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UNDERSTANDING HOW WOMEN NAVIGATED THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY DURING
THE SECOND REPUBLIC AND TRANSITION-ERA SPAIN THROUGH FEMINIST
LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how women navigated the fight for equality during the Second Republic and Transition-era Spain through the lens of feminist literature. Specifically, comparing and analyzing two books, *Doble esplendor* by Constanca de la Mora (1939) and *Crónica del desamor* by Rosa Montero (1979). Both books feature women in their thirties who work and explore themes of marriage and romantic love, friendship as a space of freedom, motherhood, working women, and politics against the backdrop of the ever-changing sociopolitical situation in Spain. Through close analysis of these works, the author examines how these women navigate gender roles and societal expectations, as well as the impact of political and cultural changes on their lives. Ultimately, this paper sheds light on the experiences of women during a tumultuous period in Spanish history and highlights the importance of feminist literature in understanding their struggles for equality and autonomy.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH QUESTION, AND HYPOTHESIS

Introduction

Women's rights were immensely expanded during the Second Republic (1931-1939). Starting in 1931, women were eligible to run for elections and they also obtained the right to vote in the last two elections held in 1933 and 1936. Additionally, they gained access to higher education and were granted maternity leave. Divorce, civil marriages, contraception, and even abortion under specific circumstances were legalized. (Brenan). With Francisco Franco, the leader of the fascist Nationalists, being the victor of the civil war, women lost the rights they had gained eight years prior (Gil Pecharromán). Franco's Regime ended thirty-six years later, and Spain returned to operating as a democracy, but Transition-era Spain was full of uncertainty. In the Transition period beginning in 1975, the government implemented Article 14 of the 1978 Constitution, which declared equality for all Spanish citizens. That same year, prohibition on contraceptives was lifted and divorce was legalized in 1981. However, the abortion law was not legalized until 1985, after the end of the Transition period ended. The law had stringent requirements, including therapeutic, criminal, and eugenic justifications (Tusell). Through this background information and the following two chapters readers will gain a deeper understanding of the social and political backdrop that influenced the writing of the feminist literature analyzed in this thesis, *Doble esplendor* and *Crónica del desamor*.

I chose to compare literature from these eras because both the Second Republic and Transition-era Spain were times when the country went through many legislative and societal transformations that impacted its citizens, specifically women. I believe there are inherent similarities, despite differing circumstances, in how women reacted to but engaged in

the fight for equality in the 1930s and the late 1970s. It is important to analyze the similarities among the texts because it shows the progression of the actions women took to secure their equality. In order to drive this comparison on how women navigated the struggle towards equality during the Second Republic and Transition-era Spain, I am going to analyze *Doble esplendor* by Constanca de la Mora (1939) and *Crónica del desamor* by Rosa Montero (1979). These books have many similarities such as working mothers, romantic relationships and marriage, friendship as a space of freedom, and the ever-changing political situation in Spain. These two works in particular are key to understanding women's treatment in differing time periods because they share personal stories of trailblazing Spanish women and discuss topics concerning women's fight for equality.

It is essential while analyzing literature from these two eras alongside historical documents and data. While Journal articles and textbooks give concrete information to their readers, literature uses individual stories to juxtapose these accounts with personal experiences of historical events. Hayden White, a historian in the tradition of literary criticism, wrote, "...history was less an end in itself than a preparation for a more perfect understanding and acceptance of the individual's responsibility in the fashioning of the common humanity of the future." (126) These two books present the individual's experience of a certain time period. How they lived through history and overcame its obstacles. White also described history as a story, but history does not often give the individual story. History requires literature because dates and large-scale events are so far removed from individuals; therefore, literature completes history. Although, it is important to state that this thesis will not take literature as history. In order to

examine how women navigated the fight for equality, I am going to study and analyze the portrayal of two figures in two works of literature.

Research Question

In what ways did women in Spain confront the struggle for sociopolitical equality before and after Franco's dictatorship? What were the similarities and distinctions between these periods, and how can literature from these eras aid in uncovering an answer?

Hypothesis

There are similarities in the way women navigated the fight for equality during the Second Republic and the Transition period due to both periods having progressive laws, changing family dynamics, modernization of Spain, new cultural norms, and women breaking away from traditional roles. After analyzing and comparing texts from each period the similarities will be more clear and provide a more definite answer based on the experiences of Spanish women.

CHAPTER 2: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC AND WOMEN'S SITUATION

Introduction

After the deposition of King Alfonso XIII and the collapse of General Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, the Republic rose to power on April 14th, 1931, ruling from 1931-1939. Throughout the dictatorship, the power and influence Spain's aristocracy maintained over members of the lower and middle classes called for a revolution. Due to overwhelming Republican support in Spain's major cities, the Pact of San Sebastián agreeing to overthrow the monarchy, and the army and monarchy no longer supporting Primo de Rivera, Spain's Second Republic was in full effect (Casanova).

Presidents and New Legislation

The first president of Spain's new government was Niceto Alcalá-Zamora (1931-1936) who used to support the monarchy but converted to republicanism. Following Zamora was the interim president Diego Martínez Barrio (July 1936-September 1936), and lastly Manuel Azaña (1936-1939). During Zamora's presidency, the government drafted a new constitution in June 1931 and enforced it in December later that year. This constitution granted the freedoms of speech and association and took away any special legal status the Spanish nobility was offered in the past; it was amended to include legalized divorce (1932), women's suffrage (1933), and access to abortion (1936). The new constitution granted autonomy to states of Catalonia (1932) and the Basque Country (1936). In addition to these new rights, the government distanced itself from the Roman Catholic Church by enforcing strict controls on Church property and forbidding

religious orders from educators (Payne). Throughout the Second Spanish Republic, there were uprisings, assassinations, and general unrest.

Political and Social Unrest During the Second Republic

In October 1931 Left Republicans and Socialists controlled the government, opposed by the Catholic Right, Navarrese Carlists, and Alejandro Lerroux's¹ Radicals. Due to the overwhelming unemployment and clashing between the National Confederation of Labor (CNT) and the General Union Workers (UGT), there were frequent violent strikes motivated by an anarchist group, the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI). In 1934, the October Revolution marked the division of the Second Republic; the socialists revolted against the government, in turn threatened a "Red" rebellion in the minds of right-wing politicians. The division sparked the union of Left Republicans and Socialists to create the Popular Front (Frente Popular) against fascism (Ruiz). There was a violent campaign after President Zamora dissolved parliament and declared there would be new elections in February 1936. The Popular Front won by a slim margin, which only divided the country more. The Socialists put more stress on the government to enact stronger social governance, and agricultural workers staged land seizures in the west and south of Spain. On the opposite end of the spectrum, there was an ever-present fear of fascism from the right. The fascist party, formed by José Antonio Primo de Rivera in 1933, continued to gain members and led to a rise in political violence in the streets following the election. Throughout this chaos, conservative politicians supported the right-wing National Front - consequently advocating for the military to save the country from Marxism. In the summer of 1936, three generals Francisco Franco, Emilio Mola, and Manuel Goded backed a conspiracy to

¹ Alejandro Lerroux García was a politician and the leader of the Radical Republican Party and served as Prime Minister of Spain three separate times between 1933-1935 (Guerra Gómez).

stage a coup d'état. José Calvo Sotelo's (leader of the extreme right) murder was the final tipping point for the right-wing conservatives who had the support of the army (Carr). All through the political and social unrest, women's situation was ever-changing yet stagnant in certain aspects. The two opposing sides, the left Republicans and the right-wing Nacionales, had different ideals to uphold. The Republicans were supportive of gender equality because they wanted to step away from the Old Regime, while the extremely conservative Nationalists did not support feminist ideologies during the Second Republic (Ripa 111).

Improvement of Women's Situation Presented by Data

In 1931 Spain's population sat at about 23,510,000 people and by 1939 it rose to about 25,517,000 people (Instituto Nacional de Estadística). The fertility rate declined from 3.68 in 1930 to 3.58 in 1931. By 1939 the rate lowered to 2.12, which had been rapidly decreasing since 1933 when the rate was 3.59 (UN DESA). In 1930 from ages 15 to 100+ there was at least 7% more women who had no education compared to men, with the largest difference being between the ages of 45 and 49 with 20% more women with no education. The percentage of Spain's male and female population 25 years or older with no education in 1930 shows how men's education was held at a greater value than a woman's education due to the gap between the two genders. By 1935, the gap between uneducated men and women was closing, but women still had at least 10% higher levels of illiteracy, for the exception of the 15-19 age group (EDU20C.org). Before the Second Spanish Republic, only about 9% of women were employed (1930), but during the second republic, the percent had steadily risen. Still, many women exclusively worked in their household. Even though more women were working, in most industries they were getting paid half of what their male counterparts were making. While also earning less, women did not get unemployment benefits unless they joined the Mercantile Society (Cobo).

Once divorce was legalized in 1932, there were 7,059 petitions filed and 4,043 that were granted. Before 1932, divorce did not exist in Spain. Before 1939 when divorce was prohibited by Franco's dictatorship, there was a steady increase in divorce petitions, but not every divorce was granted (Rhodes).

The data above supports the fact that women's situation improved with regard to their right to vote, lower illiteracy rates, presence in the workforce, and the legalization of divorce and abortion. The rate of illiteracy was still disproportionately higher in women, there was a significant wage gap and fewer benefits offered to women, and women were still expected to maintain their households and care for their children and husbands. The Spanish Second Republic gave women more freedoms they had never experienced before, but there was still inequality between men and women. In *Doble esplendor*, Constanca de la Mora had to find a way to support her daughter, Luli, while her first husband, Manuel Bolín, could not hold on to a job. She, along with many women of the time, joined the workforce and worked for a minimal salary to have enough funds to properly care for her daughter.

The Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War began on July 17th, 1936, in Morocco with a military uprising, and soon expanded to major cities in Spain. The Republicans sought aid from countries like France and Britain, but only the Soviet Union was willing to support Republican troops with weapons. The Nationalists were allies with Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy, giving them access to much more advanced weapons, aircraft, and troops (Carr). Further into the war, the Republicans began to receive more troops from the International Brigades, made up of volunteers from the United States, Poland, France, England, and Argentina (Tremlett). In de la Mora's autobiography, she wrote about the volunteers saying, "The young men who stood

briefly before me getting their supplies touched my heart. They had come so far to help us.”

(222) Yet they were still no match for the Nationalists' army. Towards the end of the Spanish Civil War, the Nationalist troops gained control of the northern industrial zones, Madrid, and finally Valencia. On April 1st, 1939, Franco declared a fascist victory and the end of the civil war marking the official end of the Second Republic (Cassanova).

Women's Role in War Efforts

Due to the little aid the Republicans received, women were permitted, but not encouraged, to fight on the battlefield and join militias, referred to as the *milicianas*. A journal article that encapsulates the mindset of the *milicianas* stated, “I participated because I felt I had the same duty to defend . . . freedom which they wanted to take away; that is what we did. We did not make war, we went to defend what they . . . were taking away from us.” (Nash 273) Constanica de la Mora felt similarly, writing, “I had to work to help save Spain.” (223) when presented with the idea of evacuating with her daughter. Women had to sacrifice their sons to war, and others by sending their children away. Constanica made the sacrifice of sending her daughter to Russia to guarantee her safety.

Women who chose not to fight and/or had already given up their sons aided in the war effort by working in munitions factories, volunteering with social services, as well as cultural and educational projects. Constanica was among these women when she ran a convalescent hospital in Alicante and helped provide supplies to troops. By keeping up the efforts from home, women gave the civil population (the elderly, other women, and children) and refugees the supplies to survive the unemployment, food and other resource shortages, and restrictions forced upon them during the war (Nash 273).

Women's role in war efforts is connected to the equality of women in Spain because it created equal opportunity to defend their country against fascism. The Spanish Civil War was one of the first wars where women were allowed to participate in combat, which further cemented the Republic's view of women as equals.

CHAPTER 3: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF TRANSITION-ERA SPAIN AND WOMEN'S SITUATION

Spain's New Government

Following Franco's death in November 1975, Spain went through a transition period as the country moved from dictatorship to democracy. The government formed a parliamentary system in the form of a constitutional monarchy under King Juan Carlos I. During the Transition period of Spain, Carlos Arias Navarro (1975-1976), Adolfo Suárez (1976-1981), and Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo (1981-1982) served as the prime ministers. The legislature was organized into the Upper House, Senate, and Lower House, Congress of Deputies. King Juan Carlos I was expected to follow in Franco's footsteps due to their close relationship, but he instead called for the development of a constitutional monarchy. The new democracy faced challenges: the threat of further ETA (an acronym for "Basque Country and Freedom" in English) terrorist attacks, large strikes in vital industries and public services, activists urging for immunity for political prisoners, and the violent street riots that resulted from protests (Tusell). Even though the Navarro administration faced adversity, Spain operated as a democracy and free elections were soon to come.

Elections and the New Spanish Constitution of 1978

The first general election took place in June 1977 (since 1936) and decided who would serve in the 350 seats of the Congress of Deputies and the 207 seats of the Senate. Under Adolfo Suárez's government, several significant reforms were passed: partial political amnesty in July 1976, the dismantling of the secret police established by Franco in December 1976, the legalization of the right to unionize and strike in March 1977, and the legalization of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) in August 1977. The enforcement of the new Spanish Constitution took

place in late December 1978. The constitution granted autonomy to every autonomous region of Spain, outlined the King's duties in the government, and ensured fundamental rights and responsibilities for all Spanish citizens regardless of gender (Conversi).

The Feminist and Medical Movement

Throughout Franco's dictatorship, women virtually had no rights. In 1980 the news journal, *Off Our Backs*, encompassed the time period immediately following Franco's death.

Spanish women find it difficult if not impossible to control their own bank accounts rent houses or apartments and sign legal contracts. Rapists in Spain are rarely prosecuted. Adultery laws do not apply equally to men and women. Contraceptives are legally available, but publicity on them or their use is a crime. Men have complete legal control of the children. Women are generally untrained and unemployed. Those who have jobs do not get equal pay for equal work despite laws that "require" it.

Women were forced to carry a child due to abortion being illegal, and the use of contraceptives was prohibited. The family planning activism movement in Spain began in the late 1970s; the movement consisted of feminist groups and liberal doctors who wanted the legalization of contraceptives. With the family planning movement gaining traction in other European countries in the late 1960s, some Spanish cities began opening their own outpatient family planning clinics. Many were managed by women doctors that provided birth control counseling and care for women with traumatic pregnancies or labor and other health issues (Ortiz-Gómez and Ignaciuk 40-41). According to "The Fight for Family Planning in Spain during Late Francoism and the Transition to Democracy, 1965–1979" written by Teresa Ortiz-Gómez and Agata Ignaciuk, "In Spain in the mid-1970s, women doctors accounted for 10.6 percent of medical

professionals and numbers were rising..." Conservative doctors who did not support the legalization of contraceptives made active efforts to keep these family planning centers out of public hospitals to prohibit affordable care and advice, and rather forced women to go to private practices that proved to be financially inaccessible (Ortiz-Gómez and Ignaciuk 43). Before 1978, doctors running these clinics engaged in risky practice by illegally distributing birth control and inserting IUDs. One doctor described,

During a clinical session a superior told me "doctor, you know that in this country it is illegal to insert an IUD." And I said "professor, the world is progressing thanks to people who don't agree with the norms. There are ways to justify an insertion of an IUD."... I was in Professor Conill's department and he supported me. But yes, there were these frictions. (Ortiz-Gómez and Ignaciuk 44)

In *Crónica del desamor*, abortions and contraceptives were often discussed. Candela got an IUD, but only three months later she got pregnant. Throughout the novel, Candela and Teresa both got abortions, despite it still being illegal during the Transition. The novel discussed how abortion should be included in healthcare legislation and likely would be if roles were reversed and men were the ones who conceived children.

After Franco's death, groups of feminist activists established themselves at the national conference for women's liberation in Madrid (December 1975) and the Catalan conference on women (May 1976) and expressed their fight for "free contraceptives, free sexuality separated from procreation and the right to abortion." (Ortiz-Gómez and Ignaciuk 45). Montero's novel relates to this sentiment because she advocated for similar causes. Main themes of the novel were abortion, contraceptives, and women's sexual liberation. Montero developed these themes by writing women's personal experiences concerning abortions, contraceptives, and sexual

liberation. To gain support for their ideas, the Family Planning Group (CPF) attended many medical conferences and emphasized the ethicality of family planning. Finally, after many years of conflict, Spain's new Constitution of 1978 legalized the sale and distribution of contraceptives (Ortiz-Gómez and Ignaciuk 46).

The feminist and medical movement relates to women's fight for equality because it demonstrates another step towards gaining rights women had during the Second Republic. In order to truly leave the fascist dictatorship behind, Spain had to reinstate its previous laws. Although abortion was not legalized until after the Transition era, the legalization of contraceptives served a vital in the feminist movement.

Improvement of Women's Situation Presented by Data

The population in Spain in 1975 rose from 35,757,900 to 37,758,631 in 1976 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística). During Franco's dictatorship, the fertility rate rose as the economy improved, with the highest rate of 3.01 in 1964. From 1967 to 1971, the fertility rate increased each year. The fertility rate in 1975 was 2.75 and decreased to 2.09 in 1981 due to the legalization of contraceptives in October 1978 (UN DESA). Women made up 18% of the workforce in 1970 and increased to almost 30% by the 1980s (U.S. Library of Congress). Between 1975 and 1980 the number of women with no education or incomplete primary education decreased, while that of women having a post-secondary education increased. In fact, in 1980, of the people aged 20-24, women were more present in post-secondary education by a factor of 1.3%. During the Transition more women enrolled in higher education and by 1983, over 45% of Spain's students were women (EDU20C.org).

Spain's new stance on contraceptives, divorce, and women's right to education positively impacted the lives of Spanish women. The data above gives readers an insight into how much the lives of the women in *Crónica del desamor* changed in a matter of years. Although abortion was not legalized yet, women were able to enjoy much more freedom than they had just six years prior. Spain's transition towards democracy faced many challenges, but its citizens persevered.

CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY AND BASIC INFORMATION OF *DOBLE ESPLENDOR* AND *CRÓNICA DEL DESAMOR*

Summary: *Doble esplendor*

The autobiography, *Doble esplendor*, recounts the life of Constanca de la Mora and her journey from supporting the conservative Spanish aristocracy to supporting the republican cause during the Spanish Civil War, and her self-consideration as a political activist and communist over the course of three decades. The book begins with her early life; she talks about different aspects of the Spanish aristocracy, some positively some critically. She came from an influential family; her grandfather, Antonio Maura, served as Prime Minister for five terms and worked closely with the king, Alfonso XIII. There are many moments during her adolescence where she describes the stark divide among social classes. De la Mora wrote about her family's extravagant vacations, but she was the only one who seemed to admire and appreciate the different cultures that Spain has to offer. After Constanca left her strict convent school in Madrid, she gained independence at her convent school in Cambridge and got a better sense of her identity. After she finished her education in England, she had hoped to start working rather than find a husband; however, these plans never materialized. She began working alongside her mother with various charities, an activity usually reserved for women that were already married to occupy their time and resources. Witnessing the amount of work put into the church's image in comparison to aiding communities made Constanca feel uncomfortable and shameful of the way she lived. Later while vacationing in France, she met her first husband, Manuel Bolín of Málaga. They got married in 1927 and lived in Málaga but separated after four years together, officially getting divorced in 1932 (one of the first divorces granted after its legalization that same year). While she was still with Bolín, Constanca got a job as a shop clerk, but returned to Madrid following their separation and revived her interest in Spanish politics. De la Mora became a more informed

citizen and involved herself in her country's contemporary history. By the time of Constancia's divorce, she had been promoted at work and could build a more stable life with her daughter, Luli (with help from her family as well). Constancia did not receive much support from others within her social class due to her abandonment of aristocratic expectations. Some shopped at the store she worked at, but most of the others spoke of the scandal of it all. When she met the commander of the Republican Air Force, Ignacio Hidalgo de Cisneros, she was separated, but still not officially divorced from her husband. Their association caused a whirlwind in the Madrid gossip circuit; despite the gossip they were married in a civil ceremony in 1933. The two found common ground because Ignacio was born into the aristocratic class but later formed communist ideals, which was rare at the time since the aristocracy was a supporter of the monarchy and hoarded wealth and communism has opposite ideologies. When the Spanish Civil War began, Constancia wished to help the Republican cause in any way possible. She ran a convalescent hospital while providing clothes and supplies for soldiers and volunteers. With rising tensions in the war, she made the impossible decision to send her daughter to Russia to stay safe. Later, she became the chief of the Foreign Press Bureau and helped present Spain's case for aid in the war to the League of Nations.

Basic Information: *Doble esplendor*

The autobiography, *Doble esplendor* by Constanica de la Mora, was first published in English in New York in 1939 originally under the name *In Place of Splendor: The Autobiography of a Spanish Woman*. By printing the book in English, de la Mora wished to prove to Americans that the Spanish Civil War was “an invasion of the forces of international fascism against the democratically elected government of the Spanish Republic.” (Richmond Ellis 32) Constanica hoped that the United States government would associate Nationalist Spain with the other fascist leaders at the time such as Hitler and Mussolini and intervene, but an intervention never came to fruition, and Spain endured Franco’s Regime for thirty-six years. Later, in 1944, de la Mora published the Spanish version of her book titled *Doble esplendor: Autobiografía de una mujer española*. In 1977, her autobiography was reissued in Spain with a new title, *Doble esplendor: Autobiografía de una aristócrata española, republicana y comunista*.

Constancia de la Mora was born January 28th, 1906, in Madrid, Spain and died January 27th, 1950, in Guatemala. De la Mora was tutored at home by an Irish nanny and attended two prestigious private convent schools reserved for only the wealthiest and most prominent families; Handmaids of the Sacred Heart convent school in Madrid from 1915 to 1920 and St. Mary's Convent School of Cambridge from 1920 to 1923.

At the start of the Spanish Civil War, de la Mora joined the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) and became a member of the National Committee of Antifascist Women. Constanica, collaborated with the Ministry of Justice for the Protection of Minors, helping move 650 children to safety during frequent bombings in Madrid. De la Mora was the only woman to work for the Foreign Press Bureau as a censor in 1937 and was promoted to the chief position in 1938. In

May of 1938 she joined the foreign minister in Geneva where they petitioned for the Spanish cause in front of the League of Nations.

After Francisco Franco declared victory, Constanica moved her family from France to Mexico in 1940. She joined the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee and served from 1940 to 1945. Constanica de la Mora died one day before her birthday, aged 43 years old, from a car accident in Guatemala. Throughout her life, she fulfilled countless achievements and left a legacy in the name of feminism, activism, and rejecting social norms. *Doble esplendor* was the only book she wrote, but it left a lasting impact on its readers. Constanica de la Mora's life was exceptionally unique in the ways she broke free from her upbringing, gained independence, and fought as a communist activist for her country.

Summary: *Crónica del desamor*

The novel, *Crónica del desamor*, was written by Rosa Montero, and takes place in the late 1970s during Transition-era Spain. Montero tells the story of a young, recently single mother, Ana Antón, working as a magazine editor in Madrid. Throughout the novel, she tries to find balance between caring for her son, working, and navigating Spain's new era of democracy. Additionally, the novel gives the readers background information and current happenings of her closest friends, Elena, Candela, Cecilio, Ana María, and Teresa. Through the course of the novel, the characters are unsure of themselves and maintain a sense of precarity when it comes to work and their personal lives. In order to portray the uncertain times of Transition-era Spain, the author describes the unstable situations of the characters. For instance, Ana is a working single mother, Cecilio is a homosexual man, Candela gets an abortion after her IUD (intrauterine device) failed, and Teresa has an illegal, unsafe abortion that leads to hospitalization. From start to finish the novel Ana's group of friends support one another, no matter the difficulty of the circumstance. Montero discusses intense topics such as marriage, abortion, sexuality, sexual liberation, friendship, motherhood, and solitude each expressed by different characters arriving at a similar conclusion. Men and women view these serious topics quite differently and the women must overcome obstacles put in place by the extremely androcentric society of Franco's Regime. Montero was an advocate for women's rights, and her exploration of women's themes through the lens of Spain's transition from a dictatorship to a democracy furthered her agenda towards equal treatment and opportunities for women.

Basic Information: *Crónica del desamor*

Rosa Montero wrote the autobiography *Crónica del desamor* at the age of twenty-eight. She was born on January 3rd, 1951, in Madrid, Spain and received her undergraduate education from Complutense University of Madrid where she earned her degree in journalism. Montero has been working in various forms of media (television, magazine, and newspapers) since 1970, and namely for *El País* since 1977. Montero went on to become the editor-in-chief for *El País Semanal* the following year. The novel was written and took place during the Transition period of Spain. In her contemporary fiction novels, she writes about human struggle and growth. Writing seventeen novels, two short stories, and six children's books throughout her career. Among these works, many focus on feminist ideals: *La función delta* (1981), *Historias de mujeres* (1995), *El corazón del tártaro* (2001), *Historia del rey transparente* (2005), and more. Montero also had a successful journalistic career winning several awards such as the World Interview Prize in 1978, the National Prize for Literary Journalism in 1980, the Press Association of Madrid Award for career achievement in 2005, and the National Prize for Spanish Literature in 2017. She has also conducted over 2000 interviews including Malala Yousafzi, Richard Nixon, Indira Gandhi, and others. Montero taught journalism and literature at Madrid's Contemporary School of Humanities and at the School of Letters of Madrid and made frequent trips to the United States as a visiting professor at Wellesley College and the University of Virginia. She has been considered by many to be a popular novelist and journalist focused on the feminist movement and adamantly calling out injustices against women.

CHAPTER 5: COMPARISON OF MAJOR THEMES IN *DOBLE ESPLENDOR* AND *CRÓNICA DEL DESAMOR*

For this chapter, I discuss the central themes concerning women's rights in Constanica de la Mora's autobiography, *Doble esplendor*, and Rosa Montero's novel, *Crónica del desamor*. While these two books share recurring themes of marriage and relationships, friendships among women, motherhood, working women, and politics, they are developed in profoundly different ways due to differing time periods, socioeconomic class, and legislation. These subjects are present throughout the books and contribute to the greater meaning of the literature and what it meant to be a woman in Spain during the Second Republic and the Transition-era. Though the books discuss matters unique to the characters' circumstances, the protagonists, Constanica and Ana, are both challenged and supported in a similar manner. For each theme, I analyze supporting quotes from the text. Below the interpretation of each theme, I compare the similarities and differences of the books based on literary analysis.

Themes

5.1 Marriage and Relationships

Doble esplendor

In the early 20th century of Spain, women were expected to be married off to whomever would most benefit the family. Constanica was expected to marry someone of a similar status, which would prove difficult because of her grandfather's elite position. Constanica was not excited about pursuing a husband; she was only seventeen and upset that she could not stay in England and work. Despite her disappointment, Constanica felt a familial obligation to find a worthy husband.

Constancia knew she did not want a loveless marriage; for her, love was an essential factor. With her parents serving as an example, she knew that one could marry for both love *and* status. When describing her parents' marriage she wrote, "My father had married this gentle girl because—and this was almost a scandal in old Madrid—he loved her." (16) From Constanica's perspective, she did not consider her mother as gentle, but in contrast, rather obsessively composed and somewhat cold. The second half of the quote is very telling of the period. In Madrid's high-class society, it was not usual to marry for love; marriage was a way to bring two families together to gain more power and influence. Perhaps her parents' love led to her conviction that she was in love with the first man who caught her eye. At the end of her first season as an eligible bride a shooting party at La Mata, she found a potential beau and decided she had fallen in love. Her over-romanticization of him dissipated after spending the summer in Arriluce with María Isabela. Although her parents approved of him due to his inherited title and having a good family, when he asked Constanica to marry him, she refused. She found the ritual of finding a worthy husband to be degrading, and she even went a couple of years to pursue

charity work rather than find a husband. After completing her due diligence to the “good works” of aristocratic women, at the age of twenty, Constancia was hopeless in finding her match,

But the kind of man who had money and social position and health, and who loves you and whom you love in return, and who asks for your hand in marriage from your father—this kind of man was slow in turning up in my life... In this state of mind, uneasy, restless, almost desperate, I met the young man whom I was to marry. (80)

Constancia’s criteria for a husband (wealth, status, health, and mutual love) resulted in a helpless feeling that she would never find the *one*. As a twenty-year-old Constancia was already considered an older bride by Spain’s standards, her desperation to find a husband is apparent after reading the quote above. Constancia’s hopelessness led her to marry someone she knew very little about. She met her first husband, Manuel Bolín, while vacationing in St. Jean-de-Luz. Immediately she took notice of him due to his height, and just two days later the two were engaged. Constancia admits the overwhelming disapproval of Bolín from friends and family only solidified her decision to marry him. She insisted, “I was marrying for love, and not for money or a title or social position.”- defying her family and Madrid’s high-class expectations and solidifying her stance on requiring a loving partner. Although, once the two were wed, she experienced a completely different side of Bolín (82).

As described in the book, Bolín was bad at managing money and expected to live off that of his wife. Once she had met the entirety of the Bolín clan, it was obvious to her that marrying wealthy women was how the men in the family “made” their fortune. Despite their rocky relationship, Constancia gave birth in 1928 to their child Constancia María de Lourdes Bolín Maura or Luli as she would be called. Even though they had a child together, their marriage did

not last in part due to Bolín's inability to keep a job and provide and care for his family. When contemplating on her marriage Constancia wrote,

I had become very conscious of his strange character but I was convinced that it was my duty both religious and moral to stand by him and lead him back into the right path. In other words, what God had united could not be broken by us. I would just have to put up with it for the rest of my life, making the best of it I could. (98)

The quote emphasizes the extent to which Constancia was struggling to stay with Bolín. She was determined to stay with him, even though he was not willing to put in any work because she felt as though she had made a commitment to him, with God as her witness, for the rest of her life.

While considering a separation from Bolín, Constancia believed she would never be able to marry again without an annulment from the Pope, which was not only unlikely but scandalous. She further insisted, "No, it was my duty to carry on and to make a good citizen and husband of the father of my child." (99). Readers can determine that Constancia was trying her best to convince herself to stay in an unhappy marriage. After living with the Bolín clan in Málaga, Constancia was faced with an ultimatum: live with Bolín as his wife or leave for good. She reasoned with herself and finally admitted,

I did not love my husband; indeed I regarded him with contempt... I valued my independence, I decided, more than anything else except my child. I was not afraid of the future. I knew that I was violating every canon of the society I had been brought up in: Spanish women of my class accepted sorrow submissively, as the will of God. To break free of the family was a profoundly terrible act. But I was ready, at long last, to burn my bridges. (106)

Constancia's thought processes the importance that her independence played in her self-image. She knew the consequences of her actions, but decided to go through with it anyways because she knew she was not meant to live a life solely as Bolín's wife. Constancia chose not to suffer how Spanish women of her status did and had her father draft the legal papers for separation. After years of waiting, Constancia was granted one of the first divorces after its legalization in 1932.

Constancia met her second husband, the commander of the Republican Air Force, Ignacio Hidalgo de Cisneros, while she was legally separated from Bolín. When Constancia met Ignacio, she was not searching for a romantic relationship, but it is obvious to the readers that she felt something of the sort. Their interaction below encapsulates her affection for him,

Ignacio turned to me, grinned, and said, 'Good for you! I admire you!' And the next day I ran to answer my telephone myself, while my maid looked surprised. But it was not Ignacio, nor the next day, nor the day after that. After a week, I sighed and let the maid answer the doorbell and stopped ruffling anxiously through my mail in the mornings. The commandant apparently had other friends. (127)

Readers can sense Constancia's disappointment following their lack of communication, but once she saw Ignacio again, all was settled. The two began as friends, and as time went on, they grew closer. Another quote that portrays her sentiments for Ignacio follows,

I found myself dressing more carefully for that reception than I had dressed for years. Not since the days when I went to my first parties had I taken such pains with my hair and the folds of my skirt. And suddenly I felt very young again, not like a woman whose life is over, whose fate is forever settled. (135)

The quote shows the revival of her girlish excitement when given the chance to spend a night with Ignacio in attendance. The way in which she describes finding herself dressing more carefully portrays her own surprise at these kinds of feelings. Although the quote is subtle when it comes to describing falling in love, this is one of the most “romantic” quotes in her autobiography. Even though they met after Constancia’s separation from Bolín, more gossip about her began to spread among Madrid’s elite. To combat the rumors, Constancia’s friend, Zenobia (the wife of poet Juan Ramón Jiménez), would accompany them, similar to the chaperones she had in her youth. After spending a summer trip together, Constancia and Ignacio knew they could no longer live their lives apart. She wrote, “I knew they [friends and family] would consider my second marriage, when it took place, as a sin against God and an offense against morality... I felt sure Ignacio would make me happy, and I was determined to marry him.” (141) Constancia was brave in going against social norms and divorcing her first husband in order to pursue her freedom. Although it took them years to get married in a civil ceremony, the two were hitched shortly after the finalization of Constancia’s divorce.

Constancia was not vehemently opposed to the idea of marriage, but she also wanted to make a name for herself. Women were expected to be caring mothers and obedient housewives and nothing more, but Constancia knew she was destined for greatness.

Crónica del desamor

With the novel including “*desamor*” (absent love) in the title, it is apparent that the novel will not discuss romantic love affairs, but the end of them. Montero portrayed romantic relationships as difficult, uneasy, and uncomfortable. The novel primarily gives details about Ana and Elena’s dating life.

During almost four decades of dictatorship, discussion surrounding women's sexuality was nonexistent. Even in the years following, it was still considered a taboo subject, but Montero did not shy away, instead, she embraced it. In the novel, Montero primarily writes about Ana, a recently single mother, and throughout the novel describes her sexual experiences with various men. When it comes to her sexual relationships, Ana does not seem to feel emotionally fulfilled. It is apparent after an encounter one evening with a man named Luís.

Se está vistiendo y su cuerpo menudo se oculta a parcelas, ahora los vaqueros, luego se abrocha la camisa, Ana siente que le pierde a medida que su desnudez se acaba. Hacía un mes que no se habían visto y al fin Luís ha encontrado un hueco en su apretado horario. Un hueco siempre breve, siempre escaso. Cuando suena el golpe de la puerta aún guarda Ana la sonrisa mecánica del adiós. (She is getting dressed and her body is often hidden in plots, now the jeans, then she buttoned her shirt, Ana feels that she loses him as her nudity wears off. They hadn't seen each other for a month and Luís has finally found a place in their busy schedule. A gap always brief, always scarce. When the knock on the door sounds, Ana still keeps the mechanical smile of goodbye.) (13)

As she gets dressed Ana feels that he is losing interest in her; she holds no value to Luís when they are not having sex. Readers can sense Ana feels this way often with Montero's use of the word "mechanical" when describing her smile as she says goodbye. Most of her sexual encounters are concluded with a sense of emptiness. Although Ana exhibits freedom in terms of her physical sexuality, she is still trapped within the constructs of her own mind.

When Ana reflects on her relationship with Juan, her son's father, she says, "En aquella época la relación de Ana y Juan era un infierno; no había dinero y tuvieron que compartir la vieja casa con más gente..." ("At that time the relationship between Ana and Juan was hell; there was

no money and they had to share the old house with more people...”) (21-22) The quote reveals the couple's financial troubles which caused them to rent out rooms in their house to make ends meet. Ana's description of their relationship as “hell” emphasizes how challenging their relationship proved at the time. Another part further explains Ana's breakup with Juan.

Cuando rompió con él lo hizo de forma definitiva. No soportaba verle más, no podía... Qué ridículo, la relación con Juan fue tan melodramática que todo en torno a él se convierte en fotonovela barata. (When she broke up with him, she did it permanently. She couldn't bear to see him anymore, she couldn't... How ridiculous, the relationship with Juan was so melodramatic that everything around him becomes a cheap photo story.) (32)

Ana knew that their separation would be permanent, and time apart would not fix their relationship. Cementing her feelings, she characterizes partnership with him as “melodramatic” and “cheap” to show that she could never return to him. By including Ana's memories of Juan, readers can empathize with how she felt and why she needed to break things off.

When Elena recounted her first sexual experience, she was on a date with a man named Miguel Ángel. Leading up to their intimacy, he got frustrated with her after she revealed she was a virgin. His reaction confused Elena and made her feel as though she had to do something sexual to get the affectionate Miguel Ángel back, not the person she saw in this scene. Throughout the whole experience, she was lost in her thoughts.

...entre las piernas de él ve el freno, el acelerador, los pedales del coche, irrealmente iluminados con la escasa luz de la lámpara interior, se concentra en esas formas y mantiene la mente en blanco (...between his legs she sees the brake, the accelerator, the

pedals of the car, unrealistically illuminated with the low light of the interior lamp, she concentrates on those shapes and keeps her mind blank.) (51)

While she engaged in the sexual act, she kept disassociating. After reading her thoughts, it is clear that Elena wanted it to be over, but until then she had to disengage mentally. Elena was so traumatized that she never saw Miguel Ángel again.

Shortly after, Elena met Javier with whom she had a short but serious relationship.

Montero describes the situation below.

Elena vive el desamor con melancolía y sin lagrimas, sólo con agobiante cansancio, con el convencimiento de lo irreversible, de la pérdida definitiva: el mismo agotamiento de cuando abandonó el PCE (Partido Comunista de España). (Elena lives the heartbreak with melancholy and without tears, only with overwhelming tiredness, with the conviction of the irreversible, of the definitive loss: the same exhaustion of when she left the Communist Party of Spain.) (56)

Elena did not cry from her heartbreak, only exhaustion. Accustomed to being heartbroken so many times, she felt tired of the pursuit. The mention of the PCE is significant as it shows that Elena had lost something that she cared for so deeply yet again. She was attached to the communist party but had to leave in the same way she did with Javier. The following sentences provide insight into Elena's state of mind,

Cuando eres verdaderamente joven, el amor y la ilusión llegan de improviso, te sorprenden, te alienan y arrebatan sin que tú seas capaz de defenderte, sin que sepas tan siquiera de dónde han surgido. Luego, poco a poco, año tras año, has de ir empeñando más voluntarismo en los afectos, has de luchar para seguir queriendo, has de forzarte a

sentir. (When you are truly young, love and illusion come suddenly, surprise you, alienate you and snatch you without you being able to defend yourself, without you even knowing where they came from. Then, little by little, year after year, you have to commit more voluntarism in the affections, you have to fight to continue loving, you have to force yourself to feel.) (56-57)

Although she was only 28 years old, she was no longer “truly” young, and the fantasy of real love no longer distracted her. Her choice of words was interesting when she described young love, that one cannot “defend” themselves from it, indicating that love will inevitably cause pain. It is saddening to read that after being broken down for so many years, Elena had to force herself to love and feel. Perhaps this is why she was so exhausted and could no longer be with Javier.

An effect of the absent love in Montero’s novel is solitude. Each character felt completely alone at one point or another, and it did not matter whether they were in the presence of someone else. At the beginning of the novel, after her time with Luís has come to an end, Ana is struck with an overwhelming sense of loneliness. Montero writes, “Tumbada en un sillón, incapaz de moverse, Ana deja que el sudor resbale por su cuerpo, pegajoso. Ha ordenado su día en torno a estas tres horas, ha prescindido de citas, ha postergado los trabajos.” (“Lying in an armchair, unable to move, Ana lets sweat slide down her sticky body. She has ordered her day around these three hours, she has dispensed with appointments, she has postponed the work.”) (13) She organized her day around Luís, but now that she faced his absence, she had no motivation for the rest of the day. While a pressing work deadline loomed over Ana’s consciousness, she could not find within herself to make progress. Ana, recently single, was at a point in her life where she must now navigate her job, motherhood, and the transformation of her

country; all these changes at once paralyzed her. How was she supposed to make it in the world? Ana was unsure but with the support of those around her she managed to find a way.

Elena also felt lonely, even in the company of others. While Elena engaged in oral sex with Miguel Ángel, she felt detached and disgusted, “Ella no está excitada en absoluto, se encuentra a sí misma vacía, abandonada y sin respuestas. Le toca inhábilmente, con reparo y algo de repugnancia” (“She is not aroused at all, she finds herself empty, abandoned and without answers. She touches him unskillfully, with reluctance and some repugnance.” (50) Elena’s inexperience is reflected by these feelings of emptiness and disillusionment. She felt “abandoned” as she was performing a sexual act of supposed intimacy.

Solitude is often a source of sadness, but not always. When Ana was detailing her breakup with Juan, she also felt a sense of freedom.

Cuando terminó con Juan terminó también su fe en la pareja. Ana creyó su desencanto eterno y vivió alborozada unos primeros meses de recuperación, de reconquista del entorno. Su cama volvía a ser suya, suyo era su tiempo, esas horas de las que ya no tenía que rendir cuentas a nadie. Suya su individualidad, sus amigos, sus gustos, sus decisiones, todo ese mundo que durante tres años fue plural. (When she broke up with Juan, her faith in the couple also ended. Ana believed her eternal disenchantment and lived elated for some first months of recovery, of reconquest of the environment. Her bed was hers again, it was her time, those hours for which she no longer had to answer to anyone. Her individuality, her friends, her tastes, her decisions, all that world that for three years was plural.) (31)

After separating from Juan, Ana was ready for a new life on her own. The house was finally *hers* and not *theirs*. She no longer had to share her belongings with another. Ana also felt as though she had more authority over her interests, decisions, and friends. Ana's newfound solitude served as a catalyst in increasing her autonomy with regard to her life direction and control over her environment.

Comparision

The ways in which *Doble esplendor* and *Crónica del desamor* portray romantic love and marriage are vastly different yet share inherent similarities. Constanica's circumstances to find her life partner were unique to her time and her elevated status in society. In Montero's novel Ana and her friends are not compelled to marry due to their social class and living in a more modern Spanish society. The difference between Constanica's aristocratic class and Montero's characters' middle class is that they were not held to the same expectations. Constanica would have been outcasted from high class society much sooner than she was if she had not gotten married. Alternatively, Ana and her friends lived in an era where society was more accepting of unmarried women. Ana did not feel an obligation to stay in an unfulfilling relationship with her son's father. On the other hand, Constanica felt the need to fulfill her marital duty to her family, first husband, and society. However, Constanica did eventually break free from her first marriage and reaped the consequences by being ostracized by Madrid's elite. The fact that Constanica was able to exercise the same freedom as Ana forty years earlier goes to show how modern and progressive Constanica was. Both Ana and Constanica were deeply unhappy with their situations, and they took steps to change that. They were both unapologetically themselves, even though it went against societal expectations.

Although Constancia did feel neglected and abandoned when Bolín did not live up to her expectations, it was more disdain she felt for him rather than heartbreak. Conversely, the characters in *Crónica del desamor* must deal with the pain of losing love. Montero's characters cope with heartbreak in different ways, Ana with meaningless sex, and Elena with her loss of faith and energy for love. Overwhelming feelings of solitude arose from the absent love and romantic partnership in Montero's novel. In *Doble esplendor* when Constancia felt isolated from her family in Málaga she wrote, "...I longed for my child who was to comfort me in my loneliness..." (95) which displayed the alienation she was experiencing from the Bolín family. Though the extent to which solitude was discussed in Montero's novel was much more in depth compared to de la Mora's autobiography.

Montero's novel discussed at large about women's sexuality and sexual liberation, but in De la Mora's autobiography sex is only mentioned when discussing the lack of conversation surrounding it. De la Mora wrote, "My mother never spoke to me of sex, or of the problems of love and birth. It was a sin to think about these things..." (81) Her mother was given another chance to speak to Constancia about sex and marital expectations four days before her wedding with Bolín, but instead her mother assumed girls from Constancia's generation were more knowledgeable than she was. But Constancia did not, she had no idea of what marriage would incur.

An essential similarity among the two books is that the women are not defined by their romantic relationships. Although Constancia and Ana's romantic relationships are integral to understanding the pressures women faced from their partners and the culture during their specific time periods, it is not the focal point of the literature. The authors engaged readers by portraying how Constancia and Ana dealt with their struggles and rose to success rather than relying on

marketing tactics like love stories to attract readers. Constanica was self-sufficient, working while raising her child, and aided the Republican cause during the civil war. Ana was a single, working mother who worked as a magazine editor at a successful paper in Madrid. Though their love lives are discussed in the books, the ways in which Constanica and Ana defied the odds and made the necessary sacrifices to live freely are the core of the books.

5.2 Friendships Among Women

Doble esplendor

De la Mora wrote about several strong female friendships and business partnerships with women over the course of her autobiography. She valued these relationships and held them close; she shared a deep regard for the friends that provided her with constant support. Each friendship that Constanica formed during her lifetime aided her in surpassing a challenging phase or uplifted her from an unfortunate situation.

While she was receiving her education at a convent school in Madrid, Constanica along with the other girls was forced to stay in complete silence the majority of the day, but this did not stop her from meeting new people. Constanica described their resilience by stating, "... no rules, no matter how strictly enforced, can prevent little girls from making passionate, wild friendships." (27). The way in which she describes these friendships as both "passionate" and "wild" portrays their importance in her early life as well as the depth to which she cared for those she had formed friendships with. It is interesting to note that she did not once describe any of her husbands in this manner but felt free to do so when speaking about her friends.

While in school at Cambridge, she developed platonic relationships with two girls María Isabel and María. María had also attended convent school with Constanica in Madrid, but their friendship flourished with the lax rules at St. Mary's. While given the freedom to roam the streets of Cambridge, Constanica met a woman from Mexico who owned a dress shop. They connected and Constanica persuaded her to let her live and work there while earning a small salary. Despite its failed fruition due to her parents' vehement disapproval, Constanica's relationship with the shop owner brought her an opportunity to provide for herself, and to feel liberated, and most importantly, loved.

While the monarchy embraced the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera, Constanica reunited with her old school friend, María Isabel, in Arriluce, a rich suburb of Bilbao. Although Primo de Rivera's dictatorship was a historic event, nothing really changed for the aristocratic class, and Constanica and María Isabel simply enjoyed one another's company on the coastline of Getxo. During her first visit she wrote, "Arriluce was the perfect setting for two seventeen-year-old girls who wanted nothing more, at the moment, from life except fun," (71) showing how young and carefree the pair were. Also, this quote exhibits how Constanica's time in Arriluce was like a breath of fresh air; she did not have to worry about marriage or her family's expectations because she got to live with the freedom a teenage girl of her status should, relaxed with the company of her friend in a beautiful town. Constanica continued to visit María Isabel during the summer months each year prior to her wedding with Bolín and would even return during her marriage, though less frequently.

One of her most impactful relationships involved her friend to business partner Zenobia Camprubí (who would later become a prominent writer, poet, and translator). She was well known in Madrid for apartment furnishings, and shop that sold linens, shawls, and pottery. At the

time Constancia was desperate for work, and Zenobia chose to not interrogate her regarding rumors despite Constancia and Bolín's popularity within the Madrid gossip circuit. When describing her first encounter with Zenobia, de la Mora wrote, "I needed understanding and now I found it. For the first time somebody thought it was quite natural and sensible that I should want to work." (98) The quote displays Constancia's need for a friend like Zenobia as she longed for someone who valued their independence as much as she did. Zenobia got her in contact with Americans who wanted Spanish lessons, offered to pay her a small fee to watch over her furnished apartments while she was gone, and most importantly, extended a job offer at her shop upon her return. When an old friend from St. Mary's offered to take Constancia to London, she saw it as a business opportunity to sell Zenobia's linens. Constancia also had her annual trip to see María Isabel in Arriluce and knew she could make a good profit from the rich connections she had. Upon Constancia's return to Madrid, she was promoted to Zenobia's partner which attracted more customers to the shop, and they had record sales due to Constancia's popularity. Sadly, her friendship with María Isabel, along with those of her wealthy friends, later ended after rumors began to circulate that because Constancia separated from Bolín she had to be a Republican as well. Zenobia and Constancia's friendship showed how women networking and making connections can be mutually beneficial.

While working at Zenobia's shop, Constancia made a new friend, Ana. Ana and Constancia shared the sentiment of being in an unhappy marriage, and they were there for each other. After Ana's husband died suddenly, Constancia had her move in to her apartment and Zenobia extended a job at the shop for Ana as well. De la Mora described Ana writing, "Ana, however, had extraordinary feminine charm, a natural fineness. She had no intellectual pretensions and still she was clever, bright, quick-minded and generous." (100) After Constancia

left Madrid for Málaga during the holidays, she heard of Ana's passing. The death of her dear friend was difficult for Constanca because she had Ana in mind when planning out her future.

Crónica del desamor

Montero depicted friendship as a supportive structure that guaranteed safety to discuss anything. The women in the novel have all gone through adversities in life which makes their bond stronger. Without a supportive network of friends, Montero's characters would not have an outlet to discuss and solve their problems.

After Ana had convinced herself, she could never be with Juan again, she began to think of how it would affect their son, Curro. When Ana was struggling with how to explain to her son that she had ended her relationship with his father and that he would no longer live with them, her friend, Candela gave her some meaningful advice.

Ahora, sin embargo, Ana se arrepiente por el Curro. Por la necesidad que tiene el niño de encontrar una imagen paterna, de dejar de ser distinto. «Hasta que Curro no te pregunte directamente por su padre tú no le hables de él, lo que tienes que hacer es ir contestando las preguntas que el niño te haga». Éste es el consejo de Candela, y debe ser un buen consejo. Ella sabe mucho de esto, no sólo por ser psicóloga especializada en niños, sino también por tener dos hijos carentes de padre. (Now, however, Ana regrets it for Curro. Because of the child's need to find a paternal image, to stop being different. "Until Curro asks you directly about his father you do not talk to him about him, what you have to do is answer the questions that the child asks you." This is Candela's advice, and it should be good advice. She knows a lot about this, not only from being a psychologist specializing in children, but also from having two fatherless children. (35)

The beginning of the quote emphasizes how worried Ana is for her son, she does not want him to grow up feeling ostracized from his peers due to not having a father figure in his life. Ana trusted Candela's opinion because of her expertise being a child psychologist and she is a close friend who has experienced the same situation with her children. Ana knew she could depend on friends like Candela to give her guidance through her predicament.

As the novel centers on Ana and her core friends, the way their friendship was presented was authentic; each person in the group provides support to the others through life's challenges, and they do not shy away from difficult discussions or debates. An intriguing passage in the novel includes dialogue between Elena and Cecelio, the only man in the group, about the difference between the relationships of men and women. Elena stated,

... generalizar es estúpido, y además tú eres un tío especialmente poco machista, pero lo cierto es que, por educación o lo que sea, los hombres tenéis tendencia de vivir las relaciones de una forma muy distinta a como las vivimos nosotras... los hombres están acostumbrados a instrumentalizar la relación con los demás... (... generalizing is stupid, and you are also a particularly unsexist guy, but the truth is that, by education or whatever, men tend to live relationships in a very different way from how we live them... men are accustomed to instrumentalizing relationships with others...) (95)

Elena says with confidence that the way men perceive relationships will always differ from that of women. Society has taught men to be in control and this leads to the instrumentalization of relationships to their liking. Contrarily, society has taught women to be submissive and follow orders. However, Spain was in a new era and men and women had to embrace the changes that followed. The behavior is learned, and therefore, is something men, like Cecelio, can overcome

by engaging in open and honest dialogue with women. The conversation between Elena and Cecelio shows that Spanish society is ready at this point to dismantle previous androcentricity.

Comparision

Both books highlight the importance of female friendships and the ways in which they can benefit the characters' lives. Although Ana's group of friends does include one man, Cecelio, he wants to support and uplift the women in his life. Additionally, Cecelio is eager to learn from the women. Both of the protagonists from each book, Constancia and Ana, have tumultuous love lives and strong friendships that help them through it. Constancia could not have made it out of her unhappy marriage if it were not for her close friend, Zenobia, offering her a job, and Ana needed her inner circle of friends to support her after her separation from Juan.

A key difference between Constancia and Ana's friendships is the topics of discussions they feel comfortable engaging in. For instance, when Constancia is with María Isabel they do not discuss politics even when the Spanish government transforms into Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. Later on, once Constancia was better informed of her country's political state during the Second Republic, she lost her relationship with María Isabel's family after confirming she was a Republican, meaning she no longer supported the monarchy and aristocracy. The loss of this family's friendship was difficult for Constancia to accept. She grew to love them as her own family after spending many summers in Arriluce and to part with them meant she had to leave behind the friendships she formed during her upbringing. However, the friendships she developed later in life with Zenobia and Ana were safe havens for her. Constancia recognized that Zenobia was a modern working woman which encouraged her to be the same. As for Ana and Constancia, their friendship was a temporary sanctuary to forget about their miserable marriages and simply enjoy each other's presence. The women in *Crónica del desamor* are

incredibly introspective; when they share traumatic moments, they grow closer and better understand what it means to be a woman in an androcentric society. Ana and her friends speak about a variety of subjects including politics, abortion and contraceptives, their intimate encounters, and most importantly their feelings in general and towards one another. The group is unafraid of what the others may think because they know that no matter the circumstance, they will always have each other to lean on. In contrast to Constancia's friends from her adolescence, Ana and her friends do not judge one another.

5.3 Motherhood

Doble esplendor

Constancia found that motherhood changed her life permanently. At the time, she was overlooked and disrespected by Bolín's family, and motherhood gave her the sense of fulfillment she had been longing for. Luli was her prized possession, but she regarded Bolín's minimal involvement and lack of attentiveness to be less than desirable.

In 1928 while living in Málaga Constancia gave birth to her daughter with the aid of an Irish nurse. She wrote, "I was not afraid of childbirth, I even welcomed it eagerly, for I longed for my child who was to comfort me in my loneliness and give my life purpose and happiness." (95) Constancia felt overwhelmingly neglected due to the distance from her family and the cold treatment she received from the Bolíns, but her baby gave her the hope she needed to keep going. She was brave in childbirth because she knew she would no longer feel so alone; she would have a new life to look after and care for. Constancia was overjoyed to have a daughter, but Bolín did not feel the same way. De la Mora wrote, "Bolín never cared for Luli, found all news about her

dull and hardly bothered even to look at her.” (96) Besides the countless other problems in their marriage, the fact that he was disinterested in his own child was devastating.

Throughout Luli’s early life she had a nurse to help take care of her; this was a common practice in Spain’s high society. Constancia grew up with an English-speaking nurse and governess, and she expected to provide the same for her daughter. Madrid’s upper-class mothers stayed at home, but a team of maids, nurses, and governesses often raised their children during their formative years. Even before Constancia started working, she had a nurse, and later a more affordable nursemaid, to care for Luli. While working, Luli’s nurse was essential. Having someone else care for her child did not bother Constancia because of the way she was raised, and she knew that a job and an absent husband meant she would need assistance in raising Luli. Constancia did not feel less of a mother for working to pay the rent, nurse, food, etc. With Bolín basically devoid of their lives, Constancia worked diligently as her father’s allowance was not sufficient for her and her daughter to live a modest - by Constancia’s standards - yet comfortable life.

After Constancia dismissed Luli’s nursemaid during a vacation to St. Jean-de-Luz, she fully connected with her daughter. De la Mora wrote,

For the first time, I realized that I had a child. Luli was only three but until then she had lived, as I had when a child, with nurses. Now I grew to know her, and I discovered that although she was hardly more than a baby she realized I was unhappy and tried to comfort me... I am afraid I often wept in my room, with Luli standing beside me, trying to cheer me up. (103)

When Constancia was the main caregiver for Luli, she fully embraced her motherhood by stating that she finally realized *she* had a child. Constancia and Luli's bond strengthened with this time alone, and Constancia was able to experience the love and comfort Luli could provide her.

A couple of years later, with the Spanish Civil War in full swing, Constancia stayed busy running a convalescent hospital in Alicante and Ignacio commanding the Republican air force. They questioned what to do with Luli, "We faced the terrible question that people all over Spain faced: what about our children? The fascists leave parents no time to bring up their daughters." (223) Constancia knew the sacrifice she had to make so that Luli would be safe, well fed, and educated, so she made the difficult decision to send her to Russia. De la Mora wrote,

...my heart ached to think of the miles of sea and land between Spain and the Soviet Union. I kept saying to myself that I must not cry. No tears. Luli must not feel the separation is hard or the journey a tragic one. She must think it is a gay adventure, a wonderful trip to a faraway land... 'Goodbye,' I managed to say to Luli, and kissed her on her forehead. 'Salud!' Luli replied. There were no tears. (223-224)

It took an unimaginable amount of strength for Constancia to send her daughter almost 3,000 miles away without shedding a single tear. The fact that she wanted Luli to feel at ease and even excited shows how great of a mother Constancia wanted to be. Although many Spanish mothers evacuated with their children during the war, Constancia could not bring herself to abandon her country. She wrote, "I felt I was in the very heart of the struggle to save Spain... I had to work to help save Spain." (223) Constancia felt strongly about her country, the Republican cause, and the fulfillment of her duties. After Luli's safety was ensured, Constancia prioritized Spain and democracy.

Crónica del desamor

In Montero's novel motherhood is explored in a unique manner. Ana has a son she refers to as Curro, which means *work* in Spanish. Ana's nickname for her son indicates that she often thinks of him as a job. Throughout the novel, when Ana mentions her son, she is listing all her duties for the day and Curro is one of those responsibilities. Of course, Ana loves her son, but she does not display her affection frequently.

As a working single mother, Ana often finds herself juggling responsibilities between her job and her son, with the two sometimes overlapping. When Ana has no one to watch over her son when she must go to work on a Saturday, Montero writes,

Pero es muy tarde y pese a que hoy es sábado Ana ha de acercarse a la revista. Como el Curro no tiene guardería tiene que llevárselo consigo, será la misma batahola de siempre, el niño correteando entre las mesas, pellizcando a los compañeros y chupando el teclado de las máquinas. (But it is very late and although today is Saturday Ana has to approach the magazine. As Curro does not have a nursery she has to take him in, it will be the same pandemonium as always, the child running between the tables, pinching colleagues and sucking the keyboard of the machines.) (60)

When Montero describes Curro's actions in the office, it is inferred that Ana feels resentment towards her responsibility for Curro when she's forced to bring him to the office. Managing motherhood while working is difficult enough, but with Juan out of the picture, Ana's situation is more arduous and exhausting.

There are many moments in the novel when Curro stays at Ana's mother's house while Ana has nights out and occasionally brings men back home. Although, towards the end of the

novel, Ana has sex with an old friend, Gonzalo, who ends up staying the night while Curro is at home. When Curro wakes up in the morning he is suspicious of Gonzalo sitting at the table.

‘Dónde a dormido éste?’ <Y le señala con un dedito acusador y tenso.> ‘No sé’ — contesta Ana entre sonrisas—. ‘Supongo que en su casa. Acaba de llegar hace un rato para desayunar con nosotros, ¿no has oído el ruido de la puerta?’ (Es imposible que Curro le oyera anoche, cuando llegamos estaba muy dormido, a pesar del cuidado que tengo para que no me vea ningún beso, ninguna caricia, ningún contacto con un hombre tiene una sensibilidad increíble y especial). Y el niño se le queda mirando unos segundos, los ojos oscuros y cargados de sospechas, y al fin dice, ‘ha dormido contigo y yo no quiero que duerma contigo, no quiero, no quiero.’ (‘Where did he sleep?’ <And he points at him with an accusing and tense finger.> ‘I don't know,’ — Ana replies with a smile. — ‘I guess at his house. He just arrived a while ago for breakfast with us, haven't you heard the noise of the door?’ (It is impossible for Curro to hear him last night, when we arrived he was very asleep, despite the care I have so that he does not see any kiss, no caress, no contact with a man he has an incredible and special sensitivity). And the child stares at him for a few seconds, his eyes dark and full of suspicion, and at last he says, ‘He has slept with you and I don't want him to sleep with you, I don't want it, I don't want it.’) (197)

The interaction between Ana, Curro, and Gonzalo reveals how her son is somewhat aware of what has happened between her and Gonzalo. As soon as Curro asked where Gonzalo slept Ana knew where the conversation was leading. Ana’s thoughts (in parenthesis) show readers her rationalization of having men over, saying she never let any man show her affection in her son’s presence, but Curro’s intuition knew better. After Curro pleaded to his mother not wanting men to sleep with her, Ana was baffled and could not come up with a reasonable explanation for her

son. The scene is traumatic for both Ana and Curro; Ana belief that she successfully hid this part of her life from her son shattered, and Curro's perception of his mother changed.

Another aspect of motherhood in Montero's novel was the lack thereof. Two of Ana's close friends, Candela and Teresa, had abortions. Since Candela already had children to support on her own, she knew she could not have another child, and there were multiple factors that made Teresa feel unprepared for motherhood. Although abortion was still illegal in Spain, Spanish women traveled to other countries, England in many cases, to have the procedure done, try at-home methods, or go to under-the-radar "professionals." At-home methods were extremely dangerous and resulted in the deaths of countless women. Under-the-radar "professionals" also caused many deaths due to unsanitary environments, unlicensed practitioners, etc (Belén Cambroner-Saiz, Ruiz Cantero, Vives-Cases, et al).

Candela got pregnant after having an IUD for three months, and she traveled to London to get her abortion. Even though abortion can be a traumatic experience, Candela does not seem fazed by it, having gone through so much already. Teresa had a much more emotional experience when deciding to get an abortion after an unexpected pregnancy. In the novel, Teresa explained to Ana every reason she could not have the baby:

Porque no, porque no lo quiero, porque ha sido un error mío, porque no estoy segura de quién es y ninguno de los dos es más que un amigo, porque no tenemos dinero, porque ya es suficiente con tu embarazo, porque yo quiero tener mi hijo en otras condiciones.

Porque no, vaya. (Because no, because I don't want him, because it was my mistake, because I'm not sure who the father is and neither of us is more than a friend, because we don't have money, because your pregnancy is enough, because I want to have my son in other conditions. Because no, wow. (23)

Her reasons were valid, but the last one can be interpreted in a variety of ways. One is that she did not want to bring a child into existence because of the fiscal responsibility; the other is that Teresa was unsure of Spain's future and did not want to raise a child in an uncertain world.

Comparision

Doble esplendor and *Crónica del desamor* explore motherhood in widely contrasting ways. Constanica found motherhood to give her solace during a difficult phase in her life. To Constanica, her daughter gave her the motivation to continue pushing forward. Also, Luli was one of the many factors that drove Constanica to pursue economic independence. On the other hand, Ana faced the challenge of being a single mother as she was the sole caregiver for her son and worked full-time to support him. Montero depicts the other more strenuous side of motherhood; it is not always a fulfilling experience, but a demanding responsibility. For Ana, readers can sense her frustration trying to balance work, raising her child, and her private life. Motherhood is challenging, and each book illustrates different trials and tribulations Constanica and Ana had to face while raising a child.

Both Constanica and Ana had to make sacrifices for the sake of their children. Constanica had to send her daughter across Europe during the Civil War to guarantee her safety so she could continue fighting for her country, and Ana had to work a demanding job due to being her son's sole provider. As well as sacrifices for their children, both protagonists made concessions in their personal life as well. Constanica and Ana both left their child's father in order to live a more fulfilling life, but this benefited Luli more than Curro. Luli's biological father was not interested in playing a role in her life, but she was able to have a father figure later in the autobiography because she had Ignacio. Curro never had a stable paternal figure due to his parents separating when he was a baby and Ana never committing to a romantic relationship. With the lack of

paternal influence in Curro's life, his mother was the only parental figure, which resulted in his protectiveness of Ana. The exchange between Curro, Gonzalo, and Ana highlights Curro's defensiveness when it comes to his mother.

In *Crónica del desamor*, the subject of abortion pertains to motherhood, as it portrays the difficult decision of choosing whether or not to mother a child. Not everyone is financially stable or mentally prepared enough to have a child, and Candela and Teresa heavily considered these factors when deciding to have an abortion. They exercised their option to choose regardless of whether they could handle motherhood or bring another child into the world. Both women were justified and responsible enough to know that they could not have a child at the present moment.

5.4 Working Women

Doble esplendor

At the time, women's economic independence was unheard of, especially within the high social class that Constancia was a part of. She had everything she could want right at her fingertips – so why would she want to have a job? Well, she felt the need to be successful on her own. Constancia knew that she had grown up in a privileged environment with most of her needs satisfied, but her internal need for independence would never be satisfied if she were to keep living that luxury.

After she completed her schooling, she wanted to go straight into the workforce and serve as an apprentice in a dress shop in England. Constancia even wrote a letter to her parents detailing her plans, writing,

I told them I was grateful for my English education, but that what I had learned in Cambridge made it impossible for me to lead an idle, useless life. Many of the women of the best families in England were going into business. I had no special training so I would serve as an apprentice to my Mexican friend and return in a few years to Spain prepared for a definite career. (53)

By Constancia's choice of words "idle, useless life" she makes it clear that living by the standards of high society would never bring her the satisfaction she craved. However, this letter was met with extreme discontent, and Constancia decided to appease her parents by going back home to Madrid to find a husband.

Years later, while she was struggling to make ends meet during her first marriage, she broke many cultural norms within the upper class by getting a job as a clerk in an art store. Although Constancia chose to work because of her first husband's spending habits and failure to keep steady employment, she felt more fulfilled and had a better sense of direction. She wrote, "The hours were long and the pay very little, but I found having a real job for the first time in my life entirely absorbing." (100) Having a job gave Constancia a greater sense of purpose. Before, she had to be dependent on those around her, but after joining the workforce she began her journey to support herself and Luli. Later on, she was promoted for contributing to the shop's success.

When Constancia first met Ignacio, he asked her if it was difficult being a single working mother, and her response shows how far she had come, "I would rather be independent than live in security.' I waited, for in Spain this was a daring thing for a woman to say, even in the Republic. Ignacio turned to me, grinned, and said, 'Good for you! I admire you!'" (127) Her fierce desire to be independent meant more to her than going back to a life of ease and comfort.

Balancing motherhood and work were challenging, but Constancia pushed past the suffering in order to live life of her own accord. After her dialogue, it is interesting that she expressed doubt after saying such a bold statement, anxious over how Ignacio would react to her. Luckily, his ideals seemed to align with hers.

When Constancia's father confronted her about her relationship with Ignacio, she stood up to him saying,

'My whole education was to make me dependent, not independent. You never taught me how to earn my living, and so I could only lean on my husband or on the money you might give me... You call me here to ask me to give up my whole life. Instead, you should be proud, you should rejoice that at least one daughter of yours has been able to see clearly, at least one daughter has made herself independent...' (143-144)

She fearlessly exposed her father to his wrongdoings in raising his daughters. Constancia pointed out how their education was not meant to lead them to a fulfilling career but to be the perfect dutiful Catholic wife. Something had awoken in Constancia, and she was not going to suppress it no matter the extent to which her family hoped she would. When she expressed to her father that he should be proud of what she has achieved, readers can feel her heartache. Not receiving any moral support from her family was expected, but heartbreaking to read it explicitly.

Constancia needed a purpose, and gaining economic independence made her feel useful. She knew her decision to work would be looked down upon by Madrid's elite, but she refused to let that stop her. Even after her father invited her to come back home, she knew that this part of her life was behind her. Constancia led a rebellious life, and her economic emancipation was one of the many steps she took that led toward political activism during the Spanish Civil War. A

woman ahead of her time, Constancia's views on women's independence reflect those of women four decades into the future. Feminist revolutionaries like Constancia helped pave the way for the self-reliant women in *Crónica del desamor*.

Crónica del desamor

The women in Montero's novel have a variety of successful careers, some of whom also have children. Ana is a magazine editor, Ana María is a doctor, and Candela is a child psychologist. It is extraordinary that these women have such respected professions given the fact that they went through university during Franco's dictatorship. Ana and Candela's careers are essential because they support their children on their own. Ana María's occupation proved especially important to Ana when she feared the worst when Curro was very ill.

Ana María es médico... Fue Ana María quien la ayudó a sobrellevar la congoja infinita de aquella mañana, cuando el Curro se despertó ahogado en fiebres, inmóvil y delirante, cuando Ana creyó que tenía meningitis y se sintió morir de dolor, con una pena y un miedo desconocidos hasta entonces. Fue Ana María la que cogió al niño, la que le llevó a su hospital, la que consiguió los análisis urgentes y la curación del chico. Desde entonces, Ana se siente en deuda hacia ella. (Ana María is a doctor... It was Ana María who helped her cope with the infinite anguish of that morning, when Curro woke up drowning in fevers, immobile and delirious, when Ana thought he had meningitis and felt herself dying of pain, with a grief and fear unknown until then. It was Ana María who took the child, who took him to her hospital, who got the urgent analysis and the cure of the boy. Since then, Ana feels indebted to her.) (55)

When Ana was worried her son had a life-threatening condition, she knew she could get him treated as soon as possible with Ana María living in the same building as them. Ana María's career as a doctor helped in discovering Curro's diagnosis and treating him quickly.

Before Ana was fully hired by the magazine, she had been writing pieces for them as a freelance writer. When she met with the director of the magazine, Domingo Gutiérrez, to discuss a full-time position he was reluctant to offer the position without the approval of the owner, Ramsés Soto Amón. Ana was insistent on having the job or she would not associate with the magazine, Domingo commented that she was impatient, but her response emphasized how important this job is. "...no es impaciencia, tengo un hijo a quien mantener, necesito una seguridad." ("...it's not impatience, I have a child to support, I need security." (38) Ana had already broken things off with Juan, so she needed a way to financially support her son and herself. Ana's use of the word "security" stresses her desperation to give her son a stable life. Luckily, Ana was later offered the job and her career as a magazine editor officially began.

Although Ana was thankful for the job opportunity, there are moments in the novel when she pushes her work to the side to either care for Curro or have men over. After her time with Luís, Ana was thinking about how she planned her whole day around him and once he was gone, she thought to herself how she once again postponed her work for the magazine, wondering if it was worth it. It is apparent that Ana struggled throughout the novel to find a healthy equilibrium between all her responsibilities and her personal life.

Comparision

Work has different meanings for Constanica and Ana. Constanica had wanted to work since she was seventeen and once she was given the chance in her twenties, she never looked

back. While under her parents' roof, Constancia had no real reason to work other than she wanted to gain some independence. Later on, after Bolín failed to support his family with Constancia, she was eager to find a job. Once she was in a stable work environment, she felt her ambition for life was renewed. On the other hand, Ana never spoke about her career in the same way as Constancia. For Constancia, working was a way to break free from society's expectations of her and a step closer to achieving independence. For Ana, working full-time was the only way to afford her house, provide for her child, and keep them well-fed. Constancia and Ana's stances on working differ because of their socioeconomic class. Constancia grew up in the aristocratic class with all of her needs and wants fulfilled. Ana's upbringing was not discussed in the novel, but in her adulthood, she is described as middle-class. Ana was not given the same luxuries as Constancia and therefore fantasized less about having a job because Ana knew she would one day have to work as the rest of her family did.

Constancia and Ana are women who deeply valued their independence. Constancia craved independence because she was never afforded it until she was well into adulthood. Ana wanted independence because she knew she was capable and did not want to continue on with her relationship with Juan. Both Constancia and Ana proved to be self-sufficient women despite societal expectations.

5.5 Politics

Doble esplendor

For the first twenty-five years of Constancia's life, she was mostly disinterested in politics. She did have some sparks of interest when it benefitted her, like when her grandfather, Don Antonio, was deemed the "savior of Spain" when the King appointed him to form a

National Government. De la Mora wrote, “Marichu and I, indifferent to politics until then, suddenly awakened with a bang. We were celebrities, even in our dank convent school.” (32). Even when significant historical events like General Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship occurred, Constanca was not worried by the situation because of her social class. “...nothing would change for the people who owned lovely villas and could give their daughters dances and parties and fine clothes and rich husbands. Politics, after the first flurry, seemed dull. María Isabel and I settled down to have a fine time.” (70) Although Constanca was initially intrigued by the transition of power, once the subject was discussed for days, she grew tired of it. Later on, when Constanca and Bolín were on their honeymoon in Italy she noted all the commotion in the streets due to Mussolini’s rise to power. “The country seethed with unrest. But we knew nothing of this. Bolín was too stupid to be interested in politics and I was too ignorant, too young and too miserable.” (92) The quote shows how the pair were unaffected by politics therefore, they had no reason to be informed. For Constanca Italy’s fascist dictator did not significantly impact her already dreary honeymoon, the country’s turmoil was an unimportant factor during her trip.

When Constanca returned to Málaga without Bolín, Spain’s political situation was tense. De la Mora wrote,

...I became interested in what was said around me. I started to read the newspapers carefully and found that ABC, which was the only Madrid paper read in the house of my in-laws, contained the most crude insults against anything and anybody not in sympathy with the monarchy. I went as far as to join the queue before the only book shop in Málaga where the Heraldo de Madrid was sold. It was not an extremist newspaper by any means, merely liberal and objective, but when the Bolín family saw me reading it in the house, they were frankly alarmed and shocked. (105)

Constancia's newfound interest in politics revealed to her that the monarchy felt threatened by rising Republican sentiments. She discovered the bias of certain newspapers, like ABC, and went out of her way to find a more neutral news source to uncover the truth behind the political climate of her country.

After Constancia was officially separated from Bolín her interest in Spain's politics heavily increased, especially when she felt lost when Zenobia and her business partner, Inés, asked her opinions on Spain's current state of politics. De la Mora described her new intrigue writing,

Overnight I became a citizen of Spain. I think I could not have had four political discussions in my entire life until I returned to Madrid in March and a week later I was talking about nothing else. For all Spain was in a ferment. The dictatorship had fallen. Great events hovered in the balance. History lay around every corner. And I was free and happy, and suddenly I wanted passionately to know about the world I lived in. (107)

Constancia's sudden curiosity gave her a new purpose and her Spanish identity. She felt revived when learning more about her country's contemporary history, and it was only the beginning.

Shortly after Constancia became well-informed on Spain's political state, she visited Arriluce hoping to connect with old friends. When she got to María Isabel's family's house, she did not receive the warm welcome she was expecting. The Marchioness asked Constancia if she identified as a Republican, which sent Constancia into a whirlwind of emotions. Constancia pondered and eventually replied to her,

Was I a Republican? For a moment, I couldn't answer. For gossip had stated my views quite wrongly. A Madrid shocked at my separation from my husband had apparently

decided that independence and Republicanism went hand in hand... ‘If being a Republican means to sweep away all the corruption of my country, then I am a Republican. If being a Republican means justice for those who have never tasted justice, then I am indeed a Republican.’ (114)

Although Constanica was updated on her country’s politics, she had not yet chosen a political affiliation. The Marchioness’s interrogation brought Constanica to the realization that she was indeed a Republican. With this new awareness, Constanica cemented her stance saying she wanted to rid Spain of corruption and bring justice to those less fortunate in society.

Crónica del desamor

Spain’s politics affect Montero’s characters’ everyday lives, so it is often a topic of discussion. Some of the characters’ circumstances concerning abortion and contraceptives are greatly impacted by the political landscape and lack of legislation. There was a moment related to contraception when a physician was unable to identify a diaphragm. “Elena ha sacado su diafragma del bolso, una cajita redonda de plástico que parece una polverea de juguete... <‘que es esto?’> Está claro que es la primera vez que este médico ve un diafragma.” (“Elena has taken her diaphragm out of her bag, a small plastic spindle box that looks like a toy powder ... < ‘what is this?’> It is clear that this is the first time this doctor has seen a diaphragm”) (28-29)

Contraceptives were banned during the dictatorship, but the fact that a medical doctor did not recognize a diaphragm is extremely upsetting. The scene reveals the negative effect of legislation banning contraceptives during the dictatorship, resulting in men’s lack of knowledge of contraceptives and women’s bodies.

After Montero described Candela's abortion experience in the novel, Ana started to think about abortion if hypothetically the roles were reversed.

Piensa Ana que si los hombres parieran el aborto sería ya legal en todo el mundo desde el principio de los siglos. Los políticos preñables no malinterpretarían sus propias necesidades, como ahora, cuando mantienen que el aborto es sólo un método anticonceptivo más, exigido sin escrúpulos por las mujeres culpables. Y, sin embargo, estos guardianes del orden genital ajeno pagarán sin duda un raspado internacional a sus hijas descarriadas, mientras otras mujeres han de someterse a carniceros españoles e ilegales. (Ana thinks that if men gave birth, abortion would already be legal throughout the world since the beginning of the centuries. Pregnant politicians would not misunderstand their own needs, as now, when they maintain that abortion is just another method of contraception, unscrupulously demanded by guilty women. And yet, these guardians of the genital order of others will undoubtedly pay an international scraping to their wayward daughters, while other women have to submit to Spanish butchers.) (21)

Of course, if men were the ones to carry a child, abortion would have been legal from the beginning. If the politicians in charge could get pregnant, they would consider abortion as another form of contraception. However, since it is not the case women must willingly surrender themselves to "Spanish butchers." Ana's use of the word "butchers" reflects the way in which illegal abortions were conducted in Spain. As many Spanish women ended up hospitalized from these unauthorized abortions (if they survived), Ana believed women were being slaughtered by inhumane means fit only for animals.

When Ana witnessed a demonstration against housing speculation, she thought back to the dictatorship when protests were illegal. Montero described Ana as fearful when she would

participate in these illegal protests. Montero returns to the present, displaying Ana's thoughts of the current situation.

Piensa Ana que el desencanto político, tantas veces esgrimido últimamente, es un invento del gobierno Suárez: es más fácil dirigir un país de desencantados que de ciudadanos rabiosamente activos. Y, sin embargo, pese a intentar luchar contra esa paralizadora inercia, siente ella misma también la perplejidad del contexto, el absurdo, la desidia. (Ana thinks that political disenchantment, so often wielded lately, is an invention of the Suárez government: it is easier to lead a country of disenchanted than of rabidly active citizens. And yet, despite trying to fight against this paralyzing inertia, she herself also feels the perplexity of the context, the absurdity, the laziness.) (37)

Ana's discontent with the current political climate is a distorted reflection of the way her country used to operate. During the dictatorship, many Spanish citizens were angry and took extreme risks to display their resentment. Now, she describes citizens' disillusionment regarding the government and the lack of action taken to make changes. Ana believes the political disenchantment is a way for the Suárez government to manipulate the population into keeping the peace, saying that it takes less effort to govern a country full of disappointed citizens rather than angry and active citizens.

Comparision

The discussion surrounding politics is important to both *Doble esplendor* and *Crónica del desamor* because they give individuals opinions on the political climate. Although it took Constanca to reach adulthood and leave her husband to get fully immersed in her country's governmental state, she continued to be an activist for her country for the rest of her life. Even

though the political situations in the Second Republic and the Transition period share similarities, Constanica and Ana dealt with political strife differently. Constanica was fascinated by Spain's political circumstances, but Ana felt unsatisfied with her government. Despite Ana living most of her life in a fascist dictatorship, she knew the politics surrounding the government were getting in the way of real progress.

Additionally, both books echo the sentiment that the personal is political. The essay by Carol Hanisch, "The Personal is Political," is the argument that the problems women face in society, such as sex or childcare, are not just personal issues, but political issues as well. In order to find solutions to these issues Hanisch encouraged women to talk about their circumstances with each other and organize "against male domination of society." (Hanisch) Throughout *Doble esplendor* and *Crónica del desamor* there are women and mothers who do not feel content in their life. In *Crónica del desamor*, Ana feels like her life is at a standstill. She's a recently single working mother, and she feels the burdens of that along with her country transitioning from dictatorship to democracy. These discussions concerning sex, sexual liberation, abortion, and contraception occurred when the core group of women were together. The past stories from the characters discuss political issues that have had an effect on their lives. *Doble esplendor* relates to the argument that the personal is political because Constanica de la Mora's defiant nature was perceived as a personal issue, but she had many modern ideas about how women should live their lives.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Both *Doble esplendor* and *Crónica del desamor* depict women's perspectives of navigating a new political system and way of life. Women's fight for equality before and after Franco's dictatorship was similar due to their comparable situations. Both time periods witnessed the progression of equality with the passing of new laws and the resurgence of fighting against injustice. The expansion of women's rights during the Second Republic and Transition-era Spain resulted in a revival of feminist ideals. De la Mora's publication of *Doble esplendor* in 1939 and Montero's publication of *Crónica del desamor* in 1979 makes it evident that the resurgence of feminist ideologies was afoot.

The two protagonists, Constanica and Ana, valued their independence and took the necessary steps to preserve it. They rejected their traditional roles in society and lived life in accordance with their own principles. These principles were to not be dependent on others and work to support themselves and their child and advance the feminist cause. They achieved this in different ways; Constanica by working, separating from her first husband, and assisting the Republican cause, and Ana by discussing serious topics concerning women, regaining her independence after ending her relationship with her son's father, and embracing her sexuality.

The historical context provides an insight into the happenings of the world around them. The high tensions of social and political strife affect Constanica and Ana's outlook on life. The analysis of each book's main themes offers a better understanding of how individuals reacted to the transformation of their country, and how they pushed forward through the difficulties life presented them. It is important to focus on the individual's experience because it gives social commentary that is often overlooked or omitted from history.

To answer the question, *how did women in Spain navigate the sociopolitical fight for equality before and after Franco's dictatorship*, they did so in a similar fashion, by rejecting the cultural norms and remaining steadfast to their morals. De la Mora and Montero's books were fundamental in developing the argument presented, but there is still room to improve. Future analysis should include literature by women of different races and economic backgrounds to better encompass women's struggle for equality in Spain. As well as the perspective of immigrant women in Spain to compare how it differs from those native to the region.

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