

Writing the Ineffable: Domestic Violence and Female Employment in Carmen Laforet's *Nada*

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Writing the Ineffable: Postwar Female Employment and Domestic Violence in Carmen Laforet's *Nada*

Abstract

This article considers the unexplored and interrelated motifs of female employment and domestic violence in Carmen Laforet's *Nada*. Andrea's voyeuristic gaze renders an intimate and sustained portrait of the inversion of gender roles in a postwar marriage in which the wife, Gloria, is the breadwinner and the husband, Juan, is a dependent. My analysis is three-fold, centering primarily on Juan's inadequate masculinity, Gloria's economic power, and her deflection of masculine antipathy towards her persona by her adoption of what Joan Riviere terms 'the feminine masquerade', a flaunting of excessive femininity designed to appease male fury at female economic dominance, and her plot to seduce her husband. This article will foreground and elucidate class tensions, the suppression of Catalan, the gendering of urban space, and forms of female resistance. My article thus provides an unstudied entrée into Laforet's relationship to class and gender, and its revalorisation of Gloria and Juan expands current critical thinking on Laforet's treatment of femininity and masculinity, while also illuminating the heretofore unstudied literary representation of the postwar working woman, and the traumatised male.

Key Words: Carmen Laforet, *Nada*, Domestic Violence in Contemporary Spanish Culture, postwar masculinity; Spanish Women's Writing; Peninsular Spanish Literature.

Domestic violence has recently become one of the most salient topics in Spanish cultural studies, with a plethora of films, *Te doy mis ojos*, *Sólo mía*, *Solas*, and literary texts, such as *Algún amor que no mate* and *El último patriarca*, exploring the complex

dynamics of physically and psychologically abusive relationships.¹ However, this cultural explosion has an important and heretofore unexamined precedent in Carmen Laforet's 1945 novel, *Nada*, which addresses two socially proscribed themes at the time of publication: female employment and domestic violence. Through Andrea's voyeuristic gaze, *Nada* renders an intimate and sustained portrait of the inversion of gender roles in a violent marriage in which the wife is breadwinner and the husband is a dependent. The pages of this *sui generis* novel are replete with raw material that probes the psychic and social causes of domestic violence, as well as the unacknowledged feminine economic contribution to Spanish households in the postwar period. In this novel, economic privations divest Juan of any coherent stature, while his wife, Gloria's wage-earning capacity inflames his hatred of her, which she attempts to defuse by tactics of self-beautification and outright defiance. Although domestic violence was thematised in other postwar *tremendista* novels, just one of which is Camilo José Cela's *La familia de Pascual Duarte*, no postwar novel exists that dramatizes with such adeptness the tension between female economic superiority and male psychological instability as *Nada*. It is one of the rare postwar novels that controverts *machista* logic by fictionalising the causality and consequences of domestic violence. Innovatively, it proffers a dual perspective into the mentality of the perpetrator of domestic violence, and the survival strategies of his victimized wife, while concomitantly demythologizing postwar male social and economic dominance. The institution of the family, a key fundament of the Franco Regime, is undermined through Laforet's portrayal of this highly violent and economically asymmetrical relationship.

My incursion into these unexplored issues relatedly expands current critical thinking on Laforet's treatment of female subjectivity by revalorizing Gloria, a secondary personage routinely dismissed by critics as 'a young and not very bright girl'

or as a powerless victim of her environment, lusting hopelessly after Román while enduring regular beatings.² Further misconceived characterization casts her as a law-abiding agent, overwhelmingly concerned with hunger.³ A similar critical inclination is discernible in scholarship devoted to masculinity, which dismisses Juan as an emasculated loser, eclipsed by the far more charismatic and talented Román.⁴ Indeed, Laforet's male characterization has been negatively compared to her masterful portrayals of female characters.⁵ Traditionally regarded as a fictionalization of middle class decline, *Nada* was criticized for its scant value for the working classes by as prominent a figure as Jorge Semprún. In his words: 'a la clase obrera, los campesinados no sirven novelas como *Nada*. Y por otra parte, puede esta novela difundir en las capas sociales menos decididas, pero han de incorporarse y se incorporan a la lucha, una ideología de derrotismo.'⁶ Contradicting Semprún, critic Irene Mizrahi perceives a palpable concern on Laforet's part 'for the poor and oppressed', and a gendered critique of the Roman Catholic Church as 'insensitive to the needs and contributions of women.'⁷ Laforet's feminism, invariably analysed through the prism of Andrea's development, is another moot point in studies of *Nada*.⁸

Surprisingly, domestic violence and female employment have not been examined, despite the fact that their representation allows Laforet's scholars to obtain novel insights into all the aforementioned and unresolved issues. This study's significance is not limited to Laforet Studies alone, however, for this motif also illuminates three understudied areas in Spanish narrative from 1939 to the present day: the representation of domestic violence, postwar male traumatising, and female employment. While studies of the prototype of Francoist womanhood, *el ángel del hogar*, proliferate, no scholarly attention has been paid to the representation of working women in the postwar period. And yet, the working woman of the postwar period

figures in classic novels, like Merce Roderada's *La placa del diamante*, and some of the most popular fiction of the postmillennial period, in novels such as Almudena Grandes's *Las tres bodas de Manolita*, María Dueñas's *El tiempo entre costuras*, and Alberto Méndez's short story, 'Los girasoles ciegos'. This thematic recurrence and her value as a cipher for the violation of gender norms make the postwar working woman worthy of sustained academic attention.

These lacunae and contradictory construals frame my discussion of this interrelated motif in this novel, an analysis that will foreground and elucidate the resignification of masculinity and femininity in the postwar periods, class tensions, the suppression of Catalan, the gendering of urban space, and forms of female resistance. Furthermore, the complex relationship between domestic violence and female employment not only provides an incisive commentary on, and insight into, prescriptive gender roles in the postwar period, but tangentially, into the problematics of representation for Spanish women writers. My analysis will seek to ascertain how Laforet negotiated the ostensibly incompatible demands of popularity for a conservative readership and her presumptive discernment of class and gender inequities as a sensitive, perceptive law student in the University of Barcelona during the postwar period. Accordingly, this article will consider Laforet's investment in this reconstruction of postwar gender archetypes, seeking to ascertain whether *Nada* is a critical response to, and undoing of, prejudicial social and gendered practices, or do remnants of these very same biases underlie this representation? My scrutiny is three-fold, centering primarily on Juan's inadequate masculinity, Gloria's economic power, and her strategies of resistance. A socio-historical contextualization of postwar attitudes to women's work, a brief theoretical discussion of domestic violence, and the quasi-

legalisation of domestic violence during the same period precedes and informs this close reading.

Norman Mailer once described masculinity as ‘not something you are born with, but something you gain by winning small battles with honor.’⁹ In Francoist Spain, male honour pivoted around the breadwinner role, and the attendant constriction of women to the house. In the words of a school textbook for the subject, *Formación político social*, ‘the father is the head of the family. His job is to work and to command the mother who is looking after the home.’¹⁰ Prior to the instauration of the Francoist New State, social planners had envisaged the home as a resolutely womanly space, untainted by the economic transactions of the public sphere, and a haven for the preservation of innately feminine qualities. The 1938 *Fuero de Trabajo* had as its main objective ‘the liberation of the married woman from the workshop and factory’, and it specifically stipulated a rise in male salaries in order to facilitate women’s full-time housewifery.¹¹ In postwar Spain, a confluence of legislative measures and discursive propaganda conspired to ensure the permanent reconsignment of Spanish women to the home. Under the Spanish Penal Code, women were considered as much a man’s property as his house and land, and a woman was required to obtain *el permiso marital* to travel abroad, open a bank account, or engage in any commercial transaction.¹² Article 57 of the Civil Code, which stated that ‘el marido debe proteger a la mujer y esta obedecer al marido’ articulated women’s subordination within the marriage and enshrined Spanish husbands’ economic responsibility.¹³

This inflexible segregation also augmented the low social status of women who were regarded as ‘merely subsidiary recipients of family derivative rights, which were ultimately owned by the male.’¹⁴ Moreover, the state ensured that women’s employment was detrimental to the family’s finances because the state-subsidized child

allowance was immediately withdrawn upon a married woman's commencement of employment.¹⁵ The 1946 *Ley de Ayuda Familiar* 'penalizaba el trabajo de la mujer casada con la pérdida del plus familiar, considerando que ésta debía dedicarse plenamente a sus tareas como madre.'¹⁶ Work for women in the public sphere was regarded as an impermanent state, and correlated with poverty and desperation, thereby ignoring the reality that 'women in Francoist Spain both needed and wanted to work.'¹⁷ The denigration of working women had implicitly classist overtones, as the only type of acceptable female employment was the bourgeois housewife's charitable endeavours, non-remunerative activities that would not disturb the patriarchal balance of power in Spanish marriages. Consequently, a miniscule percentage of women, 12.1% were registered in the official labour force in 1940.¹⁸ Enticed by the *dote*, a state dowry gifted to women upon leaving employment from 1942 onwards, this percentage was reduced to 8.4% in 1945.¹⁹ In 1947, the *excedencia forzosa* forced engaged women to leave employment and debarred them from entering the high-ranking professions of law and international diplomacy.²⁰ This spate of legislation discounted the local, familial and personal circumstances, as well as personal motivation, that impelled women's employment, and was evidently more prescriptive than realistic. This obligatory restriction of the woman to the home explicitly delegitimized and sexualised the small percentage of poverty-stricken, usually Republican, female workers, employed as seamstresses or maids.²¹

These legislative measures were buoyed by a pejorative discourse that explicitly condemned the masculinization of working women and its detrimental consequences for marital relations. Worthy of reproduction is the founder of the *Falange*, José Antonio Primo de Rivera's comments on the theme. 'A mí siempre me ha dado tristeza ver a la mujer en ejercicios de hombre, toda afanada y desquiciada en una rivalidad donde lleva-

entre la morbosa complacencia de los competidores masculinos-todas las de perder.’²² The state’s incessant propagation of the self-sacrificing totem of womanhood, *el ángel del hogar*, and thoroughly domesticated historical idols, such as Santa Teresa de Ávila and Isabel la Católica, excoriated the idea of female economic prosperity and fulfillment, which were held to be incompatible with the abnegation expected of postwar women.²³ Even young girls were exposed to this denigration of female employment. Female children’s biographies of historical figures contained exhortations to prioritise wifedom and marriage, which were judged to be far more consequential than any social, cultural or political ambitions the girls might harbor.²⁴ Harvey notes that a popular postwar biographical collections contained only one reference to a political figure, Mariana Pineda, Granada’s 19th century liberal political martyr, whose participation in politics was accredited to a neurosis caused by early widowhood. Predictably, her foray into the political arena ended disastrously, culminating in her abandonment of her children.²⁵ This misogynistic discourse decoupled feminine economic activity from femininity itself, giving female schoolchildren to understand that motherhood, wifedom, and female labour were irreconcilable.

The violation of this inflexible division between female employment and male dominance underlines Juan and Gloria’s abusive relationship in *Nada*, and plays itself out economically, spatially, and linguistically. Prior to examining their conflictual marital dynamics, it is germane to briefly consider domestic violence both theoretically, and within the Spanish postwar historical context. Domestic violence viscerally expresses the damaging effects of social hierarchy and a monolithic male gender role in the private sphere. Michael Kaufman’s multifaceted definition of domestic violence crystallises the causation between monolithic gender norms and domestic violence. In his words: ‘The act of violence is many things at once. At the same instant it is the

individual man acting out relations of sexual power; it is the violence of a society- a hierarchical, authoritarian, sexist, class-divided society, being focused through an individual man on an individual woman.’²⁶ Ergo, at the social level, domestic violence is the product of socio-economic gendered expectations, but beneath this layer, lies a private stratum of individual behaviour which expresses its frustration at these same mores. Kaufman’s recognition of the infiltration of public pressures into the private arena erases simplistic dichotomies of private/public sphere violence, and in lieu of this reconceives domestic violence as an act of violence perpetrated in the home, which is caused by the impingement of prescriptive gender norms in the private sphere that accentuate feelings of male inadequacy.²⁷ According to his theorization, domestic violence imprisons men in a logic of self-hating, whereby each act of violence confirms the abuser’s faltering self-esteem.²⁸ Substantiating Kaufman’s contention, Faith Robertson Ellison has established three predominant personality traits among wife-batterers; they hold rigid views of men’s and women’s roles, are insecure in their masculine identity and use violence as a means of demonstrating power and adequacy.²⁹ Thus, the issue of domestic violence constitutes a site of fiercely contested gender ideologies, intimately connected with a panic generated by any threat to the patriarchal gender structure. In *Nada*, the quasi-sanctioning of domestic abuse in the Francoist New State, where refuge centers for battered women were non-existent, exacerbates Gloria’s victimization.³⁰ The sexualised woman, who did not comply with the passivity required of normative Spanish womanhood, was unprotected, reduced to ‘un simple objeto, a disposición del varón, quien podía incluso llegar a violar a su mujer sin temor a ser sancionado penalmente.’³¹ The Roman Catholic Church expounded the Regime’s thinking on appropriate female behavior and also implicitly sanctioned the endurance of marital abuse.³² The ‘uxorcidio por causa de honor’ clause, ratified in the 1944 Penal

Code, permitted a man to kill his wife and her lover if he found them *in flagrante*.³³ Sexual violence within marriage was not punishable, or even mentioned in the penal code.³⁴ Based on this dual historical contextualisation of women's employment and domestic violence in the early postwar period, I will now examine their representation within the novel.

The novel's strikingly original attempt to understand the abuser's mindset is one of its strongest features, and differentiates it from the typically anodyne treatment of the abuser as an irremediable psychopath or an all-encompassing focus on the victim that leaves the causes of perpetration unscrutinised. From the very beginning of the novel, Laforet dismantles any simplistic dichotomies between feminine passivity and male proactivity by configuring the former as economically productive and the latter as violently disharmonious. Unimpressed by the shabby surroundings of her grandmother's house, Andrea gains the false impression, upon arrival, that Juan is the authoritative male figure of the house because he immediately takes charge of her luggage (7).³⁵ This mistaken impression is undercut by his facial expressions which convey his mental turmoil and inner rage: 'vi la cara de Juan que hacía muecas nerviosas mordiéndose las mejillas' (8). An oneiric image of Juan as the Mayan god Xiochipilli associates Juan with a darkness and a physical power that contain the potential for violence, and confirms Andrea's suspicion that he suffers from mood-swings (46). Laforet's portrait of Juan exposes the detrimental effects of war on men because he returns from the Civil War a shadow of his former self, a personification of a thwarted, deformed masculinity (17). Angustias later hints that the war has made both her brothers 'mal de los nervios' (9), and certainly, Juan's facial tics, violent outbursts, and self-delusions point at a simmering inner tension, worsened by his straitened economic circumstances. It is tenable that he is suffering from post-traumatic stress

disorder, a delayed reaction to atrocities seen on the front. In her article on post-traumatic stress disorder, Rachel Yehuda outlines the symptomatology of PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder) as wide ranging and variable in its intensity, spanning the gamut from irritability, sudden outbursts of anger to nightmares, all of which afflict Juan. The presentation of Juan is schizoid, for he is also shown to be a loving father, doting upon his infant and becoming distraught when the toddler is sick (63), which softens his egotism, bravado and posturing.³⁶ The collapsing of violence and tenderness into masculine personhood constitutes a pointed refutation of the machista postwar rhetoric that disallowed the expression of male affectivity and trauma. Laforet's demythologization of postwar Spanish masculine identity makes visible the dehumanizing effects of war and poverty on the male psyche, thereby reconstructing it as traumatized and economically ineffectual. This characterisation explicitly contests the idolization of the Francoist patriarch and war-hero, who was discursively represented as the undisputed master of the postwar private and public spheres.

Juan's anguish can also be partially accrued to his mediocrity as an artist, his modest occupational status as an infrequently employed security guard, and to the family's knowledge of this inadequacy, which sunders his delusions of grandeur. When Gloria sells his paintings for a paltry sum, he becomes verbally abusive: 'Esta bestia se cree que mi arte es igual que el de un albañil de brocha gorda' (48), and also prohibits her from entering his studio by a threat: 'Como te vuelves a meter en el estudio te abriré la cabeza. Prefiero que se muera de hambre todo dios a... ' (50). Juan's reaction not only evinces wounded male pride, but its spatial overtones indicate a resentment at the female appropriation of a domain he purportedly dominates, the male worlds of work and the economy. His denial of his economic incapacity and his ostentation of an imaginary earning power is patently illustrated by his railing against Gloria when she

requests money from her sister for their child's medication, and his blustering assertion that he is due to receive a hundred pesetas forthwith (62). The juxtaposition of Juan's pathetic feigning of a superior male role and his nuclear and extended families' forthright disabusing of his pretensions is recurrent throughout the novel.³⁷ In fact, Gloria recognises that a marriage to a worker would have been materially more advantageous (83). Her comment reflects the utilitarian ethos, borne of postwar deprivation, which de-emphasised pedigree and refinement, qualities deemed irrelevant to the daily struggle for survival. Moreover, it is implied that his opinions do not carry any weight within the house because his rebuke to Andrea goes unheeded (151). His economic negligibility culminates in his family's endurance of hunger (99), and the rekindling of Gloria's attraction to Román; furthermore, the loss of skill and prestige associated with gainful employment destabilizes his gendered self-perception and leaves him vulnerable to Román's machinations.

Juan's veneer of arrogance occludes a megalomania that strives to command the female members of the family, who fulfill a compensatory function for his incapacity to obtain male respect. Although Román is undoubtedly the dominant male, Juan attempts to usurp him, declaring that 'yo soy el único de esta casa a quien tiene que pedir permiso, y él que se lo concede' (72), but Román privately clarifies the actual division of male power to Andrea by declaring that Juan is his possession (71). Joseph M. Pleck avers that men's relationship with men, homosociality, is moulded by patriarchal norms, and thus men create rankings based on masculine criteria.³⁸ Homosocial bonding is key to men's consolidation of their masculinity and to their perception of their own location in the male hierarchy. Therefore, most homosocial relationships aggravate the stratification of different masculinities. Additionally, segregation between different social groups often spurs competition because men will try to climb their way to the top

social group to achieve hegemonic masculinity, the most socially prominent type of masculinity.³⁹ Disrespect within the masculine peer group leads to violence against women. As Michael Kimmel astutely observes: ‘men’s real fear is not fear of women, but of being ashamed or humiliated in front of other men, or being dominated by other men.’⁴⁰ When Román and Juan have an intense argument, he takes out his rage on the uninvolved Gloria (12), and throws a plate at Angustias. Importantly, Juan never engages in physical violence with Román, but hits both Gloria and Angustias (27). These scenes are wild ejaculations of frustration against powerless women, whereby he falls upon his prey, unleashes his hostility, and withdraws. His reservation of violence for women denotes his sense of male privilege and entitlement to misuse it in a resolutely patriarchal society, which accords him impunity for violence against women.

Laforet’s portrait of Juan’s emasculation is complemented by an ambivalent portrayal of Gloria, whose humble social extraction marks her as an inferior in the eyes of her in-laws. Angustias contemptuously describes her as ‘una mujer nada conveniente’ (26), ‘una pérdida’ (214), and ‘una golfilla de la calle’ (39). Adopting the prevalent social attitude to women’s employment, Angustias implies that Gloria’s nightly cardplaying is for leisure purposes: ‘Lo que a ella le gusta es beber y divertirse en casa de su hermana’ (116). On one occasion, Angustias rebukes her for her late arrival at the house by calling her ‘una sin vergüenza’ (32). Gloria, however, is substantially more than a scapegoat for the family’s angst, indexing as she does class and gender tensions, and the jeopardisation of cultural hierarchies, while concurrently channelling a destabilized middle-class’s social hypocrisy and the fortitude of working class women who were stigmatized for their economic activity.

For all these merits, however, a conscious and ample qualification on Laforet’s part is perceptible. Arguably, Laforet strategically includes and exploits a number of

working class traits in the construction of Gloria's character, apparently valuing her distance from Andrea's morally bankrupt and middle-class family and challenging the meagre social and symbolic position and value allotted to the working class under Francoism. Nevertheless, the agency and power assigned to this female working class character via physical, discursive, and economic agency is subverted by the novel's finale which affirms Gloria's life-long endurance of Juan's violence against her, and by the spatial and classist undermining of her economic productivity throughout the novel. In fact, she appears to function as a readerly double who allows Laforet to both confirm and interrogate postwar biases against lower-class, Republican working women. This ambivalence is manifest in the commendation and simultaneous undercutting of Gloria, the latter technique presumably serving to reproduce a personage postwar readers would deem natural and credible in class terms. Nevertheless, I would suggest that the exaggeration of the very same traits that underwrite this female character's verisimilitude affirm readers' preconceived biases about working class women. Admittedly, it was rather problematic to exalt an uncultured and unconventional woman like Gloria to the status of a role-model for postwar female readers, who were regulated by oppressive gender norms and class imperatives. Janet Pérez remarks: 'The woman whose attitudes are liberated, who dares to defy convention by her visible behaviour, dress, sexual autonomy or occupational non-conformity is an unusual occurrence in postwar female writers.'⁴¹ The stringent censorship of the postwar years compounded the difficulties of representation, a fact acknowledged by Laforet in an interview with Geraldine Nichols, 'no se podía contar entonces.'⁴² This historical conjuncture meant that postwar writers adopted the literary techniques of allusion, ambiguity, and association.⁴³

Conversely, Laforet's imagining of Gloria as the sensuous fallen woman so traduced by conservative discourse in the postwar period, affirms contemporaneous prejudices. In a 1944 sermon, Padre García Figer vituperated against the fallen woman as innately idle, lascivious and nonmaternal: 'De la mujer sensual no ha de esperar trabajo serio, idea grave, labor fecunda, sentimiento limpio, ternura acogedora.'⁴⁴ Even worse, the woman who incited male complements was dismissed as 'una tonta destinataria de piropos' (qtd. in Kebabze 114).⁴⁵ Her name, Gloria, evokes sexual euphoria and sinfulness, especially when compared to her nemesis, the austere Angustias (anxiety). Similar to Sa Malene, the repudiated sexual woman of Matute's *Primera Memoria*, Gloria's redheadedness (30) conjures up images of the sexual woman, the traditional scarlet woman who is socially ostracised.⁴⁶ It is even intimated that she used the classic female ruse of an unexpected pregnancy to force Juan to marry her: 'Juan había vuelto junto a la mujer que le dio un hijo para hacerla su esposa' (88). Following a very difficult birth, Román tries to eject Gloria and the child from the house (45), which again reinforces the incompatibility of an unashamed female sexuality with the extant conceptualization of the home as a bastion of female asexuality and hallowed domesticity. Andrea's own reaction to Gloria's nude posing for Juan corroborates the idea of baseness and the dearth of more elevated qualities attributed to her by the family: 'Una inteligencia sutil y diluida en la cálida superficie de la piel perfecta. Algo que en sus ojos no lucía nunca. Esta llamada del espíritu que atrae en las personas excepcionales, en las obras de arte' (12).

Gloria does read low-brow novels, which was something of a feat in an era of widespread illiteracy. However, the narrative voice persists in discrediting her by discounting her practicality, not to mention any type of cerebrality, and in lieu of this, reduces her to an object of titillation. Her orphanhood paradoxically confirms her

inherent amorality, for during this period, ‘abandoned orphans’ were deemed in need of a protection and surveillance by the omnipotent *Patronato de Protección de la Mujer*, the state body established to monitor female morality.⁴⁷ Ironically, in a supposedly ultra-Christian society that glorified the orphan in postwar films such as the 1955 film, *Marcelino, pan y vino*, Gloria’s orphanhood does not inspire compassion, but bears the stigma of the lack of a sound patriarchal heritage, and underlies her social marginalization. Even Gloria’s participation in the postwar culture of evasion marks her as a deviant.⁴⁸ Andrew A. Anderson contends that Gloria’s disillusionment with her marriage is compounded by the disjuncture between reality and the elevated expectations fomented by her limited reading of romance novels and viewing of films.⁴⁹ Certainly, she adopts the conventional novelistic and filmic love tropes to legitimize her love for Juan, describing their relationship as ‘una película’ (27). However, for morally suspect women who lacked a solid grounding in Christian ethics, perusal of cultural texts was thought to only stimulate their innate licentiousness.⁵⁰

The family’s lambasting of Gloria’s countermanding of normative female behaviour, her lack of education, and her sexuality conceal their real gripes: her economic productivity and her working class background. Invoking his imaginary earning power, the grandmother’s reverential attitude towards Juan is manifest in her chastisement of Andrea and Gloria for plotting against such a supposedly good provider. Disingenuously, she describes Juan as ‘un hombre bueno, que viste y que da de comer a su niño y que por las noches le pasea para que su mujer duerma tranquila’ (153). The grandmother’s humouring of Juan’s deluded self-aggrandizement omits Gloria’s economic contribution, and mendaciously attributes the main provider role to Juan. Deprived of the agency, power, and pecuniary worth afforded by gainful employment and bourgeois status, Juan judges Gloria’s work and sexuality to be

exceptional sites in which to exert control and restore a faltering self-esteem. Discounting her ready self-endangerment in aid of the family finances, Juan accuses her of being lackadaisical: ‘dice que soy una bestia que no haga más que dormir’ (218), despite the fact that it is her practical approach to their finances that has literally put meat, the symbol *par excellence* of male economic power, on the table that day (215).⁵¹

The exclusion of Gloria from the inner family circle is cemented by her animalization, invoked whenever she commits a minor error. For example, when she tells the grandmother that Ena is Román’s lover, she calls her ‘una bestia’ (189). Juan’s unrelenting persecution of Gloria is paralleled to ‘los animales con sus cachorros’ (134), a metaphor that crystallises their violent marital dynamic and concomitantly registers both self-justification and the force of social mores concerning postwar women. These animalistic references continue with Juan smelling Gloria’s scent like a dog (136), and, indeed, the pervasiveness of the family’s animalization eventuates in her self-animalisation whereby she conceives of herself as ‘aquel gato, triste perseguido’ (36). The animalization of her persona conveys the danger of female undomestication, and its unsettling and destructive ramifications for the private sphere, which perversely validate the predatoriness inherent in Juan’s terrorizing of his wife. His scenting of her is akin to a form of hunting, a codified masculine activity linked with the seduction and pursuit of women, but in this case, the analogy pinpoints the failure of masculinity, which occasions the destruction of their relationship and the dehumanization of Gloria. Inferring social degeneration, these animalistic metaphors exhibit the discursive mechanisms put in place to marginalize her as not only an inassimilable element in the family, but an inciter of its splintering. Shaped by the prevailing misogyny, these allusions infer the alienation of the female worker deemed to be despicable, and obliquely, reinscribe the necessity of a reinitiation of patriarchal relations of

proprietorship and an unconditional and silent obedience from the voiceless female other. The necessity of rendering Gloria inaudible is one of the contributory factors to Juan's perpetration of domestic violence. His attack on Gloria while in the bath manifests his desire to suppress her lower-class origins and to enforce the silence of 'el ángel del hogar', the passive asexual model of womanhood. Andrea recounts how 'le agarraba brutalmente la cabeza de modo que si abría la boca no tenía más remedio que tragar agua' (48). The incapacitation of her vocal abilities neutralizes her lower class, evidenced by her faulty pronunciation; pre-empts any verbal challenges to Juan's presumptive authority; and subjugates Gloria to patriarchal gender norms.

Undoubtedly, the family's bestialisation of Gloria responds to a perceived menace to the legitimacy, authority and power of a family on the precipice of declassment. Gloria's unsettling of their class pretensions and her flaunting of her sexuality threatens to implode their dissembling of a united and bourgeois family, symbolized by the grandmother's photos (67), and Andrea's memories of her childhood (22). Laforet colludes in the propagation of distinctly gendered and classist stereotypes by endowing Gloria with a lowclass habitus, manifested by flawed pronunciation, vulgarisms, and uninhibitedness, which contrasts with the cultivated nature of the middle classes.⁵² The displacement of Gloria in Andrea's affections is catalyzed by her awareness of her commonness, accentuated by comparison with the well-bred Ena. Laforet even exceeds the aforementioned dichotomy by portraying Gloria as the vendor of the family's objects of artistic refinement, such as the piano, which posits her as an agent of deculturation. The sale of the object debunks Juan's residual and diminishing authority as an artist, and brings into relief Andrea's family's shabby gentility.

The family's denigration of Gloria, and their obdurate disavowal of her economic efficacy, can be read as vain attempts to preserve and reaffirm their tenuous

class status by reiterating their separation from the lower and *parvenu* classes, represented by Gloria and Gloria's family respectively. Their derision preserves their superiority by concealing Gloria's crucial role as the family's main provider, whose earnings from gambling in *el barrio chino* sustain them. Andrea's family's condescension to Gloria's family belies their superior economic position, which is refracted through the lens of alimentary abundance: there is a cornucopia of non-rationed food in Gloria's sister's house, and their shop is a successful business venture (102). It is significant that Gloria's sister impudently addresses Juan by the Catalan version of his name, *joanet*, and maintains a conversation with Andrea in Catalan in front of him (62). Her enunciation of Catalan is a glaring indicator of his incapacity, stemming from his economic unproductivity, to inspire respect or fear, and signals his reduced class status. Following the war, a sizeable percentage of the Barcelonese bourgeoisie complied with Franco's suppression of Catalan, adopting Spanish as their exclusive language,⁵³ and one can surmise that Andrea's family's pretentiousness would render the speaking of Catalan unacceptable. Importantly, Juan's only utterance in Catalan occurs when he is savagely pummeling Gloria during a psychotic episode (43). The speaking of the language, therefore, cannot be said to constitute a rational choice, and somewhat contradicts Fenny Ebel's contention that Laforet restores Catalan to its prewar status as an official language during the Second Republic by referring to it as 'un idioma.'⁵⁴ Gloria's sister's insolent assertion of Catalan does, however, contain an explicit social egalitarianism as it reinstates the Spanish Second Republic's vision of a classless society and the dignification of the proletariat. Gloria also barter with traders in Catalan when she attempts to sell the family's symbols of artistic or supposed artistic accomplishment (88), an expropriation that harkens back to the proletariat's jeopardisation of class schisms during the Civil War. The conducting of the sale in

Catalan symbolizes a linguistic reclamation of her own class position and femininity: while constantly excoriated in Spanish for her numerous defects, she partially enacts her revenge in her native language, Catalan.

Her skill at gambling gives the lie to Gloria's devalued position within the family, and symbolizes her refusal to allow their petty mentality to define her. Nevertheless, Laforet's depiction of female economic sustenance does not confer Gloria with as much agency as originally perceived, ambiguated as it is by the location of Gloria's employment and the residence of her family in what was one of the most notorious locales of Barcelona, *el barrio chino*, whose unsavoury reputation is underscored by Angustias: 'Hija mía, hay unas calles en las que si una señorita se metiera alguna vez, perdería para siempre su reputación. Me refiero al barrio chino' (15).⁵⁵ Aurora Gómez Morcillo contends that its proximity to the harbor, and its ample entertainment venues, converted *el barrio chino* into one of the most dangerous zones in Barcelona, a borough where prostitution flourished. For Laforet, *el barrio chino* was a prohibited place, and she only dared to venture there to accompany her Polish friend, Linka Babecka's brother, and to hide some Polish refugees in transit to Britain.⁵⁶ In *Nada*, its inhabitants are dubious characters, living on the margins of society; compounding her illegal status as a provisioner of illegal alcoholic spirits, it is inferred that Gloria's sister is a procuress (85). Gloria's brother-in-law, Tonet's regret at the loss of Gloria's potential earnings as a prostitute or mistress, is euphemistically invoked in the issuing of a disdainful rebuke to Juan: 'con el cuerpo que tiene podría ponerte buenos cuernos y sin pasar tantos sustos como pasa la *pobreta* para poder venir a jugar a las cartas' (63). This comment both signals the family's resigned acceptance of prostitution as an acceptable economic activity and their recognition of the self-abnegation inherent in female gambling. Ostensibly, this indicates Laforet's sympathy

with the postwar working class, who ‘were forced into a clandestine existence, pushed beyond the realms of potential survival if one observed all the rules of the new regime, which explained the rise of the *estraperlo*, (the black market) and prostitution.’⁵⁷

However, the carnivalesque atmosphere of *el barrio chino*, invoked by masks, grotesque bodies and an unrestrained libidinal energy, underscores the exceptionality of female employment, and contradicts any theory of a sensibility to working class impoverishment on Laforet’s part. The sensory deluge experienced by Andrea in her foray into this forbidden locale welds together the carnivalesque with Bakhtin’s figuring of the grotesque:

Me di cuenta de que esto era el principio del barrio chino. «El brillo del diablo», de que me había hablado Angustias, aparecía empobrecido y chillón, en una gran abundancia de carteles con retratos de bailarinas y bailadores. Parecían las puertas de los cabarets con atracciones, barracas de feria. La música aturdí en oleadas agrias, saliendo de todas partes, mezclándose y desarmonizando. Pasando deprisa entre una ola humana que a veces me desesperaba porque me impedía ver a Juan, me llegó el recuerdo vivísimo de un carnaval que había visto cuando pequeña. La gente, en verdad, era grotesca: un hombre pasó a mi lado con los ojos cargados de rimel bajo un sombrero ancho. Sus mejillas estaban sonrosadas. Todo el mundo me parecía disfrazado con mal gusto y me rozaba el ruido y el olor a vino. (85)

Mikhail Bakhtin theorized the carnivalesque as a singular and self-enclosed locale in which normative social, class and sexual mores are suspended in what he termed ‘the law of freedom.’⁵⁸ He states: ‘[...] one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions.’⁵⁹ He adds: ‘Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed.’⁶⁰ The carnival space was populated by grotesque bodies, uninhibited by social strictures, who engaged in the most degraded and rudimentary forms of human activity, such as sex and gluttony, and revelled in reinvigorating eschatological functions that merged the social and the corporeal. The

carnival constitutes a space voided of class distinctions and gender differentiation, and this state of abeyance permits transgressive occurrences and a previously inconceivable equalization of people previously divided by social class and gender. Crucially, the *barrio chino* marks a hiatus in Gloria and Juan's matrimonial strife, as it is only in this socially aberrant milieu that Juan can express gratitude for Gloria's economic contribution: '¿Verdad que tú has sido testigo, Andrea, de que él mismo comprendió que yo era la única que hacía algo para que no nos muriéramos de hambre aquella noche en que me encontró jugando? ¿No me dio la razón delante de ti, no me besaba llorando?' (86). The peripherality of *el barrio chino* obscures gendered demarcations, a blurring that exposes the social overdetermination of attitudes to female employment which trap Gloria in a perpetual cycle of social ostracism and victimisation. Despite this brief interlude of matrimonial harmony, Gloria's undertaking of capitalistic transactions in a socially repudiated space qualifies the merits of postwar working women. The social unacceptability of female work is further emphasized by a corpulent casinogoer's attempted attacking of Gloria, which is truncated by Juan's unexpected arrival (86). Thus, Gloria's attempt to establish her worth beyond the classed and geographic position of the self-enclosed world of the house in calle Aribau proves to be regressive and confirms the non-agentic, pejorative envisioning of working women during this period. The potential infliction of harm onto the productive female body, and the marital discord generated by female employment, act as disincentives to women's entry into the workplace, and cannot be interpreted as a rallying cry to Spanish female readers of *Nada*, to contravene postwar legislation on female employment.

Throughout the text, Gloria indulges in copious self-praise about her body and her appearance: 'Y bonita ¿Verdad que soy bonita?' (190); 'Es que yo tengo un cuerpo muy bonito' (24). Critics have attributed this boastfulness to her intellectual

underdevelopment and inherent frivolity⁶¹, while Andrea herself interprets it as symptomatic of ‘una vanidad tonta e ingenua’(12). However, in my opinion, her obsession with her appearance originates in her ‘feminine masquerade’, a coquettish performance of femininity designed to defuse the masculine insecurity caused by her exuberant sexuality and her earning power. In her article, ‘Womanliness as Masquerade’, Joan Riviere discusses women who ‘display strong features of the other sex’, those she terms ‘intellectual women’ engaged in both the private (familial) and professional spheres of life.⁶² Riviere’s article is concerned with a variation of anxiety that afflicts the ‘intellectual woman’ that emerges in relation to her active (masculine) professional life, a malaise provoked by ‘the reprisals the woman anticipates from her father-figures after her intellectual performance’, or, in other words, after her display of characteristics perceived to be beyond the scope of prescribed passive femininity. According to Riviere, the female subject appeases this anxiety and avoids the threat of patriarchal reprisals by an accentuated performance of femininity, in effect, femininity as masquerade. She stresses the successful functioning of these women within their private lives in which they adhere to a clichéd expectation of feminine perfection. She states: ‘they have no lack of feminine interests, e.g. in their personal appearance, and when called upon they can still find time to play the part of devoted and disinterested mother substitutes among a wide circle of relatives and friends.’⁶³ The woman will also exhibit a fierce rivalry with ‘any other woman with intellectual pretensions or good looks.’⁶⁴ Expanding on the construct of the feminine masquerade, Van Lenning, Maas and Leeks observe that the adoption of the mask of womanliness reconstructs femininity as a charade, ‘femininity as a style, an artificial appearance.’⁶⁵ This performance involves woman’s playing out of her sex in order to hide the possession of an inherent buried masculinity or to conceal an enigmatic feminine essence, both of which present

themselves as threats to dominant masculinity within patriarchy. The woman ‘paints, shaves, plucks, dyes, diets, exercises her body’ utilizing these techniques as a means of masking over her secret, the threat her sexuality provokes.⁶⁶ Elisabeth Grosz concurs, suggesting that women’s artifice and pretence attains her position as ‘the object of the other’s desire.’⁶⁷ In her estimation, women’s reliance on makeup and excessive sexuality dissimulates their menacing of masculine supremacy.

Riviere’s theorisation enlightens Gloria’s contradictory constellation of odd behaviour and the coexistence of fortitude and subservience that defines her. Her overpowering and contrived femininity succeeds in making her an object of desire for Román again, who tries to seduce her while reminiscing about their romance in Barcelona (73). Her maternal qualities are undeniable, for she sells paintings to provide for the child (87), is solicitous toward Andrea and distressed by her fever (17); she also counts self-beautification as one of her favourite pastimes (83). Ena and Román’s burgeoning romance intensifies her resentment of the younger and more refined Ena, whom she attempts to discredit by alleging that Román has taken her virginity. However, it is her plaintive reiteration of her beauty following Juan’s attacks that confirms her deliberate utilization of the feminine masquerade as a type of defense mechanism, employed to ward off masculine vengeance for her contravention of established gender norms. The following comment confirms the connection between her attractiveness and the undeservedness of Juan’s vicious physical attacks: ‘¿Verdad que tú en mi caso no te dejarías pegar? Y yo que soy tan joven, chica... Román me dijo un día que yo era una de las mujeres más lindas que había visto’ (43). Describing her brother-in-law, Gloria says with perfect confidence: ‘conozco a Román perfectamente... [...] Román ha querido ser mi amante después de haber estado yo casada con Juan... Ya ves, ¿qué se puede esperar de un hombre así?’ (88). This fallacious logic is premised on

the patently machista valuation of women on their beauty, and the obverse ‘punishment’ for failing to measure up to patriarchal standards. Her anxious validation of her fading beauty coheres to a vain attempt to thwart Juan’s aggressiveness, and to assuage his jealousy at her usurpation of his economic position.

The desperation of Gloria’s masquerade is apparent in its illusory nature, for in reality, she is undergoing a gradual process of uglification, caused by the family’s impoverishment, paltry diet, and her subjection to physical abuse: ‘Gloria se estaba poniendo más fea. La cara se le había consumido aquel mes de mayo y sus ojillos aparecían hundidos’ (120). Andrea refers several times to Gloria’s dishevelled and unhygienic state (87). The narrative emphasis on her physical deterioration lends itself to a triad of mutually exclusive explanations; if viewed through the lens of contemporaneous gender ideology that insisted upon the equivalency of personal and household cleanliness with moral irreproachability, her sloppiness confirms the idea of moral laxity. A recourse to Bakhtin’s earlier-discussed theory of the grotesque reinforces the impression of a female body functioning at the lowest levels of human existence, in which bodily presentation has eschewed social regulation and languishes contentedly in a state of debasement. At the end of the novel, Gloria’s unquenchable thirst, caused by her fever, transmits the idea of a body that has been subsumed by its own corporeality (97). Contrastingly, if our point of departure is a subscription to the writer’s feminism, we can extrapolate a sincere conveyance of the devastating corporeal and psychological consequences of domestic violence and social ostracism for the individual woman, which attributes Gloria’s physical decay to the family’s invalidation of her personhood, and Juan’s cruelty. The skillful exposition of the causation underlying domestic violence, which I previously examined, leads me to incline toward

the latter explanation which can be regarded as the final phase of consequence in the well-conceived cycle of domestic violence elaborated by Laforet.

Even more groundbreaking than Laforet's portrayal of domestic violence is her chronicling of Gloria's courageous plot to incarcerate Juan in a mental asylum. As much as Juan and his family animalise Gloria, she retaliates by attempting to medicalize and spatially institutionalize Juan. To her credit and far before domestic violence became a talking point in Spain, Laforet advocates the punishment of males for domestic violence by representing Juan as a disruptive element who should be medicalized and neutralized. Clearly, the author understood that abusive behaviour was unlawful and intolerable in the praxis of everyday society, and that it required psychiatric intervention in order to prevent recidivism. This perspective concords with her interest in social and gender issues, and the reformatory impulse borne of her period as a student of law at the University of Barcelona. In her interview with Geraldine Nichols, she averred: 'he tenido ganas de cambiar algún asunto que está mal y que puede dar lugar a injusticias.'⁶⁸ The nostrum of sectioning is ironic considering the previously discussed legalized restriction of women to the home and Gloria's dubious social provenance. Suspected of being a prostitute, and worse still, a Republican orphan, bereft of paternal protection, it is Gloria who could actually be sent to 'un establecimiento penitenciario especial, destinado exclusivamente al internamiento y reforma de las mujeres reincidentes en infracciones relacionadas con la prostitución.'⁶⁹ These policies were substantiated by the research of the Francoist psychiatrist, Antonio Vallejo Nágera, who held that Republican women's illogicality, concupiscence, and propensity to irrationality made them more susceptible to violent actions, and hence, in need of institutional confinement.⁷⁰

The female orchestrated sectioning motif also demonstrates the writer's playfulness and inventiveness in regard to one of her principal inspirations, the nineteenth century classic, *Jane Eyre*, a novel that fictionalized the incarceration of his insane wife, Bertha Mason. In this novel, these nineteenth century connotations of madness are rescripted as gender indeterminate, associated with both Angustias's lover, Don Jerónimo Sanz's wife, who is quarantined in an asylum, and Juan. The dissolving of the implacable frontier between female irrationality/male logic, female constriction/male autonomy underscores the depravity of a society bent on enforcing retrograde gender norms. Laforet's subversion of a patriarchal form of punishment deconstructs and liberates women from this exclusive bind, and even disputes the notion of madness as a female affliction. We can surmise that the newly enriched Don Jerónimo sequestered his wife so as to conduct his affair with Angustias without hindrance, and concealed his deceitfulness by fashioning her as the mad wife, in urgent need of confinement. In contrast, Juan does present many of the symptoms of mental illness, which makes madness a masculine preserve in the novel. This realignment of madness with masculinity and the articulation of the taboo subject of male neurosis crystallises Laforet's advanced understanding of the wartime and postwar distortion of masculinity. More specifically, it represents a radical break with fundamentally feminized understanding of madness, as it subtly brings into relief the interconnection between men's inability to attain a prescribed sense of masculinity, irrational, socially induced, male fears regarding increased female economic independence, and the instigation of madness. It encodes a defiant challenge to a male dominance held to be infallible and homogenizing, as if the plot comes to fruition, Juan, like Gloria, will occupy a peripheral and socially derided space. However, the divergent purposes of the spaces, the obtainment of financial wherewithal in *el barrio chino* and rehabilitation and

containment in the asylum, means that their inhabitation of these spaces is not tantamount to social equalization with Gloria destined to emerge as the superior, economically valuable force. The novel ends with Gloria confiding her fear that Juan will murder her, an incongruously conventional ending that seems designed to placate readers who might have been shocked by the atypical feminine opinions and activities aired earlier in the novel.

The conflation of domestic violence and female employment provided a platform for Laforet to contrast postwar feminine and masculine archetypes, an inversion grafted onto trauma, urban space, the repression of Catalan, and class divisions. Gloria and Juan are structured in wayward developmental trajectories. Their gendered subjectivities are embedded in non-teleological narratives, which destabilize taxonomic binaries, and substitute them with reversed patterns of gendered and economic metamorphoses. Put differently, the man is feminized and realigned with madness, while the woman assumes the breadwinner role, albeit not unproblematically. Laforet's representation of Gloria undermines traditionalist gender ideologies that aspired to exclude women from the economic realm, and to impede their attainment of autonomy. Domestic violence reveals the fissures of postwar masculine identity, bringing to the fore the interconnection between economic hardship, war, and masculine trauma, while Gloria's asylum plot confutes the social idealisation of masculine rationality.

Although the depiction of a working class Republican woman's economic contribution was undeniably iconoclastic in the postwar period, Laforet's commitment to the imagining of a self-determining femininity must not be overestimated.⁷¹ The character of Gloria is patently infused with a knowledge of readers' expectations and biases that explain the book's instant success, but detract from the innovativeness of her

envisioning of the working woman. The narrative vacillation between advocacy of women's employment and the debasement of Gloria exposes the well-nigh irresolvable conundrum of a postwar female novelist aiming to attain resonance with conservative readers, to disrupt conventional gender expectations, and to highlight the plight of postwar male suffering. While Gloria serves to subvert postwar patriarchal constructions of gender, Laforet detracts from this critique by her adherence to the bourgeois conceptualization of distinction, which eclipses Gloria's industriousness. Nevertheless, her inscription of male economic redundancy into the home and the obverse reinscription of female risk-taking, skill, and commercial gain, into a marginal space in the public sphere, denaturalizes, to an admittedly limited extent, gendered preconceptions of both spaces. Ultimately, Laforet renegotiates and transgresses the accepted archetypes of femininity and masculinity, while appeasing the majority of her presumably conservative readers, a balancing act that results in the deprivileging of masculinity, but not in the correlative exaltation of covert female employment.

NOTES

¹ See Shelley Godsland, 'Writing the Male Abuser in Cultural Responses to Domestic Violence in Spain', *Hispania*, 95.1 (2012), 53-64; Duncan Wheeler, 'The Representation of Domestic Violence in Spanish Cinema', *Modern Language Review*, 107.2 (2012), 438-500.

² Celia Lamar Morris, 'Carmen Laforet's *Nada* as an Expression of Woman's Self-Determination', *Letras Femeninas* (1975), 40-47, (p.43). **Patricia L. Swier, 'Reimagining Gendered Identities in Laforet's *Nada* and Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*', in *Dictatorships in the Hispanic World: Transatlantic and Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Patricia L. Swier and Julia Riordan Gonclaves, (Maryland: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 2013), pp. 161-185 (p. 163).**

³ Sally Perret, 'A Nothing That Does Things: Hunger as Affect in **Laforet's *Nada***', *Hispanic Research Journal*, 13.4 (2012), 334-346 (p. 338). In the same article, Perret glosses over Gloria's gambling and selling of items, reducing these activities to 'the seeking of alternative options to the family's desperate situation' (p.340).

⁴ Barry Jordan, *Laforet: Nada* (London: Grant & Cutler. 1993), p. 88.

⁵ Carolyn L. Galerstein, 'Carmen Laforet and the Spanish Spinster', *Revista de estudios hispánicos*, 11.2 (1977), 109-120 (p.109).

⁶ Santos Sanz Villanueva, *Historia de la novela social española:(1942-1975)* (Madrid: Editorial Alhambra, 1980), p. 121.

⁷ Irene Mizrahi, 'Trauma and Catholicism in Carmen Laforet's Work', *Hispanic Research Journal*, 12.3 (2011), 232-243 (p. 240).

⁸ **Mark P. Del Mastro, 'Cheating Fate: Female Adolescent Development and the Social Web in Laforet's *Nada*', *Hispanic Journal*, 18:1 (1997) (p.55)**

⁹ Norman Mailer, *Cannibals and Christians* (Simon and Schuster: New York, 1970), p. 63.

¹⁰ Christopher Perriam et al, *A New History of Spanish Writing, 1939 to the 1990s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 46.

¹¹ Julia Hudson-Richards, 'Women Want to Work: Shifting Ideologies of Women's Work in Franco's Spain, 1939–1962', *Journal of Women's History*, 27.2 (2015), 87-109 (p. 88).

¹² María Ángeles García Moraga, 'Notas sobre la situación jurídica de la mujer en el franquismo', *Feminismo/s: Revista del Centro de Estudios sobre la Mujer de la Universidad de Alicante*, 12 (2008), 229-252 (p. 241).

¹³ García Moraga, 'Notas sobre la situación jurídica de la mujer en el franquismo', p. 237.

¹⁴ Olga Salido and Luis Moreno, 'Female Employment and Welfare Development in Spain', in *Trajectories of Female Employment in the Mediterranean*, ed. by Ayse Bugra and Yalcin Ozkal, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2012) pp.16-38 (p. 17).

¹⁵ **Robina Mohammad, 'The Cinderella Complex–Narrating Spanish Women's History: The Home and Visions of Equality: Developing New Margins', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30.2 (2005), 248-261 (p. 252).**

¹⁶ Pilar Folguera Crespo, 'El Franquismo: El retorno a la esfera privada (1939-1975),' in *Historias de las mujeres en España*, ed. by Elisa Garrido (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 1997), pp.520-544 (p. 528).

¹⁷ Hudson-Richards, 'Women want to Work: Shifting Ideologies of Women's Work in Franco's Spain, 1939–1962' (p. 88).

¹⁸ **Jessica Davidson, 'Women, Fascism and Work in Francoist Spain: The Law for Political, Professional and Labour Rights', *Gender and History*, 23.2 (2011), 401-414 (p. 412).**

¹⁹ Mohammad, 'The Cinderella Complex–Narrating Spanish Women's History, The Home and Visions of Equality', p. 213. Gerardo Miel has averred that the dote and *premios de la natalidad* derived from the Franco Regime's recognition of the paucity of substantial salaries for males in this period, which could drive the married woman to work. Therefore, they were conceived as a complement to the meagre male salary, which would ensure women's restriction to the home. Gerardo Meil, 'The Evolution of Family Policy in Spain', *Marriage and Family Review*, 39.3-4 (2006), 359-380 (p.365).

²⁰ Davidson, 'Women, Fascism and Work in Francoist Spain', p. 254.

²¹ Lorraine Ryan, 'The Nullification of Domestic Space in Alberto Méndez's *Los girasoles ciegos*', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, May 2014, Online First Edition, 1-26, (p.15).

²² **Nino Kebabze, 'The Right to be Selfless and Other Prerogatives of the Weak in the Rhetoric of Sección Femenina', *Romance Quarterly*, 55.2 (2008), 109-127 (p. 113).**

²³ Kebabze, 'The Right to be Selfless and other Prerogatives of the Weak in the Rhetoric of Sección Femenina', p. 114.

²⁴ Jessamy Harvey, 'Domestic Queens and Warrior Wives: Imperial Role-Models for Spanish Schoolgirls during the Early Francoist Regime (1940s–50s)', *History of Education*, 37.2 (2008), 277-293 (p. 282).

²⁵ Harvey, 'Domestic Queens and Warrior Wives', p.283.

²⁶ **Michael Kaufman, 'The Construction of Masculinity and the Triad of Men's Violence.' in *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power, and Change*, ed. by Michael Kaufman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) pp. 1-29 (p. 13).**

²⁷ Kaufman, 'The Construction of Masculinity and the Triad of Men's Violence', p. 16.

²⁸ Kaufman, 'The Construction of Masculinity and the Triad of Men's Violence', p. 18.

²⁹ Faith Robertson Elliot, *Gender, Family and Society* (London: Macmillan Press. 1996), p.167-168.

³⁰ In the early years of the Transition, both wives and victims alike were shocked to learn that domestic abuse was not simply another conjugal right. Mónica Threlfall, 'Feminist Politics and Social Change in Spain', in *Mapping the Women's Movement: Feminist Politics and Social Transformation in the North*, ed. by Monica Threlfall (London: Verso, 1995), pp 115-152 (p.133).

³¹ García Moraga, 'Notas sobre la situación jurídica de la mujer en el franquismo', p. 240.

³² **The following sermon exemplifies this support: 'Ya lo sabes: cuando se enfade, callarás; cuando grite, bajarás la cabeza sin replicar; cuando exija, cederás, a no ser que tu conciencia cristiana te lo impida. En este caso no cederás, pero tampoco te opondrás directamente: esquivarás el golpe, te harás a un lado y dejarás que pase el tiempo. Soportar, ésa es la fórmula. Amar es soportar.'**
Rafael Abella, *La vida cotidiana en España bajo el régimen de Franco* (Madrid: Temas de hoy, 1996), p.106.

³³ García Moraga, 'Notas sobre la situación jurídica de la mujer en el franquismo', p. 241.

³⁴ García Moraga, 'Notas sobre la situación jurídica de la mujer en el franquismo', p. 242.

³⁵ All references to *Nada* will be in-text and taken from the following edition. Carmen Laforet. *Nada*. (Barcelona: Editorial Bibliotex. 2001). Prologue by Rosa Montero.

³⁶ Rachel Yehuda, 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder', *New England Journal of Medicine*, 346.2 (2002): 108-114, (p. 112).

- ³⁷ Juan's comeuppance is delivered by Gloria's sister who denigrates him as 'un señor con ínfulas de la calle de Aribau' (136), and by the family's aunts' description of him as 'ese desgraciado Juan, sin saber hacer nada de provecho, muerto de hambre' (214).
- ³⁸ Joseph H. Pleck, *The Myth of Masculinity* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1981), p. 51.
- ³⁹ See Sharon R. Bird, 'Welcome to the Men's Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity', *Gender and Society*, 10.2 (1996), 120-132.
- ⁴⁰ Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America* (New York: Free Press, 1995), p. 227.
- ⁴¹ **Janet Pérez, 'Portraits of the Femme Seule by Laforet, Matute, Soriano, Martín Gaité, Galvarriato, Quiroga and Medio', in *Feminine Concerns in Contemporary Spanish Fiction by Women*, ed by Roberto C. Manteiga, Carolyn Galerstein and Kathleen McNerney (Potomac: Scripta Humanística, 1988), pp. 54-77 (p. 56).**
- ⁴² Geraldine C. Nichols, *Escribir espacio propio: Laforet, Matute, Moix, Tusquets, Riera y Roig por sí mismas* (Minneapolis: Institute for the Study of Ideologies and Literature, 1989), p.137.
- ⁴³ Michael Ugarte, 'The Literature of Franco's Spain, 1939-1975', in *Cambridge History of Spanish Literature*, ed. by David T. Gies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 609-619, p. 612.
- ⁴⁴ **García Moraga, 'Notas sobre la situación jurídica de la mujer en el franquismo', p. 241.**
- ⁴⁵ Keadze, 'The Right to be Selfless and Other Prerogatives of the Weak', p. 114.
- ⁴⁶ **'Era una mata de cabello espeso, de un rojo intenso, llameante; un rojo que podía quemar, si se tocase.' Ana María Matute, *Primera memoria* (Destino: Barcelona, 200), p.25. This physical feature is also present in Dulce Chacón's *La voz dormida*, as Elvira, the female guerrillera, is a redhead: 'La melena roja de Elvira ha dejado de ser de Elvira.' Dulce Chacón, *La voz dormida* (Destino: Barcelona, 2002), p. 164.**
- ⁴⁷ Aurora G. Morcillo, 'Walls of Flesh. Spanish Postwar Reconstruction and Public Morality', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 84.6 (2007), 737-758, p. 742.
- ⁴⁸ The culture of evasion refers to the Franco Regime's encouragement of low-brow cultural engagement, which was designed to distract from the hardship of life during the early postwar period, commonly known as 'los años del hambre'.
- ⁴⁹ Andrew A. Anderson, 'Andrea's Baggage: Reading (in) Laforet's *Nada*', *Romance Quarterly*, 57.1 (2009), 16-27 (p. 19).
- ⁵⁰ Keadze, 'The Right to be Selfless and Other Prerogatives of the Weak', p. 114.
- ⁵¹ 'La venta fue más lucrativa que las que hacía de costumbre y mis narices notaron pronto que ella se permitía aquel día el lujo de poner carne en la comida' (101).
- ⁵² Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique on the Judgement of Class* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 480-481.
- ⁵³ Jordi Cornellà-Detrell, *Literature as a Response to Cultural and Political Repression in Franco's Catalonia*, (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2011), p. 34.
- ⁵⁴ **Fenny Ebels, 'Reading the Frame: Signalling Politics in *Nada*', *Neophilologus*, 93.4 (2009), 619-632 (p. 624).**
- ⁵⁵ Interestingly, *el barrio chino* evokes decadence and eroticism in Almudena Grandes's 1989 novel, *Las Edades de Lulú*; the teenage protagonist, Lulú, describes Madrid as boring and provincial, lacking even 'un barrio chino'. Almudena Grandes, *Las Edades de Lulú* (Barcelona, Tusquets, 1989, p.54).
- ⁵⁶ Nichols, *Escribir espacio propio: Laforet, Matute, Moix, Tusquets, Riera y Roig por sí mismas*, p.133.
- ⁵⁷ **Clive Beadman, "'Cimentada en el sillar firmísimo de la familia cristiana and viudas de medio pelo": Illicit prostitution in 1940s Spain', *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 13:1 (2000), 157-166 (p. 159).**
- ⁵⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965), p. 10.
- ⁵⁹ Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, p. 10.
- ⁶⁰ Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, p. 10.
- ⁶¹ Mark P. del Maestro, 'Deception through Narrative Structure and Female Adolescent Development in Laforet's *Nada* and *La isla y los demonios*', *Confluencia*, 20:1 (2004), 45-53 (p.48).
- ⁶² Joan Riviere, 'Womanliness as Masquerade', in *Psychoanalysis and Female Sexuality*, ed. by Hendrik Ruitenbeek (New Haven: College and University Press, 1966), pp. 201-20 (p. 205).
- ⁶³ Riviere, 'Womanliness as Masquerade', p. 211.
- ⁶⁴ Riviere, 'Womanliness as Masquerade', p. 217.
- ⁶⁵ **Akeline Van Lenning, Saskia Maas and Wendy Leeks, 'Is Womanliness Nothing but a Masquerade?; An Analysis of the Crying Game', in *Masquerade and Identities: Essays on Gender, Sexuality and Marginality*, ed. by Efrat Tseelon (London, Routledge, 2000), pp. 83-101 (p.92)**
- ⁶⁶ Mary Ann Doane, 'Masquerade Reconsidered: Further Thoughts on The Female Spectator', *Discourse*, (1988), 11:2, 42-54 (p. 48).

⁶⁷ Elizabeth Grosz, *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 133.

⁶⁸ Nichols, *Escribir espacio propio: Laforet, Matute, Moix, Tusquets, Riera y Roig por sí mismas*, p. 137.

In the same interview, Laforet mentions her revulsion at the treatment of Republican women in the postwar period, whose children were classified as illegitimate by the Francoist state's laws.

⁶⁹ Jean Louise Guereña, 'Prostitución y franquismo: vaivenes de una política sexual', in *Mujeres bajo sospecha: memoria y sexualidad: 1930-1980*, ed. by Raquel Osborne (Madrid: Verdugo, 2008), pp. 143-164 (p. 147).

⁷⁰ Antonio Vallejo Nágera, and Eduardo M. Martínez, 'Psiquismo del fanatismo marxista III: Investigaciones psicológicas en marxistas femeninas delincuentes', *Semana médica española: revista técnica y profesional de ciencias médicas* 25 (1939), 194-200 (p. 197).