the reader be removed from the reading process and our understanding of literature. Secondly, reading does not represent a passive activity but rather an active process in which the reader is continually consuming and creating meaning (Tyson 170). Of course, this second principle permits new insights and interpretations with each reading of the text and correlates with the construction of meaning as outlined in Deconstruction.

Another key aspect to understanding the seemingly simple ideas set forth in Reader-Response theory is that “a written text is not an object, despite its physical existence, but an event that occurs within the reader, whose response is of primary importance in creating the text” (Tyson 172). This sentiment reflects Deconstruction’s philosophy with regards to the sign, signifier and signified because each reading, be it by the same reader at different moments in his or her life or by a variety of readers, will render a plethora of interpretations for each sign/word on the page. Thus, both theories concur that the text cannot be simply an object due to its ever-changing significance with each new reading. Once again and similar to Deconstruction, Reader-Response theory is able to align with the precepts of Feminism through its outlook on how the patriarchy shapes the viewpoint from which the public approaches the text. These three literary theories will therefore offer important tools in the analysis of both *Nada* and *Entre*

visillos and the crucial function of male characters in the development of the protagonists in manners contrary to the patriarchy.

Nada and *Entre visillos* have received the most awards and critical acclaim for their writers. In discussing the presence of female writers in Spain, Cristina Fernández Cubas, a well-respected novelist in her own right, states, “y además en España ha habido siempre mujeres escritoras. Cuando yo era pequeña estaban Carmen Laforet, Ana María Matute, poco más tarde Carmen Martín Gaité...Mujeres de éxito” (Carmona 158). This quote not only speaks to Feminism but also highlights the success, influence and importance these women and their works play in the Spanish literary scene. By choosing such well-known works, the current analysis can extend beyond preliminary, foundational considerations and examine obscured meaning such as the use of the male character in two works that share the same basic plot structure, the coming of age of a young female. Aside from highlighting the oppressive restrictions imposed upon women by the patriarchy, these adolescent protagonists also represent the “chica rara” who defies society by pursuing her education and simply ignoring that which a woman should do in favor of following her desires and reaching her full potential.

The “chica rara,” while associated with literary figures, can also easily translate to the authors themselves as their experiences are intrinsically reflected in their works.⁴ Carmen Martín Gaité refers to this tie between author and “chica rara” when describing her contemporaries: “Algunas de estas mujeres de posguerra que escribieron sobre la ‘chica rara’ eran, a su vez, chicas a las que alguna vez los chicos habían llamado raras, en

⁴ As Jonathan Culler explains in *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, “For members of historically oppressed or marginalized groups, stories prompt identification with a potential group and work to make the group a group by showing them who or what they might be” (111).

general porque se juntaban con chicos raros” (Martín Gaité 108). Within this chapter of her book, she thoroughly defines the “chica rara” providing endless examples by referring to the character first defined by this term – Carmen Laforet’s protagonist Andrea. Overall, this “chica rara” refuses to conform to society in favor of pursuing her education or deciding to walk the streets to clear her head as opposed to remaining inside the house, the stereotypical female domestic domain. In describing these protagonists as a whole Martín Gaité states “quieren largarse a la calle, simplemente, para respirar, para tomar distancia con lo de dentro mirándolo desde fuera, en una palabra, para dar un quiebro a su punto de vista y ampliarlo” (101). It is evident that the “chica rara” is and does the opposite of what a patriarchal society expects and demands of females. She has male friends and questions the definition of “normal” being forced upon women. Since most critics consider her the original “chica rara,” it is fitting to commence with Carmen Laforet’s *Nada* and her protagonist Andrea.

Nada (1945), recognized as a semibiographical work, received immediate acclaim and garnered attention for the twenty-three-year-old Carmen Laforet who was new to the literary scene. Born in Barcelona, Laforet spent her childhood in the Canary Islands until moving to the mainland to study law and the humanities. She married a journalist, and the couple settled in Madrid. Shortly thereafter *Nada* won the Premio Nadal, making Laforet the first woman to claim the prestigious prize. It fittingly earned this award because, as Elizabeth Ordóñez explains *Nada* as

the first postwar Spanish novel of female adolescence – indeed as the first significant postwar novel by a woman – stands as such a formidable model of the ontological and creative challenges facing the young woman writer in the years immediately following the Spanish Civil War. (34)

In other words, the novel is well written in all possible senses as it not only demonstrates the talent of a young female writer but also appropriately narrates the life of female adolescence.

The novel opens with Andrea's arrival in Barcelona on a train running behind schedule and her subsequent late-night journey to the familial apartment shared by three generations including the grandmother, two uncles, an aunt and an infant cousin. The reader quickly gleans that the setting is a poverty-ravished post-war Spain since both uncles make references to the war. The action centers on Andrea's experiences narrated in retrospect in the first person about the year she spent in Barcelona at the age of nineteen with her dysfunctional family. At the conclusion of the novel Andrea moves to Madrid with her friend Ena and her friend's family. Therefore, *Nada* with its urban setting in the more immediate post-war years of grinding hunger and stringent government controls on every aspect of life exacted by a stifling censorship offers a glimpse into the difficult life of 1940s Barcelona.

As the counterpart to *Nada* and written a decade later, *Entre visillos* is set in a traditional provincial capital, commonly assumed to be Carmen Martín Gaité's hometown of Salamanca. Natalia, the sixteen-year-old adolescent protagonist, searches for herself in a suffocating society that demands that women aspire to motherhood rather than an academic studies. At the conclusion of the novel, Natalia's older sister succeeds in fulfilling her wish to join her fiancé in Madrid, but Natalia's future is left open. Like Laforet, Martín Gaité received the Premio Nadal for *Entre visillos* in 1958 and moved to Madrid for her studies in 1948. Both women share a common history and wrote novels illustrating what life was like for adolescent females in Spain in the post war years. More

specifically, these authors chose protagonists with parallel characteristics. Andrea and Natalia are both orphaned by either one or both parents yet are surrounded by family that does not understand them, enjoy being academically challenged, prefer to stretch their freedom as women and find that their future is left open. Of course, they also have friendships and relationships with male characters that often provide details about the protagonist not provided in other contexts or friendships with female characters.

Chapter one will discuss *Nada* by characterizing Andrea and then examining carefully the male characters that either support or hinder her development. Male characters range from the stereotypical Iberian male such as Pons, who expects Andrea to be a wife and mother and expects her obedience, to a male with fewer patriarchal ideas such as Jaime who appreciates Andrea as the “chica rara” and encourages her agency as well as that of his girlfriend Ena. The previously discussed theories can help deconstruct the patriarchal assumptions of female behavior and highlight the male characters’ roles. Chapter two will discuss *Entre visillos* by characterizing Natalia and then delve into the strategic inclusion of male characters. As in *Nada*, Martín Gaité’s males also range from patriarchal and conservative to more liberal and open to helping Natalia realize her goals. Likewise Feminism, Deconstruction and Reader-Response theories provide the theoretical basis for the character analysis. Both chapters will conclude by connecting the importance of each work and especially its male characters to the work’s time period and cultural milieu.

This in-depth analysis of the variety of roles assumed by male characters and the manner in which they are utilized illustrates how these characters either maintain the status quo or provide the female protagonist more opportunities in the patriarchal society

of Spain in the 1940s and 1950s. These novels present serious criticism of the negative effects on young women of the Franco regime while at the same time demonstrating how males either supported or subverted the patriarchy through their interaction with females. Ultimately, *Nada* and *Entre visillos* come to represent a rebellion against the dictatorship and the shift from the subservient adolescent to the “chica rara,” a female with agency in defiance of patriarchal expectations for her gender.

CHAPTER TWO

Men Represent More Than *Nada*

As one of the most studied novels of post-war Spain, *Nada* (1945) has garnered substantial critical analysis because it introduced many fresh ideas to the Spanish literary community at a time when censorship effectively squashed anything contradictory to Franco's regime (Johnson 47). In addition to the unique characteristics that Carmen Laforet presents in her groundbreaking novel, she made history by being the first woman to win the Premio Nadal. *Nada* not only represents her first literary publication, but also launches the character of the "chica rara," which becomes a pivotal character type. Many female contemporary authors and their successors will employ this "chica rara" to develop more fully the representation of the Spanish female under the Franco censorship. In other words, Laforet's "chica rara," Andrea, is the first as Ramon Sender explains "Carmen Laforet es una escritora de gran talento y la primera que en la historia española nos da entera y sin disfraz el ama femenina 'desde dentro'" (quoted in Cerezales 151)

Although the "chica rara" is synonymous with the protagonist for these novelists, she is not the only character who helps her author criticize the repression of the Franco dictatorship. A variety of male characters reinforce Laforet's critique, affording the reader a rather exhaustive sampling of the different types of men and the multitude of ways in which they can either assist or hinder a young woman in her journey to adulthood. Through analyzing these various male characters, their professions and the liberties that as males they enjoy in relationship to Andrea, this study will highlight how

male characters function as literary tools for Laforet to critique the stifling, patriarchal Franco regime by revealing their very conservative or more liberal treatment of the female and its negative or positive effect on her development.

By focusing on Andrea and the physical, psychological and social conflicts she confronts on a daily basis, Laforet is able to pull the censors' attention away from the subversive stance of her work. Thus, the novel opens with Andrea's late-night arrival to Barcelona and her awe of the city after spending an unknown period of time in the countryside with her father's family. In this nighttime ride through the city Andrea is unable to see the harsh realities facing the urban population. Instead she happily awaits meeting her mother's family and the opportunity to attend the university. Both her paternal and maternal relatives are involved in her upbringing because her parents have passed away, and this proud middle-class family would not dare leave their young, inexperienced female relative to her own devices in a city such as Barcelona.

Authentically reflecting the 1940s, the family plays a crucial role in Spanish society, as most other social groups and organization are no longer the reliable institutions they once were prior to Franco's regime (Cazorla Sánchez 70). As Antonio Cazorla Sánchez explains, "the Francoist dictatorship and its peculiar peace brought unspeakable material suffering to ordinary Spaniards...the only institution that they could always count on was a very private one: family" (4). This portrayal of the family starkly contrasts with Andrea's reality, but perfectly reflects the family as envisioned and glorified by the Franco regime. Family functioned as a social and economic pillar when extended families lived together in order to provide enough for everyone or perhaps take care of elderly parents when there were not any dedicated homes for them (70).

Furthermore, the relationship between mother and daughter was key as it often functioned “within a wider framework of relationships” extending as far as needy neighbors (Cazorla Sánchez 71). When in place, this relationship would resolve conflicts and other issues without men ever becoming involved. However, there is a breakdown in this series of relationships as Andrea does not have the ability to know her mother and Angustias, her aunt, is far from representing an adult role model much less a mother figure for Andrea. Thus, the men do become involved in the mundane, household occurrences with which according to the patriarchal paradigm they should not need to concern themselves. By entering into this domestic domain, the men not only break a long-standing tradition but also function as a critique of Franco’s idealized version of the family. In spite of differing opinions of the family both those for and against Franco agreed that it still contains all those who know one another best. However, the idea of always being able to count on one’s family presents both negative and positive consequences. The family, as a unit or via individual members, can easily hinder one’s autonomy, especially that of an adolescent female such as Andrea because of the patriarchal tendencies inherent with the Spanish family. For example, Andrea’s experiences with her aunt, uncles and the other inhabitants of the Aribau apartment are generally negative, as these people reflect Franco’s control by inflicting their patriarchal rules on their free-spirited niece (Cerezales 162).

Andrea, the original “chica rara,” rebels against her family, a microcosm for Spanish society under Franco’s dictatorship, and societal norms in seemingly quiet ways that slipped past the censor’s eye (Cerezales 165). Like Gloria, her uncle Juan’s wife, she does not adhere to the rules outlined by her aunt Angustias and dares to explore her

surroundings. For example, within hours of arriving at the Aribau apartment Angustias explains that Barcelona is a dangerous city and informs Andrea that “no te dejaré dar un paso sin mi permiso” (83). In spite of these orders from Angustias and the fact that girls in her position should not be wandering the streets without accompaniment, Andrea delights in meandering throughout the city as a continual act of rebellion against her aunt and societal norms. These activities along with befriending boys in her university classes constitute part of her rebellion against the patriarchy and allow her to encounter males with more liberal ideas than those of her uncle Juan. Irene Mizrahi believes that “a través del testimonio subversivo de Andrea, Laforet no sólo ofrece una profunda crítica del patriarcado, del totalitarismo y de las atroces consecuencias de ambos sino que a su vez apunta hacia posibles opciones liberadoras” (31). Thus, through relationships with a variety of males, Andrea will realize that there are options that can liberate her from the traditional roles for women – wife or nun – usually offered as the only two options available for the twentieth-century Spanish woman enduring the Franco regime.

Throughout the novel, all of Andrea’s relatives, except for her uncle Román, attempt to eradicate her individuality and encourage her conformity to a society in which she has no previous experience and which she has no desire to join. Angustias is the perfect example of the woman that yields to Spanish society. For example, it is obvious that she conformed to society’s expectations for her by the numerous allusions to a sexual relationship with a married man, Jorge. Of course, Román instigates these references in hopes of leading the reader to this unfavorable opinion of Angustias. Through Andrea, the reader learns later that her grandfather did not allow Angustias to marry Jorge due to his lack of social status and monetary deficiencies. The inclusion of the now-deceased

grandfather as the typical patriarchal decision-maker permits a clear understanding as to why Angustias did not marry and, without this traditional male character, the reader cannot fully understand Angustias. Thus, thanks to this authoritative male character, Angustias represents the typical female desired by the patriarchy as she lives according to patriarchal rules such as attending mass, assisting those less fortunate and taking in her orphaned niece. While these attributes are positive, they reflect negatively in her character because they conform to the patriarchy and do not represent a female enjoying these activities of her own volition. As a representation of this idealized woman, Angustias joins the lost generation of women that did not follow their own aspirations (Cerezales 164).

At the same time, her affair with Jorge and not adhering to the beliefs she espouses and to which she subjects Andrea, Angustias is both a hypocrite and a figurehead of the patriarchy. These positions are further established in the pleasure she enjoys when exerting power over Andrea and treating her like a child as opposed to a young adult. Andrea explains “a mí me dolía el cuello, pero, sujeta por su mano, así tenía que permanecer, mientras ella me amonestaba dulcemente. Cuando, por el contrario, le parecía yo triste o asustada, se ponía muy contenta y se volvía autoritaria” (87). As Andrea slowly begins to ignore her aunt’s demands and advice, it becomes evident that the juxtaposition between aunt and niece allows the reader to ascertain more fully Andrea’s forward-thinking actions. In spite of the fact that Angustias is obviously not a male character, she functions to try to enforce patriarchal rules for female behavior in Andrea’s life because she has experienced such control her entire life. She is typical of the members and mentality of the *Sección Femenina* of the Falange Español, Franco’s

political party. Furthermore, Angustias embodies the feminist argument of this novel as she presents the perfect picture of the woman that feminism hopes to free.

While Angustias attempts to mold Andrea into the ideal Spanish woman by submitting her to the same patriarchal limitations under which she suffered, Román contradicts his sister by corrupting Andrea with activities such as smoking and telling her the family secrets that Angustias so desperately wants to shield Andrea from knowing. Román lives in the attic apartment separated by a narrow staircase that functions as a bridge connecting two very different worlds. In the shabby apartment shared by all the other family members, poverty reigns, and the food is rationed. On the other hand, Román lives a more comfortable, luxurious existence secluded in his well-furnished abode decorated with a variety of clocks. His furnishings as well as his continual supply of specialty items and cigarettes are the direct result of his participation in the black market which lines the pockets of both local government officials and the middleman by selling goods at highly inflated prices. According to Michael Richards, the black market was the real economy of the 1940s and permitted another way to impose power (181). As a result of his participation in the black market and subsequent ability to live a better life than his family living figuratively and literally below him, Román enjoys belittling his brother and creating conflict so as to perpetuate a situation in which he can dominate.

During one of their discussions Román explains to Andrea how he controls the family.

Y tú no te has dado cuenta siquiera de que yo tengo que saber – de que de hecho sé - todo, absolutamente todo, lo que pasa abajo. Todo lo que siente Gloria, todas las ridículas historias de Angustias, todo lo que sufre Juan...¿Tú no te has dado cuenta de que yo les manejo a todos, de que dispongo de sus vidas, de que dispongo de sus nervios, de sus pensamientos...? (136)

Not only does this male domination incite a feminist analysis, but it also highlights the mounting list of controversies facing adolescent women. Román is not satisfied with simply manipulating his family members as if they were marionettes. He must go beyond the control of their physical movements and enter into the realm of controlling their minds. This absolute control of people functions as a metaphor within the novel for the patriarchy that dominated Spanish society. Román contradicts himself as earlier he had instructed Andrea, “no te metas en lo que no puedes comprender, mujer...No sabrías entenderme si te explicara mis acciones” (135). At a glance this may seem both positive since he refers to her as woman instead of a girl and negative since he assumes that she would not understand. However, the overriding sentiment is negative because Román expresses superiority over Andrea as both a more intelligent individual and a man. Thus, this conversation reveals two key functions of Román throughout the novel: one is as perpetuator of the patriarchy and the other, more subversive function, is as both a hindrance and motivator to Andrea’s freedom and growth. Román motivates Andrea’s rebellion against the patriarchy by his contradictory actions such as telling Andrea she would not understand, but speaking to her as if she would and continuously offering her cigarettes, both activities men usually do with other men.

For a time Román intrigues Andrea with his mysterious ways and freedom to travel. He answers to no one and adheres to no restrictions of any kind (Ordóñez 38). These attributes of his character subconsciously motivate Andrea to find her own independence and learn to think less of her aunt’s rules and more of her freedom. Laforet demonstrates the culmination of these desires by including an episode in which Andrea flees one of Ena’s gatherings so that she can, like her uncle, walk the streets in solitude

and under the protection of the night. As characteristic of the “chica rara” Andrea does not enjoy such social gatherings because they embody the activities in which society would prefer she spend her time. Andrea explains, “había una soledad impresionante, como si todos los habitantes de la ciudad hubiesen muerto” (154 – 5). As if to assure the censors that the patriarchy still reigns, Laforet interrupts this moment of triumph with the arrival of Gerardo, a fellow classmate who had followed Andrea from the gathering in curiosity as well as in hopes of securing a date with her. More importantly, his action is extremely patriarchal as he feels that it was his duty to ensure Andrea’s safety (Del Mastro 61). In spite of Andrea’s protests, Gerardo refuses to leave her alone and does so only after she agrees to go on a date with him. Not only does he hinder Andrea’s attempt at freedom, his role eventually emphasizes another characteristic inherent in the “chica rara” – a dislike of and lack of interest in dating.

The adolescent males of the novel, like their predecessors, lack interest in liberating women. Pons, another classmate who likes Andrea, introduces her to a group of his friends known as the bohemian group. Guíxols and Iturdiaga, members of this group, are two adolescent males so preoccupied with themselves that they too show no interest in non-traditional roles for women. These characteristics are particularly interesting because one would assume that such an eclectic, open-minded group would embrace the liberated woman in the way they embrace artistic endeavors and creativity that rebel against the status quo. Yet, they are still men in a patriarchal society oblivious to the degrading manner and to the stereotypical roles to which they relegate females. For example, they expect Andrea to prepare the afternoon snack while they continue their conversation on topics such as art, unjust parents and other mundane, trivial themes that

pale in comparison to the abject poverty and despair that most of their fellow citizens endure. One day, the topic of discussion is how Guíxols spent two thousand pesetas in a very short time period. Andrea's presence is ironic as she continually struggles to survive by living off of her monthly government stipend while this young, spoiled male adolescent has no regard for spending his father's money. This episode illustrates the nature of gender roles established in Spanish society that feminism strives to eliminate and, through deconstructing their presence, highlights how these male characters function to motivate Andrea to rise above the position that society has assigned her.

Aside from his participation in the bohemian group, Pons plays an important role in Andrea's year in Barcelona. Not only does he give Andrea a set of books when he notices her spending more time studying in the library, but he is also the only male character who, for a short time, makes Andrea receptive to the idea of dating. Pons wants Andrea to spend the summer with him at his family's beach house. Thus, he invites her to his house for a gathering where she can meet his mother and give him her decision on the matter. While primarily nervous, Andrea also looks forward to attending because Pons has always treated her well. She explains,

mi amigo me había telefoneado por la mañana y su voz me llenó de ternura por él. El sentimiento de ser esperada y querida me hacía despertar mil instintos de mujer; una emoción como de triunfo, un deseo de ser alabada, admirada, de sentirme como la Cenicienta del cuento, princesa por unas horas, después de un largo incógnito. (238)

These words contrast starkly with the actual experience Andrea has at this party where Pons' mother, as well as other guests, quickly recognizes how out of place she is due in part to her lack of seasonally appropriate attire because of the social class from which she comes. However, the idea that Andrea feels this way demonstrates that the "chica rara"

is not completely immune to conforming to certain traditionally expected female behaviors, but rather chooses to continue her path of uniqueness because finding her true self is most important.

While the presence of Pons demonstrates that the “chica rara” has typical, female characteristics, he also gives Andrea the opportunity to prove the opposite when, after he asks her what she hopes to do after graduating, she answers, “daré clases, supongo” (215). Clearly, this is not one of the options accepted for women, and Pons, like the traditional patriarchal male, responds with surprise, “¿No te gustaría más casarte?” (215). Although Pons hoped for a more submissive, demure woman in Andrea, perhaps because of her situation in life, he accepts Andrea for who she is and moves on to a cousin that interests him.

On the other hand, another male figure in her life, her uncle Juan, represents a more violent way in which men can force women into submitting to patriarchal norms. The physical abuse that Juan constantly inflicts on his wife Gloria in order to beat her into submission is a manifestation of the gratuitous violence associated with *Tremendismo*, the literary movement to which *Nada* belongs. However, the inclusion of these episodes reaches far beyond the characteristics of a particular writing style. After being so badly mistreated by her husband, Gloria establishes a habit of seeking refuge in Andrea’s room or at least receiving her assistance once Juan has either left or calmed down. Sadly, this abuse affects multiple generations as the grandmother and nephew witness these episodes too. Andrea offers Gloria solace and a listening ear all the while processing the miserable life that Gloria leads as a married woman. Thus, Juan’s

behavior motivates his niece to pursue life goals outside of the traditional expectations of marriage and a family, probably the opposite of what he really wishes for her.

Additionally, Juan does not know how to express himself and continually falls victim to his brother Román's manipulation. For example, most of Gloria's abuse stems from Juan's reactions to fallacies with which Román has filled his head so as to continually bolster his sense of power. In permitting Román the ability to flex his control, Juan fails to assert his own strength and thus remains in the vicious cycle of abusing his wife and believing anything and everything his brother tells him (Illanes Adaro 36). According to Elizabeth Ordóñez, these uncles also function "as signs of an historical degeneration of patriarchal authority" (37).

Andrea, slowly maturing throughout the novel, notices this cycle of cause and effect. This observation allows her to make the informed decision to take charge of herself by deciding to spend her own monthly stipend by herself instead of giving her uncle control over her income and by choosing to move with Ena's family to Madrid. Although she often mismanages her funds, leaving her without food, Andrea has still taken a step toward autonomy and freedom from dependence on her family unlike most women that marry and never receive such autonomy. Furthermore, she continues purposefully to stray from her previous belief that "yo tenía un pequeño y ruin papel de espectadora" (246). Thus, by the end of the novel, with her decision to defy her family's wishes and make her own path in Madrid, she no longer represents a spectator but rather an independent woman in search of a unique role for herself in a society dominated by men.

While Andrea's uncles play pivotal roles in developing her character, neither of them, nor any of her relatives, serves as a positive role model. As Gustavo Pérez Firmat states, "the family members themselves are a gallery of eccentrics and neurotics" (28). Thus, the family members offer another critique of the Spanish family. As previously mentioned, the family was considered the most reliable entity for Spaniards under the Franco dictatorship and, while Andrea's family provided a roof over her head, it did little to support her efforts to develop as an independent woman. In fact, their influence is so negative that Andrea continuously seeks ways to escape their house on Aribau and her family's damaging influence. On the other hand, Ena's family provides positive interactions and experiences that allowed Andrea to recognize the possibility of a better life and the benefits of a functional family.

Ena, Andrea's best friend from university, is by no means Andrea's role model, but does serve as an example of a different, better life. The continual juxtaposition of Andrea's and Ena's home lives iterates the multitude of differences between these two most unlikely of friends and clearly illustrates the division of Spanish society into distinct social classes, defined by financial security as well as by those that favored the Franco regime and those that did not. Ena's father runs a company while her mother remains in the home to care for her five younger brothers. The family also travels rather frequently and never suffers from a lack of food, which they generously share with Andrea as a houseguest at dinner many nights a week. Ena's home becomes a safe haven for Andrea as conflicts do not extend past strong words and everyone gets along (Tatum-Davis 124). While Andrea enjoys her friendship with Ena, both girls continue the friendship for reasons aside from being friends. Obviously, Andrea delights in surrounding herself with

a more functional family where food is plentiful while Ena is searching for her mother's former love, a virtuous violinist that stole her most beautiful attribute. This violinist is Román.

Thus, Andrea's uncles intrude upon her life in the most devastating way because, once Ena introduces herself to Andrea's uncle Román, she takes a hiatus from her friendship with Andrea. This not only leaves the latter without academic materials to complete her homework but also deprives her of the warm meals of which she had grown fond. Román has succeeded in controlling everyone's life in spite of Andrea's best efforts to avoid introducing Ena to her life at home. Deconstructing the various implications of this control, the reader can assume that in spite of women's diligent efforts, men still remain dominant and in control of everything. This power structure prevails throughout the novel as men continually force Andrea into uncomfortable, stereotypical situations – her first kiss, serving the male members of the bohemian group, and attending Pons' party – until she decides to accept a job offer from Ena's father.

Be it her father, her brothers, or her boyfriend, men surround Ena. In spite of being continually among men, she dominates them and demonstrates how being surrounded by male characters brings out underlying qualities in the female that would remain dormant without the catalyst of their presence. She is the oldest child and only daughter. Her five younger siblings, all boys, serve to emphasize the predominance of male characters as well as her unique, non-traditional characteristics because these brothers do not possess near the power and control that their sister does. Thus, Ena also portrays the "chica rara" alongside Andrea. With these character traits already well

established, Jaime, her secret boyfriend, is surprisingly sympathetic and accepting of her strong personality.

As typical parents steeped in patriarchal traditions, Ena's father and mother seem equally concerned about their daughter's lack of friends and seemingly nonexistent interest in possible male suitors. Thus, Jaime functions as both an ironic character and a forward-thinking young adult. The ironic aspect of Jaime's character lies in the fact that Ena attempts to keep her family from knowing about their relationship. However, while she believes she has been successful, her mother is actually very aware of the situation. The reader and Andrea find out how much the mother knows when she reveals this information during a conversation with Andrea in which she hopes to enlist the latter's assistance in protecting Ena from Román. Hearing the details of Ena's mother's history with Román as well as her never-ending love and admiration for her daughter, Andrea is shocked to hear the mother say "cuando se enamoró de Jaime todo fue como un buen sueño. El que hubiera encontrado un hombre capaz de comprenderla precisamente en el momento en que al salir de la adolescencia lo necesitaba, era a mis ojos como el cumplimiento de una maravillosa ley natural" (250). Thus, not only does this fact explain the irony in Jaime's character but it also exposes the patriarchal preoccupation with the supposed natural desire to find an appropriate man for her adolescent daughter.

In addition to these crucial aspects of Jaime's character, he also serves as the most forward-thinking adolescent male in the novel. His willingness to submit to Ena's whims and desires demonstrates his nonconformity to the patriarchy. The typical patriarchal adolescent male would not permit a woman to dictate his time as Ena does during their many jaunts to the beach. Furthermore, he never attempts to manipulate either Ena or

Andrea to achieve his purposes. For example, like Andrea, Jaime respects Ena's request for a period of separation when she is involved with Román. When he wishes to speak with her, he does not force himself into her life but rather politely requests Andrea's assistance with reaching her. Although he does admit trying to get Ena's attention, he never uses force like Juan does with Gloria. He explains to Andrea "a ella le pasa algo extraño. Estoy seguro. Creo que ella es desgraciada" (217). At the same time, he shows compassion and understanding when he requests "dile que tengo confianza en ella y que no le preguntaré nunca nada. Pero que necesito verla" (217). These quotes reflect a more open-minded, modern man as opposed to the traditional man of the patriarchy concerned with controlling the women in his life as one of his personal possessions (Del Mastro 60).

Interestingly, Jaime and Ena, who embody the more modern concept of a couple, offer a perfect contrast to Juan and Gloria, an extreme of the traditional concept of the male-dominant relationship. Not only do these couples provide the reader with two very distinct relationships, they also highlight an important characteristic about the male and female characters of the novel. Obviously, the relationship is mutual, requiring two people in order to function properly. Yet, critical analysis has the tendency to focus on the leading female protagonist, Andrea, and subordinating characters, Ena, Gloria, Angustias and the grandmother because the novel is written by a female. In this limited focus on the female characters, readers simply overlook the crucial role the male characters play in the protagonist's search for her identity.

The first-person narration throughout the novel allows the reader to understand the inner, psychological aspects of Andrea such as her personal opinions and thoughts on events not expressed orally. However, these attributes would not be apparent without the

juxtaposition of male characters at decisive moments in her development. Thus, these male characters function as foils with which the author can highlight Andrea's eccentricities simply through a purposeful placement that concurs with and strengthens what the reader has already gleaned. In other words, without Juan, Román, Jaime, Pons, the bohemian group or Gerardo, Andrea would not be as developed a character nor would she represent the new, adolescent Spanish female fighting for the same rights as her male counterparts because the traits that portray her as a rebel against the patriarchy would remain locked in her mind unexpressed.

In conclusion, the job offer from Ena's father at the novel's end represents the change Andrea has so desperately hoped for in her life. Interestingly, it is a male character who provides her an escape from her dysfunctional family. Wherever she may go or whatever she may aspire to do, she may never be able to escape society's bias towards men. However, Román's suicide at the end of the novel metaphorically liberates the residents of Aribau, Ena's mother, Andrea and Ena from the control of a man that came to symbolize Franco in his absolute control over so many people and in his involvement in the black market. As Andrea descends the steps of the Aribau apartment to the job offer awaiting her in Madrid she symbolically leaves behind a male-dominated life associated with Franco's regime in favor of a more liberated existence on her own. Thus, the novel concludes with the suggestion that Andrea, representative of all young Spanish women living in a very patriarchal society, will enjoy a future of her own choosing. However, this conclusion is only possible thanks to the male characters' roles in providing the fundamental groundwork against which the female protagonists and

subordinating female characters are able to develop into strong, genre-defining characters for the prolific, female Spanish writers of the Franco years.

CHAPTER THREE

Men entre Women in Entre visillos

While Carmen Laforet portrays life in 1940s Spain through Andrea and the male characters that assist in her development as a foundational female protagonist, Carmen Martín Gaité in her novel *Entre visillos* (1958) reflects the society of 1950s Spain in a similar manner with her female protagonist Natalia and a supporting cast of both male and female characters. Another important aspect of Martín Gaité's plot and character development are the spaces and narrative voices available to each gender. For example, Natalia does not speak in the first person until chapter thirteen while Pablo, a primary male character, speaks for himself in chapter two immediately upon his arrival. Furthermore, the other secondary male characters speak for themselves freely throughout their interspersed appearances in the novel. The title of the novel clearly alludes to this reality in which women participate "through the curtains," looking outward from enclosed domestic spaces or with restrictions while the men walk through the streets gazing "through the curtains" into houses unencumbered by gender limitations.

Therefore, in *Entre visillos* the male characters represent a marked contrast with Natalia as they enjoy complete freedom of movement and voice under the patriarchy that relegates Natalia and her female companions to participate in life from behind the curtains and which bestows upon her the stigma of being a "chica rara," as previously defined in chapter one. Through deconstructing these elements and defining the male characters while taking into consideration feminism and reader-response theories it

becomes quite obvious that these male characters have been needlessly overlooked in previous critical analysis and that they merit attention as foils to the protagonists.

Although since Franco's death in 1975, women may divorce, use contraceptives, get a passport and work without their husband's approval, in the 1950s when the events of the novel take place, women did not have these rights. They were treated like children who had to gain permission to work outside the home or travel and had only two directions approved by the patriarchal society for their future – to marry or become a nun. Thus, the novel's portrayal of women confined in the house authentically reflects the reality of women enclosed in their domain, domestic spaces, seeing only the world visible from behind their curtains. Catherine Bellver summarizes this sentiment by explaining, "man moves through space while woman is confined within in" (33). Like many of her contemporary female writers who survived the male-dominated literary world, Carmen Martín Gaité was successful thanks in part to a childhood that afforded her the opportunity to study freely because of her family's financial and social resources.

The second daughter of a lawyer and an intelligent housewife, Martín Gaité was born on December 8, 1925. Private tutors instructed both her and her sister until they were able to attend a secondary school for women (Brown 73). However, when the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936 the lifestyle she knew of attending school and enjoying many activities usually associated with boys ended abruptly. A "chica rara," she pursued her education and graduated from the University of Salamanca in 1948. Soon thereafter she moved to Madrid where she continued studying history and philology (73). During this time she met a group of male students that would become some of the most important writers of the post-war. The shared experience of enduring the Civil War

as children provided this group with a deep connection and ability to offer a sharp critique of society. The influence of these men as well as her own passions led her to abandon her dissertation for twenty years and follow a writing career (Brown 73).

Although she did eventually return to finish her graduate studies many years later, Martín Gaité is best known for her literary achievements such as *Entre visillos*. In spite of the fact that she personally dislikes the idea of Feminism, many critics agree that she has a canny ability to clearly express the injustice and general problems that Spanish women were battling. According to Phyllis Zatin, “there is not doubt that Martín Gaité is a feminist writer, fully conscious of women’s restricted role in society and of the problems that role poses for the individual who wishes to develop herself fully as a person” (324-25). Adrián García proposes that “*Entre visillos* not only mounts an indirect attack against Francoist patriarchy – it also advances a redefinition of the gender roles imposed by that and all other patriarchal systems” (21). For example, *Entre visillos* explores, through various narrative voices, the daily lives of a group of adolescent females in a provincial capital city that appears to be Salamanca. While they represent a variety of social classes as well as opinions about the patriarchal society in which they must survive, by choosing to detail the lives of a group of girls, Martín Gaité is exposing the restrictions and problems unique to females existing under the Spanish patriarchy through juxtaposing them with male characters.

Pablo Klein’s introduction in the second chapter of the novel favors a comparison not only between him and the other male characters but also with Natalia who was introduced in the previous, opening chapter through her diary entry. The aforementioned Spanish patriarchal system takes center stage as this foreign professor arrives and brings

with him a new method of teaching that does not follow the patriarchal norms of relegating females to lower standards and disadvantages. Although his superiors try to change his ways in a pacific manner, they remain unsuccessful because Pablo embodies change and represents the future, a rupture with societal norms that in turn creates a connection between Natalia and himself (244). This understanding between the two mirrors the same connection that Martín Gaité enjoyed with her writing group in Madrid.

Ángeles Encinar postulates,

sí es posible subrayar que existe en todos ellos una constante preocupación por reflejar la insatisfacción de las protagonistas con su propia vida, la continua ambivalencia de sentimientos que experimenta y la búsqueda de algo que les permita sentirse satisfechas de sí mismas, en otras palabras, la búsqueda, casi siempre malograda, de su propia identidad. (17)

Even though Encinar is referring to Martín Gaité's stories entitled "Cuentos de mujeres," it is quite evident that the theme applies to *Entre visillos* as well because these girls are searching for their identities within a patriarchal society. For the "chica rara" the concept of looking for one's identity dominates her thoughts thanks to the continual fight against a patriarchy that subjects her to challenges to force her into submitting to patriarchal norms for female behavior.

On the other hand, the male characters never have to worry about basic privileges such as walking down the street alone because the patriarchal system provides them with everything; most importantly it confers complete power over the women in their lives. Pablo Klein is the only male character that wishes to look beyond these restrictions. He fully understands the social code implicit within the patriarchy; however, he consciously chooses to ignore it. He actively listens to the voices of his female students, and treats them respectfully. He gives them very different messages in a society that expects

women to keep silent and wait for men to marry them. Clearly he understands the patriarchal society because, although considered a foreigner, Pablo spent a few years in the city with his father. Interestingly, Rafael Dominguez's wife remembers that both father and son were odd, indicating that even as a child, Pablo's behavior did not conform to social expectations. Pablo recognizes the difference between himself now and when he was a child when he states, "el de volver a mirar con ojos completamente distintos la ciudad en la que había vivido de niño" (50). However, his childhood years spent in the provincial capital do not alter how the citizens of the town feel regarding his being considered an outsider as noted in the conversation – "si usted no vive aquí...no puede entender ciertas cosas" (55). Pablo quickly notes this during his stay at the *Pensión América*. Overall, the classification as outsider greatly assists Pablo in being able to help Natalia and the other female students in his German class during his one-year assignment because he does not have to restrict himself to patriarchal social norms.

Pablo's role provides a new perspective on the daily life of women in the dictatorship and patriarchy thanks to the point of view he affords the reader. At the same time, he also represents a unique method of viewing the protagonist as the questions he asks elicit insightful answers about Natalia's character. Pablo allows Carmen Martín Gaité a subtle way to add a commentary on society and offer a model for the self-realization of the individual Spanish female at variance from the patriarchal norms. The Spanish male worries too much about himself and his superior role in society to realize that the women he is treating like domesticated slaves possess minds of their own. Thus, it takes an outsider to ally with the "chica rara" and go against the norm in order to call attention to the plight of Spanish woman.

While Pablo is of substantial importance to Natalia's development and the novel as a whole, a variety of other male characters such as Ángel, Emilio and Natalia's father also offer the reader insights about Natalia. Once again and similar to Pablo, these characters provide distinct views into the likes, dislikes, thoughts and opinions of Natalia that she is unable to give due to having her own narrative voice in only two chapters. It is therefore clear that the reader relies on the relationships with male characters to fully understand Natalia and her position as an adolescent woman trying to find herself during a turbulent period in Spanish history.

Similar to *Nada*, the various relationships between the characters create a web of interrelationships in the majority of which Pablo commonly participates as an adviser or close friend. Interestingly, in the novel itself this reality of friendship between men and women is negated in a conversation during which Yoni tells an acquaintance, "se lo cuentas a quien quieras. Eso de la amistad entre hombre y mujer, ya no sale ni en el teatro" (134). While sexual feelings may inevitably become aroused in interactions between males and females, Pablo's relationship with Natalia as well as other students nullifies this statement because the relationship never moves beyond the parameters of the teacher-student context. This holds true in part because "Pablo, en verdad, cree que las mujeres deben y pueden desarrollarse intelectualmente si así lo desean y, como profesor, nutre las aspiraciones de Natalia" (Riddel 115). Throughout the novel there are three relationships with female characters in which Pablo plays an important role that juxtaposes with societal norms and highlights each character's uniqueness.

The first relationship that he established upon arriving in town is with Rosa, the entertainer at the local Casino. Although this relationship does not constitute a

continuous subplot of the novel, it immediately demonstrates that Pablo does not align with the traditional patriarchal precepts of the ideal Spanish male. He proves this stark difference when he simply assists Rosa to her room and helps her get to bed when she has enjoyed too much to drink as opposed to taking advantage of her. The relatability between these two characters originates in the fact that they are not natives of this provincial capital. As María del Carmen Riddel explains, “Rosa, socialmente insignificante en la ciudad, sin clase por ser itinerante y la animadora del Casino, es el personaje femenino con el que Pablo se entiende” (112). This relationship with an adult woman involves less drama than those he has with Elvira and Natalia, perhaps reflective of the fact that these two characters are adolescent females still searching for their true identity.

To clarify, Pablo is not completely void of typical male tendencies but is rather the male character that aligns the least with patriarchal ideals. The eccentric relationship he has with Elvira represents this imperfection. Unable to decipher what she wants, he kisses her, which only heightens the tension between them for the remainder of the novel. This ambivalence encouraged by Pablo’s presence exposes the inner dilemmas with which Elvira struggles. Without Pablo, Elvira would be construed simply as a scared female needing the discipline of marriage. María del Carmen Riddel clarifies “la reacción dubitativa de Elvira con Pablo muestra cómo alternan en ella su deseo de independencia y de autenticidad con su preocupación por permanecer integrada en el esquema social” (108). Elvira’s struggle with fulfilling a desire for personal independence or following society’s role for her is made all the clearer when she accepts Emilio’s marriage proposal. Interestingly, Emilio, Elvira and Pablo create a literary

triangle but not the typical love triangle in which two men vie for the affections of the female. For Elvira, this triangular formation represents the struggle between the aforementioned conflicting choices.

Further complicating the decision Elvira must make is the relationship between Emilio and Pablo. After a tumultuous period in their relationship, Emilio seeks advice from Pablo as a neutral source, or so he believes. Elvira's strong personality creates doubt within Emilio that leads him to request Pablo's insight. Similar to Natalia, Elvira does not fit nicely into the definition of the ideal Spanish female because she is not demure and complacent but rather demanding and in charge of her relationship with Emilio. The reader gleans these characteristics thanks primarily to Elvira's relationships with two men without whom the novel would lose this valuable information that permits a deeper understanding of the female characters who rarely speak for themselves. María del Carmen Riddel agrees that "los hombres aparecen en la novela como contrapartes a los personajes femeninos que son los que verdaderamente importan y cuyas experiencias de vida son las que interesan" (110).

One could argue that Pablo is two-sided because he assists Emilio in trying to get Elvira to marry him but encourages Natalia to forge her own path; however, this hasty postulation would overlook a key difference between the two situations. One friendship is with an adolescent female and the other is with an adolescent male. Thus, instead of being two-sided, Pablo represents the complexity of character required to survive as an outsider of any sort – female or foreigner – in Franco's Spain.

While these relationships with males and females represent two distinct sides to Pablo, the role as mentor that he has with Natalia throughout the novel offers yet another

more philanthropic side of his dynamic character. The favored topic of discussion between the two is Natalia's plans after completing her studies at the Institute. In discussing this curious relationship María del Carmen Riddel states

Con todo, la narración de Pablo Klein está, filosóficamente, a medio camino entre la del narrador en tercera persona y la de Natalia. [...] Pablo puede expresar lo que piensa con una impunidad que no está al alcance de Natalia y resulta así, sin proponérselo, un aliado indirecto de la joven, ya que su punto de vista concuerda con el punto de vista de ella y con las aspiraciones intelectuales... (111)

As many of his female students abandon their studies to marry and do not exhibit the potential that Natalia does, he continually chooses to challenge Natalia to think about her future outside of the two options society has labeled permissible. One afternoon she finally responds, “que de estudiar me gustaría ciencias naturales, todo lo que trata de bichos y flores y cosas de la Naturaleza. Creo que hay una carrera de esto” (184). This response demonstrates that without Pablo eliciting such answers, the depth of Natalia's character would be lost as the patriarchy does not encourage her or her classmates to articulate their true desires which it often devalues if they do not conform to patriarchal ideals. Furthermore, it is as though Pablo hopes to prevent the patriarchy from ensnaring Natalia's most prized possession – her mind.

In choosing to discuss these matters with Pablo, Natalia demonstrates an understanding of the limitations inherent with being female because she could have sought advice from her best friend Gertrudis, one of her older sisters or her aunt Concha as these females embody the patriarchal woman and are more accessible than her male German teacher. Nevertheless, Natalia overcomes her initial uneasiness with speaking to Pablo after witnessing her friend Alicia speaking to him without fear. Natalia thinks to herself “me acordaba de ella con admiración por lo bien que había hablado con el

profesor, tan segura y tan discreta” (187). These feelings of uncertainty prove that the choice of choosing Pablo as a mentor was purposeful and exemplify her being a “chica rara.” Natalia must choose him not only because he continually offers her support but also because the other people in her life, all women, desire nothing but to conform to patriarchal regulations and would not promote career aspirations or other more free thinking, masculine topics. It is understood that “tanto Mercedes como la tía Concha apoyan el orden patriarcal y jerárquico establecido. Estas se han convertido en guardianes del comportamiento de las demás” (Riddel 108). Even Natalia comprehends this as noted in her thoughts – “me da pena de Mercedes aunque no la quiero mucho, cada vez más separada de todos y más orgullosa, intransigente como la tía” (222).

It is common for opposites to attract, and this is evident in the friendship between Natalia and Gertrudis, referred to as Gertru. Obviously the differences between the friends clarify Natalia’s eccentricities and noncompliance with societal norms; however, Gertru also introduces another male character of the novel – her fiancé Ángel. When visiting her sister Josephine, she witnesses the result of not completing her education and marrying young, yet still chooses to marry this stereotypical macho Spaniard who already drinks too much, is extremely domineering and alludes to plans of cheating on his wife. For example, after a misunderstanding the two have a conversation in which Ángel demonstrates his authority over Gertru. He explains to her “no, Gertru, chiquita, no me lo he tomado al revés. Es que hay cosas que una señorita no debe hacerlas” (149). The dialogue continues with the narrator explaining that “la voz de Ángel tenía un tono autoritario que le quitaba toda dulzura” as well as his telling Gertru, “no me digas lo que tengo que saber hacer” (149 – 50). At another occasion he arrives late, and it is quite

apparent that he has been drinking as the narrative voice states “Ángel vino un poco bebido” (235). He embodies the characteristics of the patriarchal male expecting obedience from the female, but drinking and womanizing with impunity.

Taking into consideration these well-established macho character traits, Ángel’s name immediately becomes ironic as he represents the polar opposite of the traditional angel. This is to say that he does not exhibit favorable behavior nor does he strive to assist others or care for his wife in an appropriate manner. Thus, while Gertru is temporarily blinded by her desire to conform to society in marrying this “angel” of a man, the reader perceives the two-sided implications of his name. Gertru chooses to overlook his flaws and envision him as an angel saving her from becoming a spinster while the reader recognizes the parallel being foreshadowed between Josephine’s life and Gertru’s future. Gertru’s naivety continues throughout the party.

At this same party, while Ángel has the lady of the house show Gertru the kitchen, he socializes and flirts with other women. “A la francesa sólo se le veía un brazo. El otro lo tenía camuflado para atrás y Ángel, que le había pisado la mano con la suya sobre la alfombra, como por descuido, le acariciaba ahora el antebrazo, mirándola a los ojos cuando Gertru no le veía” (167). While Natalia recognizes the warning signs evident in Ángel’s behavior as well as age difference, Gertru remains blinded by her preoccupation with fulfilling the next step expected of her by society. Once again, without the inclusion of Ángel as the typical Spanish macho man one could not perceive the entire character of Gertru and the manners in which she submits to the patriarchy, as well as its damage to her development as a complete person. Thus far only Pablo

supports female agency while Emilio and Ángel, through varying manners, seek to deny their prospective wives any glimpse of autonomy.

Another male figure of substantial importance in Natalia's life is her father. He is not only her sole surviving parent, but he is also seemingly oblivious to the patriarchal constraints to which he submits his three daughters. After a conversation in which Natalia attempts to open her father's eyes to the aspirations that aunt Concha has for her sisters and herself, Natalia realizes that her father no longer understands her as she once thought he did when they lived in Valdespino. She tells him that "la tía Concha nos quiere convertir en unas estúpidas, que sólo nos educa para tener un novio rico" as well as the reality that they do not share the same relationship as before – "tú antes no eras así, te vuelves como la tía, te tenemos miedo y nos estás lejos como la tía" (228 – 29). Sadly, Natalia receives not the tender affection she was expecting from her father but rather a response that clearly demonstrates his lack of understanding "que su hija pueda desear algo más que el bienestar material" (Riddel 115). After this conversation Natalia leaves disillusioned with her father and realizes more fully the battle she faces in choosing not to marry or follow society's norms. Additionally she understands that Pablo will be her most viable option in assisting her pursuit of autonomy (Riddel 105).

In portraying how this relationship between father and daughter has evolved from a close, open space in which Natalia can share her innermost thoughts to one in which her father is oblivious to her hopes and aspirations for a future career as opposed to marriage, Carmen Martín Gaité further illuminates the characteristics that the patriarchy believes women should exhibit at the various stages of their maturation. This is to say that as a girl Natalia's musings were considered cute and different, but as a young adult

approaching a prime age for marriage, she should have moved past these previous tendencies in favor of aligning with society and her father's patriarchal desires. Thus, her father unknowingly pushes Natalia closer to Pablo as she considers her future.

Other secondary male characters such as Yoni, Miguel and Manolo all function to discourage female agency similar to the secondary male characters with whom Andrea associates in *Nada*. María del Carmen Riddel states that “en *Entre visillos* está presente toda una gama de papeles asignados a la mujer española de los cincuenta,” but at the same time there is a gamut of male characters that function in juxtaposition with these female characters so that the reader receives the complete representation of the Spanish woman in the 1950s. It takes the combination of a male and female character to understand fully all the nuances of each character and what they represent in society. Therefore, although they are seemingly secondary, these male characters assist readers in perceiving all aspects of their female counterparts.

Yoni parallels with Guíxols in *Nada* as both adolescents enjoy the spoils of a wealthy family including not needing to work for their material possessions. Other similarities between the two are the artistic spaces provided for them by their parents in which gatherings of all sorts are held and a complete disregard for money. Pablo tells the reader about Yoni, a friend of Emilio. “Hablaban de este chico como de un semidiós. [...] Yoni era hijo del dueño del Gran Hotel. [...] Era un adolescente muy guapo, de pelo negro y ojos azules” (133). Contrary to the idea that for each male character there is a female character for which he provides insight, Yoni believes that men and women cannot be friends (134). Thus, instead of relating to a female character, Yoni functions as

a contrast for the other male characters with whom he associates because he does not have a female counterpart such as Emilio does with Elvira and Pablo does with Natalia.

Unlike Yoni, Miguel, Julia's boyfriend from Madrid, does not have an equal counterpart in *Nada*. However, in his relation to Natalia, he is similar to the relation Andrea has with Jaime, Ena's boyfriend. Miguel visits Julia occasionally from Madrid, but they write each other frequently. One afternoon he surprises Julia by coming back from Madrid and through his behavior proves to be quite unlike the understanding Jaime. He does not politely request to spend time with Julia but rather arrives when he pleases and expects her to do what he asks of her without question, canceling any plans she may have. However, when she needs to explain to her friends that she will not be joining them for the afternoon movie and suggests he get a shave while she is doing so, Miguel's demeanor and tone change. The narrator describes his voice as "segura y decidida" when he tells Julia "te he dicho, Julia, que voy bien como voy. Si quieres presumir de novio delante de tus amigas, yo no soy ningún maniquí. Te buscas uno" (86). Therefore, Miguel is more aligned with the patriarchy although he does distinguish himself from the domineering Ángel somewhat by requesting Julia join him in Madrid without marrying her first. Without Miguel, Julia would not be as easily understood as the submissive woman that she represents with her faith by constantly attending mass and abiding by aunt Concha's rules.

Similar to Gertru, Julia functions as a warning for Natalia. Both represent one of the two options expected of women – marriage or the church. Obviously Gertru exemplifies marriage and the negative consequences often associated with it for women while Julia, before leaving for Madrid at the conclusion of the novel, favors the outcome

of not marrying at a young age – the fear of becoming a spinster or having to join the church. At this point attending mass and following the righteous path of faith does not satiate her innermost desire to marry and follow where Miguel may lead her life. Gertru willingly marries Ángel, but Julia is unhappy and conflicted with the two patriarchal options vying for her attention. Therefore there are three options coming into view slowly throughout the novel for Natalia – to marry, to join the church or to continue her education in hopes of receiving desirable employment. Another male character is thus introduced to clarify that Natalia does not exhibit any overwhelming interests in dating and much less marriage.

Manolo, an acquaintance of Ángel, is reminiscent of Gerardo as he does his best to corner Natalia into dancing with him. They are at one of Natalia's least favorite places, the Casino, and she is refusing to conform to societal dictates by not dancing with Manolo. Unlike Gerardo, he more readily fits the definition of womanizer as he sizes up other women on the dance floor of the Casino (68). Natalia does not enjoy going to the Casino but has gone at the persistent request of Gertru who has already wondered off to dance with Ángel when Manolo attempts to convince Natalia to learn how to dance. In his efforts with her, he notices her eccentricities as underscored by his telling her “¿Sabes que eres una fierecilla?” (69). By the time he can no longer tolerate Natalia's antics, she has announced she will be leaving and he pays for their drinks. Thus, just as Gerardo gets what he wants from Andrea before letting her be, Manolo has retreated from Natalia in spite of not achieving anything with her aside perhaps from realizing why she remained so quiet at the beginning of their encounter. In the end, Manolo represents the

typical male adolescent in search of a good time while contrasting with Natalia to further prove her label as a “chica rara.”

In concluding, these male characters may at first seem interchangeable thanks to the conformist society in which the novel takes place, but upon closer consideration, the male characters provide a more thorough and deeper insight into the female characters, especially the protagonist, than the reader is able to ascertain from the character themselves thanks to the lack of first person narration or direct characterization by the female. These men who can speak for themselves, ironically, by their juxtapositions with females, offer unique insights into the females.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Then there were Three: the Traditional, the Bohemian and the Liberal

An endless number of critical analyses exist for *Nada* and *Entre visillos* thanks in part to their female creators as well as the uncanny ability both women had to pass their criticisms of the repressive society in which they lived and wrote by the censor's watchful eye during Francisco Franco's dictatorship. A large majority of these analyses consists of exploring feminist tendencies in the works such as the use of young female protagonists, the similarities between the two works and their authors in attempts to verify seemingly autobiographical elements and investigating the veracity of the historical components. While these academic endeavors assist in providing a more in-depth, general understanding of these works, they tend to restate the work of their predecessors without uncovering anything new. This is to say that many of their critics simply revisit already established and accepted material as opposed to trying to expose a new opinion or point of view by perhaps applying an original literary theory. Thus, it was my hope to shed light on an overlooked yet important part of both novels – the variety of male characters, their juxtaposition with female characters and the manner in which they uncover key aspects of the protagonists' development throughout the novels. At the same time, this analysis reveals that both genders were equally affected by the patriarchy.

The majority of the male characters found in both works, I found in my research, fall into a few major categories, which are the traditional representative of the patriarchy, the typical “macho ibérico,” the paradoxical bohemian who holds liberal ideas in some areas but not in regards to gender equality and the liberal supporter of more equality between men and women. Feminism, deconstructive and reader-response theories assisted in demonstrating how these male characters play pivotal roles in the novels’ social criticism that is often overlooked in favor of discussing the obvious roles of female protagonists. In previous studies, most applications of feminism focus on the protagonist, in part because both authors are female, but also because the typical roles associated with each gender are confused and sometimes reversed with the introduction of this new, original female archetype – the “chica rara.” The combination of character traits these females exhibit causes the reader to notice that the female characters are not following the traditional roles assigned to them by the patriarchy. However, the analysis stops here without exploring the male characters’ role in exposing these women’s variations from patriarchal expectations.

Feminism works as a theoretical tool with which the reader can categorize the characters and establish patterns created by the author such as the previously mentioned variety of males – the traditional, the bohemian and the liberal. For example, in *Nada* Ena’s father appears to be the most socially acceptable traditional, patriarchal male as he functions as the primary provider for his family while his wife cares for the home and their children. However, Ena’s father proves to be rather subversive as his outward appearance does not accurately reflect the complexity of his character. In portraying what a father should be he forgoes strictly adhering to patriarchal restrictions as

evidenced in his marrying a woman he knew had previous transgressions. Although Andrea is Ena's best friend, she has very little interaction with him, as expressed in her narration, until the end of the novel when he offers her a job, an action that is well outside patriarchal parameters, and they leave Barcelona for Madrid. To move beyond the literal, superficial level of the text, the reader must employ deconstruction because it forces one to delve into the innuendos, the subtle subtext and the various interpretations of the text that have passed the censor's eye. In other words, feminism has established the obvious disparities so that the reader can then deconstruct the text in order to arrive at the intended or implied meaning. Thus, their departure is symbolic as they leave the last city to fall to Franco, Barcelona, for the stronghold of his control and his center of operations, the capital city Madrid.

Working cohesively alongside both feminism and deconstruction, reader-response theory affirms that the reader, through his or her own experiences, will interpret the text uniquely providing a variety of acceptable opinions. Therefore not only do the cities become symbolic, but the choice in characters is also suggestive. Andrea is going to Madrid only because she has accepted a job offer, a non-traditional occurrence, yet travels with the most traditional male character in the entire novel. This could imply that Madrid will afford Andrea the opportunity to continue her fight as a more liberal female or that the city in combination with the more seemingly patriarchal male will finally crush Andrea's free spirit and hopes for a different future.

In *Entre visillos*, Natalia's father parallels Ena's father in some aspects. He has recently moved his family from a more rural way of life to the provincial capital city so that their aunt Concha may be more influential in his daughter's lives since the death of

their mother. This move furthers Natalia's interest in pursuing her education as well as choosing to have a career as opposed to the traditional patriarchal options of marriage or the church. Guided by feminism, the reader ascertains that the father fulfills his expected role in exposing his daughters to the most appropriate influence, which in itself exhibits patriarchal ideologies. Continuing with his duties and faithful adherence to patriarchal dictates, the father insures that the family has that which it needs financially while aunt Concha worries with socialization and the behavior of her three nieces. Unlike Andrea, Natalia does not speak in the first person until later in the novel. When she does speak, and specifically with her father, the reader realizes how perceptive she is in understanding the unwritten rules for female behavior she must overcome in order to do what she pleases. Thus, while Andrea is orphaned by both parents, Natalia still has her father, but after the conversation in which she begs him to see what aunt Concha aspires for her sisters and herself, Natalia realizes that she no longer has an ally in her father. This is to say that she unhappily recognizes that her father is indeed a simple, patriarchal man. However, she does plan to discuss her dreams of an university career in biology with her father at a later time.

In considering both of these father figures presented within these two novels, the reader can draw a variety of conclusions. One of the most plausible is that the father is synonymous with the antiquated, patriarchal ideals in spite of Ena's father's unpatriarchal tendencies. Additionally, as Andrea does not have a father of her own, one can conclude that a representative of the patriarchy will somehow manage to find his way into each and every females life implying that however diligently women try to rid their lives of patriarchal intrusions, male patriarchal authority figures will forever present obstacles

around which they will continually fight. While it may seem more appropriate to analyze Ena's more liberal father in the section of this text dedicated to the more liberal male, it serves our purposes to leave him here with Natalia's father to best demonstrate the differences between the two father figures. In the end, these traditional male characters hinder Andrea and Natalia's agency and ability to strive for a future unique to that which society allows.

For Andrea there are two more characters reflective of the patriarchy that hinder her agency and necessitate her fleeing to Madrid to seek the freedom and future she desires. Juan, her uncle, and Angustias, her authoritative aunt, struggle with their own identity at the same as they attempt to form Andrea into the ideal woman according to the patriarchal ideas under which they were raised. While neither is successful in their endeavors thanks in part to their own faults, they actually strengthen Andrea's argument in working for a future not customarily offered or accepted by society. Angustias inadvertently demonstrates the future that awaits Andrea if she adheres to all of her rules while Juan, through maliciously beating his wife without an apparent reason, demonstrates a possible future that awaits her if she is to marry. Thus, these two characters offer Andrea a preview of the possibility of marrying and not marrying yet still following the dictates of the patriarchy which encourages her to seek out any opportunities that will allow her to escape from the situation in which she currently suffers.

While the two fathers portray varying degrees of adherence to patriarchal ideals and these two family members continually reinforce them as well, the bohemian groups present in both novels tend to present a seemingly neutral position. The name of these

group instantaneously conjures a mental image of societal rebels frowned upon by conservative society because Bohemians flaunt the rules. However, both of these groups – the one comprised of Pons and his friends in *Nada* and the other including Yoni in *Entre visillos* – do not garner negative or disapproving admonitions from the general society within which they maneuver. In deconstructing society's lack of overt disapproval of such bohemian groups, the reader could deduce that the authors are suggesting that the patriarchy is loosening its tight grip in permitting small factions of opposing groups. Yet again, these groups are not completely liberal as demonstrated by their treatment of women.

Andrea only enters the bohemian, artist group after Pons has told the other members how she is not like other women, that is, the other female students with which they are accustomed to socializing. Trusting his word, the group welcomes Andrea at a time when Ena has temporarily abandoned their friendship. However, this self-proclaimed bohemian group does not accept Andrea as they would other male members from whom they would elicit anecdotes about injustices and implore them to share their artwork. They expect Andrea to prepare the afternoon snack and in general remain outside their inner circle yet within their defined space in the attic apartment. The reader recognizes her precarious position outside yet within reflects her position within her family as well as society and is only attainable through deconstructing and interpreting the text provided by the author. All the while Feminism allows the reader to fully comprehend the implications in placing Andrea in the kitchen while the men remain engrossed in their abstract conversations in the living room.

Similarly, the party at Yoni's apartment in *Entre visillos* reveals the varying degrees to which society accepts divergent opinions because once again the male characters' diversities and opinions contrary to the patriarchy are not questioned but rather viewed as innovative and positively eccentric. Within minutes of arriving at this gathering, Yoni's sister whisks Gertru to the newly remodeled kitchen while her fiancé Ángel mingles with those associated with Yoni's bohemian group. A feminist critique notices the patently obvious fact that once again the woman is relegated to the kitchen while the men move freely within the various spaces of the apartment. Taking these obvious differences between men and women into consideration, the reader can deconstruct the text to decode a similar subtext to that which was found in *Nada* – society is slowly accepting change and liberal ideas, but they only suggest new freedoms for men, once again they do not apply equally to women.

Clearly these bohemian groups represent a variety of commentaries on society. They are very accepting of men with similar diversities that lie outside of society's accepted norms. While they earnestly believe they are equally accepting of women with views differing those of society, they do not fully integrate them into their innermost circle as noted by the spatial segregation created by relegating both Andrea and Natalia to the kitchen of each respective apartment. Therefore, these groups mean well yet actually remain ambivalent in or in some cases completely blind to assisting women in their fight to obtain more agency.

Thus far the parallels between the two novels are clearly examples of not only a new affinity for women writers but also a representation of the shared experience among women across two decades of Franco's dictatorship. Furthermore, Carmen Laforet and

Carmen Martín Gaité both allude to Franco's belief that women should remain in the home and care for the household by including these episodes in which even the slightly liberated male cannot forgo this pre-programmed belief that the woman's place is in the kitchen, the heart of most Spanish homes. These criticisms would remain innocently woven into the plot, unnoticed as by the censors, without the reader concentrating more specifically on the juxtaposition of the male characters with the female characters. In other words, Feminism guides the reader to see the erroneous, traditional characterizations while Deconstruction assists the reader in recalling personal knowledge and experiences to ascertain the underlying criticisms presented alongside the superficial plot throughout the novels.

Of course, from the strictly traditional to the slightly less traditional yet not completely liberated, one must arrive at the most liberal male characters who embrace change and go so far as to support the female characters, at least the "chica raras," in rebelling against societal restrictions imposed upon them. Interestingly, in both novels the most liberated male characters are outsiders, being let into each protagonist life by her own choosing. These men do not represent perfect models of liberated males, yet are the most liberal and willing to assist in providing Andrea and Natalia with more agency.

Although Andrea's uncle Román seems open to accepting women that do not fit neatly into the pre-conceived patriarchal ideal, he is not the representative of the liberal man in *Nada*. In fact, his participation in the black market, his desire to be omnipotent with respect to those in the Aribau apartment and his mistreatment of women including Ena's mother, his sister Angustias and his sister-in-law Gloria actually categorize him more closely with the traditional, patriarchal figures. He is, of course, a corrupted

version of these two pacific, sentimental men. Jaime, Ena's boyfriend, is the complete opposite of Román and the representative liberal male for Andrea. Jaime juxtaposes with both Ena and Andrea seamlessly creating a personal bridge between the generations as Ena's parents accept him yet Ena feels as though he is her secret. Thus, *Nada* offers another commentary about the changing role of Spanish women by implying in that it will take generations and a team effort between the generations to bridge the gap between patriarchy expectations and women's desires for more agency and acceptance in male domains.

Jaime, a wealthy heir to his deceased father's fortune, characterizes the newly emerging more liberated Spanish male that does not make his own way in life but rather takes advantage of his father's hard work loafing around without doing much of anything. In chauffeuring Ena and Andrea wherever Ena dictates as well as acquiescing to every want she expresses, Jaime shows that he does not mind listening to the desires of women nor does he feel threatened by such an independent, bold young female as Ena and by extension her friend Andrea. Later, he requests Andrea's help in reaching Ena for fear that she is metaphorically lost and feels abandoned. The decision to request help from a woman clearly substantiates that the patriarchy does not guide his treatment of women. By choosing someone outside of both girls' family and inner circle of friends, Carmen Laforet alludes to the reality that women will need to look outside of their usual family and friends and the parameters established for them by the patriarchy to find acceptance in traditionally masculine endeavors and the to exercise their own agency.

Jaime's parallel in *Entre visillos* is quite obviously Pablo Klein, the German professor that consistently encourages Natalia to pursue her education and a future career

of her choosing. Although he spent some time in the provincial city as a child, everyone considers him a foreigner, as he does not adhere to the patriarchal rules by which everyone else abides. Pablo approaches Natalia after noticing her talents in class, but it takes a few attempts before she opens up to him about her particular interests and hopes for her future. The relationship between this teacher and student slowly evolves to include walks throughout the city after class during which Pablo consistently prods Natalia to talk about her future with her father as well as to decide what she wants. Deconstructing this relationship, the reader realizes that it is a foreigner that is accepting a woman with more agency and thus perhaps Carmen Martín Gaité is trying to suggest it will take outsiders to break the patriarchal mold by which Spanish society has always abided. Of course, the choice to use a German professor is ironic in that the mention of Germany alludes to Franco's alliance with Hitler and as a role model during the war and after.

Both Jaime and Pablo Klein promote female agency in the female protagonists of their respective works while at the same time functioning within society without serious consequences for these divergent actions because they are men. Thus, Feminism continues to be fruitful in producing apparent differences in society's reactions between the male and female characters. The gamut of male characters has proven diverse and all encompassing in providing endless insights into the female characters with which they juxtaposition. These interactions between the male and female characters are not only pivotal to the plausibility of the plot but also to the development of the protagonist, as without these relationships many crucial facets of the female protagonists' character would be lost because the female characters could not endeavor to ask the same questions

or elicit similar information due to their gender. In other words, the reader would lose so much of the necessary elements of the author's critique because men are permitted certain privileges that women are denied because of the patriarchy.

Even secondary female characters are unable to elicit the same pivotal information from the protagonist whether they are a relative, friend or acquaintance as do the previously discussed male characters, they still play a pivotal role to the development of the novel too. These secondary female characters oftentimes introduce male characters to the protagonists providing a point of contact through which the reader gleans valuable, essential information to understand better all aspects of the protagonist's character. Additionally, some of these secondary female characters such as Gloria, Andrea's Uncle Juan's wife, demonstrate the various, negative results of submitting to the patriarchy possibilities or illustrate the importance of social classes and the distinctions in options available to women this difference in class creates such as Alicia in *Entre visillos*.

It is no accident that both novels close with an open ending, leaving the reader to speculate or hypothesize as to the future these two "chica raras" choose for themselves. However, there is no question as to the important roles the male characters fulfill in development of these two adolescent females in search, not only of themselves, but also a future that belies conforming to the patriarchy. Each novel is original, employing similar yet unique literary devices such as narrative voice, but the male characters, like the "chica rara" archetype, forge a connection between the two novels that substantiates the importance in devoting a detailed analysis to the male characters. The ever-so-important characteristics of the "chica rara" would not stand out so clearly in these texts if they

were not juxtaposed against the variety of male characters with which to compare and contrast her role within society.

As we have shown, these male characters and the character types they represent clearly convey more of a critique of traditional gender roles than the censors ascertained. Their juxtaposition with the female characters in each work reveals the crucial part they play in the reception of the novel as a whole. Without the placement of these male characters at the strategic moments in which they enter the lives of the female protagonists and the interactions between the male and female characters the novels would not present as nearly as well developed female protagonist or relay such an authentic critique of Spanish life under the Franco dictatorship. While Andrea and Natalia would still be noticeably different than the other female characters, their characterization would not be as profound. Thus, Laforet and Martín Gaité have used their male characters to critique the patriarchal system they espouse in some cases or to offer a better model for male-female interactions. Both men and women must become involved if women are ever to overcome the strictures of patriarchy and gain agency. These women and some of the males like Jaime and Pablo model how males can help women gain something more than *Nada* and live life with agency instead of peering out from *Entre visillos*.

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