

The Nature of Woman:
Spanish Women Poets of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

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ABSTRACT

KERI CHANDLER: *The Nature of Woman: Spanish Women Poets of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*

(Under the direction of Dr. Irene Gómez Castellano)

Since a woman's nature, or physical and mental character, was viewed similarly to that of the natural world, the Western European binary construct of nature versus culture is correlated to the discourse on women and their social roles throughout history. Through the study of Spanish women writers' ties to natural elements and female identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, their poetry reveals intimate connections as well as conflicts which demonstrate shifts in the socio-political climate. By approaching their poetry as nature writing, Spanish women poets' work of this period exposes the sometimes contradictory ways they adapted to the social and cultural conventions of the time through the use of natural images. I review the relationship between woman and nature as portrayed in the poetry of María Hore, Margarita Hickey, Carolina Coronado, Rosalía de Castro, and Emilia Pardo Bazán. As each writer must confront the dialectic of nature and culture, I analyze whether they embraced the social binary construct of woman's ties to nature rather than to the masculine culture, rejected it completely (and therefore subverted the binary), or searched for a solution outside of this dialectic, and how those confrontations affect their feminist messages.

To Brian: Thank you for the cake, the icing, and the sprinkles. With you I have everything.

To Cami: You are, by far, the very best gift from Mother Nature herself.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE NATURE OF WOMAN

While scholars have tackled the issues of Spanish women writers' identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and analyzed individual authors' works, none address the ties that connect as well as conflict them through their use of nature. Through the study of this pivotal theme in the artistic production of the period, the disparate images and integration of natural elements in poetry demonstrate shifts in the socio-political climate. Caroline Merchant, in *The Death of Nature*, explains: "By examining changes in descriptions of nature, we can understand the changes in cultural values" (4). In looking at poetry as nature writing, particularly, gives us a glimpse into the way that female writers experience, understand, and describe nature. In it, we can observe the unique perspectives of Spanish women, and the sometimes contradictory ways they adapted to the social and cultural conventions of the time. My study therefore examines how the depictions of nature in the poetry of María Hore, Margarita Hickey, Carolina Coronado, Rosalía de Castro, and Emilia Pardo Bazán either by embracing the social binary construct of woman's ties to nature rather than to the masculine culture, by rejecting it completely (and therefore subverting the binary), or searching for a solution outside of this dialectic, thereby transforming their own identities.

Western European thinkers constructed a binary structure that opposed nature to culture and viewed woman's nature, her physical and mental character, similarly to the natural world. This belief conditioned the discourse on women and their social roles.

According to Carol P. MacCormack, “In the eighteenth century, nature was that aspect of the world which had been revealed through scientific scrutiny to have its predictable laws, but also that which was not mastered” (6). Both women and the natural environment were subordinate to man and were felt to need taming. In addition, women’s reproductive roles were viewed as similar to nature’s fecundity. However, women also found new opportunities during the Enlightenment, which allowed a separation of biological and rational identities, the latter unattached to its wild natural counterpart. Spanish intellectuals embraced Descartes’ mind-body dualism, which “gave credence to the intellectual aspirations of educated women, by allowing them to abstract themselves from their gender, to consider themselves as rational beings and to present themselves as such in public” (Bolufer Peruga, “Neither Male...” 404).

This fragile release from woman’s ties to nature resulted in a brief social experiment in Spain for a privileged few to assert themselves publicly as women writers. In this study, I examine what these writers do with this opportunity and explore why some take advantage of the chance to distance themselves from nature in order to become superior to it, like man, whereas others continue to perceive themselves as part of the natural world, contesting the patriarchal hierarchy of culture over nature. Specifically, the differing perspectives of Hore and Hickey, the two canonical female poets of the eighteenth century, reflect such a personal and literary freedom. Hore chooses to identify closely with nature in her poetic creation of a feminine world, that exists in the enclosed area of the home and nature, for example:

Junto a un horno miraba
cómo se paseaba
un palomillo hermoso,
y los granos picaba
con ademán gracioso,
de la hormiga celoso... (“Letrilla,” 1-6)

Whereas Hickey distances herself from this connection in the quest of liberal feminism and gender equality, portraying her speakers as more masculine and separate from the feminine sphere: “Huye el Mar proceloso / donde todo es conflicto, / tormentas y borrascas...” (“Endechas Aconsejando a una joven hermosura no entre en la Carrera del amor” 25-27).

Another question addressed is whether a female poet’s connection to nature is directly linked to her literary and socio-political environment, or to her personal feminist viewpoint on the nature of woman? In the nineteenth century, the backlash against liberal reforms and the steps women have taken into the public sphere is thought to be due to the extreme popularity of the “flower poet,” Carolina Coronado. Portraying beauty and femininity, Coronado attempted to find equilibrium between patriarchy’s acceptable roles for women and her own feminist thoughts. Nearing the end of the century, Rosalía de Castro challenges this equilibrium, opening her second volume of poetry with this allusion to Coronado:

D’aquelas que cantan as pombas y as froes
Todos din que tenen alma de muller,
Poise u que n’as canto, Virxe d’a Paloma,
¡Ay! ¿de qué a terei? (*Follas novas*, 1880)

Castro writes regional poetry in which she identifies with nature but questions concepts of a natural feminine connection in order to give a voice to not only her impoverished homeland of Galicia but also its male, female, human, and nonhuman inhabitants, uniting subjects and readers in a common cause and identity regardless of time and space. Finally, fellow Galician Emilia Pardo Bazán, already famous for her naturalist novels, takes advantage of her privileged status to publish an entire volume of poetry dedicated to the most natural role for women, that of mother. Castro and Pardo Bazán, in addition to Coronado, were anomalies for

a period in which they had to navigate much more rigid norms of gender propriety but managed to overtly communicate feminist themes through their use of nature.

In the following chapters, the decisions to distance from or associate oneself with nature and their effect on the poetic corpus of María Hore, Margarita Hickey, Carolina Coronado, Rosalía de Castro, and Emilia Pardo Bazán, are compared to and contrasted with the shift in the perception of woman and nature. In viewing their poetry as nature writing, the writers' literary and social feminist identities, that is, their views of the nature of woman, based on their portrayal of natural elements become apparent. Daniel J. Philippon, writing about American women, agrees that such a connection can be made: "Women's nature writings," he says, "provide insight into women's relationship with nature and into nature writing's role in the constructions of [American] identity" (2). Surely, the poetry by these Spanish authors grants the same level of insight into the identity of women during periods of rapid political and social change. These differing views exhibit the myriad possibilities of being a feminist during this period of rapid political and social change. To this end, this analysis incorporates various twentieth-century and contemporary feminist theorists, including Simone de Beauvoir, Sandra M. Gilbert, Susan Gubar, Julia Kristeva, and Jessica Benjamin; ecofeminist critics Ynestra King, Catherine Roach, and Caroline Merchant, among others such as Susan Kirkpatrick and Jo Labanyi, to interpret the writers' relationship with nature and the resulting implications from a feminist perspective.

In the first chapter on María Hore, a discussion of the initial social limitations imposed on women writers of the eighteenth century in Spain reveals the resulting difficulties of establishing power as authors rather than through institutional female roles. However, Enlightenment reforms of the period expanded their options: Hore attended

tertulias in Madrid and maintained access to a large circle of fellow writers. Unfortunately, her personal life overshadowed her professional talents, a common issue for women writers of the period. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, there were clear expectations for women as mothers, nuns, daughters, and wives, but there were few precedents for women as simply writers. Like Sor Juana de la Cruz and Saint Teresa, Hore succeeded through writing in the convent. As a nun, she was protected from public scrutiny and utilized imagery of the natural world and the mother archetype, both socially acceptable topics, to challenge the status quo. Hore demonstrates and elevates the value of marginalized topics of the Enlightenment hierarchy: woman and nature.

Generally, interior images of domesticated nature as idealized feminine object dominate eighteenth-century poetry; as epitomized in the works of Juan Meléndez Valdés. For example, the male poetic voice equates feminine, delicate songbirds with their human counterpart in “*Filis cantando*”:

Venid, avecillas,
venid a tomar
de mi zagaleja
lección de cantar
Venid; de sus labios,
do la suavidad
suspira entre rosas
y miel y azahar. . . (1-8)

For the male poet, the feminine human and nonhuman birds and women have the same talents to offer: those of object of entertainment and of desire for the male gaze. It is important to note that the rococo works of Meléndez Valdés represent what David Gies calls the “*sensualismo*” of the period, symbolizing an alternate reality which rebels against the accepted structures of the Enlightenment, emphasizing not only the spiritual aspect but also the physical aspect of man’s attachment to his surroundings (“*Sensibilidad y sensualismo*”

217). The focus on the human body serves as a point of observation and reflection for the senses. However, María Hore and Margarita Hickey present nature with more emotional complexity, as feeling, experiential subjects rather than as manipulated objects.

Hore includes images of domesticated birds and enclosed spaces, such as cages, nests, or private gardens in her poetry. For example, in “El nido,” Hore writes:

Luego que a su gusto
la casa fabrica,
a solo alhajarla
con cuidado aspira. (13-16)

The author focuses on the bird’s subjectivity and utility, constructing a “home” for its offspring, employing personification to connect the human traits in the bird and its “family.” This is a representation of nature that experiences similar life events as humans, offering a multifaceted perspective of nature’s identity other than as a simple object / the Other to the poetic subject.

Hore began writing before entering the convent, leaving multiple archived manuscripts which are difficult to detail dates of authorship. Regardless, she established a complex identity as a poet, enjoying the freedoms of publishing anonymously about amorous topics and then under her own name, writing in the secure space of the convent. She values feminine virtues such as female friendship, rejection of male companionship, and coexistence with nature. Hore elevates a “Natural order” over a patriarchal order in which human beings, animals, and insects commune harmoniously in life and then become one with the Earth after death. In this manner, the poet bestows all elements of nature with the same level of importance. She even dedicates a short poem to the ants whose seemingly insignificant work contributes to the greater good in “A las hormigas.” Hore embraces the feminine associations

of nature and uses them to her advantage to assert her authority based on that intimacy. She does not view this as a negative connection but rather as strength. Ecofeminist critic Ynestra King describes such a compromise:

In recognizing that although the nature-culture dualism is a product of culture, we can nonetheless consciously choose not to sever the woman-nature connection by joining male culture. Rather we can use it as a vantage point for creating a different kind of culture and politics that would integrate intuitive, spiritual and rational forms of knowledge, embracing both science and magic insofar as they enable us to transform the nature-culture distinction and create a free, ecological society. (23)

Hore utilizes imagery of nature as feminine, and also observes it empirically while describing its suffering and death, thereby testing the limits of Enlightenment philosophy and the nature-culture duality. She also uses nature to establish a reference point from which to authorize her experience. In her descriptions of the distress of animals and their suffering personified, Hore highlights the value of marginalized beings, including herself as woman writer.

Like Hore, Margarita Hickey is an aristocratic eighteenth-century poet who took advantage of the expanding limits allowed to women during the Enlightenment. Whereas Hore utilizes images of nature to express the value of peaceful coexistence with the environment, in my second chapter Margarita Hickey's work indicates the social contradictions and double standards that had been created for women. In her poetry, she suggests that nature and its corresponding instinct are not to be trusted. Hickey, like Simone de Beauvoir, encourages women to distance themselves from the patriarchal construct of femininity and, in turn, nature, in order to succeed professionally. Beauvoir states:

Man seeks in woman the Other as Nature and as his fellow being. But we know what ambivalent feelings Nature inspires in man. He exploits her, but she crushes him, he is born of her and dies in her; she is the source of his being and the realm that he subjugates to his will; Nature is a vein of gross material in which the soul is imprisoned, and she is the supreme reality... Now

ally, now enemy, she appears as the dark chaos from whence life wells up, as this life itself ... Woman sums up Nature as Mother, Wife, and Idea; these forms now mingle and now conflict, and each of them wears a double visage. (237)

Hickey attempts to avoid this association of woman with the Other and as close to nature.

Hickey's aversion to a connection to feminized nature calls instead for women to enjoy other cultural pursuits, perhaps intellectual ones, in her poem, "Endechas aconsejando a una jóven hermosura no entre en la carrera del amor": "A empresas más heróicas / eleva tus sentidos" (55-56). In her poetry, Hickey elevates these goals more closely correlated with culture than with nature. In this chapter, Hickey's approach to nature writing contrasts with that of Hore's, integrating Beauvoir's theory of the Other, showing that both succeeded as women writers and as feminists in the eighteenth century but with dramatically different images.

On the other hand, nineteenth-century poets, such as Carolina Coronado, Rosalía de Castro, and Emilia Pardo Bazán direct their focus on the exterior and the wildness of nature: intense storms used for pathetic fallacy, birds of prey, and the open sea are frequent topics that link these authors to their Romantic male counterparts but with differences in perspective. Male poets tended to retain a disillusioned attitude with detached images of nature which belonged to a separate sphere, creating an antagonistic relationship with the natural world (which also directly relates to Spain's sociopolitical state of affairs at the time). The women poets, while taking advantage of the same tools as their male counterparts, still retained a connection to the natural world in their work. Castro dedicated the title and inspiration of an entire book of poetry, *En las orillas del Sar* (1884), to the water which represented not only her native Galicia but also of her relationship with the natural elements of her homeland. Similarly, in Coronado's "A la soledad," the poetic subject speaks of the excitement and sentimental reciprocity that awaits her in the untamed forest:

Plácenme los colores
Que al bosque dan las luces matutinas;
Alégranme las flores,
Las risueñas colinas
Y las fuentes que bullen cristalinas. (20-24)

This shift outwards represents not an acceptance of women in the public sphere as published writers but rather an adaptation to the Romantic movement, accessing the powers of nature in the Sublime by means of their intimate relationship with it. In general, this is indicative of the shift from Neoclassical aesthetics to a nineteenth-century appreciation for the omnipotent Sublime in nature. As the writers' poetry progressed chronologically, the socio-political circumstances regressed and *La Querelle des femmes* still lacked resolution. However, these female poets of the nineteenth century communicated their distinctly feminist political messages more overtly by integrating forceful images of nature, manipulating the powers of the Sublime.

The third chapter begins with an analysis of women poets of this period with Carolina Coronado, who questioned patriarchal concepts of time, progress, and nature in her poems and then sought to reconcile them with her feminine perspective on natural elements. She declares the act of writing to be essential and natural, comparing it to the omnipotent forces of nature, like the Sublime but not as foreign or alienated. Regardless, she struggled with self-representation as a woman writer in the public sphere, juxtaposing positive and negative images of nature, as well as the masculine and feminine, leading to a poetic portrayal of madness.

An approach Coronado's poetry by means of Gilbert and Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic* illustrates the consequence of the woman poet clashing between the masculine and feminine identities of woman as nature and man as culture, and between the male writer and

the female *poetisa*: madness. Her openly antagonistic views towards patriarchal limitations in her prose made her a pioneer nineteenth-century feminist. For example, Coronado wrote in the periodical *El defensor del bello sexo*:

La cuestión de si las jóvenes deben o no dedicarse a hacer versos me parece ridícula. La poetisa existe de hecho y necesita cantar, como volar las aves y correr los ríos, si ha de vivir con su índole natural, y no comprimida y violenta... es inútil que decidan si debe o no existir, porque no depende de la voluntad de los hombres. (“Al Sr. Director” 96)

She contrasts writing with the forces of nature repeatedly in her work, and concludes that both writing and nature are independent and, by extension, more powerful than man alone. However, she remained conflicted by the task of reconciling her dual identities as poet and as woman throughout her career.

Rather than reject her gender, Coronado worked proudly within it, although at times she faced difficulties projecting herself as an autonomous intellectual subject while acknowledging that women can be sexually desirable and desiring. The imagery and themes of her poetry reveal this tension, as she embraces feminine, sexualized descriptions of nature and rejects them. The contradictory viewpoints can only lead to one conclusion for the nineteenth-century poet: madness. Gilbert and Gubar explain: “While the woman novelist may evade or exorcise her authorship anxieties by writing *about* madwomen and other demonic double, it appears that the woman poet must literally *become* a madwoman, enact the diabolical role, and lie melodramatically dead at the crossroads of tradition and genre, society and art” (545). In this chapter, Coronado’s juxtaposition of positive and negative images of nature, as well as the masculine and feminine, lead to her own portrayal of the “anxiety of authorship” of the “Madwoman.”

Unlike Coronado, Rosalía de Castro, a Galician poet and contemporary of Emilia Pardo Bazán, faced more obstacles than the other women featured in this study as she wrote not for intellectual pursuits but rather for financial security and, later, socio-political progress and change. In addition, in *Las Románticas*, Kirkpatrick states, “Critics are only now beginning to realize that her poetic achievement, increasingly valued in the twentieth century for its innovativeness and evocative power, was profoundly rooted in her gender identity” (297). Through her poetry, Castro frequently incorporates images of the lower classes, often marginalized women, and wrote both in Galician and Castilian. In this chapter, her use of nature highlights the spatial disconnection that exists between the dominant, upper class patriarchal structures where myriad marginalized subjects suffer and the ambiguous, undefined area the speaker creates for herself. The speaker herself remains an anomaly, a vessel to serve as a witness. The theory of Julia Kristeva’s “Women’s Time,” in which she asks, “What can ‘identity,’ even ‘sexual identity,’ mean in a new theoretical and scientific space where the very notion of identity is challenged?” will highlight the importance of this juxtaposition of spaces and perspectives (875).

Castro underlines the idea that nature can be deceptive, and she refuses to present a simplistic point of view, presenting various images for one landscape. Catherine Davies states that in Castro’s poetry “the landscape does not represent social harmony; quite the reverse, its beauty is presented as delusive, deceptive, paradoxically cruel. Her landscapes [...] are almost always populated, usually by poor people; the presence of these people negates the myth of natural harmony” (“Rosalía de Castro: Cultural Isolation” 191). By rejecting the aesthetics of Romantic *costumbrismo*, Castro refuses to participate in the patriarchal discourse that creates arbitrary hierarchies or to subvert this dialectic. By

illustrating the lack of harmony that exists in nature, much of it blamed on male culture (destruction of Galician forests and resources and economically induced emigration to New Spain) the poet does not reconcile the division of a cultural vision of time and space with a natural one. Specifically, in her poems, the poetic voice speaks from natural and man-made boundaries, revealing the arbitrary notions of space, pertaining to the Kristevan perspective of “Women’s Time.” Castro incorporates an organic space and time not regulated by the Symbolic order due to the speaker’s constantly changing point of view, from intimate to distant, and of the past, present, and future.

Finally, in the fifth chapter on Emilia Pardo Bazán (1852-1921), the focus hinges on her work of poetry titled *Jaime*, named for her son. Although best known for her Naturalist novels of the late nineteenth century, an analysis of her earlier poetic corpus reveals Pardo Bazán’s identity as mother and writer and demonstrates how the author relishes the power of her role as creator of life and of verses. In *Jaime*, she creates an entirely feminine world full of harmonious images of nature. This positive association of woman and of nature as mother is a challenge to the “ángel del hogar” image of the subservient object. Rather, Pardo Bazán asserts power: in Poem VII, she links herself to the work of God as well as Mother Nature. She asserts that women have been given certain gifts from God and therefore, that women have an inherent authority:

Puso dulce calor en su regazo,
fecunda sangre repartió en sus venas,
puso en su seno regalada leche,
puso en su corazón ternura inmensa.
Hízola manantial del río humano,
depósito de seres en potencia,
flor cuyo cáliz atesora el fruto
vaso precioso que el amor encierra. (5-12)

These images of nature combined with the maternal reveals Pardo Bazán's trust in the power of Nature for the benefit of humanity. Catherine Roach posits that this concept can be feminist: "The Earth has functioned in the non-Western cultures as a very powerful and ancient center for worship and for seeing the divine as female and, before the Western scientific revolution, as Merchant explains, has been understood as our 'active teacher and parent' instead of as 'mindless, submissive female body'" (61). In this chapter her poetry demonstrates how Pardo Bazán subverts the patriarchal concept of domestic "ángel del hogar" and instead proposes a mother-creator who controls her own space, the external "huerta."

The poetic voice is that of the mother, demonstrating the point of view of the mother rather than that of the male infant. This is significant as Roach states: "Infants have trouble perceiving mothers as autonomous subjects (see Benjamin). Mothers and women remain closer to object than subject, closer to nature than to culture" (54). However, in this volume of poems, women are both subject and nature, asserting power over the absent male structures of dominance. Pardo Bazán played with the limits of femininity through contrasting images of sensual nature and motherhood, those that had been created by both men and women. She proposes a feminist solution to the conflicting concepts of gender roles of woman as domestic angel or natural chaos in the archetype of a powerful Mother Nature, a synthesis of negative and positive attitudes towards women.

In both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women's identity expanded from that based on a male perspective to that of a woman's as she was able to represent herself in the social manners previously mentioned and, most importantly, in her own words through writing. In addition, due to an increase in the number of periodicals and in literacy rates,

women's literary freedoms grew within both the private and public spheres. While many authors used nature as a metaphor for their own experience, male poets, especially, incorporated images of women as manipulated objects: idealized, marginalized, or made equivalent to a feminized nature. However, when women take up the pen themselves and utilize these similar metaphors for self-expression, they provide shift in perspective from woman as object to desiring, authoritative subject. Margaret Anne Doody expounds on the connection of woman and nature as subject: "Women poets seem to be bent on breaking down that barrier between subject and object, between 'Man' and animal which is a barrier parallel to the Lockean barrier betwixt mind and world" (26). In their selection of the ways in which to expose these natural images, i.e. as essential or as artificial in relation to woman, nature is not only a poetic but also a political device. Therefore, as the nature, or concept, of woman's identity changed from the beginning of the Enlightenment to the turn of twentieth century, so did her use of nature. Female authors demonstrated this struggle by differing in their perception of the essence of nature in woman; however, they, not the patriarchy, claimed the authority to determine their closeness to nature.

Throughout this period, equality of the sexes was also stifled by Europe's overwhelming acceptance of Rousseau's gender roles, including the nature of woman (in addition to Spain's institutionalized Catholicism and religious beliefs that reinforced rigid limitations). Catherine Jaffe and Elizabeth Franklin Lewis explain how the breadth of his recommendations threatened women's literary potential:

Rousseau's influential conception of 'natural' gender roles proscribed women's intellectual efforts and exalted (and limited) her influence to the domestic sphere: 'Women are what they ought to be, they will keep to what they can understand, and their judgment will be right; but since they have set themselves up as judges of literature, since they have begun to criticize books and make them with might and main, they are altogether astray.' (5)

Rousseau's works were embraced into the nineteenth century in Spain as the feminine ideal, based on a woman's natural qualities that he outlined. Susan Kirkpatrick agrees that Rousseau's concepts dominated Romantic Spain and beyond: "That powerful nineteenth-century stereotype of feminine identity, whose English version Virginia Woolf called the 'Angel in the House' ... formed along lines set down in the late eighteenth century" (*Las Románticas* 8). In this impossible domestic role, which reassociates women with a supposedly natural moral superiority in addition to her biologically restrictive reproductive qualities, the opposed categories create a paradox for women: "A polemic which created further contradictions by defining women as natural (superior), but instruments of a society of men (subordinate)" (MacCormack 7). In researching the nature-culture binary, I reveal how women writers navigated this slippery slope utilizing nature, because it was a tool most accessible to them and acceptable for them in order to project their own subjectivity.

Other scholars, including but not limited to Mónica Bolufer, Theresa Ann Smith, and Elizabeth F. Lewis, have discussed female authors' expanding subjectivity during the period, due to the Enlightenment reforms of Carlos III and the promises that awaited all converts of the new "religion": egalitarian philosophic thought. Aristocratic women, in particular, jumped at the opportunity to participate in tertulias and economic societies (albeit in restricted fashion). These women also enjoyed social freedoms to participate in *cortejo* relationships and even express themselves artistically by wearing exaggerated French fashions. Lewis states "Such customs may have been viewed as frivolous, but their identities, once based solely on their production in the home, were now being discussed and questioned throughout the eighteenth century" (*Pursuit* 22). Carmen Martín Gaité asserts that these opportunities to express themselves socially were only allowed in Spain because they were

trends imported from elsewhere in Europe: “In the view of the modern, the *cortejo* opened the way toward disputing the presumed eternal values that the traditional image implied, values attributed to conventions already abandoned in other European countries, those which Spain had to overcome to keep up with the times” (10). Therefore, Spanish eighteenth-century upper-class women embraced these modern, socially acceptable forms of public female expression as a gateway through which to pursue other potential liberties available to them.

Previously in Spain, women’s public and private roles and their access to education did not attract widespread attention (from men) as a political issue until 1524, when women continued to be viewed as easily corruptible due to their moral and intellectual weakness. In that year, Juan Luis Vives asserts that some tutelage to enable only virtue could be beneficial, in *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana*. Nevertheless, the patriarchal postulation that woman’s relation to Eve results in her inferiority as well as her source of power pervades Spanish mainline thought.

Benito Feijoo’s “En defensa de las mujeres” (1726) challenges the status quo by supporting intellectual and moral equality for both sexes. Theresa Ann Smith credits him for disputing the negative connotations associated with woman’s connection to Eve: “He questions competing versions of Genesis as authoritative and reasons that the penalty for Eve’s fall from grace is subordination, perhaps, but not due to natural inequality and this subordination does not imply intellectual inferiority” (35). Other writers of the period contributed to these crucial arguments for women’s education and access to letters: Josefa Amar y Borbon’s “Discurso en defensa del talento de las mujeres” (1786) disputes Rousseau’s vision of a woman’s “nature” that is complementary to a man’s and Gaspar

Melchor Jovellanos' "Memoria sobre educación pública" (1802) advocates education reform not only for women in addition to men, but also for the lower classes. However, because of the social and economic decline at the turn of the nineteenth century in Spain, almost no women's lives were changed due to these debates, and no polemical discussion on woman publicly appears again until the 1840s (Kitts 241).

This approximate forty-year gap of women's publishing, beginning in 1800, represents of a cycle of debate and censure of women as they are allowed some freedom for a time then yet again repressed and blamed for society's problems due to their supposed inferior qualities. The cycle can be compared to Marina Warner's "cycle of redemption" citing woman's connection to Eve in *Alone of All Her Sex*:

The fate of Eve determined that childbearing was woman's main purpose, then the salvation of the soul for herself and her husband. There is a cycle of redemption in which first Eve is thrown out of Eden and closes paradise to mankind, but the Virgin, the second Eve, accepts the words of the angel and conceives the redeemer who will restore humanity to the grace of God and reopen the gates of Heaven. (186)

The poets of the nineteenth century faced more pressures to conform to a social patriarchal ideal as the 'Angel in the House,' writing about domestic and accepted feminine institutions of marriage and motherhood, while at the same time seeking an individual voice and identity. While woman's limitations, based on her proximity to nature (as Other) and her role as mother tied to her physiology were questioned in the eighteenth century, they were reinstated in the nineteenth century. However, the institutionalized roles of woman as domestic "angel" and mother are ironically far removed from a "natural" state. MacCormack explains, "Women were the repository of 'natural laws' and 'natural morality', but also that which was emotional and passionate, needing constraint within social boundaries" (6). In my analysis,

this era's fissure between nature as female and culture as male reflected in the work of these poets demonstrates how the concepts of the nature of woman that Hore and Hickey publicly explored during the Enlightenment were revisited by Coronado, Castro and Pardo Bazán in the following century.

In her research of women's writing before the twentieth century in Spain, Amy Katz Kaminsky asserts that published authors during this time were accused of not writing their own works, of producing indecent literature, of not assimilating to the literary traditions of the time, and of publishing outrageous points of view ("Introduction" 13). In the eighteenth century, for example, Josefa Amar y Borbón wrote (and protested) extensively defending women's ability to create and participate artistically and Beatriz de Cienfuegos created the women's periodical *La pensadora gaditana*. Kaminsky believes that "women need a history; women's writing needs its tradition. Feminist literary critics and historians have begun, in the words of María de Zayas, to 'recover women's good name,' so that it may be recovered for good" (13). It is evident that in spite of a resurgence of publications in the last ten years on this topic, we need to continue the work that women writers began centuries ago and pay homage to these artists' accomplishments, perhaps discovering more long-forgotten voices of the past. Through this investigation, we can highlight the relevance of their words to contemporary readers and women writers as well.

Among the few published female poets from the eighteenth century, the work of Hore and Hickey provide a great deal of insight into the period and into their pursuits as writers and self-representation. Women authors also published various poems anonymously during this time, but the work of Hore and Hickey easily surpasses any other excerpts that could be found outside of possible archival work in the future. In addition to their poetry, they both

interest me because of the marked emphasis placed on their personal lives (somewhat like women writers of the nineteenth century), which caused their artistic talents to be overlooked by many critics until recently. These successful women writers and their biographical details of the Enlightenment era pique more curiosity because they were such anomalies. In *Eve's Enlightenment*, Mónica Bolufer Peruga highlights this significance: “The imposing image of the learned woman was a powerful reference for real early modern women of letters, especially writers, one that they incorporated into their works and reshaped to fit their needs of self-assertion and cultural authority” (18). Hore and Hickey wrote about domestic objects and nature to communicate their desire or discontent as they were just beginning to explore the public limits of discourse through these accessible means.

However, a century later, other women poets are increasingly conflicted and frustrated about the limitations placed on them in patriarchal society. Monica Bolufer explains that the acceptance of a more “patriarchal feminism” by both men and women resulted in such a situation in Spain at the turn of the nineteenth century: “La utilidad común es más importante que la felicidad individual de la mujer” (*Amor* 147). Given the much broader choice of women writers to choose from in the nineteenth century, Coronado, Castro, and Pardo Bazán demonstrate widely differing feminist perspectives while utilizing nature to discuss critical issues of identity during this time. While Coronado, Castro, and Pardo Bazán have been extensively researched (although Pardo Bazán’s poetry is not), like the earlier petition from Kaminsky, Lou Charnon-Deutsch agrees that more attention and merit is deserved for these and other almost forgotten writers: “Critical rejection of the sentimentality of this writing perpetuates the misunderstanding of the reality in which they participated meaningfully and of the still undetermined effects of this writing on large segments of even

the illiterate population” (465-66). Much remains to be studied and investigated, especially the use of nature in these women’s poetry.

Little work exists that examines both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women writers, especially those who wrote poetry. However, there has been a surge of research in the last ten years on the topic of women writers in the eighteenth century, including, most recently, the 2009 publication of *Eve’s Enlightenment: The Experience of Hispanic Women during the Enlightenment* by Catherine Jaffe and Elizabeth F. Lewis. This book discusses the importance of the Enlightenment for women, particularly for women writers, because they developed the ability to assert and project themselves into the public sphere. They explain the paradox of the era for women as: “the conflict between the Enlightenment reformers’ demands for rational equality for men and women (an issue generally conceded by the century’s end) and the increasing emphasis on sentiment and passion as a defining characteristic of the feminine sex” (9). The authors claim that the eighteenth-century participation of women of letters is critical to the feminist debate today because it marks the first time that women’s intellectual equality was discussed at length in Modern Spain as well as when women began to write in earnest for the public, although few in number.

Previously, in 2006, Theresa Ann Smith contributed *The Emerging Female Citizen: Gender and Enlightenment in Spain* to explain how tertulias, Economic Societies, liberal writers and reformers, *juntas*, and *escuelas patrióticas* helped to situate women in the public arena. Smith determines that, unfortunately, these gains were lost at the turn of the nineteenth century and blames this largely on the creation of the *ángel del hogar* ideal, in addition to a general social, political, and economical decline. She argues: “Enlightenment intellectuals erroneously valued reason over passion and, in doing so, neglected the power of these two

forces combined” (198). This feminist rationale, although not accepted by patriarchal standards, proposes an alternative option that some of the poets in this study achieve, reconciling the roles given while asserting subjectivity and agency through authorship.

Finally, Elizabeth Franklin Lewis’ *Women Writers in the Spanish Enlightenment : The Pursuit of Happiness*, published in 2004, presents similar arguments to Smith’s, adding that the eighteenth century marks the period in which women began to consider the prospect of their individual happiness as well as that of their daughters. Lewis qualifies the limitations that Spanish women faced during this time, stating that “Although [male intellectuals] wanted women’s participation in their reform movement, the actions of Spanish women should be to promote ‘utilidad común’ rather than their own individual happiness” (5-6). She focuses on the essayists and social reforms of the time to conclude that their ideas paved the way, albeit on an undulating path, for women today to become invested politically and financially.¹

These recent publications mentioned highlight the challenges for women in the midst of new freedoms through the debates on equality, access to education, and the ability to write publicly. Many of these struggles, the authors point out, are based on the Enlightenment concepts of woman’s closeness to nature and the determination by man of how she should be molded. These works provide excellent insight into the accomplishments of women of letters and touches on all areas of the humanities, but do not go into great depths on the topic of poetry or the use of nature. This study expands on these works as a basis from which to explore how the integration of disparate natural images by female poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries both followed and challenged the roles that were assigned by the

¹ It is also important to mention Rebecca Haidt’s *Embodying Enlightenment: Knowing the Body in Eighteenth-Century Spanish Literature and Culture*, a 1998 study of the masculinization of the body during this period in Spain.

patriarchy. The use of these images, such as birds or cages in the case of Hore, or the sublime sea in the case of Castro, can be seen as attempts by these female writers to challenge the roles of patriarchy while manipulating its accepted gendered discourse at the same time.

While recent scholarship on eighteenth-century women writers expanded, relatively few works examine women poets of the eighteenth century. However, Frédérique Morand has recently completed exhaustive research on María Hore, the principal canonical female poet of the period. In 2007, Morand published an extensive critical and anthological work titled *Una poetisa en busca de libertad: María Gertrudis Hore y Ley (1742-1801)*. Although her research analyzes some of Hore's poetry, the primary focus of Morand's book remains on her biography and rather than highlighting her artistic output. There is a comparative dearth of primary sources for other women poets outside of the archives, except Serrano y Sanz' *Antología de poetisas líricas*, published in 1915 and his *Apuntes para una biblioteca de autoras españolas*, published in 1903, and the poems included in critical work done by academic writers such as María Salgado and Constance Sullivan in the 1990s.

Furthermore, surprisingly little has been published in book form in the last ten years about women poets of the nineteenth century. The seminal text on the topic is Susan Kirkpatrick's *Las Románticas: Women Writers and Subjectivity in Spain, 1835-1850*, published in 1989. Kirkpatrick argues that the *ángel del hogar* ideal actually worked to women's advantage, and they were able to use this image to assert authority, although domestic and limited, and subjectivity. She also discusses the pervasive link of women to nature in Romantic poetry, claiming that it is used negatively to objectify women in male poets' work whereas women have a more complex relationship with nature that is demonstrated in their poetry: "It is above all by representing nature as feminine that

Romantic poetry equates woman with otherness, with the non-self that confronts the poet's subjectivity in the dialectic of resistance and reconciliation, as seen in Wordsworth – she is valued because she is what the poet is not" (24). Kirkpatrick explores this dialectic, which also existed in the eighteenth century, but in terms of women's silence and treatment as the Other, rather than as nature writing used for socio-political purposes.

La pluma como espada by Anna Caballé (2004) is an anthology of twenty-six women's texts from Latin America and Spain from 1800 to 1920. In the introductory chapter, María Prado writes: "Algunos creyeron poder detener el proceso limitando la escritura de mujeres a la descripción de realidades aparentemente simples, como una flor. Pero enseguida se vio que todo texto, aunque describa una violeta, es un signo de vida inteligente, y uno de los caminos para que esa inteligencia se ensanche y se complique" (16). The poetry of women from the nineteenth century illustrates this power that they have claimed in nature writing, exploiting the limits outlined for them by patriarchy.

With respect to individual poets of the nineteenth century, there is extensive research on Rosalía de Castro and Carolina Coronado, both of whom have several anthologies published. However, there is very little published on Emilia Pardo Bazán as poet; her annotated anthology of poems, *Poesías inéditas u olvidadas*, was published in 1996, but little more has been done on this subject. Taking advantage of this dearth of research allows for an exploration of Pardo Bazán as a nineteenth-century poet who shares feminist links to Castro and Coronado based on her integration of natural elements and the role of motherhood, which has not yet been exposed by critics.

The common hindrance all poets faced was challenging the divide between a woman's place, determined by her nature as morally superior and selfless yet susceptible to

the evil that awaits her in the public realm. In the domestic arena, the idealized home was protected and safe for women to be mothers and wives, working for the 'utilidad común' and few women dared to overstep the bounds into the public sphere or to vocalize their feminist perspectives.

These limitations of culture and the corresponding advantages of nature are the focus of my research. In looking at their poetry as nature writing, I illustrate how the use of the natural elements mirrors an author's relationship to her own nature, i.e. her identity can be observed in the differing perspectives of Spanish women poets in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is shown that nature is not a reflection of the authors' feelings but rather nature serves as a mirror of the speakers' individual relationship with patriarchal culture.

CHAPTER 2

THE *HIJA DEL SOL*'S SPARK IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT: REEXAMINING MARÍA GERTRUDIS HORE

María Gertrudis Hore (1742-1801) wrote extensively in the second-half of the eighteenth century with an intensely personal and intimate tone about the varied aspects of (upper class) women's lives. Through images of nature and woman as complete subject, the author manipulates the codification of the Western-European binary construct of nature versus culture and creates empathy for the poetic subject and outrage at the injustice to women as well as nature. In doing so, the poet challenges the Enlightenment hierarchy; Hore demonstrates and elevates the value of marginalized topics that exist outside of the patriarchal system: woman and nature.

This inequality was supported by scientific "evidence" that women were essentially different than men physically, emotionally, and morally. Londa Schiebinger explains:

By the 1790s, European anatomists presented the male and female body as each having a distinct *telos* – physical and intellectual strength for the man, motherhood for the woman. Yet even in this age where males and females were considered essentially perfect in their difference, difference was arranged hierarchically. Despite the revolution in views of sex and gender differences, the age-old dominance of men over women remained in force (in spite of opposition to the fundamental premise of the revolution – that sex pervades the body). (190-91)

The period of Enlightenment focused on equality of the mind and reason (for some) but still on difference of the sexes. Mónica Bolufer Peruga and Isabel Morant Deusa elaborate on this concept of difference and its connection to nature for women: "el concepto clave de la

‘naturaleza,’ esa idea de significados múltiples, tan imprecisa como mítica, que la Ilustración convirtió en norma a partir de la cual debían justificarse las pautas para la convivencia social [. . .] para indicar a las mujeres cuáles debían ser sus comportamientos y modos de pensar. Esa naturaleza se representaba como marcada en todo por su sexo” (197). Hore, as a woman and poet, participating in *tertulias* in Madrid, observed these philosophical and intellectual norms and their resulting benefits bestowed upon (mainly) men; therefore, she wrote to protest this injustice against women as well as nature. By writing about subjects such as nature personified, Hore chooses to value that which has been marginalized in the patriarchal structure of the Enlightenment.

Rather than subvert the paradigm, ignoring or arguing against these supposed differences of the sexes that were hotly under debate, Hore chooses to emphasize them even more, illustrating the continued connection of woman and nature. However, she does not deny the suffering that they share. In “Oda de una Poetisa a un Jilguero que cayó herido a sus pies,” published anonymously in 1787, the poetic voice laments the injury of her bird, “que apenas empezaste / a gozar de tu esfera / la libertad amable” (2-4). The poetic *yo* speaks directly to the personified finch as a mother and caregiver, accentuating her status and sexual difference:

Será mi mayor gusto
que en mi pecho descanses,
y con mi propia mano,
el alimento darté. (25-28)

The speaker adds to this image of mother and child additional promises of protection, never to “imprison” the bird in a cage: “No probarás prisiones / de tejidos alambres” nor to cut its wings.

However, for this sacrifice the speaker expects the bird to remain emotionally and physically constant. The poetic *yo* fears that the bird will abandon her: “ingrato a mis favores / volando te escapeses” (35-36). Ultimately, the figurative mother and child must stay connected for survival:

Pliegue al Cielo que encuentres,
¡oh! Jiguerillo infame,
con liga, que te prenda,
o tiro que te mate. (37-40)

Hore's poetry was belittled for its innovative, complex images of nature and femininity, which allow for an interpretation of her nature writing. In “Healing the Wounds,” ecofeminist Ynestra King states: “In ecofeminism, nature is the central category of analysis. An analysis of the interrelated dominations of nature – psyche and sexuality, human oppression, and nonhuman nature – and the historic position of women in relation to those forms of domination is the starting point of ecofeminist theory” (117). In Hore's work, nature is a fundamental character that experiences transformations and interchanges with the poetic *yo* as subject. Whereas nature has been interpreted as a generally stagnant object that is observed and utilized by the senses in neoclassical literature, or a means to utilize pathetic fallacy in early Romantic works, Hore creates a dynamic between the marginalized female and dominated nature which openly criticizes their mutual oppression. The poet takes advantage of the rococo traits of musicality and sensuality in her verses as well as the escapist tendencies in which the writer integrates differing perspectives of reality veiling a disguised, usually improved or playful portrait of a subject. Whereas women's writing of the period traditionally disguises not only their identities but their experiences, Hore portrays the profound roles which both women and nature perform not seen in poetry by male writers of the period who focus on their connection to nature as part of a larger spiritual experience

(Gies “Sensibilidad y Sensualismo” 219). Hore integrates poetic subjects and speakers that are women and / or nature, who are complex victims, caregivers, and mentors revealed through a transparent lens rather than disguise.²

Hore mentions enclosed spaces in her writings, specifically birdcages. These spaces are metaphors for much of her time spent isolated, whether in an overprotective marriage, on an island, or in a convent. The birdcage can be found as a common metaphor for repression during the period, for example, in Moratín’s *El sí de las niñas*, Doña Paquita is unable to make her own life choices like the omnipresent caged bird. However, Hore freely expresses herself through writing and exploring her connection to the natural world.

The initial writing about Hore focused more on her biography than her literary pursuits, but in large part if it weren’t for the continued speculation regarding her personal life perhaps her manuscripts would not have been preserved, like many other female writers of the previous centuries. Fernán Caballero’s short story, titled “La Hija del Sol,” placed Hore’s fame (for better or worse) into posterity in 1849, a tale which was passed down orally in previous generations. However, although Caballero prefaces the story by framing it as a tale told from one woman to another for entertainment, thereby subtly submitting to patriarchal values of women’s work being of little importance, the author concludes with a certification of its verisimilitude: “NOTA. Esta relación es verídica. La Hija del Sol nació en 1742 [. . .]” (429). Caballero asserts the importance of this tale that seems inconsequential but begs the question of the value women’s writing in general and the separation of the private from the public. In this story she merges the two spheres by publishing a short story

² Similarities of Hore’s poetic strategies can also be seen in Gabriela Mistral’s *Ternura* in tone and maternal theme.

about the personal life of another female author but focuses on the motives for entering the convent.

Thanks in large part to this nineteenth-century myth (in which Caballero focuses mainly on Hore's love life), the eighteenth-century poet's popularity soared so much so that Augusto de Cueto included her in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles* in 1869 (on which most eighteenth-century poetry anthologies continue to be based).³ As one of her first editors (and censors), Leopoldo Augusto de Cueto disparages her work:

Las pocas poesías que se han conservado de esta mujer singular, [. . .] no merecen salvarse del olvido, a no ser como testimonio honroso de su gentil entendimiento, que en tiempos más felices para las letras habría sido producido acaso brillantes y sabrosos frutos. Son estas poesías por demás candorosas é insulsas, y si algo hay digno de notarse en ellas, es que, escribiendo doña María de Hore cuando todavía reinaba el contagio del mal gusto, su estilo es claro y natural, con muy pocos resabios de retruécano y de alambicamiento. (ccxxxv)

The "Hija del Sol," or María Gertrudis Hore, remained a footnote in the anthologies until the last 20 years, when her poetry began to be analyzed and recognized for her literary talents, including innovative uses of poetic images and techniques. In 1984, Russell Sebold published one of the first contemporary criticisms of Hore's poetry, but focused again on her motives for entering the convent and her religious poetry. At the time, much of her work was inaccessible. In the 1990s, Constance Sullivan, a noted scholar of Spanish Women's poetry, published an article on Hore's more intimate poems, with a focus on her personal life but signaling the time for additional research to be done. As fascinating as her life story might be, however, the socio-political implications of her work transcend that which has been accepted and interpreted for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In her 1996 anthology, Amy K. Kaminsky notes:

³ Recent critics, like Frederique Morand, have illustrated the disparity between Cueto's texts and the archival sources found. Therefore, Cueto should be treated as testimony much like that of Caballero.

Because of their epistolary form and conversational tone, it is easy to read many of Hore's poems as if they were personal letters filled with autobiographical revelations. The scarcity of documents and of other accounts of her life adds to this temptation. This procedure becomes even more dangerous when we consider that so few of her poems survive. (392)

The reason for the lack of access to her work is two-fold, understandable for a woman writer of the eighteenth century: the majority of what she published was anonymous or noted with the pseudonym "H.D.S." (Hija del Sol), and that which did carry her name suffered extreme censorship (Morand *Una poetisa* 67). However, shortly after 2000, critics changed their focus to the validation of Hore as a canonical poet, in part due to her obscurity many substandard works had been attributed to her.

In an article published in 2000 by María Luisa Guardiola highlights the importance of nature and spaces, especially when the poet was on Isla de León: "[. . .] el encierro de la joven en la isla, que compara con una mujer bella y solitaria, es el marco ideal para suscitar su sensibilidad. La ciudad corrompe la espiritualidad del ser. El materialismo y las ideas positivistas destruyen el espíritu" (504). Although based on a biographical interpretation of Hore's poetry, Guardiola succeeds in illustrating this dialectic of urban and rural, between culture and nature, is an example of the Enlightenment hierarchy with which Hore struggled.

The extensive archival work of Frédérique Morand, who published *María Gertrudis Hore (1742-1801): Vivencia de una poetisa gaditana entre el siglo y la clausura* in 2004 and then in 2007, *Una poetisa en busca de libertad*, clarifies the bibliographical and biographical errors of the *Hija del Sol*. She did indeed publish 20 years before previously believed, before entering the convent, in 1768, which Morand was able to verify through painstaking comparison of Hore's manuscripts (*Una poetisa* 53). In the same vein, Morand proved that Hore did not write the other less accomplished poems that were previously

attributed to her. In addition, she verifies many historical details: María Gertrudis Hore was born on December 5, 1742 to Irish parents in Cádiz. She published her first 2 poems anonymously at age 12 in a regional anthology of poetry. At 19, she married Esteban Fleming, a business partner of her father's, and left Cádiz after her father's death due to subsequent conflicts with her mother; they lived in Puerto de Santa María for years. No one has been able to verify the existence of any offspring but because the poem "Al poner unas flores..." refers to the death of a child and a grieving mother critics postulate that the couple had a son who died soon after returning to Cádiz. Aside from domestic activities, Hore was a dynamic participant in a Madrid tertulia and when not in the city continued intellectual debates via correspondence.

Morand included in these two books over sixty sonnets, odes, *romances*, *endechas*, and other religious poetry and letters by Hore⁴. As the primary pioneer of the archival investigation into the poet, however, Morand uses much of her efforts necessarily publicizing and justifying the merits of Hore's work, in addition to the biographical data she is able to provide. Morand's two volumes remain focused on the biographical connection to her writing; therefore, she does not cover nature as a topic in Hore's work. She does mention a geographical effect on her character: "Los vientos que soplan desde el estrecho de Gibraltar despeñaron un papel de primer orden (salinas) y, en la época de la poetisa, aparentemente, afectaron al carácter y la sensualidad de las gaditanas" but returns to the concept of Hore as nun (*Una poetisa* 41). Morand critiques the imagery of chains and restraint as metaphor for either the convent and the restrictions on the woman writer of the eighteenth century, but not in terms of nature and culture.

⁴ Constance A. Sullivan published an article based on her archival research of over 50 texts in 1992 but did not anthologize them ("Poetic Identity").

While Morand writes about biographical details and Hore's pursuit of 'liberty,' Elizabeth Franklin Lewis dedicates a chapter of her recent book, *Women Writers in the Spanish Enlightenment*, focusing on Hore's Romantic style with eighteenth-century sensibilities: the poet's search for happiness through authorship. Lewis briefly examines the topics of birds and motherhood in several anthologized poems, as well as in order to illustrate the contradiction for female writers between happiness and denial in the social construct of the period. However, she does not analyze the poems intimate relationship to nature, which establishes Hore's poetic identity and source of power as an author. At such a critical period of change in viewing the world as dominated by endless possibilities of science and nature over religion and tradition, challenging at the turn of the nineteenth century, the change in viewpoint of woman's relationship to nature also must be analyzed.

According to Caballero's story, the "Daughter of the Sun" receives her nickname due to her immense beauty, and is the object of many suitors' attentions before and after marrying. Caballero alludes to an adulterous affair which results in Hore's hysteria and repentance to ask her husband's permission to become a nun. In her research, Morand was unable to confirm any adultery but, on the basis of Hore's own poetic works, suspects that the infidelity did indeed occur. Morand portrays Hore as an example of a woman living a life in figurative chains to pay for the sins of her youth ("Enlightenment Experience"). Recent publications demonstrate that the "*Hija del Sol*" deserves a new opportunity to transcend the legend perpetuated by nineteenth-century author Fernán Caballero.

Differing interpretations of Hore's motives for entering the convent abound, whether it was the repentant adulteress from Caballero's legend, a frivolous woman who tired of social life and impetuously decided to become a nun in the Monasterio de Santa María on the

coincidental date of Valentine's Day, 1780 (Morand 48), or excessive grief over the loss of her child and father. No one believes, however, that Hore was propelled by religious reasons, even though she published a "Novena" specifically for the convent to which she applied a few months beforehand. Most critics cite her lack of religious fervor in her writings (Sebold, Morand, Sullivan). For this reason, it is surprising so much criticism surrounds this aspect of her biography and her writing. Morand repeats "Cabe destacar que María Gertrudis Hore fue la única de las cuatro escritoras de la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII español, reconocidas hoy en día por la crítica, en tomar el velo de la religión" (*Una poetisa* 23). Nonetheless, because her poetry does not resonate with religious tones or themes, I will focus on aspects of nature and woman.

Elizabeth Franklin Lewis views her time in the convent as feminist metaphor for Virginia Woolf: "This subject eventually turns away from the frenzied exterior (male) world in search of a 'room of her own' in what she calls the '*amable sociedad de adentro*'" (*Women Writers* 62). I also contend that she entered the convent in order to write and escape the pressures and limitations of male-dominated society. Although Hore wrote poetry both before and after her seclusion from the outside world, she only began to publish in her own name while in the protection of the convent.

By writing about subjects such as nature personified, Hore chooses to value that which has been marginalized in the patriarchal structure of the Enlightenment. For example, in her most popular poem, "El nido," (from manuscript of poems written between 1760-95) Hore creates a connection between nature and woman; they both suffer together. The bird is the subject and the poetic *yo* is the voice that expresses its pain. Part I focuses on the bird and its construction of a "home" for its offspring:

Luego que a su gusto
la casa fabrica,
a solo alhajarla
con cuidado aspira. (13-16)

Hore utilizes personification to connect the human traits in the bird and its “family” with humans. Pierre L. Ullman agrees: “Las palabras ‘fabrica’, ‘alhaja’, ‘amante’ y ‘llora’ humanizan al pájaro al asemejar su industria, morada, acoplamiento y tristeza a sus equivalentes entre los seres humanos” (104). The poet also alludes to the sacrifices mothers make, even birds, to which human mothers relate:

Las plumas más suaves
del pecho se quita,
porque encuentre lecho
la esperada cría. (16-20)

The swallow removes the best feathers from her own chest for the sake of her expected arrival. Hore projects human emotions onto animals, contrasting greatly with male poets, challenging these norms by showing the personified actions and feelings of the bird.

Compare these verses to the object of desire, of the gaze, by Juan Meléndez Valdés, “Del caer de las hojas”:

Las dulcesavecillas
Ocultas en su seno
El ánimo hechizaron
Con sus sonoros quiebro;
Y entre lascivos píos,
Llagadas ya del fuego
Del blando amor, bullían. . . (Polt, 234, 21-27)

Rather than tantalize, Hore protests. Her verses do not reserve the luxury of the male poets to experiment within the rococo movement of sensibility and sensuality to subtly disguise reality; but instead must reveal the verisimilar experience of a witness not often publicly heard.

These qualities relating to woman's "nature" that are the results of eighteenth-century changes have current implications on feminist theory and, specifically, ecofeminism. Most ecofeminist critics argue that women are no closer to nature than men, challenging Enlightenment claims that women lack reason and, therefore, are identified with irrational nature. Karen Warren faults this connection of woman with nature to the "logic of domination" which "allows for the sexist domination of women under patriarchy by way of the longstanding historical association, at least in Western culture, of women with nature" (x). Warren agrees that nature and woman are connected by virtue of their oppression and the struggle for the rights of the two should never be separate.

This oppression is seen in the majority of poems of Hore and her representation of nature, e.g. birds and flowers as feeling, experiential subjects who participate equally with the human poetic voice. The poet unites the natural world and woman through metaphor and personification to place these marginalized objects in the spotlight. In part this representation is due to Lockean sensualism, popular during the eighteenth century in Spain. David Gies explains that many male poets play with nature: "El poeta del dieciocho comienza a usar sus cinco sentidos, a captar en palabras lo que está descubriendo mediante la aplicación de aquellos sentidos al mundo que le rodea. . . La íntima relación que establece el poeta entre su tacto, su vista, su gusto, su oído –es decir, sus sentidos – y su arte poético revelan la presencia del nuevo sensualismo lockiano" ("Sensibilidad" 220-21). On the other hand, aside from the male traditions of the period, in viewing this poetry as nature writing, I will integrate the ecofeminist theory of Ynestra King, a proponent of "nature feminism." According to her, ecofeminists "will fuse a new way of being human on this planet with a sense of the sacred, informed by all ways of knowing – intuitive *and* scientific, mystical *and*

rational. It is the moment where women recognize ourselves as agents of history – yes, even as unique agents – and knowingly bridge the classic dualisms between spirit and matter, art and politics, reason and intuition” (“Healing” 120-21). Unlike other poets in this study who deny woman’s innate association with nature, Hore emphasizes it to challenge the patriarchal norms that would negatively value feminized nature.

Hore perpetuates the essentialist concept of women as emotional, irrational, connected to their biological functions as well as portraying animals who are mothers and their natural actions and sentiments. King states that “the process of nurturing an unsocialized, undifferentiated human infant into an adult person – the socialization of the organic – is the bridge between nature and culture” (“Ecology” 21). Hore places both socialized / “cultured” woman and nature in the same elevated position as poetic subject through maternal imagery. In addition, this strategy of using the mother, a traditional but evolving figure, to emphasize essential differences between the sexes was common in the eighteenth century: “Madre de sus hijos, madre del marido, madre de la nación; a la mujer, por su natural –racional- naturaleza, dicen algunos hombres del siglo, le corresponde crear las condiciones del nuevo hogar, constituido ahora en un espacio de reposo y felicidad para todos” (Trueba 499). This small space in which patriarchal culture allows women, as mothers, to create is used and expanded by Hore to prove the value in the nature of being a woman, even though it is disparaged and limited by male-dominated society.

Part I of “El nido,” concludes as the poetic *yo* addresses a “Tú,” which is revealed later to be “Mirtilo,” a man and perhaps a lover. She refers to his absence and the way in which she has replaced it and will continue to, with nature:

Ésta es en tu ausencia
la diversión mía,

y lo será siempre
que estés en la villa. (49-52)

“Ésta” is the swallow, which gives the poetic voice joy, and she feels such a bond with this bird that she proclaims to her lover that nature will always be her companion for enjoyment, whether he is present or not. This is a bold statement which is addressed directly to a male character, and it breaks the symbolic order of man over woman and over nature. Not only does she subvert the patriarchal order but she creates a new one in which men are separate from women.

In Part II of “El nido,” this negation of men becomes apparent: she exclaims to the “Tú,” Mirtilo, to leave her alone in her space and to allow her to feel, because he does not form part of this emotional space: “¡Déjame que llore; / déjame que sienta!” (1-2). Anna Trueba explains that “El nido” is “[. . .] un claro índice del sentir negativo del yo poético hacia el hombre, en este caso un infame muchacho que ha revuelto un nido llevándose a dos pajarillos y dejando morir un tercero y provocando la más terrible desolación en la golondrina que los cuidaba” (518). The poetic *yo* uses mandates to powerfully claim what she wants for herself as well as what actions she wants him to take, as well as blames a male for the harm done to the bird, extending the gap between genders and their relationships with nature.

Hore also incorporates more sensuality in Part II than in Part I; first, demanding that she is able to “feel,” instead of passively observing. However, she repeats different forms of the verb “ver” to emphasize the shock of the sight she encounters: “Volvía contenta / a ver de mi nido” (6-7). Then “Vilo ¡ay triste vista! / ¡nunca yo lo viera!” (9-10). Aside from sight, Hore includes touch:

El que yo guardaba

ya palpita y tiembla
y en mis mismas manos
muertecito queda. (37-40)

The descriptions of the palpable sensations are used to involve empathetic experience, rather than empirical observation, that the poet feels. “The poets of the eighteenth century – men as well as women – were trying to set up their own terms for discussing human experience and relationships to the world without getting altogether caught up in what some philosophers wanted to make of ‘Sensibility’” (Doody 5). Hore alludes to the eighteenth-century appreciation of the sensorial experience. She emphasizes contact, whether human or non-human, to communicate abstract ideas about motherhood and social injustice. She also exchanges the possession of the babies, whereas first it was “El nido” and “la esperada cría” now the poet says above “mi nido” and “el que yo guardaba.” The poet transfers responsibility and empathy from the bird to herself; they are interchangeable subjects.

Additionally, a continuity highlights the “other,” which are the forces beyond her control, unlike nature. Then she describes the “other,” who, according to her, aside from Mirtilo, is the “muchacho” presented against nature and woman:

Pero el inhumano
abatirlo intenta;
percíbolo, grito,
corro en su defensa;
mas no llegué a tiempo,
que el pájaro apenas de las vigas cae
y en mi pecho queda. (21-8)

In this case personification blends with dehumanization to blur the boundaries between the human and non-human, challenging the authority to define and value each over the other. With this technique Hore incorporates irony, juxtaposing the supposedly “human” with “inhumane” behavior. The poet also alludes to the mother, with the baby resting on the

maternal chest. The poetic subject runs to the aid of her distressed child, and the human poet and bird mother are interchangeable. These images create a connection between the human mother and her animal offspring, emphasizing the link between woman and nature.

The relationship between mother and child is further elaborated in “Anacreónica: Al poner unas flores, después de amortajado, a un hijo que se le murió de viruelas” (also from manuscript of poems written between 1760-95), a moving and emotional poem. According to Morand, Hore lost a young child to the disease but no concrete evidence of this fact exists. In fact, the descriptive subtitle was added by her scribe (Morand *Una Poetisa* 529).

Given the depth of sentimentality and personalization of this poem, one can see why much of her poetry was taken autobiographically. The subject is the poetic *yo* and, at the same time, so are the flowers, which represent and actively portray the desolation of the poet. The nontraditional image of funereal decorations highlights the close connection between nature and the mother, based on her choice of symbolism:

Estas hermosas flores,
que adorno fueron míos
y hoy con trémula mano
entretejo y matizo (1-4)

The subject points out the change in possession of offspring between human and non-human, like in “El nido.” In this poem, the flowers that once belonged to the mother are returned to the Earth with her child, indicating an understanding of the circle of life, as she weaves the flowers together making a symbolic chain of nature’s cycle. The creation of a botanical crown also alludes to Hore’s own artistic creation, a seemingly self-conscious choice as well as a recurrent motif in rococo poetry, which the poet exploits and inverts in a funereal fashion.

As in previous poems, a sensory juxtaposition draws the reader's attention: the "trémula mano" of the mother with her son's "fríos dedos," where she places the flower, is a metaphor for the mother's love and caring that she can no longer provide herself:

Entre tus fríos dedos,
conforme, sólo aplico
esta flor, que retrata
la aflicción que reprimo. (9-12)

Also, Hore includes the action "reprimir," an allusion to being closed in and repeats the verb "conforme," she can suppress her emotions and physical self but allows her spirit to be released through nature and the flower. Lewis sees this ambiguity and constraint which Hore experiences as symptoms of being a female poet of the period: "Like the female poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Hore often felt her brilliance stifled and constrained. She also expressed ambivalence between her 'ego-centric, desire-driven' self of art and the 'other-directed' self of religion and home, much like the women poets to follow her in the nineteenth century" (*Pursuit* 67).

In addition to emphasizing sensuality over reason, the poet questions patriarchal religious values in "Al poner unas flores...". The poet briefly refers to the religious rites of passage, however, she diminishes them by her word choice:

Su purísima Madre
también tu madre ha sido;
pídele que me ortogue
resignación y auxilio. . . (17-20)

During the Enlightenment, God was viewed as the Supreme Being and nature was simultaneously a reflection of a divine order as well as secularization and pantheism through which nature was embraced. Hore first uses these ecclesiastical references to her advantage as a woman. These verses conclude the direct address to the son as "Tú," in which he is

compared to the son of Christ and she to the Virgin Mary. Hore utilizes this traditional imagery of herself as the suffering “Mater Dolorosa” of the Middle Ages to perpetuate the belief that she has been a good mother. Through the image of the “Mater Dolorosa” she implies that in mothering there is only suffering that connects mother and son, and thus asserts the only positive reflection of herself possible now that her son is dead. However, she interposes the traditional religious image with the pagan non-Enlightened image of Mother Nature and the cycles of all life, human and non-human. Morand agrees: “Hore no parece convencida por los argumentos teológicos defendidos por la jerarquía eclesiástica de su tiempo; se construye, libre, su propio esquema espiritual, eso sí, basándose en las ideas de la espiritualidad de sustancias inmateriales” (“¿Qué sabemos...?” 144). In asserting her own spiritual beliefs, Hore gives the flower as much agency as she allows herself or Christianity, allowing the floral chain to rest with her son instead of her and to represent her grief.

The poet continues to challenge the systems of power by changing the hierarchical order as she concludes in ambiguous terms about the child’s “eternal rest”:

Ya su espíritu habita
en más dichoso sitio:
y tras sí se ha llevado
sentimiento y sentido.
De la naturaleza
ceda el infinito alivio
al superior decreto
De quien así lo quiso. (25-32)

Then, the senses are utilized again with respect to the son and his resting spirit, only now adding the key eighteenth-century word sentiments. The poetic voice mentions that her son’s spirit has already gone; however, the poet does not refer to heaven or another location specifically, thus questioning Christianity. The fact that her son leaves her with feelings, yet she has no concern for his physical being or specific resting place, challenges the norms of

the time. Morand agrees that the poet suggests another value system based on nature, based on this passage: “Ni siquiera menciona a Dios sino a la ‘naturaleza’ aunque se puede entender, implícitamente, el nombre de Dios, la *naturaleza divina*; no obstante, no fue el que eligió la poetisa sino un sustantivo representando el orden y el curso natural de las cosas” (“¿Qué sabemos...” 144). The poet emphasizes nature and feminine values through these sentiments, which are more important to her than masculine reasoning. Her memories and feelings about her loss provide a comfort because of the sensual connection to nature which is omnipresent; rational examination of the circumstances does not.

Another poem, “Anacreónica⁵ a la muerte de un hermoso Canario,” published anonymously in 1787, deals with both human and non-human nature, but the poetic voice identifies with a domesticated caged bird, rather than the wild swallows from “El nido” or the flowers from the previous poem. Ironically, this canary that was so content to be enfolded safely in its cage died in that very protective enclosure when it fell to the floor. The poet identifies the previously known dangers, which are men:

¡Ay...Pajarito mío,
que contento vivías
del cazador seguro
del lazo y de la liga! (57-60)

The first two stanzas refer to the cycle of life; the bird dies in the speaker’s hands: “y donde la empezaste, / acabará tu vida” (3-4), indicating the physical intimacy and maternal union between the human and non-human in this cycle. Hore utilizes irony again, however, when she describes the very unnatural upbringing of the canary without its mother and juxtaposes the nest with its actual home, the cage:

Tú que no disfrutaste
las maternas caricias,

⁵ Lewis believes the term “Anacreontic” is a misnomer and is probably due to an editor’s labeling, not the poet’s (*Pursuit* 65).

robada al dulce nido
aun apenas nacida. (5-8)

These references to nature, first the cyclical nature of life and death, and then the rapture of the “baby” from its “home” underlines the injustice of the subject’s imprisonment. From there, Hore demonstrates how the canary overcame these pressures of solitude and isolation by singing, a metaphor for the poet’s writing in the convent. The poet claims that she mothered the bird, “A quien yo alimentaba / alegre y compasiva” (9-10) and she repeats the possessive “mi mano” and “pajarito mío” to illustrate that the bird is a product of her compassion and belongs to her, as though it were her child.

Most important is the connection to the poet’s own mother and the bird:

De mi querida madre
eras tú las delicias,
y prenda de su afecto
fuiste herencia mía. (41-4)

Her inheritance was a cage, albeit with a living animal inside, but the symbolism of the enclosure and restrictions being passed down from one mother to another is significant and a commentary on the socio-political conditions of the era. Elizabeth Lewis highlights the conflict of identity in nature through a negative connotation: “Hore too used the bird as both her muse and as an external projection of her ‘caged’ inner self” (“Mythical Mystic...” 98). In this poem we see the contradictions of being imprisoned and being liberated as a metaphor for the poet’s experience of freely expressing herself while in a convent (or isolated island, overprotective marriage) yet literally being restrained. Hore did not choose the symbols of nature, such as the canary, arbitrarily; the bird not only represents her sentiments but also protests the domination of nature, as they suffer the same restrictions. Woman and nature are two objectified subjects who face external forces beyond their control.

Like the previous two poems, the poet relates to the figure of the child through pain and suffering – she empathizes completely with her child’s pain, using sensory images to emphasize the extent of their mutual desolation:

Te tiembla el cuerpecito,
el pecho te palpita,
las alas se te caen,
y lentamente pías. (65-8)

This empathetic description of tremendous pain is illustrated in detail through touch and sound. Again the poetic voice speaks of her own suffering in connection with the bird; the canary is gone and no longer feels, yet the mother does: “¡pobre de mí! . . . ya expiras” (76). She sacrifices her own warmth, trying to transfer her warm breath to the bird but to no avail. Hore illustrates that no matter what a woman sacrifices and gives to her child to appease the patriarchal norms of the era, she cannot save him and is left with only pain. Therefore, the cultural ideal of repressed mother is insufficient for the author.

“Anacreónica a la muerte de un hermoso Canario” is followed by a quartet, “A las hormigas,” which serves as a postscript to the previous poem. Hore connects nature to the cycle of life by requesting that the ants “clean” the bird for her in their instinctive way and leave her the essence of the canary:

A vosotras hormigas diligentes,
anatómicas diestras de las aves
el cadáver entrego porque quiero
en precioso esqueleto conservarle. (1-4)

The poet incorporates this grotesque description of the afterlife in the natural world, to emphasize the “natural order” that has as much value to her as does the patriarchal one. This challenge is decidedly feminist: “The Pythagorean theme, along with the strong interest in animals, birds and insects generally found in women’s poetry, especially in this period,

permits investigations and statements counter to a dangerously prevalent reduction of everything to the life of Mind” (Doody 13). This quartet can also be read as a satire of the *fábulas*, the morality poems popular in Neoclassical literature in the first half of the eighteenth century. Whereas Hore did not have the opportunity to revel in the interplay of hiding patriarchal gender roles of the rococo aesthetic in her poetry of the time, she could again invert the imagery in a funereal manner that emphasizes the power of nature. Normally, in a *fábula* the animals would follow the rules of the cultural norms and go about their lives. Here, Hore manages to challenge this canonical pattern.

Regardless, the mother-child leitmotif of these poems highlights the reconciliation necessary between woman’s connection to the natural world and her cultural opportunities in eighteenth-century Enlightenment. King states: “The key to the historic agency of women with respect to the nature / culture dualism lies in the fact that the traditional activities of women – mothering, cooking, healing, farming, foraging – are as social as they are natural” (“Healing” 116).

“La ensalada,” published in 1795 in *Diario de Madrid*, highlights the harmony between women and nature in a protected, feminine space of the private home. Lewis comments: “While men went outside the domestic sphere to find friendship, women in Hore’s poetry find companionship, understanding, peace and happiness within it – an ‘amable sociedad de adentro’ as she puts it in another poem, ‘Endecasílabos a sus amigas.’” (*Pursuit of Happiness* 77). However, unlike the contradictions of the enclosed spaces like the cage, the inclusion of natural elements such as vibrant fruits and vegetables contribute to a pacific equality in the interior scene. The colors of the Earth contrast and bring joy to the artistic creation of this beautiful salad:

Pon también la ensalada
aliñada y compuesta,
con la blanca cebolla
y la borraja fresca.
El rubí del tomate
y la esmeralda bella,
del pimentillo dulce
y hojitas de pimienta. (25-32)

Hore utilizes all of the senses in this poem, including the sight of the colors and shapes, the sounds of the external leaves which differ from the tactility of the soft ripe interiors, and the fragrance of the herbs: “y el orégano ostente / fragante competencia” (35-6). Of course, the tasting of the decadent salad remains untold, leaving the reader only with the reference to the peaceful environment the women enjoy: “comamos y bebamos / en paz nuestra merienda” (47-8). The female companionship, along with the artistic creation of the salad made from natural components, highlights the implicit value of the feminine and of nature as all the requirements for a full life without the male presence or “culture.”

Many critics have pointed out the lesbian connotation in the verses:

Parte ese verde globo,
su corazón nos muestra
muy rojo y matizado
con las pepitas negras. (37-40)

However, in addition to representing an erotic moment, this is a celebration of the power of the female sex and friendship. Such references to this power appear in other poems in which she alludes to Sappho (“Bellísima Diana,” “Zagal el más bello”) for the inspiration and example she has provided for later women poets. Kirkpatrick explains that Sappho was vital to many Romantic poets in the important portrayal of friendship in this era: “One powerful form of encouragement to women with a vocation for writing was the example of other women writers. Taking heart from the images of illustrious forerunners like Sappho and Saint

Teresa . . . the pioneering female poets of this period in turn provided models that inspired their younger or more timid contemporaries” (*Románticas* 79). The critic also adds that Sappho’s image as a sexually desiring and desired subject served to counter the prevailing images of women repressed (*Románticas* 80).

It is important to underline the acceptance of homosexual poets in the eighteenth century, so much so that Luzán lauded Anacreon and Sappho as examples of *buen gusto* and models for poets, and were extremely popular during the period (Gómez Castellano 85). In addition to the allusions to Sappho, for her image as sexually desiring, for her poetry and work as female artist, the legend of her untimely demise recurs in Hore’s poetry. In her analysis of references to suicide in “Bellas pescadoras,” and later “Bellísima Diana” Lewis states that Hore’s passion and desire separate her in her allusions to Sappho in comparison with her contemporaries (*Pursuit* 70,74).

Hore, with the authority as poet, elevates the positions of women and nature as creators and essential characters to demonstrate that the feminine is neither less nor incomplete without the presence of man and the dominant patriarchal structure. In “La ensalada,” she reveals that external “culture” damages the natural peace of interior protected spaces, but asserts that women equally are to blame:

De riñas y cuestiones
ardiendo está la Aldea,
todas hablan a un tiempo,
y no hay quien las comprenda. (1-4)

Hore describes the negative influence of culture in the town and the resulting chaos, which can affect women as well as men.

Hore continues to focus on the feminine in the poems “A sus amigas” (1780) and “Hasta cuándo, Gerarda” (1795) and refers to nature indirectly yet still highlights its

importance for the female author. In “A sus amigas,” the speaker describes the peace of the convent:

halló la paz, el gusto, la alegría,
los placeres, el gozo y el sosiego
que en este caos de contrariedades
en vano procuró buscar su esmero. (17-20)

As in “La ensalada,” Hore emphasizes the peaceful attributes of feminine companionship as well the chaos from which she and the women distance themselves. The poetic voice also alludes to the contradictions of the Enlightenment culture: she is torn between her identity of author as a product of either nature or culture. Of course, Hore opposes this dialectic from which she flees. Interestingly, the Hore uses nature as a metaphor for the means of escape from the “chaos” of society as she travels across the sea:

Ya la nave que anduvo por el golfo,
expuesta al choque de contrarios vientos,
sin temor de huracanes y borrascas,
logró tener del mar seguro puerto. (5-9)

Although the winds challenge her direction, she does not fear the power of nature, the overwhelming potential of the Romantic Sublime is not present. Nature helped her arrive at the shelter of the convent but the contradictions and varying winds stay with her as she desires to continue writing: “y la pluma me ponen en la mano / gusto y obligación al mismo tiempo” (27-8). Now, she delights in the company of the nuns, who are friends and family for her “Las ya de edad me tratan como hija” (41) “y con la juventud alegre logro / la diversión, compañía y juego” (43-4). Hore elevates the society of women, helped by nature, and suggests that with both she lacks nothing.

Like “A sus amigas,” the theme of female friendship and authorship dominates in “Hasta cuándo, Gerarda.” Hore utilizes temporal elements and movement to emphasize the

importance of the interlocutor, a young poet, to join the belief system that Hore has established to become a successful female author. The older, experienced speaker repeats “Hasta cuándo...” in the first two stanzas to underline the urgency of time for young Gerarda. Hore then includes repetition by beginning three consecutive stanzas with *yo* as she speaks of the past, of the speaker’s previous mistakes: “Yo lloré ingratiudes, / yo celebraba afectos” (21-2). As the speaker refers to the present and the future, she integrates movement:

Emprenda, emprenda mucho,
elévase tu ingenio,
remóntese tu numen,
cruce el numen volando,
no aletee rastrero. (33-7)

Hore suggests that Gerarda must quickly continue forward to claim the poetic gifts she already possesses. These preexisting gifts give the young artist agency. The poetic voice encourages an elevation, an incline to meet her genius that refers to a spiritual (although not Christian) path. Then nature joins in the near future:

Y luego que tus voces
llenen de gozo el viento,
verás qué diferentes
guirnaldas te tejemos.
Verás caer marchitas
esas rosas de Venus,
y perder la fragancia
que te encantó algún tiempo. (54-61)

Again the wind helps the poets, and the speaker will join her in female companionship by crafting garlands together, inspired by their individual genius. Hore subverts the concept of nature that is cultivated, that is, cultured, when she illustrates the ephemeral quality of the roses. The speaker objects to the value placed on roses when it regards courtly love and emphasizes how quickly both fade, adding to the importance of time in the poem.

Gerarda's artistic powers are being wasted by making laurels for men, contrasting natural elements which presumably constitute the women's creation with the industrial elements of man:

No tejas más laureles
a ese contrario sexo,
que sólo en nuestra ruina
fabrica sus trofeos. (38-41)

The word choice "fabrica" indicates a disdain for the artificial and is another way Hore elevates the natural world to reconcile the nature/culture dialectic. This can be argued as a precursor to ecofeminist politics, as the poet wrote in the century following the Scientific Revolution, which Carolyn Merchant blames for the transformation of "the cosmos [which] became a machine instead of an organism which sanctioned domination of nature and women" (xvii). Hore challenges the values of artificial culture with the natural. King adds that a central ecofeminist principle is "The building of Western industrial civilization in opposition to nature interacts dialectically with and reinforces the subjugation of women, because women are believed to be closer to nature" ("The Ecology of Feminism" 19). Hore foreshadows this continued problematic of male-dominated industrialization at the expense of nature and women and the expanding void between the sexes if a solution outside of the dialectic is not found.

In order to provide a complete overview of Hore's work, it is key to give an example of a poem which does not specifically utilize images of nature, of which only one exists in her published poetry. "Estaba Apolo en el Parnaso" (1787), is a sonnet which relates a mythological world in which Hore, or "Fenisa," receives her artistic and aesthetic powers as the daughter of Apolo. Constance Sullivan points out that this poem was written before she took her religious vows but then published, like all her other poems, after she entered the

convent (“Poetic Identity” 161). There are no images of nature, except perhaps the reference to varied garlands worn by the other characters. Fenisa refers to the garland as a crown, implying a hierarchy: “y al ver de todas coronar las frentes, / ¿dónde está, dice, la corona mía?” (7-8). The author reveals her desire and drive for recognition as an artist:

Febo al verla de galas adornada,
aparta, la responde, la riqueza
con mi numen feliz no tiene entrada:
A que ella le replica con presteza:
si esto no más en mí te desagrada,
coróname que admito la pobreza. (9-14)

The poet insinuates this desperation, “replica con presteza,” signaling her argument and demand to receive a garland as the other (presumably male) characters wear. Sullivan discusses the eighteenth-century author’s ambition and pride with regard to her timing of writing and publishing, proposing “that Hore did have a vocation: that of poet. Writing constantly and on many subjects, self-consciously proud of her work and of the high regard in which other people held it, Hore was protective of her fame as a poet and determined to maintain it even – perhaps especially – after she entered the cloister” (“Poetic Identity” 175). This poem exemplifies such pride in her status as author.

In “Estaba Apolo en el Parnaso,” Hore attempts to reconcile the masculine and feminine spheres, a significant element as a feminist writer. King encourages the inclusion of the male with the female: “An ecological feminism calls for a dynamic, developmental theory of the person – male *and* female – who emerges out of nonhuman nature, where difference is neither reified nor ignored and the dialectical relationship between human and nonhuman nature is understood” (“Healing” 117). In accordance with King’s theory, Hore tries to merge the male-dominated intellectual world with her personal feminine identity tied to the power of nature. Although Hore praises female companionship and embraces settings

apart from traditional male society and culture, she does not advocate that all women reject men. She frequently acknowledges her fortune for being given the talent and opportunity to write during a period when women were able to experiment with social roles. The poet enjoyed the benefits of being a woman in society as well as a woman in nature, and refuses to deny her connection to either. She also refuses to place either culture or nature over the other, thus rejecting the dialectic.

However, on an artistic level, and therefore on a socio-political level, Hore does elevate the feminine world and nature in order to establish a new reciprocal relationship with, but not over, Enlightenment patriarchy. King states: “There is no natural hierarchy; human hierarchy is projected onto nature and then used to justify social domination. Therefore, ecofeminist theory seeks to show the connections between all forms of domination, including the domination of nonhuman nature, and ecofeminist practice is necessarily antihierarchical” (“The Ecology of Feminism...” 19). I assert that Hore does just that in her work, establishing the connections not just of domination and repression but the positive associations and possibilities that can exist in the poetic realm as well as, eventually, reality, while avoiding a hierarchical structure between feminine nature and masculine culture.

In this analysis of María Gertrudis Hore’s poems, it is clear that the “Daughter of the Sun” transcends the simplistic legend perpetuated by Fernán Caballero. The striking images of nature, the techniques of personification and dehumanization, and the leitmotif of justice and spiritual motherhood demonstrate how María Gertrudis Hore manipulates the reader’s emotions towards empathy and outrage for the injustice of the poetic subject, whether human or anthropomorphic representation of nature. Hore proves to be an innovative writer and a feminist. Although she was not an ecofeminist by contemporary standards, her seemingly

innocuous personal topics were indeed socio-political. In doing so, the poet takes advantage of the liberties provided to her by eighteenth-century liberal reforms while challenging the perpetual dialectic by making feminized woman and nature central to her work in the masculine sphere of literary culture.

CHAPTER 3

MARGARITA HICKEY: AT WAR WITH NATURE

Unlike María Hore, who embraces her subjects' intimacy with nature to uphold traditional feminine values as powerful, Margarita Hickey chooses to distance herself from the constraining patriarchal perceptions of woman as nature. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir claims: "The being who is most firmly anchored in nature, who is closest to the ground, is also the key to the beyond. Truth, Beauty, Poetry – she is All: once more all under the form of the Other, All except herself" (251). By selecting negative images of nature and likening man to the savage natural world, Hickey disassociates woman from this disadvantageous position and aligns herself as well as her work with the male canon. In her poetry, she suggests that nature and its corresponding instinct are not to be trusted. Hickey, like Simone de Beauvoir in the twentieth century, encourages women to distance themselves from the patriarchal construct of femininity and, in turn, nature, in order to achieve fulfillment personally and professionally.

In this chapter, I discuss the ways in which Hickey attempts to avoid this association of woman as the Other and as close to nature. For this poet, the circumstances are incredibly serious, and the language and themes in her work reflect such issues: truth vs. artifice, illustrated by a venomous snake in the grass; the cruelty of nature, revealed causing shipwrecks and dangerous metaphor for the institution of marriage; and war between bestial instincts vs. the rational human. The recurring concept of war illustrates Hickey's mission to

establish equality amongst the clashing sexes above all else. In her poem “Romance dedicado a las Damas de Madrid, y generalmente a todas del mundo,” the poetic voice proclaims:

Sexo hermoso, combatido
sin piedad, con furia tanta,
a pesar y sin embargo
de creer vuestras fuerzas flacas
.....
contra enemigos tan fieros
sepáis defenderos cautas. (13-16, 63-64)

In her work, the poet confronts the personal, political, and philosophical issues that are being discussed by Enlightenment thinkers and does not retract from her feminist viewpoint.

Margarita Hickey’s eighteenth-century work has only recently been ‘discovered’ after her publications under pseudonyms (*‘Una dama de este corte’*, *‘Antonia Hernanda de la Oliva’*, and *‘M.H.’*). The slight biographical material published in Serrano y Sanz’ *Apuntes para una biblioteca de escritoras españolas*, 1903, has been corrected and expanded mainly by Constance Sullivan. Thanks to her research, we can ascertain that Hickey was born between 1737-41 in Palma de Mallorca and married Juan Antonio de Aguirre when he was probably in his fifties and she around twenty; not scandalous, but a notable age difference (“Biographical” 220). Hickey begins her intellectual pursuits at a young age, submitting her translation of Racine’s *Andromaque* in 1759 to Agustín de Montiano y Luyando, creator of an illustrious tertulia in which she was subsequently involved. This fact, supplied by Philip Deacon, allows room for speculation that Hickey became amorously connected to Vicente García de la Huerta, an author who was also married (399). Other than romantic conjecture about Hickey’s personal life, Deacon confirms that Hickey’s use of the character names “Lelio / Clelio” and “Fabio” can be identified with Huerta (408). Due to her husband’s elderly status, Hickey becomes a widow at a fairly young age, most likely before the age of

forty, in the mid-1770s. She writes her last will and testament in 1801, noting that she gave birth to a son who died, presumably, very early on and shortly thereafter adopted another baby, María Teresa. Sullivan postulates that if the son were stillborn it would have been fairly common to adopt an orphaned baby to replace the lost child (“Biographical” 221). Given to the date of her will, one can assume that Hickey died in or close to 1801, and Salgado notes that she was a *novicia* at the time (“Margarita Hickey” 292).

The themes, poetic subjects, and prologues of her work speak volumes about her desire to be accepted in the realm of the male canon. María A. Salgado has written two articles on Hickey’s glosses of Golden-Age poets and the subsequent strategies the poet utilizes to position herself with authority and, at the same time, to subvert such authority by demonstrating the female’s perspective in love relationships. In addition, Hickey attempted to publish an impressive work titled *Descripción geográfica e histórica de todo el orbe conocido* in 1790, another example of her intent to break the patriarchal limits of feminine authorship, but was thwarted by censors at the time. In her prologues, she contradicts herself as she asserts that she wishes to have her work judged on an equal level to a man’s but then reminds the readers and editor that she humbly submits her work as a woman in acts of false modesty. These contradictions reveal, again, her frustration as a woman writer during the period which result in the self-conscious character of her artistry as a poet. Salgado writes, “The severity with which women’s writings were judged can be deduced from the many petitions written by Hickey, and published by Serrano y Sanz, in which she requests permission time and time again – even from the king himself – to be allowed to publish her works” (“Margarita Hickey” 292). Therefore, Hickey saw no other option than to assert herself by assuming a masculine manner in order to succeed.

On the surface, Hickey's efforts to be acknowledged by and to assimilate to the traditional authorial elite do camouflage her unorthodox feminist sentiments regarding gender restrictions. Not only does she want women to distance themselves from savage nature, revealed as passion, but also for men to do most of the changing. Like Beauvoir, she questions the social institutions and customs created by men for women. Yet in a few instances, Hickey reproaches men and women for their materiality while venerating the love of God, implying support for religious institutions, and she occasionally upholds the ideal of the maternal feminine. These contradictory sentiments are understandable given the Enlightenment debates on the status of women, education goals for boys and girls, as well as socio-political ideals for all classes.

Mónica Bolufer-Peruga, in "Rational Equality in the Spanish Enlightenment," explains that simultaneous arguments questioning the moral and intellectual equality, if not superiority or inferiority of women existed and were accepted by both the conservative, historically religious status quo and liberal, rational Enlightenment thinkers (389-90). She highlights that "In a way, all women who wrote for publication entered that debate, whether they intended it or not ... They often did so by invoking a century-long tradition of learned women. They also frequently invoked the equality of unsexed minds in order to assert their own entitlement and to ask for effective intellectual recognition" (403). For these reasons, given the contradictory arguments of the period, I believe that Hickey pursued "self-fashioning," to use Greenblatt's Renaissance term, towards masculinity rather than femininity to assert her persona of a successful professional writer. The instances of distinctly non-feminist concepts in her poetry demonstrate the conflicting perspectives in this gender struggle, or, as Hickey later insinuates, war.

As previously mentioned in the introductory chapter, the eighteenth century marks a period of rationalistic thought that promoted woman to be seen as man's natural complement, based on difference rather than inferiority. However, this complementarity leaves Hickey to promote equality of intellect and eschew patriarchal institutions of love, where she found no balance possible. Cristina Molina discusses the contradictions of mind vs. body by defining the "Enlightenment dialectic of feminism": "la razón ilustrada, que en un principio representa la promesa de liberación para todos en cuanto razón universal, se trastrueca en su opuesto, consumando y justificando la dominación y la sujeción de la mujer, una vez definido 'lo femenino' como naturaleza" (21). Therefore, Hickey is compelled to reject this definition of "the feminine as nature," and pursue a more masculine approach in her work by distancing herself and her poetic subjects from the natural world.

Hickey, like her contemporaries Mary Wollstonecraft and Josefa Amar y Borbón, is at war with nature, in terms of the historical association of women and nature. Hickey's first poem in the volume, "Diálogo entre la España y Neptuno," follows her translation of Racine's *Andromaque*. The elegy for Capitán General Don Pedro Ceballos praises his military career and heroism shown defending La Habana in 1762. A prologue precedes this poem and leaves little doubt in regard to her feminist thoughts on gender (in)equality. The author's requisite false modesty ("Si no he sabido desempeñar uno ni otro empeño, recibáseme mi buena voluntad en cuenta de mi poca habilidad y suficiencia") is countered by commentary on those who have helped her in her artistic endeavors and those who have not, about whom she states: ". . . y a los más por suponerlos llenos de preocupación contra obras de mujeres, en las que nunca quieren éstos hallar mérito alguno, aunque esté en ellas rebosando: he desconfiado de la crítica de todos y he escogido por mi único juez al público el

que sin embargo y a pesar de la ceguera e ignorancia que se le atribuye, hace (como el tiempo) tarde o temprano justicia a todos” (139, 140). Hickey makes her beliefs clear in a confrontational manner, insinuating an “us vs. them” battle, and impressing the concept of justice and the struggles to publish that women writers face.

Following the prologue, three endorsement statements written by (male) friars of the Convento de Capuchinos continue in this feminist theme, mentioning that the poem “. . . logra también los graciosos elogios de un sexo, que el vulgo cree incapaz de ideas de esta naturaleza” (144) and “danse, pues, a la estampa en obsequio sólo del bello sexo en general, y en desagravio o vindicación de la injusticia que el vulgo hace a éste en la opinión que de él comúnmente tiene &c” (146). Hickey manipulates the reader before they see the first poem with these controversial statements about the injustice that women must confront and then presents her volume of poetry, which appears to mirror the patriarchal tradition. She states that the letters are to prove that her work contains nothing “contra la fe y buenas costumbres” but, obviously, her motives are much grander given the content of her prologue and her poetry (143).

The elegy for Captain Ceballos, “Diálogo entre la España y Neptuno,” is an epic poem with allusions to Roman Gods including the eponymous Neptune, Jove, and others, following Neoclassical ideals and structure and employing didacticism. Hickey also integrates female Roman Goddesses like Belona and Minerva, and Siep Stuurman believes that women writers used mythological figures to their advantage: “Mythology occupied an uncertain space between truth and fiction, and between the religious and the secular . . . For feminists it opened fascinating discursive possibilities, for the myths of antiquity are replete with heroic and wise-women” (417). The feminine, maternal character, Spain, mourns for the

loss of the hero Ceballos (“¡oh España! madre venturosa / de tanto Héroe ilustre esclarecido”), and Neptune quickly joins her in sorrow while also praising the country’s rulers (9-10). Yet as Neptune speaks of Carlos III, he broaches the subject of war:

¿Vigilante atendiendo, y cuidadoso,
a que dejen probado sus memorias
el axioma de ser feliz la tierra,
que gozando de paz, piensa en la guerra? (29-32)

While combining the concepts of war and men, Hickey continues to describe the female characters in traditional patriarchal terms. “Luisa,” presumably María Luisa de Borbón, is close to nature and therefore feminine:

¿No ves sus perfecciones, su belleza,
su bondad, su virtud, su amor, sus raras
prendas con que adornar naturaleza
quiso su Real Persona? . . .
.....
Luisa de la lis la más hermosa
de cuantas hasta ahora ha producido
la fecunda feliz Planta famosa
de las lises... (50-54, 57-60)

Hickey, in her first published epic poem, seems to follow canonical models of content and style, and praise of Carlos III concludes the work: “y por divina arcana y justa ley / el del vasallo bueno, es el buen Rey” (439-40). However, the stage has been set for the rest of the volume’s poetry: war, nature, and women’s roles are concepts that will be questioned and confronted. In figurative terms, “Diálogo entre la España y Neptuno” illustrates Hickey’s battle as a woman writer in the eighteenth century. She can imitate male writers and follow their corresponding rules, but the allusions to war imply deeper issues and conflict with accepting the status quo. Although Virginia Trueba has categorized Hickey as idealizing male character and potential love relationships as an optimistic symptom of the

Enlightenment, I believe that the poet oversimplifies gender roles purposely as a rhetorical device in order to illustrate their corresponding polarized dialectical relationship that results from the debates over the woman question.

“Diálogo” is one of the few poems in which she presents traditional female poetic subjects who are closely related to nature. The others include imitations of the Golden Age masters, and a Rococo “Novela Pastoril, puesta en verso en este Romance, en agudos” in which the shepherdess Filena falls in love with Silvio. In the shepherd’s absence, Filena communes with nature and sees her devotion expressed in corresponding images:

Si la tórtola gemía,
si el pajarillo cantor
publicaba con gorjeos
los contentos de su amor. (73-76)

The connections between nature and woman stand out in these poems because of their scarcity in Hickey’s work. The poet purposely links the two subjects when imitating canonical writers, proving her talent on the same level as men. Trueba adds that Hickey inverts traditional courtly love poetry by using a woman’s perspective: “La tradición de Hickey es la de la lírica renacentista tanto española como italiana, la cual bebe, a su vez, de la poesía petrarquista y más atrás, de la poesía trovadoresca” (*Claroscuro* 126). In “Romance Imitando al de aprended flores de mí lo que va de ayer a hoy, &c.” the feminine delights of nature are a mimesis of Góngora:

los símbolos de amor mismo,
las enamoradas plantas,
la arrulladora paloma,
la tórtola amartelada... (61-64)

Like Trueba, Salgado agrees that these glosas perform as challenges of convention: “Hickey subvierte el lenguaje y las convenciones del discurso amoroso patriarcal para exponer la falta

de igualdad en las relaciones amorosas” (“Reescribiendo” 17). However, when taken in the entire volume’s context, not only does Hickey invert the canon’s voice and subvert its language but she also questions the roles and institutions for women on a practical level and declares war against an essentialist definition of woman. The dichotomy between her imitations of canonical poetry and her original work emphasizes the lack of perspective in the majority of published works on such issues as the struggles of a woman writer, unjust institutions such as marriage, and epistemological concepts of gender differences.

In one last “imitation” of a canonical work, Hickey creates “Villancicos” and the reader finds the last examples of woman as feminine nature:

Que el pastor buen pastor sea,
y a su oveja en el aprisco
sepa tener y guardarla,
.....
y libertarla animoso
del lobo astuto, y sus tiros. (177-79, 183-84)

This final depiction of woman as feminine animal illustrates, in its canonical tradition, represents one of the the two sides that are at battle in Hickey’s “war”: the patriarchal definition of woman. Yet she objects to her own representation of the woman sheep in this Villancico when the poet inserts a “treta del débil,” to cite Josefina Ludmer’s term, as the character Pascuala excuses her thoughts on life: “y siendo mujer me meto / en hablar loca y sin tino / en las cosas que no entiendo” (359-61). Like Sor Juana before her, not only is Hickey repeating the sexist blather of her contemporaries but she is doing so using sardonic irony.

Continuing the metaphor of women as innocent sheep who need to be protected, Gil, the other main character, notes at the conclusion of the poem that only God knows how to

create sheep and lions as well as how to change them for the better or worse: “deshacer y ablandar sabe” (512). Hickey, in her religious poetry, includes the sexless divine when hoping for change of the gender system. It is important to mention that the “Villancicos” are followed by a note citing Feijoo as her reason for attempting to not only write the poem but to include a social message: “¿Qué conceptos grandes se podían poner en boca de Gil y Pascuala, &c.?” (341). Hickey, while following canonical tradition of a “Villancico,” manages to embed her ideals for the equality of genders. Trueba adds, “Más allá del contexto religioso del poema, importa destacar la perspicacia de Hickey al introducir un argumento que siempre había sido rebatible con dificultad” (*Claroscuro* 125).

In her original work that is not focused on mimesis, Hickey distances woman from nature and the Other, and instead ties men to nature as well as sin and passion. Cristina Molina states that passion forms one of the biggest fears of the Enlightenment thinkers, because it signifies weakness of soul and mind and therefore representing “las No-Luces” (32). Molina clarifies the tension between Nature and Reason in eighteenth-century Spain, where passion is found:

Es la esfera de lo privado doméstico, con un sujeto paciente, la mujer, cuya naturaleza consiste precisamente en ser eso, ‘Naturaleza’, como lo opuesto a la Razón; Necesidad y Pasión frente a Libertad y Autonomía. La cercanía de la mujer respecto a la naturaleza física – asociación conceptual que ‘no aparece como algo que pueda derivarse, sin más, de su proximidad a la vida por ser dadora de la misma’ – significa en la Ilustración el alejamiento de lo femenino de aquello que se entiende por ‘naturaleza humana’ propiamente dicha. (33)

It is not surprising that Hickey frequently links men with passion and lack of reason, given this thought.

Hickey, like Simone de Beauvoir, encourages women to distance themselves from the patriarchal feminine ideal of woman as object, and, therefore, nature's aspects, in order to succeed professionally or reach "transcendence." Beauvoir also sees a dialectical relationship between man and woman regarding nature, regarding them as enemies:

Man seeks in woman the Other as Nature and as his fellow being. But we know what ambivalent feelings Nature inspires in man. He exploits her, but she crushes him, he is born of her and dies in her; she is the source of his being and the realm that he subjugates to his will; Nature is a vein of gross material in which the soul is imprisoned, and she is the supreme reality . . . Now ally, now enemy, she appears as the dark chaos from whence life wells up, as this life itself . . . Woman sums up Nature as Mother, Wife, and Idea; these forms now mingle and now conflict, and each of them wears a double visage. (152)

Hickey attempts to avoid this perception of woman as the Other and as nature. She writes in order to warn women against following patriarchal standards and expectations, which they see as prescribed by Natural Law. Instead they should pursue other goals that do not involve dependence on men as outlined in her poem, "Endechas aconsejando a una jóven hermosura no entre en la carrera del amor," when she states, "A empresas más heróicas / eleva tus sentidos" (55-56). In this first example of her original style, the reader finds both signs of the urgency of the philosophical matter and the danger that is found in proximity to nature.

In these "Endechas," Hickey uses militaristic jargon, such as "Detente," "No prosigas, aguarda, / detén el paso," and "se entrega a su enemigo" that subtly reminds the public that the author is proclaiming a war of gender conflict. The images from nature are not the rococo, gentle feminine qualities that appear in the previous poetic imitations but rather dangerous, masculine hazards:

Huye el Mar proceloso
donde todo es conflicto,

tormentas y borrascas,
nafragios, peñas riscos. (25-28)

The speaker refers to marriage and the disastrous combinations that ensue in this institution given the conflicts of the sexes.

In this poem, there are two examples of natural images that could be perceived as feminine:

Que en esas mismas flores
está el mayor peligro
.....
no te suceda incauta
lo que al fiel pajarillo;
Que engañado en los ecos
del gorjeo mentido,
pensando que al consorte
se entrega a su enemigo. (11-12, 15-20)

However, the difference Hickey makes in comparison with the previous visions of feminized natural elements is that these carry a highly negative connotation. The flowers are artifice used to disguise danger, i.e. the tools that men use to hide their true malicious intentions to objectify and subject women to their will once the courtship is over. The female bird, which is a metaphor for woman, contrasts to man because she is trustworthy. While the bird possesses positive traits in that it is “fiel,” it forms a cautionary tale for human women not to follow the seemingly innocent sounds of nature because they must lead to danger, both the “consorte” and “enemigo.” This use of nature differs from that of María Hore who calls for women to embrace their connection to the feminine world that can absolutely be trusted in collaboration with the male sphere. However, in her original poetry, Hickey only integrates natural images that are traditionally metaphors for women in order to demonstrate the errors women make by assuming these standard roles and social customs.

Woman should distance herself from these traditional feminine ways, such as accepting flowers and sweet nothings, and instead remain constant on their side of this conflict. If women follow the “current” that is “mainstream” manners, Hickey predicts disaster in the form of shipwreck, because they are figuratively “en donde se navega / sin fe, sin norte fijo” (29-30). The poet suggests that women pursue Reason and scientific knowledge, illustrating her desire for their equality.

Hickey also integrates repeated elevating and descending movements, as women continually move upwards or fall within the spaces allowed to them. This encounter with interior and exterior spaces signals the poet’s frustration with her inability to progress as a writer in a fashion like male poets are able to do. She often had to ask men to write letters requesting permission for publication from the censors and was frequently denied based on her gender. Unlike Hore, who writes about personal spaces, Hickey contrasts spaces to demonstrate the disparities between public and private spheres and the impossibility of reconciling the two. She emphasizes the boundary between the two repeating:

Detente, hermosa Tirsi,⁶
¿Dónde va tu albedrío?
Mira que vas perdida
siguiendo un precipicio. (1-4)

The image of the cliff bordering the young woman’s moment of decision illustrates that following her own choices based on free-will is a matter of life and death. The speaker warns her not to ignore scientific and patriarchal knowledge.

⁶ Tirsi is probably based on the lovesick shepherdess in the 1707 cantata by Handel, *Clori, Tirsi, e Fileno*.

Hickey advises women to enjoy the thrill of anticipation rather than the actual relationship with a man in “Romance satisfaciendo a la duda de una Dama . . .” because it always disappoints. While the coquetry is harmless, love and passion are serious business:

Siendo el amor, a manera
de la guerra y de sus iras,
más agradable en su imagen,
que en su ser y esencia misma. (45-48)

While Hickey adapts to the model of Enlightened Adviser, it must be acknowledged that the poet does not completely encompass the spirituality of accepting sisterhood. There are a few poems in which she critiques the behaviors and appearance of women, particularly those who are materialistic and lack moral standards. The poet has been deemed a “woman scorned” and “anti-misogynist” by critics, and Hickey’s hypocritical censure of men while professing to desire equality is somewhat paradoxical. Her criticism of men using the language of war should be seen as a rhetorical device, not personal but rather to draw attention to the situation. As far as a proposed solution, Hickey suggests intellectual pursuits and letting God fill the void for love that exists. Especially at the conclusion of the volume, her religious poetry appears sincere in the aspect that it can serve a purpose for the many women who ask for help in finding a satisfactory love.

In the next several poems that follow, Hickey does not mention nature at all, only abstract terms about relationships and the characteristics of the two sexes. In “Seguidillas: En que una Dama da las razones porque no gustaba, o no le habían gustado los hombres en general,” for example, the poet’s leitmotif of equality between the sexes is clear. Speaking of the passion and jealousy that love can create, the poet compares the suffering of women to that of martyrs: “Hay que sufrirlos, / si ignorantes son necios, / otro martirio” (9-11). So

serious is this conflict between the genders that women are now martyrs of an unjust battle. The poetic voice blames men, who have lost their minds, for this lack of justice: “como si acaso el alma / tuviera sexo; / locura rara” (31-33). Using Enlightenment thought with the feminist battle cry that the soul has no sex, men are the ones who lack reason for trying to enforce a system in which the genders are not equal.

As Hickey’s poems progress in the volume, the language becomes more and more explicit in terms of the severity of the issue of woman’s plight in the contradicting limitations of eighteenth-century society. In the “Décima” advising a young woman not to marry the poetic voice contributes: “conserva libre tu mano, / huye del lazo inumano” (6-7) and equates “marido” with “tirano.” In another “Décima respondiéndolo a una amiga que le pedía porfiadamente la hiciese una definición de los hombres . . .” the poet calls men “monstruos inconsecuentes,” dehumanizing and denaturalizing their being. Jealousy at the blame of passion seems to be the culprit for the inhumane actions of men. Hickey pursues the Enlightenment goal of distancing the Rational Self from the base, passionate savage animal. The “Seguidilla” which follows elaborates: “De los celos alevés / teme la furia, / que hay (a prueba de su ansia) / pocas corduras” (22-25). At the same time that Hickey depicts men as more savage beasts who lack reason in comparison to innocent women, the poet takes on the role of adviser to all women. The titles of her poems nearing the middle of the volume become more elaborate, explaining the inspiration for the work, that it is didactic and useful, within Neoclassical limits, but she has established authority.

With this authority, Hickey describes the ideal (Enlightened) man in “Romance a un vicioso y abandonado, que se alababa de no haber amado en tu vida, y decía ser incapaz de

amar.” He is “verdadero, claro, exacto / de buenos principios lleno, / una alma grande” (7-9) and contrasted to the animal who lacks Reason that is her reality:

sin reflexión, indiscreto,
te igualas a los que pueblan
el monte y bosques espesos;
a las aves a las fieras,
al caballo, al gato, al perro,
a los reptiles más viles,
y al más depreciable insecto. (66-72)

The speaker takes the power, as adviser to and commentator on both men and women, to describe these differences to the character Crisanto⁷ (“y para que lo comprendas / claramente y sin rodeos, / te lo explicaré, Crisanto”). Hickey uses the Enlightenment philosophy against the stereotype of men to establish power in a dialectical relationship – that of Reason over passion, mind over body. What men have done with their position subordinating women is a mistake of Natural Law, according to Hickey: “una disonancia, un yerro / de la gran naturaleza, / y más que hombre, monstruo fiero” (182-84). A syllogism has been created within the poem, where the speaker makes concluding arguments why man should deny his animalistic desires or else be sent away “a los bosques y a las selvas / con tus dignos compañeros” (207-8).

Nature continues to be negative, and not only represents the baseness of man but also passion in “Endechas endecasílabas a la mudanza no esperada de un amante. . .”.⁸ The speaker states that regretfully “mi pasión amorosa / también ha decaído” and compares it to “cual roca incontrastable; / al embate continuo, / de las airadas olas” (57-58, 69-71). The speaker and her lover, Celio, place their trust in differing authorities: first, Celio uses nature

⁷ Most likely an allusion to Calderón’s drama of conversion *Los dos amantes del cielo*, 1640.

⁸ “Endechas endecasílabas” is one of the poems that Deacon purports to be inspired by real events between Hickey and Huerta. The character Celio has been documented in shared poetic exercises between the two authors (408).

as his own witnesses: “en tu infausta partida / poniendo por testigos / los cielos y la tierra” (21-24). However, after the suffering by the speaker, she claims that Celio is the only true witness to the pain he has caused: “Tú propio, Celio aleve, / tú propio eres testigo / del dolor, de la pena” (85-87). But she is not giving him authority as a witness, rather making him the recipient of blame and responsibility for failure. The speaker does not trust nature, as Celio has done. She likens him to deceiving nature, and then dismisses them both:

De ese tirano hechizo,
de esa sierpe entre flores,
martirio apetecido,
veneno disfrazado. (156-59)

This poem also marks the use of the term “holocausto” to refer to the repression of women by men. Used six times in the second half of Hickey’s work, the escalation of conflict terminology underlines the urgency and severity of the her cause. In the following “Romance a uno que siendo muy fácil en mudar de amores y de amantes . . .” she repeats the idea: “holocaustos tan comunes, / rendimientos tan indignos” (25-26). The consequences of death and sacrifice persist at the conclusion of the poem when combined with the concept of war:

Advirtiéndolo que igualmente
en las guerras del Dios niño,
como en las del arrogante
fiero Marte vengativo. (61-64)

In the midst of so much suffering and symbolic carnage at the hands of Cupid, Hickey adds another element in relation to nature: the biological one. Using metaphors, the speaker contrasts the true, honest children of love with the false, unnatural creation that is lust:

Deseos tan mal formados,
afectos tan mal nacidos,
.....
ansias tan abominables,

nacidas de un vil principio;
llama tan vaga y errante,
legítima hija del vicio. (17-24)

In these lines, Hickey uses the concept of motherhood to illustrate how following base passion and desires leads to unnatural, deformed “children.” Following one’s desires does not create a healthy society, according to the author. The falseness of the natural world is also mentioned: “tomando por eco amante / el que es de serpiente silbo” (57-58). Still, Hickey does not trust nature in so far as its constructs taken by patriarchal society to define the sexes.

What is surprising from a contemporary feminist viewpoint like Simone de Beauvoir’s, but not an eighteenth-century one, is Hickey’s exaltation of the idealized, dedicated maternal figure. In the analogy of creating children of an Enlightenment society, the author venerates responsible, selfless mothers. In her final poem of the volume, “Romance crítico moral joco-serio . . .”, the poet attacks every stereotype of society, from the “Cowards” to the “Ignorants.” The last group she targets include vain and materialistic bourgeoisie, whom she criticizes and contrasts to the classic Roman mother Cornelia, who put her children ahead of all else: “aquí tenéis ya presentes, / mis adornos, mis arreos” (1346-47). The speaker speaks of Cornelia: “!oh mujer heroica y fuerte! / !oh norma digna de madres! / !oh ejemplo de las mujeres!” (1366-68). Much like Josefa Amar y Borbón’s ardent encouragement for women to obtain an education in order to serve society as a whole in *Discurso sobre la educación física y moral de las mujeres*, who states:

La educación y cuidado de los hijos pertenece del mismo modo a los padres que a las madres; pero como la naturaleza los deposita por cierto tiempo en el seno de éstas, y les suministra los medios de alimentarlos en los primeros meses, parece que en cierta manera están más obligadas a su conservación y manejo. Hay también otra razón cual es la de que están más tiempo en casa y teniendo casi siempre a la vista a sus hijos, pueden conocerlos mejor y corregirlos. (xxxvii-viii)

Amar y Borbón goes on to criticize mothers who pass on their negative and superficial traits, like Hickey mocks the ignorant in her poem. Hickey, understanding her role as Enlightenment “Adviser” to women readers much like Amar y Borbón, illustrates a feminine ideal through this allusion to Cornelia in hyperbolic manner.

Whereas Beauvoir views childbearing as not indicative of “transcendence” and a constant reminder of woman’s essential link to nature due to her biology, eighteenth-century feminists used the position as a source of authority. From the Catholic reverence for the Virgin Mary to Rosseau’s creation of the popular domestic mother, by most thinkers “women were considered even by the most radical thinkers as inferior to men physically, morally, and intellectual. Rousseau’s influential conception of ‘natural’ gender roles proscribed women’s intellectual efforts and exalted her influence to the domestic sphere” (Jaffe and Lewis 5). Either Hickey is maintaining the status quo (doubtful given the disdain for men and marriage in her work), or she is creating a figurative model that does not exist, like the ideal man described earlier.

Like Hickey’s similarity to Beauvoir’s thoughts on nature and woman, a possible connection can be made for the poet as a precursor to the feminist theory of Jessica Benjamin on the subject of domination. In speaking of the unrealistic, nonexistent mother, along with the similarly perfect imagined man, I assert that Hickey is using metaphor for the possibility of reconciliation between men and women. As the poet communicates in figurative terms about motherhood, she does not specifically mention children except for the men in general who act as such and Cupid, the “Dios niño” included several times in her poetry. Benjamin postulates: “The idea of mutual recognition is crucial to the intersubjective view; it implies that we actually have a need to recognize the other as a separate person who is like us yet

distinct. This means that the child has a need to see the mother, too, as an independent subject, not simply as the ‘external world’ or an adjunct of his ego” (23). Therefore, Hickey could be speaking in symbolic terms of the necessary “mutual recognition” between woman (mother) and child (man) through this metaphor of the mother as the ideal woman.

Without this peaceful (idealistic) solution, conflict and a cycle of domination is unavoidable. As women, and as mothers, according to Benjamin, the Mother has agency by being an independent subject upon whom the child relies to provide “mutual recognition” so that the child in turn can see itself as subject; its actions are validated (or recognized) by the mother who must be a separate subject to do so. Benjamin states, “Another subject whose independent center must be outside her child if she is to grant him the recognition he seeks” (24). A lack of recognition results in a negative cycle which is aggression and domination. Hickey constantly berates men for not recognizing women as equals, which leads to the battle of gender illustrated in her work. Benjamin’s paradox of the logic of domination is that you must simultaneously be independent and recognize it in yourself while you are dependent on others to recognize it as well (33). This is why Hickey’s war will continue until both men and women change, which entails women becoming independent from men (and their ties to nature) and men recognizing that their own independence can coexist with women’s. Otherwise, Benjamin explains if they both are determined to dominate the other, they will “struggle to the death for recognition” (54). Hopefully, the metaphors of idealized men and women who behave by respectfully allowing the independence and dependence to be recognized as such, the gender conflict can be resolved.

In conclusion, Margarita Hickey distances herself from the constraining patriarchal perceptions of woman as nature in her work, *Poesías varias, sagradas, morales, y profanas*

in an effort to be recognized on merit but not defined by her gender. Without doubt, her feminist thoughts on women's liberation from the male institution of marriage and on women's right to participate in letters echoed her contemporaries as well as foreshadowed thoughts of future feminist critics. The themes of martyrdom, sisterhood, motherhood, mentorship, and Reason over sensibility and nature unify Hickey's work. Whether assimilating to the patriarchal standards on the surface in some poems or blatantly chastising men and women for their failure to seek intersubjectivity (Benjamin) or transcendence (Beauvoir), Hickey's approach to definitions of nature and of woman contrast with María Hore's with dramatically different images, but both succeeded as women writers in the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER 4

CAROLINA CORONADO: THE MAD *POETISA* IN THE ATTIC

Nineteenth-century Spanish poet and author, Carolina Coronado, explored themes of women's friendship, writing, and social issues during a prolific career, publishing from 1839 to 1910. In this period of extreme societal and political turmoil, Coronado's poetry reflects conflicting concepts of woman as she attempts to reconcile her own public identity in the midst of external and internal chaos. She closely identifies women as nature in her poems, portraying them as flowers in particular, and positively illustrates women's similarities and connections to the natural world, especially in terms of a feminine and moral ideal. However, while Coronado embraces an essentialist definition of woman as close to nature, she rejects a corresponding distance from masculine culture. By incorporating negative connotations of both masculinized and feminized nature, she illustrates the injustice of a dialectical polarity of gender roles, as prescribed by patriarchal restrictions which confine women to the domestic sphere.

Susan Kirkpatrick's *Las románticas* follows the construction of women writers' subjectivity in Spain from 1835-1850 and the way in which they maneuver the social pressures of gender while trying to create their own voices. Women gathered authority from the emphasis on subjective experience and emotion but had to find a way to express themselves as desiring individuals (10-11). When speaking of Coronado, Kirkpatrick

analyzes the poet's creation of a female lyrical speaker and also sees a multi-faceted presentation of subject:

The pressure of the contemporary feminine ideal can be seen in Coronado's feminization of the poetic models of a male-dominated tradition, on the one hand, and in the recurrent image of the inhibiting force of the female condition, on the other. The strain between the two forces, between the pull of a poetic lust for experience, knowledge, and achievement and the restraint of feminine socialization, became the constitutive figure of the poet's subjectivity. (242-43)

What I define in terms of a portrayal of "madness" of the poetic self, Kirkpatrick labels Coronado a "divided self" and "victim" of contradictions of the period (243). While Kirkpatrick focuses on the tension and struggles outlined in Coronado's poetry, I shall address the explicit choices that Coronado makes to communicate a feminist perspective through natural images.

This feminist perspective appears early on in her work, such as in "Invitación" (1845), in which the poetic voice calls for a chorus of women to join her publicly and promises to help them overcome their fears of ridicule, which she also faces: "Y en los valles sombríos, / Donde a su coro inflama, / Sólo el odioso búho le desama" (18-20). The speaker welcomes the feminine chorus to unite with nature, positively depicted in the metaphors for women, while the male "búho" is portrayed as jealous and hateful. However, when the poetic voice faces limitations in her artistic expression, negative images of feminized nature surface in other works, such as a flower's roots tying her to a biological role in "La flor del agua." Contradictions such as these varied representations of gendered nature recur in the complex nineteenth-century space of Spanish women's poetic creation. The uniting theme of nature, particularly that of women as flowers, provides an organic arena for finding resolution to the "woman question."

In addition to Kirkpatrick's *Las románticas*, the contradictions and issues about which Coronado writes are addressed in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, where Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that: "Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century [women writers] struggled in isolation that felt like illness, alienation that felt like madness, obscurity that felt like paralysis to overcome the anxiety of authorship that was endemic to their literary subculture" (51). In spite of her literary success and acute fame, Coronado continually alludes to loneliness and other sentiments that define Gilbert and Gubar's "anxiety of authorship," capitulating in an isolated *Poetisa en un pueblo* who determines that her feminine, natural world remains unaccepted by the public sphere that includes culture. This poetic subject, the alienated *poetisa*, pertains to the village physically but not socially or politically. She faces rejection for challenging the limitations of the natural and cultural duality, and transforms into the epitome of the "Madwoman." The factors leading to the "madness" of the nineteenth-century female author are summarized by Gilbert and Gubar:

Thus the loneliness of the female artist, her feelings of alienation from male predecessors coupled with her need for sisterly precursors and successors, her urgent sense of her need for a female audience together with her fear of the antagonism of male readers, her culturally conditioned timidity about self-dramatization, her dread of the patriarchal authority of art, her anxiety about the impropriety of female invention – all of these phenomena of "inferiorization" mark the woman writer's struggle for artistic self-definition and differentiate her efforts at self-creation from those of her male counterpart. (50)

In this study, I will illustrate how the themes of loneliness, anxiety, fear, and the need for female companionship recur in Coronado's nature-centered poetry, in which she attempts to reconcile her personal and public roles of the era. She consistently turns to a feminized nature to save her, to flee from these negative sentiments and their corresponding madness, but her feminist efforts to incorporate nature with culture only exacerbate the anxiety of authorship.

The poet's escape, an identity with the natural world, hinders her admittance to the cultural sphere. Even though she illustrates the interconnection of feminized and masculinized nature and culture, she cannot transcend or eliminate the dialectical opposition that separates them alone.

Nature and culture, the poet believes, are not mutually exclusive, but in nineteenth-century Spain, the divide between the two continued to grow. Carolina Coronado was born in 1820, a period of silence after women had spoken out earlier in the eighteenth century for equal opportunities and freedoms based on rational ideals of equality during the Enlightenment. The women of the following generation were figuratively paying the price of entrance to the public sphere and the liberties in thought, dress, and society that some upper-class women formerly enjoyed. Now, with Spain in turmoil recovering from French occupation, unstable leadership, and resistance and losses in the New World, the country was divided politically, socially, and philosophically. Sally Ann Kitts explains how these factors related to the "woman question":

There was a perception of a decline in moral standards within society, as well as a general decline in Spain, found in essays on woman that takes on a new severity at the turn of the nineteenth century . . . There was no polemical discussion on woman again until the 1840s. In 1822, a periodical specialized for women readers is published, but it focuses on fashion and childrearing. (240-41)

At this time, the few women publishing limited their public writing to domestic topics, especially related to their biological roles as wives and mothers and distanced from the male public sphere.

As Romanticism took hold in Spain in the 1830s-50s with the development of dramas such as Duque de Rivas' *El moro expósito* and *Don Álvaro o la fuerza del sino* as well as

José de Espronceda's poetry, so did the opportunity for women to cross the cultural divide.⁹ Susan Kirkpatrick, in *Las Románticas*, explains that Spanish women were permitted limited access to writing thanks to this literary movement and the influx of political liberal reforms in 1840 (64). Kirkpatrick also asserts that:

The Romantic view of poetry as the expression of emotion and imagination rather than the product of long training in an aesthetic tradition made it possible for the possessor of a feeling heart and an enthusiastic imagination, but not of a classical education, to qualify as a poet. Furthermore, in a culture that vaunted the 'natural' compliance and religious piety of its women, the conservative cast of 'historical' Romanticism offered a personalized discourse of feeling closely associated with religious devotion that Spanish women could adapt for self-expression. ("Modernizing" 414)

These circumstances provided an opportunity for Coronado to enter the cultural sphere, as she did not receive a formal education, only that of the upper-class woman who would be expected to entertain and care for her family, sacrificing herself above all others.

In 1844, Fermín Gonzalo Morón published his thoughts in the *Revista de España y del Estrangero* on women's education, a reflection of popular opinion: "El entendimiento y la razón de la mujer es muy débil, porque toda la vitalidad y la fuerza de su existencia está concentrada en su corazón . . . el estado y el padre de familia no tiene más que seguir las indicaciones de la naturaleza; así pues no deben empeñarse en ejercitar sus fuerzas ni en cultivar mucho su entendimiento" (qtd. in Pérez González, "La condición" 261). Despite this commonly accepted ideology, privileged Coronado frequently entered her family's library and would surreptitiously read any books she could find, especially Golden Age poetry, and began to compose her own work as an adolescent (Gould Levine, Marson, and Waldman 116). However, Ísabel María Pérez González indicates that Coronado faced resistance from

⁹ Russell P. Sebold and others have demonstrated the presence of Romanticism in the eighteenth century in Spain, even before Germany.

the female members of her family, even after her male relatives encouraged the young poet's writing, and the critic argues that this was symptomatic of jealousy caused by the previous generation's prohibited access to such "culture" ("La condición" 263). The poet compensated for this lack of maternal support by looking for a female public and precursors; she was aware of the writings of Sappho and Saint Teresa by the 1840s, based on her publications in homage to them, yet themes of alienation and loneliness continued to dominate her poetic work.

In 1844, Coronado's death was erroneously reported, and a series of elegies were published in homage to her. The gaffe probably owed to her recurring nervous illness, catalepsy, which began as a young child. Her malady represents not only the characteristics of the ideal upper-class woman of the time, i.e. weak, frail, and dependent, but may also signal a psychosomatic conflict caused by her aspirations. In addition to catalepsy, Pérez González explains that Coronado also experienced psychological illness: "Hubo mucho de tristeza enfermiza en el temperamento de Carolina; a lo largo de su vida va a manifestar una tendencia a la melancolía morbosa, a los estados de laxitud depresiva, sin ánimos ni deseos de superación, como si el empeño en aferrarse al origen de sus sufrimientos la consolara" (*Carolina Coronado* 26). The critic indeed connects Coronado's illnesses to her professional ambition: "La joven poetisa tuvo que enfrentarse a la reacción hostil de una mayoría que desaprobaba sus pretensiones literarias. No se arredró por ello, más bien se hizo fuerte en la intimidad infranqueable de su imaginación creativa, tratando de hallar un difícil equilibrio entre la voluntad entorno y su propia voluntad" (*Carolina Coronado* 27). Gilbert and Gubar agree, stating that Romantic poets believed that for both men and women, the mental tasks required for writing would cause great strain, especially for the woman author (55). The

conflicts suggested by these critics are expressed in Coronado's poetry. Furthermore, I propose that the author's use of feminized nature mirrors her positive and negative steps to success as a woman writer.

Although this study does not rely on an interpretation of Coronado's personal life, some of the eccentricities noted by some critics and biographers bear repeating for my analysis of her poetic portrayal of the "Madwoman in the Attic." Certain biographical events are indeed reflected in her professional work.¹⁰ In 1845, Coronado produced a series of poems dedicated to "Alberto," who is only further identified enigmatically as her true love lost at sea. She took a vow of celibacy by year's end, but almost a decade later married American diplomat Horace Perry. In this same year, 1852, Coronado published her second volume of *Poesías*; from that point onward, her poetic output diminished greatly, perhaps revealing the difficulties of reconciling her personal life as wife and mother with her career. She had three children: the first, a son, died as an infant; her second child died as a young woman and Coronado chose to have her embalmed and kept in an *armario* at a convent; when her husband died, she had his body embalmed as well and placed in a chapel connected to her living quarters. After her husband's death, Coronado became so overprotective that she slept in the same room with her third and last living child, even after the daughter married (Torres Nebrera 17). The majority of criticism published about Coronado not only equates biographical details with the feelings of loneliness and anxiety expressed in her work, but also focuses excessively on her personal life as the key insight to interpreting her poetry. I

¹⁰ In this instance I utilize Rita Felski's "allegory of authorship as masquerade," in which one can understand women authors through their creation of multiple selves without completely relying on biography for interpretation.

argue that, like many other eighteenth-century women writers, her work is much more complex than a simple emotional autobiography.

While critic Noël Valis also claims that the work of Carolina Coronado is not autobiographical, because the concept of autobiography itself is impossible, I propose that this impossibility can be a basis for the portraits of anxiety and madness that ensue in Coronado's work. Valis states that "the very notion of autobiographical is highly unstable, given its character as an artificial and subjective reconstruction. Moreover, as a re-creation, autobiography expresses the multiple *fictions* of the self – *poetisa* is a cultural construction" (30). The poet creates a public persona of the ideal *poetisa* using similes and metaphors of the commonly accepted images and topics of her generation, i.e. the forces of nature, flowers, and birds, in an attempt to gain social acceptance. However, her poetic identity was rejected or challenged as Coronado incorporated natural elements in unconventional ways.

As mentioned previously, women published successfully if they followed the expectations for appropriate topics that emphasized woman's inferior position, such as nature and the domestic sphere. These limitations signal that the "*Ángel del hogar*" ideal had become a permanent fixture in the psyche of nineteenth-century Spain. This polarizing concept of the "Cult of Domesticity," as Bridget Aldaraca refers to it, "lived and breathed in the pages of the women's and family magazines which abounded in Spain from the 1850s" and that the "impression of the public world as materialistic and threatening provokes in turn an idealization of the supposedly isolated sphere of female domesticity as a timeless spiritual refuge, a stable locus outside the turbulent flow of history" (63, 64). The idea that this separation was determined by nature, as argued in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile*, spread

throughout Spain with great popularity at the turn of the nineteenth century. Examples of the concept of a “natural” division are found in his patriarchal treatise, *Emile*:

To leave [woman] above us in the qualities proper to her sex and to make her our equal in all the rest is to transfer to the wife the primacy that nature gives to the husband. The use of reason that leads man to the knowledge of his duties is not very complex. The use of reason that leads woman to the knowledge of hers is even simpler. The obedience and the fidelity she owes to her husband and the tenderness and the care she owes to her children are consequences of her position so natural and easily sensed that she cannot without bad faith refuse her inner sentiment that guides her, nor fail to recognize her duty if her inclinations are still uncorrupted. (Book V, 382)

This idealization of woman as natural devoted mother and caregiver, self-sacrificing, and tied to the domestic sphere, as well as her moral code, became the norm for the nineteenth-century and a standard against which Coronado would be measured.

In addition to Rousseauian concepts of sexual difference and the revolt against Enlightenment ideals, the fascination with the “*buen salvaje*” of the New World contributed to the European binary construct of nature vs. culture, supporting roles for women that place them close to their “natural” roles for women as mothers and moral, spiritual models. Aldaraca explains, “The idea that the female is more natural than the male, that is, uncorrupted by the pernicious influence of urban civilization, effectively designates the former as a kind of noble savage and provides the justification for isolating women from modern history under the guise of protecting and preserving the purity of their natural nobility” (65). Therefore, whatever limited entrance the Romantic movement allowed to women writers, more powerful concepts of “*Ángel del hogar*” and the “*buen salvaje*” created a slippery slope for young female poets like Coronado.

Luckily, Coronado found the aid of a mentor, Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch, acclaimed dramatist of the era, after she gained notoriety for her first publication, “A la palma” in

1939.¹¹ He helped her revise and publish her first book of poetry, *Poesías*, in 1843, and they corresponded frequently. Her letters reflect a desire to publish more poems with overtly feminist topics, and it seems that Hartzenbusch discouraged this, probably for social and commercial reasons (Pérez González, “*La condición*” 267). Furthermore, Coronado’s decision to connect the female writer to flowers and nature places her in a stagnant, compromising position with her critics. Her contemporary, Emilio Castelar, underlines the finite expectations held for the poet during the period:

No le preguntéis por qué canta. No lo sabe. Sería lo mismo que preguntar al arroyo, por qué murmura; al astro, por qué produce la armonía en las esferas . . . En las ciencias se necesita la reflexión profunda, el raciocinio laborioso, la comparación sesuda; pero en las artes se necesita la inspiración, que sin dejar de ser reflexiva y de encerrar en sí, como la misma naturaleza, un raciocinio, ha de centellear prontamente como la palabra creadora. (48-49)

According to many critics such as Castelar, as well as her own editor, Hartzenbusch, the *poetisa* could write aesthetically pleasing poems about flowers, but she should leave the socio-political, cultural sphere to men.

The distinction between science and art, between woman’s proximity to nature and instinct and a man’s to the learned public arena of culture, became even more polarizing as the century progressed. In the eighteenth century, female authors like Hore use science and Reason to counter male hegemonic discourse, as seen in ““Estaba Apolo en el Parnaso” (1787). In her second book of *Poesías*, Coronado writes of the harsh divide between culture and nature, conveying her disdain for the ways in which man wants to control nature, a metaphor for the domination of women. In “A la invención del globo” (1845), both a

¹¹ Coronado gained so much attention that even José de Espronceda dedicated a poem to her; they were similar in style and linked in the Romantic tradition.

figurative and literal interpretation of masculine culture, the speaker criticizes [male] scientists who ascend over female nature, the landscape, in a hot-air balloon:

Ya por cima del mundo se suspende
A contemplar la gran naturaleza,
Y si le place el mar, su vuelo ataja
Y como el ave acuática al mar baja. (37-40)

The power struggle arises as nature attempts to take control of the movement of man and the balloon: “Y cual vapor del mar se eleva luego / Y con las nubes por los aires gira” (41-42). Coronado argues against the notion that man can control and dominate nature, and by extension, women.

In this same series of poems, Coronado writes about the connection between nature and God as a means of transcendence to spiritual purity and eternal happiness in the afterlife, rather than scientific knowledge. The female speaker’s time spent with nature is a reminder of the harmony that God controls, not man: “Y en perfecta armonía / La prodigiosa máquina mantiene” (“Bondad de Dios” 24-25). However, the speaker does not experience joy when alone in nature, only a longing to find solace and company in the kingdom of heaven. The poet closely aligns herself to feminine nature, morality, and God to protect herself from *el qué dirán*, i.e. powerful public opinion.

Loneliness, one of the primary symptoms in Gilbert and Gubar’s taxonomy of the “anxiety of authorship,” recurs in Coronado’s poetry; whether the poetic subject is accompanied or alone, the sentiment remains. The first poem published in Coronado’s earliest book of *Poesías* is titled, “A la soledad,” in which the speaker finds peace and harmony alone with nature; in fact, this entire volume encapsulates the concept of loneliness. In this poem, the speaker searches for companionship with natural elements:

Plácenme los colores
Que al bosque dan las luces matutinas:
Alégranme las flores,
Las risueñas colinas
Y las fuentes que bullen cristalinas. (21-25)

However, the speaker still suffers from pain, in the midst of nature, and continues to experience loneliness: “Si sola y retirada, / Aun me entristece más noche sombría” (51-52).

In other poems, Fernando Manso Amarillo argues that Coronado’s obsession with the sea, as a symbol of loss and the Sublime power in nature, is also a symbol of her isolation and loneliness: “La grandeza de la Naturaleza casi la enajena,” although Coronado makes these aesthetic choices for her poetic speaker, not herself (170). Even as the poetic *yo* looks for solace in nature, she is lost alone in it. Manso also purports that her use of pathetic fallacy is typical for the Romantic poets: “La poetisa personifica los elementos y los fenómenos naturales para hacerlos partícipes de su dolor y de su soledad, y esto es una postura romántica” (171). However, the elements of nature do not always directly reflect her feelings, as one would expect from this technique. Coronado creates in nature a complete subject, not a simple sentimental mirror. Nature’s elements can briefly comfort her, but also quickly abandon her. In another water metaphor, in contrast to the grandness of the sea, the poetic voice even lacks the solace found in a dewdrop due to the enormity of her sorrow:

Ven a mezclarte con mi triste lloro,
Y a consumirte en mi mejilla ardiente;
Que acaso correrán más dulcemente
Las lágrimas amargas que devoro.
Más ¿qué fuera una gota de rocío
Perdida entre el raudal del llanto mío...!!! (9-14)

Whether masculined or feminized nature, the speaker is briefly comforted but left without remedy, completely alone. Her pain is so great that it subsumes the smallest and greatest offerings of nature, and is, therefore, incongruous to the limited use of pathetic fallacy.

This isolation and loneliness leads to Gilbert and Gubar's next symptom, the "need for sisterly precursors and successors," which appear in allusions to Sappho and Saint Teresa. Amy Kaminsky purports that Coronado's article in prose, "Los genios gemelos: Paralelo de Safo y Santa Teresa de Jesús," published in 1850, demonstrates the tradition that she longingly searched for, comparing the poetic talents and personal difficulties that each woman faced, including the feared vituperation of men and jealousy of women. This was a daring association to make at the time between two seemingly disparate women, but Kaminsky points out that it was a self-interested work:

Coronado deliberately avoids self-reflexivity. Coronado does not want to call attention to her *work* as a thinker and an artist because she wants to maintain her standing as *poetisa*-artless, touched by genius, a wonder of nature – that which she praises so highly in Sappho and Theresa. Furthermore, self-interested as she is, Coronado must not appear egocentric, since that would undermine the seemingly selfless essayistic process of discerning (rather than consciously forging) a female literary tradition. ("Construction" 11)

However, in her poetic works, self-reflexivity appears, especially in poems dedicated to other male and female poets. By drawing on other writers, the author desires a place for her own work within, or ultimately, outside, of the existing tradition. Coronado holds these two writers in high esteem, regardless of time period: "¡Safo! ¡Teresa! sois un engendro de la madre eternidad, para quien los siglos son minutos, que os dio a luz casi a un mismo tiempo. Sois dos gemelas que habéis recibido un mismo soplo de vida, y la misma inspiración inmortal, que os hará marchar juntas en los siglos" (94). These three women in particular share, as talented writers over centuries and millennia, aspirations to create a female sisterhood for pedagogical and spiritual purposes, and all attempt to transcend the social and artistic limitations they faced.

The search for “sisterly precursors” is revealed, for example, in “Los cantos de Safo” (1843). The speaker feels the support of an accomplished predecessor: “Y de entusiasmo el corazón llenaron / De amor ardiente e inspiración divina” (43-44), as well as fear of the task at hand:

¿Y quién la flor de la ventura mía
Osara marchitar con mano aleve?
¿Quién a usurpar tu corazón se atreve
Y a reinar donde Safo reinó un día? (33-36)

In “Porque quiero vivir siempre contigo” (1948), from her second volume of poetry, the speaker’s creative process is described as confusing and limitless. Caught between the boundaries of dreams and wakeful delusions, she sees visions of ghosts, and compares herself to Saint Teresa:

¡Ay! lo que siento yo, lo que me inquieta,
Señor, quién lo comprende, quién lo canta;
¡Pobre santa Teresa, pobre santa,
Que a tal agitación vivió sujeta! (49-52)

The suffering of the female artist is closely related to madness in this poem, with the speaker directing her pain to the Lord, she states that she relates to Teresa: “Yo comprendo esa dicha santa y pura” and now searches for God to save her from her illness:

Por eso ardiente sed tiene mi boca ...
Y por eso en tus brazos solo espero
La fiebre mitigar que me sofoca;
Y por eso te busco ciega, loca. (201-4)

Like Sappho and Teresa, Coronado must find a way to escape hostility and does so through nature and spirituality. Coronado writes that she searches for God to guide her in images of nature but she finds it lacking: “No te encuentro en las olas vacilantes” and then proclaims what she sacrifices for her religious and moral journey:

Por ti ya dejo las queridas flores,
Los pájaros, el río, los pinares,
Para ti nada más tengo ya amores,
Para ti nada más tengo cantares;
Para mí nada más tienen colores
De tus ojos los bellos luminasres,
Para mí nada más tiene armonía
Tu voz que sueño en la locura mía. (81-88)

The speaker abandons all that she values in order to gain acceptance; however, in the face of rejection, nothing remains except madness, “la locura mía.” The relationship in this poem between Saint Teresa and Coronado becomes clearer, as they are united in their passion, and Kaminsky claims that in Coronado’s essay she “asserts that it was as a woman and a poet that Theresa was great, and that her religious activities only served to diminish her in those capacities” (“Construction” 7). The link between the need for a female tradition of writers and her falling into madness is apparent throughout this poem, as well as her passion, her desire to write and base it on the women who came before her. Gilbert and Gubar add that this is a necessary step in “the difficult paths by which nineteenth-century women overcame their ‘anxiety of authorship,’ repudiated debilitating patriarchal prescriptions, and recovered or remembered the lost foremothers who could help them find their distinctive power” (59). Coronado, in her list of sacrifices that she has suffered, particularly alludes to her connection with nature and highlights just how challenging the task at hand was.

The “urgent sense of her need for a female audience” is evident in an entire section of poetry titled, “A las poetisas,” also included in Coronado’s second volume of *Poesías*. Here, she calls for women to join her in “¿A dónde estáis consuelos de mi alma?” (1846), evoking the sensorial experience of listening and imagining the sight of fellow women writers, which is driving her to near insanity. The poetic *yo* urges, “Yo quiero veros, mi tristeza acrece / La soledad mi padecer irrita; / A darme aliento a mitigar mi pena” (7-9). The speaker claims that

writing their poetry, like nature, will provide them with a cure for the anxiety that pursues them all and will give them fresh air in which to breathe. She purports: “He visto alguna vez que al cuerpo herido / Flores que sanan con su jugo aplican” and like natural, botanical cures, these women “flowers” will heal each other (11-12).

In “A Luisita” (1846), Coronado perpetuates the theme of women’s proximity to nature as socially curative and adds a morally superior characteristic: “Yo te diré nuestra historia / y aunque otra los hombres cuenten, / Por Dios, que los hombres mienten” and a biological one: “De madres, esposas, hijas” (41-43, 73). She desperately desires these women to hear their own story, the truth of a woman’s life rather than the myth of the “*Ángel del hogar*”: “Esto, niña, es solamente lo que de ciencia nos toca; / Después te dirá mi boca lo que hay de felicidad” (33-34). However, the interlocutor refuses to listen. The speaker’s only tonic is the knowledge of her truth, recorded, to someday be appreciated by other women:

¡Ay, dirás, verdad decía
La que estas cosas cantaba;
Bien me acuerdo que lloraba
Cuando escribió este papel! (93-96)

The power of the written word and her authority as a poet overtake the lies told by men and the perceived ignorance of women.

In the search for a female audience, the concepts of anxiety and suffocation recur in “La flor del agua” (1845), which, for many critics, has become a classic metaphor for the nineteenth-century female writer. For example, Kirkpatrick explains in *Las Románticas* that these women were caught between two worlds, needing to join forces to survive (241). While the beautiful, personified flower in the water appears to float freely, in reality she is immobile and linked to a dark and murky earth by deep roots that will not break. However,

these ties to the muddy bottom below also save her from certain death, as she cannot survive without the nutrients that are provided by the soil and the water. The feminine flower then mentions the sight of premature butterflies and foresees the battle they will face, yet their physical challenges only remind her of her own limitations. The speaker addresses the poet-flower and her presumed fate:

Tú, poetisa, flor del lago,
Por amante, por cantora
has venido en mala hora
con tu amor y cantar. (121-24)

She predicts that they will surely sink and fail alone in the water (121-24). However, the poetic voice urges all of the lilies to unite and join together so that their strengths increase as well: “Pero, enlazan sus raíces / A la planta compañera” (137-38). The poetic *yo* transforms into *nosotras* and the female public save each other: “Si con las almas unidas, / vivimos, las dos así” (143-44). More than sisterhood, Coronado writes of the strength of nature and women’s link to them, refusing to cut these ties.

In addition to the desire for sisterhood, Coronado expressed a severe anxiety, classified in Gilbert and Gubar’s taxonomy as the “anxiety about the impropriety of female invention,” which leads to the anxiety of authorship. Unfortunately, in the century that followed Amar y Borbón’s plea for gender equality in “Discurso en defensa del talento de las mujeres” (1786) Rousseau’s vision of “natural woman” still discouraged women’s place in artistic creation. In “La flor del agua,” the author refers to these sensations: “Contigo en igual desvelo / Hay florecillas también” and a “Movimiento que no cesa, / Ansiedad que se dilata” (231-32, 17-18). In addition, throughout the poetry of Carolina Coronado, themes of silence, immobility, and suffocation persist to illustrate a paralyzing state of panic and

discomfort during artistic creation. In “Rosa blanca” (1843), the flower symbolizes the beauty of woman, yet it does not produce:

¿Y qué importa si es hermosa?
Sola, muda y abismada
solo busca la apartada
Arboleda silenciosa. (45-48)

The plants are immobile, but the speaker perceives suffering in the personified flower.

However, the poetic voice questions the flower’s capability to communicate its plight: “¡Tal vez no hay un pensamiento / En su cabeza marchita” (25-26). The speaker refers directly to the male poet and contrasts him with the female flower:

El poeta ‘suave rosa’
Llamóla, muerto de amores...
¡El poeta es mariposa
Que adula todas las flores! (29-32)

Coronado utilizes metaphors of the butterfly and the rose to juxtapose the male’s movement and the female’s stagnation, and to blame the male gaze for the feminine flower’s limitations, much like Amar y Borbón claimed that women lacked education and experience because of men’s restrictions.

This dichotomy of mobility/immobility demonstrates the sensations of anxiety, to which the recurring theme of loneliness is added in “La tórtola errante” (1844):

Solo que en mi soledad,
No tengo como tu amiga
Alas, aire y libertad
Para calmar la ansiedad
Que el corazón me fatiga. (16-20)

Loneliness and anxiety can cause a paralyzing sensation of entrapment and an incapability to change circumstances. This is highlighted through the speaker’s need for air and fear of

suffocation, another symptom of the anxiety faced in the act of creation. She appreciates nature's beauty but cannot express it as she desires; she is imprisoned and trapped in the domestic, feminine realm.

This theme of imprisonment and its resulting anxiety also appears in "El tiempo" (1847), when the speaker challenges the nature/culture gender duality:

¿Cómo permite Dios que en nuestra mente
Se refleje también la inteligencia;
Y que la fiebre que el ingenio siente
Venga a inquietar también nuestra existencia? (25-28)

The rhetorical questions underscore her desperation and need for flexibility in the distinction of gender roles that seem unchanging. Gilbert and Gubar explain the "anxiety of authorship" as "based on the woman's socially determined sense of her own biology" (51). Therefore, a woman writer's perception differs from the anxiety that may be expressed by male authors of the same period (51). For this reason, Coronado incorporates her vision of a male perspective that contrasts to her own.

The woman writer reveals her self-consciousness in public artistic creation, particularly for a male audience, in "Un encuentro en el valle" (1846), through a monologue addressed to the masculine turtledove, her former friend. As the male bird travels alone, he always finds admirers, while the poetic *yo* waits alone and stagnant. She concludes the poem stating: "Pero tú has nacido ave / Y yo he nacido mujer" (79-80). This simplistic essentialist logic seems unquestioned, yet Coronado manages to challenge the rationale. The "natural" limitations of gender roles place her outside of the harmony and beauty of nature if she does not follow the traits of the "*Ángel del hogar*" ideal as the modest woman, whereas he has the freedom:

¡Ay! Tú volverás a hallar
Otro amante a quien amar,
Porque las tórtolas son
todas en el corazón
Iguales, y en arrullar. (66-70)

Coronado utilizes Enlightenment egalitarian thought to suggest the equality of the sexes in heart and artistic talent. Otherwise, the poet hints that the only other option for the nineteenth-century author is rejection and a resulting madness for the speaker, “andando el tiempo loco.” (24).

The fear of “antagonism from male readers,” the last symptom cited by Gilbert and Gubar, became a reality for women writers. Although many began publishing in the 1840s and appeared to be accepted publicly, a backlash ensued. In 1841, a popular caricature was published in Spain titled “El mundo al revés” in which the woman is writing feverishly at a desk while the husband is drowning in domestic chores (Pérez González, *Carolina Coronado* 266). This then, was the portrait of the nature/culture duality reversed and the terminology used, “al revés,” illustrates the incomprehensibility of women altering their prescribed roles. For Carolina Coronado, she not only battles an anxiety of authorship that seems like madness, but she was being transformed into a monster-like caricature, figuratively. In 1844, this famously beautiful woman appeared in the periodical *La Risa* in a portrait that made her look not only ugly, but mannish, distorting her feminine features.¹² This attack on her femininity illustrates the period’s duality: if you were not an “angel” you were a monster. Gilbert and Gubar assert that “women who did *not* apologize for their literary efforts were

¹² This caricature can be found in *ABC's Hemeroteca*
<http://hemeroteca.abc.es/nav/Navigate.exe/hemeroteca/madrid/blanco.y.negro/1924/01/27/044.html>

defined as mad or monstrous: freakish because ‘unsexed’ or freakish because sexually ‘fallen’” (63). For this reason, in her poetry, Coronado aligns herself with feminine nature and religious piety in order to avoid this pitfall. Later, imagery mixing nature and monster appear in her poems. Coronado connects the Sublime in nature to a horrendous creature in “A la invención del globo”: “Allá por bajo de sus pies tendido / El monstruo enorme de quien es nacido” (47-48). Yet this association carries a maternal connotation, therefore juxtaposing natural biological roles with unnatural, defective results. In “Porque quiero vivir siempre contigo” the ocean is a monster: “Monstruo rabioso que espumante baba” but has infantile qualities, again linking the maternal, natural function to an unnatural deficiency. (69). Gendered nature is reflected in a monstrous design that portrays woman’s contradictory ideal as one that has imperfect consequences for both sexes.

In “En el castillo de Salvatierra” the speaker describes her fears of public reprisal best. In this unusual example, the woman is symbolized by a bird who does escape her ties to the earth. She soars above the suffering: “¿Que inmóviles aquí tantas mujeres / Tanto llanto vertieron de sus ojos” (13-14). However, the poetic *yo* cannot escape the terror and loneliness that is the woman’s plight:

El terrible fantasma hacia mí gira...
 Tronando me amenaza con su boca...
 Con ojos de relámpago me mira...
 Y su luz me deslumbra y me sofoca.

 Bájame con tus brazos de la altura
 Que yo las nubes resistir no puedo!
 ¡Sácame de esta torre tan oscura
 Porque estoy aquí sola y ... tengo miedo! (105-108, 113-116)

Her fear approaches madness, and the speaker sees visions of ghosts and looming attacks. The paranoia, suffocation, and delusion clearly represent the anxiety of authorship.

Coronado does not limit her work to feminine topics and themes in the traditional sense, but speaks out against women's inequality, spousal abuse, and the destruction of war.¹³ She addresses all of these issues using the idealized "*Ángel del hogar*" to her advantage, embracing the strength of morality, and, therefore guaranteed acceptance that role would bring into the public sphere. From that perspective, the poet criticizes the male patriarch as lacking and, at times, tyrannical. "El juego del niño" portrays the cruelty of man against nature: "Emilio, no le atormentes, / deja al insecto en reposo / que es juego muy doloroso" (1-3) and the speaker labels the boy "inhumano" due to his passion, and his desire for power over nature: "Y ya seres te has hallado / A quien mostrar tu poder" (39-40). In "A Lidia" (1845), the speaker compares man to a tyrant and accuses him of enslavement.

The most vitriolic poem of her Coronado's collection, "El marido verdugo" (1843), exemplifies this criticism, connecting the female speaker to the superior maternal figure, and the abusive husband contrasts to the civilized cultural ideal. He is an animal:

¿Teméis de esa que puebla las montañas
Turba de brutos fiero el desenfreno?
¡Más feroces dañinas alimañas
La madre sociedad nutre en su seno! (1-4)

The husband, tied to savage nature, becomes the monster, rather than feminine idealized nature. However, to add to the polemic, Coronado includes women in their part of the dialectic as their complex relationship with men makes wives and mothers responsible for the health of society. Connected biologically to their natural roles, she uncomfortably places them as accomplices in the cycle of abuse and domination. Yet the majority of blame rests in the portrayal of man as uncontrollable beast, the very opposite of the modern "cultured" man.

¹³ Other nineteenth-century authors, most notably Emilia Pardo Bazán, deal with the topic of domestic violence as well.

The wife is elevated morally and described as “inocente” with “su blanca frente” marred by blood and her husband’s fingerprints. Woman symbolizes virginal purity and peace with her white skin that distances her from the animalistic, violent man, who the speaker dehumanizes: “Y así en humanas formas escondidos, / Cual bajo el agua del arroyo el cieno” (33-34). The poet uses the nature / culture dialectic to illustrate how man errs in his duties of the home and fails not only morally but socially.

“El marido verdugo” confronts a taboo subject, and in doing so, Coronado contrasts wilderness and civilization. The animalistic men live in the mountains, in the mud, and come to “madre sociedad,” which represents the culturally elevated sector where they will be raised and educated, turning the nature / culture dialectic upside-down in order to illustrate its futility. Men and women cannot continue to live on opposite sides of the divide, but must find a common space in which to unite.

All of the factors listed in Gilbert and Gubar’s taxonomy of “anxiety of authorship” culminate in Coronado’s “La poetisa en un pueblo” (1845). Filled with snippets of commentary from the townspeople, the female poet remains the objectified center of the spectacle. There are allusions to her madness: “‘Esa que saca las coplas. / ‘Jesús qué mujer tan rara. / ‘Tiene los ojos de loca’” and “¡Vaya con Dios la gran loca!” (2-4, 48). The public ridicules her, and two lines simply repeat, “Ja ja ja ja ja ja.” The residents cannot comprehend the unnatural qualities of this woman poet who does not subscribe to societal norms of propriety. Under pressure to write verses in public for a bride, “se fue huyendo de la boda,” unable to create in such an atmosphere. Although they refer to her as a writer, the

subject remains both silenced and silent.¹⁴ The townspeople deny her morality, exclaiming, “¡Qué mujer tan mentirosa! / ‘Dicen que siempre está echando / Relaciones ella sola’ (32-34). The *poetisa* remains immobile until the conclusion, when she finally withdraws from the crowd: “Ya mira, ya se incomoda. / Ya se levanta y se va...” (46-47). The accusation of dishonesty can be the most distressing, and Aldaraca explains the particular power that eighteenth-century Spanish society possessed over the individual woman in the nature/culture duality: “She does not have the power to define herself as good and modest woman; this power rests ultimately in those who will arbitrarily interpret her appearances and actions: the collective and anonymous judge, public opinion” (75). This obligation to be morally exemplary and remain unseen to the public eye caused a grave problem for the woman writer of the era. The division between city and country, between man and woman, between nature and culture, comes to light in Coronado’s poetry as a dialectic impossible to reconcile.

Although Gilbert and Gubar successfully diagnose a problem for a century of women writers, a resolution evolved slowly because each woman had to face the factors leading to her own anxiety of authorship. It was not Coronado’s identity as being close to nature that caused her portrayal of the “madwoman”. Rather, it was the attempt to joining the male sphere of Culture that was not a realistic option for her in this period, given the social limitations of womanhood and the “Angel in the House”. For this reason, Coronado does not accept a simple inversion of dualisms that offer no alternatives, as illustrated in her poetry where the gender divide persists alongside corresponding suffering. Ecofeminist critic Gillian Rose recommends that dualities be displaced, oscillating between the two choices of

¹⁴ Many authors (Margot Versteeg and Lou Charon-Deutsch) are studying the image of muteness and silence in female representations of authorship in Nineteenth-Century Spain, as epitomized in Bohl de Faber’s *La gaviota* and other works where singers and female authors become mute.

imitating men or embracing the stereotypes of women. Rose proposes: “Oscillation for its own sake is not the point; the goal of such a critical mobility must be to deconstruct the polarities that it oscillates between. The structure of the Same and the Other must be destabilized” (84). Therefore, Coronado incorporates myriad landscapes, and shows that the perceived division between city and country does not exist; that corruption is evident in the cultured city and the “natural” countryside; in the public and in domestic spheres. By doing so, the poet shows the flaw in Rousseau’s argument in which he states: “I would not indiscriminately object to a woman’s being limited to the labors of her sex alone and left in profound ignorance of all the rest. But that would require very simple and very healthy public morals or a very retired way of life. In big cities and among corrupt men such a woman would be too easy to seduce” (Book V, 382-83). Coronado’s poetic work reiterates that if there were only these two choices, city or country, nature or culture, one could not resolve the dialectic.

Coronado attempts to achieve “oscillation” outside of the dialectic’s limits by demonstrating the interconnectedness of nature and culture in her poetry, and she successfully identifies the feminine and masculine in both. Although the *poetisa* frequently aligns women with nature in a positive light by exploiting Rousseauian stereotypes of morality, she does not accept a corresponding distance from masculine culture. By incorporating negative connotations of both masculinized and feminized nature in her work, Carolina Coronado challenges the dialectical polarity of gender roles, as prescribed by patriarchal terms, which confine women to the domestic sphere. While she may not encounter an antidote to the madness, the act of bravely and publicly addressing each

characteristic of the “anxiety of influence” releases the possibilities for the woman writer by embracing both nature and culture.

CHAPTER 5

“WOMEN’S TIME”: NATURE AND SPACE IN THE POETIC CORPUS OF ROSALÍA DE CASTRO

Nineteenth-century poet Rosalía de Castro distances herself physically and temporally from the literary tradition of previous female Spanish poets. As part of the *Rexurdimento* movement which was based on the iconic melancholy of the Galician region and echoed in her poetry, Castro had the ability to speak for her marginalized compatriots (orphans, widows, emigrants, the impoverished) who also felt displaced by sociopolitical circumstances. In order to give other Galicians a voice, she published *Follas novas* in her native language and clarifies her innovative, modern feminist position through language, thematic elements, and perspective, as illustrated in the initial poem from 1880:

D’aquelas que cantan as pombas y as froes
Todos din que teñen alma de muller,
Poise u que n’as canto, Virxe d’a Paloma,
¡Ay! ¿de que’ a terei? (Part 1, Poem I, lines 1-4)

In this allusion to Carolina Coronado, the seminal “flower” *poetisa*, Castro delineates her differing point(s) of view by juxtaposing the present (theirs) and the poetic ‘yo’'s uncertain future which does not abide the parameters of other Spanish writers of the period.

The poetic voice rhetorically (and ironically) questions her spiritual status as a woman if she refuses to identify herself as close to nature and the domestic sphere, as her predecessors and contemporaries have done. Yet, like her fellow women poets, Rosalía de

Castro also integrates images of natural elements into her poetry, such as water, trees, and landscape. However, the poet breaks from feminine tradition by utilizing these only to orient her remarkable, detached perspective. Unwilling to follow the “Tretas del débil” (Ludmer) of those female poets previously studied, Castro makes no apologies or excuses for her feminist stance.

In this chapter, I will utilize Julia Kristeva’s psychoanalytic feminist theory, specifically that of “Women’s Time” (1979), to illustrate the innovative socio-political feminist attitudes of Castro’s poetry that remain relevant today. Although previous critics have analyzed the poet’s natural themes, none have addressed the psychoanalytic feminist ties to these images, metaphors, and personification in terms of temporal and physical space. In particular, the poetic *yo* frequently encounters natural and man-made boundaries, denoting the limitations and potential movement in time and space between water and land, interior and exterior, or dreams and reality, which pertain to the Kristevan perspective of “Women’s Time.”

Kristeva begins her essay with the conflicting concepts of “time”: “We confront two temporal dimensions: the time of linear history, of *cursive time* (as Nietzsche called it), and the time of another history, that is, another time, a *monumental time* (the nomenclature comes from Nietzsche), that incorporates these supranational sociocultural groupings within even larger entities” (203). The theorist refuses to accept traditional dimensions of time and place, in which one would construct identity, and Castro also questions our perceptions of temporal and physical space. The poet marks time in myriad ways, abstract and tangible: she illustrates unending seasons, nights, and days, as well as finite clocks ticking and hair turning gray.

In “Women’s Time,” Kristeva argues that physical space, traditionally a domain of the Symbolic Order, has been relegated to women, whereas temporal space, to men: “. . . It seems indeed that the evocation of women’s name and fate privileges the *space* that *generates* the human species more than it does *time*, destiny, or history” (204). Kristeva proposes that choosing between these two approaches, i.e. aligning with either “cursive” or “monumental” time leads to impossibility for female subjectivity as the former negates diversity (in the creation of the equal sociopolitical place for “Universal Woman”) and the latter can neither be communicated nor, therefore, recognized by the Symbolic Order (207-8). Rosalía de Castro’s varied, distanced perspective from her subjects rejects both “cursive” and “monumental” time as referents, instead incorporating both in order to create a fluid, organic space and time of her dream-like reality. The poet integrates a natural space and time that is not regulated by the Symbolic Order due to the speaker’s constantly changing point of view, from intimate to distant, and of the past, present, and future.

Castro challenges the unavoidable reality of time passing with varied portrayals of nature’s cyclical time and the unlimited space of her dreams. Like Kristeva, she does not accept one definition for time or for a feminist construction of identity. The delineation from others’ time, with which Castro began *Follas novas*, continues in Poem III:

Tal como as nubes
que impele o vento,
i agora asombran, i agora alegran
os espazos inmensos do ceo,
así as ideas
loucas que eu teño,
as imaxes de múltiples formas,
de estranas feituradas, de cores incertos,
agora asombran,
agora acrarán
o fondo sin fondo do meu pensamento. (1-11)

The poet marks the multiple perspectives temporal and physical space in the image of the clouds undulating in the wind, using simile for her “crazy” thoughts of daydreams as well as the physical form of the poem, unfixed and nonconforming. Castro integrates images of nature without specifically tying women to its implied limitations in the Symbolic Order, illustrating the freedom through art of self-representation.

Rosalía de Castro was born in 1837 in Santiago de Compostela, and spent the majority of her life in Galicia. She published *La flor*, her first book of poetry, in 1857, and two years later married Manuel Murguía, with whom she had seven children. While many critics claim that the Galician *Cantares gallegos* and *Follas novas* represent Castro’s best work, the timing creates the opportunity to associate the poet’s achievements with her marriage. Many critics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, like Shelly Stevens, associate Murguía with Castro’s poetic success, particularly due to his encouraging her interests in regionalism; however, Stevens concludes that his interests remained purely political rather than literary (22). Castro also published five novels, all in Castilian, between 1859 and 1881. The writer attracted both positive and negative attention for her third book of poetry, *Cantares gallegos* (1863) glossing the popular oral *cantares* of her homeland. It is interesting to note that her subsequent collections: *Follas novas* (1880), also written in Galician, and the Castilian verses in *En las orillas del Sar* (1884), were probably composed at the same time. These last two poetic works convey a strong socio-political tone evident in the themes of existential angst and a distancing of the natural world from the solitary poetic voice, the latter highlighting Castro as a precursor to Unamuno and his contemporaries.

Literary circles recognized Castro for her work to some degree¹⁵ but she did not achieve commercial success until after her death in 1885. She gained posthumous admittance to the literary canon in the twentieth century after her readers converted her into the a *santiña* icon of Galicia for giving voices to marginalized subjects and for her poetic innovation: utilizing a popular register and tone, challenging rules of rhyme and meter, and approaching sociopolitical topics overtly.

Earlier critics who explored the concept of nature in Rosalia de Castro's work include Kathleen Kulp-Hill, in an investigation of both her prose and poetry (1977) within a historical, biographical context. Kulp-Hill dedicated a chapter to the topic of nature, especially in regards to personification and pathetic fallacy as a commonplace rhetorical device in literature and describes the poet as "so close to nature, so sensitive to its phenomena and their effects on her moods" that Castro's integration of nature does not strike the reader as innovative (244). But the critic does add: "Nature becomes the context of familiar reality into which she weaves the intimate experiences of her soul," implying a close spiritual connection with nature (245). While Shelly Stevens praised Castro's works in Galician for its language and focus on the rural, feminine sphere in these compilations, the critic unnecessarily bemoans and simplifies the "pure romantic and imitative derivative tone" of her Castilian publications, especially in relation to the portrayal of nature (14).

Also composed in the 1970s, Marina Mayoral's seminal work on Castro's entire body of poetry illustrates its breadth while attempting to break the *santiña* stereotype in *La poesía de Rosalía de Castro* (1974). However, like the previous critics, Mayoral describes Castro as

¹⁵ Castro had a particularly large following in the Galician Diaspora and published frequently in Cuba and Argentina (Davies, "Cultural" 181).

close to nature: “Rosalía, como una planta de umbría, necesita humedad y sombra” (236).

The critic based her comments on the use of pathetic fallacy and the Sublime: “Hay una cualidad en la naturaleza que la hace definitivamente extraña al hombre: su perennidad, su eterno retorno. Nada puede entender del dolor de un ser que es esencialmente pasajero. La naturaleza, por ello, será sólo testigo, y testigo indiferente, del paso del hombre” (247).

While I agree that Castro utilizes specific references to “cursive” time in nature to present multiple perspectives of her reality, I disagree that her nature is like the Sublime, apathetic to the plight of humankind. I argue that Castro utilizes physical (water, land, plants, animals) and temporal space (seasons, day, night, eternity) to interconnect the myriad identities in her poetry, portraying life in a seemingly desolate landscape and questioning these seemingly fixed, restrictive concepts.

In 1983, Catherine Davies published an article demanding a new critical approach to the literature of Rosalía de Castro be made more “pertinent to contemporary Spain,” explaining that previous analysis relied too heavily on biographical interpretations and, therefore, simplified her perspective and her work (“Criticism 1950-1980” 219). Two years later, the *Convenio de Santiago* met to honor the centennial of Castro’s death with hundreds of papers in homage of her work, providing the needed depth in criticism. In the last twenty years, a broader interpretation of Castro’s work, both poetry and prose, has appeared, and many investigations have been published in Galician by academic groups formed to specifically break simplified stereotypes of Castro. With regard to nature, contemporary critics of the 2000s approach Castro’s connection to the natural world and to Galicia as more complex. Critics emphasize political implications and historical context to the land, rather than pathetic fallacy to express woman and nature either delighting or suffering at the hands

of the patriarchal power structure. In particular, critics such as Alberto Acereda, Elizabeth Small, and María López Sánchez work to contextualize the subversive intent of Castro's poetry through existential themes, style, and meter so that her innovative work may be appreciated as a precursor to the Generación de '98 and in the transition from Romanticism to Symbolism. Small suggests in "Tropo y Locus" that Castro "is not the poet of flowers, but of 100-year-old trees," signifying her nonconformity to the pressures of literary tradition and that her link to nature serves to give her space and strength to create, not merely to reflect the elements back to the reader (209). Small also argues that the distance of perspective in *Follas novas* is her tool to prevent her work from being too pathetic ("Irony" 293).

In addition to the literary innovations brought to light and accepted by recent critics, the importance of political context and identity dominates linguistic research as well. Kirsty Hooper explains: "The time is right for a reassessment of Galicia's relationship with the world. Our task as literary critics is to forge reading practices that take into account the multiple *positionings* that influence cultural expression. . ." (46). Hooper signals the work of María López Sánchez, who observes, "foron vistas en ocasións como inocuas, simplemente costumistas, propias dunha sensibilidade feminina" (101). However, the political importance of what López Sánchez calls "anchoring" the text based on Galicia's landscape, cannot go unnoticed (107). Castro continually utilizes Galicia as an axis from which to shift these perspectives.

Finally, Catherine Davies also published a Kristevan analysis of the maternal in Castro's religious (and a few non-religious) poems in 1995. The critic focuses on the coincidence of the semiotic over the symbolic, contradicting previous interpretations of Castro's religious poetry, utilizing Kristeva's *About Chinese Women* (on the maternal) and

The Powers of Horror (on the abject). I should like to expand upon this analysis with non-religious poetry, adding the use of natural images and physical and temporal space of “Women’s Time” as well as *The Powers of Horror* to communicate Castro’s innovative feminist concepts.

Ironically, a chronological literary history of Castro’s prolific work has proven inconclusive at best, due to the sporadic publication dates of her volumes and lack of manuscripts. Like “Women’s Time,” no linear evolution of the poet’s subjectivity can be illustrated in her poetry due to this lack of knowledge. Critics can compare her works in Galician and in Castilian, but they cannot trace her construction of identity as a writer, as a woman, or as a Galician according to any chronology, which is representative of Castro’s multiple perspectives within time and space. Furthermore, the author does not presume to speak for all of Galicia or Spain in the nineteenth-century, but rather she allows her verses to present snippets in time and space of varying figures: emigrants, orphans, widows, and writers as they relate to the poetic voice’s ever-changing point of view. Rosalía de Castro reveals the numerous voices of the muted subaltern in rural Galicia during a period of social upheaval. However, while Castro presents distinct voices and problems, she does not resolve them. Often she depicts her subjects in relation to nature’s “monumental” time, especially in reference to border spaces, marking difference and limitations for all who live according to “cursive” time. Yet, in reality, the physical and temporal location of the speaker could be found in this alternative that Kristeva proposes which is neither “monumental” nor “cursive,” resulting in the space of negation and of the abject.

The poet refuses to propose an all-encompassing solution for a struggling “Universal Woman” in nineteenth-century Galicia but rather illustrates individualized pain and

experience. The poetic voice floats through natural landscapes of physical and temporal space utilizing prosopopeia. For example, in “Extranjera en su patria” (*Follas novas*), the poetic voice uses a third-person point of view to describe varying people and places amongst temporal and physical space referents. The feminine subject sits physically on a border, an “old terrace,” designating a division of both space and time:

N’a xa vella baranda
Entapizada de’edras e de lirios
Foise á sentar calada e tristemente
Frente d’o tempo antigo. (1-4)

While the poetic voice has distanced herself from the scene located on this boundary of historic, in “cursive” time, man-made constructions, like the physical terrace and the religious temple, a relationship with nature remains. The speaker’s view of the coming masses surveys potential identities through interpersonal relationships, in “monumental” time: “Interminable precesión de mortos, / Uns en corpo no mais, outros n’o espírito” (5-6). Castro utilizes prosopopeia in order to transfer perspectives from woman in nature to temple to “endless” procession of masses, living and dead. In a socio-historical analysis, Catherine Davies claims that prosopopeia “offers a dialogical, multiple viewpoint rather than the single voice of the lyrical self. In this way her poems give voice to the thoughts, feelings, and words of the working country people – primarily to the women – as individual human beings” (“Cultural” 193).

The journey, or oscillation between viewpoints, continues in the poem:

Contemprou cal pasaban e pasaban
Collendo hacia o infinito,
Sin que ó fixaren n’ ela
Os ollos apagados e alundidos
Deran sinal nin maestra
D’habela n’ algun tempo conocido.
Y uns eran seus amantes n’ outros días,

Deudos eran os mais y outros amigos,
Compañeiros d'a infancia,
Sirvientes e veciños. (11-20)

This type of perspective equates to Kristeva's "*interiorization of the fundamental separation of the socio-symbolic contract*" so that women are no longer tied to either "cursive" or "monumental" time (223). The subjects are endless in the space of the procession, heading towards an infinite time, but the woman seemingly remains fixed, watching from a boundary marker of time and space. While the woman observes the procession of never-ending masses, neither serves as the Other. Kristeva explains that when the separation from the traditional limitations of time takes place, "From that point on, the other is neither an evil being foreign to me nor a scapegoat from the outside, that is, of another sex, class, race, or nation. I am *at once the attacker and the victim*, the same *and* the other, identical *and* foreign. I simply have to analyze incessantly the fundamental separation of my own untenable identity" (223). "Extranjera en su patria" provides such a continuous analysis of many identities, by naming them according to a historical time, but not determining their identity definitively in the moving changing time and place of the poem. The poetic voice returns to the female subject at the conclusion, remaining a stranger, because she remains situated on the border of space and time:

mientras cerraba la callada noche
sus lutos, ¡ay!, tristísimos
en torno a la extranjera en su patria,
que, sin lar ni arrimo,
sentada en la baranda contemplaba
cuál brillaban los fuegos fugitivos. (25-30)

The subject is at once one of the people in regard to her relationships and not one of them, both same and the Other.¹⁶ With regard to this poem, Davies states “What is denied in this poem is not simply Galicia but the whole phallic, patriarchal symbolic order of language and law” (“Return” 78).

This analysis becomes problematic as the speaker in this poem and in others reveals the dystopia of her homeland, rather than a traditional pastoral idyll expected of the *santiña* of Galicia. The poetic voice simultaneously portrays her point of view as that of her countrymen and a foreigner, a friend and a stranger, alive and dead, relaxing at the hearth and homeless. In this poem, Castro integrates antithesis to expand the concept of multiple perspectives as well, leaving the reader to determine if the identity of the poetic subject(s) remains somewhere in between, as artist and dreamer.

In “Women’s Time,” Kristeva describes three “generations,” or “attitudes,” of feminists, all of which appear in the voices of Castro’s poetry. Like Kristeva, Castro presents, contradicts, and eventually abandons the first two of these attitudes in her wealth of poems. The first “generation” desires equality in the linear space of patriarchal politics in order to gain the same rights and liberties as men. Castro frequently protests the sociopolitical injustices facing the people of Galicia, but her battle is individualized, not all-encompassing. She certainly desires that her compatriots experience equal liberties as the rest of Spain, and all critics agree that the primary thread connecting her poetry is this sociopolitical struggle. Elizabeth Small’s article, “Tropo y locus: Árboles en la poesía de Rosalía de Castro” (2007), connects tree imagery to political issues, such as regionalism and natural preservation, as

¹⁶ Gloria Anzaldúa’s concept of borders and mediating cultures, such as the arbitrary political frontier and natural ones like the sea, are discussed in *Borderlands/La Frontera* and would provide additional analysis to this poem in particular.

well as acknowledges the poetic innovation and existential feminism present in Castro's work. I argue that her poetry also allows for a new feminist approach with regard to nature, space, and time.

Castro mirrors the tones of the first "generation's" egalitarianism in "Del mar azul las transparentes olas..." (*En las orillas del Sar*, 1884). The poet personifies nature: the waves "murmuran," "me besan y me buscan," and the water takes on a masculine, seductive personality (2,4). The water's character becomes more complex as the relationship ensues with the speaker. After "flirting," the masculinized water is "relentless" and the speaker states: "y pienso que me llaman, que me atraen / hacia sus salas húmedas" (7-8). The metaphor of a confining and suffocating space, the "humid halls," represents the established patriarchal canon.

The speaker "anxiously," or, "eagerly" considers entering the patriarchal space, crossing the shoreline into the water, however, the waves are stronger than the poetic voice, and they taunt her with their power and movement:

Mas cuando ansiosa quiero
seguirlas por la líquida llanura,
se hunde mi pie en la linfa transparente
y ellas de mí se burlan. (9-12)

The poetic subject's feet "sink" in the water when faced with physical and social limitations. When the poetic voice considers the inability to enter the "halls" like the masculine water, she reaches her apogee of despair. The poetic *yo* remains bound by limitations of time and space, frustrated:

Y huyen abandonándome en la playa
a la terrena, inacabable lucha,

como en las tristes playas de la vida
me abandonó inconstante la fortuna. (13-16)

The poetic voice repeats “abandoned,” in the present and the past tense, to stress the tension of having lost the potential opportunity to move freely in space and time. Now she faces a struggle without end, an eternity stranded alone on the shore, limited by arbitrary markers of gender like bodies of water designate region and country. Castro plants this desire for a possible place in the masculine sphere, like Kristeva’s first “generation” of feminists, wishing for more fluid borders like water’s gradual flow over ancient rock to facilitate change. In “Del mar azul las transparentes olas...” nature represents more than an emotional counterpart in pathetic fallacy, it is a symbol of the organic relationship between man and woman, struggling writer and the literary canon, the subaltern at a place of both possibility and impossibility.

Castro’s poems about inconstant love affairs, in glosses of her *Cantares gallegos* (1863), could also relate to this first “attitude” of equal rights in the patriarchal system of courtship. The poetic voice speaks out in “Quíxente tanto, meniñina,” first describing their love that flowed in fresh water “que para min eras lúa, / branca aurora e craro sol; / augua limpa en fresca fonte” (3-5). However, the poetic voice degrades the lover’s identity with images of putrefaction, discarding the carnation given to her by her deceitful lover,

Mais a pasar polo río,
¡o caravel afondou!...
Tan bo caminno ti leves
como o caravel levou. (23-26)¹⁷

In this place at the edge of the river, the poetic *yo* moves along this border that constrains her physically and throws into it the symbol for her love, now dead, showing her power and

¹⁷ Italics in Castro’s glosses of *Cantares* indicate her additions.

ability to challenge the material representations of courtly romantic gestures. The final couplet, Castro's personal addition to the original *cantar*, communicates a verdant desire for death and destruction, calling to mind Kristeva's concept of the abject: "On close inspection, all literature is probably a version of the apocalypse that seems to me rooted, no matter what its socio-historical conditions might be, on the fragile border (borderline cases) where identities (subject / object, etc.) do not exist or only barely so – double, fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject" (*Powers* 207). The poetic voice remains on the "fragile border" of land and sea, watching and wishing for death and decay in the demise of sexual desire.

More images of putrefaction in nature serve as a warning to all women who are seeking transcendence through a male counterpart in "Sed de amores tenía, y dejaste" (*Orillas*), written sometime before 1884. The natural element, water, is metaphor for women's virtue: "Sed de amores tenía, y dejaste / que la apagase en tu boca" (1-2). Castro concludes the poem with this lesson for the reader:

No volverá, te lo juro;
desde que una fuente enlodan
con su pico esas aves de paso,
se van a beber a otra. (15-18)

While the water symbolizes woman, it carries negative connotations of stagnation and immobility, confined in a fountain. The male "bird" migrates and drinks from any "body" of water it chooses. In terms of time, the bird moves toward the future and seemingly endless potential; the feminine water remains in the past. Castro illustrates the injustice of courtly love and the need for women to use all their strength in order to be able to stay on a level field like their male counterparts. In these three poems, which span over at least two decades

of the nineteenth century, Castro continually addresses the blatant inequality between the sexes through images of masculine and feminine nature in “monumental” and “cursive” time.

Rosalía de Castro does not choose to write in the same language or even with the same poetic “rules” of meter and rhyme as other writers of the Romantic canon. In Kristeva’s focus on language, her second “generation” rejects the concept of the patriarchal system entirely to connect to a matriarchal language and lifestyle. Much of Castro’s work portrays a pseudo-matriarchal society, or a patriarchal society devoid of men; however, rather than thriving, suffering ensues. The emigrant “widows,” for example, in “Tecín soia a miña tea,” (*Follas*) describes:

Tecín soia a miña tea,
Sembréi soia o meu nabal,
Soia vou por leña ó monte,
Soia a vexo arder no lar. (1-4)

Castro creates a world without men, yet the poetic voice is alone, lacking a human female community to give her solace.

Allyson M. Poska examines in *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain* how lower-class women held more power in Galicia due to the mass emigration of men to other regions and to Latin America at the end of the nineteenth century. She states: “From sexual norms to property acquisition, Galician peasant women consistently defied traditional expectations of women’s behaviour” (2). Perhaps this context adds to Castro’s assertiveness during the time period. Instead, the poet illustrates a woman’s social network that remains in the natural world, which connects her to the absent husband:

Anduriña que pasache
Con el as ondas do mar;

Aduriña, voa, voa,
Ven e dime en ónde está. (19-22).

The *aduriña* not only has access to both husband and wife, across the boundary of the sea, but also between the past, present, and future. This example provides more than pathetic fallacy or the Sublime in nature; the bird has the ability to keep the couple united in a time or space that the speaker leaves undetermined yet possible.

A similar connection to nature in this world without men is portrayed in “Pasa, río, pasa, río” from *Cantares gallegos*. The poetic *yo* stands at the edge of a Galician river, the border between immobile land and frenetic sea:

Pasa, río, pasa, río,
con teu maino rebulir;
pasa, pasa antre as froliñas
color de ouro e de marfil,
a quen cos teus doces labios
tan doces cousas lles dis. (1-6)

The speaker communes with a sensual nature, humanized with lips that speak sweetly to her, but she still feels alone. However, she continues to speak directly to the river, as “*ti*” and also refers to personified flowers that experience loss like the presumed “widow” speaker: “Pasa, pasa, mais non vexan / que te vas ao mar sin fin, / porque estonces, ¡ai, probiñas, / cómo choraran por ti!” (7-10). It is interesting to note how Castro painstakingly describes the natural elements in these poems, but refuses to identify the poetic voice in terms of any other marker but her relationship to nature and references to her emotional state. The poetic *yo* does refer to the Carril shore, not necessarily as an exact physical location but rather as a future possibility:

I, ¡ai, que fora das froliñas
véndote lonxe de si

ir pola verde ribeira
da ribeira do Carril! (19-22)

The connections to these natural spaces provide clues to the speaker's identity, but still they are fluid. Surrounded by nature's sounds, color, and touch, she senses a devastating loss. The overwhelming, recurring concept of solitude and loneliness cannot be limited by time and space in patriarchal terms. Alice Jardine argues that Kristeva uses a future tense that refers simultaneously to the past in her writings, and I assert that this reflects the future possibility to which Castro refers: "Julia Kristeva writes in a kind of "future perfect" – a modality that implies neither that we are helpless before some inevitable destiny nor that we can somehow, given enough time and thought, engineer an ultimately perfect future" (5).

Another characteristic of the second "generation" is the complete rejection and disdain for male comportment. Elizabeth Small cites several "tree poems" that reveal Castro's outrage at the maltreatment of nature and women. For example, in "Jamás lo olvidaré!" (*Orillas*), about the devastating destruction of the Galician landscape, the critic states: "El poema entero es, en efecto, un grito apasionado – como si la poeta se levantara sobre las astillas de un *locus amoenus* devastado, e hiciera de ellas un *locus politicus*" ("Árboles" 212). Alberto Acereda studies another tree poem, "Los robles," also written sometime before 1884, and asserts that the grand oak tree represents "el dolor por la tierra, la queja ante un paisaje en destrucción y un pueblo desahuciado, el lamento por el triste estado de su Galicia natal y la esperanza de un renacer" (13). Both of these poems portray victimized Mother Earth, connected to the past and present, and the destruction that the patriarchal system has brought to the land and its innocent inhabitants. Yet the patriarch is absent; in "Los robles," the family consists of a young child, a feeble old man, and a mother rocking her infant in front of the hearth, reminding the reader of their connection to the earth:

y el anciano y el niño contentos
en su lecho de paja dormían
como duerme el polluelo en su nido
cuando el ala materna le abriga. (23-26)

Among the destruction of the Galician forests, a past matriarchal, mythological scene ensues in the present. Only the past connotes a patriarchal association. Castro concludes the poem in Part IV with an apostrophe, pleading with the great masculine oak to return to the magical time:

Torna roble, árbol patrio, a dar sombra
cariñosa a la escueta montaña,
donde un tiempo la gaita guerrera
alentó de los nuestros las almas,
y compás hizo al eco monótono
del canto materno. (1-6)

As the speaker hopes for the possibilities of the present, Castro utilizes metaphor to personify and feminize an idealized version of the tree: “donde umbrosas se extienden tus ramas, / como en rostro de pálida virgen / cabellera ondulante y dorada” (13-15). This poem illustrates the most striking image of matriarchal society in which men are dismissed. Like Kristeva’s second “generation,” Castro offers a space and time of feminine authority where men, especially in their destructive state, do not belong. In a sense, the matriarchal space becomes that which Kristeva describes in “Women’s Time”: “This phase is characterized by a quasi-universal rejection of linear temporality and by a highly pronounced mistrust of political life” (208).

In another example of rejecting the masculine world, Castro’s “Cuido una planta bella” (*Orillas*) features a maternal poetic *yo* living in a utopian feminine world. In this inverted universe the plant “child” thrives in darkness, becoming healthier, taller, and more beautiful on a windowsill that separates her spatially from the external world. The shade

from the trees and the windowpane protect her, along with the doting mother figure. However, just one ray from the masculine sun, in a personified “kiss,” can prove deadly: “y languidece y se marchita y muere / cuando un rayo de sol besa sus hojas” (11-12). The succession of events, separated breathlessly by successive “y”s face no deterrents to slow the process once it begins. In that case, even her mother cannot save her from nature’s powers that can transcend the borders of pane, glass, and tree branches.

However, the speaker uses simile to move from mother to the plant-child itself:

Por eso yo que anhelo que el refulgente astro
del día calor preste a mis miembros helados,
aún aliento y resisto sin luz y sin espacio
como la planta bella que odia del sol el rayo. (25-28)

The beautiful plant resists the sun’s masculine power, prefers to go without light and without space, at least in patriarchal terms. The poetic voice offers another option:

Ya que otra luz más viva que la del sol dorado
y otro calor más dulce en mi alma penetrando
me anima y me sustenta con su secreto halago
y da luz a mis ojos por el dolor cegados. (29-32)

This other light and heat source cannot be described in concrete terms, but the poetic *yo* sounds intimately acquainted with an alternative possibility of abstract space, “en mi alma.”

Another characteristic of this second “generation” tends to subvert the standards of behavior and dialectic stereotypes, as seen in “A xusticia pola man,” (*Follas*). The poetic speaker, dishonored, describes the male offenders: “Aqués que tén fama de honrados na vila, / roubáronme tanta brancura que eu tiña; / botáronme estrume nas galas dun día” (1-3). The female speaker distances them spatially, “Aqués,” not naming them in any other terms, a mob that defaced her pure clothing that was previously white and sparkling. She subverts a

world where at first, woman represents the “Ángel del hogar,” white and innocent, while the men are associated with the muddy earth that “they” throw, described in general terms. The poetic *yo* then witnesses her own life change in an instant: “Nin pedra deixaron en donde eu vivira . . . meus fillos... ¡meux anxos...!, que tanto eu quería, / ¡morreron, morreron ca fame que tiñan!” (5, 7-8). Without these domestic parameters, she transforms into a “loba doente,” and explains, “Miréinos con calma, i as mans estendidas, / dun golpe, ¡dun soio!, deixéinos sin vida” (23-24). Instead of man, she becomes violent animal who will seek justice in a world where none exists otherwise. Kristeva expands on this inversion of the dialectic that is problematic: “The particular structure of the logic of counterpower and countersociety is what lies behind its essence as an image of defeated society or power. In such a perspective, which is most likely too Hegelian, modern feminism would be a single moment in an ongoing process – the process of becoming aware of the implacable violence (of separation and castration) that underlies *any* symbolic contract” (216). In this most extreme example of Castro’s poetry, one can see the negative implications of inverting the dialectic that is emblematic, as well as problematic, of Kristeva’s second “generation.”

Finally, the third “attitude” that Kristeva proposes in “Women’s Time” does not exclude the first two “generations” but rather offers a “parallel existence” with other feminist women from other times. Instead of ignoring differences between women, like the first “generation,” or viewing the patriarchy as Other, as the second “generation,” Kristeva recommends that all women appreciate the differences, struggles, and issues that each woman faces. Kristeva suggests: “The time may have come, in fact, to celebrate the *multiplicity* of female perspectives and preoccupation. In a more accurate, honest, and less self-serving way, we must guarantee that the *fundamental difference* between the sexes arises

out of the network of these differences” (206). Sylvia Mikkelsen expands on this argument and applies it to spatial relationships: “Where most of these readings challenge and attempt to deconstruct male / female oppositions, Kristeva allows for a space of interior confrontation with other which is neither reconciliation nor rejection but, rather, a psychodrama of unresolved psycho-bisexual tension which could ideally find expression in aesthetic joissance” (181). For Rosalía de Castro, this space for aesthetic joissance can be found in the dreamlike reality that she conveys in her poetry.

For example, “Cenicientas las aguas, los desnudos” (*Orillas*) is a popularly anthologized poem of Castro, often cited as a cruel representation of Sublime nature. Catherine Davies states “In Castro, landscape does not represent social harmony, quite the reverse, beauty is delusive, deceptive, paradoxically cruel. Her landscapes . . . are almost always populated, usually by poor people; the presence of these people negates the myth of natural harmony” (“Cultural” 192). However, this is not the nature of the Sublime, but rather the verisimilitude of life that truly exists in this seemingly deserted land. Life continues for Galicians, and so it does for solitary artists. The depiction of the winter scene overflows with antitheses: “el cielo,” “la tierra,” “el color gris domina,” “el verdor intenso,” “la blanca gaviota,” “los cuervos,” culminating in the juxtaposition of the reality and dream in life:

¡Ah, si el invierno triste de la vida,
como tú de las flores y los céfiros,
también precursor fuera de la hermosa
y eterna primavera de mis sueños! (31-34)

The seasons of life, winter and spring, imply the cyclical nature of time and eternal possibilities, but at the same time, imply a linear beginning and end. This is Kristeva’s parallel. The speaker recognizes that for some, winter signals an end but that for her another

possibility exists: “¡Oh, mi amigo el invierno! / Mil y mil veces bien venido seas, / mi sombrío y adusto compañero” (26-28). For the speaker, winter represents an accomplice, yet prior to this intimate dialogue she describes another perspective, the lone farmer and his dog on the distant frozen, arid landscape from a third-person point of view:

Seguido del mastín, que helado tiembla,
el labrador envuelto
en su capa de juncos cruza el monte;
el campo está desierto. (13-16)

Castro’s poetic voice floats from different perspectives, in this case, “Yo desde mi ventana, / que azotan los airados elementos” (21-22). The window is open to other perceptions of time, landscape, and sensations. Elizabeth Small comments on Castro’s “distancing”: “. . . By varying her subjective stance and taking on the voices of other personas in her poetry, Castro reminds her readers of lyric poetry’s fallacy in pretending to express the sincerest and least mediated feelings of a poet” (“Irony” 296). The poet recognizes that she cannot speak directly for herself, and certainly not for others. Castro presents lives as seen through another vision, another time, and another space.

In “Cenicientas las aguas,” Rosalía de Castro alludes to life and to dreams, and the intermingling of the two. She includes water in the title line to illustrate the many forms of the natural element, which have been portrayed as both masculine and feminine, as powerful and weak, and all along and outside of the parameters of the reader’s understanding of water. Frozen water can appear ashen, or dead, yet it deceives, a metaphor for all of the identities Castro illustrates in her poetry. No one accesses the complete dimension of her subject’s identities, these are left to their dreams or unconscious state. Dreams are the borderland between realities: “¡Ah, si el invierno triste de la vida, / y eterna primavera de mis sueños!

(31, 34). The parallel temporal and physical space, i.e. “Women’s Time,” exists for the poet in a dreamlike state. Castro’s “Dicen que no hablan las plantas” (*Orillas*), contradicts the concepts of logic, natural borders, and limitations of time and space:

Dicen que no hablan las plantas, ni las fuentes, ni los pájaros,
ni el onda con sus rumores, ni con su brillo los astros,
lo dicen, pero no es cierto, pues siempre cuando yo paso
de mí murmuran y exclaman:
--Ahí va la loca, soñando
con la eterna primavera de la vida y de los campos... (1-6)

The poetic *yo* purports to know the “truth” about nature based on her past experience and her perspective. However, nature speaks in a taunting manner, calling her “crazy” due to her dreams that do not follow rules of patriarchal time. The speaker concludes: “Astros y fuentes y flores, no murmuréis de mis sueños; / sin ellos, ¿cómo admiraros ni cómo vivir sin ellos?” (14-15). The poetic *yo* needs both her dreams and nature’s space in order to live, for that is where she resides.

In “¡Tas-tis, tas-tis!, na silenciosa noite” (*Follas*), Castro illustrates a life without dreams: a never-ending moment, silent, and immobile according to the clock of “cursive” time:

¡Tas-tis, tas-tis!, na silenciosa noite
con siniestro compás repite a péndola,
mentras a frecha aguda
marcando un i outro instante antre as tiniebras,
do reloxo sempre inmóvil
recorre lentamente a limpa esfera. (1-6)

The poetic *yo*’s reality is unbearable, in this time that follows other rules and meter, and space, while she is unable to move through it, is limitless:

Todo é negrura en baixo
E só na altura inmensa,

Só na anchura sin límites do ceo
Con inquietú relumbra alguna estrela,
Cal na cinza das grandes estivadas
Brilan as charamuscas derradeiras. (7-12)

The dichotomy evident between dreams and reality is revealed through nature and time, the last light of summer visible but she cannot enjoy it. She repeats “stirring” to signal the only movement, like an illness, to the reader. The speaker finally exclaims, “¡Qué triste é a noite, i o relox qué triste, / si inquieto o corpo i a conciencia velan!” (25-26). The body and the mind suffer, unable to reach idealized dream state. Yet, as Kristeva reminds us in *The Powers of Horror*, the idealized dreams do not necessarily exist because they must coexist with the phobias of humanity:

. . . Fear – a terrifying, abject referent. We encounter this discourse in our dreams, or when death brushes us by, depriving us of the assurance mechanical use of speech ordinarily gives us, the assurance of being ourselves, that is, untouchable, unchangeable, immortal. But the writer is permanently confronted with such a language. The writer is a phobic who succeeds in metaphorizing in order to keep from being frightened to death; instead he comes to life again in signs. (38)

In conclusion, the concept of dreamlike, wandering escape to the semiotic of imagination is frequently cited in Castro’s essay “Lieders” (1858). She begins: “¡Oh, no quiero ceñirme a las reglas del arte! Mis pensamientos son vagabundos, mi imaginación errante y mi alma solo se satisface de impresiones” (949). Castro refers to her “vagabond” spirit in motion that does not conform to boundaries of time or space, instead her “imagination,” or her dreams, rule her. Elizabeth Small agrees on the limitless boundaries of Castro based on her poem, “Del antiguo camino a lo largo,” and states: “No tan domesticado como en la poesía femenina de su siglo, ni tan salvaje como los paisajes sublimes que inspiraban los románticos, el espacio poético creado aquí por Rosalía de Castro conforma a los requisitos de su subjetividad, no a los patrones de movimientos literarios . . . sale de su

casa y el espacio doméstico para moverse dentro de un espacio todavía suya” (210). Rosalía de Castro utilizes multiple perspectives of both time and place in order to convey her feminist message of not only protest for the marginalized Galicians of the period, but for all, in the past, present and future “Women’s Time.” The subjects of her poems refuse to be limited by any natural or man-made boundary of time or space due to their ability to transcend perspectives between dreams and reality.

CHAPTER 6

EMILIA PARDO BAZÁN: THE MOTHER IN NATURE

In *Mother / Nature: Popular Culture and Environmental Ethics*, Catherine Roach affirms that the “woman as close to nature” debate stems from millennia of associations, basing biological ties of motherhood to the concept of Mother Nature, with varying consequences. Roach proposes three models of Mother as Nature: “The Good Mother,” as nurturing and providing; The “Bad” Mother, as ominous and all-powerful; and The “Hurt” Mother, as depleted victim; all of which can be utilized to both human and nature’s detriment, as well as benefit. While the postmodern world continues to debate these archetypes, Emilia Pardo Bazán integrated these diverse images of mother in her prose and poetry within a nineteenth-century social context that reflects the need for women to identify with the maternal as a source of authority. In her sequel to the canonical *Los pazos de Ulloa*, *La madre naturaleza*, the very title indicates Pardo Bazán’s consistent focus on the connection of nature and family to her work. In the naturalist novel, the author depicts the sensual connection of the natural world to human desire: “Bajo el árbol se refugió la pareja. Era el árbol protector magnífico castaño, de majestuosa y vasta copa, abierta con pompa casi arquitectural sobre el ancha y firme columna del tronco, que parecía lanzarse arrogante hacia las desatadas nubes: árbol patriarcal” (7). After illustrating in detail the subjects’ connection to the natural world, Pardo Bazán reveals the impossibility (especially for women) of finding contentment through love. The result of the quest for happiness results in the realization that

the lovers are siblings and must face the unnatural taboo of incest: “Naturaleza, te llaman madre. . . Deberían llamarte madrastra” concludes the novel, as the intimate connection with protective nature has been destroyed. In this novel, nature transforms from Roach’s “Good Mother” to “Bad,” causing the main female character to escape the natural world and enter a convent.

Whereas Pardo Bazán refers to Mother Nature and then nature as stepmother, Roach explains:

Perhaps at times we could understand the Earth as our mother and, at other times, in other situations, as our father or our parent or our sister or our child. As women, similarly, at certain times, when we celebrate our bodies or the cycles of life in which we participate, we could see ourselves as clearly embedded in the environment and connected with to other life forms (as closer to nature) and at other times we could place greater emphasis on our unique role as observers and shapers of the environment. (60)

Contradictory viewpoints of Mother Nature emerge in Emilia Pardo Bazán’s prolific production of 21 novels, over 1,000 short stories, essays, theatre, and poetry, which spans approximately sixty years, revealing the complex, transformative views on men’s and women’s relationship to nature, over this extensive period of writing during social, political, and industrial turmoil. Jo Labanyi elucidates the connection between gender and modernization during this period, highlighting the need to construct one’s identity as social citizen in public terms, including to “construct citizens as individuals who freely chose to merge personal identity with socially prescribed role-models held out to them for imitation, maintaining the liberal fiction of social contract” (386). Through allusions to “Mother Earth” and the Virgin Mary juxtaposed with realities of motherhood, Pardo Bazán compromises the patriarchal dominating concept of *ángel del hogar* by intersecting her maternal role with the work of God and powerful nature.

In a time of industrialization and a resulting gap between genders, geography, and politics, the dichotomy causes women's isolation from modernization and science as well as a lack of authority in the public sphere. Patriarchal society resisted women's participation in this realm due to moral concerns, leaving as the only viable social role the *ángel del hogar*, idealized wife and mother. Therefore, Pardo Bazán seizes this sole identity and expands it from within, incorporating the inherent authority prescribed by Mother Nature.

Pardo Bazán began writing poetry in early childhood, in the 1850s, when Romantic concepts continued to dominate Spanish poetry and women increasingly published *novelas por entrega* in periodicals. An autodidact, she maintained an awareness of European literary and academic affairs, including scientific theories. The popularity of realist novels, regionalism and *costumbrismo* motivated her, along with her male mentors, to begin writing her first novel, *Pascual López*, published in 1879 (Pattison 33). Her husband¹⁸ encouraged her to continue her research and writing until 1883, when she published a polemical collection of essays entitled "La cuestión palpitante." These entailed Pardo Bazán's thoughts on Naturalism, prescribing it to correspond with her own philosophy. As a woman of deeply-held Catholic values, she integrated the concept of free will into her description of Naturalism so that the environment, timing, and race contributed to human being's circumstances on which their decision-making is based (Borda Crespo 31). The importance of free will for Pardo Bazán resulted in her desire for both men and women to be able to control their own destiny in all possible ways, a factor for Christian beliefs as well as feminist ones. This determinism in Naturalism is not a contradiction or a mistake but rather illustrates the complexity of her writings and of her personality. Her conviction in these

¹⁸ Pardo Bazán's husband, Don José Quiroga, helped her to "attend" law school by proxy as he taught her the day's lessons upon returning home and she completed the assignments as well. (El Saffar 379).

beliefs caused a huge polemic personally and professionally (according to biographers such as Bravo-Villasante the uproar ruptured her marriage).

Of course, Emilia Pardo Bazán accomplished myriad feats in the late nineteenth century, continuing to work as a professor until her death in 1921. Collections of her works continue to be published, and a new tome, *Approaches to Teaching Pardo Bazán*, will be published in 2013. The majority of Pardo Bazán's critics conclude that, unlike her prose, her poetry falls short of canonical status, and the author herself disparaged her lyric attempts in her *Apuntes Autobiográficos* and Maurice Hemingway observes that while she published poetry continuously from the 1860s to the 1880s; she supposedly stopped because she feared negative health effects, such as depression, from writing poetry and stated that "la prosa es más sano y espiritual" (xi). Hemingway notes that while the compilation of poetry he collected, *Poesías inéditas u olvidadas* (1996), should not be considered a critical masterpiece at the level of Bécquer or Rosalía de Castro, in the inclusion of the small volume *Jaime*, originally published in 1881, "su producción poética alcanzó su punto culminante" (viii). All contemporary critics agree that these works have value, especially for contextual studies of her prose and potential biographical clues. Specifically, in the only book of poetry published in her lifetime, *Jaime*, Pardo Bazán links the maternal role to the archetypes of Mother Nature and the Virgin Mary, those of both nature and spirituality, in order to assume authority and assert female subjectivity by portraying this association positively. Regardless of the varied merits of these poems, the contemporary Pardo Bazán poetry specialists, Hemingway and Cristina Patiño Eirín, as well as others, agree that her rediscovered poetry merits additional analysis.

Pardo Bazán's poetry remains largely unknown, in part due to the difficulties of gathering her scattered verses in periodicals and varying archives across Spain. In the 1950s, Spanish critic José Montero Padilla examined and transcribed the that existed in archives in Galicia. He downplays her poetic abilities but claims that her elegy to a colleague, "A Teodorio Vesteiro Torres," and her nature poem, "Descripción de las Rías Bajas," represent her best lyrical work. The following year, Serrano Castilla republished her ode, "Al insigne filósofo Feijóo" accompanied by a page of commentary agreeing with Montero Padilla that "la Pardo Bazán" would best be remembered for her prose rather than poetry. Not until the 1990s did new poems appear thanks to Maurice Hemingway, who completed extensive archival research for his edition of Pardo Bazán's *Poesías inéditas u olvidadas*; to Cristina Patiño Eirín's articles including other unpublished poems; and to José Manuel González Herrán who also contributed to the exposure and academic investigation of this poetry by the canonical writer. In the prologue to Pardo Bazán's compilation, Hemingway wishes more studies were done on her work, from her poetry to her novels: "Despite the ready assent to her stature, her work is little known. With a handful of exceptions, her novels are unavailable in modern editions outside the collected works, and until quite recently have been largely forgotten" (*Poesías* 1). After their work accessing these manuscripts, approximately ten articles ensued in this century on the topic of Pardo Bazán's poetry, all concluding that the varying perspectives revealed in these poems demanded a reevaluation of Pardo Bazán's entire literary work. None of these analyses, however, covers the scope of motherhood, nature, and maternal archetypes in the author's poetic corpus.

Pardo Bazán's general criticism follows a similar chronology. The first major study of the author in book form, *Vida y obra de Emilia Pardo Bazán*, published in 1962 by

Carmen Bravo-Villasante, is a paean of adoration and has a novelistic quality. In regards to the collection *Jaime*, Bravo-Villasante writes, “Son las rimas sencillas de la primera nana con que mece a su niño” (49). However, the critic does highlight the author’s feminist principles and their beginnings from Pardo Bazán’s early readings (Feijóo, Stuart Mill) as well as the effects of such progressive thoughts on motherhood: “Ahora que tiene el hijo. . . persiste su vocación, y se aviva el deseo de dar a luz hijos espirituales, más costosos y difíciles que los de la carne. La esterilidad de su espíritu la desasosiega tanto como antes la inquietaba la otra” (50). This call for the mother to serve as teacher mirrors the observation of Caroline Merchant, who explains that during the Renaissance, images of nature as a nurturing Earth Mother persevered until the Scientific Revolution brought the “new image of nature as a female to be controlled and dissected through experiment legitimated the exploitation of natural resources” (189). By the nineteenth century, Merchant describes the result for woman as nature: “From an active teacher and parent, she has become a mindless, submissive body” (190). Pardo Bazán laments this lack of power for women and utilizes the authority of the Virgin Mary, as well as bringing earlier associations of Mother Earth and biological power of life giver and mother of society’s citizens.

In 1989, Maryellen Bieder suggested a new feminist analysis of Pardo Bazán’s prose in “En-gendering Strategies of Authority: Emilia Pardo Pazán and the Novel.” She explains that previously, the canonical works of Pardo Bazán appeared to fit within the confines of patriarchal expectations with regards to the implied reader and her conservative opinions on society, especially marriage and motherhood. However, in the context of her essays (and I would add her poetry), the idealized concepts of the *ángel del hogar* are subverted through the images of the “widowed, abandoned, or martyred mother.” (483). These images of

fragmented mother reflect Roach's "Hurt Mother," which Pardo Bazán juxtaposes with the "Good Mother" in "La Mejor Madre."

In order to understand the socio-religious context of the time, Marina Warner explains the emphasis on the Virgin Mary during the nineteenth century: "On December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the Virgin Mary the Immaculate Conception, the only human creature ever to have been preserved from all taint of original sin. . . Not only he, Christ, was exceptional; but so was his mother, his only human parent" (236). Therefore, it is not surprising that Cristina Patiño Eirín rediscovered a lost *poema mariano*, titled "La Mejor Madre," which was publicly presented by Pardo Bazán in 1877 in Santiago de Compostela. In this poem, the author juxtaposes two mothers: "la madre anciana y achacosa," or "Hurt Mother," of the working-class Alberto, and the "Good Mother" Virgin, "Una mujer bellísima, radiante, / Con la sien rodea / De un círculo de estrellas chispeante" (15, 74-76). Alberto, a soul-suffering Protestant, is giving aid to a "savage" vagabond when he sees a vision of the Virgin Mary on the old man's cross on his neck. The image of the celestial Virgin Mother combines with earthly man, the spheres together: "Y los descalzos pies sangre manaban / Y ráfagas de polvo / El semblante y cabellos afeaban" (63-65). The natural elements unite with the divine as Alberto walks along the Rhine River, which is omnipresent. The poem opens with a description of the river's different textures as it journeys to the village, "bruma," "cristales líquidos," "ligera espuma," and "fuente límpida," like the "Good Mother," all-giving. Pardo Bazán creates a supporting character in the water that observes constantly, like an omniscient narrator yet the poetic voice narrates in third person seemingly through the river. The water from the river revives Alberto's spirit, if not the vagabond's: "Y diligente y vivo / Con agua roció su faz helada" (68-69). Nature is idealized as well as the

celestial mother, but not the earthly one. Merchant explains this phenomenon in Platonic and Neoplatonic symbolism: “Nature, as God’s agent, in her role as creator and producer of the material world, was superior to human artists both in creativity and in ease of production. She was more powerful than humans, but still subordinate to God” (10). This hierarchy is reflected in the speaker’s point of view. Alberto, in the instant of seeing this stranger, becomes a surrogate Virgin who immediately comes to the old man’s aid and nurtures him like a mother. In addition, Pardo Bazán places the encounter between the two men in a secluded, almost idyllic natural space, reminiscent of Eden:

Paseándose un día
Del río por la margen pintoresca,
En una fronda retirada y fresca
Que el pino con el sauce entretejía,
Vio en el suelo tendido
Un hombre anciano, al parecer dormido. . . (51-56)

The author utilizes a harmonious nature that has actively “woven” a sanctuary for the human characters. Also, by choosing a male subject, Pardo Bazán transposes gender roles so that Alberto is at once son, mother, and Virgin, while the poetic voice maintains superior position of omnipotent observer.

While Alberto helps the strangely dressed man without hesitation or judgment, the townspeople are deceived by appearances. They confuse his debauchery for happiness, and his solemn conversion to Catholicism for sorrow or weakness. Like in nature and the maternal, Pardo Bazán highlights the subtle strength that remains hidden in the metaphor of the volcano:

No mueren los volcanes
Porque ceniza pálida los vele;
Antes el fuego que nació debajo
Arder entonces más intenso suele. (109-12)

The usage of maternal language, “nació,” alludes to the all-powerful Mother Nature. The speaker associates the ability to give life with the force of a volcano, which can also bring death. Although the townspeople perceive Alberto’s soul to be dead, they are mistaken, just as, the speaker emphasizes, the power of nature, and by extension, women in their biological connection as mothers, are stronger than they appear.

The association with woman to her biological role as mother is supported by Susan Kirkpatrick in “The Female Tradition in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Literature,” and she points out that a journalist of the era, Pedro Sabater reiterated the social truism:

[He] declared that the female of the species was “una especie de ángel descendido del cielo.” What made her angelic was that her subjectivity consisted entirely of love in its domestic aspect – love of parents, family surroundings, husband and children. “[E]l torpe vicio de la voluptuosidad y el sensualismo” is explicitly ruled out for the true woman. It was through this kind of regulation of female subjectivity that the new ideology gave women a degree of moral authority while keeping them firmly circumscribed by domestic and reproductive functions. (364)

Therefore, Pardo Bazán derives the authority through associating motherhood and women with the angelic and creates a natural domestic space on the bank of the Rhine River for a spiritual transformation of man.

The angelic ideal automatically prohibits sensuality in any form for the *ángel del hogar*. During the nineteenth century, scientific theory dictated that women’s only physical, sexual satisfaction could be achieved through childbearing: “Male fear of female sexuality is expressed in the nineteenth century by the insistent unlinking of hysteria from the demands that female sexuality might make upon the male. The idealized *ángel del hogar* is asexual, or rather, she satisfies her sexual needs, not through intercourse with the male, but through childbirth” (Aldaraca 406). I argue that Pardo Bazán’s integration of the senses and of

sensuality through the natural elements formulates a type of rebellion or subversion to this social and scientific norm. For example, in “La Mejor Madre,” the lack of sensuality in the domestic, Protestant realm contrasts with the wealth of corporeal fulfillment available through the adoration of the Virgin:

¡Al templo dije! ¡A una mansión vacía,
Desnuda, pobre y fría,
Sin luces, sin altar, sin santuario,
Sin humo perfumado de incensario;
Sin lenguas de metal que hablen al alma
Colgadas del airoso campanario;
Sin imágenes místicas, serenas
Cuya grave actitud, llena de calma,
A meditar invita
Y a rezo fervoroso solicita! (20-29)

Pardo Bazán repeats “sin,” utilizing anaphora in order to emphasize this sensorial lack, then follows with another taxonomy of need in relation to the Virgin Mother ideal:

Pues nada encuentra en su natal capilla
Que encienda la ternura,
Que le llame con íntima dulzura,
Ni que traiga a su boca
La oración amantísima y sencilla
Que brotando del labio, al cielo toca. (40-45)

Again, the poet integrates repetition in this sensual, intimate description. The disparity between what Alberto’s earthly, aging mother no longer offers increases and the speaker illustrates that he may abandon this “Hurt Mother,” his “natal capilla” and rediscover the “Good Mother” that provides unlimited amounts of nurturing, beauty, and resources. The contrast between the Protestant world and the idolatry of the Virgin in Catholicism underlines the available power for women. Warner concludes:

A goddess is better than no goddess at all, for the somber-suited masculine world of the Protestant religion is altogether too much like a gentlemen’s club to which the ladies are only admitted on special days. But it should not be

necessary to have a goddess contrasted with a god, a divinity who stands for qualities considered the quintessence of femininity and who thus polarizes symbolic and religious thought into two irreconcilably opposed camps. (338)

The necessary polarity of the period places Pardo Bazán decidedly not only on the Catholic side, but on the feminized, Virgin-worshipping half of the sect itself. However, the author extends the limitations set upon women with the religious, moral authority to use the sensuality of nature and of the mother through this connection.

The final example of the subversive power of the senses again utilized by the definition of its absence is in the aging, earthly mother, who enters his room to find her converted son kneeling in worship of the Virgin: “Estábase el mancebo tan absorto, / Que no escuchó la puerta que rechina / Ni sintió de su madre las pisadas” (131-33). While the poet creates a grave contrast of the sensuality that connects the two mothers, the speaker describes the “Hurt Mother” by what she lacks: a presence, a force. The physical mother can no longer provide for her son, since her job of raising him has passed; now she neglects her spiritual duty to teach him and nourish his soul. Pardo Bazán integrates word play of the possessive to denote to whom one belongs both physically and spiritually: “Alberto respondió con voz serena: / ‘Estaba con mi madre departiendo’” to which she replies, “¿Esa imagen tu madre? ¡No te entiendo!” (136-37, 142). Alberto explains:

“Mi madre en el principio fue creada:
No fuera el Universo todavía,
Y ya mi madre concebida fuera.”
“Deliras.” “No deliro, madre mía.” (147-50)

Herein lies the authority of the Virgin Mary, whose image has the ability to change Alberto’s life. Pardo Bazán utilizes this strength in the poem and transfers it to Catholic mothers so that they raise their children the same way. The power in the image of the Virgin Mary, Warner suggests, lies in the lack of patriarchal partnership in this creation: “There is no more

matriarchal image than the Christian mother of God who bore a child without male assistance” (47). With this authority as mother, Pardo Bazán is able to seize authorial power as well.

Another critic, Alicia Andreu, confirms the importance of the social, religious, and political morés of the era that underline the poem. Andreu emphasizes that the Catholic Church had an ulterior motive in spreading the image of the Virgin Mary in tandem with the *ángel del hogar*; the church urgently needed to bring more women, with their husbands, back to the church in the second half of the nineteenth century, a secular period. Marina Warner concurs: “The Virgin Mary is not the innate archetype of female nature, the dream incarnate; she is the instrument of a dynamic argument from the Catholic Church about the structure of society, presented as a God-given code” (338). The domestic ideal suited religious, social, and political, but above all else, patriarchal, needs of the time. Pardo Bazán managed to find a manner to utilize these misogynistic motives to her own advantage by writing with feminine subjectivity in terms of sensuality and connection to nature as well as the authority in the biological role of motherhood on her own terms.

Her religious-based poetry also increased the disparity between her contemporaries due to their high regard for science, and Pardo Bazán has to make this incongruence conform to her feminist ideals as well. In her religious work, *San Francisco de Asís (Siglo XIII)*, published in 1882, in which Denise DuPont explains she writes of the passion of the Saint but uses Saint Teresa’s account, given Pardo Bazán’s intense adoration of Teresa’s literary pursuits. Pardo Bazán creates another literary and spiritual mother through her many references to Saint Teresa in her work. She laments the lack of appreciation of women writers before the nineteenth century, as she finds anonymous manuscripts and blames

patriarchal Spanish culture for this neglect. Like Carolina Coronado, Pardo Bazán desires a literary sisterhood. She links this neglect of women authors to science and its innovations, which she sees as no friend to the woman writer, historical or contemporary:

Aun cuando el escalpelo agudo y las finas pinzas del anatómico y del fisiólogo disequen uno por uno los nervios, los tejidos, las fibras del cuerpo femenino, penetrando hasta los últimos grupos de células y los centros nervios más complicados; aunque pesando el cerebro y analizando el organismo de la mujer, intenten demostrar que en vaso tan frágil no habita un alma igual a la del varón, cualquiera de los nombres que han llenado estas páginas—Clara, Rosa de Viterbo, Isabel de Hungría – desmentirá tal afirmación. (Qtd. in DuPont 97)

Although another critic, María Jiménez Morales, states that by the 1900 World's Exposition, Pardo Bazán had altered her disillusionment towards science and modernity given later positive essays, her poetry and feminist thoughts continue in the nineteenth century to connect more to nature than to science (525).

As Lou Charnon-Deutsch observes in her chronicles, “Al Pie de la Torre Eiffel,” from the World Exposition in 1889, she expresses disdain for the rapid changes of industrialization: “She interprets the unease she experiences at their sight as a metaphor for what the industrial revolution has meant for the modern factory worker: ‘Y cuando decimos que hemos llevado la luz, la ciencia y el progreso a una región salvaje, ¿no podríamos añadir que llevamos la inquietud, el desasosiego y las penas del alma?’” (120). Charnon-Deutsch concludes, “She would rather retreat into art and nature, she says, than ‘morir aplastada por el coloso de hierro de la industria’” (120). This description of her confrontation with the machines of modernity foreshadows an ecofeminist viewpoint that at the least, highlights the innovation of society and industry of the era that could not be ignored due to its very size and economic impact.

In “El árbol de la ciencia,” an undated one-stanza poem rediscovered by Patiño Eirín that was not published in Hemingway’s volume, the speaker reflects these thoughts from Pardo Bazán’s chronicle of the World Exposition:

Aquel árbol de la ciencia
que tan caro nos costó,
imprime á los que le buscan
una eterna maldición.
¡Feliz quien todo lo ignora
y sin frío ni calor
come, duerme, se pasea,
y hace bien la digestión! (1995)

The speaker addresses biological needs that pertain to a maternal relationship over the spiritual costs of science. The Tree of Life, sacred tree, contrasts with this ironically termed “Tree of Science.”

In the same vein, J.R. Saiz Viadero recently encountered and circulated the poem “Almas gemelas,” presumably written around 1894 while Pardo Bazán was summering in Cantabria and later published in a few periodicals in the early 1900s. In the poem, the author transforms scientific terminology of the atom into poetic expression with the personification of natural elements:

Mitades de una gota de rocío
con que el mar, al beberla,
en lo profundo de su seno frío
cuaja una sola perla;
átomos del perfume de la rosa
que el viento mece unido. . . (1-6)

The speaker describes the creation and incubation of a pearl in the bosom of the ocean, integrating maternal language of the breast and rocking by the wind. The sensual elements are included as well, with the olfactory stimulation of the atoms of perfume, drinking the dewdrop, the coldness of the water’s bosom, then “notas que vibra el arpa melodiosa” (7).

The authority of nature as powerful creator, Mother Nature, cares for beauty, from life and into death, at the conclusion of the poem.

The poetic work that most expresses this caring authority is *Jaime*, a diminutive volume of 20 poems written around the time of the birth of her first child in 1876. The first limited edition, of 300 books, was released in 1881 by her friend and mentor, Francisco Giner (Hemingway xi). Two more editions were published, in 1886 in Paris, and in 1924, after the author's death. Montero Padilla cites a 1920 interview with Pardo Bazán in which she reflects on the verses, almost 40 years after their publication: "A impulsos de un sentimiento nuevo y profundo, tuve un desahogo lírico al escribir los breves poemitas reunidos con el título de *Jaime*. Aunque yo sabía que eran poesía sincera y en tal concepto tenían algún derecho a la vida, como dudaba de la forma, por esto y por su carácter íntimo y personal acaso los hubiera dejado inéditos. . ." (375). Little doubt remains that the acclaimed author incorporates (unnecessary) feminine modesty, self-deprecating and self-defensive discursive strategy, when speaking of a poetic volume that she encouraged to have published twice in her lifetime. The intense nurturing quality which Pardo Bazán expresses for her poetic work, like for that of a child that "had a right to live" but was part of her, shows her connection between the roles of mother and author. The poetry of *Jaime* allows for a comparison and contrast of the conflicting, contradictory views of woman and her biological ties to nature and social roles of the period, specifically in terms of Mother nature and the Virgin archetypes.

In his analysis, Montero Padilla unknowingly highlights sexist critiques of Pardo Bazán's work: ". . .No han faltado quienes tachaban a Doña Emilia de denotar en su obra un temperamento excesivamente varonil. Para estos últimos, he aquí [*Jaime*], revelándonos,

definitivamente, a la mujer” (376). Maryellen Bieder addresses Pardo Bazán’s “En-gendering Strategies of Authority” to conclude that contemporary readers can discern her manipulation and subversion of reader expectations of the period, through irony, engagement and distancing, and achieving gender equilibrium by unbalancing both stereotypes, as seen in the poem “El árbol de la ciencia.” She adds that Pardo Bazán used her own name rather than a pseudonym, and “necessarily writes as a woman, but she also consciously situates her texts within established generic conventions, writing within realist, naturalist, or *costumbrista* modes, for example, and drawing on the discourses of science, art, literature and hagiography, among others” (474). In another sexist error, to assume a universal female experience can be expressed by one woman, Montero Padilla states “. . . Eso fue lo que acertó a hacer la escritora en su libro: dar forma a un sentimiento eterno y universal—el amor de la madre. . .” (375). Yet Pardo Bazán explains in her interview with the critic that *Jaime* reflects a uniquely personal experience, especially as an upper-class woman, and by no means universal. The feminist author is aware of the realities for women of the period, as she described in her Naturalist novels and her essays. Perhaps this interpretation explains her hesitation in publishing more of her poetry.

Pardo Bazán relishes the power as creator of life and of verses. In *Jaime*, she creates an entirely feminine world full of harmonious images of nature. This positive association of woman and of nature as mother converts the “ángel del hogar” image of the subservient object to a more powerful one that she uses to her advantage. Pardo Bazán asserts authority: in Poem VII, she links herself to the work of God as well as Mother Nature. She illustrates that women have been given certain gifts from God and therefore, that women have an inherent right:

Puso dulce calor en su regazo,
fecunda sangre repartió en sus venas,
puso en su seno regalada leche,
puso en su corazón ternura inmensa.
Hízola manantial del río humano,
depósito de seres en potencia,
flor cuyo cáliz atesora el fruto
vaso precioso que el amor encierra. (5-12)

These images of nature, combined with the maternal, reveal Pardo Bazán's trust in the power of nature and God for the benefit of humanity. Catherine Roach posits that this concept can be feminist: "The Earth has functioned in the non-Western cultures as a very powerful and ancient center for worship and for seeing the divine as female and, before the Western scientific revolution, as Merchant explains, has been understood as our 'active teacher and parent' instead of as 'mindless, submissive female body'" (61). Personification of nature helps portray this active strength in Mother Nature, as well as in the woman author who creates literature.

Pardo Bazán subverts the patriarchal concept of domestic "ángel del hogar" and instead proposes a maternal matriarch who controls her own space, the external "huerta." The poetic voice encourages the mother birds to build their nests in her space as well, in Poem XIV of *Jaime*: "En un rosal de mi huerto / un jilguero labró nido" (1-2). The speaker will protect through nature: "Ven, incuba tu polluelo, / que tu nido está en las flores, / y en mi cuarto está la cuna." (16-18). As in "La Mejor Madre," the author provides an idyllic space for nurturing their creation.

The poetic voice is that of the mother, demonstrating the point of view of the mother rather than that of the male infant. This is significant as Roach states: "Infants have trouble perceiving mothers as autonomous subjects (see Benjamin). Mothers and women remain

closer to object than subject, closer to nature than to culture” (54). However, in this volume of poems, women are both subject and nature, asserting power over the absent male structures of dominance.

In Poem VI, Pardo Bazán integrates sensuality to demonstrate the physical connection to her power to create flesh and blood, likening her sexual organs to the artist’s paintbrush:

Abiertos como flores
están sus labios,
y un leve vapor tibio
más aromático
que son los azahares (9-13)

She alludes to the Renaissance artist Albano at the end of the poem, asserting her similar prowess as impetus of beauty and goodness through her son and her words. As Merchant describes, in Renaissance images “Nature is God’s involuntary agent, a benevolent teacher of the hidden pattern and values God employed in creating the cosmos. . . A somewhat less orthodox view saw her as a creative force – a soul with a will to generate mundane forms” (7).

However, her editor disapproved of this allusion, according to Maurice Hemingway (3). Pardo Bazán sexualizes the asexual mother-child relationship with the erotic taboo depiction of lips that border on incestuous, a unifying theme for the author. This editorial admonition illustrates the continuing difficulty of women as writers even in the late 19th century. Pardo Bazán played with the limits of femininity through contrasting images of sensual nature and motherhood, those that had been created by both men and women. She proposes a feminist solution to the conflicting concepts of gender roles of woman as domestic angel or natural chaos in the archetype of a powerful Mother Nature, a synthesis of negative and positive attitudes towards women.

In addition to her role as creator, the author remains aware of her duty as teacher, mentor, and spiritual adviser to her child. Even in the midst of overwhelming emotional descriptions, Pardo Bazán prescribes these future responsibilities. A “Good Mother”’s task never ends in providing for its descendants. For example, in Poem XVI, the speaker describes the tranquility and protection of the natural *huerta*:

En el jardín alegre
de la paterna casa
tus vacilantes pasos
por vez primera ensayas. (1-4)

When the child demands the fruit from the garden, the speaker compares her *huerta* to the Garden of Paradise:

Que en este paraíso
de tu serena infancia
no existe árbol alguno
que fruta dé vedada. (25-28)

However, the allusion causes the poetic voice to take the role as teacher, and utilizes metaphor to refer to the temptations of lust: “Verás, mi bien, cien flores / divinas y gallardas, / y ni pedir las debes” (33-35). Instead, the mother offers her own flowers and fruits to enjoy, which should endure:

Goza aquí, pues, bien mío,
que aquí te dan sin tasa
perfumes y sabores
y pétalos y galas
las frutas de mi huerto,
las flores de mi alma. (37-42)

The maternal speaker gives all that she has from her own garden, from her heart and soul, in the metaphor of the natural elements; both woman and nature allow the child to partake in the sensual delights for “free” so that he remains pure. The poetic voice is self-sacrificing, like

the *ángel del hogar*, while assuming the morally superior role as authority, which is the only one readily available to women. As long as the children continue under her care, they will thrive, and that results in her domain. She remains the subject but nears precipitously the line of danger where men will freely take and use the feminine mother and nature to their fill without reciprocating. As Roach underlines in her book the danger of the archetype of the “Good Mother” as Mother Nature:

Women are perceived as a ‘natural resource, as an asset to be owned and harnessed, harvested and mined, with no fellow-feeling for her depletion and no responsibility for her conservation or replenishment.’ Even when women are exalted as purer than men, as less bestial, and as the ‘guardians of culture and morals,’ Ortner points out that these seeming ‘inversions’ merely place women above instead of below culture and that in both cases women remain excluded from the realm of culture” (38).

Therefore, Pardo Bazán’s speakers must assert their subjectivity and authority not only as physical providers but fulfill the role of teacher and mentor. In this way, the “Good Mother” can complete her duties but avoid devastation.

In the following poem, XVII, the maternal speaker takes the opportunity to teach the child that curiosity ending in destruction is prohibited in this mutually-respecting environment. In this role of authority, she repeatedly asks the child what he discovered through these acts, after decapitating a toy and removing the petals of a flower, and the answer, “Nada,” illustrates the emptiness and lack resulting from continued wreckage. Therefore, the maternal duty requires teaching creation to preserve and conserve its resources, and appreciate the natural and man-made joys of life. The speaker concludes with the moral: “No rompas el resorte de la vida / por mirar su interior” (9-10). The mother has the authority to explain the value of life, for she, along with nature, have the power to bestow it, of which she has reminded the reader in Poem IX “Misterio es el nido, misterio es la cuna”

(1-2) then “Misterio es la vida, / misterio es la tumba; / son hermanas la vida y la muerte” (5-7). Like Sublime Nature, matriarchs possess these powers.

In Poem X, Pardo Bazán also subverts patriarchal values by contrasting the present of her innocent child with his future as a man. She uses simile to remind him that he will always form a part of nature: “Veréte tan gallardo / como los robles” (3-4). A brief vision of the son winning accolades after combat completes the vision of the future, when the speaker abruptly states:

¡No importa! Aunque a mis brazos
triumfante llegues,
no darás a mi espíritu
más que hoy le ofreces;
que hoy eres blanca página
que no contiene
ni signos ni diseños
ni caracteres. (13-20)

The poetic voice determines the values in feminine realm as mother and teacher, and the masculine feats are meaningless to her.

Pardo Bazán’s role as mother and author are powerful enough to subsume the sensations of nature in Poem XIII, in which the speaker describes her son’s birth. The poetic *yo* imagines hearing a polyphonic chorus of nature in the middle of the night “por darte la bienvenida / pensé que se despertaban” (23-24). However, she realizes that it is her as mother who has the ability to create this sound:

Mas no eran los ruiseñores,
ni los tiene esta comarca;
era el himno de ventura
que mi corazón alzaba. (29-32).

The nightingales, common metaphor for male poet, are replaced by the mother poet's song. She does not subvert, but rather substitutes her voice to communicate this female, biological experience that male writers cannot know. In this perspective, the speaker is the ultimate authority based on experience and as witness to the child's arrival, she is both lifegiver and observer. The feminized flowers, on the other hand, awakened to serve as witnesses: "Te siguieron, ángel mío, / con amorosa mirada" (13-14).

In the poetic corpus of Emilia Pardo Bazán, the author creates a remarkable balance between social values of feminine identity and the demands of her own subjectivity. Through the use of the archetypes of Mother Nature and the Virgin Mary, she maintains an authority that she utilizes to extend the limitations of woman perceived as nature and as mother. Rather than attempt to avoid the truths of motherhood, Pardo Bazán exalts the work of woman in this biological role and challenges other women to follow the example. Although there are pitfalls in the association of woman as morally superior and as linked to Mother Nature, the author embraces these identities through the privilege of her status as accomplished novelist.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

The perspectives of women and nature have changed dramatically over long periods of time, beginning in the prehistoric era. The polemic which arose through debates on the role of women in the social and intellectual arena in the eighteenth century still resonates today with feminist thinkers. Mary Wollstonecraft wrote, like Feijoo, that women should be separated from their seemingly feminine “natural difference” through Cartesian mind-body dualism in order to achieve liberty and happiness. Liberal feminists in the twentieth century, such as Virginia Woolf, followed suit, blaming the “Angel in the House” ideal for limiting women’s professional prospects. These feminists suggest distancing themselves from their feminine biology and therefore, from nature, in their writing. However, as these Spanish poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries illustrate, nature and woman need to be reconciled, not seen as points of opposition.

In *Mother / Nature: Popular Culture and Environmental Ethics*, Catherine Roach affirms that the “woman as close to nature” debate stems from millennia of associations, basing biological ties of motherhood to the concept of Mother Nature. While far from resolved, the critic offers three ecofeminist approaches to address the polemic: the first, that women are indeed closer to nature; the second, that women are no closer to nature than men; and the third, most postmodern response that the question itself is flawed due to its basis of hierarchical dualisms / dialectics. All three of these distinct attitudes emerge in the poetic corpus of the authors in this study.

In facing their struggles to address the nature / culture binary, Maria Hore, Margarita Hickey, Carolina Coronado, Rosalia de Castro, and Emilia Pardo Bazán include natural elements and imagery in their poetry. No clear linear evolution exists between essentialist or cultural feminist perspectives from these writers. In the eighteenth century, Hore did not deny her biological and intimate ties to nature as a writer or as a woman. Perhaps because she had the opportunity to experience both married life and cloistered living in the convent, Hore lacked the need to cover her feminine ties to her poetic identity. Margarita Hickey, the other female poet of the Enlightenment in this study, represents a pioneer liberal feminist following the footsteps of Mary Wollstonecraft and others. Hickey and Hore are both clearly feminist authors who achieve self-representation as writers on their own terms, one through an essentialist definition of her poetic voice and the latter through a denial of any natural difference between the sexes.

In the same vein, the nineteenth-century poets differed greatly from personal political beliefs (Castro, a liberal progressive and Pardo-Bazán at odds with her on the conservative side) to their treatment of nature in their work. Carolina Coronado enjoyed the benefits and favor of being a popular literary figure, yet it also served to her detriment when she attempted to reconcile the masculine sphere of publication and her feminine world focused on nature. Coronado refuses to release her ties to nature, and she pursues her professional career on her own terms, speaking openly for feminist values in her prose as well as her poetry. She challenges the dialectical polarity of gender roles, as prescribed by patriarchy confining women to the domestic sphere and embraces both culture and nature.

Rosalía de Castro integrates multiple perspectives of both time and space in order to articulate her feminist views to not only protest for her regionalist interests of Galicia, but for

all women and all marginalized subjects, human and nonhuman. Her poetic subjects resist the limitations of the boundaries of temporal and physical space due to their ability to transcend dreams and reality. In my estimation, Castro, the most innovative of the authors in this study, both examined and avoided the nature / culture dialectic simultaneously.

Pardo Bazán creates a balance between the social values of a feminine institution and her own subjectivity as author. By using the archetypes of Mother Nature and the Virgin Mary, she maintains an authority that extends the patriarchal limitations of woman as nature and as mother. The poet elevates woman's biological roles and her connections to the natural world. She also maintains an essentialist viewpoint that is equally feminist.

While these five poets address nature distinctly, all approached the patriarchal divide between a woman's place, determined by her nature as morally superior and selfless yet susceptible to the evil that awaits her in the public realm. These writers were well aware that they were the few who dared to overstep the bounds into masculine sphere of publication and to vocalize their feminist perspectives. These limitations of culture and the corresponding advantages of nature are the focus of my dissertation. In looking at their poetry as nature writing, I have concluded that the use of the natural elements mirror an author's relationship to her own nature, i.e. her identity and the differing perspectives of Spanish women poets in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nature is not a reflection of the authors' feelings but rather a mirror of the speakers' relationship to patriarchal culture. How the writers determine that relationship reveals their unique identity as a feminist of the period.

Based on their use of nature, I conclude that these authors struggled with the social binary construct of woman's ties to nature and accepted their roles within the confines of patriarchy, subverted the construct and attempted to embrace a male point of view removed

from nature, or rejected the concept completely to create their own solution outside of this dialectic. I have explored how these female poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries both followed and challenged the roles that were assigned to them by the patriarchy through images from nature. The use of these images reveals the attempts of these female writers to challenge the roles of patriarchy while adapting to them at the same time. I have also examined how these challenges are produced in the poetic corpus of these five authors to chart the shift between the 18th and 19th century in the perception of woman and nature.

In the nineteenth century, Rosalía de Castro inquired whether she was truly a woman if she did not write about flowers and birds. In the twentieth century, Sherry Ortner asked, “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” This study finds that there is no evidence of a linear evolution in the perception of women as connected or disengaged from nature, but rather a cyclical, organic movement that progresses and regresses. All women writers, from the past to the present, must create their own answers to these questions. As true then as it is now, there are myriad forms of approaching feminist writing. What is remarkable is that in the two centuries covered in this study, these five women have faced these questions uniquely and honestly in their relationship to nature and to culture.

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