

## Women, Subalternity and the Historical Novel of María Rosa Lojo: An Interview

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### Women, the Historical Novel and Argentine History

KL: Your recent work offers readers a “surprising” version of history reflected in two book titles, *Astonishing Love Affairs in Argentine History* and *Stories Buried in the Recoleta Cemetery*. The novelty, it seems to me, is in rediscovering a buried history in which women played a central role; your work is actually part of a long trajectory of literature by women writers who founded Argentina’s literary tradition, such as Juana Manuela Gorriti (1816-1892), and who were erased from history until Lily Sosa de Newton, Lea Fletcher, Francine Masiello, and journals such as *Feminaria* first brought them to our attention just two decades ago.<sup>1</sup>

MRL: There is no question that we have a feminine literary tradition at the very foundation of our literature with works at the same level as the masculine literary tradition. However, for several years only the founding “fathers” were recognized; the “mothers” were forgotten or considered a marginal phenomenon. As Bonnie Frederick points out in her book *Wily Modesty*, this process begins with the first *History of Argentine Literature* by Ricardo Rojas.<sup>2</sup> Rojas was a solid intellectual who dared to undertake this project despite the jokes made by those who said that Argentina did not have its own literature. Given the intellectual atmosphere of the era, it might be thought admirable that he included women at all, instead of just

silencing or ignoring them. Nevertheless, he does so only parenthetically, separating them from the great literary movements. He classifies them above all by their gender, not by what they wrote as creative subjects at the same level as their male counterparts. And this conception remains until today in the most recent literary histories, despite the best intentions. This is the dangerous side of gender studies, which is that they can have the same effect of locating women once again in a “ghetto,” separating them out as if their work were not at the level of male writers (who also have a gender, by the way, although it is as if for men gender were “neutralized,” the masculine tends to be understood as the “universal measure”).

Women writers have also ignored our ancestors. We haven’t dialogued with their texts as one does with the “classical” national texts, all written by men. I think this began to change with the publication of the novel *Juanamanuela, mucha mujer* (1980) by Marta Mercader, who attempted a very interesting recuperation of Juana Manuela Gorriti, which was well received by the reading public, who rediscovered this nineteenth-century author through Mercader’s novel.<sup>3</sup>

I have always been interested in the figure of Eduarda Mansilla, the brilliant sister of the equally brilliant, but far better known, Lucio Victorio Mansilla, author of *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*.<sup>4</sup> I have written a novel about her, *Una mujer de fin de siglo* as well as several critical studies of her literary work. I also plan to publish a book of critical articles about her prose fiction. In my book of short stories, *Historias ocultas en la Recoleta*, I focus specifically on another nineteenth-century author, the poet Agustina Andrade, who inspired me to write the story “El canto del silencio”. Furthermore, the entire book *Amores insólitos* is centered on intergender relations, gender roles, asymmetries of power, and the possibility, as Pierre Bourdieu says, that “difference” in a genuine love relation should not be read as “subalternity.”

KL: In recent years the historical novel has proven to be commercially successful, stimulating writers to produce more work in this genre by de- and reconstructing historical legacies, especially with respect to gender and women’s history. Although traditionally identified as a form of subaltern expression, can women’s writing still be considered as such today, when many of the current bestsellers in

Argentina are written by women and have women as protagonists? MRL: Women's writing still occupies an undervalued position, less deserving of the "universal" critics' attention. From this perspective, it is subaltern writing, or it is seen as such. Not with respect to sales, but it is certainly subaltern in that the tendency of the "prestigious" critics is to automatically consider it of less merit without even taking time to read it. On the other hand, let us not forget that for these very same critics, the fact that these books are a huge commercial success also contributes to the depreciation of their literary value.

KL: And if the reading public is also feminine, that implies. . . .

MRL: . . . further devaluation. They believe it is "literature for women" and in many minds this is equivalent to sentimental, kitschy, a mere pastime, and even ridiculous literature; that is how it has been presented even in some cultural milieux, referring to the silliness of writing about chandeliers as if Proust had no interest in the domestic sphere. Obviously, the question is not *what* the writer is discussing, but *how* it is done. It may be as boring or trivial to talk about how many canons there were in a battle or how many mules or the number of wounded. With these topics one can lapse into the same triviality or lack of literary value. Not everyone is a Proust, Virginia Woolf, or Tolstoy.

KL: Most historical and fictional writing portrays the (in)famous nineteenth Century Argentinean dictator, Juan Manuel de Rosas (in power 1835-1852) as a ruthless tyrant who is largely responsible for the development of anti-democratic tendencies in the country. In your narratives, however, you, like historian María Saéñz Quesada, have brought to our attention the fact that Rosas took women very seriously as political agents.<sup>5</sup>

MLR: It is true that throughout his life, Rosas lived surrounded by women; he needed them and wanted them to carry out political roles alongside him. He made them relevant and important. He admired Queen Victoria, and there are very curious letters between the exiled Rosas and his friend Rojas y Patrón, who used to send him money, in which both share their fascination for one of the young

princesses, Princess Alice, one of Queen Victoria's daughters. Rojas y Patrón points out how gladly people would prefer to be ruled by such a charming, feminine figure rather than by the less pleasant, and much more conventional, figure of a male. In other words, Rosas was always conscious of the peculiar power of women, their charm, and seductiveness. It should be recognized that from a certain point of view, he used them, but it is also true that women in his circle enjoyed a central role. They were not mere inert instruments stripped of their will and intelligence. They collaborated with him because in one way or another they felt comfortable, or respected, or because they perceived that this position enabled them to retain some amount of power.

KL: In contrast with the Rosista period, the post-Caseros era which followed his overthrow in 1852 seems to be characterized by an absence of women from the political scene. Earlier, women like Rosas's wife Encarnación and his daughter Manuelita were in the spotlight and discussed, but after Caseros. . . .

MRL: . . . there were no women visibly associated with positions of leadership; men exclusively were in power, it is true. It is not until the beginning of the twentieth century that we find the first professional women, as well as grassroot feminist groups actively promoting equality of civil and political rights, with leaders such as the socialist Alicia Moreau de Justo, Elvira Rawson, or Julieta Lanteri. But it is not due to these groups that women would accomplish what they set out to achieve. The right to vote was finally given to women by Eva Duarte de Perón, who was not ideologically feminist, and who, although having her own sphere of influence, undoubtedly acted as the mediator for a male ruler, who happened to be her own husband. In any case, as historian Marcela Nari has correctly indicated, although Eva's discourse did not resort to revolutionary feminist slogans, her political practice, her acts, and her gestures established the image of a woman capable of transcending the private sphere and defending the political and labor rights of her gender.

KL: How can this disappearance from the public sphere or depoliticization of women be explained?

MRL: A historian, Lucía Gálvez, comments that women always become visible when men need them. Afterwards they again return to domestic confinement. I believe there is some truth to this, isn't there? During periods of civil war, during the construction of the nation, in conflicts on one side or the other, women were necessary. Once Argentina was "modernized," pacified and homogenized, it was deemed more appropriate for women to return to domestic tranquility.

KL: Rosas's daughter, Manuela Rosas, had a prominent and publicly visible role in many affairs of state, meeting with ambassadors, representing her father, and negotiating with him on behalf of opposition groups. The Unitarians and the Liberals have both portrayed her as a victim of her father, using her as an allegory for the captive nation. For instance, the best-known nineteenth-century Argentinian novelist José Mármol portrays her as the white hope for the future, a nation which can remain pure and chaste despite being under her father's rule. Are there any other portrayals of Manuela in which she is represented in a more ambiguous fashion?

MRL: The principal spokesperson to articulate such a position, the one responsible for this construction of Manuela, is without a doubt Mármol, who had probably fallen in love with her, as is revealed in his writings, but he never got anywhere, and from a distance he sees her as a victim. But he perceives her as a victim because of his prejudices, which were shared by many men of his time with regard to feminine nature. Mármol believed Rosas had "perverted" Manuela's femininity by bringing her into direct contact with power, because obviously he believed that matters of power are not for women, that this association with power corrupts their nature. He also describes women as fragile and delicate beings, prone to a frivolous and light-hearted imagination, who become rough and insensitive once they face the harsh realities of violence and politics. In Mármol's eyes, Manuela was to some degree subjected to a kind of continuous pressure from her father, whose goal was to degrade her pure, chaste, and sweetly feminine nature, and furthermore, she would not be allowed to love any man because (according to the theory

that [the seat of government] Palermo was a brothel) there would not be a suitor worthy of her in Buenos Aires. However, Manuelita had already chosen a man fully worthy of her: the loyal and patient Máximo Terrero, a well educated young man from a wealthy family who was also a childhood friend and the son of Juan Manuel de Rosas's best friend.

It is precisely Mármol's portrayal (which has had a long line of followers throughout the years, a portrayal I never found credible) that motivated me to write a novel and to construct my character from another possible interpretation of Manuela Rosas, whom I consider much more a protagonist of her own destiny than that image desired by the imagination of poets or liberal writers.

The proof that she was a protagonist, and that she also felt herself to be such, lies in the extraordinary help she offered, as an elderly woman, to the historian Adolfo Saldías. Thanks to her, Saldías, the pioneer of Revisionism—particularly the revisionist history of *Rosismo*—had access to her father's archives, and this was an act of historical vindication of which Manuela was enormously proud. So much so that she would read aloud the chapters of this work, which she considered extraordinary, to Máximo. Toward the end of his life, Máximo was quite ill and probably suffered from a stroke, or at least this is how Manuela describes him in her letters to Antonino Reyes. To keep him from getting too tired, Manuela would read Saldía's work to him chapter by chapter.<sup>6</sup>

In some ways, her father's vindication was her own as well. She felt as though the government belonged to her, and there is no evidence that she had felt ashamed or regretful for having been part of that early phase of government, although I am sure that she would have seen certain acts by Rosas as particularly unacceptable, as would have been the case with the execution of Camila O'Gorman, a friend of hers. Undoubtedly, she could not have approved of this, no matter how hard Rosas might have tried to convince her that Camila's execution was a political necessity. But apart from this, I believe that, until the end, she considered that both she and her father had provided the nation with a necessary service.

Manuela's greatest wrath was not directed toward the traditional enemies (for instance, in the last years of her life she and Juan Batista Alberdi, whom she very much respected and who returned

this respect, had a very good relationship, and Alberdi has even left us a very interesting view of the elderly Juan Manuel de Rosas).

Manuelita's deepest anger and her greatest resentment were specifically directed towards those who had flattered her in her moment of glory. People such as Doctor Dalmacio Vélez Sarsfield, or the Calzadilla family, who in the post-Caseros era, denounced Rosas because it benefited them, or the Anchorenas, who had been so favored by Rosas's policies, and who later did not lift a finger to help improve Rosas's situation in exile.

### Women's History and Subalternity

KL: When I read *La princesa federal* it seemed to me that I had found the Manuela Rosas I had hoped to have existed historically: protagonist of her own story, hers is just one of several juxtaposed voices in the novel, which are at times mutually exclusive. The young medical student Gabriel Victorica, visiting the elderly Manuela in London, secretly reads the cynical diary of Rosas's own Press Secretary Pedro de Angelis, who is in love with the young Manuela and writes about the events in the heat of the moment, several decades before the quiet conversation takes place in London. As they converse, the elderly Manuela's reading of her own history differs with the interpretation offered to us by de Angelis, so that the reader has the option to choose among the versions he or she finds most convincing. But even so, isn't there a fairly stable image of her in the novel? In other words, doesn't de Angelis's cynicism makes us wary of what he says, and doesn't Gabriel Victorica's naiveté encourage us to identify with him as the modernizing-scientific voice of the future?

MRL: But he also mistrusts that very same future. There is a part of the novel in which he reflects on the icons who were held up as models when he grew up, precisely those responsible for the demonizing version of Rosas's government. He asks himself whether one world has any advantage over the other and reaches the conclusion that in both worlds there were the uneducated and the dispossessed, people with power and those who were never going to have any. He sees both eras in a similar way; despite the fact that he is a young scientist and doctor who wants to complete his training, there is a deep

distrust of the absolute value of progress, given that progress, he believes, has not improved the human condition. This is the doubt that he confronts. To what extent does such progress, fostered by his father's generation and by the liberal, enlightened and advanced generations to follow (his among them, by the way), fail, however, to put an end to the injustice, marginalization and subalternity of immense human groups?

KL: The use of the diary and of the elderly woman's conversation or confession to a young man, and the direct and indirect quotations from Freud provide us with elements of the domestic and private life which enable us to interpret monumental history. What advantages are there for the author in this kind of narrative?

MRL: The way in which this story could be fleshed out within a believable framework was to start from the characters' intimate lives; watching them live helps to recover them as subjects. That is the reason for choosing this setting. Moreover, in my view, the fact that it should be an elderly Manuela who reviews her life greatly enriched the perspective. It also allowed for the coexistence of two women: the woman she was when young, and the woman in her seventies. An elderly woman who sees herself and sees the young girl at a distance who initiates her apprenticeship into power.

Furthermore, I found the juxtaposition of spaces very interesting in a novelistic sense: the open, changing, dramatic, and intense space appropriate to Manuela's history as a young woman in the "pampa" and in conflict-ridden Buenos Aires, and the calm, enclosed, motionless, deteriorating space of her living room in the Victorian London of her old age. This way of alternating between two worlds—open and closed, past and present, outside and inside—compensates for the deliberate lack of action in the novel. The action is not real, it is virtual; it is not immediate; it is, basically, a past action.

KL: The novel itself suggests that Manuela is being analysed or controlled by her father or by patriarchal political power (which "can do everything"), and by Rosas's secretary, Pedro de Angelis, or scientific power (which "knows everything"). As women readers, we identi-

fy with the naïve Gabriel Victorica and his modernizing-scientific discourse in its Freudian version. Doesn't being identified within these three masculine powers place the woman reader in a submissive position with respect to men, who once again use the power of language and of hegemonic discourse to represent women?

MRL: Not in that Manuela permanently challenges this position or power, because these phrases “men who can do everything” and “men who know everything”—which are ironic—are hers. She is the one who is aware of what is happening to her and of the fascination she has felt for her father, a feeling she has toward Pedro de Angelis as well. This fascination has something to do with that particular power of men, which she in turn neutralizes through feminine power. There is an ongoing game of power in the novel, and with respect specifically to Victorica's modernizing discourse, Manuela always maintains a gently mocking reserve towards him. For instance, when she hears Mr. Freud's name, she calls him Mr. Alegre (Mr. Happy), taking up Victorica's translation, and she doubts that any kind of scientific discourse can unlock the mystery of the human soul. This doubt is always part of her and is definitely shared by Victorica as well. He is caught up in the seductiveness that emanates from this older woman, who is wiser than he, and who involves him in her own power of evocation and language.

KL: There is reciprocity among subjects. Although the reader has the impression at the beginning of the novel that men have the power, at the end we see that this is not the case, that these very rigid frameworks can be broken.

MRL: Manuela interacts continuously. She is not a passive object. She is a subject who is formed through a struggle of intelligence and subtlety in her relationship with her surroundings, and she gradually frees herself from her own father. There is a paragraph in the novel in which Pedro de Angelis is talking about the ambiguity of this relationship, saying that the princess's suitors come to free her, when in fact she does not want to be freed.

Everyone believes that Manuela wishes to be freed by the hand of a hero capable of wrenching her from the sleeping dragon. They are all unaware

that the dragon never sleeps, and worst of all, that she actually does not wish to be freed. She has a pact with the beast, and the flames that seem to imprison her are nothing but a reflection of the wall that supports the castle. (153)

This is the key to what happens to Manuela. She is voluntarily captive to that relationship, from which she is not able to detach herself, although she will end up doing so, marrying Máximo, and reaching normal adulthood. However, it is a process that takes her a lot of time.

KL: In this context it is interesting to consider the quotation in which she says that taming men is like taming horses, the indigenous way requires a lot of patience; but she rejects the word “taming.” Here, she connects women to other marginalized groups, in this case the indigenous peoples.

MRL: I took the idea about taming horses by the Indians, and their unique techniques, from Mansilla’s *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* (1870). The association is quite intentional: that is, that women, who are forbidden to use brute force (or explicit force) should tame—like other subalterns, the indigenous— “in the Indian way” through sheer cunning, in such a way that even they do not acknowledge their intention to “tame.” She prefers the word “persuade,” an idea she used all her life.

KL: We are given an opposing view in Pedro de Angelis’s diary, when he mentions that in Rosas’s house, he finds the world upside down: the Indian mixed with the white, with the black. . . .

MRL: The “high” with the “low.” A carnival-like world, resulting from the inversion of roles and hierarchies, as Bakhtin would say.

KL: He speaks of how racial contact disgusts him. . . .

MRL: And that is an attitude that Rosas did not share. Rosas had other defects, but he was not racist, and neither was Manuela, in my view. I suppose that the world of *candombes* and great rituals of African-River Plate origin, in which she was always the guest of honor,

attracted her. She enjoyed this world, and unlike José Mármol, she did not think of it as “disgusting.” What the historian Pedro Barrán has referred to as “barbaric sensibility” (with its freer sensuality and sexuality) was not repressed.<sup>7</sup> The repression takes place after Caseros and provokes a fascinating reaction in subsequent essayists, such as Ramos Mejías, so noticeable in his work *Rosas y su tiempo*, when he describes the sensual elements of the adoration that black masses (especially black women) felt for Rosas.

In the eyes of Pedro de Angelis, as an “enlightened” European who has been a private tutor in a prince’s court, everyone is barbaric (in their methods, in their behavior, in their intellectual pretensions, as demonstrated by the controversy between de Angelis and Esteban Echeverría). Anything he might see in this immediate world will therefore seem to him to emerge from barbarism. His is a very different view from the insiders’ view that Argentines have of themselves, where some are labelled as barbaric, while the others consider themselves learned, or the reverse, some are labelled as “filthy, disgusting, savage Unitarians” and others proclaim themselves as defenders of the Creole culture and the Argentine nation. For de Angelis, all these quarrels lose their meaning in his own confusion and defencelessness in a world where he doesn’t find a place of his own. He is torn between his commitments in this place, which were increasingly demanding, and his nostalgia for his birthplace to which he would never return.

In short, de Angelis’s voice links the readers not only with the world of Rosism but also with the world of a European who comes from the Enlightenment, from Paris, from liberalism, and even Masonry; and so he suffers from the intense contrast with the Creole Spanish American society, still essentially colonial. This society continues to live in a semi-feudal world (given that Rosas’s government was, in certain aspects, a feudal government), in a country that has gained independence from Spain, yet preserves many archaic structures, without quite becoming a “republic” in the full or “modern” sense. De Angelis’s diary is read and discussed at the end of the century when the entire previous era is clearly over and a new era is dawning.

KL: A moment of transition to a new order not so different from our own. . . .

MRL: This is a parallel I have considered seriously. Occurring in both periods is a change of mentality, the foreign influence on language itself and many customs, the love for luxury felt by the Argentine upper class and by large sectors of the middle class that imitated the upper class. There was also increasing financial speculation, instability in the economy, and the pragmatism of the ruling class. In one way or the other, the majority of “common” people who came from the countryside, politically committed to defeated groups, were left completely off the map, eliminated and anachronistic, like those old gauchos who spent their last days in taverns cheering for Rosas and for the young Manuela—that is how Cunningham Graham saw them—while important families, who had benefited from Rosism, settled themselves into the liberal order most comfortably.

KL: Does Manuela use “feminine” wisdom only with men to achieve what she wants, to tame them (feminine charms, seduction), or is it rather that she understands the desires of human beings in general, and knows how to manipulate them through these desires, hence for Victorica she is a better lesson in psychoanalysis than his classes?

MRL: The latter. From the start she places herself within a cultural construction, within a feminine role. This is, however, relative with respect to possible stereotypes, because while she is an exquisite hostess and a socially sophisticated lady, she is also an authority in rural matters and an expert equestrian. This is emphasized by some of her visitors, such as William MacCann. There is a wonderful part in MacCann’s book in which he says that she is such an Amazon that he rides behind her without catching up with her, and it is for this reason he cannot follow social etiquette and drive off the mosquitoes from her face and arms.<sup>8</sup>

I suppose she had what is now known as “emotional intelligence,” and she knew how to make use of it perfectly. She knew what the other person felt and needed, and she could put herself in that situation. That is how as an elderly woman she reveals herself in a letter to her friend Antonino Reyes. In this letter she says that she finds out and understands everyone’s tastes—household members, their visitors—and while it is not an easy task, she knows how to do

it very well, and consequently everything runs smoothly, and, as a result she is the one who controls the strings of her world.<sup>9</sup>

KL: I would like to talk a bit more about the relationship between the marginalized groups, subalternity, and women. A critic suggests there are three models to understand how women writers tend to conceive the relationship between their writing and subalternity: the revisionist, who researches history in order to change narratives and offer new alternatives, and who maintains the stability of the author-narrator's voice or position, such as Rosario Ferré from Puerto Rico. The second is the one who searches for subaltern voices and allows them to speak, erasing herself as author or becoming a mediator, using testimony as a model, as does Elena Poniatowska from Mexico—she insists that she is a journalist and that her presence and power in the narrative are minimal. The third is the one who searches for a new language through which she totally dismantles the monumental author, such as the Chilean Diamela Eltit.<sup>10</sup> I think that several of these alternatives can be seen in the novels you have written.

MRL: I would place myself within the third alternative more than any other. Even in novels that demand a certain adaptation to the language of the period, such as historical novels, the truth is that I am committed to using my own language despite certain touches reflecting the era, certain strategies one uses in order to avoid falling into blatant anachronisms. An example of such a text would be Pedro de Angelis's apocryphal diary. There is no doubt that there is a search for a different language in which the story can be narrated, and there is, of course, the dismantling of the monumental author. I look for the counterpoint of voices, of positions, and of places in all my books.

KL: Especially in *La pasión de los nómades*.

MRL: In *La pasión de los nómades*, the voices of Rosaura and Lucio alternate. There are also other languages introduced from the voices of secondary characters, particularly, the voices of indigenous Ranqueles, men and women, toward the end of the novel. In *La princesa*

*federal*, and in *Una mujer de fin de siglo*, there are three voices as well. In the latter novel, instead of intertwining throughout, each one takes a separate part. And finally in *Historias ocultas en la Recoleta*, there are many voices placed within that “new language” that constitute my identity as an author. This also occurs in *Amores insólitos*. My interest lies precisely in displacing the unifying gaze, my passion is to multiply views and positions.

### Notes

1 Sosa de Newton, *Diccionario biográfico de mujeres argentinas*. 3rd ed. Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1986; *Feminaria*, Buenos Aires, Ed. Lea Fletcher; Masiello, *Between Civilization and Barbarism. Women, Nation and Literary Culture in Modern Argentina*. Lincoln, U of Nebraska P, 1992.

2 Frederick, *Wily modesty. Argentine Women Writers, 1860-1910*, Tempe, U of Arizona P, 1998. Rojas, *Historia de la Literatura Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Coni, 1917-1922.

3 Mercader, *Juanamanuela, mucha mujer*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1980.

4 Lucio Mansilla's work was recently translated into English by Mark McCaffrey as *An Expedition to the Ranquel Indians*, Austin: U of Texas P, 1997, based on the 1947 edition of *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*, Mexico City and Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica. Originally published in *La Tribuna* between May and September, 1870.

5 Sáenz Quesada, *Mujeres de Rosas*. Buenos Aires, Planeta, 1991.

6 “Really, Reyes, that work of Dr. Saldías is fantastic! We are reading the first volume just now, I read aloud so that my poor Máximo does not lose track, so he understands it well and it doesn't tire his mind.” (89) London, 3 October 1892, in *Manuelita Rosas y Antonino Reyes. El olvidado epistolario (1889-1897)*, Buenos Aires, Archivo General de la Nación, 1998.

7 Pedro Barrán, *Historia de la sensibilidad en el Uruguay. La cultura “bárbara” (1800-1860)*, Vol. 1, Montevideo: Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias, 1990, and *El disciplinamiento (1860-1920)*, Vol. 2, Montevideo: Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias, 1991.

8 William McCann, *Viaje a caballo por las provincias argentinas*, Buenos Aires, Hyspamérica, 1986. Published in 1853 as *Two Thousand Miles Ride Through the Argentine Provinces: Seeing an Account of the Natural Products of the Country, and Hearts of the People, with a Historical Retrospect of the Rio de la Plata*.

9 "If he [Dr Saldías] were to witness my present life, he would be convinced that the amount of work imposed by my domestic duties is certainly superior to my advanced age. Firstly my constant attention and care for my poor old husband, whom I believe couldn't live without me. I am the one who runs this house; I give every order in the house, and I keep my expenditure books without any help. As for my character, I study everybody's tastes, and this, my child, is also hard. Happily enough, my Máximo and our children seem pleased, and accepting of my financial impositions." (97) London, 21 February 1893, in *Manuelita Rosas y Antonino Reyes. El olvidado epistolario* (1889-1897), Buenos Aires, Archivo General de la Nación, 1998.

10 Walescka Pino-Ojeda *Sobre castas y puente: conversaciones con Elena Poniatowska, Rosario Ferré y Diamela Eltit*, Santiago de Chile: Cuarto Propio, 2000.

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