

# Rebels with a Cause in Contemporary Spanish Women Playwriting



# Rebels with a Cause in Contemporary Spanish Women Playwriting

By

Anthony Pasero-O'Malley

**Cambridge  
Scholars  
Publishing**



Rebels with a Cause in Contemporary Spanish Women Playwriting

By Anthony Pasero-O'Malley

This book first published 2022

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2022 by Anthony Pasero-O'Malley

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-8757-6

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-8757-1

# CONTENTS

List of Illustrations .....	vi
Acknowledgements .....	viii
Introduction .....	1
“Una necesidad de contar”	
Chapter One.....	25
Historical Drama, Site-Specificity, and Fact-Inspired Theatre: <i>Fuga mundi</i> and <i>Bajo el agua</i> by Mar Gómez Glez	
Chapter Two .....	76
Learning to Fly: Developing Female Community and Subjectivity in <i>Verano en diciembre</i> by Carolina África	
Chapter Three .....	114
Center Stage Communities: Lucía Miranda’s Forum Theatre	
Chapter Four .....	151
Cleats and Heels: Negotiating Gendered Sporting Structures in <i>Playoff</i> by Marta Buchaca	
Conclusion.....	183
Bibliography .....	189
Index .....	207

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1-1 María Pastor as Juana, in *Fuga mundi*, Teatro Guindalera, Madrid, June 2016. Photographer: Eva París.
- Fig. 1-2 María Álvarez as the Marquesa de Santa Cruz (left), Anaïs Bleda as Clara (middle), and Chusa Barbero as Prudencia/Sor Paula (right), in *Fuga mundi* Teatro Guindalera, Madrid, June 2016. Photographer: Eva París.
- Fig. 1-3 Goize Blanco (left) and Ángela Chica (right), in *Sincronizada*, Microteatro Por Dinero, Madrid, September 2017. Photographer: Laura Madera.
- Fig. 2-1 From left to right: Pilar Manso as Teresa, Lola Cerdón as Martina, Almudena Mestre as Paloma, Carolina África as Alicia, and Virginia Frutos as Carmen, in *Verano en diciembre*, La Belloch, Madrid, June 2014. Photographer: Geraldine Leloutre.
- Fig. 2-2 From left to right: Carolina África as Alicia, Lola Cerdón as Martina, Pilar Manso as Teresa, Virginia Frutos as Carmen, and Almudena Mestre as Paloma in *Verano en diciembre*, La Belloch, Madrid, June 2014. Photographer: Geraldine Leloutre.
- Fig. 2-3 Virginia Frutos as Alicia (left), Almudena Mestre as Paloma (middle), and Carolina África as Alicia (right) in *Verano en diciembre*, La Belloch, Madrid, June 2014. Photographer: Geraldine Leloutre.
- Fig. 3-1 Pilar Bergés (left), Macarena Sanz (middle), and Efraín Rodríguez (right) in *Casa*, Teatre Lliure, Barcelona, December 2021. Photographer: Javier Burgos.
- Fig. 3-2 Cristina Varona as Laura (left), Noelia Lezameta as Raquel (middle), and Bárbara Nita as Déborah (right) in *Las chicas no fuman igual*, Sala Cuarta Pared, Madrid, June 2015. Photographer: Javier Burgos.
- Fig. 3-3 Anahí Beholi as Silvia in *La chica que soñaba*, November, 2019. Photographer: Javier Burgos.
- Fig. 3-4 From left to right: Belén de Santiago, Anahí Beholi, Ángel Perabá, and Lucía Miranda in *La chica que soñaba*, Teatro Conde Duque, Madrid, March 2020. Photographer: Javier Burgos.

Fig. 4-1 From left to right: Neus Cortès as Nuria Torete, María Romero as Julia, Yolanda Fernández as Mami, Cristina Varona as Pippi, Ana Escriu as Princess, and Cristina Bertol as Capi in *Playoff*, Teatro Conde Duque, Madrid, January 2018. Photographer: David Ruano.

Fig. 4-2 From left to right: Cristina Bertol as Capi, Yolanda Fernández as Mami, Cristina Varona as Pippi, María Romero as Julia, Neus Cortès as Nuria Torete, and Ana Escriu as Princess in *Playoff*, Teatro Conde Duque, Madrid, January 2018. Photographer: David Ruano.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Rebels with a Cause in Contemporary Spanish Women Playwriting* represents the culmination of a period of research and writing spanning the last three years and laid against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges that ensued. What it means to complete a book project that had its initial tentative stages in graduate school, fully developed during the height of the pandemic and subsequent quarantine periods and concluded in our current fledgling post-pandemic era is simultaneously both a journey and a reflective process of the many networks of people and institutional support without whom this book would not have been possible.

First, I would like to recognize the grants and sources of institutional funding that advanced my proposals to further explore the current theatre landscape in Spain and the significant contributions by women playwrights. The Charles Gordon Reid, Jr., Summer Travel Fellowship and the Graduate Studies Dissertation Fellowship conferred by the University of Virginia allowed the travel funding and ensuing time and space to interview and document the advances made by women in the performing arts in Spain throughout the last two decades. Additional funding from the Faculty Study Research Grant along with conference travel funding from Davidson College provided the necessary means to establish close contacts with Spanish theatre networks, practitioners, editors, educators, and other researchers. In particular, travel funding allowed for the unique opportunity to participate in the Congreso Internacional Las Desconocidas. “Compromiso y reivindicación: la dramaturgia femenina reclama su sitio” conference held in the Universidad de Salamanca in October 2021. Never before had I enjoyed an occasion exclusively devoted to bringing the critical studies of Spanish women playwrights to the forefront in a conference setting. This experience constituted an invaluable resource both for my own research and reflection while showcasing the significance of a shared network of playwrights and researchers brought together in the same space for discussions of shared passions. My most sincere and deepest gratitude to the conference



organizers Ángela Martín Pérez, Jesús Guzmán Mora, and Santiago Sevilla Vallejo for their tireless work and dedication throughout the whole conference and to the presenters whose efforts to travel and present at the conference highlights the commitment found in their research and writing. I would like to thank Pilar Jódar Peinado, Ana Prieto Nadal, Ana María Díaz Marcos, Eva María Moreno Lago, and David Hitchcock for the opportunity to take part in conversations about theatre and the ensuing friendship that resulted from this shared experience.

I would like to extend a particularly special thanks to Ralph Janes and Steven Koehler for your mentorship and support. This book likewise represents the growth of my own training and research in acting, playwriting, and directing that began under your guidance and teaching years ago. The lessons and techniques you imparted represent invaluable sources of knowledge and experience that I carry with me to this day and apply to every project with which I am involved.

This book project does not emerge from a void as the groundwork and initial research stages take as their point of departure my experiences in the graduate programs at Marquette University and the University of Virginia. Throughout my years of graduate work, a number of friends and colleagues made significant impacts on my research career. My deepest thanks go to Sarah Rabke, Caroline Whitcomb, Thallya Díaz, Matthew Richey, and Matthew Street for their friendship and support during long weekends and nights in graduate school. Additionally, my most heartfelt gratitude to Gabrielle Miller, Nick Wolters, Samuel Amago, E. Michael Gerli, Randolph Pope, Eli Carter, Charlotte Rogers, Eugenia Afinoguénova, Scott Dale, Todd Hernández, Armando González Pérez, Germán Carrillo, Kyra Kietrys, Angie Willis, Samuel Sánchez y Sánchez, Magdalena Maíz-Peña, Luis Peña, Melissa González, Abril Jiménez, Diego Luis, Joanne Britland, and Nasser Meerkhan for sharing your advice, research and life experiences, and for representing models to emulate as professors, colleagues, and friends. Words cannot describe the support provided by Nora Benedict as a friend and colleague. You always took the time to listen, help, and provide valuable insight even as you made your own way through academia and life in another state and, for this, I will always be grateful. Finally, I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee David T. Gies and Fernando Operé for your guidance, support, and theatre

mentorship with the Spanish Department Theatre Group and as I navigated the writing of my dissertation. Without you it would not have been possible to reach this stage of my career.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my dissertation advisor and mentor, Andrew A. Anderson, who advised the course of my dissertation from the initial framing through to the defense almost three years later. Along the way, you have made the most positive impact on my career and academic life even as I endured personal challenges and loss. Your continued guidance and support in the years since have been invaluable, and I look forward to our ongoing friendship in the coming years.

The openness and warmth I have experienced through my contact with playwrights and people involved in the world of the performing arts in Spain represents the foundational pillar for this project. I would like to thank Conchita Piña, Isaac Juncos Cianca, and Ignacio Pajón Leyra at Ediciones Antígona for their commitment to publishing and visibilizing the contributions made by playwrights in Spain. My most sincere appreciation and gratitude go to the playwrights themselves without whom this book would not have been possible. Thank you to Mar Gómez Glez, Carolina África, Lucía Miranda, and Marta Buchaca for your friendship, advice, and support throughout the completion of this book.

Finally, I would like to thank the family and friends that have made my life as rich as possible throughout the years both in the United States and in Spain. Thank you to Heather M. Offerman who has accompanied me on this journey for the last two years. Thank you for your care, for the travel we've shared, and for listening to the many rewrites and edits of chapters I made along the way along with for your support during the long evenings of rehearsals and performances. Thank you to my mother, Anne Pasero, for your continued inspiration, love, encouragement, and for the opportunity to live in Spain which has constituted the most invaluable life experience. This book is dedicated to the memory of my father, Joseph O'Malley, who was an inspiring professor, researcher, friend, role model, and unwavering source of support. We miss you every day.

## INTRODUCTION

### “UNA NECESIDAD DE CONTAR”

Writing in 2006 for the Spanish newspaper *El País*, Elena Arnedo declared that while the twentieth century had been marked by ‘the discovery of women,’ the twenty-first century, by comparison, could rightfully be regarded as “el siglo de las mujeres”.<sup>1</sup> Resting on the basis of an increasing global representation of women in positions of political leadership, Arnedo’s statements reflect a profound sentiment among Spanish women playwrights, actors, directors, producers, and publishers that have come to occupy prominent positions in the spotlight of the current theatre landscape of twenty-first century Spain. Given both the exceptional quantity and quality of their works, Diana Luque notes that those who affirm the dearth of women playwrights in Spain are willfully ignoring “la realidad escénica de nuestro país”.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, despite increasing critical recognition and visibility in all areas of production and performance, women in theatre and the performing arts still find themselves devoting significant time and energy geared towards dispelling and disrupting long held ideological beliefs located in the products and practices of the profession and that relegate women to an objectified and subservient status. These dynamics of oppression have been resolutely denounced by women theatre practitioners whose socially committed themes and wide array of stylistic and structural techniques create a space for female empowerment and a redefinition of gender roles on stage that aim to positively influence the self-identity and subjectivity of women off stage in the audience and in the world outside of the theatre.

---

<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to capture the essence of Arnedo’s statement in direct translation, though the two best approaches are either (“the century of women”) or (“the century belonging to women”). All translations are by the author.

<sup>2</sup> (“the reality of our country’s stages.”) Luque, “Tan excepcionales como los creadores.”

In her survey of the contemporary Spanish women playwrights housed in their collection, Conchita Piña, cofounder of the publisher Ediciones Antígona, notes that despite their heterogeneity, they all share “una necesidad de contar... y con la obligación de hacer y construir nuevos valores para la sociedad presente y futura. Con la responsabilidad moral de hacerse oír, de dejar de ser transparentes”.<sup>3</sup> The polysemic nature of the Spanish verb “contar” is particularly fitting in this occasion since it points to two definitions pertinent to women playwrights in Spain. Firstly, the reference to numerical quantities highlights the continued call for parity in the theatre profession. Ainhoa Amestoy reveals her hopeful beliefs in this respect as it pertains to normalization across the diverse sectors of employment (acting, directing, producing, hair and makeup, costuming, lighting, sound design, etc.) although she admits that “hay que forzarla para que llegue un día en que no sea necesario contar el número de hombres y mujeres”.<sup>4</sup> Amestoy goes on to point out that “No puede ser que en una temporada en un teatro nacional haya un 80% de hombres iluminadores o directores”.<sup>5</sup> The second definition of the verb suggests the need to establish a female-centered discourse as an expressive means for the performance and production of women’s realities on stage. Responding to the question of why she selects women characters for her plays, Julieta Soria stated that “yo aún me sorprendo de la cantidad de historias apasionantes por contar que tienen a las mujeres como protagonistas, y que siguen ahí esperando a que las saquen a la luz”.<sup>6</sup>

*Rebels with a Cause in Contemporary Spanish Women Playwriting* examines a selection of plays from four of the most innovative and prolific leading women playwrights of the first two decades of twenty-first century

---

<sup>3</sup> (“a need to tell... and with the obligation to make and build new values for the present and future society. With the moral responsibility to let themselves be heard, to stop being transparent.”) Piña, “Ser visibles... esa es la cuestión”.

<sup>4</sup> (“we have to force it so that one day it won’t be necessary to count the number of men and women.”) Hernández Nieto, “Ainhoa Amestoy, una mujer de teatro, teatro y teatro.”

<sup>5</sup> (“It shouldn’t be the case that in a single season of a national theatre 80% of the gaffers and directors are men.”) Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> (“I am still surprised by the amount of fascinating stories yet to be told that have women as protagonists, and that are still waiting to be brought into the spotlight.”) Hernández Nieto, “Julieta Soria, la dramaturga que surgió del amor por las palabras.”

Spain. Mar Gómez Glez, Carolina África, Lucía Miranda, and Marta Buchaca have not only figured prominently on Spanish stages and performance spaces across the country where their plays have been widely produced, their works have extended beyond national geographic boundaries for performance in a diverse array of international and transcontinental locations and venues throughout Europe, Africa, Asia, and North and South America. Collectively, they have been the recipients of close to two dozen literary prizes and theatre awards and have received nominations for several others. These distinctions and accomplishments effectively serve as a testament both to the recognized quality of their plays and to the positive reception of their themes and dramatic devices from audiences, peers, critics, and reviewers alike. Their plays have been published both in Spanish and in translation, thereby offering an accessibility of readership outside of Spain, and the possibilities of linguistic expression have been further widened through the inclusion of multiple languages within the pages of their texts. For Gómez Glez, África, Miranda, and Buchaca, playwrighting and performance provide effective and necessary means for visibilizing issues of social justice related to race, gender, and sexuality, and they combine their own individual approaches to writing with play ideas and proposals commissioned by theatre companies wherein playwright and actors develop the project together in a communal experience that reinforces the collective nature of play production and reception.

Mar Gómez Glez, Carolina África, Lucía Miranda, and Marta Buchaca substantially broaden the scope of what it means to be a woman in theatre by surpassing historically traditional limitations of gender that previously ascribed women to the exclusive position of actress. Instead, these four playwrights exemplify the characteristics of “mujeres de teatro total”,<sup>7</sup> a type of classification established by Raquel Vidales to describe contemporary Spanish women theatre practitioners who combine the multiple functions of acting, directing, playwrighting, production, and more. Gómez Glez has published novels for adults and children, regularly contributes a column for the Spanish newspaper *El País*, and teaches university courses and theatre seminars both in-person and online. Her recent online theatre seminar – titled “Seminario de Teatro Documento” –

---

<sup>7</sup> (“women of total theatre”) Vidales, “El año en que estallaron las dramaturgas.”

was offered during the month of July 2020 through the Escuela Internacional del Gesto. África has regularly directed and acted in theatre productions, and also founded her own theatre company – La Belloch Teatro – in 2012 based in Madrid. Miranda founded the Cross Border Project, a theatre company that combines the performing arts and education to produce a pedagogy for social change through the medium of the theatre and, like Gómez Glez, Miranda teaches annual courses on acting techniques and theatre movements. She has likewise led workshops dedicated to exploring the tenets of forum theatre in various worldwide locations. Finally, Buchaca has crossed multimedia boundaries by regularly balancing play production with screenwriting for television and film.

The seven plays selected for study in this book by Mar Gómez Glez (*Fuga mundi*, *Bajo el agua*), Carolina África (*Verano en diciembre*), Lucía Miranda (*Las chicas no fuman igual*, *¿Qué hacemos con la abuela?*, *La chica que soñaba*), and Marta Buchaca (*Playoff*) all share the distinctive feature of a direct focus on the experiences of women. In several cases the plays enhance this feminist focus through all-female casts that displace the male characters to the offstage margins while simultaneously placing the historically peripheral bodies and stories of women center stage and in the spotlight, thereby inverting traditional gendered theatre practices. By foregrounding the women characters as the subjects and protagonists of their plays, Gómez Glez, África, Miranda, and Buchaca reinscribe the stage as a space for the productive exploration of female autonomy and individuation. They use the platform of the theatre and the expressive possibilities therein to portray the realities of gendered oppression and the struggles to define subjectivity within a social context where the confining patriarchal and dominant cultural conditions place severe strictures on women's open search and development of selfhood and identity. The diversity of genres deployed in their respective approaches, spanning the subversion of realist conventions, the framework of historical drama, the communal potentialities of forum theatre, and experiential site-specific production point to important innovations at contemporary stagecraft that merit close study. The temporal frame for this book, roughly covering the decade spanning the years 2007-2008 (when Gómez Glez's *Fuga mundi* receives the Premio Beckett award) to 2017-2018 (corresponding to Buchaca's writing and publication of *Playoff*), constitutes a period marked

by the significant advances achieved in terms of women’s representation in Spanish law, society, and the arts. At the same time, this ten-year period has likewise exposed the degree of inequality that still reigns both in the professional world of performance and production, and in the everyday reality of women in Spain today. The plays examined here by Gómez Glez, África, Miranda, and Buchaca draw attention to this social reality by actively engaging the audience in a dialogue that simultaneously critiques the present context while suggesting alternatives for future progress.

My study of the playwrights and plays in this book within the theoretical framework of feminist theatre is primarily informed by the influential writings of critics such as Janet Brown, Gayle Austin, Jill Dolan, Hanna Scolnicov, Sue-Ellen Case, and Patricia Schroeder. Janet Brown, for instance, posits that “Simply by moving to center stage those who traditionally have been minor characters or offstage altogether, a feminist drama teaches the audience, glorifying the women patriarchal society has defined as marginal”.<sup>8</sup> Roberta Johnson’s 2019 book *Major Concepts in Spanish Feminist History* provides an extremely useful point of departure for examining the ways in which a consideration of the scope of feminist writing is applicable to an understanding of how Gómez Glez, África, Miranda, and Buchaca participate in the feminist project of vindicating female agency in theatre. Johnson defines feminist writing as “Writing that addresses the condition of women in order to expose and/or attempt to correct inequities”.<sup>9</sup> As Gayle Austin notes, this exposure accrues a unique representation on stage, since plays “combine verbal and nonverbal elements simultaneously, so that questions of language and visual representation can be addressed at the same time, through the medium of an actual body”.<sup>10</sup>

The title chosen for this book, *Rebels with a Cause* purposely suggests multiple interpretive readings that are particularly relevant for a study of the profound impact generated by women playwrights and theatre practitioners in general in Spain throughout the last twenty years. On the one hand, the allusion to Nicholas Ray’s 1955 film *Rebel Without a Cause* starring James Dean and Natalie Wood refers here to the literary practice of

---

<sup>8</sup> *Taking Center Stage: Feminism in Contemporary U.S. Drama*, 13.

<sup>9</sup> *Major Concepts in Spanish Feminist History*, 7.

<sup>10</sup> *Feminist Theories for Dramatic Criticism*, 2-3.

intertextuality as a strategic device designed towards reinforcing thematic content through associative connections to cultural materials resonating with the lives and consciousness of individual spectators. For the purposes of women-authored literary works, intertextuality can likewise provide an effective means for transforming women's subject status through a powerful refutation of dominant standards of gender roles and relations. Susana Lorenzo Zamorano notes how "references to the literary world are frequently directed towards a recontextualization of both real and fictitious women from a feminine point of view".<sup>11</sup> The four playwrights examined in this book additionally make extensive use of intertextuality as a stylistic and structural means for engaging audiences through contemporary multimedia referents. The songs, images, and video projections played in the performance space in their plays at once lean on audience competence and further bring to mind Brechtian notions of alienation, distancing, and the adoption of a critical stance on the part of the spectators through which to interpret the action of the drama. Moreover, they blur the separational divide between audience space and performance space as conceived and developed in nineteenth-century realism with the invisible barrier of the fourth wall. Gómez Glez, África, Miranda, and Buchaca spotlight how these and other devices of metatheatre intensify the collective identification between actors and spectators, thereby producing a communal experience involving both on and offstage worlds.

At the same time, reframing the denomination of 'rebels' in the plural form aims to foreground the collective reality of women in theatre and society at large in Spain while recognizing the plurality of individual experiences that makeup the social fabric. The exploration of personal subjectivity, individuation, and autonomy within the group and social dynamic is an issue that constitutes a pressing topic of concern for the four playwrights studied here. Along with many others currently writing for the stage, Gómez Glez, África, Miranda, and Buchaca all share a deep preoccupation with the widespread social inequities, discriminatory practices, and mechanisms of gender oppression that work towards the psychic and physical subjugation that ultimately relegate women to marginalized

---

<sup>11</sup> "Avant-Garde Metatheatre: The Case of Spanish Women Playwrights at the Turn of the Century", 326.



positions in society.<sup>12</sup> Subverting hegemonic cultural conditions of inequality and reified hierarchical concepts of gender relations, these playwrights rebel in order to spotlight women’s experiences by placing their characters in the forefront position of center stage wherein they assert their newfound positionalities as active subjects.

Going against the grain of traditional notions of gender propriety and status in the arts even in a social climate auspicious to progress does not, however, come without its consequences. In a telling quote that provides a further source of inspiration for the title of this book, María Velasco pointed out that “cuando una transgrede algunos límites, sobre todo si tienen que ver con el sexo, enseguida te atribuyen provocaciones gratuitas y te acusan de rebelde sin causa. Es una lástima que a estas alturas sigamos sufriendo estos prejuicios mutiladores”.<sup>13</sup> Her statements – drawn from a 2016 piece in *El País* by Raquel Vidales and titled “El año que estallaron las dramaturgas” – reflect the sentiments of the other six playwrights interviewed by Vidales and whose works were slated for production at the Centro Dramático Nacional in Madrid. They include two of the playwrights studied here, África and Miranda, along with Denise Despeyroux, Lucía Carballal, María Fernández Ache, Lourdes Ortiz, and Carolina Román. The article subheading – “El CDN estrena en una sola temporada de forma insólita siete obras de autoras vivas”<sup>14</sup> – points to the institutional commitment to “incluir en su programación al menos un 40% de creaciones protagonizadas o avaladas por mujeres durante los próximos tres años”.<sup>15</sup> While the move represents a considerable advance in gender equality, Diana

---

<sup>12</sup> Pilar Jódar Peinado, for example, places particular emphasis on the marginalization of women “en cuanto a la conformación de la historia y el arte oficial, limitando nuestras apariciones públicas o silenciando nuestras aportaciones” (“in terms of official history and art, limiting our public appearances or silencing our contributions.”) “El deseo de éxito y libertad: figuras femeninas marginadas por la cultura patriarcal en cuatro dramaturgas españolas del siglo XXI”, 339.

<sup>13</sup> (“when one transgresses certain limits, especially when it comes to sex, you will be immediately attributed gratuitous provocations and accusations of rebel without a cause. It’s a shame that these days we still suffer from these mutilating prejudices.”) Vidales, “El año en que estallaron las dramaturgas.”

<sup>14</sup> (“The CDN premieres in a single incredible season seven works by living women playwrights.”)

<sup>15</sup> (“include in their schedule at least 40% of works created or cosigned with women protagonists for the next three years.”)

Luque rightfully points out that “lo insólito [...] es que esto sea noticia en 2016, y más insólito aún es que una fecha tan cercana como diciembre de 2005 sea la primera vez que el CDN haya programado textos escritos por mujeres”.<sup>16</sup>

Conscious of a double marginalization as women and as artists, Spanish women playwrights evince an ethical commitment dedicated to the causes of eradicating inequality and calling attention to the covert ideological operations of systemic oppression as a first step towards bringing about social change. It is in this light that the visibilization of social, racial, sexual, and gender topics attains a status of acute relevance and current significance. Ana María Díaz Marcos emphasizes how “en el contexto actual se hace más necesario que nunca una dramaturgia de la búsqueda que conlleve todavía una denuncia de la invisibilidad”.<sup>17</sup> For Laura Rubio Galletero, this process begins in the moment that language is produced in written and oral expression. By affirming that “con las palabras hacemos visible lo invisible, es decir, nuestro ‘Yo soy’”,<sup>18</sup> Galletero likewise alludes to the relationship between language production and identity, thereby revealing female subjectivity as a means of empowerment originating within the self and voiced through expression of the self, separate from the imposition and dictates of external pressures and strictures. Language becomes a powerful tool for the four playwrights studied here, and the willful engagement of their characters to talk about, talk to, and talk with each other, the spectators and, perhaps most importantly, themselves not only establishes the parameters of conflict and determines the course of action, it provides the means for either a positive assertion of agency and subjectivity or a negative slide into a passive state of submissive resignation. The character’s voice therefore becomes just as determining a factor in these plays as their silence.

---

<sup>16</sup> (“what is incredible [...] is that this is news in 2016, and what is even more incredible is that such a recent date as December 2005 marks the first time the CDN included texts written by women.”) Luque, “Tan excepcionales como los creadores.”

<sup>17</sup> (“in the current context it is more necessary than ever that we have a dramaturgy that leads to denouncing this invisibility.”) Díaz Marcos, *Escenarios de crisis*, 19.

<sup>18</sup> (“with words we visibilize what was previously invisible, meaning, our ‘I am’.”) Rubio Galletero, “‘Mi agravio mudó mi ser’ Un mapa para mujeres contemporáneas.”

Language as a productive means of liberation is intrinsically tied to the process of identity formation. The rebellion of Spanish women playwrights as they actively take up writing, production, and performance to assert their voice and expose dominant forms of oppression and inequality additionally aims at an erasure of long held patriarchal conceptions and discrimination within the profession. Luque notes that in terms of playwriting, “afortunadamente, la toma de conciencia sobre la tradicional discriminación de las mujeres en el ámbito dramático está acelerando y facilitando la incorporación de escritoras al panorama teatral español”.<sup>19</sup> The debate of the progressive move towards equality that goes beyond historically institutionalized discriminatory practices of gender is revealed in the form of recent scrutiny surrounding the linguistic use of the Spanish preposition “de” in its reinforcement of traditional hierarchical and relational positionalities. Ana Contreras, for instance, references the limitations and dependent status imposed on women that she perceived throughout her childhood. As she states, “nací en una época en la que se nos decía que solo podíamos ser esposas de y madres de. Lo que me parecía muy injusto”.<sup>20</sup> Inma Nieto speaks in markedly similar terms, noting that when it comes to plot development in theatre, “las tramas suelen ser masculinas. Somos la hija de, la esposa de, la hermana de un hombre. Y casi siempre las mujeres somos minoría en un elenco”.<sup>21</sup>

The appropriation of language to advance the feminist project of equal representation and female empowerment results in a productive reformulation of the subordinate positionality commonly conferred upon women in a patriarchal relational system. Marta Buchaca notes how in her collaborative work with the women actors from the company La Joven during the initial stages of developing her play *Playoff*, “decían que

---

<sup>19</sup> (“fortunately, the level of consciousness surrounding the traditional discrimination of women in the realm of playwriting is accelerating and easing the incorporation of women playwrights into the panorama of Spanish theatre.”) Luque, “Tan excepcionales como los creadores.”

<sup>20</sup> (“I was born in a time when we were told that we could only be the wives and mothers of. Which I found to be extremely unfair.”) Hernández Nieto, “Ana Contreras, ayudando a crecer a alumnos y público de teatro.”

<sup>21</sup> (“the plots are traditionally masculine. We are the daughter of, the wife of, the sister of the man. And women are almost always a minority in the cast.”) Hernández Nieto, “Inma Nieto, o el teatro como el encuentro con el público.”

habitualmente interpretaban papeles de novia, hermana o hija de y que querían interpretar un personaje que fuera una hija de puta, o que su personaje viviera una historia de amor”.<sup>22</sup> Writing about the female spectator, Jill Dolan notes that the audience “sees women as mothers, relegated to supporting roles that enable the more important action of the male protagonist [...] While the men are generally active and involved, the women seem marginal and curiously irrelevant, except as a tacit support system or as decoration that enhances and directs the pleasure of the male spectator’s gaze”.<sup>23</sup> The experience of the female spectator that Dolan discusses can certainly be extrapolated to women actors such as those from *La Joven*, whose statements included above are noteworthy for they reveal how the actors are acutely aware of the historically subordinate status of their theatrical counterparts from a young age. Consequently, their rejection of a genealogy imposed by patriarchal standards serving to objectify women and cast them in secondary roles points to a profound dissatisfaction leading towards efforts at crafting novel characters that project positive images of subjectivity and agency. Moreover, as is the case with Miranda’s *Las chicas no fuman igual*, the collaborative process of creation where the actors hold a primary and active stake in the formation of their characters produces a democratic and powerful experience for new generations of women actors and spectators. Through their newly empowered characters, the women on stage possess the means for showcasing for their peers off stage possible alternatives that can be fashioned to counter normative gender roles in order to reconfigure interpersonal relationships on a more equal footing.

Emmanuel Garnier notes that the lack of a genealogy specific to women has been cited as a common motif to explain their historical absence from the Spanish stage.<sup>24</sup> By comparison, male artists can look back on a long line of precursors in the arts.<sup>25</sup> The male playwright, whether he chooses to consciously follow or depart from the influence and model of his

---

<sup>22</sup> (“they told me that they usually performed the roles of girlfriend, sister or daughter of and that they wanted to play a character who was a bitch, or that their character had their own love story.”) Hernández Nieto, ““Marta Buchaca, una autora teatral en presente.”

<sup>23</sup> *The Feminist Spectator as Critic*, 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Lo trágico en femenino: dramaturgas españolas contemporáneas*, 11.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

predecessors, nevertheless possesses the means at his disposal to do so. To contrast, a survey of the last two centuries reveals that social and ideological forces have historically worked to disrupt sustained efforts to establish a similar continuance of women playwrighting. Eva Varela Lasheras frames this dichotomy in architectonic terms by employing the visual metaphor of the house, writing that “Es como si a un hombre y a una mujer se les dice que construyan una casa cada uno. Ambos tienen la misma capacidad. Pero el hombre tiene el cemento, los ladrillos, el diseño, sabe cómo hacerlo porque tiene unos ancestros, tiene una genealogía, tiene una historia propia que pertenece a lo masculino.” For Lasheras, the woman artist finds herself looking back on a void “sin ancestros” and consequently devoid of the requisite conditions and precursors. She states that “En la literatura dramática escrita por mujeres me encuentro con falta de raíz. Al menos hasta el siglo XX.”

The imagery of the house with its connotations of domesticity and confinement is poignant for an exploration of women’s historic marginalization in the world of the performing arts. Patricia O’Connor highlighted how “las mujeres del siglo XVI y XVII fueron relegadas a la cazuela, una especie de jaula en el piso superior alejada del escenario y lejos del patio donde los hombres se movían con toda libertad, al igual que lo hacían en la vida diaria”.<sup>26</sup> The social isolation in the private sphere impeded substantial advances in women’s education and the creation of a female network of artists outside of the home, and it is only in the nineteenth century where we find a sustained growing presence of women playwrights such as Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, Joaquina García de Balmaseda, Faustina Sáez de Melgar, Enriqueta Lozano de Vilches, Elisa de Luxán de García Dana, María Rosa Gálvez de Cabrera, Antonia Opisso Vinyas, Constanza Vereá y Núñez, Trinidad Aceves y Loredó, and María Gertrudis de Garecabe who endeavored to bring their plays to public attention.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> (“women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were relegated to the ‘cazuela’, a type of cage located in the upper floor away from the stage and far from the courtyard where the men could move about with complete freedom, like they did in everyday life.”) *Dramaturgas españolas de hoy: una introducción*, 17.

<sup>27</sup> For a more complete list of nineteenth-century Spanish women playwrights, *Escritoras españolas del siglo XIX: manual bio-bibliográfico* by María del Carmen Simón Palmer is a valuable reference.

Following the affirmation made by director Vanesa Martínez in 2018 of how “Lo que pasa en el mundo del teatro es un reflejo de lo que pasa en nuestra sociedad”,<sup>28</sup> we find that this statement was acutely relevant for the nineteenth-century social reality particularly regarding the roles and relationships among men and women. What came to be known as the ‘woman question’ constituted such a widespread topic of concern that it occupied the pages and ink of “innumerables tratados, artículos monografías, antologías y discursos [...] fascinaba y preocupaba a su vez a una abigarrada multitud de ambos sexos: alienistas, higienistas, religiosos, políticos, filósofos, docentes, sociólogos, literatos y literatas, conservadores y radicales, periodistas y novelistas”.<sup>29</sup>

The relegation of women to the private sphere of the home tasked with the duties of domestic care and child rearing worked to enforce norms of social propriety and preserve the virtue of the household. Francisco Alonso y Rubio observed the fact that the “familia humana es un simulacro de sociedad, es la sociedad misma en miniatura”,<sup>30</sup> encompassing the notion of the family unit as a microcosmic representation of social reality whose esteem and value rested upon rigid cultural conditions of gender relations. The domiciliary confinement of women in conjunction with the imposition of the ideals of self-sacrifice and abnegation fashioned the image of the woman in the home as the ‘ángel del hogar’<sup>31</sup> an idealized mythification whose selfless nature benefitted the collective wellbeing of the family unit. In developing the mimetic spatial settings in which their plays take place, Sue-Ellen Case notes that “Since women have generally been confined to the domestic domain and denied admittance to the public arena, their

---

<sup>28</sup> (“What happens in the world of the theatre is a reflection of what happens in our society.”)

<sup>29</sup> (“countless treatises, monographs, anthologies, and speeches [...] it simultaneously fascinated and was the subject of concern for a motley multitude of both sexes: alienists, hygienists, members of the religion, politicians, philosophers, educators, sociologists, men and women of letters, conservatives and radicals, journalists and novelists.”) Jagoe, *La mujer en los discursos de género: textos y contextos en el siglo XIX*, 23.

<sup>30</sup> (“the family unit simulates society, it is society in miniature.”) “La mujer”, 68.

<sup>31</sup> Either (‘the angel in the house’) or (‘the angel of the hearth’) are fitting translations. The first invariably alludes to Coventry Patmore’s poem “The Angel in the House” from 1854 wherein the poetic voice depicts the qualities and traits of the ideal wife.

performance space has often been within their houses”.<sup>32</sup> It is nevertheless within this same confining domiciliary space that the seeds of rebellion from the strictures of gender norms can take root, as Adela in Federico García Lorca’s *La casa de Bernarda Alba* so forcefully demonstrated in her fateful attempts to loosen the cultural and sexual stranglehold enforced within the family home.

The efforts to advance women’s participation in the workplace and in political representation throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century point to a progressive move disrupted by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the totalitarian dictatorship of Francisco Franco (1939-1975). Franco’s repressive regime forced the exile of a number of successful and promising artists, intellectuals, and members of the political opposition, and resulted in the incarceration and assassination of a multitude of others ensnared by the flare-up of war and the subsequent internal persecution and reprisals that ensued in the Postwar years. If, as Pilar Nieva de la Paz notes, the difficulties stemming from “La condición social de la mujer, su bajo nivel educativo, su aislamiento dentro de la esfera privada, los constantes obstáculos que tuvieron que vencer las aventuradas mujeres que intentaban por primera vez incorporarse a la esfera de lo público – ¿y qué hay más público que el negocio del teatro?”<sup>33</sup> impeded an increasing presence of women on the Spanish stage in the preceding years, the aftermath of the Civil War produced a distinct setback through a return to conservative ideals of gender propriety.<sup>34</sup> Carme Portaceli points out that “El franquismo lo que hizo fue relegar a las mujeres al espacio privado.

---

<sup>32</sup> *Feminism and Theatre*, 46.

<sup>33</sup> (“women’s social condition, their lower levels of education, their isolation within the private sphere, the constant obstacles that had to be overcome by the first women who ventured into the public sphere – and what could be more public than the theatre?”) *Autoras dramáticas españolas entre 1918 y 1936 (texto y representación)*, 24.

<sup>34</sup> O’Connor highlights how Fray Luis de León’s *La perfecta casada* (1583) emerged once again to the fore as the textual paragon that defined woman’s role as that of the ‘perfect housewife’ in the new regime. María Eugenia Fernández Fraile notes that *La perfecta casada* is “una de las obras moralistas que más ha influido en el imaginario femenino español desde el renacimiento hasta nuestros días” (“one of the moralist works that has most influenced the Spanish female imaginary from the Renaissance up to the present day”) “Historia de las mujeres en España: historia de una conquista”, 12.

Quitarlas del espacio público. Eso aún hoy lo estamos padeciendo”,<sup>35</sup> thereby emphasizing the damaging effects of the ideological notions surrounding gender norms perceived as an enduring force in the twenty-first century.

Just as Nieva de la Paz’s *Autoras dramáticas españolas entre 1918 y 1936 (texto y representación)* is groundbreaking for the author’s exploration of women playwrights in the intervening years following the First World War and leading up to the Spanish Civil War, Patricia O’Connor’s landmark 1988 book *Dramaturgas españolas de hoy: una introducción* proves a useful resource given the survey and close examination of women in the theatre landscape from the end of the Civil War up through to the year of publication. O’Connor notes that in this period, “Considerando solo mujeres con un mínimo de tres obras de larga duración, escrita en castellano para adultos, y representadas comercialmente entre 1939 y 1975 en Madrid, nos quedan muy pocos nombres”.<sup>36</sup> The sustained efforts throughout the decades of the forties and fifties by playwrights such as Dora Sedano, Julia Maura, Ana Diosdado, Mercedes Ballesteros, María Isabel Suárez de Deza, Carmen Troitiño, and Luisa María Linares suggests efforts to maintain a presence on the Spanish stage despite (or perhaps in spite of) working within the rigid yet arbitrary parameters of censorship and the binds of socially and politically sanctioned theatre genres. What is nevertheless noteworthy in O’Connor’s register of the works written and produced by these playwrights is the critical recognition and accolades that were bestowed on a number of occasions despite the paucity reflected in her study. In particular, Suárez de Deza’s *ex aequo* Premio Calderón de la Barca in 1951 for her play *Noche de San Miguel* would mark the first time a woman was awarded the prestigious theatre prize for a new and emerging playwright whose work had not yet been produced in a professional venue. It would be over thirty years until

---

<sup>35</sup> (“under Franco women were relegated back to the private sphere and removed from public. We are still suffering from this today.”) Hernández Nieto, “Carme Portaceli, la curiosidad hecha directora de escena.”

<sup>36</sup> (“If we take into account only those women with at least three plays of considerable length, written in Spanish for adults, and performed on commercial stages between 1939 and 1975 in Madrid, we are left with very few names.”), 30.



another woman – in this case María Manuela Reina in 1984 for her play *La libertad esclava* – would receive the Calderón de la Barca prize.<sup>37</sup>

The decade of the eighties marks a significant moment for the contemporary history of Spanish women playwrights breaking the silenced imposed through almost forty years of dictatorship and laying the foundations for what has come to be considered a renewed genealogy. The increasing visibility produced by the output of publication, performances, awards, and prizes was described by Virtudes Serrano in her research on the period as a “renacer de la dramaturgia femenina en España”.<sup>38</sup> María Manuela Reina won the Premio de la Sociedad General de Autores in 1983 for her play *El navegante*, and the Calderón de la Barca awarded to Reina a year later was followed up by Maribel Lázaro in 1985 for *Humo de beleño*. Paloma Pedrero, Carmen Resino, and Concha Romero all saw their plays published and performed, and the Madrid-based library La Avispa became an important nexus for the newly formed Asociación de Dramaturgas Españolas, founded in 1986.<sup>39</sup> The journal *Estreno* edited by Patricia O'Connor comprised a focal point of visibility through the 1984 number dedicated to showcasing the work of women playwrights in order to raise greater academic and critical awareness. “Podemos concluir con una afirmación rotunda,” wrote Serrano, “hay una dramaturgia femenina que intenta abrirse camino en el teatro español actual con un lenguaje propio”.<sup>40</sup>

The exploration of the expressive possibilities of staging and the expansion of themes encompassing a wider critical scope including the performativity of gender roles, discrimination in the private and public spheres, disciplinary mechanisms operating on the construction of aesthetic

---

<sup>37</sup> Although records indicate that a Remedios Orad was awarded the Calderón de la Barca *ex aequo* in 1953, research shows that this is an instance of a male writer, Jorge Llopis, operating under the pseudonym of a woman.

<sup>38</sup> (“renaissance of women playwrighting in Spain.”) “El renacer de la dramaturgia femenina en España (1984-1994).”

<sup>39</sup> Serrano describes how “Los primeros jueves de cada mes, las quince escritoras que constituyeron la asociación se reunían en el sótano de la librería [...] para leer y comentar textos” (“On the first Thursday of each month, the fifteen writers that comprised the association would meet in the basement of the library [...] to lead and discuss texts”) “Hacia una dramaturgia femenina”, 351.

<sup>40</sup> (“We can resolutely affirm that there is a trend of women playwrighting that is trying the pave its own path in Spanish theatre and with a language of its own.”) “El renacer de la dramaturgia femenina en España (1984-1994)”, 16.

bodily standards, the constraints of heteronormativity, violence and abuse inflicted in affective and interpersonal relationships, and the recovery of silenced and forgotten women within the framework of the historical drama all imbued the work of women playwrights in the eighties and nineties with an overtly feminist approach that still continues well into the twenty-first century. The increasing visibility of women in the performing arts runs parallel to the legislative aims of advancing gender equality and women's rights since the death of Franco and the transition to democracy. Article 14 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution, for example, established that "Los españoles son iguales ante la ley, sin que pueda prevalecer discriminación alguna por razón de nacimiento, raza, sexo, religión, opinión o cualquier otra condición o circunstancia personal o social".<sup>41</sup> More recently, the 2004 *Ley Orgánica de medidas de protección integral contra la Violencia de género* and the 2007 *Ley Orgánica para la Igualdad efectiva de mujeres y hombres* were passed as measures condemning gender inequities and discrimination on the basis of sex although critics like Ana María Díaz Marcos and Mercè Saumell have maintained the claim that much work still needs to be done within public and social discourses in order to provoke a widespread shift in the collective consciousness geared towards the eradication of gender-based violence and discriminatory practices. Díaz Marcos emphasizes the fact that despite these measures "las desigualdades persisten en la sociedad contemporánea"<sup>42</sup> and lists the specific examples of "brecha de género, diferencias salariales, reparto desproporcional del trabajo doméstico, efecto tijera y falta de visibilidad de la producción creativa de las mujeres"<sup>43</sup>. Saumell likewise notes how "la igualdad efectiva de mujeres y hombres todavía no se cumple, especialmente en los cargos de

---

<sup>41</sup> ("The Spanish people are equal under the law, without any prevailing discrimination on the basis of birth, race, sex, religion, views and beliefs or any other condition or any other personal or social circumstance.")

<sup>42</sup> ("inequalities still persist in contemporary society") *Escenarios de crisis*, 20.

<sup>43</sup> ("gender gap, differences in salary, unequal distribution of domestic duties, scissor effect and the absence of visibility when it comes to women's creative output and production.") *Ibid.*, 20.

más poder, pero también es cierto que en los últimos tiempos hay más sensibilidad por el tema”.<sup>44</sup>

The widespread call for parity within the theatre arts and institutional makeup points to the growing sensibility and awareness of existing gender inequities. In her extensive study from 2011 of the programming at the Centro Dramático Nacional and covering a period of twenty years since it was founded in 1978 up to 1998, Isabel Montijano Sánchez observes that “Aunque esta institución tiene la misión de ser una de las cunas de nuestros artistas teatrales contemporáneos, cuando observamos su programación anual, podemos percibir una cierta falta de mujeres artistas en algunos de los puestos (tanto de su organización interna como la de las obras programadas para cada temporada”.<sup>45</sup> The 2015-2016 season of the CDN – the subject of Raquel Vidales’s *El País* “El año que estallaron las dramaturgas” article examined above – was intended as one of the measures designed to establish a greater foundation for equal representation in the theatre programming that would set a precedent for future seasons. However, it is important to note that the case of the CDN should not be construed as an isolated and localized instance, as Montijano Sánchez goes on to state that “Esta falta, que ha estado desde el principio y aunque más levemente se mantiene a día de hoy, verdaderamente se repite en la mayoría de las instituciones españolas y de prácticamente el mundo entero”.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> (“equality between men and women has not been achieved, especially in positions of power, but it is also true that in recent times there has been more sensibility on the topic.”) “Mujer y creación escénica hoy en España. Estado de la cuestión.”

<sup>45</sup> (“Although this institution has the intended mission of being a home to theatre practitioners, when we observe their yearly programming we note a certain lack of women in some of the posts (in both the internal organization and the plays scheduled for each season.”) . *Las mujeres profesionales del teatro en España: un análisis a partir de la programación del Centro Dramático Nacional*, 3. Montijano Sánchez includes the following statistics pertaining to gender representation of playwrights and directors from 1978-1998: “Índice de dramaturg@s hasta 1998: 25 dramaturgas frente a unos 220 dramaturgos. Índice de directores/as hasta 1998: 15 directoras frente a unos 190 directores” (“Index of playwrights up to 1998: 25 women and 220 men. Index of directors up to 1998: 15 women and 190 men.”) Ibid., 27.

<sup>46</sup> (“This absence, which has existed from the beginning and continues to exist to this day, is replicated in the majority of Spanish institutions and practically worldwide.”) Ibid., 3.

As noted earlier, this gender imbalance has historically affected all sectors of the industry and it is certainly the case that women still occupy a minority position in the Spanish theatre landscape of the twenty-first century.<sup>47</sup> Carmen Viñolo stated in a 2016 interview that “el teatro cierra continuamente sus puertas a las mujeres [...] ¿Dramaturgia de mujeres? Hoy, en 2016 se sigue aplicando la misma regla de siempre: Desconocida = inexistente”.<sup>48</sup> The increasing numbers of women who graduate from theatre schools and conservatories trained in acting, directing, design, and production complete their studies with a course curriculum often deficient in terms of historical female representation.<sup>49</sup> Upon entry into the profession, the gendered biases and barriers become even more acute and defined along conservative patriarchal lines. A common thread in interviews with women from the professional world of theatre performance and production points to the continued existence of entrenched sexist discourses that reproduce a reification of traditional hierarchical notions of women in a subordinate position. “El teatro es un mundo de hombres” affirms Vanesa Martínez.<sup>50</sup> These testimonies evince the realities of the power dynamics of gender roles that women playwrights, directors, and producers still struggle

---

<sup>47</sup> Díaz Marcos, for instance, references how “Las autoras teatrales han ocupado un espacio minoritario, en compilaciones, historias literarias, libros de texto y listas de lecturas obligatorias, igual que en congresos y festivales separadas de los espacios de gestión y toma de decisiones” (“Women playwrights have occupied a minority position, in anthologies, literary history, textbooks and reading lists, as well as in conferences and festivals where they are separated from the spaces of management and decision-making.”) *Escenarios de crisis*, 33

<sup>48</sup> (the theatre continually closes its doors to women [...] Women playwrights? Today, in 2016, the same rule still applies: Unknown = nonexistent.) “¡Por aquí las que aspiren a dramaturgas!”

<sup>49</sup> Montijano Sánchez notes how “cuando en la Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático de Madrid se cursan ciertas asignaturas en las que se enseña teoría sobre escenografía y diseño, no se nombra a ninguna mujer, al igual que apenas se estudian mujeres dramaturgas o teóricas del teatro” (“when classes are taken in the Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático in Madrid on stage and set design, not a single woman is mentioned. The same occurs with the absence of women playwrights and theatre theorists.”) *Las mujeres profesionales del teatro en España: un análisis a partir de la programación del Centro Dramático Nacional*, 14.

<sup>50</sup> (“the theatre is a man’s world.”) Hernández Nieto, “Vanesa Martínez, una directora de escena preparada para todo.”

against on an everyday basis and which impede a greater progression in the performing arts.

Nevertheless, the promising winds of change O'Connor alludes to in her book on the threshold of the twenty-first century appear to be blowing ever more in favor with each passing year. Ainhoa Amestoy affirms that “las mujeres venimos pisando fuerte. Se nos están abriendo las puertas”.<sup>51</sup> Her references to Helena Pimenta, Carme Portaceli, Natalia Menéndez, and María Folguera place an important spotlight on the women who have recently taken up prominent positions of directing over the last decade in some of the largest theatre venues in the country. Women have been on juries and selection committees for nationally recognized performing arts awards, there are increasingly more groups promoting women's rights and theatre companies run by women, and resources for publication such as Ediciones Antígona led by the remarkable efforts of Conchita Piña, Isaac Juncos Cianca, and Ignacio Pajón Leyra are providing a valuable means for the promotion of works authored by women playwrights. Recent issues of the academic and research journals of *Don Galán* no. 8 “Mujer y teatro en la España del siglo XXI” (2018), *Acotaciones* no. 41 “Teatro y Feminismos. Colaboración, autoría y canon” (2018), *Las Puertas del Drama* extra no. 1 “Mujeres que cuentan (Especial autoras)” (2016), and *Anagnórisis* no. 1 “Las mujeres en el teatro” (2010) have dedicated their pages to the critical study of women in theatre production.

The important strides made in recent decades and buffered by the socially progressive movements of MeToo, the 8-M demonstrations, and public marches on November 25<sup>th</sup> commemorating the victims of gender-based violence, along with the legislative measures outlined above, point to significant changes in the roles and collective and personal identities of women in society and the arts. In a recent interview for the *Revista Godot* with the director and actors of Yolanda García Serrano's all-female play *Cuidados intensivos* performed in the Teatros Luchana in Madrid, Paloma Montero affirms that “la mujer está empezando a tomar una dimensión mucho más importante en las artes escénicas, algo que era absolutamente necesario por aquello de que nuestro género esté representado [...] Estamos

---

<sup>51</sup> (“we are coming strong. The doors are being opened to us.”) Hernández Nieto, “Ainhoa Amestoy, una mujer de teatro, teatro y teatro.”

en el camino, pero aún nos queda bastante”.<sup>52</sup> Expounding upon the reason as to why the plot chronology in *Cuidados intensivos* comes to a close in 2012 instead of in the present day of the performance in 2019, director Blanca Oteyza notes the advances made in the intervening years: “justo en estos 7 años ha cambiado mucho el papel de la mujer incluso a la hora de cómo hablar. Ahora se habla de cirujanos y cirujanas, pero entonces no. En el 2012 se dio la primera manifestación de las batas blancas”.<sup>53</sup> In response to the question “¿Qué papel ocupa la mujer hoy en día en las artes escénicas?” Oteyza reflects on these same advances and the positive outlook moving forward, firmly concluding that “Estamos en un proceso que es imparable”.<sup>54</sup>

*Rebels with a Cause in Contemporary Spanish Women Playwriting* aims to contribute to the expanding field of studies of women in theatre in twenty-first century Spain by focusing on plays from four innovative women playwrights whose works have remained undertheorized to date. At the time of writing there are only a few existing articles on plays by Gómez Glez, África, Miranda, and Buchaca, and as of yet there has not been an attempt to examine these four playwrights together in a collective fashion within the scope of a single book project. A study of the textual, production, and performance strategies of Mar Gómez Glez, Carolina África, Lucía Miranda, and Marta Buchaca, showcases the unique contributions of these four playwrights to the contemporary theatre landscape while at the same time responding to Diana Luque’s call for more “publicaciones académicas, revistas de investigación teatral y los seminarios que muestran interés por estudiar y visibilizar la dramaturgia escrita por mujeres”.<sup>55</sup> By using the

---

<sup>52</sup> (“women are beginning to form a much more important part of the performing arts, something that was absolutely necessary for the representation of our gender [...] We are on the right path, but there is still a long way to go.”) Penichet, “‘Hemos tenido que pasar una transición para normalizar que la mujer esté donde le corresponde’.”

<sup>53</sup> (“in these seven years women’s roles have changed a lot, including when it comes to the ways in which we talk. Now we differentiate between ‘cirujanos’ and ‘cirujanas,’ but back then we did not. In 2012 the first protest took place led by the white coats.”) Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> (“We are in a movement that is unstoppable.”) Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> (“academic publications, theatre research journals and seminars that display an interest in studying and visibilizing plays written by women.”) Luque, “Tan excepcionales como los creadores.”