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Lisa Vollendorf, ed. *Recovering Spain's Feminist Tradition*. NY: MLA, 2001. 407p.

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*Recovering Spain's Feminist Tradition* is a comprehensive collection of nineteen articles that provide the reader with a panoramic view of feminism and feminist thought in Spain from the medieval poems of Florencia Pinar to the contemporary writings of Montserrat Roig and Carmen Riera. The collection is divided into three parts, dedicated to each of the following literary periods: medieval and early modern age, 18th and 19th centuries, and 20th century. The objectives of this work are, on one hand, to question the treatment of Spain as a Catholic and reactionary country separated from the rest of the world that can only follow the philosophical and literary norms established by more sophisticated countries, and on the other, to create a space for Spanish feminists within the feminist and literary criticism anthologies written in English. To fulfill these goals, each essay in the collection is dedicated to a different Spanish female author whose work is representative of her gender and, in most cases, defends a feminist point of view.

The first part of the collection focuses on the study of the birth of feminism in a period where women were completely subordinate to men (father and husband) and whose only opportunity for escape and self-expression was the convent. In this regard, Barbara F. Weissberger challenges the existing critical approaches towards the work of Florencia Pinar, one of the few women who was part of the Castilian *Cancioneros* in the late 1500s, questioning the critics' assumption that the main goal of her poems was to portray woman as the subject of her own sexual desire instead of a sexual object. María Isabel Barbeito Carneiro recovers the figures of several women who, both inside and outside the convent, are going to serve as reference points for other women during the 16th and 17th centuries: Catalina de Mendoza was, for example, one of the first women to divorce her husband on the grounds of infidelity to protect her father's inheritance and her goal of using this fortune for the foundation of Jesuit schools. Lucia de Jesús and other urban *beatas* chose to leave the paternal home, rather than marry and pursue a life outside male conventions and constraints, while practicing their own version of spirituality, unlike the views maintained by other women in different literatures.

Closing the first part of the collection is a very interesting article by Alison Weber on Ana de San Bartolomé and her relationship with her mentor and friend, Santa Teresa de Jesús, who later will inspire Ana to continue with the discalced reformation and challenge the roles and mission that church authority will impose on women.

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In a similar context, Anne J. Cruz's article on Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz shows how this nun's representation of women's intellect, religiosity and spirituality in the 16th century will result in her silence for the rest of her life. The last woman studied within this period is María de Zayas. According to Vollendorf, Zayas was not only successful in the private and public arenas, but she used the female body and its representations to condemn the violence that women were suffering at that time while seeking improvement in women's education and social justice.

The second part of the collection, covering the 18th and 19th centuries, includes Theresa S. Soufas and co-authors' essay on an anonymous play supposedly written by a fourteen-year-old girl titled *El ejemplo de virtudes y Santa Isabel Reyna de Ungria: Compuesta por una dama sevillana a los 14 años de su edad*, where the main protagonist failed to fulfill her destiny in life because of the political and social constrictions that men around her imposed. Constance A. Sullivan and María Cristina Urruela, in different essays, analyze the work by Josefa Amar y Borbón and María Pilar Sinués, respectively, coming to the conclusion that, although in a very traditional form, they both call for the unity of all women, providing models of other successful women they could follow and guiding them on how to advance the development of a bourgeoisie society in which women seek the support of other females to reassure themselves and stop looking for male approval.

Finally, the poetry of Rosalía de Castro is seen by Catherine Davies as paradoxical regarding feminism and the portrayal of women, mainly because of two reasons: first, the readers of her works are primarily men. Second, the main topic of her poems is Galician women suffering the results of emigration, which was never experienced by the author herself. In contrast, Lou Charnon-Deutsch's essay on Concepción Arenal and Joyce Tolliver's on Pardo Bazán agree on seeing these two writers as influential in asking for better education for women and the right to vote in spite of Pardo Bazán's containment of being "one of the boys."

The last part of the collection, over the 20th century, may be divided into three chronological sections. The first two essays, Maryellen Bieder's "Carmen de Burgos: Modern Spanish Woman," and Nancy Vosburg's "The Tapestry of a Feminist Life: María Teresa León (1903-88)," are dedicated to the first three decades of the 20th century and to two writers who tried to combine their desires for women's advancement with the reactionary and backward thinking of a nation that was torn between monarchy and democracy and approaching civil war. The last four articles: Margaret E. W. Jones' "*Vindicación Feminista* and the Feminist Community in Post-Franco Spain"; Christina Dupláa's "Montserrat Roig: Women, Genealogy and Mother Tongue"; Joana Sabadell's "María Mercè Marçal: The Passion and Poetry of Feminism"; and Kathleen M. Glenn's "Voice, Marginality, and Seduction in the Short Fiction of

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Carmen Riera,” cover the history of the movement in the period following Franco’s dictatorship, particularly focusing on the blend of feminism, language, and nationalism in Catalonia. Finally, two essays at the center of this section: Josebe Martínez Gutiérrez’s “Margarita Nelken: Feminist and Political Praxis during the Spanish Civil War” and María Asunción Gomez’s “Feminism and Anarchism: Remembering the Role of Mujeres Libres in the Spanish Civil War” highlight the role of Margarita Nelken in the period of the Second Spanish Republic, whose responsibility as a deputy and in the fields of politics and labor were revolutionary. She inspired many to undertake professional positions and also drew attention to groups of anarchist women. These efforts advocated during the war made working class females aware of their rights and prospects and integrated them as a part of the revolution.

This collection is an exhaustive study of authors and views about women and feminist issues along eight centuries. The topics addressed in the different essays are innovative, and the literary analyses of each author’s work, as well as the explanations of her historical and biographical contexts, draw a very clear picture of what it meant to be a woman living in Spain throughout the different centuries, and how different women tried to overcome the limits imposed upon them by social conventions because of their gender.

Nevertheless, because of the importance of this topic, and the fact that this is one of the first major collections on feminism in Spain, it may be necessary to have a more extensive discussion on the meaning of this term in Spain and how this issue is regarded, viewed, and studied today. For the vast majority of the 20th century, Spain lived under a dictatorship in which one of the main premises was woman’s submission to man. Today, according to some studies (*Instituto de la Mujer* and *Red Estatal de Organizaciones Feministas contra la Violencia de Género*), around 68 women die every year in the hands of their partners. It was not until 2004 that the government approved a law against domestic violence and set up special protection for battered women. When we take these three facts into consideration, the story of feminism in Spain is only beginning to be written. ✱