Becoming woman in Vargas Llosa's Fiction:
Blazing a trail from *La ciudad y los perros* to *Tiempos recios*

Aisa Pessagno-Delboy

Submitted to Swansea University

in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Swansea University

2022

Abstract

This study investigates the evolution of Mario Vargas Llosa's portrayal of his female characters through detailed analysis of relevant works ranging from *La ciudad y los perros* (1962) to *Tiempos recios* (2019). The main purpose is to address an important deficit in the critical study of Vargas Llosa: the analysis of his female characters throughout his work of fiction. This work shows the progression of female identity, the rejection of the patriarchal system and the steady, albeit gradual, growth of women's power of self-determination. Vargas Llosa's broader socio-political preoccupations are discussed in each chapter as essential historical background to the works under consideration. An introductory section on the context of each of the periods to be addressed highlights relevant events in the world and in Peru, with particular reference to the writer and to women. This will allow the reader to contextualize the representation of female characters and their roles within society.

In his early fiction, women are portrayed as passive, subservient and often victimized by men. Those of indigenous descent are doubly disadvantaged by their low socio-economic status and social exclusion. In subsequent works, women gradually become more prominent (*La tía Julia y el escribidor*, 1977), more assertive (*Travesuras de la niña mala,* 2006), more defiant of heterosexual norms (*Cinco esquinas,* 2016), and more self-determined (*Tiempos recios,* 2019*).*

Other major aspects of Vargas Llosa relate to his self-professed status as a "realist" writer who diversifies his fiction with autobiography. Driven by his personal demons, his literary themes—which serve as a barometer of his increasingly liberal socio-political perspectives—suggest themselves to the author who feels compelled to investigate them. The author's unfettered defiance of norms and constraints—in literature as well as in his personal life—allow for an unapologetic and innovative portrayal of women and their various "becomings", in an ever-evolving world.

Declarations and Statements

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed  (candidate)

Date: September 25, 2022

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated.
Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed  (candidate)

Date: September 25, 2022

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed  (candidate)

Date: September 25, 2022

Contents

Acknowledgements

Completing this project was only possible thanks to many people. My sincere and deepest thanks go to my supervisor, Lloyd Hughes Davies. His constant expert advice, interest, enthusiasm and unwavering support have been crucial. I could not have accomplished this work without his abundant feedback, patience and guidance. A special thanks to Guillermo Martinez Sotelo for his valuable suggestions and motivation and to Joanna Rydzewska for her well-founded advice and continual encouragement.

I also thank my friends and colleagues, Diana Pardo, for helping me begin this journey, for her encouragement, and for always being there, and Amalia Gomez Wilkinson, Christy De Lara and Cecilia García Márquez for their invaluable support and friendship. I also would like to extend very special thanks to Traca Wolfe, with the University of Central Oklahoma library, whose generous assistance always went above and beyond expectations. Thank you to Crimson Mason, for her unfailing graciousness and willingness to help that never went unnoticed.

My gratitude goes to my dearest friend Clarita Pescetto and her family. Thanks to their welcoming support and friendship I was able to continue.

Finally, all my love and thanks go to my sons, Alonso and Ignacio, and to my husband Enrique, for their encouragement, for all the absences they had to endure and for the sacrifices they had to make. ¡Gracias chicos!

List of abbreviations

Conversación	*Conversación en La Catedral*
El Paraíso	*El Paraíso en la otra esquina*
Invención	*Vargas Llosa: La invención de una realidad*
La Fiesta	*La Fiesta del Chivo*
La tía Julia	*La tía Julia y el escribidor*
Leoncio Prado	Leoncio Prado Military Academy
Pantaleón	*Pantaleón y las visitadoras*
Peregrinaciones	Flora Tristán, *Peregrinaciones de una paria*
Temptation	Efraín Kristal, *Temptation of the Word: The Novels of Mario Vargas Llosa*
Tentación	Efraín Kristal, *Tentación de la palabra: Arte literario y convicción política en las novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa*
Travesuras	*Travesuras de la niña mala*

Introduction

A winding path from patriarchy to female emancipation

Taking the work of Peruvian modern realist writer Mario Vargas Llosa as a reflection of society, the purpose of this analysis is to show the progression of female identity, the rejection of the patriarchal system and the consistent—although extremely slow—growth of women's power of self-determination. This study follows the evolution of the representation of female characters from his first novels of the 1960s, when women are portrayed as passive and complacent in a *machista* society; progressing to the novels of the 1980s, when women are beginning to show signs of change; and culminating in his last works of fiction published in the teens, where women have become very different characters when contrasted with the original females of Vargas Llosa's literature. It is significant that this evolution can be perceived so clearly in the fiction of a man who is not only a representative of his gender but belongs to a group of novelists, known as the Boom writers, whose works are clear testament to a *machista* perspective (see below, The Boom and women, p. 37).The growth of female characters in the oeuvre of the recipient of the 2010 Nobel prize in literature does not relate only to numbers, although there is steady growth of female figures as the decades transpire. Urania, the first fully-fledged female character makes an appearance in 2000 in *La Fiesta del Chivo*. Thereafter, women make more frequent appearances and their fulfilment of the role of protagonists in their own right becomes the norm, sometimes even against the original intentions of the author, as he has stated with reference to Martita Borrero Parra, protagonist of his most recent novel, *Tiempos recios* (2019) (Casa de América, 2019, 36:23). It follows then that the reader is faced with a unique phenomenon, not with a literary creation stemming from the self-perception and demands of a feminist writer, but with the experiences observed through the eyes of a realist author who is not—ostensibly—fighting for a cause but merely seeking to portray society as he perceives it.

Vargas Llosa's production is extensive and varied. This study will focus on his fiction, more precisely on his novelistic production which to date encompasses nineteen titles. Further, in order not to stray from its main focus, it will centre on those works that are most significant to female representation, where women are more prominent, more

numerous or stand out as fully developed characters. The analysis of each novel will give especial consideration to Vargas Llosa's female characters. This differs from previous research on the oeuvre of the author, as little investigation has been carried out on women in his literary world, and none that encompasses his early work as well as his most recent. This analysis is significant because, while women's longstanding demands for change and equality remain legitimate and urgent—as the strong and immediate global support for movements like #MeToo and Time's Up attests—it is important to note as well the less visible changes that are taking place in society, even in the least expected areas, reflected here in the perspective of a hitherto conservative male writer whose artistic vision shows perceptible change and development in this respect.

The Literary Foundations: realism and Gustave Flaubert

This work focusses on the development of the representation of women as a reflection of society in the novels of Mario Vargas Llosa. This is especially valuable in an author who is a self-declared realist writer and whose work spans close to sixty years. His work springs from personal experience or from his omnivorous reading. From that initial spark he creates a new reality. Even though this new reality is fictitious, as Seymour Menton notes, each novel captures the social environment of its characters, even that of the most introspective ones, which in the broadest sense renders every novel historical to a greater or lesser degree (1993, pp. 31–32). The individual stories, situations and characters are arranged and (re)created as needed to make the novel more colourful or appealing to the reader—what Vargas Llosa terms the "elemento añadido" (1971, p. 86)—but in broad terms social circumstances remain a part of the work of a realist writer, resulting in the final products being generally accurate pictures of the times they depict.

Realist novels conceal artifice, normalize their viewpoint on the world and appear to be describing a world that exists, not to be creating one, and that world is independent of the writer. One believes the Realist is reporting what he has seen with his own eyes (Sturrock, 1977, p. 79). Realists then present fiction in a plausible manner, rearranging facts and incorporating details they deem necessary to change or improve circumstances. In his seminal essay "La verdad de las mentiras" (1989) Vargas Llosa is at pains to demonstrate that the fictional world is a much-modified version of the real world, being written rather than lived, made of words rather than of concrete experiences. Nonetheless,

he acknowledges that he “belongs to that sect, school or tradition” of the realist writer (1997, p. 322). The major reason is that, while his work may transform reality and that his effectiveness in doing so may be a gauge of his literary impact, his novelistic world remains closely related to the real one (1997, p. 321). In the case of *La ciudad y los perros* (1962), for example, Vargas Llosa remarks that the setting is, at least supposedly, the Leoncio Prado Military School where he himself studied. In the novel, his description of the school appears to match reality: “Frente a él, hacia la izquierda, se yerguen tres bloques de cemento … Más allá, languidece el estadio, la cancha de fútbol sumergida bajo la hierba brava, la pista de atletismo cubierta de baches y huecos, las tribunas de madera averiadas por la humedad” (1999, p. 27). This is a description of what Vargas Llosa would have seen with his own eyes—which contradicts the idealized portrait offered in the college brochure (1999, p. 256). In “The Truth of Lies”, Vargas Llosa goes on to identify a different kind of writer, the writer of fantasy “who describes unrecognizable and blatantly inexistent worlds”. Even this world, however, relates to life—albeit in a different way—its “unreality” becoming a symbol or allegory for the everyday world, of experiences identifiable in life (1997, p. 322). The writer whom Vargas Llosa has in mind here is most likely Jorge Luis Borges, whom he mentions in the essay. Borges’s short stories differ in their settings and stylistic precision from Vargas Llosa’s work: knowledge of “Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius”, for example, is drawn from the pages of an encyclopaedia that notes that the literature of Uqbar “era de carácter fantástico y que sus epopeyas y leyendas no se referían jamás a la realidad, sino a las dos regiones imaginarias de Mlejnas y de Tlön” (Borges, 1956, p. 16). Such a setting seems remote from our world but there are connections: while Tlön is described as an orderly planet, it turns out to be no less chaotic than our world. Borges implies that any attempt to impose order on the universe results in the creation of fiction. One may conclude therefore that while the literary methods of Vargas Llosa and Borges differ radically, one being a realist writer, the other being a writer of fantasy, both engage, in their different ways, with the “real” world.

Vargas Llosa directly refers to realism and literary vocation in an author for whom he professes admiration, Gustave Flaubert. In his essay *La orgía perpetua* (1975), Vargas Llosa exemplifies Flaubert’s approach towards obtaining material for his work

through a letter the French writer sends to a friend and fellow realist whose wife was dying. In this missive he anticipates his condolences while alerting the soon-to-be widower to the opportunity he will have to make good use of that tragedy for his writing (1995, p. 105). Anecdotes like this one prompt Vargas Llosa to call the vocation for literature "monstrous", and to highlight that for this vocation a writer comes to consider life as a mere pretext for literature, to feel he has been granted the extraordinary freedom to use everything for his work, and in the case of Flaubert particularly *la misère humaine* (1995, p. 106). Vargas Llosa declares that no other writer has seen as clearly as the Frenchman that writing, vulture-like, feeds preferably on *carroña* (1995, p. 106). Vargas Llosa is referring to Flaubert's passion for mimesis when he proposes that the writer is one of those who transform all events into literature, "cannibalizing" his whole life to turn it into his novels (1995, p. 103), yet strong parallels can be drawn between the practices of the French writer and those of the Peruvian, some of whose fiction is based on significant, personal events around him and his family—examples are *La tía Julia y el escribidor* (1977) and the drama *La señorita de Tacna* (1981). As Sara Castro-Klarén points out, Vargas Llosa could argue alongside Flaubert that the writer employs for his purpose and with no scruples the whole of reality; has a totalizing ambition; and must make certain that the novel shows, not judges (1990, p. 119). Both authors use their own life experiences as a source to feed their literary universes.

The making of a realist writer

The prolific, diverse, precocious and relentless writer Mario Vargas Llosa believes that learning to write at five years of age was the most important event that ever happened to him, and that was the main strand of his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize (Vargas Llosa, 2010e). Indeed, the genesis of his writing could be traced back to his early childhood in Cochabamba, Bolivia, the place to which the unfortunate circumstances of his birth led him.

Jorge Mario Pedro Vargas Llosa was born in Arequipa, Peru, on March 28, 1936. He was the only son of Dora Llosa Ureta (1914–1995). Her husband, Ernesto Vargas Maldonado (1905–1979), had abandoned his wife when she was five months pregnant and when he learned about the birth of his son he requested and was granted a divorce. Dora's family welcomed, loved and protected the first grandson and nephew, and tried to

compensate for the absence of the father. The boy spent his first year in Arequipa, but his mother's situation was difficult: a divorced woman with a baby in the conservative, prejudiced and prudish society that Arequipa was at the time. Mario's grandfather, trying to protect his daughter and her son from the gossip that their situation caused, signed a ten-year contract to work in Bolivia and took his whole family with him. That is how the Peruvian spent his first years in Cochabamba, living in a large home with his mother, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Vargas Llosa lived an idyllic childhood in Cochabamba (Williams, 2014, p. 6). In his autobiography, he recalls he was enrolled in school and learned to read at the age of five in brother Justiniano's class. He considers learning to read and write the most important event in his life—aside from the afternoon when he was introduced to the man who was his father. He also remembers his first creative scribbles. He wrote verses, or lengthened and amended the stories he read, and his large and happy family celebrated his literary efforts (1993c, pp. 14–19). This was the beginning of a life of writing. He never stopped constructing new worlds, improving what he saw, building new realities or showcasing those that were sometimes overlooked, unnoticed or perhaps deliberately ignored. Already by early adolescence, his keen observation skills and acute memory allowed him to accumulate memories that later constituted material for his extensive oeuvre. He had been observing and preserving those impressions until he began writing short stories as a teenager, and from the outset he assigned to women a special place in his work.

When he was ten years old, the young Vargas Llosa and his family moved back to Peru, to the northern city of Piura where his grandfather had been appointed prefect. During that first Piura period, he began to discover the real Peru. He saw the ocean for the first time; spied with his friends on a mysterious *casa verde*, which would be reshaped into the brothel in *La Casa Verde* (1965); and became acquainted with the neighbourhood of *La Mangachería*, at the centre of the same novel (Williams, 2014, pp. 6–7). That year of 1946 was not ideal, as his classmates were three or four years older than him. While it was "un año horrible" (Oviedo, 1982, p. 21), it could not be compared with what was to come. Vargas Llosa recalls that his childhood came to a sudden halt on the day his mother revealed to him that his father, the handsome man in uniform whose picture he kissed good night every evening, was not in heaven but alive. "Tú ya lo sabes,

por supuesto . . . Que tu papá no estaba muerto. ¿No es cierto?" his mother asked. The bewildered boy lied: "Por supuesto. Por supuesto" (Vargas Llosa, 1993c, pp. 13, 9). This is how this second stage in the author's life ends and a new, hurtful, unhappy one begins.

That same day they moved to Lima and Vargas Llosa, with no previous warning, was separated from the only family he had known for eleven years. The young man was also jealous. He had to share his mother with another man for the first time. "Me dejaron en un cuarto solo y se encerraron en el de al lado. Estuve toda la noche con los ojos abiertos y el corazón sobresaltado, tratando de oír alguna voz, algún ruido, en el cuarto contiguo, muerto de celos y sintiéndome víctima de una gran traición". That man had not only stolen young Mario's mother from him but took to beating her, and sometimes the boy as well. Mother and son began a lonely, tense and frightened life (Vargas Llosa, 1993c, pp. 31, 53–54, 60)—much like some mothers in *La ciudad y los perros*. The situation is recreated in Vargas Llosa's first novel, where Ricardo's mother surprises him with a memorable phrase: "Tu papá no estaba muerto, era mentira. Acaba de volver de un viaje muy largo y nos espera en Lima". Ricardo's life changed forever at that point, and his mother becomes an illustration of submissive, even abused women in a *machista* society. The cadet describes nights when he listened to what was happening in his mother's bedroom, a fusion of weak womanly pleas and thunderous masculine insults, until the child ran in to stop his father, only to be hit by the man (1999, p. 22). This fiction describes quite closely what young Vargas Llosa recounts his years with his father in his memoires. He describes his home as an utterly abnormal one, one where visitors were not allowed and where he lived in constant fear that something unpleasant was going to happen, or even that in one of his father's rages he or his mother would be killed. Along with terror, he experienced hatred for the first time (Vargas Llosa, 1993c, pp. 56, 54). The lonely and resentful child felt excluded while at the same time wanted to disappear, to die. He withdrew into reading and learned to fantasize and dream to escape his new reality. "Si ya había en mí las semillas de un fabulador, en esta etapa cuajaron, y, si no las había, allí debieron brotar" (Vargas Llosa, 1993c, pp. 51–54). It is by no means the intention of this study to imply that the fiction Vargas Llosa creates is all based on

events of the author's life. It would be easy to fall into biographical fallacy[1] (Edel, 1973, p. 65) by affirming that all his literature is anchored on the events of his life. There is a nebulous line separating realism from fiction based on true events, though. As stated, Vargas Llosa recognizes himself as a realist writer, but one must be wary of reading the author in the fiction he or she writes. Vargas Llosa proposes that all novels remake reality, whether by embellishing it or by heightening its negative aspects. That works of fiction express dissatisfaction with life and are written and read by individuals in order to live through fantasy the lives that they refuse to give up (2007a, pp. 15–16). Readers experience through fiction lives different from their own. In this way, works of fiction do relate to the author's life or experiences, although both undergo a process of transformation. Thus was born this realist writer who wanted to distance himself from life. The present analysis stands with Leon Edel, who considers imaginative writing, in which he includes prose and drama, not only as an act of communication but as an act of expression, countering the now popular notion that literary work must be divorced from the creator, and proposing that the author cannot control involuntary thoughts that permeate the work. Edel further considers that part of the artist's life emerges disguised as literature, and that "a writer's first story is often more transparently autobiographical than his later work" (1973, pp. xiii–xv, 48–55). This is particularly true in the case of Vargas Llosa who, in the prologue to his first novel, *La ciudad y los perros*, discloses to his readers that in order to "invent" this initial story, he had to have been, as a child, somewhat like each one of his protagonists, Alberto, Jaguar, *serrano* Cava and Esclavo, and also to have been a cadet at the Leoncio Prado Military academy, a *Miraflorino* and a neighbour of La Perla, where the academy was located. One can find the author in this piece, as well as in various others.

It is true that in 1950 and 1951, as a young cadet at the Leoncio Prado Military Academy, Vargas Llosa was absorbing experiences that would underpin his first published novel. During those years, he would also unwittingly begin to write

---

[1] For details on biographical fallacy, see *Literary Biography* (1973), where Leon Edel discusses the fact that "Certain critics insist that any attempt to relate biography and the artist's work, and in particular any attempt to read the life of the creator in his books, constitutes a "biographical fallacy" (1973, p. 65)

"professionally". He wrote love letters for his schoolmates' girlfriends, helping them communicate feelings in ways they did not know how. As word spreads, students from different levels of study would come to hire his services, paying him with cigarettes. *Poeta*—one of his nicknames—also wrote his first erotic novelettes at the Leoncio Prado and read them aloud to his schoolmates. He declares in his autobiography that he wrote a substantial number of such *novelitas*, many on request, which helped finance his habit of smoking. He had earned amongst his fellow *leonciopradinos* the right to be a writer (1993c, pp. 114, 122). Certainly, those novelettes could be considered precursors of some of his novels, such as *Elogio de la madrastra* (1988) or *Los cuadernos de don Rigoberto* (1997) as well as of some of the erotic scenes found in *Travesuras de la niña mala* (2006) and *Cinco esquinas* (2016). At the time, he was experimenting with genre and with themes that would become prominent in his writing, while, perhaps for the first time, at the age of fourteen, he was enjoying a consistent audience outside of his family, both situations foreshadowing his future.

By 1951 the calling of the future Nobel prize winner was becoming apparent. A summer job as messenger between his father's company, the International News Service, and the daily *La Crónica* allowed him to approach a world that would turn out to be a lifelong vocation. The now renowned column and opinion writer claims in his memoirs that it was precisely running between the drafting tables of these newspapers that he got the idea of becoming a journalist. This led to his application for a job with *La Crónica* the next summer. This time his job got him an ID that read *periodista* (1993c, pp. 118–121, 141). When he moved to the city of Piura, Northern Peru, for his high school senior year, he took with him two letters of recommendation from *La Crónica* addressed to *La Industria*, one from the headline editor Alfonso Delboy, a friend of the owner of *La Industria*, and one from the director of *La Crónica*. Vargas Llosa was offered the job with the Piura newspaper and was able to continue writing news and interviews. He also wrote two columns, "Buenos días" and "Campanario", where he would, at the age of 15, pen commentaries on politics and literature (1993c, pp. 154, 193–195). In spite of his use of the proverb "la ignorancia es atrevida" when he refers to his youthful opinions in these columns, this was yet another instance when he was beginning to exercise a skill which would be paramount in his professional life. Since then, he has continued penning

innumerable opinion pieces, essays, treatises, prologues, newspaper articles and chronicles. For over four decades Vargas Llosa has been publishing commentary articles in Spain's newspaper *El País*, where, since 1990, he also has a standing semi-monthly column addressing current world affairs, many related to political, social and literary matters.

In 1952, when he moved to Piura, Vargas Llosa also took with him the first drama he ever wrote, *La huida del Inca* (1951). He ventured to show his script to a teacher, which led to the school principal allowing the student to direct his play and present it during the city's commemorative week events, on July 17, 1952, at the *Teatro Variedades* (1993c, pp. 189–190). Although this is a teenage writer's adventure which Vargas Llosa would rather forget, from a current perspective it can be argued that it was important for the future man of letters for diverse reasons. First, it was his initial experience of theatre, a genre that he recognizes as his first literary devotion (1993c, p. 197). Further, *La huida* was successful; besides giving him the opportunity to direct it and see it performed in front of the whole town, it got him a second place in a children's drama competition sponsored by the Ministry of Education (1993c, p. 200). This was his first success in a public contest, and it may have influenced his decision to enter future contests, such as the one organized by the *Revue Françoise* in 1958, for which he entered "El desafío" (1957). This time he won first prize: a life changing two-week trip to Paris. By the time that trip came to an end, Vargas Llosa was convinced he had to go back to Europe to study and write seriously (Oviedo, 1982, p. 27). Everything he did that year in Piura would come out well, as he nostalgically recalls in *El pez en el agua: Memorias* (1993c, p. 200), and this *obrita*, as he refers to this early work which he would like consigned to oblivion, was nevertheless the first text he wrote in the way in which he would later write all his novels: from a first draft that he will rewrite, correct and redo a thousand times until it finds its final form (1993c, p. 122). This first draft was the predecessor of the "magma" he writes for all his novels, where he includes everything he might possibly need, jotting down details he will later polish and condense through many revisions, but which in some instances can reach 4,000 pages, as was the case of *La Casa Verde* (Oviedo, 1982, p. 76). In any event, *La huida* must have meant something special, perhaps an augury of future circumstances, for the writer would carry in his wallet an old,

faded copy of the program, as an amulet, since that opening night in 1952 (1993c, p. 190). Over the years, following this early debut as playwright, Vargas Llosa has authored and published among his fictional pieces eight more dramas, nineteen novels, seven short stories and two children's books. Women have become an important driving force within his narrative. This is appreciated as early as in his short story "Día domingo" (1957). Also, all his plays have leading female characters; most of his novels have female characters who are significant to the development of the story; and five of his seven works of fiction since 2000 have a leading female character. Even the first of his two children's books, *Fonchito y la luna* (2010), is a Platonic love story. His secret ambition of someday becoming a playwright has been amply fulfilled—and female characters have been at the centre of it all.

While he was in Piura for the second time, he was also amassing experiences and observations that would give him material for *La Casa Verde,* based to some extent upon his recollections of Piura. "Los jefes" (1957) is a short story also based on an experience during his time in the northern city: an attempted strike amongst the students protesting against what they considered unfair examination rules. As was the case in "Los jefes", many of his novels deal with situations he lived or witnessed, which he turns into stories from angles that allow him to deal with cultural, political and social issues. *La ciudad y los perros* is a work of fiction that exposes the world of the military school he attended and which he came to experience as a microcosm of Peru, with its mélange of races, social classes and cultural diversity. Here Vargas Llosa introduces prostitutes, brothels and women of different social classes. His third novel, *Conversación en La Catedral* (1969), is a political narrative that deals with corruption during the dictatorial government of General Manuel Odría (1948–1956). It portrays a world of unscrupulousness, deception and double standards during this general's administration, which Vargas Llosa lived through while at high school and university and of which he was well informed through his work for *La Crónica*. Social differences are also central to the narrative in this novel, where the author introduces the figure of the domestic servant and brings in again the world of prostitution.

These are fictional stories based on life events, some on his own experiences, others on observation or on material he read. Memory is an extremely rich source for

him: everything he has written has its origins in a lived experience, the invariable starting point of a topic that he later develops into a story, novel or play (EFE, 2019, para. 4). Through the years, the "real" world has continued to inspire much of Vargas Llosa's writing, and during his long and ongoing writing career, he addresses a wide variety of topics, several of which have to do with his early interest: social issues. This, together with the fact that he began writing in the 1950s and has not ceased, makes this author's publications a perfect source for the analysis of changes that society has undergone through almost six decades. Furthermore, during this time, Vargas Llosa has dedicated several chapters in his novels, as well as complete pieces, to women; women of diverse backgrounds, social classes, races, occupations and origins. Frequently, women throughout his literary universe are significant enough to be part of the title, as is the case in *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* (1973), *La tía Julia y el escribidor* and *Elogio de la madrastra*. Yet in other instances, Vargas Llosa has produced important female characters that play crucial roles in novels that reveal flaws affecting society as a whole. Colonialism, imperialism, politics, class differences, gender bias and greed are amongst the social issues highlighted by Vargas Llosa, and power, the lack of it and thirst for it are fundamental to them. Powerlessness and power relations are at the core of female actions and attitudes in the novels of the Peruvian author. Examples of empowered women in the fiction analysed here are present in *Travesuras de la niña mala*, *La Fiesta del Chivo*, *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* (2003) and *Tiempos recios*. Some novels by Vargas Llosa which have women in leading roles have been adapted to film: *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* was directed by José María Gutiérrez Santos and Mario Vargas Llosa (1975). It was later readapted and directed by Francisco Lombardi (1999). Other novels taken to the screen are *La ciudad y los perros* (1985), directed by Francisco Lombardi (1985), and *La Fiesta del Chivo* (2005), directed by Luis Llosa. The latter novel was also adapted into a TV series, El Chivo (2014), produced by Madeleine Contreras and Televisa. His short story "Los cachorros" (1967) too was turned into a film of the same name (1973), directed by Jorge Fons. These are some of the novels and films the Peruvian has produced. The list does not encompass all the work authored by Vargas Llosa; the production of fiction and non-fiction by the only living representative of the Boom in Latin American literature is almost inexhaustible.

As stated, women appear in Vargas Llosa's literary pieces abundantly—sometimes as the object of male desire, others as counterparts that highlight male characters, and yet other times as true main characters playing independent roles. The long period between his first work of fiction and his last novel, the steady rhythm of his production, the diversity of social issues introduced, his interest in representing reality—albeit transformed— the number of different roles assigned to the women in his fictional world, and the fact that, in the author's own words, "La [nueva] novela deja de ser 'latinoamericana', se libera de esa servidumbre" (1969, p. 31) and leans "towards the wider, universal context of existential and metaphysical malaise" (Swanson, 1990, p. 14), make Vargas Llosa's creation a remarkable reflection of the role of women in different sectors of society and allow for the study of social change as it affects the female population of the world.

Literature review

There are copious studies on Vargas Llosa and his life, his fiction and his nonfiction. The themes approached in many of these focus on the author's use of experiential events to create new realities, the technical literary devices he employs and the theoretical concepts and sources that influence him. Others take a more psychological methodology. In fact, the number of pieces this prolific and versatile writer continues to pen is so extensive and the topics so varied that naturally his works have been studied at length. As a result of the number of pieces written about his production as a whole, it was decided to include in this literature review only a selection of the major works about his literary creation in order to prioritize the publications that focus on Vargas Llosa's work from a perspective that privileges analysis of female characters or societal issues around women.

Among his most renowned critics is José Miguel Oviedo. This classmate of Vargas Llosa's at the La Salle school in Lima maintained a warm friendship with the writer through the years, becoming a specialist on his work. Oviedo not only produced many articles and essays about Vargas Llosa, edited two volumes of essays and articles about his work and published *Dossier Vargas Llosa* (2007), a compilation of various texts the critic had penned through time for different purposes, but he also had the opportunity to interview him privately and participate in public dialogues with the author,

resulting in his ground-breaking book *Vargas Llosa: La invención de una realidad* (1970, revised editions 1977, 1982). With *Invención*, Oviedo intended to give an organic image of Vargas Llosa's creative oeuvre up to the year of its publication (1982, p. 14). This book gives a biographical sketch of the author before approaching the analysis of his work from a theoretical perspective and offers a structural analysis of his short stories and novels up to *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1981), and his drama, *La señorita de Tacna*. Oviedo explains in detail the combination of techniques that make Vargas Llosa's work what it is. He elaborates on his use of Flaubert's technique of the *vasos comunicantes*, his *diálogos telescópicos* and the *caja china*. The critic also sheds light on the process of Vargas Llosa's engagement with the idea that triggers a story: how the memories he recovers seem to take possession of his imagination—what Vargas Llosa has come to refer to as "his demons"—and to his "magma", as the author has labelled the first, all-inclusive draft of a novel (1982, pp. 76–79, 175). Oviedo recognizes Vargas Llosa's first three books, *La ciudad y los perros*, *La Casa Verde* and *Conversación en La Catedral*, as a well-defined unit which constitutes his first period, one of unusual artistic ambition and formal structural complexity. Oviedo considers the novels of the 1970s, *Pantaleón* and *La tía Julia* part of a transition period where Vargas Llosa withdraws from his epic "total novel" ambition and goes into a more basic format where he interpolates two stories and introduces humour (*Pantaleón*) and self-reference (*La tía Julia*) into his writing (2007, pp. 15–22). Further, Oviedo perceives Vargas Llosa breaking into a new phase with *La guerra del fin del mundo*, taking a step back from building his fiction around a personal experience and entering the field of retelling what someone else has written before, of making literature from literature (1982, p. 312); he clearly identifies Vargas Llosa's incursion into the new historical novel. Fernando Ainsa would later underscore that these works represented recognizable historical facts, albeit adulterated and distorted as they assumed fictional status, and could also constitute rewrites of previous works on the matters in hand. In that context, he refers specifically to *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1991, p. 30). Although Oviedo's study does not include Vargas Llosa's latest fiction, he certainly understood the innovative approach the writer had undertaken, which would resurface in a large number of his subsequent works of fiction the seeds of which are in historical events—*La Fiesta del Chivo*, *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, *El sueño del celta*

(2010) and *Tiempos recios* are good examples. Oviedo's analysis constituted a roadmap for others to follow.

While Oviedo was one of the first critics who dedicated much of his work to Vargas Llosa, and although his work continues to be essential for a sound understanding of the author, there are several other commentators who have dedicated important books to Vargas Llosa as well. Amongst them, Efraín Kristal stands out. He is currently considered by many in the literary world and in academia the most knowledgeable specialist on Vargas Llosa's oeuvre (Reyes, 2019a, para. 2). He has also authored numerous articles on the Nobel's work and edited, along with John King, *The Cambridge Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa* (2012). He wrote *Temptation of the Word: The Novels of Mario Vargas Llosa* (1998), and twenty years later he published a completely revised edition in Spanish: *Tentación de la palabra: Arte literario y convicción política en las novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa* (2018). In the words of Gerald Martin, this book includes all the characteristics of a definitive evaluation and interpretation of Vargas Llosa's work (2018, pp. 15–16). At the time, *Tiempos recios,* the latest of Vargas Llosa's novels to date, had not been published. Kristal's analysis of the author's work is all-encompassing and treats, among other subjects, the political path of the author as it relates to the vision of the world he depicts for his audience. Kristal informs readers that his book aspires to be an essay of literary criticism on the body of novels authored by Vargas Llosa (2018, p. 27). He groups the author's works chronologically and divides them into three periods which he labels "moments". In *Temptation* he identifies two contrasting "moments", the novels of the 1960s, his first "moment" and socialist decade—*La ciudad y los perros*, *La Casa Verde* and *Conversación en La Catedral*—and associates the novels of this period with a corrupt society that has no regard for the individual. Like Oviedo, Kristal considers the 1970s a transitional period, and argues that in the 1980s the author begins to resort to erotism and art in order to compensate for human discontent, considering this the beginning of his liberal period. Further, he asserts that Vargas Llosa's disenchantment with the Cuban Revolution was the trigger for this transition, a period that saw Vargas Llosa distancing himself from radical thought with novels such as *Pantaleón*, *La tía Julia*, *La guerra del fin del mundo*, and *Historia de Mayta* (1984), where, Kristal proposes, one can find fanatics with illogical and unviable, utopian ideals—thus the turn

to erotism in *Elogio de la madrastra* where Rigoberto transfers utopian inclinations to the private sphere. Common to these novels is the importance of imagination and fantasy to control irrational elements that threaten social coexistence (2018, p. 377). Kristal believes the second moment in the writer's oeuvre begins after his presidential defeat in 1990 and is also related to the end of the Cold War in 1991. He describes this as Vargas Llosa's liberal decade, in which fanatics who resort to violence to effect change feature prominently (2018, pp. 28–29). He sees this as a moment where pessimism is evident in his production: *Lituma en los Andes* (1993) and *Los cuadernos de don Rigoberto*, from his perspective, are Vargas Llosa's transition novels between his second and third moments (Reyes, 2019a, para. 20). Twenty years later, in his new study *Tentación*, Kristal includes a third moment, one in which Vargas Llosa does not believe in the revolutionary action anymore and ascribes responsibility for corruption not only to the regimes in power, but to the individuals who benefit from and abuse such power—*La Fiesta del Chivo, El Paraíso en la otra esquina, Travesuras de la niña mala* and *El sueño del celta* (2018, pp. 401–412). Earlier, Kristal has contrasted these novels to those of the 1960s, where he exposes sick and corrupt societies, concluding that in the 2000s Vargas Llosa's characters again recognize these conditions, but they either fight them or flee from them, and the characters themselves are treated with "concern, compassion and empathy" (2012, pp. 130–131). Vargas Llosa's most recent novels at the time of Kristal's latest publication (*Tentación*) were *El héroe discreto* (2013) and *Cinco esquinas*, and the critic argues that these announce a new moment in Vargas Llosa's production, one that corresponds to a period of prosperity and democracy in Peru (2018, p. 30). Kristal's analysis takes a chronological approach and the perspective of the author's political views in order to group and examine his oeuvre. Perhaps Dominic Moran's perspective sums up quite succinctly Vargas Llosa's changes in political stance: a trajectory from the radical left towards liberal democracy and the free market (2006, p. 259). Vargas Llosa concurs, declaring himself not only a liberal but a liberal who deeply distrusts power (Univisión Noticias, 2014a, 04:20).

Raymond L. Williams is another writer who has followed Vargas Llosa over the decades. He has penned three important books on his works and his life, *Mario Vargas Llosa* (1986), *Vargas Llosa: Otra historia de un deicidio* (2000) and *Vargas Llosa: A Life*

of Writing (2014). In the main section of his latest study, Williams focuses on later works of Vargas Llosa: *Lituma en los Andes*, *La Fiesta del Chivo*, *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, *Travesuras de la niña mala* and *El sueño del celta*; his main focus is "to question the critical lacunae and critical misrepresentations of Vargas Llosa's writing of the twenty-first century", while his approach is to compare the "complexity, nuance, scope, and significance" of these later works to those of the novels of the 1960s which some critics consider Vargas Llosa's only truly accomplished work. Williams acknowledges a critical position predominant among the United States' academia that censures Vargas Llosa for having become "too politically conservative and narrow to be of interest today". This line of thought contends that the author's biases translate into an undesirable portrayal of women and ethnic minorities in Peru and Latin America (2014, pp. viii–ix). Although Williams acknowledges this perspective, he does not elaborate on it, nor does it constitute the focus of the critic's work.

There are numerous other critics, journalists, academics and authors in various fields who write about Mario Vargas Llosa, his life, his novels and his nonfiction, among other topics. They do it from different perspectives and at different moments. Roy C. Boland has authored a well-regarded study where he takes a psychological approach, *Mario Vargas Llosa: Oedipus and the 'Papa' State* (1988) in which he explores male adolescent characters in Vargas Llosa's fiction to demonstrate that they are driven by profound Oedipal conflicts. He includes in this study all of the novels published between 1963 and 1984, with the exception of *La guerra del fin del mundo* which is set outside Peruvian reality. Again, this study's core relates to the male characters, not to the female perspective, which is not even granted secondary status. That begins to change in Boland's next book, *Una rara comedia: Visión y revisión de las novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa* (2003), where he again highlights the oedipal position between parents and sons, and in the case of *La Fiesta del Chivo* the parricidal battle between a daughter and her father (2003, pp. 1–2). Although he acknowledges some women in Vargas Llosa's previous novels are formidable human beings, he assigns Urania Cabral the label of first "round" female character, and further claims she is one of the characters with most depth and complexity among all the author's repertoire, male or female (2003, p. 28). The present analysis adheres to Boland's opinion that it is in *La Fiesta del Chivo* that the

author portrays a genuine leading female character for the first time, a trend that he will continue throughout most of his future work. Later, in his piece “The erotic novels” (2012), Boland highlights the intertextuality between the novels *Elogio de la madrastra* and *Los cuadernos de don Rigoberto*, both by means of the shared main characters, Lucrecia, don Rigoberto and Fonchito, and through recurring phrases and words. Boland also underscores the intertextuality between these two erotic books and well-known world figures, traditions and authors, especially by reference to Georges Bataille. The Frenchman’s “Good”, Boland argues, is represented by don Rigoberto’s law-abiding public role, and his “Evil”, by his private pursuit of pleasure (2012, pp. 102–115). In this analysis, doña Lucrecia, the woman around whom the novel is constructed, is left to maintain a “perilous” balance between the two extremes, as the focal point of Boland’s analysis is centred around don Rigoberto. This can be tied back to Boland’s acknowledgement that before Urania Cabral there were other women in Vargas Llosa’s world of fiction that were interesting characters, giving the examples of Bonifacia and Lalita, who were in his words: “formidables seres humanos”. Nonetheless, they did not deserve the label of “round” characters in Forster’s sense of psychological complexity (2003, p. 28). The fact that critics generally simply did not give them enough attention may have also contributed to this situation. Today, a different approach to the exploration of Vargas Llosa’s productions is warranted, one that focuses on women.

There are many other important treatises and publications about Vargas Llosa apart from those mentioned above, and it would be close to impossible to enumerate them. Surprisingly however, there are very few books that deal with women as a focus of study. In *La mujer en la novela de Mario Vargas Llosa* (1993), Flórez refers to a significant observation by Vargas Llosa himself: “Es cierto. Ningún crítico ha advertido que la mujer es central en todas mis novelas” (1993, p. 19). In 1993, women in Vargas Llosa’s novels were mostly objects of desire or simply adjuncts to their more important male counterparts, and yet the author recognized then that those women were central to his work. These female characters were also ignored by the critic. Close to three decades later, the situation regarding the lack of attention to Vargas Llosa’s female characters has not changed significantly. In retrospect, it is evident that by 2019 women in his literary world have become stronger, well-developed characters and protagonists: There should

now be no question that these characters deserve attention in their own right. Current global trends, events and movements around women in the world also ought to serve as reminders of the need for a long overdue analysis from a female perspective of the work of this insightful and persistent observer of society.

The 50th anniversary of *Conversación en La Catedral* was commemorated in 2019. In the course of a tribute to the novel during the 24th Lima International Book Fair, world specialists in Vargas Llosa's work participated in a round table. Francesca Denegri questioned the reasons behind the great deal of attention given to the phrase "¿En qué momento se jodió el Perú?", uttered by Zavalita, in contrast with the scant attention paid to the identity of Hortensia's assassin, which would nowadays be considered a case of femicide. This started a conversation in which the analysts agreed that critics have focused on male characters, overlooking female and other marginal characters. Agustín Prado went on to say that the door is open for other methods of analysis, such as those based on gender, for instance, to offer new interpretations of *Conversación en La Catedral*. In Efraín Kristal's opinion, the treatment of the feminine character is lacking in the first novels and a new reading of this work would allow for new angles of the novel to be found and for charting the evolution of the author's treatment of female characters from that time to his most recent pieces (Reyes, 2019b, paras. 13–15). There is a void in the study of Vargas Llosa's female characters, especially in following their evolution through the author's production: that is the critical deficit that this study sets out to fill. While there are some studies of women in Vargas Llosa's novels, they are not comprehensive. For instance, Flórez conducts a literary analysis of women in Vargas Llosa's fiction, beginning with his first collection of short stories, *Los jefes*, and progressing to a consideration, in chronological order, of those females who feature in the novels, beginning with *La ciudad y los perros* and ending with *Elogio de la madrastra* (although the latter is not listed in the index). Following her analysis, she gives a very short synopsis of each of the female characters. In *The Sexual Woman in Latin American literature: dangerous desires* (2001), Diane Marting devotes a chapter to Vargas Llosa's women, "Mario Vargas Llosa and the end(s) of sexual freedom", focusing on the sexual revolution in literature (2001, pp. 206–262). She refers to *Elogio de la madrastra* and, in spite of touching on such themes as the female body and power, female resistance and

agency, her treatment is, in the main, restricted to the erotic aspect of sex, relating it to gendered sexual behaviour. Urania in *La Fiesta del Chivo* is well recognized as the first leading female character in the Nobel's repertoire, but most attention has been focused on the novel's treatment of dictatorship. It has also been analysed from the lens of intrigues and treason, directly related to political power. It is a novel that revolves around power relations, betrayal and loyalty, says Hopkins Rodríguez, emphasizing that these are associated with morality in the personal, political and collective spheres (2011). Rosa Boldori de Baldussi produced an early study about Vargas Llosa's demons. In *Vargas Llosa: un narrador y sus demonios* (1974), Boldori also alludes to the Oedipal problem, and through it she approaches analyses of some of the women in the Vargas Llosa's first novels (1974, pp. 29–40). In addition, some of Oviedo's articles, such as "Historia de un libertino", offer thoroughgoing analysis of the significance of convents and brothels in Vargas Llosa's work (2007, pp. 31–48). In 2018, Santiago Gómez Sánchez published *La Musa asesinada. "Conversación en La Catedral", de Vargas Llosa: novela marxista* (2018). Although it focuses primarily on social issues, Gómez Sánchez does devote a section to Amalia, Queta and *la Musa*, important female characters of the novel. There he highlights gender discrimination and the fact that it intersects with the additional discriminations these women experience due to poverty and race (2018, p. 60). Recently, in *Mourning El Dorado: Literature and Extractivism in the Contemporary American Tropic*s (2019), Charlotte Rogers focuses on Bonifacia, from *La Casa Verde*, proposing that her traumas are a metaphor for the damage that the Amazonian terrain sustained as a result of Hispanic colonization. In Rogers's interpretation, Bonifacia stands as a metonym for the changes of the Peruvian Amazon in the 1960s (2019, pp. 131, 143). Also in 2019, Ana Godoy published *Arquetipos femeninos en Francisco Umbral y Vargas Llosa, obras y vidas paralelas* (2019), a book contrasting feminine archetypes in Vargas Llosa's and Francisco Umbral's publications. This lengthy study concentrates on the coincidences between the production of the two authors, including female archetypes. Godoy's investigation aims to prove that their almost parallel trajectories lead to important coincidences (2019, p. 508).

As illustrated, the number of studies about Vargas Llosa's fictional work from the female perspective is scarce and mostly dated. At the time of the present analysis there

are no studies that focus on female characters despite their prominence in his latest novels, notably *Tiempos recios*. One of the major narrative lines in this novel is the life of a Guatemalan woman who goes from being an heiress enjoying the status and economic means of her well-to-do family to virtual destitution, to mistress of the president of her country, to fugitive blamed for his assassination. This is Martita Borrero, and she, like many other figures in Vargas Llosa's fictional world, awaits an analysis of her character on her own merits, not in the shadow of or in support of others in the realist fictional space that Vargas Llosa has created.

Women distance themselves from patriarchal limitations

Vargas Llosa's work depicts a patriarchal society where female characters fit into few and specific patterns, especially during his early years, and are analysed by critics from a phallocentric perspective. During this initial period, women were mainly restricted to a small number of roles, archetypes within the Nobel's literary world: mothers, prostitutes, wives and muses, mostly. Women of that period also exhibit certain symbolic characteristics. They are portrayed as victims or gradually develop into frivolous, meddling, naive, or unintelligent women. The novels of the 1960s in particular, *La ciudad y los perros*, *La Casa Verde* and *Conversación en La Catedral*, and also to some extent those of the 1970s, *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* and *La tía Julia y el escribidor*, will give a baseline for comparison with those novels penned in the new millennium which depict females in leading roles. Starting in 2000 with *La Fiesta del Chivo*, most of the novels by Vargas Llosa have a woman either as protagonist or in a very significant role, and power relations between genders are clearly disrupted.

Structure

As Vargas Llosa uses innovative techniques not to dismantle reality but to bring the reader closer to a social and human reality that he intends to denounce (Shaw, 1999, p. 140), he is the perfect choice of writer for the purpose of tracing the evolution of the literary representation of women. He is not only a realist author, but one who has observed the world and written about what he has experienced and witnessed during most of his life. The period covered in this study spans from 1962 to 2019, and the evolution of the role of women in society emerges clearly as time elapses. For that reason, the best approach is to consider his work chronologically. Also, as the great themes and

transformations in the portrayal of female characters seem to be apparent with each decade change, these periods will be used to structure the chapters.

Female characters will be examined from two perspectives, that of their literary complexity and role within the novels and that of the representation of women in their social context through the years. As Vargas Llosa's observation and portrayal of women within his literary world is intrinsically related to the reality around him, it is necessary to situate the reader within the circumstances of each period. To achieve this, this study is structured to include a section on the context of the decade to be addressed, highlighting, by way of introduction to each chapter, the most relevant events in the world and in Peru, with particular reference to the writer and to women. This will enable the reader to contextualize the representation of female characters and their roles within society. The analysis of each of the books selected for that period will follow.

The first chapter will focus on Vargas Llosa's first decade as a writer, the 1960s. During this period the author's objective was to write the total novel and women played merely supportive roles for male characters. It begins with his first published fiction, *La ciudad y los perros.* Despite being his first book, it turned out to be considered by many as one of his masterpieces. This work features women, mostly wives and mothers, in subservient positions. It also presents two brothels, where women were mere objects of desire. Although the visit of one of the protagonists comprises a very short sequence in the novel, the expectation that builds up to the moment when *poeta* is finally able to meet the idealized prostitute *La Pies Dorados* is significant. During the 1960s he also penned *La Casa Verde*. It is built around the jungle and a brothel that gives its name to the novel. The last novel of the period is *Conversación en La Catedral*. In it, a maid and two prostitutes are key characters. The women he portrays throughout this decade clearly have to plot a difficult course through an oppressive patriarchal society and, with almost no exception, acquiesce to a subordinate role. Aída, a character in his last fiction of the decade, makes an early and unsuccessful attempt to break that mould.

The second chapter focuses on his fiction of the 1970s, where the author experimented with satirical comedy. His female characters in *La tía Julia y el escribidor* and *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* begin to evolve in the direction of complexity, although the reader cannot yet find among the characters of these works any woman in a truly

developed role. Chapter three is lengthier, as it combines background on the 1980s, 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium before going into the works which will be discussed: the three novels Vargas Llosa wrote between 2000 and 2009. During the 1980s Peru was afflicted by an unparalleled situation: terrorism. Violence perpetrated by terrorist groups such as Shining Path and *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru* (MRTA) and the fight to eradicate them dominated the country. Vargas Llosa's novels abandoned the humour of the 1970s to concentrate on themes more closely related to socio-political issues. No novel penned during the 1980s and 1990s has been the object of in-depth analysis in the present work, as they do not portray women in roles relevant to the topic; thus, Jurema, secondary to the men around her in *La guerra del fin del mundo* yet playing an important role in the plot, has not been included. This novel "es el proyecto más independiente del resto de la obra" (Williams, 2001, p. 94). Jurema or any of the other women in this epic cannot be compared on equal terms with other female characters in Vargas Llosa's literature. *El hablador* (1987) is a case similar to that of *La guerra del fin del mundo*; although it is not set during a time of war, it has much to do with orality and the indigenous traditions in the Amazonian Jungle. *Historia de Mayta*, *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* (1986) and *Lituma en los Andes* are novels that do not have women as central characters, and deal mostly with the military, with terrorism or with a different style of life in the Andes. This brings up the fact that certain communities in Peru, as well as in other postcolonial countries in Latin America (in the strictly historical sense), are separated from large cities by more than geographical distance. People in rural or Amazonian areas share habits, religion, even languages different from those present in developed cities. That it is difficult to compare the women in these groups with those who were born in modern urban areas is in itself significant, and will be addressed, albeit briefly as it is not the main focus of this work. From 1987 to 1990, Vargas Llosa found little time to write. This was a period in which the author was immersed in political commitments in preparation for his unsuccessful run for the presidency of Peru in 1990. *Elogio de la madrastra* is his only published fiction of that period and in his autobiography *El pez en el agua*, he calls it *un divertimento erótico* (1993c, p. 211). As such, both it and its sequel, *Los cuadernos de don Rigoberto* are not

included here. They belong to erotic literature diversified by elements of fantasy rather than to literary realism.

In contrast, most of the novels produced after the turn of the new millennium portray women as strong, well-developed characters adhering to realist patterns of behaviour. With the exception of *El sueño del celta* and *El héroe discreto*, which do not depict women in prominent roles, all the novels produced by Vargas Llosa during this period will be addressed here. The novels of the first decade will be discussed in the third chapter. *La Fiesta del Chivo* is the first of Vargas Llosa's novels that portrays a genuinely leading female character, Urania Cabral. She is the first woman in the Nobel's fiction who is at the centre of one of the main storylines of the narrative. *La fiesta* is the story of Dominican Republic dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, and in parallel, through flashbacks, the story of Urania and her escape from the claws of the tyrant and his system. It is also the story of the people around Trujillo and the undue power he exerts over them, which finally leads to his assassination. *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, the second novel of the decade, also presents a woman in a leading role, this time a historical character, Flora Tristán. She is not only the true protagonist of the book, but an advocate for women's rights who dedicates her life to fighting for her ideals. *Travesuras de la niña mala*, the third and last novel of this decade is devoted entirely to the life of this "bad girl" and her eternal follower Ricardito Somocurcio. *Niña mala* decides she will have power over her own life and embarks on a series of adventures that take her away from a country, indeed, from a continent where that power was denied her.

The fourth and last chapter before the conclusion is devoted to the novels of the second decade of the new millennium. It includes *Cinco esquinas*, where the reader meets three women who seem different from each other: *Retaquita*, Marisita and Chabelita. In spite of their dissimilarities, they have in common the fact that they do not relinquish to men their power over themselves. They live their lives on their own terms. Lastly, *Tiempos recios* is the latest of Vargas Llosa's fictional works at the time of this research. This is a fictional historical novel where Martita Borrero Parra—Miss Guatemala (*que nunca lo fue*) (2019a, p. 336)—is a protagonist. This is particularly significant since she was not meant to be. The author had set out to create a fictional interpretation of Johnny Abbes García, the right-hand man of dictator Trujillo, as the protagonist. In this novel,

which links the history of Guatemala with that of the Dominican Republic and has many ties to *La Fiesta del Chivo*, Martita rises from a secondary position to achieve the status of main character. This female character opposes the power of her author and in the view of most critics, wins. Also of evident significance is the fact that, out of the seven novels Vargas Llosa has published to date during the first two decades of this millennium, five include strong and leading female characters. This indicates that Vargas Llosa's literary world has evolved in parallel with the real world, where the power and influence of women continue to grow—albeit slowly.

Our critical review given earlier in this chapter has highlighted diverse studies and perspectives about Vargas Llosa and his oeuvre, but none prioritizes the role of women in it. My overarching objective will be to cast new light on a neglected aspect of Vargas Llosa's work, the evolution of his treatment of women from subservience within a patriarchal system to a position of self-determination, influence and power within a more progressive social context. The approach is chronological, with one chapter assigned to each of the decades in which the presence of women is significant. Set against the essential historical and literary backdrop, such as the Odría regime in Peru (1948–1956) and the Boom generation of which Vargas Llosa was a leading representative, my methodology will consist of providing essential historical information at the beginning of each chapter prior to subjecting each of the selected works to close textual and comparative analysis. My focus will be on the writer and his works set within a series of significant contexts such as realism (with reference, for example, to Flaubert), New Historicism (Seymour Menton), feminism (Simone de Beauvoir) and becoming-woman (Gilles Deleuze). My aim will be to reveal the mechanics of Vargas Llosa's writing, with particular reference to his female characters. In order to accomplish this goal, I will draw on literary theories and comparative perspectives. I will show how a writer who is often seen as conservative (particularly when set alongside García Márquez) is, in fact, progressive and forward-looking as is evident in the evolution of his female portraitures.

Chapter One

The 1950s and 1960s: the beginnings

The 1950s, a decade of firsts

The 1950s are crucial years for Mario Vargas Llosa as a future writer. Although he does not publish his first novels until the 1960s, their seeds can be traced back to this decade. During 1950 and 1951, he attended the Leoncio Prado Military Academy which became the setting for his first novel, *La ciudad y los perros*. In 1958 he travelled to the Jungle for the first time, and no other trip in his life has proven to be a more fertile journey (Vargas Llosa, 1993c, p. 471). That experience gave him material not only for his second novel, *La Casa Verde*, but also served as *materia prima* for *Pantaleón y las visitadoras*, *El hablador* and also for one of the storylines of *El sueño del celta*.

On the political front, Peru was under the military dictatorship of General Manuel Odría (1948–1956), which would be the backdrop for the third of his great novels, *Conversación en La Catedral*. In 1953 the author entered San Marcos, a university in Lima where political activism was almost part of the curriculum. There he joined a secret communist cell, Cahuide, and became camarada Alberto. Vargas Llosa refers to this as an invaluable experience, not only for his later work, but for his life: “Muchas de las cosas que ahora creo, defiendo o aborrezco, tuvieron su semilla en aquella aventura juvenil” (2001d). It gave him a different perspective of an essential Peru and of those fighting for democracy, justice and freedom; it taught him to think in light of the dialectic of class struggle. Without those lessons of Marxism, his literature would have been inconsequential; he would have written, as others, about unimportant matters (Ayala, 2017, pp. 13, 28). Those years were full of experiences that the future Nobel Prize winner would not only turn into the books mentioned above, but which would also set in motion ideas for much of his ensuing oeuvre.

On a more personal level the 1950s are also paramount. In 1955 Julia Urquidi Illanes (1926–2010) met a nineteen-year-old Vargas Llosa. They had known each other before in Bolivia, when he was a child. Julia was ten years older than Mario and was also the sister-in-law of his beloved uncle Lucho Llosa, his mother’s brother. After a secret courtship reminiscent of a soap opera, Mario and Julia eloped and got married in a small town outside of Lima. Later, he used this adventure as the basis for his novel *La tía Julia*

y el escribidor. Also, it is in 1957 that his first short story, “El desafío”, was published and won him his first literary competition. The prize included a two-week trip to Paris, his dream city. If he had fantasised about living in Europe up to that moment, that 1958 trip confirmed him in his wish. Back in Peru, he dedicated himself to finishing his undergraduate studies and his thesis, *Bases para una interpretación de Rubén Darío*, was approved *cum laude*. In 1959 he was awarded the Javier Prado Fellowship to pursue a doctorate at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid and he and his wife Julia moved to the Spanish capital. He would live in Europe for the next sixteen years.

Women and their rights. The long struggle of women to free themselves from oppression and to achieve equality in education, economic independence and political power among other rights, had begun to lose momentum in the early decades of the 1900s. This, ironically, was a result of earlier success: women around the world were being granted the main demands of what during the 1960s, in retrospect, would be identified as the First Wave of feminism. These demands were the right to vote and to property ownership. Also, during the late 1940s and 1950s, the world was recovering from World War II. Men had returned and women in many cases did not have to—or were not allowed to—work outside their homes anymore. This was a period when families were reunited and, as with most wars, more babies were born. In the midst of this, in 1949, the writer, philosopher, feminist Simone de Beauvoir had published in France the seminal treatise *Le deuxième sexe,* which was translated into English in 1953 as *The Second Sex*. In this pioneering work, she analysed the problem of modern woman from philosophical, historical and psychological perspectives, and the result was “one of the most important feminist texts of the twentieth century.” In it she conceptualizes woman as an immanent “Other” constrained by culture, in contrast with transcendent, free men (Freedman, 2007, p. 251). Beauvoir postulates that woman has always been a vassal of men, never able to share the world on an equal footing. Her thesis is that “one is not born a woman but becomes one”, interiorizing their Otherness, their second-class standing and submitting to it. In the introduction to her book, Beauvoir also mentions that feminism was a discussion that was practically over, yet it was still talked about (1981, pp. 24–15). The issue seems to reach a plateau every so often, only to re-emerge with new energy following these intermittent periods of calm.

In the 1950s, social convention associated female propriety with the traditional roles of wife and mother. Family was centre stage and, if a woman assumed the extra role of paid worker, it had to fit the needs of her husband and children; it had to be treated as a second job (Birmingham Feminist History Group, 2005, p. 8). This was a period when upper middle-class women in Europe and the United States were for the most part enjoying their home lives. This quiet period during which women were satisfied with caring for children, house and husband would not last long. A sense of dissatisfaction, a longing for something they could not grasp was informing female consciousness in the United States. It was a problem, the "problem that has no name" as the American writer and activist Betty Friedan identified it. This feeling, and Friedan's recognition of it, would later be at the core of the revival of the feminist movement during the 1960s, and not only in the United States.

The women's movement in Peru was already underway by the early 20th century. As in most of the rest of the world, educated women belonging to the upper social classes were the ones championing legal egalitarianism, formal citizenship, equal education rights and better working conditions. They also supported the fight of other oppressed groups such as the peasants and the working class. In 1933, the right to vote in municipal elections had been granted only to women over the age of 21, as well as to mothers and to those women who were or had been married. Thus, it was recognized that marrying or being a mother was equivalent to coming of age, while women's ability to work was irrelevant regarding suffrage rights. That law was essentially immaterial for all, though, as even women who fulfilled all those requirements were not able to exercise the right to vote until 1963 when the government first implemented it (Muñoz and Barrientos, 2019, p. 465). In addition to reaching the legal age of 21 or being married in order to be considered for the municipal vote, a person, woman or man, had to be literate to be allowed to cast a vote. In effect then, for a great part of the century two major demographic groups were denied the right to vote in general elections: women and illiterates. The right to vote in presidential elections, however, was granted earlier to women who were literate. This was due to political motivations. General Odría, the dictator who rules the country in *Conversación en La Catedral*, feared he would not win the elections of 1956. In 1955, he granted women the right to participate in presidential

elections in hopes that the female vote would be conservative and would help him stay in power. Eventually, due to political reasons Odría was not able to run as a candidate in 1956 but, thanks to his self-interested scheming, women had been granted the right to suffrage. Peru was the second to last country in Latin America to recognize voting rights for women.[2]

The 1960s, it all begins with a spark

Vargas Llosa began this decade living in Paris and married to Julia Urquidi. They had moved to France when his fellowship in Madrid ran out. He had different jobs during this period: he taught Spanish at the Berlitz School and wrote for France Press and for the French Radio and Television Broadcasting. It was for the French press that he travelled to Cuba to cover the Cuban missile crises and began writing his first articles firmly supporting the Cuban Revolution (Kristal and King, 2012, p. 151). At the same time, he kept working on *La ciudad y los perros*. He had the idea for it in Lima and had begun writing it in Madrid. Vargas Llosa completed his first novel in Paris in 1962, and his life was forever transformed.

This decade brings abundant change to the author on a personal level as well. It is during this period, in 1964, that he divorced Julia Urquidi. Against all odds, their marriage had lasted nine years. In 1965 Vargas Llosa married Patricia Llosa Urquidi (1945–). The ceremony took place in Lima, and they returned to live in Paris. In 1966 their son Alvaro was born. In 1967 they became parents for the second time as Gonzalo was born. With their two children, they moved to London, where they would remain for the rest of the 1960s. It is also in 1966 that Vargas Llosa published *La Casa Verde*, and a year later was awarded the Rómulo Gallegos Prize for this novel. Through his acceptance speech, “La literatura es fuego”, he openly committed himself, as a writer, to independence; he also declared his faith in socialism. He highlighted the power of literature: “es fuego, que ella significa inconformismo y rebelión, que la razón del ser del escritor es la protesta, la contradicción y la crítica . . . La literatura es una forma de insurrección permanente y ella no admite las camisas de fuerza”. Throughout said

---

[2] The last country in Latin America to recognize voting rights for women was Paraguay, 1961, also tied to literacy requirements.

acceptance speech he also expressed his hope for a better world for Latin America through socialism, although he made clear that even then, the writer must not be wholly subservient to that cause but continue to demand that the right to disagree be recognized (Vargas Llosa, 1986b, pp. 176–181). In 1971, when poet Heberto Padilla was imprisoned in his native Cuba for alleged counterrevolutionary ideas, it was this need for independence of thought that would drive Vargas Llosa away from Cuba, from socialist ideas and from the left.

Back in Peru, democracy had experienced a setback. Fernando Belaúnde Terry, a democratically elected president (1963–1968 and 1980–1985), was overthrown by yet another dictator, General Juan Velasco Alvarado, who accessed power through a *coup d'état* (1968–1975). The political project of General Velasco's government to modernize the state and resolve urgent social contradictions was grounded on dismantling oligarchic control. He attempted to accomplish this through the redistribution of property in a radical and unsuccessful agrarian reform and the establishment of a large omnipresent State capable of steering society away from the imperialist power of the United States. In order to achieve his goals, his regime established and strengthened relationships with the Soviet Union, Cuba and China (Pásara, 1982, pp. 2–7). As a result of military rule, Peru faced a steep decline in agricultural productivity, the retraction of private investment, a large external debt and exaggerated expenditure on weapons (Contreras and Cueto, 2015, p. 365). Peru faced extremely difficult times, as would be recounted by Vargas Llosa through the character of Uncle Ataúlfo Lamiel in his *Travesuras de la niña mala* in 2006.

Women. The passivity of the 1950s gave way to intense work in favour of women's rights around the world during the 1960s. May 9, 1960, marked a transcendental shift in reproductive freedom for women: The Food and Drug Administration of the United States approved the first birth control pill, Enovid-10, which would become popularly known as "the pill". By 1965, one out of every four married women under 45 in the United States had used the pill and by 1967 nearly 13 million women in the world were using it (Planned Parenthood, 2015, p. 4). Although this was a huge step forward towards woman's right to choose, abortion would remain illegal for some time to come. Owing to public pressure, in 1967 Great Britain took the lead, and was slowly followed by other countries in Europe and North America. Abortion laws

were gradually liberalized (Freedman, 2002, p. 237). Feminism was reborn in the form of the Second Wave, which focused more on issues of equality and discrimination and lasted roughly from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. In Simone de Beauvoir's words, most of the women who led the Second Wave of feminism that began in the 1960s were too young to have read *The Second Sex*, but they had discovered it later. They became feminists for the same reasons Beauvoir described in her book but were clearly shaped by their own experiences (Castellanos Llanos, 2008, p. 34). One of the leaders of feminism in the United States, someone who did read Beauvoir and quoted her book, was Betty Friedan. In 1963 she published *The Feminine Mystique*, a revolutionary, ground-breaking text which encouraged women to reach their full potential. This book was based on Friedan's experiences and those of other women. It was an uncomplicated, straightforward read with which women seemed to identify easily. After over a decade of quiescence, Friedan's bestseller kindled the resurgence of liberal feminism. According to the author, a "mystique of feminine fulfilment", utterly unrewarding for women, had been created around the image of suburban mothers. She supported her claims with numerous women's personal testimonies and blamed men in positions that allowed them to mould that female stereotype (psychologists, educators and the media, among them) for constructing this false feminine ideal. She encouraged women to reject their typecasting as neurotic for seeking rewarding work outside the home and to search for their individuality (Freedman, 2007, p. 269). Friedan was incorrect about one detail when she begins her book with the phrase: "The problem lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women" (1997, p. 57). She believed she was writing about women in the United States, but her work, clear and easy to read, presented a situation with which many around the world could identify as their own, and was a turning point for countless individuals. This book impacted many women who felt they were living that unfulfilling kind of life. Although she would later be criticized for focussing only on middle and upper-class women who were college educated, white and married, she nonetheless gave at least women who could identify with this group, words to express the sentiments that overwhelmed them, and it brought about the new beginning in the fight for the rights for women, the Second Wave of feminism. This fight began to incorporate

other realities. The civil rights movement influenced the American feminists and racial justice was championed alongside gender equality.

In Peru, during the Velasco government, the role of women was included in the political agenda for the first time, and problems of marginalization, education and labour inclusion were discussed (Fajardo, 2019, p. 10). Women in Perú were also among those who were following the feminists around the world. Activists Fanni Muñoz and Violeta Barrientos consider that the invention of "the pill" changed the lives of women, and that Friedan's book, which in their view recycled the ideas of Beauvoir's *The Second Sex,* influenced the rise of Peruvian feminism. They reference Helen Orvig's[3] impressions upon reading *The Feminine Mystique* in 1966: for her, the book was a revelation, a total identification and the full confirmation of her ideas. Orvig no longer felt alone in the world and could begin to dream of a new reality that involved the liberation of women" (2019, pp. 467–468). Her opinion was not much different from that of many high and middle-class, educated, married women in the United States and around the world.

There was a difference in Peru: changes for women who were not part of the higher, educated classes were also taking place. In contrast with the disastrous economic consequences of the military regime, during Velasco's rule, female participation in the country's affairs was advanced and became essential. Towards the latter part of the 1960s, the involvement of women in communal and cooperative work organizations began to spread among minority sectors. Neighbourhood organizations were created in *pueblos jóvenes*, and although these associations were led by men, women became crucial. They were the ones who organized *ollas comunes,* an initiative to prepare communal meals to feed those who mobilized to demand basic services for their communities—water, electric, transport, schools and medical services. They also marched in support of these demands and those of other organizations, especially those to do with education for their children. It is during the military regime of General Velasco that women's popular organizations begin to emerge in Peru (Cáceres Sztorc, 2017, pp. 21–23). During this period women in the popular sectors begin to fight for their rights and for those of their families.

---

[3] Renowned Norwegian feminist activist who has lived her adult life in Perú.

Then, there is the Boom. While this was going on in Peru, Vargas Llosa along with other now well-known Latin American literary figures were living in Europe and spearheading a new era for literature. The polemical Boom of Latin American literature is intrinsically related to Vargas Llosa and to a group of male authors whose novels caused an explosion in the literary world between the early 1960s and the early 1970s. This was a phenomenon, or movement, or fortuitous convergence so difficult to define that despite many studies and much analysis, neither the readers, nor the critics, nor the writers themselves have been able to reach much consensus on it. Carlos Rama calls the onomatopoeic name an infamous one, as it stems from the modern North American marketing term that indicates the sharp increase in sales of a product in consumer societies (2005, p. 165). This is related to the opinion of some that the Boom writers owe much to sales strategies, arguing that the work of other writers of the period was as good or perhaps better than that of the members of this group, but was overshadowed by their promotional strategies (Williams, 2014, p. viii). Definitions aside, issues as basic as which writers or which novels are part of it are not clearly established. The five authors most consistently regarded as the original Boom writers are Vargas Llosa; Gabriel García Márquez (1927–2014), of Colombia, Nobel Prize 1982; Carlos Fuentes (1929–2012), of Mexico; Julio Cortázar (1914–1984), of Argentina; and José Donoso (1924–1996), of Chile. Other writers are also considered at times, depending on different perspectives and criteria. Despite the lack of a universal notion of what the Boom is, there are some commonalities that can be associated with most of these figures. The fundamental point of coincidence is of course the quality of their work, but they also shared other elements that affected their careers. Some of these common pieces are: an editor, Carlos Barral, and his Biblioteca Breve Award; a literary agent, Carmen Balcells; living away from their countries, some in Barcelona in particular; a friendship and loyalty towards each other; and a preoccupation for social issues in Latin America paired with an initial support for the Cuban revolution. Although these are all influential factors, from Donoso's insider perspective, "internationalization" is the key. He dismisses other criteria, more directly related to commercial aspects, and gives preponderance to the international language of the novels of the 1960s, highlighting that these writers embrace the collective issues of their times, depart from isolation and "local" spheres and begin to speak an international

language, forming part of the contemporary Spanish American novel (1983, pp. 9–11). Whereas these important considerations are relative and dependent on perspective, the quality and number of works produced during the 1960s and 1970s by the authors mentioned is unquestionable: from Ángel Esteban and Ana Gallego's standpoint, this current of writing comprises the true Golden Age of Latin American literature (2011, p. 11). This unparalleled, unprecedented and so far unique phase in Latin American literature is relevant to this work for a few reasons, the first being that Vargas Llosa is in the midst of it. Additionally, Vargas Llosa is the only living representative of the original five members. Perhaps most significantly, the Boom writers were all men, and their literature exposed the patriarchal values of the time, values which they shared, as Pilar Serrano reveals (see below, p. 37). This highlights the fact that, in the case of Vargas Llosa, his literature has evolved over the years, reflected in his changing representation of women. What follows is an account of factors that tie Vargas Llosa and the Boom of the Spanish Latin American literature, as well as some comments on the representation of women in the literature of his all-male peers.

The explosion: a twenty-four-year-old novice writer and an experienced publisher. *La ciudad y los perros* is the novel that, according to many observers, ignited the Boom (Aguirre, 2017, p. 19; Curiel Rivera, 2006, p. 13; Sierra, 2002, p. 12), although there are diverse opinions in this respect. Vargas Llosa himself has proposed that the honour should be attributed to Carlos Fuentes's *La región más transparente* (1958) (Aguilar, 2012, para. 4) and others cite García Márquez' *Cien años de Soledad* (1967) with its unprecedented sales as the beginning of this phenomenon. José Armas Marcelo shares his views in this respect, acknowledging that some see in Fuentes's novel something new, unnamed in 1958 but crystalizing into the Boom with the publication of *La ciudad y los perros* in 1962: "No me atrevo a decir cuándo y cuál es la novela del boom" (Aguilar, 2012, para. 5). It is in 1962, with the help of Carlos Barral, that the Boom becomes the Boom. The story of *La ciudad y los perros* is of great consequence to Vargas Llosa, to the other members of the group and to the literature of Latin America. The novel departed from the norm of what Latin American and certainly Peruvian writers had offered up to 1963, which was more in line with the indigenous world and traditional realism. His truly innovative work introduced new themes and new techniques that set it

apart from other works of fiction. Carlos Fuentes would later label it the most extraordinary novel about adolescence written among us (Aguirre, 2017, p. 19). Notwithstanding this, it was the author's first novel and persuading an editor to accept it proved an arduous task. Javier Cercas remembers that those were the times when the publisher *made* the book (emphasis mine), and writers had to be grateful, many even had to pay to get published (Algún día en alguna parte, 2016, 21:54). Vargas Llosa was no exception, and he contacted several publishing houses with negative results. Fortunately, he also circulated his manuscript to friends in the literary world, among them Julio Cortázar and Sebastián Salazar Bondy who in turn reached out to publishers in Paris, Mexico and Buenos Aires. Carlos Aguirre stresses that without that network the young, unknown Vargas Llosa's history might have turned out differently (2017, p. 89), particularly in view of the next step the inexperienced author took. In spite of his great doubts about the possibilities of a novel like *La ciudad y los perros* being published during the 1960s in Spain, under the harsh censorship imposed by Francisco Franco's regime, he took a chance. Vargas Llosa was advised to contact the well-known Carlos Barral, of Seix Barral. This was an editor who had managed to publish in Mexico works censored in Spain. If the censors banned his novel, the resourceful editor found ways to publish, he was told. That was crucial as, upon receiving *Los impostores*—the novel's title at the time—Barral became convinced it was Biblioteca Breve material and submitted it to the 1962 competition (Ayén, 2019, p. 86). This prize, a creative initiative instituted in Barcelona by Barral himself, accepted for consideration unedited work and sought to promote writers who wrote in Spanish and placed themselves within the sphere of social "realism" (Aguirre, 2017, p. 91). This award was one of the most prestigious in Spanish literature and played a paramount role in Vargas Llosa's career and in what would come to be the Boom. It carried with it a pecuniary reward as well as status, but, most important from Barral's perspective was that it provided critical support for getting around censorship (Ayén, 2019, p. 86). When he won the distinguished Biblioteca Breve Award, Vargas Llosa became the first Latin American to receive this honour, and it catapulted the unknown Peruvian into a world of renowned writers. It was instrumental in the success of the now acclaimed author. The critics were captivated by the innovative, audacious and technically accomplished first fictional work of the future Nobel recipient

(Castro-Klarén, 1990, p. 11). Fuentes proposes that, with no transitions, Vargas Llosa had emerged from obscurity to the brightest light of international popularity, and affirms that Alejo Carpentier, Cortázar and Vargas Llosa constitute the top trilogy of the novel of those times in America (Williams, 2001, p. 48). "Con la concesión del premio a Mario Vargas Llosa, se lanzará el llamado *boom latinoamericano*" (Barral, 2001). Carlos Fuentes was also awarded this prize for *Cambio de piel* in 1967, and José Donoso was selected as the winner in 1970 with *El obsceno pájaro de la noche*. Although 1970 was the year when Carlos Barral left Seix Barral and the prize was not awarded, his selection made its mark in literary circles, and Donoso is even considered as an awardee by some (Esteban and Gallego, 2011, p. 272). García Márquez was also a client of the Catalan publisher—although *Cien años de soledad* was not published by Seix Barral and the Colombian never submitted his work to the Biblioteca Breve. Awards such as the Formentor, also organized by Barral in Spain, the Romulo Gallegos in Venezuela and the Primera Plana in Argentina, helped popularize Latin American literature around the world, promoting translations into more languages and larger editions to reach the growing readership. This contributed to the internationalization underscored by Donoso. Latin American literature was reaching the world, as proved by *Cien años de soledad* and the "nueva galaxia de ventas" it prompted (Ayén, 2019, p. 156). Carlos Barral and his Biblioteca Breve were central to it and decisive in the success of Vargas Llosa's *La ciudad y los perros*, the novel that sparked the Boom of Latin American literature. Barral was also, unwittingly, responsible for another factor in the gestation of the Boom.

The Balcells factor. The career of one of the most powerful literary agents in the world, Carmen Balcells, "la súperagente" who, when asked by García Márquez if she loved him, replied "I can't answer that, you represent 36.2 per cent of our business interests", began with Barral. He felt uncomfortable discussing financial issues with his authors/friends and appointed one of his employees as inhouse literary agent in charge of negotiating copyrights on behalf of Seix Barral. In the words of Vargas Llosa, that was a providential moment in the Spanish editorial world, as it took Carmen Balcells twenty-four hours to realize that there was something absolutely aberrant and unnatural in having a literary agent employed by a publisher, when the publisher was the enemy. Balcells told Barral she was going to become a real agent for the authors and would argue for them

and against the publisher, to which, Vargas Llosa continues, the extraordinary Barral replied that she was absolutely right, and Balcells began changing the relationships between authors and publishers along with the lives of perhaps hundreds of Spanish language writers (Algún día en alguna parte, 2016, 18:45). This is perhaps an exaggeration by Vargas Llosa, and there are other versions of how it came to be that Barral gave Balcells his authors: that it was conditional on his wife becoming Balcells's partner (which happened, although she soon became pregnant with twins and left); that an offer by Barral to make Balcells director of copyright within his firm was not fulfilled; that Barral was just tired of Balcells and ready to cut ties (Ayén, 2019, pp. 132–133). Whatever the reason or combination of reasons, Barral lost control of his authors, and the times of the leonine contracts favouring publishers with rights in perpetuity over the writers' works came to an end. Also critical is that Balcells had an instinct for good writers. She had the Boom writers before they were considered part of the Boom. She represented them when they were unknown. Robert Saladrigas believes "ella se lo debe todo a Gabo [García Márquez] y sus autores . . . y también al revés". Ayén adds that she could see them as diamonds in the rough, and worked hard for them; by 1962 Balcells was representing the then mostly unknown García Márquez and Vargas Llosa (Ayén, 2019, pp. 146, 132), and they gave her an immense bargaining influence that she knew how to utilize. The new economic power the authors gained was paramount not only because it gave them just reward for their work, but because it allowed them to focus on writing without having to concern themselves with subsistence jobs. Carmen Balcells took away economic power from publishers like Barral and gave it to her authors, encouraging them to produce a great number of masterpieces during those decades of the Boom.

Barcelona was the place to live/to write. Another factor that united the Boom members was Barcelona, and it was not by chance that these authors converged there. Balcells wanted to take care of their every need so they could devote themselves to their writing. Balcells looked after her writers not only in relation to the editors, but in whichever way she could. She provided them with items ranging from writing paper to housing and schools for their children, so they could produce novels. *La Mamá Grande*, as she would be known by her clients (after the character in García Márquez' short story),

attracted them to Barcelona, to be close to her. García Márquez and his family arrived in 1967, and in 1970 she offered to cover, indefinitely, the five hundred dollars a month Vargas Llosa made as a professor in London if he would dedicate himself to writing; a novel every two years instead of every five is what she advised—she also recommended that he move to Barcelona, which was cheaper (Ayén, 2019, p. 119). Donoso also moved to the Catalan city, while Julio Cortázar and Carlos Fuentes were habitual guests and the contact with Vargas Llosa and García Márquez was constant; Barcelona became the most important cultural centre of Spain (Esteban and Gallego, 2011, pp. 250–253). This camaraderie and constant exchange of ideas must have been intellectually invigorating, although not for everyone. Pilar Serrano, Donoso's wife, recalls that the men—referring to Donoso, Vargas Llosa and García Márquez—would talk literature while the women organized activities for the children. Women did not partake in the conversations about books and authors: their roles were perfectly defined. She further quotes García Márquez as stating he hated intellectual women (Esteban and Gallego, 2011, p. 249). Those were the times of patriarchy in their countries, in Franco's Spain and in the works of these men. In their literature, it is the men who were the creators and the women the servants who ministered to their needs, as is the case in *Cien años de soledad*. This perspective of the authors' patriarchal societies and the aversion towards intellectual women carried into the literature they wrote and perhaps may be related to the absence of female participation in the group called the Boom.

The Boom and women. This section does not refer to women writers but rather to the representation of women in the fiction of the exclusively male Boom writers. It is not that there were no women producing literature at the time, there certainly were, but they were not part of this high profile and elitist club. The Boom occurred during times when machismo was particularly prevalent. These writers inherited a patriarchal society: they made no attempt to reform it at the time. On the contrary, they took the opportunities offered them, built on them and made no efforts to give women writers a position in their elite circles. Women had limited scope for self-expression, and the future changes they accomplished would come only through their own merits. Once in a while the name of a female Latin American writer and contemporary of the Boom is mentioned as someone who, for the quality of her work, should be part of it. Among these women are Rosario

Castellanos, México (1925–1974), who published *Oficio de tinieblas* (1962) around the same time as Vargas Llosa's first novel came out. Cristina Peri Rossi, (Uruguay (1941–), is another notable author who could have been considered a Boom writer. She lived in exile in Barcelona, embraced socialism and published in the 1960s *El libro de mis primos* (1969). Perhaps though, she was prepared for the exclusion and for the difficult times a woman writer had to face. When she was very young, she found only three books written by women in her uncle's immense private library. These writers were Alfonsina Storni, Sappho and Virginia Wolf and, coincidentally, all had died by suicide. Storni's uncle warned her to learn that women do not write, and when they write, they commit suicide (Pérez Salazar, 2016, paras. 9–10). Growing up in Latin America during the 1940s, it was difficult for a woman to deviate from gender expectations. Becoming a writer, a profession often considered bohemian and more suited to men, an activity that occurred outside of the realm of the home to which women were confined in patriarchal societies, was discouraged. Xavi Ayén deems the Boom a group of *machos.* He mentions female writers such as Nélida Piñón, Luisa Valenzuela, Cristina Peri Rossi but they belonged to different universes. He recognizes those as *machista* times, with the Boom being no exception (Grosso, 2019). Times have changed, however, and in the new millennium, women, writers or otherwise, are considered on the merit of their work—or at least they should be, although that is not always the case. Elena Garro, México (1916–1998), was a recognized writer also close to the Boom; her novel *Los recuerdos del porvenir* (1963) is considered a precursor of magical realism. Honouring the centenary of her birth, a publishing house reprinted her book *Reencuentro de personajes* (1982); an advertising band around each printed copy read: wife of Octavio Paz, lover of Bioy Casares, inspirer of García Márquez and admired by Borges (Cruz, 2016, para. 1). The year was 2016.

Referring to the old days, the author Iván Thays asserts that at the time, feminine literature was marginal in Latin America, overshadowed by the image of the hegemonic, committed and self-assured male writers (2012). This would change in the latter part of the 1970s, as the post-Boom emerges as a "deliberate reaction against certain aspects of the Boom novels and…partly defines itself in terms of what it rejects" (Shaw, 1998, p. 6). One of its characteristics is that it did include women, and an important group of them emerged. Once the phenomenon of the Boom faded, there was another period of great

interest in the Latin American novel that "was generated, almost single-handedly at first," by Isabel Allende [*La casa de los espíritus* (1982)]. Her literary and commercial success paved the way for the recognition of new works by women writers as well as of works which had previously been overlooked (Kristal, 2005, pp. 9–10). There are some aspects which are identified as differences between Boom and post-Boom authors that do not seem to be completely accurate in the case of Vargas Llosa. It is true that the literature of many of the post-Boom writers was nurtured by the authoritarian regimes that surrounded them, which yielded fiction closely intertwined with its socio-political context (Shaw, 1998, p. 13). In this respect Vargas Llosa's initial work complements theirs. This analysis does not endorse the proposition that all the Boom writers were satisfied simply to revolutionize writing, considering that innovative art in itself would challenge the status quo and promote social change (Shaw, 1998, p. 13). Mario Vargas Llosa's techniques such as *cajas chinas*, *diálogos telescópicos* and *vasos comunicantes* are indeed innovative, but he does not part company with social criticism. Rather, he modifies reality offering a plausible alternative. His denunciation of atrocities is expressed with a clear voice of protest and with conviction. While it is well known that some of the Boom writers later produced works that would be categorized as post-Boom, the difference in Vargas Llosa's case is that he did not dedicate himself to writing magical realism or fantastic literature. No doubt there are aspects that are clearly different when contrasting these two waves of literature, Boom and post-Boom. The one that concerns this work is highlighted by Mempo Giardinelli: that the post-Boom includes within its characteristics "the emergence of an important group of women writers" (Shaw, 1998, p. 12), who were absent before or, rather, present but not taken into consideration. Women were almost entirely absent from the lists of Boom writers. The thrust of this work relates to the representation of women in Vargas Llosa's novels, as it reflects social change and evolves during his long literary career. As a realist, Vargas Llosa continues chronicling the world, his work gradually becomes more receptive to the new roles women assume in the world. Not only does he give preponderance to female characters but allows them to display characteristics of independence and free thought, which were inherent to a new cluster of women, those who dared become writers and gain a place in the post-Boom.

When referring to the 1960s and 1970s, one remembers the attitudes that accounted for the absence of women in the Boom. The situation had changed by the 1970s with the post-Boom, but "those machista times" (Grosso, 2019) had not disappeared altogether. The focus of this analysis does not embrace all the writers of the Boom, but it seems pertinent to address the representation of women in some of their work very briefly, as these men assessed each other's work, shared their opinions and critiqued their drafts. In Donoso's work, one can find feminine and masculine stereotyped reflections of a patriarchal culture and hegemonic discourse (Dimo, 2002, pp. 62–63), but in his production there is the added element of the subjectivity of gender. In that respect, Schulz argues that although transvestism in novels could be read as a challenge to patriarchal society, since transvestism polarizes the masculine and feminine roles, it ultimately reinforces a system of domination which does not allow the free expression of homosexuality (1990, pp. 221–222). In that sense, Donoso circles back to a hegemonic patriarchal society. In the case of Cortázar, he seems to have embraced the popular *machismo* of his time more overtly. For instance, in *Rayuela* (1978) he equates mediocre readers with females. Utilizing sexist terms, he identifies a *lector cómplice*, an active reader who collaborates with the author in uncovering the meaning of the text, and a *lector hembra*, a female or passive reader who, assuming a comfortable position, "consumes" the plot without really engaging with it (1978, p. 452). Cortázar was an innovative writer, but his representation of women, even if fantastic, was inferior to that of men. The revolutionary ideologist with regard to politics and social issues was not as forward-looking with respect to women, his concept of them grounded in values of a *macho* society (Filer, 2002, p. 65). With respect to Carlos Fuentes's oeuvre, Chalene Helmuth posits that it protects a patriarchal society that maintains a binary notion of gender, where women exist as the *other* in relation to men, sometimes as possessions that they display as decorations (2002, pp. 88–92). Stereotypes of women and men in patriarchal societies are represented in Fuentes's work, as in that of García Márquez. In the latter, the characterization of women and of men interacting with women is revealing. This is the case for instance of *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* (1981) where society is represented from the perspective of masculine domination and the feminine characters are peripheral to the male (Millington, 2002, pp. 127–130), to the extent that a woman

who has lost her honour is discarded like damaged goods. Twenty-one years later, the situation of women, as portrayed in the last novel published by the Colombian, has not changed much. In *Memorias de mis putas tristes* (2004), the title itself places women at a disadvantage. Not only are they prostitutes, but they are sad (or melancholic in the English translation) and they belong to a man. García Márquez considers the rape of an adolescent as a "noche de amor loco". These two novels from different time periods do not show an evolution in the representation of women in García Márquez' work. Contrastingly, in the case of Vargas Llosa, a shift in the representation of women can be perceived in his work as time elapses.

The schism: los camaradas, Casa de las Américas and Heberto Padilla. The Boom writers were also referred to as the *gauche divine* of the 1960s and 1970s. This was inspired on the initial effervescence, mystique, and passionate adherence shared by most of them towards the Cuban revolution and its leader Fidel Castro and to their many visits to the island, invited by Casa de las Américas (Donoso and Serrano, 1983, p. 145). The Cuban Revolution was the epicentre of the formation of the Latin American intellectual family in the 1960s, with the prestigious *premio Casa de las Américas* aiding in drawing them closer to their cause (Gilman, 2003, p. 113). Ayén includes editors and critics from the Spanish-speaking world in this fraternal solidarity with the Revolution (2019, p. 225). Casa de las Américas, established four months after the triumph of the Castro revolution in 1959, was a significant element in bringing and keeping together the authors who would be considered members of the Boom. Later, this institution would also play a key role in its dispersion. The objectives of this organization, affiliated to the revolution, included the promotion of writers whose work might contribute to the development of sociocultural relations between Latin America, the Caribbean and the rest of the world ("La casa," n.d., paras. 1, 3). These writers shared an admiration for the Cuban Revolution during the 1960s, but that changed for some. In 1971, the incarceration, torture and later release of the Cuban poet Heberto Padilla fractured the unity of the Boom, as some writers now rejected the idea that the Castro Revolution was the solution for the problems of the oppressed. At the head of this group was Vargas Llosa, who resigned from the Editorial Committee of the journal Casa de las Américas. He affirmed in a letter published in *Revista Libre*, that Padilla's fabricated confession signalled that

the Cuban Revolution had deviated from their declared decision of fighting for justice while respecting individual freedom of opinion and that this was not the kind of socialism he wanted for his country (1971, p. 122). As is now known, Vargas Llosa's initial distancing from the Cuban Revolution developed into harsh opposition as time elapsed. Other figures remained faithful to Castro's regime, the most conspicuous being García Márquez. This would be a cardinal reason for the unspoken rift between the Boom authors. Other reasons included "a damaging split in the Barcelona-based Seix Barral publishing house" (Swanson, 1990, p. 222): a literary exodus from Barcelona ensued and friendships changed, some writers becoming estranged from each other, as was the case of Vargas Llosa and García Márquez, a situation that they have refused to address publicly. However, the coincidence of these writers in a city that was conducive to literary production allied to the quality of their output, had created something extraordinary, the indefinable Boom. As circumstances changed, however, so the currency of the Boom declined until it became a distant memory among the continent's aging literati.

This work seeks to track changes in the world, particularly as they relate to women. Perspective adjusts as an individual undergoes change, and this is particularly evident in Vargas Llosa's literary world, owing to the diversity of his themes, his prolific output, the decades he has continued to publish and the open social and political evolution of his thought. The reader will find that female characters portrayed in the Peruvian writer's novels have managed to overcome the strong stereotypes that characterized his work as a realist writer immersed in a patriarchal society during the Boom years. The baseline for the observation of this evolution will be the first women—a young girl, various mothers, and a prostitute—that Vargas Llosa sketched in the novel that sparked the Boom.

The novels of the 1960s: patriarchy rules

This decade marks the beginning of the writing career of a young Vargas Llosa, yet it is during those early years that he wrote three of his most accomplished pieces. Some have considered the novels he wrote during this decade as a trio that comprises the first great literary period of the author (Oviedo, 1981, p. 10). During this period, he experimented with new narrative techniques influenced by some of his favourite writers

such as Gustave Flaubert and William Faulkner (Köllmann, 2014, p. vii). This is also the author's socialist phase and the first decade of the Latin American Boom period, during which he lived in Europe and had a very close relationship with other Boom writers (see above, p. 41). From the following analysis focused on female representation, it will be evident that the women within the three texts of this span are subservient to men and are restricted to secondary positions. The roles they perform, mostly one and two-dimensional, are subordinate to those of their male counterparts and their presence is to a large extent required to highlight and support other characters.

1962 - La ciudad y los perros: an instant success, limited feminine presence

The first full length novel published by Vargas Llosa, *La ciudad y los perros* was an instant sensation which brought him the esteemed Biblioteca Breve Award and global success. This novel is a fictional story set mainly in the Escuela Militar Leoncio Prado, which Vargas Llosa attended for two years. The military organization of Leoncio Prado that he experienced first-hand, left on the author a lasting impression towards the military, one which would resurface in later works such as *Pantaleón y las visitadoras, ¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* and *Lituma en los Andes.* There was a film version of the novel released in 1985. In contrast with the book, translated as *The Time of the Hero* the film was given a literal translation to English, *The city and the dogs*.

It was also at the Leoncio Prado Military Academy boarding school where the adolescent poet started writing erotic "novelitas" (Vargas Llosa, 1993c, p. 114). In *El pez en el agua* he describes how he wrote and sold those erotic pieces and love letters to sustain his smoking habit. A scene in *La* c*iudad y los perros* recreates this: when a booklet called *Los placeres de Eleodora* was confiscated from a classmate, Alberto offered to write a better one in exchange for half a pack of cigarettes. In the novel he starts writing, gradually becoming more audacious: "las palabras vulgares ceden el paso a grandes alegorías eróticas, pero los hechos son escasos y cíclicos: las caricias preliminares, el amor habitual, el anal, el bucal, el manual, éxtasis, convulsiones, batallas sin cuartel . . .". When he was done with the writing, he would announce the title: *Los vicios de la carne* (1999, pp. 177–178). Back in his memoires, he mentions that one of the reasons for this writing was that love letters and erotic *novelitas* were not frowned upon or considered degrading or *de maricas* in that temple to *machismo* (1993c, p. 114).

These words may be at the core of his portrayal of women in literature, which some scholars consider misogynistic (Vázquez, 2007). His words may also shed light on the reason for the abundance of prostitutes and extensive erotic scenes in the majority of his fiction. While they may not have seemed degrading from a male point of view in a *machista* society, especially at that time, women are now seen from a different perspective. This difference is appreciated through the evolution of women in Vargas Llosa's literature. It is worth noting that the presence of prostitutes is more abundant in his early works, while eroticism is maintained throughout most of his narrative. As time elapses though, women increasingly take charge of making the decisions regarding their bodies. The use, or not, of their bodies becomes a personal choice, in some instances an instrument to counterbalance male power and persistent manifestations of *machismo*.

Machismo and *marianismo* are sets of behavioural patterns that developed in Latin America after Spanish Catholics settled in the New World. *Machismo* refers in brief to an attitude of exaggerated masculine aggressiveness and intransigence in men's relationships with women, and *marianismo* to a female moral and spiritual superiority. These two concepts depend on each other for their continuity. They are symbiotic and complementary. *Marianismo* has produced a convenient set of suppositions and a central figure around which a series of beliefs and practices related with the position of women in society have been constructed; although rooted in the Old World, *Machismo* and *Marianismo* have developed fully in Latin America (Stevens and Soler, 1974, p. 18). The subordination of women has been fabricated by men. In all realms of knowledge, legislators, philosophers, writers, scholars and priests have formulated and sought to maintain this secondary status, based on the argument that it was "voluntad del Cielo y beneficiosa para la Tierra" (Beauvoir, 1981, p. 26), and women have been for the most part compliant, as it would have been impossible for men to maintain them in a situation of subservience without female cooperation. This is evident in Vargas Llosa's portrayals in *La ciudad y los perros*. For instance, Ricardo's father would physically and verbally abuse Beatriz, his wife, and hit his son if he stood up for her. Yet the morning after one of these incidents took place, Beatriz would ask Ricardo to beg his father to forgive him for entering their room to stop the man from striking her. She made clear that the son had to understand her husband's bad temper. Humouring him was the only way to keep him

happy, she claimed (1999, p. 145). Keeping the husband/father happy appeared to be the cornerstone of marriage and the core of a happy family. It would be natural to infer then that *machismo* relied on *marianismo* and Catholicism to become established and provide the foundation for the stereotyped roles depicted in Latin American society and also very clearly represented in Vargas Llosa's early literature. These notions also have to do with gender roles. Men, like the Spanish conquistadors, flaunt their physical strength, virility, and dexterity which make them adept at dealing with aspects of life in the public sphere, where sleaziness and corruption often beckon, while, by standards of *marianismo,* the attributes ascribed to females, humility, passivity, self-denial and subordination to men amongst others, limit women to the private sphere of the home (Skard, 2014, p. 207). Additionally, as Richard Basham states, it is not only that the natural place of the woman from the *macho* perspective is the home, but also that she does not know much of the husband's private life outside of it and must be satisfied with the information he gives her and not wonder if he has a mistress, or maybe more. Further, she is a mother first, a wife second, and a sexual being almost never (1976, p. 128). Alberto's father is the perfect *macho*. His friends express admiration towards this don Juan who, although married, dates striking women and wipes rouge off his mouth before entering his family home—the wife's kingdom/gold cage. This image of the man who can have one woman after another is also admired by his son, who plans to emulate the father in the future. When his girlfriend Marcela asks if he will be a philanderer as his father, Alberto quickly denies that possibility, while secretly planning to be just that: "Me casaré con Marcela y seré un donjuán" (1999, p. 471). The double standard and the tolerance, almost admiration for womanizers in the society of the time is evident, and, as Julia Kristeva proposes, it has much to do with power. "Don Juan no exalta la sensualidad, ni siquiera el autoerotismo, sino la demostración de saber poner bajo su poder, desviándolas de su propio camino (*se-ducere*), a todas las que encuentra a su paso" (Kristeva, 1985a, p. 10). The fathers portrayed in Vargas Llosa's first novel are good examples of *machista* men. Interestingly, while every mother in the novel has a name, all fathers remain unnamed: they are all just *padres* which underpins the reader's perception that fathers in that society are individuals who conform to the stereotypes of philanderers and abusers of women and children. On the other hand, the use of the first names of the mothers suggests their personal

victimization and, in cases such as Carmela's, their fruitless fight to free themselves from the norms of the society they were born into—burdened as women by the precepts of *machismo* and *marianismo*.

Necessary background. *La ciudad y los perros* in particular is not an erotic piece. It is the story of four cadets in their last year at the Leoncio Prado Military Academy, and criticism of the military organization is one of the main themes of this narrative. The setting is a high school, and the novel focuses fundamentally on the hierarchy in the military and its sway over all else, showcasing through it the strong power relations not only within the armed forces, but across social strata. Although the present study's main focus lies on the role of women, it is necessary to get into the plot and the cadets who are the main characters in order to have a perspective on the women who are portrayed around them. Without the protagonists, these women would have no reason to exist. They have no meaning or purpose of their own. Perhaps in no other work by Vargas Llosa is it more evident that women are merely supporting characters to the male protagonists. As illustrated, *machismo* and *marianismo* became part of the social make-up of Peru and other Latin American countries. Through the mothers of the main characters, the author depicts the power men exert over women—and women allow—for reasons related to culture, history and even religion. These mothers, as well as Teresa, the object of the desire of the protagonists, will be the ultimate focus of this section.

Jaguar, Porfirio Cava, Boa and Rulos are members of the *Círculo*, a covert clique that rules amongst the other cadets by means of terror and violence. They need the questions for an upcoming exam and Cava has to carry out what would mark his fate. A trail of broken glass leads school authorities to discover the crime. There are two other cadets that are crucial to the plot: Alberto (*poeta*), a fairly popular student who writes erotic *novelitas* and love letters—in some respects an alter ego of the author—and Ricardo (*Esclavo*) Arana, a lonely student who is constantly bullied by his classmates, desperate for a true friendship and in love with Teresa. *Poeta* needs to pass an exam and *Esclavo's* attempt to help him cheat by giving him the answers is discovered. Esclavo is punished with weekend confinement and asks Alberto to take the long ride from Miraflores, a higher middle-class neighbourhood, to the lower middle-class area of Lince

to let Teresa know he would not be able to make their date. Teresa becomes an especially important character, central to the plot and the link between the main characters.

Alberto is not content simply to deliver the message but takes the opportunity to ask Teresa out. As he returns to school on Sunday, *poeta* is told the theft of the exam had been discovered and the colonel had ordered all students who were on guard duty the night of the event to remain in detention until the offender came forward. Amongst those who lost weekend privileges were *poeta*, and *Esclavo*. Alberto's main problem in life up to this point has been that his mother has left her husband and does not want any economic help from him. The separation concerns the cadet mostly because his mother is short of money and Alberto needs cash to be able to go to a brothel and meet *La Pies Dorados*, a prostitute popular among the cadets. This was about to change.

As will become a characteristic of Vargas Llosa's writing, through flashbacks, memories, and words connecting different settings and times, there are various plots maturing throughout the chapters of this novel. *Esclavo*, who had been remanded to school for almost five weeks and is desperate to see Teresa, denounces Cava to his lieutenant. While he is rewarded with a pass to leave school for six hours, Cava is expelled. This is a turning point in the narration. Jaguar, the indisputable, aggressive, violent leader of the students, swears he will avenge his friend. During a routine armed drill, *Esclavo* is wounded and later dies. Alberto, convinced that Jaguar had killed Esclavo, denounces him. Lieutenant Gamboa in turn presents this accusation to his superiors, who prefer to protect the military from a potential scandal, force Alberto into retracting and file the incident as an accident. Against his superiors' advice, lieutenant Gamboa continues searching for the truth, which leads to his transfer to the Andes, an inhospitable destination. The author conveys the idea that this is his punishment for following correct procedure. In later novels, major characters who also belong to the military such as Lituma and Pantaleón will receive the same punishment for acting in ways that contravene their superiors' designs—even though their actions follow correct moral and even legal stances. In those cases, as in this one, the author communicates that the soldiers are correct in their actions, highlighting how the military protects the hierarchical order over the truth. In an unexpected twist, as Gamboa is leaving, Jaguar confesses to killing Arana. The lieutenant's answer is incisive: There is nothing left to do,

"Más fácil sería resucitar al cadete Arana que convencer al Ejército de que ha cometido un error" (1999, p. 458). This is one of the many instances in which the army is criticized, here for its unwillingness to accept accountability. As a response to this denunciation, the high command of the Leoncio Prado Military Academy organizes a public burning of a thousand copies of this novel upon its publication.

Teresa, everyone's muse. This is a simple girl and a one-dimensional character who does not do much more than go to school and wait for one of her suitors to come by. Although she has the particularly important role of bringing the male characters together and giving them a purpose, she does nothing to prompt any of that. In fact, she ignores what is going on in every storyline, even in the one that directly affects her, as Alberto keeps her in the dark. Arana brings Teresa into the story in the first chapter, and soon the three main protagonists' thoughts will revolve around her. Arana's love for the girl drives the timid, almost cowardly boy to approach his superior and betray a classmate in order to see her. He dies for this action. Alberto, in turn, betrays his friend by forming a relationship with her and although guilt consumes him, he likes the company of a girl from a different social class. The humble Teresa makes his insecurities fade. "Vallano tenía razón: los cadetes impresionaban a las hembritas, no a las de Miraflores, pero sí a las de Lince," Alberto thinks. Teresa helps the *poeta* boost his self-confidence, as he could behave with her the way he did not dare among the girls he has known forever. With this shy, humble girl he could be talkative and use "las frases ingeniosas, los desplantes y las bromas que había escuchado tantas veces en el barrio" (1999, p. 125). Clearly, Teresa's function in relation to Alberto is to boost his persona. She is also necessary to exemplify the flaws of their society. He needs someone perceived to be inferior to him to feel secure. This constitutes another form of power game. It is thus important to remember that Teresa personifies the unfairness resulting from *machismo*, highlighted by her fat, greasy and dirty aunt. This woman is desperate for her niece to have a different future by hanging on to Alberto, "Tienes suerte que se haya fijado en ti" (1999, pp. 108–110). This comment about the girl who is lucky because a high-class boy deigns to look at her implies that men select women, that they have the power of choosing, and that women have to be grateful. "No sabes hacer nada. Ni cocinar, ni coser, ni nada. Pobre de ti" (1999, p. 109). It is clear that the role of women, especially women

in the lower classes, is to serve in diverse ways. Again, it is the women themselves who perpetuate their situation. This female may have attracted a young man from a more affluent area but in the 1960s would not have secured an invitation to meet his mother. Alberto rehearses an unthinkable imaginary dialogue with his mother, “me enamoré de una huachafa”, and reduces Teresa to someone who writes on cheap paper and has bad penmanship (1999, pp. 189, 179). Even worse, class hierarchy was accepted and internalized by such a girl naturally. One day, Alberto just discarded her, disappeared without a word to leave her to contemplate becoming a nun when she sees him walking and holding hands with someone whom Teresa herself describes to Jaguar as “una chica decente” (1999, pp. 478–479). The girl uses that term as if accepting the notion that only people from higher classes and who have money are decent, perhaps implying that a girl like herself is the opposite, indecent, unworthy of respect. She had assumed the class difference and considered it natural and incontestable rather than undesirable or as something worth resisting. This female idea will persist through *La Casa Verde* and *Conversación en La Catedral* and then it will slowly start changing. In *Travesuras de la niña mala*, Vargas Llosa revisits the idea when Ricardo meets Otilia’s father, but this time he does it from a different angle. He brings up the subject making a point of showing his awareness of the great lengths to which *niña mala* has gone to avoid her destiny, finally deciding to flee her country. When *niño bueno* finds out where *niña mala* came from, he understands why she had fought her whole life to escape. In 2006 Vargas Llosa will not present a girl who quietly accepted an inherited situation but one who lived her life on her own terms, even if at a great personal cost.

Class differences are emphasized further in *La ciudad y los perros* when Jaguar, an individual from origins as humble as Teresa’s and who also had endured extremely difficult times while growing up, came to light as the girl’s nameless admirer. Throughout the novel, an anonymous first-person narrator had been telling the story of one of the main male characters. He has reflected on his difficult childhood and his love for Teresa. It is only when the novel is coming to its conclusion that the reader is surprised with the revelation that this narrator is Jaguar and in a final twist he runs into Teresa and shortly thereafter they get married. The unsophisticated, ingenuous muse, who was not allowed to aspire to the love of Alberto, did inspire true love and even a sense of

the unreachable in Jaguar. Teresa remains at the centre of the story until the epilogue, when she becomes almost a reward for this character who never stopped loving her. Jaguar deserved redemption for confessing his crime to Gamboa and following his advice to finish school and to make something good come from cadet Arana's death (1999, p. 458). From this perspective, the resolution of the novel has almost religious connotations (sin, repentance, confession, penance) and Teresa seems to assume the role of the sacred host.

Wives and mothers: good, bad, all victims. There is an abundance of wives/mothers, as many as there are main characters, and all are victims and secondary characters. To different extents and in different versions, they are all under their husbands' power, and when the husband is not around, there is a son to take his place. Women depend upon men economically and socially. Some resort to religion to numb their frustrations. They live in a world where men are allowed freedoms denied women, and females accept the roles they have been dealt, acquiescing to the situation and so perpetuating it. Marcela Lagarde explains that marriage is important for women because they value the man's existence more than their own. Male recognition underpins the existence of the female. While men project their existence singlehandedly, women need to be wives just to exist (1993, p. 367). The dependency of women is made abundantly clear. Not even their stories are told by themselves: the problem is mostly told from the perspective of each male son, revealing oedipal problems with the fathers (Boldori de Baldussi, 1974, p. 31). These female characters are nonessential: they are flat, passive and at the mercy of their husbands, yet they are many and their stories fill a good number of pages. Also noteworthy is that while motherhood is clearly represented in the novels of this decade, its absence or rejection in later works will be perhaps more significant.

Alberto's mother, tired of her husband's open and flagrant philandering, decides not to take either this behaviour or his economic support any longer. Carmela dares to leave their comfortable home and rent a small house with no view at the end of an alleyway. In the absence of her husband, she dedicates herself to serving her son when he is home. She polishes his shoes, prepares his bath, waits with warm food on the table, and most importantly, complains to him as if he were her estranged husband. To Alberto's protests and insistence that she take care of herself, she would reply that nobody would

notice, as she now was a poor abandoned woman (1999, p. 106). Thus, in reality, she does not see herself as someone strong who has taken action, but rather as a victim, as someone who had no choice in the matter. Roles shift: while Carmela would tell Alberto he looked very handsome, just like his father, contrastingly, her own husband addresses her as *hija* (daughter) (1999, pp. 111–112) while the son lies about how long he would be out, knowing she is disappointed when he does not spend his free time with the mother. Carmela replaces her husband with Alberto as the object of servile attentions and complaint: "Cada vez que terminaba un pedazo de pan, su madre le alcanzaba la panera con ansiedad. …No te veo nunca … Cuando sales, pasas el día en la calle. ¿No compadeces a tu madre?"(1999, p. 107). This causes Alberto to feel as his father probably had: "Soñaba toda la semana con la salida, pero apenas entraba a su casa se sentía irritado: la abrumadora obsequiosidad de su madre era tan mortificante como el encierro" (1999, p. 107). While elaborating about the feminine attitude where women permanently recreate their voluntary servitude towards others, Lagarde proposes that women—even if single or childless—feel the need to conform to the norms associated with their gender, to the stereotype ascribed to them, to perform as *madresposas*. As a result, they behave as mothers to brothers, husbands, friends or other males, and they may also temporarily relate as wives (not in the erotic sense) to fathers, friends or sons, assuming a powerless and submissive role (1993, pp. 363–365). In this case, Carmela treats her son as she would her husband. Carmela's husband, for his part, seems amused by her dignified attitude of leaving him and not accepting his economic support. Condescendingly, he tells her he understands that what worries her "son las formas", social conventions, and proposes to find another nice, large house and go back to living together, in exchange for his absolute freedom. This man flaunts his economic power, knowing it is his winning card. As for Alberto, he does not respect his mother for taking a dignified position but thinks she should let him write them a cheque every month until he repents of his sins and returns home (1999, p. 23). Beauvoir refers to marriage as disadvantageous for women and promotes their emancipation from it through work. In tune with what Vargas Llosa is illustrating, she underlines the great moral effort that a woman must make to choose the path of independence, equating the idealized concept of marriage with a deceptive, dangerous and tempting obstacle towards woman's freedom.

The economic inequality that gives advantages to men, Beauvoir further states, and the temptations of comfort, economic prerogatives, and social worth associated with marriage weigh on women and encourage them to surrender, to sell themselves in order to receive the privileges that a man can provide, pushing them to ardently desire to please men (1981, p. 161). Carmela tries to be true to her convictions, but in the end she concedes. Her husband justifies his desire to be able to live his life as he sees fit, avoiding scenes, by reference to the social status quo that tolerates this situation. The higher the socioeconomic status, the harder it is for women to reject arrangements like that, "Para algo somos gente bien nacida", was his reasoning (1999, p. 114). She protests and resists, but in the end, she gives in. The reader learns this as Alberto's friends talk admiringly about his donjuanesque, handsome and elegant father who dates striking women. Alberto is proud, and celebrates the fact that his parents are now looking for another house, that is more comfortable, to move into together (1999, p. 470). Carmela has resigned herself to be the "good" woman, in Freud's terms: her husband will be fond of her and respect her in his own way, while being attracted by "bad" women, who will be the ones to satisfy him sexually (Wolff, 1972, p. 208). In order to maintain her status as a respectable married woman, she has to put aside her need for self-respect.

When Beatriz and Ricardo moved to Lima to live with the father Ricardo had believed dead, they also walked into a type of relationship new to him. While he was abusive, his wife was submissive. He was violent, and she took his beatings. The son tried to defend his mother, but she reproached him for doing so the next morning. She too fits the stereotype of the woman who took abuse from men. Beatriz does not dispute her husband's opinion of women when he states that: "Todas son iguales. Estúpidas y sentimentales. Nunca comprenden nada". He also believes that: "Las mujeres son así, todo lo tergiversan" (1999, p. 257). This woman also allows her husband to demean her and take all decisions about the son she had raised: when she objects to Ricardo attending the Leoncio Prado Military Academy, the school where he would die, her husband's response is dismissive: "No te he pedido tu opinión … Estas cosas las resuelvo yo. Simplemente te comunicaba una decisión" (1999, p. 257). Beatriz thus illustrates the relationship of many women with their husbands. Those women who only exist socially and individually through their relationship with a man. "La mujer sola es imaginada

como la mujer carente, le falta algo, le falta el dador de la vida social, le falta el hombre" (Lagarde, 1993, p. 367). Beatriz needs to preserve the marriage at all costs since it sustains her self-worth: she has already been a single mother, abandoned by her husband, a woman lacking a man. She does not want to be that woman again. Unfortunately, the price she has to pay for her social standing is her son.

The case of Jaguar's mother is different. She is a character somewhere between a victim-mother and a bad-mother. She suffers with her first husband and her second husband dies leaving her with no retirement pension. Through Jaguar's recollections the reader realizes that the only thing that matters to her is that her son, brings in money, even if at the cost of leaving school. When Jaguar tells her he knows how to make money without quitting school she only looks at him. When her son asks Domitila if she knew about Higueras, the man who introduced his older brother to crime, the conversation ends in: "Ya estás grande…Allá tú con lo que haces, no quiero saber nada. Pero si no traes plata, a trabajar" (1999, p. 348). She is implying that if he does not bring her money in any way he is able to, he would have to quit school and begin to work to support her. Jaguar's age is not specified, but he was probably around 11 at that time. Another aspect of the woman is underscored when Jaguar describes her shirt full of holes and darns, her wrinkled face and neck, shaggy head and missing teeth. She was an uneducated woman and also victim of her circumstances. Jaguar wanted his mother's forgiveness after his first time with prostitutes, but she transferred that responsibility too: "Mejor pídele perdón a Dios" (1999, p. 381). She was also a religious woman. Already at Leoncio Prado Military Academy, Jaguar punches a classmate for speaking ill of Santa Rosa, "Mi madre era devota de Santa Rosa y hablar mal de ella es como hablar mal de mi madre" (1999, p. 196). The cadet loved his mother no matter what. The only object of this character is to get Jaguar into a life of crime so he could later attain redemption. She was a necessary character. Domitila anticipates a life of crime and imprisonment for her son (1999, p. 410), but he proves her wrong. Once he leaves to become a delinquent, her mission is accomplished, and she dies. While his mother was punished with death, Jaguar was rewarded with the girl the three students liked, got a respectable job and even took his new wife's aunt to live with them. Poetic justice was achieved.

Teresa's mother also tries to stand up for herself at least on occasion. She is tired, defeated and selfish. Her life had been an inferno while her husband lived. He was a drunken, violent man who brought other women home. She would confront and physically attack these women while her husband, with Teresa sitting on his lap, would enjoy the scenes as if they belonged to a theatrical performance. "Mira, esto es mejor que el catchascán" (1999, p. 321). Teresa's mother stops protesting when a woman hits her with a bottle and cuts her eyebrow. She becomes a resigned and peaceful being, until the day when her husband dies. Then, she takes Teresa to her aunt telling the child: "No toques hasta que yo me vaya. Estoy harta de esta vida de perros. Ahora voy a vivir para mí y que Dios me perdone. Tu tía te cuidará" (1999, p. 321). As far as the reader knows, she never came back. She is brave when she can be, with those weaker than herself, such as some of the women her husband brought home and her own young daughter, but she does not have enough fortitude to leave her husband while he is alive, nor to take her daughter with her when she is finally free from his abuse, nor to confront Teresa's aunt. She is ultimately a weak woman.

The first prostitutes. Alberto is desperate for the 20 *soles* he needs to visit *Pies Dorados*, a prostitute with whom he is obsessed. At the beginning of the narration, she is constantly on his mind. She has been made famous by one of his classmates at his school. She is described as a short woman whose dyed blond hair shows black roots. She smiles behind her excessive make up. All in her is ordinary, apart from her feet which resemble two fish made of mother-of-pearl. When Alberto tells her it is his first time at a brothel, she makes it clear that it is a business transaction and he has to pay, which he does. He had believed she would mark his passage into adulthood, but when the time came he was not capable of consummating the sexual act because of his nervousness (1999, pp. 134–136). In any case, he did transition into adulthood while at the academy, a positive development that had less to do with his failed encounter with the famous prostitute than with his friend's death and Jaguar and lieutenant Gamboa's unspoken lessons in principled behaviour. A second brothel is mentioned where an older man, El flaco Higueras, takes Jaguar for the first time. He is so young that the owner was afraid she was going to be reported to the police, and the woman who took him hoped he would bring her good luck (1999, pp. 362–363). In both cases, the scenes with the women and

their descriptions are superficial. Their main purpose is to facilitate initiation rituals for very young men.

Although the females in this novel are clear and defined characters with names and roles, they are not mature in literary terms. Teresa is at the heart of the story, yet her character is undeveloped, and she fades rapidly by comparison with the well-developed, energetic main male protagonists. In a narrator as crafty as Vargas Llosa, these circumstances cannot be fortuitous (Agosti, 1969, p. 179). As a character she remains secondary and as a representation of a collective of women of the times, she highlights the prevalence of *machismo* and the ingrained discrimination against women of a certain status. Her aunt serves the purpose of reinforcing these notions.

None of the wives and mothers in *La ciudad y los perros* is portrayed in a positive light, they are all flawed victims. Their weaknesses are only natural, but they also display low self-esteem and are willing to submit to men to gain status, a better economic situation or simply social recognition. In a way, they also sell themselves, albeit surreptitiously, as does la *Pies Dorados*. Their presence is intentional: they embody a denunciation of the institution of marriage. There is some criticism of the male characters, but the denunciation of the attitudes of women is more significant. These wives and mothers, even if they fight to an extent, in the end give up in exchange for status and economic reasons. From a certain perspective, these socially appropriate women become less morally correct than the prostitutes rendered by the author. They are not only secondary characters, but people lacking character. The *machista*/*marianista* situation was clearly supported by women. This kind of female representation will slowly change as the years go by and different novels and female characters are introduced. The first hint of this can be seen at the conclusion of *La tía Julia y el escribidor*, where Patricia warns her husband, who represents Vargas Llosa's own younger self, that she would not be like his first wife Julia, twenty years her senior, who accepted his escapades in silence to keep the peace. Vargas Llosa begins to acknowledge then a change in the new generation of women.

1965 - La Casa Verde: intricacies of a Jungle

The second novel published by Vargas Llosa is, arguably, his masterpiece. In contrast with *La ciudad y los perros*, where the Leoncio Prado Military Academy

functions as the central background for the various threads and Teresa serves as the binding agent for the focal characters, this next work is a complex narration of numerous independent storylines which take place in different temporary planes and in diverse locations. It is perhaps as intricate as the Jungle where it begins. The seemingly independent accounts intersect at different moments and settings, showcase different characters, do not adjust to a linear chronological order, and take place in scenarios as broadly different as a brothel in the city of Piura, a military garrison and a Catholic mission run by nuns in the Jungle. As the narrative develops, these plots interweave, entwining the characters' thoughts with actions, their present lives with past endeavours, requiring the reader actively to search for clues until the stories converge.

The two broad settings for the novel are the coastal city of Piura and the Amazon Jungle. At the centre of the Piura storyline are two brothels named *Casa Verde*. The first one was built by Anselmo, a young man who showed up in Piura one day and made it his home until he died of old age. This original Casa Verde, branded a house of sin by father García, is burnt to the ground by a mob of women incited by the priest. What had enraged them was the discovery that it was Anselmo who had taken Antonia, a blind and mute girl who had disappeared months before. As the house is burning down, the mob witnesses the cook appear through the flames with a new-born in her arms. The baby was Anselmo's daughter, Chunga, born after Antonia had bled to death trying to give birth. Years later, it will be Chunga who establishes and runs a second Casa Verde.

In the second broad setting, the rainforest is shared by various groups: the authorities and military personnel of Santa María de Nieva; a group of nuns running a Catholic mission; Fushía, a thief and smuggler, and the indigenous people led by Jum. Against this backdrop, there is a power struggle between the hegemonic groups and the natives. The contrabandist traffics furs and rubber provided by the tribe's people for next to nothing, a situation Jum wants to alter organizing his men to sell directly to the buyers in the city. Fushía is actually only a front for the powerful Governor Reátegui, whose profits suffer as a result of Jum's actions, which he decides to end. Reátegui coordinates an expedition to find the indigenous leader, who is brought to Santa María de Nieva and tortured into understanding he had to keep doing business as usual. A little girl fought fiercely to remain with Jum and Reátegui, thinking that a girl with intelligent eyes—hers

are green—can be educated, takes her away and delivers her to the nuns. Aided by the military and abetted by the authorities, the nuns routinely kidnap indigenous girls and take them under their protection to teach them their religion and their "proper", civilized, way of life. The girl, Bonifacia, is brought up in just this way. She will become an essential character in both of the main storylines of the novel. Bonifacia's parentage is unclear, but what is certain is that she is not Jum's daughter. When she asks about that possibility, Madre Angélica tells her categorically: "No era tu padre . . . Nacerías en Urakusa pero eras hija de otro, no de ese malvado" (1993b, p. 88). If not Reáteguis', she must be the daughter of another "white man" but that is not made clear in the text. What is clear is that this powerful man liked defenseless women, he thought he was "buying" Lalita from Fushía when she was only 15 years old, also, it was difficult to believe that he would fall for a Christian (1993b, p. 92), which implies that he was used to go after *paganas salvajes*, women he could probably buy cheap or just take. Lalita is another character worthy of attention. Fushía is the one who meets the teenager who lives in the Amazonian city of Iquitos. He grooms and seduces her until she leaves her mother to move in with him. When the authorities pursue him for his illegal activities, he sells the girl to his boss, Reátegui, for a speedboat and some food to escape. The reader later finds out that it was a scam, and Lalita leaves the city with Fushía. The three girls mentioned, Bonifacia, Chunga and Lalita, stand out among the sizable number of individuals who populate this complex text.

In the case of Bonifacia, there is more than meets the eye. The green-eyed native girl handed to the nuns to be civilized, is of great consequence to the narration. The scene where she first speaks, anticipates her strength of character: "No me digas tonta, mamita … No me robaron …Yo les abrí la puerta …Yo las hice escapar, ¿ves que no soy tonta?" (1993b, p. 27). She is defiant not only through her action of letting the girls escape when she was supposed to be guarding them, but by making sure those who control her know it was her intention to do so. She projects a solid self-image and a determined and rebellious attitude. Her actions are deliberate, and she is far from being a fool. She makes that very clear. This character demonstrates that she has a mind of her own and is capable of decision making. It is true that the girl does not develop into the outright wilful persona one might expect from this scene but, as we shall see, it is the

intention in this section to demonstrate that she is more purposeful and deliberate than she may have been given credit for.

First, it is important to underscore that this girl is corralled into abandoning her sense of self-worth. It is tainted by nuns who constantly remind the child of her obscure origins, equating her with the devil, sometimes blurting out phrases like: “Eres el mismo demonio”. On other occasions they remind her that she used to be a little demon-like girl: “Tenías malos instintos, demonio, sólo las inmundicias te gustaban”; or predict her future: “Eras de este tamaño pero ya se podía adivinar lo que serías” (1993b, pp. 43–45). Bonifacia is in that sense not an undeveloped character, but the successfully created persona of someone who has been diminished and turned into a shy, fearful being but whose purposefulness still comes through her interactions and is underscored by her decisions.

When the Mother Superior wanted to give her to Reátegui, Bonifacia shows her spirited and wilful self, holding her head up even as tears were running down her cheeks, her lips tenaciously closed, her green eyes wet but defiant (1993b, p. 121). She cries and pleads. She does not want to go, and she achieves her goal. This is of great consequence to the novel, as Lalita and her partner Nieves take her in, and it is while with them that Bonifacia meets and marries the Sergeant. Soon, Bonifacia has to overcome yet another upheaval when she moves with her husband to his home city of Piura. Critics have divided opinions as to who is the link between the two major locations of *La Casa Verde*. Some critics, such as Williams, propose the Sergeant—who in Piura will go by his last name Lituma—is that connection through his military duty in the Jungle, for being in the mission when Bonifacia was a young native girl and by later marrying her and moving back to Piura (2001, p. 136). Kristal, on the other hand maintains that the central story, which brings together both major and seemingly unrelated plots, is that of Lituma and Bonifacia (2018, p. 133). Yet other critics, Standish among them, see in Bonifacia the structural link between the two major settings in the novel, one that foregrounds its symbolic dimension (1990, p. 169). Kristal further perceives Bonifacia’s story not only as the connection between the two worlds, but as central to one of the major plots of the narrative (2018, p. 135), while Williams later holds that Bonifacia’s story is the central one in the novel (2014, p. 156). This analysis subscribes to the latter perspective.

Although both Bonifacia and Lituma become key characters who not only merge the two main settings and connect various independent threads (undergoing change, as truly developed, round characters do), Bonifacia maintains her central place throughout the narrative. Lituma helps her move from one setting to the next, but his character is not the object of as much description. Bonifacia is at the centre of her narrative line at all times, while Lituma is absent for a long period while jailed.

Looking at Bonifacia in particular, she makes her own choices and also selects what to show of herself to others. She chooses to let the girls run away from the mission, as she chooses not to let the nuns know she speaks Aguaruna. When she is asked why, her response reveals a character who has her own criteria and acts in a considered fashion: "¿No ves cómo de todo las madres dicen ya te salió él salvaje? … ¿No ves cómo dicen ya estás comiendo con las manos, pagana? Me daba vergüenza, Madre" (1993b, p. 85). This contradicts the image Sara Castro-Klarén paints of a trusting, naive girl who has not learned to be cautious and wary (1990, p. 58). This will be evident again when she tells everyone that Anselmo was from the Jungle, as she was. Lituma did not believe that to be true for, if it were, she surely would have mentioned it before. Nobody asked, she explains and, besides, "¿No dices que las mujeres tienen que estar con la boca cerrada?" (1993b, p. 427). She listens and she learns. She chooses not to go with the Reáteguis' but to stay with Lalita and Nieves. While it might seem that Lituma attempted to force her sexually before they were married, it appears at the end of that sequence that that is not what actually happened. Disappointed, he remarks that "lo había dejado tirando cintura", but she then shyly puts her hands on his back and quietly tells him to his ear that she had never known a man, until then (1993b, p. 176). She takes control of the situation, not giving in to force but making a voluntary decision. Later, already in Piura, when her husband is imprisoned because of an ill-fated Russian roulette game, she enters a relationship with one of his best friends, Josefino, and is perfectly conscious of what she is doing, "Yo soy mala pero tú más que yo … Los dos nos vamos a condenar …Yo sé que es pecado y a pesar sigo contigo …Dios me va a castigar, y a ti (1993b, p. 350). Bonifacia is completely aware of her actions, yet she chooses what she believes to be a sin. She does this again when she decides not to have Lituma's son, and then when she becomes an *habitanta*, as the prostitutes at the Casa Verde were known. She becomes a

different person, even takes a different name, which signifies a disruption in the life and person of a character, signalling, as is the case of our protagonist, irreconcilable before and after social identities (Castro-Klarén, 1990, pp. 12, 38). Josefino (re)baptizes her Selvática (woman from the Jungle), and that becomes her working name. Bonifacia is not duped: “y por qué me dices Selvática si sabes que no me gusta, ¿ves, ves cómo eres malo?” (1993b, p. 350), fully aware that he has become her pimp as well as her lover. These interactions contrast with Zapata’s impression that Bonifacia is a female character who plays a traditional role, in her case of lover and prostitute, without developing an awareness of herself, in order to survive the miserable conditions imposed on her by Lituma’s decision to play Russian roulette (Zapata, 2002, p. 210). Bonifacia does know that she has other options. She ponders them: she can work as a maid in Piura and have her baby, go to Lima where Lituma is and work there while she waits for him to be released, or she can go back to Santa María de Nieva and stay with her friends or at the mission (1993b, p. 352). Summing up, she can wait for Lituma or not. She chooses not to; she chooses a different life.

Superficially, it may seem, as Boldori points out, that Vargas Llosa does not introduce any intrinsically outstanding female character who is able to escape her element or conditions (1974, p. 40), but one cannot disregard the fact that Bonifacia’s primary situation involves going around naked, barefoot and eating worms. By the end of the novel, her environment is no longer the jungle, and her life conditions had changed dramatically, although she has literally to sell herself to achieve this. Another approach to Bonifacia can be taken from the point of view of a different character of Vargas Llosa’s, Paul Gaugin from *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*. He describes how, among what are considered more primitive societies—as was the case of Bonifacia’s original tribe—, sex is free from inhibitions: “del terror al cuerpo, a la libertad, a la desnudez, al estado de Naturaleza” (Vargas Llosa, 2003a, p. 472). From this perspective, although it seems she did one way or another escape her primal circumstances, her ancestral memory may have overpowered the fears instilled by the nuns, allowing her to embrace freedom through her body.

On the other hand, prostitution is a profession that for some (including Bonifacia) is a choice and implies power. Towards the end of the novel, she has reached a new, if sui

generis, confidence in herself. At one point, Lituma called her *recogida* to which she replies, "¿Mi plata también te parece recogida?", and someone else warns him, "Cuidado que se caliente ella, más bien … Y te deje y tú te mueras de hambre. No te metas con el hombre de la familia, inconquistable" (1993b, p. 428). It is notable that a woman who is the breadwinner is no longer considered a woman and, even if in jest, becomes the man of the family. The balance of power seems to have shifted. She has created her own order in her world and seems to be almost proud of what she has achieved, "No soy tu prima", she told one of Lituma's friends, "Soy una puta y una recogida" (1993b, p. 428). While Bonifacia's social position may not be enviable, her role in the novel is much more important and consequential than those of the women in *La ciudad y los perros*. She reveals more substance than does Teresa or any of the main characters' mothers. José Luis Martín goes as far as to say in 1993 that Bonifacia "se levanta de esta novela como el personaje mítico más logrado de la narrativa hispano-americana contemporánea" (Flórez, 1993, pp. 68–69). Still, she fits the mould of either mother or prostitute so prevalent during this stage of the author's production.

Lalita, a diminishing force of nature. While Bonifacia made the most of the circumstances she encountered, Lalita creates her circumstances. She does not wait for life to change, "una buena mujer la Lalita pero, eso sí, tenía su carácter" (1993b, p. 147), that was the opinion of Adrián Nieves, the third man in her life. She was a force who took her destiny into her own hands. In reviewing some of Vargas Llosa's female characters, among them Lalita, Kristal and King point out that they are primarily accessories of men, objects of their desire who serve to focus attention on them. While this is true, it would also be important to highlight that Lalita's role is one that begins to part with the paradigm of the "recurring female character type in Vargas Llosa's fiction … a woman who responds with resilience and vitality to untold humiliation and abuse" (Kristal, 2012, p. 131). She was not a woman who took her luck and resigned herself to it. It is true her story is necessary to enrich Fushía's character, and that the reader learns much of her story through various of his dialogues with Aquilino, as when he boasts about his having her: "Era como tener una mujer y una hija a la vez, Aquilino" (1993b, p. 72). Such a perspective implies paedophilia and is reminiscent of Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita. One should not lose sight of the fact that the girl Fushía seduces at fifteen years of age evolves

subsequently. Lalita sheds the submissive daughter role; she grows into a woman who overcomes it. It is she who seduces Nieves and plans their getaway, and it was she who decides that the Sergeant, later known as Lituma, would marry Bonifacia and it is also Lalita who devises a plan to achieve this purpose. As the name change marks a break in Bonifacia/Selvática's character, so Lalita losing her beauty and becoming extremely fat, *una barbaridad*, symbolizes a dramatic change in her identity. When Nieves becomes the scapegoat for Reátegui and Fushía and decides to turn himself in, her strength seems to fade. "Mejor nunca hagas planes…Después, si no salen es peor. Piensa sólo en lo que está pasando en el momento, Bonifacia". For the first time Lalita is dispirited and without a plan. For some time Huambachano or Pesado—a nickname given to someone annoying—had been after a woman, any woman who was white, and Lalita took him. She did not want more children, but he did, and she gave in as she gave in to life as well, accepting what it brought without fighting anymore. Lalita is not a fully developed character, and her importance may be circumstantial, but she also is a step ahead if compared to those in the previous novel.

La Chunga, a resolute woman. Chunga is the product of an illicit relationship between Toñita and Anselmo, and her birth and rescue from the burning Casa Verde by Angélica Mercedes (1993b, p. 222) seems almost a miracle performed by an angel of mercy. Of the female characters in *La Casa Verde*, Chunga is the one considered to have most agency. Boldori describes her as, "La única mujer que maneja los hilos accionales", but notes that she is also qualified as *marimacho* and is marginalized from the female group (1974, p. 40). Chunga does break the framework of mothers and prostitutes: she actually wants nothing from men—but their money. Juana Baura, the woman who had raised her mother, took Chunga in after the fire, and after her terrible experience of Antonia's abduction, she instilled in Chunga distrust of men, love of money and the habit of loneliness (1993b, pp. 288–289). The owner of the second Casa Verde makes a decision early on: she has never been in love, nor would she be. Chunga makes this perfectly clear in her eponymous drama penned by Vargas Llosa in 1986, *La Chunga*, in which is the central character: "Prefiero vivir sin hombre como un hongo. Pero a mí nadie me va a hacer arrodillar jamás. Ni decirme que tengo la vida prestada" (1990a, p. 67). This determination marks her personality. Luis Loayza finds in the women in *La Casa*

Verde a characteristic kindness, but is careful to mark the exception of Chunga, whom he describes as masculinized, tough, lonely and spiteful (1972, p. 137). The birth of this character is noteworthy not only because she is the first female who shows real determination that endures, but because she, like Lituma, will be a recurring character in Vargas Llosa's fictional world. Intertextual references are abundant in future novels and in the drama *La Chunga* (1986). Regarding Chunga's character in the play, Concepción Reverte proposes that Vargas Llosa takes to the stage a woman who, in a *macho* society, has been forced to adopt a manly appearance and behaviour as a means of self-defence (1998, p. 415). She has become a protagonist. It is worth mentioning that Chunga's character in the play exhibits the same personality as she does in the novel written twenty years before, the difference being that in the theatrical version she becomes a main character whose name is part of the billboard.

Female roles *in La Casa Verde*. In this, his second novel, the reader still finds women portraying the roles of the two fundamental stereotypes the author assigns to women: mothers and prostitutes, or variations that do not stray far from these. There are also differing opinions regarding the role of female characters in this novel. Boldori considers them secondary to their male counterparts, oppressed victims with no chance to overcome their circumstances. Women's actions are kept in a subordinate role and the development of their characters is hampered by the needs of their male counterparts; she is a victim of men and is perceived only from their perspective (1974, p. 39). Boland also considers the women who are assigned outstanding roles subservient to men. He uses a phrase coined by Vargas Llosa in his 1977 speech when entering the Peruvian Academy of Language. Here Vargas Llosa refers to a society described in José María Arguedas's literature as *chauvinista fálica*: a society where women are sexual victims of men: "un mundo donde . . . 'Con su voluntad, sin su voluntad, por el mandato de Dios, la mujer es para el goce del macho'" (Vargas Llosa, 1978, p. 105). Boland claims that the women in *La Casa Verde*, "even the formidable pair of Bonifacia and Lalita are portrayed as adjuncts to the male world: they are products, indeed victims, of an environment dominated by what Vargas Llosa has defined as 'phallic chauvinism'" (Boland, 1990, p. 126). This perspective supports the view that the purpose of these women is to please men. At the other extreme, Gerald Martin considers that Chunga, Lalita and Bonifacia are

the only female characters in Vargas Llosa's work who triumph over their male partners or antagonists (2012, p. 30). Each of these viewpoints has value, and each has followers. The moment in which each opinion is issued must be considered, taking into account not only the passage of time, but also the "situatedness" of critics whose personal circumstances influence their perspectives. Critics and readers have different appraisals of the aspects of fiction they read or reread. Times have changed considerably between the 1960s and the first decades of the new millennium, and the changes in the perspective of women and from the perspective of women have not been the exception but an extraordinary example. The present critic's perspective is closer to that of Martin: Bonifacia, Lalita and Chunga do overcome their circumstances and appear triumphant over the men they accompany.

In comparison with the previous work of Vargas Llosa, and from this analytical perspective, the women in *La Casa Verde* are crucial to the plot, interesting personas who develop as the narrative unfolds. Bonifacia is a character who is transformed from an uneducated Aguaruna child who could not bring herself to wear shoes to a woman who not only supports herself but her husband and his friends. She speaks for herself when she wants to. She also remains quiet about certain things when she believes it would not be in her best interest to share them. Bonifacia is not controlled by men, even if on a first reading it might seem she is. She is perfectly capable of making her own decisions, and she has done so consistently. She let two girls escape against the nuns' orders because she believed they would be better off going back to their own environment. She does not let the Sergeant force himself on her but decides to give herself to him. She becomes *la Selvática* and takes a new profession, that of prostitute. *La Selvática* is perfectly conscious of her reality, as self-acknowledged *puta* and *recogida*. From this perspective, Bonifacia would not need Lituma or any other character to stand by herself. She is a protagonist on her own.

Lalita may not be as round a character or as self-sufficient as Bonifacia, but she definitely is a more developed female character than previous ones. It is true though that she is dependent on men. She is not able to be without one, but she does procure them for herself. The first one was Fushía. She agreed to run away with this older man, wealthier than her, after helping him to trick Julio Reátegui. Afterwards, she fancies Adrián Nieves,

whom she pursues—not the other way around. She clearly chooses him over the man with whom she had run away before: “Es limpio, educado, se quita el sombrero para saludarme, y que Fushía no me insulte tanto”. Later, it is she who visits him one night in his hut, naked under her skimpy jungle *itípak* dress, and who asks him “¿De qué se asusta? ¿Por qué se voltea, diga?” (1993b, pp. 287, 154)—and with Nieves she abandons Fushía and makes a new life. When Nieves is imprisoned, as she still needs a man to support her, Lalita decides to pay attention to Huambachano, forms yet another family with him, gains weight, loses her beauty and stays with this man to the end. With her beauty goes her power to choose, but she is still able to keep a man by her side. These two women, a prostitute in its true definition and a woman who uses her body to attain the changes she pursues are uncontestably more developed than *La pies dorados* or the other prostitutes who make a brief appearance in *La ciudad y los perros*.

Motherhood is also presented through these women. There is Lalita’s mother. This woman is the first mother the reader meets in *La Casa Verde*. She is introduced as an *alcahueta,* word with a negative connotation which describes a person who facilitates or conceals a love or sexual relationship between two other people. She knew what Fushía wanted, while the older man knew that the only thing that interested this parent was money. This mother went along with Fushía’s suggestion that the fifteen-year-old girl stop going to school and work with him. As a reward the unscrupulous mother receives some presents, and when young Lalita runs away with the older man, she accepts one thousand *soles* as a gift. She accepts handouts in exchange for turning a blind eye, and only goes to see the lawyer *doctor* Portillo afterwards. She figured she could be awarded damages from Fushía, as she had the right to her daughter, which he had taken from her (1993b, p. 74). Lalita is treated as merchandise by this mother. There is no hint of filial love or concern. This detachment from their offspring is a characteristic of many of the mothers in Vargas Llosa's work.

It is noteworthy that Lalita is, on the contrary, one of the few women in Vargas Llosa’s fiction who enjoys the role of mother and loves her children. She is adamant she would not leave her first son, Aquilino, when she runs away with Nieves, and then she has more children with him and later with Huambachano. “Tiene un montón de hijos, no me acuerdo cuántos, muchos . . . Ella no quería más hijos, pero el guardia sí quería”

(1993b, pp. 388, 389). When she was young and pretty, she wanted her son with her. As years went by, she resigned herself to being a mother many more times. That was what her new man wanted. In a way, motherhood took away her beauty and her freedom. She begins as a seductress and ends as a mother. The last the reader learns of Lalita, is that she is the proud mother of an adult Aquilino who is about to get married. Contrastingly, Bonifacia chose to have an abortion and dedicate herself to prostitution. While Lalita has always been dependent on a man to support her, Bonifiacia became economically self-sufficient. One can begin to see a contrast between women who decide to be mothers and those who choose the opposite.

The women in this novel do not necessarily remain secondary to their male counterparts, although in some instances they are, and the result of this is as ambivalent as are the opinions about them. What is certain is that these characters are good examples of a reality that was prevalent in certain underdeveloped areas of some countries: they have to be considered under that light. In 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" to frame the intersection of various interactions of race and gender in the context of violence against women of colour, to articulate the interaction of racism and patriarchy, as well as to illustrate the location of these women in the spectrum of the subordination systems and within feminism and anti-racism (2006, p. 16). Although the term was originally conceived to describe the situation of women of colour and violence against them in the United States, it applies as well to certain groups in Peru—and the world for that matter. Those categorized as of a different race, class or gender from those of the hegemonic group are victims not of one, but of a series of discriminations as individuals or as groups. They are at a disadvantage in more than one respect and face a complex array of prejudices that "intersect" and compound their problems, deepening their marginalization and lowering their standing in the social hierarchy. This is certainly the situation of Bonifacia and Lalita who are not only women in a patriarchal country, but are women who are also poor, uneducated and in the case of Bonifacia indigenous, belonging to an ethnic group that was considered *salvaje*, as she was constantly reminded by the nuns. As such, these women are as successful as they could be at that time and place. The novel is still set in the 1960s, during the military government of general Velasco and, although popular female organizations had begun to emerge during his

regime, there had not been substantial political change for women in Peru yet. This situation only begins to change in the 1970s when Peruvian women were allowed to cast their vote and, at an international level, the United Nations instituted the Decade for Women. For the time being, women still have to depend upon male characters if the novel is to remain realistic.

1969 - Conversación en La Catedral: the end of a period

The third great novel penned by Vargas Llosa during the 1960s is one that closes the decade and concludes his first cycle as author. This is a political story that has to do with corruption, moral dilemmas, disillusionment and existentialism. *Conversación en La Catedral* is considered the great novel about urban life in Perú and a solid picture of corruption in Latin-American society (Kristal, 2018, p. 147). The central character, Santiago Zavala, is profoundly critical of his country's situation. To be true to his values, he chooses to attend a university where his college mates fight for social justice. He meets Aída, who would be the object of his affections, and is ashamed to find himself on the side of the spectrum his new friend is resisting. To be consistent with his feelings and true to himself, Santiago abandons his home, status and privilege, and embraces a modest life on his own. This is a complex fiction in which, years after he has forsaken the family and social status into which he was born, Santiago casually runs into Ambrosio. This man used to be his father's chauffeur and, unbeknownst to Santiago and the rest of his family, also his secret sexual partner. Ambrosio had a similarly secret relationship with Amalia. This woman is an important character in the development of the story and the link between two different worlds. Santiago asks Ambrosio to join him in *La Catedral,* a bar after which the novel is named, and the two men hold an intense and powerful four-hour conversation. Santiago has many questions, and Ambrosio holds many answers. Through this exchange and interpolated dialogues, scenes and also memories recreated in Santiago and Ambrosio's inner worlds, the reader learns about their lives and the lives of those who had been around them. Many secrets are revealed. This novel is considered Vargas Llosa's first dictatorship work. It is also an exposé of the country's social and moral characteristics and values, a depiction of its internal tensions and conflicts. The reader becomes familiar with the rampant corruption in the different social and political strata of

the country and is introduced to an underworld in which female characters abound. This analysis will focus primarily on them.

The first political novel: a total success. His first dictatorship novel *Conversación en La Catedral* is not only one of Vargas Llosa's most accomplished works of fiction but is also considered among the greatest Latin American novels. The author has confessed publicly that of all his novels, this is probably the one that was the most challenging for him to write. Anchored in history, this is an ambitious piece during a period when the author was in search of the total novel. He cleverly utilized modernist techniques, interior monologues, spatial and temporal planes, which added "resonances and dissonances between events and conversations taking place in different times and places", and an indirect discourse through an impersonal narrator who was able to express the character's thoughts and create intrigue (Kristal and King, 2012, pp. 3–4). This belongs to the category of difficult literature, that which is consistently challenging and requires time, concentration and the participation of the reader to decipher the literary keys (Vargas Llosa and Gallo, 2017, p. 67). At the core of the narrative is the question Santiago Zavala asks himself about his country, "¿En qué momento se había jodido el Perú?" (2001b, p. 17). This realist, pessimistic observation in the form of a question drives Santiago throughout the narrative. Ambrosio's answers to his inquiries about family matters take him into a broader space and allow the author to expound on a national reality that he harshly criticized. The author wrote this novel at the peak of his socialist period. It is set during the government of General Manuel A. Odría (1948-56), encompassing the end of that period and overlapping with the next government, that of Manuel Prado (1939-45 and 1956-62). This is a piece of literature that has passed the acid test of time in the novels of the Boom (Vargas Llosa and Gallo, 2017, p. 32). The main theme is corruption: corruption in the political sphere that permeates his close environment and to which a disgusted Zavalita is not willing to conform.

The regime of general Odría is known in Peru as *el ochenio*, as it lasted for eight years. This period was characterized by repression, authoritarianism, government paternalism, control over social movements and ruthless persecution, plagued with the incarceration of those who opposed the regime, ruled by an internal security law that in effect destroyed the rule of law and affected the political, cultural and intellectual spheres

of the country while in reality safeguarding the interests of the oligarchy (Contreras and Cueto, 2015, p. 311). General Odría assumed power by ousting Dr. José Luis Bustamante y Rivero (1945-48), a friend of Vargas Llosa's family. His dictatorial government was democratized by his call for elections in 1950. His regime did not allow candidates from the left or APRA (*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*) and, at the last minute, declared invalid the candidacy of his only rival, Ernesto Montagne. General Odría won the elections of 1950 as the only running candidate. Many of the abuses of his authoritarian government are depicted in *Conversación en La Catedral*. This analysis, however, will focus on the women represented there.

Gullible, kind Amalia. This character, essential for the development of the plot, goes through different phases. In the beginning these changes are not sought by her but brought about or orchestrated by others. As the novel develops, so does this character. Amalia, as well as Ambrosio, are bridge characters, needed to link the Zavalas's upper-class world with other spheres. Amalia begins as an innocent girl, a maid in Santiago Zavala's home. She is in love with Ambrosio Pardo, the chauffer. The girl cannot understand why he does not want their relationship to be made public and breaks up with him. This is kept secret. Parallel to this, Santiago lusts for Amalia. He and a friend attempt to seduce her using an aphrodisiac. His parents, Zoila and Fermín, suspect something and Zoila immediately fires Amalia. Fermín, a kind man who had figured out that Amalia is not the one to blame, offers the now jobless woman a position at his lab. She takes this job and enjoys it. "Gano más que antes, pensaba, trabajo menos y tengo una amiga" (2001b, p. 104); it is a good life. This stepping out from the role of servant seems to indicate that a female character has eluded the author's previous stereotypes and patriarchal dictums. That did not last. She works in a non-domestic environment, earns her own living and has work friends. Then she meets Trinidad. For a while they date, and each keeps their own life, work and interests, until he makes the decision that they should live together. At that point, he insists that she quit her job. More than a request, it is a demand. Is he not capable of supporting her, he asks—after all, he is a man. She pleads with him, trying to make him understand that she likes her job, but he insists that she should dedicate herself to cook for him, wash his clothes and later take care of the children. The next day Amalia quits her job (2001b, p. 110). It was uncommon at the time

for a girl like Amalia to work outside the home instead of dedicating herself to domestic labour. Straying away from the roles traditionally ascribed to each gender by *machismo* and *marianismo* would go against the natural order of affairs and the generalized view of the proper place of women. Up to this point most of the decisions in Amalia's life have been facilitated for her. She had decided to end her relationship with Ambrosio, but it was a reaction to his wanting to keep it secret. She began a job outside the home as a result of being fired and was offered the job to calm don Fermín's guilty conscience. Then, she quit that job at the lab because Trinidad demanded it.

After giving up her job, she has to endure his bad temper and stay home while he goes, alone, to the stadium (which they used to enjoy together) because the single salary was not enough for her to join him. So, Amalia's world changes, but so does Amalia. As the novel develops, and following the renewal of her relationship with Ambrosio, she seems to have internalized the norm. A narrator describes how she feels that being busy all the time, cooking, washing Ambrosio's clothes and taking care of their daughter Amalita Hortensia had been the remedy for the nightmares she used to have (2001b, p. 607). Amalia's mind has been reframed. She has been corralled back to where, according to the society of the time, a woman like her belongs: the house, the kitchen and the children. Her power to earn a living and be independent has been taken away, even if, ultimately, with her consent.

Amalia's character goes through various stages. First, she is a trusting maid. Then, she becomes a packer at the lab and Trinidad's woman. The following period is traumatic for Amalia: she has no job, Trinidad has died at the hands of government henchmen and their son is stillborn. She is depressed and unemployed. It is at this point that she runs into Ambrosio again. He continues to be Fermín's chauffeur. Trying to help her, Ambrosio tells Amalia he knows of a house where she can work as a maid again. This leads to a new period in Amalia's life. She is hired by Hortensia, *la Musa*, a renowned prostitute and kept woman of the Minister of Interior Cayo Bermúdez. He is a very dangerous, powerful man who is also after Fermín Zavala. This is where the first part of the novel leaves Amalia, as the link between the Zavala's and Bermúdez' worlds. Up to this point, Amalia has moved as required by the larger design of the plot, but her character takes a turn, not a full turn, but a noticeable one nonetheless. There are

moments after those life-altering events when some strength shows through, and she can be seen from a new perspective. Her character is less one dimensional, she shares her thoughts, and those of others, about herself and her physical appearance. She analyses herself, allowing the reader to reach her inner emotions through conversations with a friend and interior monologues while she fights her feelings towards Ambrosio (2001b, p. 322). The reader learns from her how and why she decided to terminate her previous relationship with Ambrosio, and how she stuck to her decision. There are other instances when she demonstrates capacity for introspection and recognizes her own evolution, even if these thoughts are communicated to the reader by a narrator in the third person. “Se daba cuenta de las charcas de agua hedionda, de las nubes de moscas, de los perros tan flacos, y se asombraba pensando que había querido pasar el resto de la vida en el callejón cuando murieron su hijito y Trinidad” (2001b, p. 350). The reader knows what she thinks through her own thoughts, which testifies to her subjectivity. This woman of humble origins is not driven by money or power. Amalia is a compassionate, intuitive human being and a very important protagonist in the story (Flórez, 1993, p. 53). When Hortensia loses everything and most of her so-called friends abandon her, Amalia faithfully stays with the boss who cannot pay her anymore, but whom she considers almost a friend. The other maids, Símula and her daughter Carlota, find new jobs and give Amalia advice: “Tienes que irte tú también, Amalita, mi mamá dice que esta casa se hunde” (2001b, p. 516). Amalia’s character gradually becomes more whole. She questions Ambrosio’s fears of Fermín and Hortensia and after she becomes a mother, a stronger, more self-assured Amalia emerges. Towards the end of the narration, it would be Amalia who gives a naive Ambrosio advice regarding economic issues. Ambrosio is at the centre of one of the main plots, but Amalia ceases to be a mere supporting character for him after the first of the four main sections of the novel. Like Bonifacia in *La Casa Verde*, she has to be approached in the context of her origins and the goals a girl like her would set for her life. Throughout the narrative she alludes to cooking for a man, washing his clothes and taking care of him and his children as rewarding activities and remedies for undesirable situations. As Selvática did before her, Amalia makes the best of what she is given in life, and before her premature death she has reached a point where her aspirations are fulfilled not by Ambrosio, but by being with Ambrosio. From a certain perspective, she breaks the

mould of the servant. Even if that was her initial role in the novel, by the end of her life she was the partner of the man she loved and was doing what she wanted to be doing. She did not struggle to get to that point though, she went where life took her. Her literal death mimics the way she lived: she does not know exactly what is happening, she just feels herself floating. It is important to highlight here that her death was caused by childbirth. As will be discussed later, motherhood seems to be related to the physical or symbolic death of various characters.

Muses and prostitutes. These women are also more developed characters. In the first place, they are not the usual prostitutes as the women who took care of the young Jaguar or *La pies dorados*. These are women whose feelings and intentions the reader does get to know and who are crucial to the development of the plot. Hortensia, *la Musa,* was the kept woman of Cayo Bermúdez. He gave her an allowance and paid for her house and expenses in exchange for her entertaining him and his friends. Amalia learns from Ambrosio that she is looking for a maid and applies for the job. She gets it. Hortensia is the complete opposite of Amalia's previous mistress of the house: "No era estirada como la señora Zoila" (2001b, p. 262). Amalia feels at ease with her, and the young woman comes to feel that her boss considers her almost as a friend, so much so that she never leaves her when everyone else does. She also names her daughter Amalita Hortencia, combining her name with that of *la Musa*. When Bermúdez abandons Hortensia she finds a new love in Lucas, a scoundrel who abandons her six months later, but not before making her almost destitute: with money gone, he steals what was left of her jewellery. Shortly after, *la Musa* tries to kill herself. She has to move to a rundown apartment and begin turning to prostitution to support herself. *La Musa* takes to drugs and drinking in excess and in her desperation decides to blackmail Santiago's father, Fermín Zavala. She knows the story of Fermín, nicknamed *Bola de Oro* because of his affair with his chauffeur and threatens Fermín with divulging it. As Queta has warned her, she has a bad ending. Unbeknownst to Fermín, his chauffeur and lover kills Hortensia. Although Hortensia does not tell her own story and it is through a narrator and Amalia's thoughts that the reader learns about her, *la Musa* does have her own story. She is a prostitute with a big heart. When Amalia needs her, she is there for her maid, taking her to the dentist, giving her advice, being careful that she takes care of herself when she becomes pregnant

and taking her to the hospital to deliver her baby. Hortensia is also a whole character in the sense that she has feelings that are communicated. When she meets Lucas, she becomes a woman in love. She is passionate, she suffers, she attempts suicide, and she tries to go on with her life. Hortensia does not seem to be just a character who is there to serve the needs of the narration although she fulfils that purpose; she also has her own story and feelings. *La Musa* evolves—albeit in a negative way.

Queta is also a prostitute. Although she does work at a brothel, she is pretty, exclusive, expensive and intelligent. She is the star. This woman also works for Cayo Bermúdez. Under his orders, she entertains other men whom he wants to keep close and controlled. Queta and Hortensia engage in a homosexual relationship that begins to satisfy Bermúdez and develops into a true friendship. Ambrosio, mesmerized by Queta, becomes one of her customers. The woman is conscious of the great efforts he makes to pay her steep rate, and gradually the economic transaction develops into a bond closer to a friendship. She becomes his confidant, which, towards the end, allows her to piece things together and discover that it was Ambrosio who had killed Hortensia. Queta's character does undergo change. First, she is strong and glamourous, at least to the admiring eyes of Amalia, whose perspective is what informs the reader. Then, the aspect of her being a true, faithful friend to Hortensia, even when she has already lost everything is highlighted. As in the case of her friend, the evolution of this character is not for the best. She leaves the narrative as a woman consumed by suffering, both spiritually for the loss of her friend and physically because of a sexual disease.

These women seem at the beginning to be in charge of their lives and their bodies. They seem to have chosen their physical attributes to exert power over men. As the narration advances, though, it becomes clear that they could not depend on themselves to survive. Their bodies were useful as long as they were favoured by powerful men. These are women who are dependent on men and whose fortune is up to the masculine will. In this sense, they are still very much secondary characters.

An intellectual: Aída. Although a marginal character whose role in the plot is limited, Aida is nonetheless important: she is the first female character in Vargas Llosa's oeuvre who has a true interest beyond men or domesticity—at least at the beginning of the novel. She is a self-declared communist, an opinionated girl who is studying to have a

career and who meets Santiago during their entrance examination for San Marcos University. That university is presented as one where much social activism takes place. Both Aída and Santiago are admitted, and, in parallel to his falling in love with Aída, Zavalita starts to embrace her socialist ideals. He frequents students who favour Marxism and have revolutionary ideas which he wants to share. This female character is a pioneer in Vargas Llosa's fiction since she is the first to influence a male character. Her ideas are the force behind his, though doubts and contradictions are inevitable for Santiago. "Las dudas eran fatales, decía Aída, te paralizan y no puedes hacer nada" (2001b, p. 135). She is sure about her convictions. She also knows, and always reminds Santiago even if jokingly, that he comes from the bourgeoisie. Aída, Santiago and their friend Jacobo become activists and join the communist cell named Cahuide in San Marcos. Jacobo, also in love with Aída, manages to have members regrouped so he is assigned with her while getting rid of Santiago, who is integrated into a different circle. When Santiago realizes Jacobo's trick, he withdraws. Unfortunately, when the love factor is incorporated, Aída's character reverts to characteristics more in line with previous females in Vargas Llosa's work. Her self-confidence diminishes and for the first time she does not know what to do. She has doubts. The last time Santiago sees Aída is at a formal Cahuide meeting. Aída and Jacobo had fought because he stopped her from going on a mission she had been assigned and that he considered dangerous. She asked for a vote to expel Jacobo from Cahuide. Her request was approved, but when it was her turn to cast her vote, she started to cry. The determined girl had lost her essence once love was involved. Years later, Santiago tells this story to his close friend Carlitos, who expresses an opinion about women in general: "Las mujeres son formidables… Rumberas, comunistas, burguesas, cholas, todas tienen algo que no tenemos nosotros. ¿No sería mejor ser marica, Zavalita? Entenderse con algo que conoces, y no con esos animales extraños" (2001b, p. 230). "Strange animals" is what Carlitos calls women. In Friedan's *Feminine Mystiqu*e there are continuous references to neurosis in relation to a woman looking for a career for herself, or to a woman who repudiates conventional behaviour. Friedan quotes an editor explaining that those women must be neurotic and aggressive. Following Freudian thought and tradition, the author explains, women were taught to pity the neurotic, unfeminine, unhappy women who wanted to be poets, physicists or presidents. Further,

she expounds, the concept “penis envy” coined by Freud had been seized upon in the United States to explain all that was wrong with American women, and that such a rationalization had been popularized by men in public or authoritative positions such as psychoanalysts, sociologists, educators, writers, marriage counsellors and religious men, among others. Freud’s followers wanted to help women rid themselves of their neurotic desire to be equal, to reach fulfilment as women by affirming their natural inferiority (1997, pp. 102, 58, 168–169, 186). Aída could be an example for these Freudian followers to use. The leap forwards that women in Vargas Llosa’s literature had taken through the construction of Aída, a new woman, is undone by her breakdown. Later, Aída marries Jacobo and probably has children, according to what Santiago confides to Ambrosio. Jacobo is the one whose picture appears in the newspapers when captured or released. The spirited girl gets side-tracked and assumes the more natural role of mother while still providing a glimpse of what might have been.

Zoila, the mother outside the stereotype. Zoila deserves a brief note. She is a minor character, yet it is interesting that she does not fall into the stereotypical role of mothers. She is much more concerned with social appearances than with her children. She is never the one who looks for Santiago or asks about him. Santiago is never at ease with her. Her obsession with appearances and prejudices might have even inclined Santiago to live the kind of life he chose. “Ya no eras como ellos, Zavalita, ya eras un cholo. Piensa [Santiago]: ya sé por qué te venía esa furia apenas me veías, mamá. No se sentía victorioso ni contento, sólo impaciente por partir” (2001b, p. 600). Zoila appears to have caused deep resentment in her son. It is significant that, once estranged, Santiago only asks about his father and that it is only his father who is always concerned about him. In most cases the contact between a distanced son and the family is the mother, especially in the case of the author. The relationship with these literary parents contrasts with that of other adolescent sons Vargas Llosa creates. As Roy Boland points out, the author typically recreates in them his own Oedipal crisis (1990, p. 33). That Santiago refers to Fermín as *papá* (father) but to Zoila as *la mamá* (the mother) creates some distance between him and his mother. She is less of the diminished victims who populate *La ciudad y los perros* and more of a representative of society—prejudiced, old fashioned and conservative. She is punished with a husband who believes it is better to be dishonest

and marry a woman in order to conceal his sexual preference and conform with the hypocritical society of the times. She is further punished because everyone outside her family knows this secret. They are both victims of the implacable norms of society. It is an interesting coincidence that the reader will find another Zoila in *La tía Julia*. In that novel Mario is introduced to Zoilita at a seance. She is in purgatory and asks for people to pray for her to be able to leave it sooner (2006, p. 76). This is Vargas Llosa's last novel of his socialist period and Zoila represents the social sector most deplored by Santiago, one that has much to atone for.

The female roles in *Conversación en La Catedral*. There are remarkable female characters in this novel. Amalia, as well as the more colourful Hortensia and Queta embody women who in the end are powerless without a man. They represent a social sector which made it extremely difficult for them to expect much from life. In common with other social groups—of lower economic status associated for example with race and provincial origin—women were victims of many forms of discrimination (see above, the reference to Intersectionality on page 66). Nevertheless, Amalia rises above the role of servant and becomes a willing mother and wife while *la Musa* and Queta, far from finding an escape route from the sordid world of prostitution, fall deeper into the morass. The dirty world they transit is represented by the last scene where Queta appears, taking a bath in water that turns black.

Aída on the other hand stands for the new woman who is emerging, and Zoila is an exception to the mother/victim to whom the reader was accustomed in Vargas Llosa's early fiction. Zoila is a victim in another sense, of hypocrisy, though she is unaware of it. While at first glance she may appear to be a strong and determined woman, she is probably part of the gossip and the object of the pity of her friends, without being aware of it. These are small advances in the outlook for women. In *Cinco esquinas* some of these themes will reappear: the two heterosexual female friends who explore a lesbian relationship, the corruption in the news reporting industry, government interference with the freedom of speech and the two omnipotent men who run a profoundly corrupt country. But the characters Vargas Llosa constructs then will display completely contrasting attitudes to those of *Conversación*. Women, in particular, take action and counter the evils that defeated the protagonists in the earlier novel (see below, p. 167).

The decade that comes next, though, the 1970s, represents a transition in the work of Vargas Llosa. His focus shifts from *the total novel* to a simpler, more accessible literature that includes humour and is extremely popular among his readership. Women in those novels will also constitute transitional figures between the secondary characters of the 1960s and the female protagonists of the new millennium.

Chapter Two

The 1970s: not many options, but change is on the horizon

The ME decade

The beginning of this period found Vargas Llosa enjoying the status of an established writer. His first three books had been published to wide acclaim. He was an undisputed member of the Boom and enjoyed world-wide recognition. The author was married to Patricia Llosa Urquidi, and they had two sons. In 1970, after accepting Balcells's offer (see above, p. 36), he and his family moved to Barcelona. In 1971 as a consequence of the Padilla affair, Vargas Llosa withdrew his support for the Cuban Revolution, a development that contributed to the end of the Boom (see above, p. 41). In 1973 he published *Pantaleón y las visitadoras*, which marked the author's debut within a different, lighter literary world. His only daughter Morgana was born in 1974 and that same year the family moved to Lima. *La tía Julia y el escribidor*, the first book where the author himself features as a character, with his own name and his personal life forming an important part of the plot, was published in 1977.

Regarding politics and socioeconomic aspects, Peru was undergoing difficult times. There was no reason to be optimistic at the end of the military regime; the economic policy of General Velasco's administration, driven by his political project of creating a powerful, omnipresent state able to intervene and "orient" the course of the country towards the Soviet Union, Cuba, and China, resulted in disaster (Pásara, 1982, pp. 3–7, 22). Those years were devastating for the country. Through Uncle Ataúlfo, a character in *Travesuras de la niña mala*, the voice of the author is heard describing the consequences of the Velasco regime: his rule lasted seven years, during which time economic controls and interventions, nationalizations and agrarian reform were put in place in an attempt to correct the social injustices, the exploitation and the inequalities that plagued the country. The problem was that the policy was counterproductive, as Uncle Ataúlfo expounds: in the end the poor were poorer and their savings were depleted along with foreign investment, whereas tension and violence increased (2008, p. 167). On August 29, 1975, an internal *coup* within the Armed Forces placed general Francisco Morales Bermúdez Cerruti in command of the country. He led the "Second Phase" of the military government. A sector of the military and General Morales Bermúdez heard the

popular demand for the return to democracy and in April 1980 the citizens of Peru went back to the polls to elect a democratic president. After twelve years of military dictatorship in the country, General Morales-Bermúdez returned power to civilian rule. In an ironical turn, Fernando Belaúnde Terry, who had been overthrown in 1968, was elected for a second period. The negative record of the military government includes the decline in agrarian productivity, the retraction of private investment, a large foreign debt and excessive expenditure on armaments. In addition, opposition newspapers were confiscated from their owners, handed over to pro-government editors, and subjected to strict censorship (Contreras and Cueto, 2015, pp. 365, 253, 256). Although Uncle Ataúlfo believed the last four years of the dictatorship, when general Morales Bermúdez was in power, were somewhat more positive and less populist than the previous seven, the media remained under state control until Belaúnde's second government, when he returned them to their private owners.

The ME decade for women. Meanwhile, around the world there were significant changes that affected women and their movements as well. The United States women's rights movement, also known as the women's liberation movement, championed equal rights and opportunities and promoted greater personal freedoms. The United States Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision proved to be a pivotal success for the American feminist movement. The court ruled in favour of a woman who had been denied an abortion, pointing out that a state cannot interfere with a woman's right to choose abortion during the first two trimesters of pregnancy. This case set a precedent and made abortion more accessible and safer for women throughout the country[4].

The year 1975 was of particular importance for feminist movements across the world for several reasons: In the United States, *Time* awarded their coveted "Man of the Year" issue and cover page to "American women" in recognition of their accomplishments. The first United Nations world conference was celebrated in Mexico in June, coinciding with the 1975 International Women's Year. In December of the same

---

[4] The women's movement in the United States suffered a major setback in June of 2022 as: "In a historic and far-reaching decision, the U.S. Supreme Court officially reversed Roe v. Wade on Friday, declaring that the constitutional right to abortion, upheld for nearly a half century, no longer exists. …The decision…means that abortion rights will be rolled back in nearly half of the states immediately, with more restrictions likely to follow." (Totenberg and McCammon, 2022, para. 1).

year, the United Nations General Assembly declared 1975 to 1985 the United Nations Decade for Women, to focus on issues that impacted them. In Spain, General Francisco Franco's demise in 1975 marked a turning point for women in that country. During his regime, women had been held back. His labour laws, for example, stipulated that women had to abandon their jobs at the time of marriage and, if a woman was to be reinstated, she needed the authorization of her husband, who could deny her the right to collect her salary directly (Molinero, 1998, p. 114). Just days after Franco's passing, Madrid witnessed the first marches in favour of the liberation of women and those would set the foundation for a plural feminist movement (Diez Balda, 2002, p. 247). Their demands were akin to those of women around the world: new laws regarding discrimination, contraception, divorce, access to education, and abortion, among others. The constitution of 1978, though still not explicitly proclaiming gender equality, reinstated women's right to work, to be remunerated and to be promoted, expressly prohibiting discrimination based on sex (Hernando and Valenciano, 2018, para. 2). Also, the first feminist congress was celebrated in Madrid in 1978. Things were changing for women in Spain as well.

Slow advances for women in Peru. Regarding political rights in Peru, literate women over the age of 21 (18 if married) had been granted the right to vote in general elections in 1955 because it was believed that they would support General Odría's candidacy (see above, p. 27). The right to vote for illiterates, male and female, was recognized only in 1979. This contributed to the retention of immense power by an extremely small minority. As per official data available for those years from the INEI (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática), Peru's government census office, the rates of illiteracy ranged from 58 percent in 1940 to 18 percent in 1981 (1997a, sec. Analfabetismo). Remarkably, out of the total number of illiterates in the country, women accounted for 62 percent in 1940, a number that consistently increased, reaching an overwhelming 73 percent in 1981 (1997b, sec. Diferenciales). This was consistent with the postcolonial patriarchal philosophy prevailing in Latin American societies and reflected in Vargas Llosa's novels.

The Second Wave of feminism in Peru was heterogeneous. There were three branches: the straightforwardly feminist, which questioned the exclusion and subordination of women in public and private matters and fought to change it; that of the

popular urban women who entered the public space through traditional roles [such as the mothers who came together to institute the *ollas comunes* to feed their children] and often raised their profile and extended them; and that of women in the political arena—parties and unions (Vargas, 2004, p. 10). Women were beginning to be heard. General Velasco's new Education Law (1972) strived to eliminate all kinds of discrimination and granted women access to training and leadership positions within the education system. Augusto Salazar Bondy, philosopher and educator who contributed to the new law project, was married to feminist activist Helen Orvig. Upon his request, Orvig drafted Article 11 of the law. Although the section denouncing women's marginalization was discarded, the provisions to create an intersectoral commission to protect women's rights and foster their participation in the revolutionary process did stand (Oliart, 2017, p. 134). Stemming from it, the Comité Técnico de Revaloración de la Mujer, which dealt with the contents of school textbooks, was created (Orvig, 2004, p. 21). That was an important step in the education of women in the future. The military government also included a chapter dedicated to women in the *Plan Inca*, the army's secret Revolutionary Government Plan written in 1968 and released by General Velasco in 1974. It emphasized the marginalization and discrimination of women regarding their civic rights, unequal employment and remuneration, limited access to political positions and abusive treatment of women by men in low cultural settings. It set as an objective the "Efectiva igualdad con el hombre en derechos y obligaciones" through promoting the participation of women in high-level positions, promoting coeducational schooling and prohibiting husbands from unilaterally disposing of common property (1974, p. 30). This was encouraging. By the mid-1970s, organized feminist groups had been founded: Acción para la Liberación de la Mujer Peruana (ALIMUPER), Taller de Trabajo Flora Tristán and Movimiento de Promoción de la Mujer. The first milestone, greatly important for visibility, was the 1973 protest against a beauty pageant. About a hundred organized protesters took to the streets chanting the slogan "sea fea o hermosa, la mujer no es una cosa". Not all demands of women had the same backing though: when in 1979 feminists marched in support of the right to choose abortion, they were attacked on the streets.[5]

---

[5] To this date, 2021, in Peru abortion is only legal when the pregnancy may endanger the life of the mother or is the

Another aspect of feminism in the country had to do with creed. With Catholicism being deeply ingrained in Latin American societies, their questioning of "submission as destiny" led many Peruvian women to re-evaluate their religion, and the circle of Christian feminists Talitha Cumi was created towards the end of the 1970s. Its purpose was to expose patriarchy within the religious system (Trapasso, 2004, p. 24). This ecumenical group served as a rallying point for religious women and Catholic women who were beginning to question dogma and the church's position on family planning and motherhood. The same year, Maruja Barrig published *Cinturón de castidad. La mujer de clase media en el Perú* (1979), which depicted women as diminished beings with little possibility of self-realization. This book had an important impact on the Lima society (Muñoz and Barrientos, 2019, p. 477). It was a confrontation with a reality that was becoming more difficult to disregard.

The novels of the 1970s: women are closer to the centre of the action

After his extremely successful first decade as a writer, Vargas Llosa published two novels, *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* and *La tía Julia y el escribidor* during the 1970s. These novels denote a transformation in the author's writing style and are perceived to be light weight in comparison with earlier ones such as *La Casa Verde* and *Conversación*. Vargas Llosa was not alone in stepping aside from his pursuit of the total novel and venturing into lighter and less complex literary forms: other Boom authors also were closing a cycle and experimenting with the popular. José Promis Ojeda reflects on Donoso's 1970 novel *El obsceno pájaro de la noche*[6]. He remarks that it is this novel that closes a cycle beyond which there is no further possibility of expression: "La novela de Donoso es el broche que cierra una etapa, después de la cual solo cabe cambiar de rumbo" (Swanson, 1995, p. 10), and they did alter course. García Márquez had led the way with his masterpiece, *Cien años de soledad* (1967), a novel of limitless accessibility for Vargas Llosa, being within the reach "del lector inteligente y del imbécil, del refinado que paladea la prosa, contempla la arquitectura y descifra los símbolos de una ficción y del impaciente que solo atiende a la anécdota cruda" (2007b, p. 10). Philip Swanson

---

result of rape.

[6] *El obsceno pájaro de la noche* (1970) was selected as the winner of the Biblioteca Breve award the year when Carlos Barral left Seix Barral, thus unfortunately the prize was not awarded).

reviews some of the Boom authors who turn to the popular, considering *Cien años de soledad* a "watershed in the history of the new novel", where García Márquez recreates "the popular viewpoint of a Third-World community" incorporating his grandmother's "fantastic story-telling style"; Fuentes's *La cabeza de la hidra* (1978) is a less successful effort, owing to frictions in the presentation of reality versus fiction; while Donoso goes for the "soft-porn detective novel" with *La misteriosa desaparicion de la marquesita de Loria* (1980) (1995, pp. 9–15). It is worth taking into consideration two additional circumstances that may have influenced this turn in Vargas Llosa's choice of argument and change in style. First, the dictatorial military regime in Peru of Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968–1975), followed by a "Second Phase" headed by Francisco Morales Bermúdez (1975–1980) (see above, pp. 29 and 78). Second, the Padilla affair in Cuba, centred on the writer's entitlement to freedom of expression, raised "the question of who had power over words" (King, 2012, p. 152) and brought about the author's disillusionment with the Castro regime and his break with the Latin American left (see above, p. 41). These two momentous events took place between the publication of *La Casa Verde* and that of *Pantaleón*. As a result, in the 1970s there emerges an author who distances himself from his convictions of the 1960s, and also from his familiar approaches to writing (Williams, 2014, p. 46). The author was going through a period of great consequence in his personal life which impacted his creativity. He later disclosed to José Miguel Oviedo that he had fun writing *Pantaleón*, and was able to write fluently and speedily, something that had not happened with any of his earlier books (Williams, 2001, p. 59). Vargas Llosa's writing during the 1970s is free of previous constraints. These relatively light weight works may not have been as appealing to critics as other works, but they were extremely popular among the author's followers. Both novels of the 1970s were later turned into films. Another characteristic of the novels of the 1970s is that Vargas Llosa places women closer to the centre of his narrative, although he does not offer the most favourable depictions of them.

1973 - Pantaleón y las visitadoras: reality becomes farce

The first satirical work with hints of dark humour published by Vargas Llosa, *Pantaleón y las visitadoras*, marks a change in the style of the writer. This does not intend to be a total novel, as previous works had been, but is part of a temporary phase of

parodic novels that will correspond with the author's parting with the socialist model (Köllmann, 2001, p. 135). In equal measure, this less intricate work was an easier read, leaning more towards entertainment than depth, and was very successful among his readers. At one point, Roy Boland refers to it as the most "popular" of his novels, the most published and translated (2003, p. 61). Vargas Llosa himself has referred to this novel as one "con un éxito de público que no tuve antes ni he vuelto a tener" (Lázaro, 2021, para. 4). The humorous account of the "special service" he created was turned into two different film versions, one in 1975, which Vargas Llosa co-directed, and a second one in 1999 directed by Francisco Lombardi. *Pantaleón* has also been adapted for the stage and performed very successfully around the world.

Another novelty found in the fiction authored by Vargas Llosa through the 1970s is that during this period his female characters became more relevant. The author placed them closer to the action and made them more consequential, even if they were not rendered in their best light and were still secondary to the male characters. In *Pantaleón* women are directly portrayed as a commodity. This novel creates a plot around the army's reaction to the problem of troops kidnapping and raping local women. With the purpose of satisfying the needs of their men in an orderly manner, this branch of the armed forces organized a prostitute supply service, the prostitutes being called *visitadoras*. The idea is based on actual facts the author learned about while visiting the Amazonian Jungle in 1958 and later in 1964: a *visitadoras* service organized by the Peruvian Army to relieve the sexual desires of their personnel in their Amazonian garrisons. In the work of fiction, Pantaleón Pantoja is selected to assemble a similar service. His perfect promotion exam and service record as well as his lack of vices make him the ideal man to carry out the mission. In the prologue to his novel, Vargas Llosa, who had previously "declared that there was no place for humour in literature" (Swanson, 1995, p. 11), indicates how he tried repeatedly and unsuccessfully to write it in a serious fashion, until he finally realized the topic called for mockery and humour. As a result, this serious critical work took the form of a satire. As *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* deals with the army, it is traditionally seen as a work of denunciation of the armed forces, its hierarchical order and double standards. It must be taken into consideration that *Pantaleón* was written during the first phase of the Revolutionary Government of the

Armed Forces led by general Velasco, and that this novel can be taken as a protest against the military dictatorship. The novel is also disapproving of religious fanaticism, through the creation of an intransigent Brother Francisco, leader of a sect to which Pantaleón's mother adheres out of boredom and lack of a social life. Through the colourful portrayal of Sinchi, an unscrupulous radio broadcaster who attempts (and later succeeds) in blackmailing Pantoja, the author also decries the corruption of the media. This analysis will not focus on these areas but rather on what is of interest to this work, the role of women within the novel. All female characters are secondary in this fiction, even though some feature prominently in the plot, and can be grouped in accordance with the duality good/bad. The "bad" girls are those related to prostitution. The most conspicuous ones are Leonor Curinchila, better known as *Chuchupe*; Olga Arellano Rosaura, *Brasileña*; and Maclovia. The "good" female characters are those assigned the more traditional roles of wife and mother of Pantaleón: Pochita and *señora* Leonor.

The wife and the mother/mother-in-law

Pochita, Pantaleón's wife, and Leonor, the mother-in-law who never gives up the role of mother, are secondary characters who revolve around Pantaleón. Both are there to serve him, to move with him wherever he is transferred; even to live as civilians hiding from the families of the other officers if they are instructed to. Pantaleón's mother openly tells her son that she will do as he says, since she does know how to carry out the orders of a superior (2013b, p. 313). She is careful to emphasise "yo sí sé", implicitly contrasting her attitude with that of her daughter in law who left Pantaleón because of his affair with a prostitute. In Leonor's view, Pantaleón outranks the female, in this case his mother and his wife, who must accept his actions, wishes and demands. Pochita, belonging to a younger generation, is no longer one to acquiesce in silence to whatever her husband decides to do. This foreshadows change, the beginning of women's open rejection of *machismo* and *marianismo*.

Señora Leonor joins the followers of Brother Francisco, a foreigner who has founded a sect that performs animal sacrifices and places huge crosses in the places he visits, inaugurating them as if they were churches, which has Catholic priests fuming over the competition (2013b, p. 85). According to Kristeva, Christianity constitutes the most sophisticated symbolic construct that confines women to the *Maternal*, a

representation that fails to consider women's voices regarding issues around maternity (1985b, pp. 133–135). *Señora* Leonor's intermittent breaking with the "true religion" (as Pochita calls Catholicism) and becoming a devotee of heretical practices, may be interpreted as a first sign of rejection of this constraint, especially since the last sacrifice offered by this sect before being outlawed was that of a child. Later, *señora* Leonor confesses apprehension about eating a special kind of bread, the *niño* bread that was made in honour of the martyred boy, but she gives in, recognizing it as the tastier one in Iquitos (2013b, p. 163). There is no decisive stance in *señora* Leonor's scruples about eating bread made to honour a sacrificed baby, about religion or even about the actual ritual of offering the child. She defends it, stating that it had not been done out of evil but of fear, as they believed that with this sacrifice God would postpone the end of the world. They did not want to hurt him, she explains, but to send him straight to heaven. This mockery of religious attitudes is reinforced by Pantaleón's comment: "Creo que tus rezos no sirven porque mezclas la Iglesia con la superstición: el niño mártir, el Santo Cristo de Bagazán, el Señor de los Milagros, la santa Ignacia" (2013b, pp. 151, 270). The criticism encompasses the Church and sanctimoniousness, but it is significant that the leader of the sect is a man and the follower a woman.

Pochita is a naïve woman who has to endure living with an intrusive and overbearing mother-in-law. On the surface, Pochita and Leonor have a good relationship, but Vargas Llosa employs a letter from Pochita to her sister as a device to enlighten the reader regarding the home situation of Panta (as Pochita addresses Pantaleón). Through this missive the reader is able to catch glimpses of Pochita's feelings. She writes her secret wish: "de repente de ésta revienta y se va al cielo de una vez", but she immediately corrects herself: "No, qué mala soy, pobre señora Leonor, en el fondo es buena" (2013b, p. 85). Up to that point, Pochita was patient with her mother-in-law, but that letter reveals her true feelings. Leonor is actually overprotective of her son and meddles in his affairs without regard for Pochita. *Señora* Leonor represents two roles. As a mother in law she treats her son as if he were a child and even when the wife is furious because her husband returned home drunk at dawn, the mother condones his behaviour and ignoring his wife's outrage, brings her *hijito* hot coffee (2013b, p. 42). She is ever-present and intrusive, which only serves to belittle Pochita, who does not protest this lack of respect. As a

mother, Leonor also oversteps the mark, “¿Por qué no te han dado una casa en la Villa Militar que es tan bonita? Otra vez tu falta de carácter, Panta” (2013b, p. 33). She is demanding and critical, perhaps the cause of her son’s lack of character and his belief that he needs constant guidance. He recognizes that if he didn't have people telling him what to do, he wouldn't know how to operate and his world would fall apart (2013b, p. 329). Leonor, even though a secondary character, is nonetheless given more importance than Pochita who is subordinate not only to Pantaleón but also to his mother. This submission ends when the affair between Pantaleón and *Brasileña* becomes public. Then Pochita, displaying autonomy and character for the first time, leaves her unfaithful husband taking her new-born daughter with her. Leonor the mother, on the other hand, consoles her *hijito* pampering, almost rewarding him, as if secretly happy to be able to assume the role of the sole woman. Panta is not oblivious to this, as his mother appears in his nightmares with Chuchupe’s features that have been grafted onto her, “las tetas, las nalgas, los rollos y el andar protuberante de Chuchupe”, and this fusion of the two Leonors reassures Pantaleón that it did not matter that Pocha was gone, as she, his mother would continue to care for him (2013b, p. 236). In a way, the mother and wife resemble the first women in *La ciudad y los perros*, eager to please their men. At the same time, they show some development. In Pochita’s case, she leaves and does not go back to Iquitos. She stands her ground and Pantaleón has to meet with her in Lima. Only then she agrees to accompany him to his new army post. *Señora* Leonor is a strong and even overbearing mother throughout the novel. She never played the role of defenceless woman represented by Vargas Llosa’s mothers of the 1960s. In the end, though, Pochita did reconcile with her husband and *señora* Leonor never became independent. Oviedo and Kristal describe the novels of the 1970s as transitional, and from this analytical perspective, these women are also transitional in terms of the development of the author’s female characters. Pochita, *señora* Leonor and the other women in the novel are distancing themselves from the stereotypes depicted in the previous decade. They are evolving but have not yet become independent, developed or autonomous characters.

The “bad” women. Leonor Curinchila, Chuchupe, runs the *visitadoras* service. In Spanish the women involved in this activity are referred to as *mamis* (moms). In fact, Chupito, her partner/lover, calls her “mamy”. The characters of s*eñora* Leonor and

Chuchupe, the “good” woman and the “bad” one, thus have in common their name as well as the function of guiding or managing the son and daughter in law and the putative daughters. This is not gratuitous but highlighted through Pantoja’s recurring dreams where he sees a *señora* Leonor whose hips, jowls and breasts have grown larger, overflowing until they are confused with those of Leonor Curinchila (2013b, p. 93). The author has gone back to representing the mother as the domestic woman who is after her son as replacement to her husband, begging him to eat something or to drink his milk as if he were a child, kneeling and, as Alberto’s mother, polishing her grown son’s shoes and brushing lint out of his clothes. But this mother is not a victim, on the contrary, she could be described as decisive and domineering. Chuchupe, on the other hand, does not honour her nickname after the most poisonous snake in the Amazon. She is a woman who comes from a less affluent socioeconomic class, but within her means she takes care of her girls. From the perspective of this analysis, the women in this novel are beginning their evolution towards independence. Additionally, the construction of the two Leonors, and their juxtaposition in Panta’s dreams convey the idea that there is a thin line between “good” and “bad”, that nothing is absolute and that all characters should be read as complete beings with virtues and weaknesses. Maclovia, one of the *visitadoras*, is removed from the group after a failed attempt to run away with a member of the military whom she married secretly. Her story is revealed through a letter to Pochita asking for help to be reinstated. In this letter written by her cousin, she reveals that she cannot read and write and that she has no money nor any way to earn a living other than through using her body. This echoes the voices of liberals over the years—John Stuart Mill, Susan B. Anthony, Flora Tristán, Emma Goldman—who fault the limited economic opportunities for women’s self-support as the factor that forces them into prostitution (Freedman, 2007, p. xvi). Although in *Conversación en La Catedral*, the feelings of *la Musa* for Lucas are displayed, and the friendship between her and Queta are recognized, the origin of those prostitutes is not disclosed and the reasons why they chose their life paths are unknown. It is in *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* that the notion arises that no woman is confined to one extreme of the duality good/bad. This is reinforced by the character of *Brasileña*, the first prostitute in Vargas Llosa’s literature whose original story is made available to the reader. Beginning with her complete name and last names,

Olga Arellano Rosaura, the author shares details about her childhood in an orphanage after her drunken mother abandoned her and how the intelligent and obedient girl subsequently lost her way. He also presents another duality that is neither completely good nor entirely bad, her biographical sketch mentions her beauty: a blessing and a curse, which is what, in the end, brings about her downfall. Vargas Llosa makes this prostitute a human being, and during her funeral, through Pantaleón's speech, acknowledges her as a person and as a soldier, which was in turn his ruin.

In essence, after *La Casa Verde*, where female characters displayed some agency and purpose independently of the males around them, at first in *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* the women seem to have taken a step back. The *visitadoras* in particular are objectified and commercialized as merchandise. Gradually though, it becomes apparent that there is more to the women in the novel; that Vargas Llosa's portrayal of women is beginning to manifest change. This is a circular novel that begins with Pochita waking up Pantaleón so he can go and meet with his officers and receive his new orders and ends with a similar scene where Pochita wakes up Pantaleón so he can go and supervise his soldiers' breakfast. Pochita has the first and the last lines in the novel, and her attitudes are contrasting. As the novel begins, she is affectionate towards her husband, gently waking up *Pantita* and enthusiastically looking forward to learning the location of their new post. By the end of the novel, Pantaleón is stationed in an Andean post as punishment for honouring *Brasileña* as a member of the military during her funeral. Pochita, who is with her husband again, calls him a maniac and an idiot, while cursing the weather, the lack of electricity and his scratching her with his bracelet. Pochita has changed, and so has Pantaleón. Night and day he wears the bracelet that his girls, the *visitadoras*, gave him as a farewell present. Pochita is done with her sweet passivity and Pantaleón now has a different understanding of women. It may be taking things too far to claim that Pochita exemplifies what Deleuze and Guattari considered "anomalous", but it does become apparent that her character has become more decisive and independent. They propose that something unexpected and even insignificant can trigger a becoming (1987, p. 292). Pantaleón's affair with *Brasileña* is what leads to that change in Pochita, what sparks her inconformity, her rejection of subservience to her husband and even to her mother-in-law. She breaks with past norms and leaves her husband, who is reduced to

begging her to return. Through the evolution of these characters the author evinces the shifting status quo. Considering that Deleuze refers his concept of the anomalous to that individual who steps out of the centre, populated by constrictions and norms, in order to break the borders and be free of such stereotypes, we can fairly claim that Pochita is approaching those borders. Again, a transitional character, an example of how women's voices are getting louder. The 1970s bring significant changes for women in the world, and they are beginning to surface in the characteristics of the women in Vargas Llosa's universe as well.

1977 - La tía Julia y el escribidor: a woman features in the title

Critics see the decade of the 1970s as a fallow period in Vargas Llosa's artistic development, although it is during this period that the author creates Julia, one of the most memorable of his women. She may be limited, lacking higher education, with little if any appreciation of Marito's literary aspirations, but none the less she comes alive as a woman who lives and enjoys life spontaneously, who follows her instincts, who says what she thinks, who is unselfconscious, flawed, child-like even at 30. It is tempting to see her as a female counterpart of her creator. Could Vargas Llosa have said, echoing his mentor Flaubert, "Julia, c'est moi"?

The second novel of the 1970s is generally analysed from the perspective of different kinds of writing—the artistry of the author vs. the formulaic style of the scriptwriter. This is especially interesting and tempting considering that the protagonist is Marito, an incarnation of the author, and the scriptwriter is Pedro, which happens to be Vargas Llosa's third name. This is a direct link between the two, which supports the case that "through his character Camacho, the narrator Marito's personality is completed and complemented" (Geisdorfer Feal, 1986, p. 109). But this analysis will remain focused on Julia and the development of women in the author's literary world. *La tía Julia* maintains the humorous tone of *Pantaleón*, while it adds the novelty of incorporating the author as one of the main characters. The book began as a story about a scriptwriter whom the Peruvian had met years before and, in an effort to make the novel less artificial, the author states, he added an autobiographical *collage* of the adventure that led to his first marriage (2006, p. 9). For some critics, Vargas Llosa's production during the 1970s loses intensity; it is considered to have given way to simplification. *La tía Julia* and *Pantaleón*

are regarded by some as entertaining novels which do not reach the technical sophistication of previous works (León, 2012, p. 81; Rodríguez, 2001, p. 309). Beginning with *Pantaleón* the author moved away from the totalizing effort, surprising readers with new, more accessible literary techniques and style which, naturally, reached a larger readership. To this new lighter style Vargas Llosa added in *La tía Julia* the technique of inserting himself and people close to him as an important part of his work. Unlike those of *La ciudad y los perros*, these characters kept their own names and their relationships with the author. *La tía Julia* was released in a film version in 1990 under the title *Tune in tomorrow* (Amiel, 1990).

There are varying statements issued by Vargas Llosa about his first printed work with clear autobiographical episodes. In *A writer's reality* he observes that he was experimenting with new formats. It occurred to him to introduce into a novel the episode of his life as an underage author who married a woman twelve years older; a "grotesque" marriage with soap opera elements that caused a scandal of great proportions in his family. He wanted to tell it "exactly as it happened, as a document, not as fiction, something that would be exactly the reverse, the polar opposite of Pedro Camacho's soap opera"—in other words, non-fiction. He also clarifies that the episode where he and his ex-wife were searching for a marriage license is probably eighty percent autobiographical, with added anecdotes for the book (1991, p. 111). These, along with a change in the age difference—from ten to fourteen years—brings the novel back into the realm of fiction. In any case, this novel was a challenging task to undertake for the author. He has referred to the difficult ceremony of writing as a strip tease in reverse, an act of exhibitionism where the author reveals the demons that torment and obsess him, an act in which the writer is undressed at the outset but clothed at the end, the initial experiences so maliciously disguised that not even the novelist can recognize the autobiographical in the finished novel (2001e, pp. 11–12). The "truthful" representation of events is also compromised by the aesthetic objectives of the novelist who refines and even transforms his "factual" raw materials. This emerges nicely in an exchange between Marito and Julia: she had provided him with an idea for a short story which he reads to her, but Marito's narrative offends her and she keeps interrupting him: "Pero si no fue así, pero si lo has puesto todo patas arriba—me decía, sorprendida y hasta enojada—. . .

Yo, angustiadísimo, hacía un alto para informarle que lo que escuchaba no era la relación fiel de la anécdota que me había contado, sino *un cuento, un cuento*, y que todas las cosas añadidas o suprimidas eran recursos para conseguir ciertos efectos" (2006, p. 164). This intentional manipulation of reality to make it more appealing combines with time and distance to make recalling events a more challenging task. Even when the intention is, with George Eliot, to "give a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in [ones] mind. … The mind's mirror is doubtless defective; the outlines will sometimes be disturbed, the reflection faint or confused" (Furst, 1992, p. 3). The barriers of time and point of view cloud vision, making that task almost unfeasible, even more so the attempt to reconcile the memories of two different people about those events. Vargas Llosa recognizes that the experience of trying to recall objectively, not to invent but to be truthful, is impossible and that fiction is incompatible with objective reporting of lived experience, adding that in his writing he was constantly misguided by his own memory (1991, p. 112). He dedicated the novel: "A Julia Urquidi Illanes, a quien tanto debemos yo y esta novela". A few years later, though, the TV series *La tía Julia y el escribidor* (1981) aired first in Colombia and later in Peru, and, in particular, its portrayal of her character offended Julia. She discloses in a letter to Patricia Llosa that she had been particularly offended by her depiction in the "telenovela" where "se ha distorsionado a la 'tía Julia' del libro" (Urquidi Illanes, 2010, p. 284), and she felt compelled to give her side of the story in *Lo que Varguitas no dijo* (1983). Her rebuttal is a testimony of her years with Vargas Llosa, not only based on her memory, but also informed by her point of view and her perspective. It is a fact though that any retold story is remade by the teller, even with the best of intentions. As noted in *La orgía perpetua*: "Es el elemento añadido, el reordenamiento de lo real, lo que le da autonomía a un mundo novelesco y le permite competir críticamente con el mundo real" (1995, p. 181). Consequently, for the purposes of this analysis, *La tía Julia y el escribidor* is not considered biographical, and Julia will be treated as a literary character which may have biographical elements but is nonetheless a figment of the memories and the imagination of an author of fiction.

The novel has two narrative lines. In the odd chapters and also the twentieth and last one, a first-person narrator, Marito, tells his experiences, Julia's and those of Camacho. The point of view is always Mario's, and he is recalling past times.

Interpolated through the remaining even chapters are the *radionovelas* that the scriptwriter produces, fiction within fiction. Those are told also in the past tense by a third person narrator outside of the stories. The argument of the chapters dealing with the protagonist's experiences tell the story of a young Marito who lives in Lima with his grandparents. Although he would like to be an author, he pursues with resignation a career in law and works in the news section of a well-known radio station. He meets Julia, a Bolivian divorcee fourteen years older than him,[7] who is an in-law relative visiting her sister. Julia and Marito's relationship, which begins as a friendship that consisted of going to the movies at night, slowly changes and they fall in love. Although they try to keep the true nature of their relationship concealed from their relatives, they are soon discovered. In face of the family opposition and the couple's fears that they would be separated, they flee to a small-town south of Lima where, after many misadventures, they manage to get married. After a while, they move to Europe and surprise the family with a successful marriage that lasted eight years. A year after their divorce Mario marries Patricia who is brought into the narrative briefly but significantly in the last chapter. Alongside their story develops that of Pedro Camacho, another Bolivian who is the scriptwriter of the title and is hired to bring ratings up in the radio station where Marito works. Camacho is an instant success but becomes so absorbed by his work that he suffers a nervous breakdown and is committed to an institution. Around ten years later, while visiting Lima, Mario runs into him again. Camacho, who claims not to recognize him, is almost unrecognizable himself, a skinny, run-down old man working as a tipster for a newspaper that had seen better times. In the end, the world takes a complete turn for all the protagonists.

Julia, the divorcee. Among the earlier Vargas Llosa's oeuvre, Julia is a female character who begins to exhibit some complexity. Although she undoubtedly serves a particularly important function in the narration and is essential to the plot, the protagonist is not as developed as one might expect for an eponymous character. Before the reader has an impression of her physically, it is established that Aunt Julia is in Lima looking for a new husband (2006, p. 18) and that in her first week in the city she has already dated

---

[7] In real life, the age difference was of ten years. Julia Urquidi was born in Bolivia on May 30, 1926.

four different men, one of them married. "¡La divorciada se las trae!", another aunt observes (2006, p. 23). Julia's purposes are clear and are shared by her sister Olga, who approvingly rates one of the suitors as well-to-do economically, of social standing and with serious intentions (2006, p. 65). Marito, in contrast, is depicted as what his family considers an intellectual who has published a story in a reputable newspaper and does not think about fooling around women or partying (2006, p. 19). Marito also mentions that Julia is the one who comes up with the idea of him taking her to the movies some evening (2006, p. 20). Personalities, temperaments and intentions are established through Marito, who functions as the only first-person narrator in the chapters that have to do with the protagonists' actions. The young man gives a belated physical description of Aunt Julia, as he discovers, also somewhat belatedly, that she is an attractive woman. He describes her as well dressed and groomed, with a strong and direct laugh, deep voice and insolent eyes, a woman who danced well and whom men's eyes followed (2006, pp. 79–80). Julia would come closer to being a round character if she had a voice of her own.[8] Instead, she is only seen through the eyes of the boy who gives his and his family's perspective on her. She is thought of as a loose woman, the *invencionera* of their relationship and, although jokingly, the author sets forth who he was before meeting her: a minor who lived quietly studying law (2006, p. 300). There are different perspectives about Julia's character. In 1978 José Miguel Oviedo considered her "the most intense and beautiful character in the novel [and] … one of the most interesting feminine characters in the author's gallery … Intense, consistent, authentic" (1978, pp. 167–170). Yet, Julia never offers a thought or utters an opinion directly. That limits her scope, and even though she is one of the protagonists, she is not whole (fully "rounded"). A second factor that "flattens" this character—considering E. M. Forster's definition of "flat"—is that she is depicted as someone who goes to Lima to remarry, accomplishes her goal thanks to Marito and the last time she is an active part of the narrative is when they are able to be together after overcoming the objections of Marito's father. In the last chapter, an epilogue of sorts, Marito tells the reader about the divorce that saddens his family after

---

[8] According to Forster, flat characters are, in their purest form, "constructed round a single idea or quality: when there is more than one factor in them, we get the beginning of the curve towards the round" (2002, p. 48).

eight successful years of marriage. Julia is gone and in the next line Mario has remarried, highlighting that this time it is to his first cousin, Patricia. The remainder of the chapter is about the main character, Mario. He reveals that some of his dreams and appetites have become reality: He has obtained a college degree, has lived in an attic flat in Paris—always his dream—and has become a writer. Julia has been a character secondary to the needs of Mario. Although not a truly leading character, she shows more independence and development than previous female figures, thereby marking a trend that will gather momentum in Vargas Llosa's subsequent narrative.

In addition to the construction of the literary character, there are dialogues which represent the situation of women and the double standard held in the country at the time. The protagonist comments that Julia was terribly aliterate, but does not leave it at the character level, adding that she was "como todas las mujeres que había conocido hasta entonces" (2006, p. 119). This comment may be related to his youth, but he could also be referring to Peruvian women, since the character is writing about the past at a time when he had already been out of the country and met women of different nationalities thus being able to make comparisons. In relation to sexual repression, the allusion to Peruvian women in particular is categorical when he correlates the attitude of girls in higher class areas, such as Miraflores, to the Stone Age, arguing that these girls usually entered marriage as virgins, but "se dejaban tocar los senos y el sexo cuando el enamorado ascendía al estatuto formal de novio" (2006, p. 120). It is important to note that by relating this attitude to a particular socioeconomic class, Marito is emphasizing different attitudes towards sex in women across classes. Additionally, a certain universal disdain towards the intelligence of women is perceived through the configuration of the intended target public for radio soap operas: grandmothers, aunts, cousins and retirees of a country (2006, p. 16), placing most adult women in a category that does not encompass men—unless they are no longer able to work and be productive. Studies conducted in 1940 affirmed that radio serials were followed to compensate for deficiencies (emotional, psychological and social counted among these). These studies also devalued the soap opera genre because they were closely associated with women, whose activities were trivialized (Drain, 1996, p. 3). The differences between women and men are more substantial than radio preferences or prudishness; they have to do with a double standard

that goes hand in hand with *machismo*. Marito's friend Javier gives him twenty points for impressing him by his choice of a lover: somebody close to being his aunt, old, rich and divorced. Immediately, an upset Marito makes things clear: she is not his aunt, but the sister of his uncle's wife; neither is she his lover nor is she old; and she doesn't have a penny to her name. Just as quickly Javier explains that he was not criticizing but congratulating him: "Vieja quería decir mayor que tú, y lo de rica no era crítica sino felicitación, yo soy partidario de los braguetazos" (2006, pp. 165–166). It is only when he realizes that they want a serious relationship that he admonishes Marito, hoping he is only playing a game (2006, p. 166). Javier, given the social class they belong to, can condone the idea that Marito might entertain himself with an older woman. He would actually admire his friend for it, but that is where the line is drawn. If the relationship is made official or is serious, they are crossing an unspoken social line—a line that was also drawn between Teresa and Alberto in *La ciudad y los perros*, Alberto also being permitted a good time, but nothing more. Oviedo posits that Mario contravenes other existing mores, compatible ages being one of them (1978, p. 169). This is another example of a double standard. The age difference between Julia and Mario is not much different to that between Mario and Patricia, and yet there was no opposition to his second marriage. Compatibility of ages is not the essence of the convention he was contravening; it would be more accurate to say that it was not socially acceptable to form a couple where the woman is older. The reverse, by contrast, is quite acceptable.

Julia's character undergoes change throughout the novel. Marito meets a Julia who, from the words and phrases utilized to describe her, comes across as a strong-willed woman. "Dictatorial" is the word Marito uses when recounting her choosing a movie; she was impetuous when she corrected others and adamant when warning others not to dare ask her anything that would reveal her age (2006, pp. 67, 24, 23). Slowly, though, she becomes more insecure. Naturally because of the age difference, she explains to Marito: "Te parezco tu mamá y por eso te provoca hacerme confidencias … hijito" (2006, p. 117). During her first description of herself to Marito she declares she had never listened to a radio soap opera (2006, p. 22) but as their relationship is establishing, she confesses she has begun to listen to them, and that she finds them fantastic: "unos dramones que parten el alma" (2006, p. 121). Considering the disdainful perspective already brought

forward about soap operas being trivial (see above, p. 95), Julia has turned from a woman who was more interesting because she exhibited characteristics usually associated with men, to a woman like any of the simple-minded grandmas, aunts or cousins who are the target audience of these inconsequential programs. She is gradually reconfigured as the older, vacuous woman. He refers to her as *tía*, and she calls him Marito and sometimes even *hijito*. Philip Swanson highlights the age motif throughout the stories of Pedro Camacho (whom Marito assumed was in his fifties) and the symbolic triumph of youth (incarnated by Marito) over him when they meet in the last chapter. After many years of absence Marito has become a mature, successful author and Camacho has collapsed (1995, p. 74) into a bony, rundown, underemployed version of his old self. The years that Marito and Julia spend in Europe are not narrated and the reader is therefore unprepared for the apparently abrupt end of their relationship. The age-old motif of the older woman making way for a younger one is played out yet again in the replacement of Julia by the much younger Patricia.

Julia is a more developed character than the previous females in Vargas Llosa's oeuvre, and, as such, signals the direction of the author's future work. As the author ages, his female characters also become more mature, more complex and textured, determined and experienced (Godoy Cossio, 2019, p. 246). In E.M. Forster's terms, Julia, if not "round", is capable of "rotundity". In the last chapter, which works as an epilogue, Mario is already divorced and visiting Lima when he runs into his old workmates. Socializing with them delays his return home. Patricia, his new, younger wife is waiting for him, and warns Marito, that she would not tolerate a repeat of his earlier misdemeanours, that she would not be like Julia who accepted his escapades in silence to keep the peace, "ella me rasguñaría o me rompería un plato en la cabeza. La prima Patricia es una muchacha de mucho carácter, muy capaz de hacer lo que me prometía" (1993b, p. 489). That is the last line in the novel, and through it Vargas Llosa acknowledges that women have evolved: Patricia's voice is clearly heard, representing a more assertive new generation of women.

Roy Boland argued in 1990 that "the reason for Vargas Llosa's allegedly rather summary literary treatment of women is that he intends to represent the reality of Peru, which he perceives as a world teeming with rampant machos" (1990, p. 126). This analysis subscribes to this argument and further demonstrates that the author's female

characters represent a variety of evolving realities within a fragmented society. Amalia and Lalita, for instance, are victims of injustices that go beyond gender—economic, educational, social—which makes it difficult for them to be self-sufficient and sure of themselves. That is not the case of Patricia, who belongs to a privileged social sector, which makes her self-assured and capable of standing up for herself without fear. In later works by Vargas Llosa, such as *Travesuras de la niña mala* and *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, these differences will be clearly identifiable.

Chapter Three

The 1980s and 1990s give way to a new millennium: progress

The bloody 1980s

Vargas Llosa, is, by this time, a world-renowned writer, and married to Patricia with three children. The family is living mostly in Peru. The first part of this decade was a prolific time for the author. He published four novels: *La guerra del fin del mundo, Historia de Mayta, ¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* and *El hablador*. He also penned three dramas: *La señorita de Tacna, Kathie y el hipopótamo* (1983) and *La Chunga*. Due to his political endeavours, Vargas Llosa did not dedicate himself to writing between 1987 and 1990. He only wrote *Elogio de la madrastra* which he considers *un divertimento erótico* (Vargas Llosa, 1993c, p. 211). The novels that he wrote earlier during this decade dealt with social and political issues with few female protagonists relevant to our analytical criteria. By contrast, *La Fiesta del Chivo, El Paraíso en la otra esquina* and *Travesuras de la niña mala*, all published during the first decade of the new millennium have not only important but central female characters.

For Vargas Llosa the man of letters the outlook is positive, but for the citizen of Peru the period is bleak. This decade is now a painful memory for the Peruvian people. The years previously, Fernando Belaúnde Terry had been re-elected president of Peru after a military regime that had left the country in debt, with practically no private investment, agriculture in ruins and terrorist groups emerging. The gravity of the threat posed by Shining Path was ignored by the new government. Although the outgoing Interior Minister had expressed preoccupation over “the advance of subversion” to his incoming counterpart, this information could not be confirmed. The intelligence files on subversive groups to be transferred to the new government were lost. When the incoming Interior Minister brought this to the attention of president-elect Belaúnde, the latter underestimated the risk, recommending “not to make waves” (Gorriti Ellenbogen, 1999, pp. 40–45). Ignoring the issue would prove disastrous for the country. Shining Path initiated extremist actions in 1980 and MRTA in 1984. The day before the people voted to re-elect Belaúnde in April 1980, militants of Shining Path began acts of terror against the Peruvian State and society by publicly burning the ballot boxes and electoral registers in the remote village of Chuschi, Ayacucho. The night of July 28, when Belaúnde was

sworn in, the first electrical tower was blown up, leaving the capital city of Lima in darkness—a warning to citizens of what their future held. The bloodiest period in the entire republican history of the country had begun. Belaúnde's government was unable to overcome the situation inherited from the military. The national currency underwent rapid devaluation and rampant inflation took hold (Contreras and Cueto, 2015, pp. 368–370). In *Cinco esquinas* Vargas Llosa recreates the way in which Peruvian citizens learned to live with the instability and fear that frequent bombings and general lawlessness caused them—although, anachronistically, situating these in the latter years of the Fujimori regime.

In 1985, at the age of 36, the youngest president in the history of Peru, Alan García Pérez, took office (1985–1990, 2006–2011). Contreras and Cueto describe the "heterodox" method of protectionism, import controls and high taxation that García implemented. It worked well at the beginning, but the price control and exchange rate freeze lasted too long. This increased the fiscal deficit, causing hyperinflation, unemployment, extreme poverty and finally economic collapse. Additionally, García refused to pay the external debt, making the country unworthy of credit and internationally isolated. The result was one of the worse economic crises in Peruvian history (2015, pp. 372–374). In 1987, García attempted to nationalize the banking and insurance industries. That was more than the people were willing to stand for, and a new political movement, *Libertad,* was led by Mario Vargas Llosa. His involvement in politics deepened as he entered the 1990 presidential race. Vargas Llosa began a long electoral campaign against the traditional politicians and was winning by a landslide until the final stages. Then, an unknown politician, the son of Japanese immigrants, engineer Alberto Fujimori Fujimori, joined the race. He was a former rector of the National Agrarian University. He had for two years acted as moderator of *Concertando,* a forum where state ministers, political figures and experts were invited to discuss diverse sectoral problems. This program was aired on the state-owned national TV which reached most of the country and had an immediate effect on provincial politics in particular. The *Chinito* of channel 7 was already a rising star when he began campaigning in 1989 ("Concertando," 2001, pp. 1–2). His campaign took him all over Peru where he would arrive at meetings driving a tractor and flaunting the slogan: "Hononestidad, Tecnología

y Trabajo". He won the 1990 presidential race by a solid majority. Before him was a country where car bombs, blackouts, popular trials and terrorist attacks were part of daily life.

Women in the 1980s. After the United Nations declared 1975-1985 the Decade of Women, feminism seemed to reach areas previously closed to it. An advocate of international feminism, Peruvian activist Virginia Vargas considers that "the experiences of oppression and subordination, and the resistance to them, are expressed in so many different ways that there cannot be one global explanation which encompasses all conflicts" (Lavrin, 1999, p. 187). This sentiment, a reaction to feminisms focusing almost exclusively on the experiences of middle-class women in developed countries, became prevalent in different regions and translated into the emergence of diverse, local feminist movements around the world. Estelle Freedman's statement in 1980 expresses it well: "To talk feminism to a woman who has no water, no food and no home is to talk nonsense" (Freedman, 2002, p. 95). Gayatri Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), also points to differences that obstruct the possibility of being heard for those outside the hegemonic echelons of a country. She posits that, "If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (1988, p. 84), highlighting that for women that possibility is even slimmer. In South America, Bolivian indigenous Andean woman turned community organizer, Domitila Barrios de Chúngara, had published her testimony, *Si me permiten hablar* (1979), emphasizing the needs not only of women, but of all workers. Although she rejects traditional middle-class feminism, she repudiates patriarchy and demands women's rights for labour and revolutionary movements (Freedman, 2007, p. 346). Barrios encourages women to take their place in society and fight for their rights. These examples illustrate the difficulties suffered by those who are not part of the dominant groups and show how they are aggravated in the case of women. Kimberlé Crenshaw clearly identifies this situation in 1989 by recognizing and defining "intersectionality", which describes how race, class, gender and other individual characteristics "intersect" and overlap creating more challenging situations for women (see above, p. 66). Muñoz and Barrientos describe the reality of feminism in Peru: the small number of feminists distanced them from the fashionable European theoretical

thought put forward by Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray or Kristeva. The question was not whether one followed an ideological line, but whether one was a militant. Latin America lived a different reality and pragmatically resolved the demands of women, doing politics in its own way (2019, p. 477). Nevertheless, international feminisms did have a certain influence on local sentiments. Victoria Villanueva claims that it was under de Beauvoir's influence and following her advice for independence, that feminists in Peru took to the streets in 1984 to demand that married women be allowed to keep their maiden name. "No más señora de" was their slogan. They were heard, and the Civil Code was modified (Villanueva, 2004, p. 29). From that moment on, women did not have to be identified as a possession, which is what the possessive "de" before the husband's last name implied. Also in the 1980s, feminists in Peru and around Latin America embraced the Chilean feminists' motto: "Democracia en el país y en la casa". Their fight shifted from public to private issues, as matters of domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape within the marriage were made political.

The 1990s: a decade of contrasts

Vargas Llosa begins this period living in Peru and devoting his time to politics. A few days after the vote was held in April 1990, Vargas Llosa, the author temporarily turned politician, returned to Europe and to his writing. He vowed to keep silent about Peruvian politics, but when Fujimori closed Congress in what came to be known as the "autogolpe", he broke his silence. Vargas Llosa strongly criticized this action and publicly requested democratic countries and international organizations to impose diplomatic and economic sanctions on to what had become a *de facto* dictatorship. This prompted the Fujimori government to threaten to take away his Peruvian nationality (Livia, 2019). Due to the political pressure in Peru to withdraw his citizenship, and the risk of "quedar convertido en un paria", Vargas Llosa requested Spanish nationality. He was speedily granted dual citizenship in 1993 (Manresa, 1993). Since the 1990s, he has lived primarily in Madrid. During this decade he dedicated himself to writing fiction as well as editorial pieces, teaching in universities around the world and occupying a chair he was granted as a member of the *Real Academia de la Lengua Española* in 1996. In 1993 he published *El pez en el agua*: *Memorias*, which he wrote mainly in Berlin. As for

novels, the same year he published *Lituma en los Andes*, and in 1997 *Los cuadernos de don Rigoberto*. Neither is included in this analysis.

As 1990 rolled in, Vargas Llosa was the favourite contender for the presidency of Peru, at the head of an alliance of right-wing parties, FREDEMO (Frente Democrático). Circumstances changed during the last months of the campaign when APRA, the outgoing president García's party, and other left-wing parties managed to frighten the popular sectors by emphasizing the social costs implied by the neoliberal adjustment proposed by Vargas Llosa who favoured comprehensive economic restructuring. The economic "shock" that he would implement would require, for instance, doing away with the price control for basic products (Contreras and Cueto, 2015, pp. 380–381). With the help of these other political groups and his austere "tractor" campaign, the *chinito del 7*, Alberto Fujimori, became president of Peru based on a populist agenda.

By 1990, Peruvians had been living in the midst of narco-terrorism for over a decade and had to deal with hyperinflation and areas of extreme poverty. In order to combat these evils, and in complete contradiction of his campaign discourse, Fujimori implemented an economic program known as the *fujishock*. He did away with government subsidies and the fixed price of the dollar. His became an anti-populist government that reduced state bureaucracy by privatizing companies, promoting foreign investment and private companies; it was a pro-market government that resumed relations with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, reinserting Peru into the international community (Vargas Llosa, 1993c, p. 532). In other words, he implemented something remarkably similar to what Vargas Llosa had proposed. However, all similarities between the two plans evaporated on April 5, 1992. On that Sunday, Fujimori announced on national TV that he was dissolving Congress, along with other critical government institutions. His turned into an authoritarian government, whose modus operandi was: "Se actúa primero y se informa después". But the intense pressure of the international community forced him to take a step back, and quickly, in June of the same year, call elections for a Constituent Congress in charge of drafting a new Constitution (Contreras and Cueto, 2015, p. 394). In December 1993, after a referendum, the Constitution of 1993 was enacted.

The Fujimori regime can take credit for many important accomplishments: first and foremost, the capture and imprisonment of the leader of Shining Path. Guzmán and some of his higher commanders were apprehended in September 1992 and that gave the country a sense of freedom that many citizens who had been born in the 1970s had never experienced before. Also, inflation was dramatically reduced from over 7,000% in 1990 to under 10% in 1995 and the Gross Domestic Product increased by 30% (Contreras and Cueto, 2015, pp. 399–403). Peru's standing in the international markets was restored and attracted foreign investment again. In 1997 the successful rescue of 72 hostages who had been kidnapped by the terrorist group MRTA in the residence of the Japanese ambassador in Lima brought Fujimori additional national and international prestige. This military victory was publicized as a political triumph and was used to reinforce Fujimori's hard stance against terrorist groups; his popularity ratings doubled to nearly 70% (Álvarez Rubio, 2015, p. 64). These achievements gave the people a sense of liberation and progress, but the cost was extremely high. The legacy of the Fujimori regime was a system of corruption deeply rooted in the sphere of national politics and the economy.

The name Alberto Fujimori can hardly be uttered without mentioning his right-hand man, Vladimiro Montesinos. Quiroz gives an account of what are now well-known facts about Montesinos. He was an army captain who sold confidential information to the CIA and was tried by a military court for espionage and insubordination. He was held in a military prison for two years (1976-1978), and during that time he studied law, graduating after being released. He then became a defence attorney for drug traffickers, getting their cases "resolved" through bribery, blackmail and pressure. The Fujimori-Montesinos relationship was established during the electoral campaign, at which point Montesinos "solved" a serious tax evasion problem that threatened to ruin Fujimori's reputation and presidential ambitions. Their corrupt collusion spread in all directions and lasted the whole "infamous decade" of the Fujimori regime. Since July 1990, Montesinos became the *de facto* head of the National Intelligence Service (SIN). Being the unofficial leader gave him extraordinary power, since he was beyond institutional control. As a result, it was actually the SIN that ran the country's government (Quiroz, 2018, pp. 357–360). As is depicted in *Cinco esquinas*, Montesinos, represented by an eponymous character, was able to manipulate anyone as necessary through bribery or threats with the

judiciary and the media, both under his control. This partnership lasted until the end of the Fujimori regime.

Women in the 1990s. In the early 1990s the seeds for what would be the Third Wave of Feminism were planted in the United States. Grounded in the achievements of the Second Wave, it incorporated the pleas for recognizing difference, diversity and individuality. The Third Wave is difficult to define, as it was born as a reaction; it breaks with the previous feminism and its duality. Third Wave is complicated, unpredictable, plural and welcoming of multiple differences (Budgeon, 2011, pp. 3–5). The ideas that were recognized in the 1980s are important components of the Third Wave, one significant example being intersectionality. Women were more self-assertive and inclusive. Third Wavers embraced femininity and at the same time trans movements. Anita Hill's 1991 testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee denouncing sexual harassment by then Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas had a profound impact on feminists. At the forefront was their fight against sexual harassment in the workplace and the effort to increase the representation of women in leadership roles. All causes of the oppressed minorities in the world become their causes.

During the Fujimori government political rights and the importance of the role of women in public spheres increased substantially. Fujimori published a new National Population Policy Law in 1995, introducing family planning methods previously banned in the country, such as tubal ligation and vasectomy, which caused a strong confrontation with the Peruvian Catholic hierarchy. The day after its enactment, he departed for Beijing, where the fact that he was the only male president in attendance at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, besides the host president of China, attracted international attention (Cañas, 1995a, para. 1). Progress in favour of women was achieved in that conference. A recommendation for non-discrimination on the basis of maternity is incorporated, and the need for the fathers sharing in the responsibilities of parenthood is acknowledged. Also, the Vatican agreed not to oppose the revision of the laws that provide for punitive measures against women for illegal abortions, and a reference to artificial contraceptive methods was accepted (Cañas, 1995b, paras. 4–5). An important aspect of the law enacted in Peru was that women did not require their partners' consent to have tubal ligation performed. Fujimori launched a program that

became controversial and was branded by the Catholic Church and his political opponents as the "forced sterilization program".[9] There were also less polemical advances for women during this decade. Some of the most important were the creation of a Ministry of Promotion of Women and Human Development, an Ombudsman's Office for Women's Affairs and a Women's Commission in Congress. Also, a law was enacted to establish at 25% the quota for women representation in political lists. If in the 1980s women had become aware of their entitlement to basic rights, in the 1990s these rights began to be recognized by the State (Vargas, 2004, p. 13). The Fujimori regime had been at the same time the one that had advanced institutionalization and recognition of citizenship of women, placing many in visible positions of power, while contrastingly developing a manipulative and patronizing policy towards poor women in particular (Cáceres Sztorc, 2017, p. 64). The women in his family provided an unexpected source of internal opposition. His wife, Susana Higuchi was the first to denounce corruption in his government, implicating members of Fujimori's immediate family: a full-blown scandal was set in motion.[10] This resulted in Higuchi being ousted as wife, mother and First Lady, a role that the couple's first born daughter Keiko Fujimori promptly assumed amid much controversy and criticism.[11] The 1990s was a decade of contrasts where advances were no doubt gained in many respects, in particular regarding the pacification of the

---

[9] For more information refer to M. Cecilia Villegas *La verdad de una mentira, El caso de las trescientas mil esterilizaciones forzadas* (2017), and Ágata Cáceres Sztorc *Entre el autoritarismo y la democracia* (2017, pp. 66–69).

[10] While publicly Fujimori championed women's rights, the personal situation of his wife, Susana Higuchi, was different. On March 24, 1992, Higuchi was the first person to denounce corruption in her husband's government. The First Lady denounced the misuse of the clothes donated by Japan to benefit low-income Peruvians. She claimed they were sold for personal profit by Fujimori's sister and brother and their spouses. While this scandal became world news. In Peru the case was taken to the courts to be investigated and was also primetime news. Two weeks later, this scandal was eclipsed when Fujimori announced that he was closing Congress and completely reorganizing the Judicial System, in what came to be known as "el Autogolpe del 5 de abril".
Later, Higuchi claimed she had been kidnapped and tortured, receiving electroshock and beatings because of exposing the handling of the donations from Japan. In a message to the nation, Fujimori announced he and his wife were separating. For more information, refer to: *La historia de Susana Higuchi* (Sifuentes, 2008, 00:01), "24 de marzo de 1992: El autogolpe de Susana Higuchi y la ropa donada del Japón" (Silva, 2012), "Alberto Fujimori bota a Susana Higuchi de Palacio" (Lamula.pe, 2011), "Escándalo en la familia del Presidente Fujimori" ("Escándalo," 1992).

[11] For more information on Keiko Fujimori as First Lady, refer to: ¿Cómo Llegó Keiko Fujimori a Ser Primera Dama de La Nación? (Latina.pe, 2015, 07:00) and "La niña de sus ojos" (Saravia and Wiesse, 2016).

country, the economy and women's rights and recognition, but the moral cost was so high, that it would be difficult to ascertain whether the balance was positive or negative.

A new millennium: change is imminent

By the year 2000, Vargas Llosa had settled down again. He lived mainly in Madrid with his wife Patricia, as their children were already adults. He had a *tribu* of his own, with two daughters in law, welcoming a son in law in 2006 and grandchildren whom he confessed made him completely lose his good sense, rationality and freedom—and he loved it. During this decade he wrote three novels that had women as central characters: *La Fiesta del Chivo, El Paraíso en la otra esquina* and *Travesuras de la niña mala*.

Meanwhile, in Peru the political chaos continued. The debacle of Fujimori's regime began in 1996 when he decided to run for the presidency for a third time. In order to allow this third term, his party approved a law known as the *ley de interpretación auténtica*. According to the constitution of 1993, enacted while Fujimori himself was in office, a president can only be re-elected once. Using a ruse based on his election in 1990 under an earlier constitution, his party claimed that his first period should not be considered. Individuals and institutions who objected were overruled and officials were changed (Cáceres Sztorc, 2017, p. 69). In July 2020 Fujimori was sworn in for the third time amid popular unrest. This period would end quickly. As recreated loosely in *Cinco esquinas*, Matilde Pinchi Pinchi, Vladimiro Montesinos's secretary, leaked to the press the first of what soon would turn into hundreds of videos where this shadowy advisor recorded himself bribing influential people. On September 14, 2020, a video was released portraying Montesinos giving Congressman Alberto Kouri US$15,000 in exchange for abandoning his political party and joining Fujimori's. This was the end. An authoritarian regime with a democratic *façade* that Vargas Llosa had referred to on many occasions was about to implode (see below, p. 117). On September 16 Fujimori deactivated the SIN and removed Montesinos as advisor. Montesinos fled Peru and began a journey through different countries in a bid to evade the authorities. He was apprehended on June 24, 2001, in Caracas, Venezuela and speedily returned to Peru, where he is serving several sentences. In November, Fujimori, who had attended the APEC Leaders' Summit in Brunei, decided not to return to Peru but to go to Japan and from there he resigned by fax.

Congress did not accept his resignation, but instead declared his “permanent moral incapacity” and the vacancy of the Presidency. Fujimori stayed in Japan until November 2005, when he decided to return to Peru via Chile. Upon his arrival there, he was apprehended and later extradited to Peru. He is currently serving several sentences in a Peruvian penitentiary compound.

Valentín Paniagua Corazao, President of Congress, became the leader of a Transition Government until July 2001 when Alejandro Toledo Manrique was elected President of Peru, and in 2006 the people re-elected Alan García Pérez. There were situations that could be highlighted in both governments, but since Vargas Llosa’s novels have not been built around them nor have been set in Peru during that time they will not be addressed here. It should suffice to mention that, at least on the surface, both were relatively good governments. During Toledo’s tenure, anti-corruption investigations were widespread at the beginning and successful economic policies were implemented throughout. García’s second term was a great improvement over his first one; he also followed successful neoliberal economic policies. The first decade of the 21st century was, in economic terms, one of the most positive in the country's economic history (Contreras and Cueto, 2015, p. 415). Peru was one of the most stable economies in Latin America, during the period known as *el milagro peruano*.

Women in the first decade of the new millennium. The Third Wave of Feminism was in full swing by the year 2000. Women were no longer only concerned with traditional female interests or with straight/gay issues. Born in an era of internet and globalization, Third Wavers deal with larger issues such as the environment, the economy and social justice. As Heywood states, Third Wavers believe gender is not a variable that can be isolated; they reject conventional stereotypes, ideas and ideals, and champion issues that involve multiracial interests, multiculturality, multiethnicity, diverse sexual categories and religions as well as other kinds of hybrid identities (2006a, pp. xvii–xx). Feminists of this period highlight gender, but it is by no means their only focus of interest.

Meanwhile in Peru, feminisms were evolving as well. Women began to question gender problems and incorporated into their cause the indigenous and Afro descendants, without actually considering themselves postcolonial feminists (Muñoz and Barrientos,

2019, p. 482). Feminist organizations began to organize writing contests for women, in order to promote literature written by women. Also, gender studies programs were included in the curricula of private and public universities. As was the case of Fujimori, Toledo's and García's private lives and their personal attitudes towards women were contrastingly much less than optimal. Toledo had an illegitimate daughter whom he did not recognize until public pressure and the risk of losing the presidential election made it unavoidable.[12] García also had an extramarital son but in his case, he did welcome his love child. Pilar Nores, his wife at the time, had to face the country by García's side when he confirmed this situation to his constituents.[13] In both cases, all the women involved were subjected to immense humiliation, to public scrutiny and to private pain. Then there is a change of orientation: in his novels of the first decade of the 2000s, Vargas Llosa portrays women who are beginning to rebel against opprobrium and who fight abuse, women who although they are not successful yet, are no longer willing to quietly accept their circumstances.

The first novels of the new millennium: trying to break the cycle of powerlessness

Beginning in 2000 and throughout the first decade of the new century, Vargas Llosa wrote three novels that bring about an important change. His literary world moved on its axis, abandoning male-centred literature to introduce novels where, for the first time, the main protagonists are women. His representation of women changes: he portrays them in a very different light from the ones who populated previous novels. Women now have a voice, and each one in a distinct way is critical of the gender status quo. They realize power is at stake and try to reclaim it either by escaping their reality, changing it or constructing a new one, desperately endeavouring to take hold of their own destinies. They also have in common either not being Peruvian, or, in the case of *niña mala*, a Peruvian who poses as a woman of different nationalities, attempting to reinvent herself and so distancing herself from the limits that her true origin would have imposed

---

[12] For more information on the case of Lucrecia Orozco and Zaraí Toledo Orozco refer to "Toledo reconoce a Zaraí como su hija después de una larga polémica" ("Toledo reconoce a Zaraí," 2002) and "Cuando Alejandro Toledo negó a su hija Zaraí ante todo el mundo - Bayly" (El Crítico Noticias, 2013).

[13] Pilar Nores, wife of Alan García, faced the nation by her husband's side when he acknowledged his extramarital son with a woman "de altas cualidades", after journalist César Hildebrandt made it public. For more information see "Alan reconoce a su sexto hijo" (Mendoza, 2006) and "El secreto de Alan" (EFE, 2006).

on her. The works published during this period are *La Fiesta del Chivo*, *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* and *Travesuras de la niña mala*. Throughout these novels, women evidence awareness of the main principles of social functioning: that it is men who distribute power roles and that among the most important considerations for this distribution are gender, class and race. For the first time in Vargas Llosa's fiction, women openly reject the position they have been assigned in society and try to change that prevailing order by exercising power over their own lives. Although they fail to live full and satisfying lives, these are the first protagonists who actively try to effect change. In *La fiesta*, Urania decides she will be educated and independent, renouncing marriage so that no other man can use her as *el Chivo* did. Flora wants to alter the status quo not only for herself but for all the oppressed, and fights for universal change in *El Paraíso*. The last of the protagonists of the triad, *niña mala* of *Travesuras*, is born in a country where the remnants of colonialism are deeply rooted (see below, p. 143).[14] Lloyd H. Davies points out that "The postcolonial implies the continuing colonial legacy after political independence, which did not eliminate entrenched political and social structures". This is a reality in many Latin American countries, and certainly in Perú. "Among the fundamental issues treated by postcolonialism are state violence, the exploitation of people and environment by transnational corporations, and social disempowerment often determined by race and ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality" (Davies, 2007, pp. 1038, 1035). *Niña mala* is determined not to fulfil the destiny reserved for those like her, who, besides being women, are descendants of indigenous people, are not economically solvent and belong to the lower social classes. Throughout the text of *Travesuras*, the author builds up a case for those who have suffered the circumstances their country forced them to accept, sympathising with the reasons why some come to hate it and see fleeing it as their only chance to be free (2008, p. 360). As is evident, the female

---

[14] For information on poscolonialism in Peru, refer to "Colonialidad y modernidad/racionalidad", by Aníbal Quijano, published in *Perú Indígena* (1992, pp. 11–20). "No obstante que el colonialismo político fue eliminado, la relación entre la cultura europea, llamada también "occidental", y las otras, sigue siendo una relación de dominación colonial" (Quijano, 1992, p. 12).
Also see *Antología del pensamiento crítico peruano contemporáneo*, Martín Tanaka (2016). "En el Perú la injusticia en las relaciones sociales entrecruza componentes de clase, étnicos, regionales, de género, entre otros. . . . un sector resulta especial e históricamente oprimido, . . . la población pobre, andina o amazónica, de origen indígena, rural, femenina. Cualquier proyecto emancipatorio o igualitarista debería considerar esta configuración tan compleja, que además se expresa en un orden social extremadamente heterogéneo y fragmentado" (Tanaka, 2016, p. 15).

protagonists of these three novels have opened their eyes to their situation and resist it, dealing with it in different ways, but all trying to circumvent it. What is at stake is power. Women have realized they are at the mercy of men and begin a struggle to obtain power over themselves and for themselves.

Women have been subject to men's power and precepts for a period so extended, that it has almost become natural. They never shared the world with men on an equal footing: they have been vassals, if not slaves of men, claims Simone de Beauvoir. Why then, have they always been so complacent, often indulging in their role as *Other*, submitting to the perspective of men? Why have they not challenged male sovereignty? (1981, pp. 21–25). The obedient, submissive, even resigned mothers of the cadets whom Vargas Llosa presents in La *ciudad y los perros* exemplify this perplexing situation. This is the result of the cultural construction of women that [Marcela Lagarde] calls a historical creation which defines women as social and cultural beings "from and for *the others*" (from the female perspective). This construction renders women captive and stems from patriarchal societies and cultures, which have defined the circumstances of women as a gender: oppression, vital dependence, subjection, subalternity and voluntary servitude (1993, pp. 33–35). The term voluntary is key, although it may also be deceptive. If, as Lagarde proposes, females have been rendered inferior and excluded from vetted spaces, activities and powers, while being compulsorily inserted into others—in theory inalienable ones—on the presumption of the incapable, impure, incomplete and failed nature of women (Lagarde, 1993, p. 15), then their captivity has not been truly voluntary. It was normalized and inherited, the implication being that there was no alternative. As was the case of Alberto's mother in *La ciudad* who decides against accepting her unfaithful husband's money, but ultimately relents and moves back in with him, implicitly consenting to his serial infidelities. A comparison could be established here with Amalia of *Conversación en La Catedral.* She resigns from her job—relinquishing her power to earn a living and along with this her independence—because of a man. Even if she made the decision herself, she was influenced to act in this way by her partner and by social norms. The same happens to *tía Julia*, who, in the words of *prima* Patricia, had to put up with Varguitas' indiscretions just to keep the peace. In many instances, as in the cases just mentioned, there is no apparent violence, power is exercised

over others. Even in situations where interdependence is so prevalent, so endemic that it seems to be a natural, frictionless situation, power is exerted, permeating all instances of life and usually creating frustration or resentment. Power is a relationship that allows one to direct or determine the behaviours of another, thus governing a society, a group, a community or a family, all through strategy or tactics (Foucault, 1996, p. 410). If tactics and strategies are used to preserve the power of one side, it is because it is conscious and convenient for that side. That is the state of affairs with regards to the position of women in the world in the 1960s and 1970s, as portrayed by Vargas Llosa's literary output of those decades. Women are depicted as subjugated by a patriarchal society; but that situation could not last forever, not without opposition, since, as Foucault proposes, "as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy" (2003, p. 280). Thus, the correlation power/powerlessness can be upset. There is always the risk of an imbalance that will cause this relationship to break as, in accordance with Foucault's analysis, the "summit" in the relation is not the only "source" of power, but it is assisted by the lower element in the relationship which has been conditioned to "hold [it] together", power becoming a "mutual and indefinite 'extortion'" (1996, pp. 235–236). The individual or group who has been on the losing side of the equation at some point may react with repressed resentment and a demand for change, altering the state of affairs. Deleuze's perspective on power and the all-time question of balance between men and woman is based on relations between the groups he designates majoritarian/minoritarian. He relates the domination of men to their being in the "majority", while women constitute one of the many minorities. Deleuze and Guattari propose that the difference between "majority" and "minority" is not only quantitative. A "majority" is a constant that serves "as a standard measure by which to evaluate" and assumes "a state of power and domination" over the "minoritarian" systems. In literature, for example, supposing that "the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language" is the constant or the standard, then that constitutes the "majority". They further illustrate the point through Marxism, which "has almost always translated hegemony from the point of view of the national worker, qualified, male and over thirty-five". Deleuze and Guattari also offer the

notion of “becoming”: the process by which a minority “deviates from the model”, and how it affects the majority/minority groups through a simultaneous deterritorialization/reterritorialization. This becoming, they expound, is not a subject in itself, but a relationship shift, of one [the minority] pushing the other [the majority], as “you don’t deviate from the majority unless there is a little detail that starts to swell and carries you off”. Although becomings occur in many realms, there is no becoming-man, as “the majority in the universe assumes as pregiven the right and power of man”, who is the “majoritarian par excellence” [powerful and dominating] and becomings are only minoritarian. “Women must become-woman”, and in doing so, men are affected, as it always implies “two simultaneous movements” (1987, pp. 105, 291–292). Becoming-woman thus brings about a reconfiguration of the relation man/woman, which is what Vargas Llosa’s literature illustrates. When women become-woman they escape the parameters that constrain them, they evade the strong invisible fences that were constructed to corral them.

Deleuze’s theory is not without detractors among feminists, who claim that “he proceeds as if there were clear equivalence in the speaking positions of the two sexes: he misses and consequently fails to take into account the central point of the feminist assertion of sexual difference, namely the idea that there is no symmetry between the sexes” (Braidotti, 2003, p. 51). Other critiques are that becoming-woman offsets sexual difference and self-sufficiency, that it undermines feminism’s strength and that it favours a male project toward “alterity” (Sotirin, 2011, p. 122). These arguments are countered by examining the Body without Organs concept that Deleuze and Guattari offer as a means to strip the Oedipal, organic and cultural-historical values from the body in order to liberate it and avoid traditional binary oppositions and confrontation. “The question is not, or not only that of the organism, history, and subject of enunciation that oppose masculine to feminine in the great dualism machines. The question is fundamentally that of the body—the body they steal from us in order to fabricate opposable organisms” (1987, pp. 119–121, 276). Body without Organs provides feminism with the possibility to resist and escape the conventional order, domination patterns, binary organization of sexuality and dualisms as “sexuality no longer functions on the level of the unified, genitalized organization of the sexed body” (Sotirin, 2011, p. 122). Although not

necessarily embracing all implications of the Deleuzian theory, becoming-woman is an appropriate perspective from which to view the trajectory and progress of women towards empowerment in the almost sixty years covered by this study. Women are becoming and their territory is changing: they are not confined to the home and its boundaries anymore, and this has necessarily affected men. There have been some adjustments and some shifting in both genders' perspectives for this to be accomplished. The transformation that occurs in women could not be without change in men as, binarism and dualism must be defied to overcome gendered subjectivity and establish new territoriality. Urania in *La Fiesta*, Flora Tristán in *El Paraíso* and *Niña mala* in *Travesuras* are leading examples of women who are on their way to becoming-woman.

Vargas Llosa's novels of the first decade of the 2000s represent women who are resisting their situation of powerlessness. The codes written and enforced by men through the years when patriarchy ruled established systems that kept women away from power and in a state of dependence (Beauvoir, 1981, p. 165), but the protagonists of Vargas Llosa's fiction are slowly fighting against that secondary place, that *Other* place in relation to men. This is where the reader meets Urania, the girl who tried to escape the grip of *el Chivo*'s power.

2000 - La Fiesta del Chivo: the novel of all dictators

The first in the triad of Vargas Llosa's novels of this period is *La Fiesta del Chivo*, a novel that departs from much of what Vargas Llosa's readers were accustomed to and launches a series of novels where many of the protagonists are women. Urania Cabral, significantly, one of the few important characters who does not correspond to a historical figure, is the first central and strong female character in the author's prolific oeuvre. This is undoubtedly a major innovation that this novel brings but is not the only one. Also, in contrast with much of his previous (and later) work, it takes place entirely outside Peru, in the Dominican Republic. The only other works of fiction Vargas Llosa has written which are not at least partially set in Peru, were published almost forty years apart: *La guerra del fin del mundo* and *Tiempos recios*. The first is set in Brazil, while the latter opens in Guatemala, and closes in the Dominican Republic: it has connections with the dictator Rafael Trujillo and those in his political sphere. Unusual as well is that this book does not include conspicuous autobiographical aspects, although Vargas Llosa does

have strong feelings about dictatorships and has been exposed to them through the years. Finally, the successful film version of *La Fiesta del Chivo,* 2005, is also unlike other film adaptations of his books. The fact that Urania's role in the film not only keeps its importance but highlights it, marks a difference in the depiction of women in previous films based on Vargas Llosa's novels. It contrasts with the situation in films such as *La ciudad y los perros*, where the mothers are completely suppressed, and Teresa's appearance is kept to a minimum. In *Tune in tomorrow,* the film version of *La tía Julia,* Julia was not only taken from the billboard but was turned into a flighty woman lacking common sense who after various unsuccessful marriages is looking for her next husband. The mother of the protagonist in the film *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* is absent from the cast, and the personal stories of the visitadoras are also omitted, inevitably diminishing these characters. The novel as well as the film version of *La Fiesta del Chivo* mark the beginning of a new stage in the presence and depiction of women in the work of Vargas Llosa.

A dictator novel twenty-five years in the making. Vargas Llosa's fictionalised account of history belongs to the literary subgenre of Novels of Dictatorship, mostly associated with Latin America and its long history of dictatorial governments. Although this genre's roots go back to the 19th century and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Facundo* (1945), it gained fresh momentum in the early 1970s. In the fall of 1967, while chatting at a pub in London, Carlos Fuentes and Vargas Llosa came up with the idea of compiling a gallery of imaginary portraits of dictators in Latin America. To launch this project, they invited some twelve authors, including the Boom writers, to participate by presenting a fifty-page novel of their "tirano nacional favorito", to be included in the volume "*Los padres de las patrias*" (Fuentes, 2011, para. 2). The project did not come to fruition but, Fuentes states, some of the writers continued to finish their own novels. Augusto Roa Bastos authored *Yo el Supremo* (1983), Alejo Carpentier wrote *El recurso del método* (1974) and García Márquez published *El otoño del patriarca* (1975). These works constitute some of the most celebrated Latin American dictator novels and have a number of features in common, for example, the dictators are not historical figures but imaginary composites—except for Miguel Ángel Asturias's nameless dictator of *El señor presidente* (1946). They are set in the distant past so they "evade the challenges of the

present". These writers' support for the Cuban Revolution made it difficult for them to express criticism of the dictatorial regimes they were illustrating, vulnerable as they were to contradictions stemming from their ideologies (Martin, 1989, p. 272). These issues will not apply to the dictator novel written twenty-five years later by Vargas Llosa.

In the case of the Peruvian author, perhaps the initial idea of writing this dictator novel dates back to his early project with Fuentes, but it was stimulated by his first-hand contact with the island and with the people who survived the long, dark period in the history of the Caribbean republic known as the Trujillo Era. General Rafael Leónidas Trujillo's dictatorship in the Dominican Republic lasted thirty-one years (1930-61), during which time he exercised unfettered power over the men and women under his rule. In 1975, Vargas Llosa lived on the island for some months while co-directing with Jose María Gutierrez the first film version of *Pantaleón*. Throughout those months, the Peruvian author heard numerous stories and anecdotes relating to the *Trujillato*, as this period is also known. The writer was horrified by the violence and cruelty the dictator inflicted upon his people (Univisión Noticias, 2014b, 01:30). Trujillo scarred the island in such a profound way that almost sixty years after his death he is still considered one of the worst despots in the history of all of Latin America (Castro and Birns, 2010, p. 140). The idea of a novel that would depict the brutality of this corrupt dictatorship, however it arose, remained with Vargas Llosa for around twenty-five years, and the resulting work of historical fiction is a good example of his "cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat" (Nobelprize.org, 2010) for which he received the Nobel prize in 2010.

In the eyes of the author, the quarter of a century interval between the previous dictator novels and his own responds to the fact that he does not choose his themes freely, but that issues impose themselves on him, leaving the author with no choice but to write about them (Krauze, 2000, para. 12). He writes about the dictator and about the plot to assassinate him, but what sets *La Fiesta* apart from the dictator novels mentioned earlier is that Vargas Llosa also writes about the effects the dictator and his actions had over the people. He brings Urania to the time when he was writing the novel, 1996, which allows him to show the long-lasting consequences of the years that the Dominican Republic was under Trujillo's rule. In writing historical fiction, Vargas Llosa is not interested in what

he calls “archaeological” novels that only recreate history. He prefers rather to take the perspective of the present to assess the effects of the past and also possible consequences yet to be identified (Moran, 2006, p. 263). It is also worth noting that during the time when he was writing *La Fiesta*, a different kind of dictatorship, that of totalitarian governments disguised as democracies—such as those of Alberto Fujimori in Peru and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela—were taking shape. Further, some Peruvian readers consider certain episodes and characters to be based on the Peruvian situation (Boland, 2003, p. 8). In this way, bringing the Trujillo tyranny to the forefront when he did, could be the way the author, consciously or not, chose to warn his readers, in particular through Urania and her family’s retrospective thoughts, that accepting some initial abuses might lead to worse ones. His work can be seen as a cautionary tale; “los países anestesiados por la propaganda y el providencialismo se *acostumbran* a tolerar casi cualquier cosa” (Martínez, 2000, para. 3, emphasis added). Vargas Llosa affirms that he aimed to write a dictatorship novel that would transcend the local sphere to become universal; while writing about Trujillo, he was also writing about Castro, about Fujimori, about all dictators (Moret, 2000, para. 2). *La Fiesta del Chivo* portrays the abuses the dictator Trujillo committed towards his people, giving particular relevance to the mistreatment and violence he visited upon women. The Nobel laureate writes about the power Trujillo exerted upon women and through women.

Urania and the women in the island that belonged to *el Chivo*. To render his fictionalised image of the Trujillo Era the author weaves three different narrative strands, as has become almost characteristic of his writing. In one, a narrator gives an account of the last day in the dictator’s life, and later the months following his assassination. In a second thread, the men who have plotted his assassination for months wait for *el Chivo*’s vehicle in order to realize their plan. Through flashbacks the reader learns how the plan took shape. The third thread is that of Urania Cabral, the daughter of one of the Generalissimo’s disgraced collaborators, whom the reader meets thirty-five years after the dictator’s death. While the focus on the *Trujillato* and Trujillo’s life is appealing, as it has many interesting angles and themes, it is not the object of this analysis which will concentrate mainly on Urania who illustrates the place of women in a profoundly corrupt dictatorship set in a patriarchal society.

The fictional female characters are fundamental in the novel, as were the women in the historical events it portrays. It was the dictator's treatment of women that spurred the plotters to take action. Minerva, Patria and María Teresa Mirabal, known as the Butterflies, were three sisters who became political organisers against Trujillo and for that they endured prison, torture and humiliation. They were assassinated in cold blood by the secret police under orders of the dictator. Vargas Llosa recalls the testimony of the only survivor among the men who made it their mission to avenge the women of their country by ending Trujillo's life. They were used to the government's abuse of their parents, brothers and friends, but they would not tolerate having their women murdered. That was the limit: "Hay que matar a Trujillo" (Krauze, 2000, para. 7). Amadito García Guerrero, Salvador Estrella Sadhala, Antonio Imbert and Antonio de la Maza, the men who are awaiting in the car to ambush Trujillo, recall the conversation they had the day the Butterflies were assassinated. Estrella believes that is when they began to make their plans, while de la Maza recalls they had already been meeting by then (2000, p. 41); either way, they remember the Mirabal sisters at that crucial moment. They had influenced their decision. These sisters had become a symbol of the strength and resistance of Dominican women, and their murder was not only the tragic death of three young women and their driver, but a message from the tyrant to his subjects that refusal to accept his designs would not be tolerated. Such a cowardly crime against women could never be forgiven in the *machista* society, and it contributed to the setting in motion of the conspirators' plot against Trujillo (Diederich, 1978, pp. 71–72). *Machista* societies are imbued with *Marianismo* (see above, p. 44). This causes great contradictions in these cultures. The man, especially during the 1960s, was the head of the household, a dominant figure who could hold women back and sometimes abuse his position of power. Women were submissive and their rights were frequently disregarded, but, contrastingly, as they represent the mother, the Holy Mother, they are revered, sacred. Trujillo had managed to penetrate the psyche of many men and convince them that their women should be given to him as a kind of homage to a demigod, and that had worked for many years. The brutal crime of the Mirabal sisters was the limit: the degradation women had endured during this regime had to come to an end.

Urania Cabral is a fictional character whose experience represents the violence and cruelty that women on the island had to endure. She is central to the plot because, as atrocious as the dictatorship was for the majority of Trujillo's subjects, the heinousness and brutality directed at women was much worse, and there was no better way to reveal the depth of its consequences than through a woman. The dictator utilised women and sex as instruments of control and coercion. In an eminently *machista* society, he had managed the impossible: to make men believe that it was through holding in his arms the most beautiful women in the country that he obtained the energy necessary to lead and reinvigorate the Dominican Republic (2000, p. 74). In many cases, he did not have to exert violence to achieve results. One of the dictator's nicknames was *Padre de la Patria Nueva* (2000, p. 15), and the implications of this on a patriarchal society were immense. For one, women were under the rule of men, under the rule of the father and the husband in particular. Men, on the other hand, felt they owed obedience to their ruler and patriarch; they owed him everything, including their women. It was not unusual for *el Chivo* to receive surprise presents from solicitous subjects. That was the case of Moni, one of his favourites. She was brought by her father on the day of her wedding, "Mire la sorpresa que le traigo, Jefe" (2000, p. 383). Women were in an impossible position: they had to comply with the wishes of their fathers or husbands as well as with those of the great father of the country. What may seem even more peculiar is that it was not only among the uneducated peasants, who were kept in a state of unquestioning subservience, that Trujillo was able to impose these abject, irrational and immoral practices. He also made use of the women of his circle, the wives and daughters of his educated ministers and aids, to gauge their loyalty (Moran, 2006, p. 266). Vargas Llosa believes that Trujillo did not have sexual encounters with these women because he liked them, but to verify his men's willingness to make that sacrifice for him (Krauze, 2000, para. 5). In order to confirm their compliance, he had to make sure that they knew about his manipulation of their wives, and he wanted their humiliation to be public. Urania tells her father about the anecdote Senator Henry Chirinos, joyously related at a reception she attended in Washington. Trujillo, Chirinos recalled, declared to a select group of his party members—military, ministers, senators, governors and other important characters—that he had been with many women, but the best "hembra" among them had been Froilán

Arala's wife; the funniest part of the story was that Froilán, among those present, had heroically smiled, laughed and celebrated with the other men (2000, pp. 73–74). Some critics propose that, with *La Fiesta del Chivo*, Vargas Llosa begins to depict the process of corruption of individual men surrounding a strongman (Kristal, 2018, p. 421). While this analysis concurs with that perception, it argues that it is also the beginning of a period in which women start to demonstrate that they can oppose the status quo and fight for change. In some cases, the only way to stop the issues they face from destroying them is to flee, which Urania does while she is a young, vulnerable girl. She returns when she has taken command of her life and is no longer defenceless or frightened. Urania's return takes place during a time, 1996, when women, Third Wavers, were not only embracing differences, but were becoming strong and empowered, rejecting victimization and assuming beauty instead of rejecting it, avoiding being objectified through taking command of their own desires. This is exactly what Urania demonstrates.

Urania flees to stop the circle of violence. Urania is unlike other women. That is established in the first line in the novel when she points to her extraordinary status by reference to her name. It is different—not one suited for a woman but for a planet or a mineral (2000, p. 11). The implication is that she is as uncommon as her name. As a young teenager she was handed to *el Chivo* as an offering from her father, disgraced senator Agustín Cabral, who hoped thereby to regain the dictator's favour. Such practice was not unusual: he enjoyed boasting about the many "hembras que se había tirado" (2000, p. 71). Trujillo was thought to be worthy of enjoying the women, who were referred to as objects or animals. Luis Alfonso, proud to be called the "Celestino del Jefe", asks Cabral if a man like Trujillo would not be deserving of some fun from time to time? "¿Gozar unos minutos con una hembra?" (2000, p. 346). He was then talking about fourteen-year-old Urania, who was to be offered to the almighty Trujillo. As many women of all ages, she was delivered into Trujillo's claws by her father through Manuel Alfonso, and was never an innocent girl again. But that is not what is unusual about her. What makes Urania different is that she managed to escape the tyrant, albeit if after being violated by him. She fled the country unbeknownst to the almighty Trujillo. This is the first small battle she won, significantly, aided by other women, the nuns of her school. "¿Por qué la dejó salir del país sin consultarme?", an infuriated dictator questions colonel

Abbes García after her escape: someone had hidden from him the document authorising her departure (2000, p. 374). In this way, she escapes his control and that of Cabral. Significantly, Urania renounces the name she was given in the Dominican Republic as a child. Nobody called her by that name anymore but Uri or Miss, Mrs. or Doctor Cabral. Symbolically, she also renounced the fate that should have been hers. She is also different because she decides to stay away and is successful in self-exiling herself for thirty-five years. This woman is not sure why she is back to visit the island after so long. Through a long introspection, a narrator in the second person interrogates her. Will she regret this trip? Is she becoming sentimental, or is it a symptom of her decline? She is only acting out of curiosity, she posits. She is just trying to prove to herself that she does not feel sadness, loathing or bitterness, that she does not hate anymore. She had buried her memories in work and studies, and now she does not know what it is that she is looking for, but she knew it was time (2000, pp. 12–14). It is 1996, and that cannot be fortuitous. It is an important year for the Dominican Republic, as it marked the first open elections after Trujillo's and later Joaquín Balaguer's tyrannies (Kristal and King, 2012, p. 127). In 1996 Dr. Jaime David Fernandez Mirabal, grandson of a fourth Mirabal sister, was elected Vice President of the Dominican Republic in the first Government of the Dominican Liberation Party and remained in the position until 2000. Urania's questioning herself may be equated to the choices the people of the island had to make at that time while exercising their democratic civil rights. She frees herself, symbolically, of the ghosts of the past, as does the Republic. The reunion of Urania with her family, and her testimony to her aunt and cousins is eloquent in the same sense. Also, the visit to her family highlights interesting aspects regarding women. The first notable fact is that only women participate in the conversation. The only male family member whom the reader meets, Urania's father, is physically unable to communicate due to a stroke. One cannot avoid thinking that this condition not only represents a form of poetic justice, but also signifies that women's time to speak has come. In this case, women may very well incarnate the nation that has been freed.

Speaking up and being believed were not the same, and Urania has a challenging time convincing her aunt, cousins and niece that she had indeed been the victim of the horrors she describes in detail. It is common knowledge that those were the methods of

Trujillo, and they know Manuel Alfonso was the playboy who sought women for the dictator (2000, p. 331), yet these women are reluctant to trust Urania. A woman's word is not taken at face value even by women, even decades after what had transpired has become widely known. The dissimilar reactions of the women who represent different generations is telling. Her father's sister, Aunt Adelina, whose lucidity and strong voice contrasts with her physical deterioration, as the author is careful to point out (2000, p. 252), is the most reluctant to be persuaded by her niece's account. She was of sound mind and able to understand Urania's words perfectly, but she was the one who was most steadfast in her refusal to believe her niece. She looks at Urania in fear, and without any hint of compassion (2000, p. 508), asks her to stop giving her account of the facts. Aunt Adelina accuses her niece of being bitter and full of hatred, not pious as her mother had been (2000, p. 509). She wants Urania to pray and forgive, to consider that maybe her father, from her perspective a naive man, could have been fooled by Manuel Alfonso. In any case, he has suffered enough, the aunt proposes, and those were different times: he could have gone to jail or be murdered (2000, pp. 513–516). She justifies his actions. Lucinda, the same age as Urania and her best friend during childhood, has a different perspective. Lucinda reproaches her cousin: Urania should not complain because, thanks to what happened, she graduated from Harvard, became a lawyer and worked for the World Bank. From Lucinda's perspective, Urania's story showed that every cloud has a silver lining. She had studied in the best places and was a successful woman, unlike them (2000, p. 513). Urania seems to have followed Beauvoir's advice to become aware of herself and emancipate herself from marriage through work, which would (and did) translate into repudiating her subjection to men (1981, p. 161). This independence came at a great cost, one which Lucinda was unable to understand. From Lucinda's assertions, the reader can gather that she would have readily paid the price Urania paid if it had meant that she would get to live her life.

Manolita, another cousin two or three years younger than Urania, does not judge, just laughs nervously. She would rather not find out what had really happened. She tells Urania not to go on with the story if she finds it upsetting (2000, p. 339). The only one who believes her story and is affected by it from the beginning is Marianita, Manolita's twenty-year-old daughter. The account of what her aunt had to endure literally makes her

sick (2000, p. 499). When they say their goodbyes, they all promise to be in contact and ask Urania to reply to their letters and visit from time to time, which carries a certain implied reproach. Urania agrees, but she is not really sure she will (2000, p. 515). The only one who understands is Marianita, representative of the new generation. She embraces Urania tightly, and tells her "Yo a ti te voy a querer mucho, tía Urania…Te voy a escribir todos los meses. No importa si no me contestas" (2000, pp. 517–518). She does not judge or expect anything in return. Each woman reacts differently to Urania's story. In this way, the reader finds that there is hope in the new generation of women, perhaps for the new generation of women.

There are a couple more women who are significant. Benita Sepúlveda, a mature woman, is the caretaker of the Casa de Caoba, where Trujillo took his women. She displays complete indifference to the events she witnesses. She changes flowers and offers breakfast to women and young teenagers such as Urania (2000, p. 499), showing no concern for the terrified girl's fate. That character could have easily been a butler, but it had to be a woman. A woman in this position symbolises the consent of women to the fate of her fellow women. As Urania twists her ankle running down the stairs, Benita looks at her calmly, with a smile (2000, p. 512). She has probably witnessed such episodes previously. Not all are like Sepúlveda though. There is also Sister Mary, another woman who is, in reality, the one who saves Urania from Trujillo. This sister is able to help Urania flee the country, making all necessary arrangements and delivers on her promise to prevent Agustín Cabral from seeing his daughter again (2000, p. 514). One woman offers the girl to the tyrant, but another woman delivers her from him. There is one more woman the reader does not meet, who was probably a victim as well. Urania interrogates her father about her mother's fate. Did he do it to her as well? Did he arrange visits? Did she resign herself? Was she proud of this? After all, "Las buenas dominicanas agradecían que el Jefe se dignara tirárselas" (2000, p. 71). Along with the questions Urania poses, there is a telling protest Cabral raises during an internal dialogue, "'Acusarme de traidor, a mí'. A él, que, por Trujillo, renunció a los placeres, las diversiones, al dinero, al amor, a las mujeres" (2000, p. 281). That "love" is included among his offerings to the dictator may well indicate that Cabral had offered his wife to Trujillo before handing over his daughter. There is also Manuel Alfonso's discourse

while trying to recruit Cabral's daughter for his master. She has become so big and pretty, he tells Cabral: "Me recuerda a su mamá. Los mismos ojos lánguidos y el cuerpo finito y airoso de tu mujer, Cerebrito" (2000, p. 337). Manuel Alfonso's expressions are crude, with too much familiarity when talking about *su mujer* and her body. This, together with Cabral's complaints and the young woman's accidental death seem to indicate she had been another of Trujillo's trophies. There would be no reason to doubt it, since *el Chivo* could get away with that and more, and women had to comply quietly.

On the night of his assault on Urania, *el Chivo* recited a few lines of Pablo Neruda's Poem XV, "Me gustas cuando callas, porque estás como ausente; parece que los ojos se te hubieran volado y parece que un beso te cerrara la boca" (2000, p. 504). Throughout the years of the *trujillato*, women were silent in the face of such abuse. Urania's willingness to speak out is symbolic of the breaking of that silence with the tacit support of the new democratic government. Urania's cathartic confession makes her stronger, although her wounds still need healing. Her interaction with a man who offers to buy her a drink at her hotel can be taken as a sign of self-confidence: she is able to dismiss a drunk tourist who addresses her in English: "Get out of my way, you dirty drunk" (2000, p. 518). The implication may also be that she has been scarred by Trujillo in such a way that she will never be able to have a relationship with a man. That is something left for the reader to decide. What is clear, though, is that Urania is finally willing to try to let people into her affections. She has all the time in the world to do that: "Si Marianita me escribe, le contestaré todas las cartas" (2000, p. 518). This is the last line in the novel, and it signals hope for the future, based on the positive attitude of the younger generation of women.

2003 - El Paraíso en la otra esquina: an unreachable paradise

Continuing with the innovations introduced in *La Fiesta del Chivo*, Vargas Llosa writes a second work of realistic fiction based on history in which one of the central figures is a well-rounded female character. Different from Urania, a character devised by the author to represent her gender and the people of her country in *La Fiesta*, the French-Peruvian Flora Tristán is based on an eponymous historical character (1803-1844). Well ahead of her time, this figure embraced and fought for utopian ideals for women and workers of the world. Tristán is representative of Peruvian literature as well as French:

though she wrote in French for a French-speaking readership, her memoirs, *Peregrinaciones de una paria* (1838), depict the turbulent albeit monotonous life of Peru during the beginnings of the new republic (Basadre, 1946, p. XI). Flora's life alone, her fate plagued with tragedies, would provide enough material for a most engaging novel, and the prospect of writing one portraying this champion of social change preoccupied Vargas Llosa for many years. Flora is probably the female character to whom he has given most thought; after reading *Peregrinaciones* in the 1950s, her idea accompanied the Nobel recipient for almost half a century (Coaguila, 2016, p. 292). He constructs his novel's fictional heroine based on Tristán's diaries, letters and manuscripts in order to build an authentic character (Estrada, 2017, p. 126). Her lonely fight for the rights of women and her visionary ideas regarding the working class in general make *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* an opportune contribution at a time when women were becoming more forceful in their demands for equality and for political representation and not only for women but for underrepresented groups in general (as exemplified by Vargas Llosa's protagonist). In 1992, Rebecca Walker, one of the visible representatives of the Third Wave of feminism, urged women to take action and to show their commitment to empowering women. She pressured them to integrate ideologies of equality and female empowerment and to look beyond issues such as voting and feminist theory. She declared: "I am not a postfeminism feminist. I am the Third Wave" (Walker, 2007, pp. 400–401). This Third Wave affiliation distinguished her generation from Second Wave feminism and gravitated towards ideals that were more in line with those of Tristán's than with those of the Second Wave. They lean towards an "intersectional (see above, p. 66) and multiperspectival version of feminism", embracing action over theory while rejecting "sex wars", opting for inclusive and welcoming approaches striving to form coalitions (Snyder, 2008, pp. 175–176). This is reminiscent of Flora's idea that all women have the same rights, and her pleas for them to join with all the oppressed of the world in order to fight legally and loyally against all oppressive laws and prejudices. She urges women to disregard gender, as the causes of all who fight for their rights are common causes (2018, pp. 97–98). In Walker's vision for a generation that "has grown up transgender, bisexual, interracial, and knowing and loving people who are racist, sexist, and otherwise afflicted", it would be difficult to be inflexible, to have to choose sides according to

traditional dichotomies such as male/female, black/white, oppressed/oppressor. They have “trouble formulating and perpetuating theories that compartmentalize and divide according to race and gender and all of the other signifiers” (Heywood, 2006b, p. 22). As Flora did during her life, “third-wavers consider themselves entitled to equality and self-fulfilment” (Snyder, 2008, p. 178). The feminism of the early 2000s advocates inclusiveness, as Flora did in her time. Women became more forceful in their demands for equality and freedom for all the oppressed. They wage a fight that is no longer like Flora's lonely one. Women organize as feminists around the world, and Vargas Llosa reflects in his fiction the higher profile reached by women across all sectors. His later novels will also feature female characters’ forceful demands for change. The most violent form will be linked to *Travesuras*, where one of *niña mala’s* (impersonated) identities is that of a *guerrillera*, representing a group of women who took up arms and were very much present in one of the bloodiest periods in Peru’s history.

Tristán’s biography is not the only one that Vargas Llosa fictionalises through the pages of this new novel. Along with her story, the author interpolates chapters from the life of another historic figure, Tristán’s grandson, painter Paul Gauguin (1848-1903). In this dual structure, the life of Gauguin occupies the even numbered chapters. Although the Frenchman is born a little over three years after his grandmother’s demise, he knew about her and her unorthodox life. Gauguin’s own particular trajectory had followed a conventional path as a married stockbroker with five children until in 1873 he begins to paint, as a hobby. The recession of 1883 following the Paris stock market crash found a Gauguin for whom painting had become much more than a pastime. When his boss is forced to let him go Gauguin, filled with euphoria kisses his hands and thanks him: “Gracias, patrón. Usted acaba de hacer de mí un verdadero artista” (2003a, p. 389). He abandons his wife and children to pursue his art and advocates a return to primitivism. He becomes the troubled, now world-renowned painter who was never truly recognised while alive. Both protagonists are consumed by personal doubts, both are tormented by sexual demons, both fight for freedom, both die in poverty, and both contribute to the world utopian efforts that transcend their own lives. Each in their own area of immense interest and in their own way fight the system to bring about change. This work will

focus mainly on the sections that pertain to Flora, the woman who championed the rights of both women and workers whom she wanted to unite as one.

El Paraíso, like most of Vargas Llosa's prose literature, is a realist fiction; this one may also be considered a historical novel. Although there is no clear-cut definition of what such a novel is, there is consensus that, broadly, a historical novel is one set in a certain past period of the history of the world and communicates to the reader historical facts in detail and with verisimilitude. The illusion of truth is a necessity, while factual truth is only a relative element. Further, this work would belong to Latin America's New Historical Novel category, which Seymour Menton differentiates from the traditional historical novel after reviewing various approaches to the latter. In Menton's analysis, Léon Francois Hoffmann's approximation to the conventional historical novel is too loose as it considers historical any novel in which a specific historical event determines or influences the plot and background. Menton also mentions Georg Lukács, who wrote a seminal study about the historical novel in 1937, and opposed the classification of novels as subgenres, using as references Dickens and Tolstoy's works, on account of the similarities between realist and historical novels (1993, pp. 31–32)—particularly to the point in Vargas Llosa's case. For Lukács, the historical novel's peculiarities are not significant enough to be considered a new genre (Lukács, 1966, p. 297). From his perspective, a new vision of reality would need to arise for that to happen, and historical fiction does not stray far enough from the larger classification of realist fiction (Shaw, 1983, p. 27). Menton considers Avrom Fleishman's definition arbitrary, as it requires the historical event and the author to be separated by two generations, whereas he deems excessively general David Cowart's proposal that the historic novel is any fiction in which the past is somewhat predominant (1993, pp. 32–33). These are but a few of the perspectives on historical fiction; however, although there has been much discussion about it and despite the rising number of works published in Latin America in recent times that could be classified as such, there is still no consensus on a theory for their study (Piérola, 2008, p. 152). From Menton's perspective, the most appropriate definition of the historical novel is Enrique Anderson Imbert's, who in 1951 stated that the event must have occurred in a time before that of the novelist (1993, pp. 31–33). Menton's favoured definition of the historical novel serves as the basis for his New Historical

Novel. He designates Alejo Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* (1949) as the first novel of the kind in Latin America, and in narrowing down this category, he specifies that the action must take place predominantly in a past not experienced directly by the author. Additionally, the critic lists six features that may be found in the New Historical Novel, although he specifies that not all must apply to every single work (1993, pp. 32, 42–45). Vargas Llosa's novel would certainly qualify as historical from the perspective of periodicity[15] and *El Paraíso* also presents most of the features that Menton identifies. First and foremost, Flora is a fictionalised historical character, and her thoughts and intentions are seen from the narrator's perspective to transmit a set of values and ideas. Also, presenting Tristán's philosophy and utopic struggles takes precedence over fidelity to a certain historical period. In order to convey the depth of her commitment and the reach of her influence, Vargas Llosa does not hesitate to distort reality to make a point, which happens when he creates a casual encounter between Tristán and Karl Marx, for instance. "Lo conociste poco después, en circunstancias pintorescas, en una pequeña imprenta de la orilla izquierda del Sena, la única que había aceptado imprimir *La Unión Obrera* (2003a, p. 453). Through this passage the author is not only conveying the difficulties his character faced in having her work printed, but also the possibility, never corroborated by history, that the two fighters for the rights of the workers of the world met. The narrators also frequently refer to the books Tristán authored, incorporating metafiction and intertextuality, techniques that also feature in Menton's list. One of these narrators mentions that "el doctor Émile Goin, era devoto lector suyo, en especial de su libro de viajes por el Perú, *Peregrinaciones de una paria*". The good doctor was not satisfied with only getting the author to sign his copy of her book, but he further enquires whether what Flora relates in her book was the truth or was coloured by imagination (2003a, p. 132), a pertinent question also for *El Paraíso*. Vargas Llosa introduces metafiction, intertextuality and also the palimpsestic, as he rewrites and alters some sections of Flora's *Peregrinaciones*, but they are still very identifiable. "Ese vestido, llamado saya, se compone de una falda y de una especie de saco que envuelve los hombros, los brazos y la cabeza y se llama manto . . . que le oculta el rostro por completo,

---

[15] The author was born in 1936 and Tristán passed in 1844.

a excepción de un ojo" (2003, pp. 491, 495), becomes "el [vestido] de las 'tapadas', que constaba de la saya, una estrecha falda y un manto que, como un saco, envolvía hombros, brazos, cabeza y dibujaba las formas de una manera delicada y cubría tres cuartas partes de la cara, dejando al descubierto sólo un ojo" (2003a, p. 319). The concept of the carnivalesque Menton alludes to can be found in Flora's dressing up as a man on various occasions, not only in Europe, with the purpose of being granted access to places where a lady could not enter, but also to attend a party during the carnivals in Arequipa. She was dressed "de húsar, con espadín, casco con penacho, botas y bigote" (2003a, p. 235). Even the description of her costume is parodic. Although these attributes would certainly allow considering *El Paraíso* within Menton's category of Latin America's New Historical Novel, the present analysis leans towards Lukács' distrustfulness of "mere formalism" and his lack of interest in the problem of defining historical fiction, emphasizing instead "the question of how the historical spirit comes to consciousness in literature" (Shaw, 1983, p. 27). If the truth can be rearranged to convey a philosophy of the time from the author's perspective and if it can be consciously manipulated and distorted in order to propitiate the author's purpose, it strays away from the historical. "In the historical novel, the combination of fiction with 'facts' from the historical record is done in a way that makes it difficult, if not impossible, to differentiate which is which: it seems to be a hybrid of two genres, but refuses to be read as either" (Piérola, 2008, p. 152). *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* may qualify as a historical novel, depending on the critical approach adopted, but is definitely another sample of the realistic vein of its author.

***Madame-la-Colère*'s life turns her into the activist predecessor of Karl Marx.** Vargas Llosa incorporates Flora's vision to form a union that will bring together all the workers of the world and make them a force capable of standing up for their rights. This becomes the driving principle of her character, as well as the main thread in the novel. For Tristán, unity is the only path to success in resisting those who exploit the underprivileged and to improve their working conditions. Tristán wants to organise peasants, artisans and workers to contribute small monetary amounts so that they can build communal homes (palaces, she calls them) where they will be able to retire when physically exhausted or too old for the workshops (2003a, p. 17). The organisation she dreams of is described in *l'Union Ouvrière* (1843) and she spends the last months of her life touring France to

promote this initiative. Such a tour was undertaken by the historical madame Tristán, who kept a journal published posthumously as *El tour de Francia, 1843-1844* (1973)—each chapter title named after a city with the time of her visit. *El Paraíso* covers approximately the same period, keeping the city and dates as chapter subtitles, while highlighting an event in Tristán's life that is relevant or adds interest to the novel through an additional title phrase. For example, *Pregrinaciones's* chapter title "Dijon (18-24 de abril de 1844)" becomes "Bastarda y prófuga, Dijon, abril de 1844" in *El Paraíso* (Tristán, 2006, p. 95; Vargas Llosa, 2003, p. 45). Both present and past are introduced by a third person narrator, while a second person narrator intervenes addressing Flora, in many instances assessing her life and questioning how it would have turned out if her circumstances had been different. If her father had not died young, she would not have experienced hunger. The feelings of discrimination, exploitation and injustice would be abstract concepts for her: "Nunca hubieras tomado conciencia de la esclavitud de las mujeres ni se te habría ocurrido que, para liberarse, era indispensable que ellas se unieran a los otros explotados a fin de llevar a cabo una revolución pacífica (2003a, pp. 15–16). The last chapter, "La última batalla, Burdeos, noviembre de 1844", does not appear in *El tour*. This is a total creation of the author, and it is where he introduces Carlos Marx, a fictional rendering of Karl Marx. There are many indications that the historical Flora proposes the union of the workers before the historical Marx: first, in 1843 she wrote *l'Union Ouvrière*, while Karl Marx wrote his manifesto in 1848; second, *The Holy Family* (1845), co-authored by Marx and Friedrich Engels, acknowledges Tristán by analysing E. Bauer's review of *l'Union Ouvrière*, and recognizing her "great proposition" of demanding the organization of labour; third, in the same co-authored work, Engel supports Tristán, stating that for advancing this demand she is treated as "a *canaille* for her insolence in anticipating Critical Criticism" (1956, pp. 29–30).

Apart from these references, there are no reliable sources that place Tristán and Marx together, so Vargas Llosa resorts to introducing that possibility (or at least linking their ideas) with a made up "Carlos" Marx, highlighting that Arnold Ruge is a common friend of both characters and introduces them because of their similar ideas about the working class. Although they did not meet at the planned *tertulia*, the author places them, fortuitously, in a small printing shop where Tristán is finally collecting her printed copies

of *La Unión Obrera*. “Mi libro se llama *La Unión Obrera* y puede cambiar la historia de la humanidad” (2003a, p. 453), she tells Carlos. It is in *La Unión Obrera* that Tristán urges workers to join forces:

> ¡Aislados sois débiles y caéis aplastados bajo el peso de toda clase de miserias! ¡Pues salid de vuestro aislamiento! ¡uníos! La unión hace la fuerza … tenéis a vuestro favor el número. …Yo vengo a proponeros una unión general de los obreros y obreras, sin distinción de oficios, que vivan en el mismo reino; una unión que tendría por objetivo CONSTITUIR LA CLASE OBRERA. (2018, p. 21)

Vargas Llosa, characteristically, presents an activist Flora at the end of her life who introduces the early circumstances that shaped her (through a combination of stream of consciousness, interior monologues and flashbacks). Flora Tristán died at forty-one, overworked and overstretched by her own determination to battle the injustices of the world.

Flora Tristán: from bourgeois to drifting pariah to activist. Born into a wealthy family that a tragic death renders penniless, this self-educated social outcast who is considered an illegitimate daughter, rejected by her paternal family and prisoner of the husband her mother arranged for her to marry, views herself as a pariah. Her circumstances, though unfortunate, allow her the opportunity to experience life from different perspectives. Life’s ups and downs, with periods of adverse circumstances and spells in which she enjoys privileged conditions reserved for the very few, give her a unique perspective. Flora Tristán understands inequality as the source of many social problems and fights for the rights of women and of the oppressed workers of the world, urging them to unite as the only path to attain true change. The narrative takes place during the last four months of her life, through flashbacks: it is June of 1844, barely five months before her death, and she relives her first meeting with don Mariano de Goyeneche, her father’s cousin, in 1821. He believes her lies, writes to her uncle, Pío Tristán, and arranges for her to travel to Peru to meet her paternal family (2003a, pp. 133–134). The reader becomes familiar with the different stages of the French-Peruvian woman’s life as well as with her personality through the narrator’s recollections: “Se casaron un mes después, el 3 de febrero de 1821 . . . Cuando, encogida en la cama del albergue de Avallon, advirtió que tenía los ojos húmedos, Flora hizo un esfuerzo para apartar de su cabeza esos recuerdos desagradables” (2003a, p. 49). The reader is aware of

the protagonist's thoughts through interior monologues: "Hoy comienzas a cambiar el mundo, Florita" (2003a, p. 11), she encourages herself. As the novel begins, a narrator ties Flora's present with her past, providing the reader with essential information about this character, her conscious decision to battle the injustices of society and more:

> Se sentía tranquila, con fuerzas para enfrentar los obstáculos que le saldrían al paso. Como aquella tarde en Saint-Germain, diez años atrás, en la primera reunión de los sansimonianos, cuando, escuchando a Prosper Enfantin describir a la pareja-mesías que redimiría al mundo, se prometió a sí misma, con fuerza: 'La mujer-mesías serás tú'. (2003a, p. 11)

This seems to hint at the character's desire for prominence rather than at religious fanatism, as she is not particularly inclined to the latter, and believes that "todos los sacerdotes—judíos, protestantes y mahometanos, pero principalmente los católicos—eran aliados de los explotadores y los ricos" who kept the poor appeased during their earthly life, waiting for the promised Paradise to arrive only "post mortem" (2003a, p. 309). It is also the narrator addressing Flora who introduces her faith not in organized religion but in humanity, "Una creencia, una religión, la más bella y la más santa: el amor a la humanidad" and her opposition to nationalism, considering the universe should be the only true "patria" (2003a, p. 352). It is also a narrator who claims that the year she spent in Peru was more educationally beneficial to Flora than five years in the Sorbonne and provided motivation for her work (2003a, p. 351). It is indeed her experience in Peru that gives her the opportunity of a different perspective, opening her eyes to the differences between those who serve and those who are served.

The author has good reason to go back to her old circumstances, as the extreme situations she endured moulded Tristán into a woman ahead of her time to become the fierce promoter of rights for women and for all the oppressed that she became. If her position had remained the one expected at her birth, "no hubieras conocido la pobreza, Florita…Injusticia sería para ti una palabra abstracta" (2003a, p. 15). Through introspections such as this, the author presents what could have been and compares it to what actually happened. There are plenty of contrasts in this novel, as there are in Flora's life. For short spells she is allowed to enjoy the existence of the aristocrat she should have been, although she spends most of her short life perceived as an illegitimate, uneducated and penniless woman. Her fate had been sealed long before she was born, at the time her parents married. That moment would determine her wandering future. Her

mother, Teresa Laînè, was a French woman whose family fled to Spain because of the revolution of 1789. Her father was don Mariano Tristán y Moscoso, the firstborn to one of the wealthiest families in Peru while it was still a Spanish colony. He was serving as a colonel in the Spanish army. In what would mark Flora's destiny, they only had a religious marriage, and Mariano did not seek the royal authorisation (required by the Spanish army for a man of his position) to marry (Iribarne González, 2012, p. 29). Their union was never considered legal, and their children were illegitimate with no right to claim the fortune of their father. As such, and according to her mother, she has to be grateful when her older drunken boss offers to marry her when she is still a teenager. It is important to highlight that her thoughts on the unfair treatment of women are not limited to uneducated women such as herself, who was abused by her husband. The time she spends with women who live in privilege helps her understand that no matter the social or economic class, their gender handicaps women in relation to men. She compares their circumstances to those of slavery, regardless of status or wealth. The narrator addresses her by the nickname her husband gave her, "Andaluza". "Serías un bello parásito enquistado en tu buen matrimonio…máquina de parir, esclava feliz" (2003a, pp. 15–16). If she had remained wealthy, the comfort money can provide would have prevented her from becoming conscious of her situation and she would not have been motivated to fight for change. Further, her observations are not limited to her own country. She is certainly aware of the conditions French women endure, but her travels give her a good opportunity to observe other societies and the standing of women within them—Peruvian and English in particular. In *Peregrinaciones*, where Flora chronicles her trip to Peru, she shares her impressions of Peruvian society and the role of women within it. She also pens *Paseos en Londres* (1972), expressing sharp criticism of this European society and its treatment of women. Vargas Llosa fictionalises in *El Paraíso* impressions she recounted in *Paseos* and vividly describes the atrocious treatment of women. By bringing in her perception of both societies, the Nobel laureate is able to portray women of different social classes, as Flora spends most of her time in Peru with privileged women, while in London she makes a point of studying the underprivileged. Dressed as a man, she visits the *finishes*—the name which Vargas Llosa's Florita gives to a certain kind of business, tavern-brothels, in the West End—and describes orgies and acts that affect her

profoundly. She perceives in them the extremes to which the humiliation of women could go (2003a, p. 408). Flora would never forget these images, nor the differences she sees within each of these societies. Those trips are the reason she dedicates all her efforts to highlight and fight inequality. Vargas Llosa emplots Flora Tristan's diaries and testimonial writings, although, as Kristal points out, he manipulates some of her traits for literary purposes. Her religiosity, nationalism and authoritarianism are toned down, while a "troubled relationship to sexuality" is invented (2012, pp. 133–134). In this way, he constructs a round character in the form of an exemplary heroine who sacrifices all, including her happiness, for her cause.

As a child, Flora lived a comfortable life until the premature death of Mariano. She was only four years old when her mother was forced to leave her home and take her to live a modest life in the country. Her life of immense misery begins when the girl is fifteen and they return to live in one of the poorest districts of Paris. Flora's mother secures her a position as worker-colourist apprentice in a printshop owned by André Chazal. Soon this older man tries to force himself onto Flora. Her vigorous rejection only spikes his interest and prompts him to ask for her in marriage. Her mother, unlike Flora, is ecstatic. The woman's words seal the transaction, "Suerte porque está dispuesto a casarse contigo a pesar de ser tú una bastarda, hija. ¿Crees que hay muchos que harían algo semejante? Agradécelo de rodillas, Florita (2003a, p. 48). Flora had learned about her illegitimate status when the family of a boy she dated opposed their marriage putting forward that reason. Now she begins to realise that "ser bastarda echaba sobre ella una culpa de nacimiento tan horrenda como el pecado original (2003a, p. 48). Her marriage to Chazal marks a schism in her relationship with her mother and is the reason for her belief that the institution of marriage is a covert sale of women to their husbands (2003a, pp. 48, 181). Catherine Belsey concurs with Flora: in her opinion, even true love legalizes "the transformation of people into property" and the confinement of desire to married couples has produced "at best a lifetime of surveillance and self-surveillance for the couple in question, and at worst the perfect opportunity for domestic violence" (1994, p. 74). The situation described by Vargas Llosa and despised by Flora in the eighteen hundreds is still representative of women in certain sectors of contemporary Peru. Among the lower, less educated classes, they too face social and cultural discrimination. In the poorer

segments, it is customary for men to have sex on demand; male control over a partner's sexuality and fertility is common, and is reinforced through domestic violence (Villegas, 2017, p. 57). In the case of Flora and Chazal, where no kind of love is involved, domestic violence soon becomes an issue. This union educates the girl in the realities of life for a married woman, especially one who does not love her husband. She gives birth to three children in four years (two of which die young), discovers that her husband is practically her legal owner and realises that marriage represents a state of servitude almost like slavery. It is then that this unschooled girl begins to feel an indomitable need for freedom, a crucial driving force in her life which would not subside until she lay on her deathbed (Vargas Llosa, 2003b, p. 15). She relates how, finding herself the mother of two children and pregnant again at 22, she had to escape her husband's nightly rapes. Thanks to the unfortunate illness of her elder son, she was able to get Chazal to rent a room in the country away from the polluted Parisian air for her and the children. Her son died a few years later, but she never went back to Chazal (2003a, pp. 58–59), fleeing with her surviving children including Aline, who would be the mother of Paul Gauguin. In the eyes of the law Tristán, who dropped the Chazal surname, becomes a criminal and spends most of her remaining life running and hiding as a fugitive from her husband and the legal system. That will only end when Chazal is imprisoned for publicly shooting Flora. She will never be completely free of him, though, since his bullet remains buried close to her heart and would contribute to her early death.

Around her thirtieth birthday, years after escaping Chazal, she leaves her children behind and embarks on a visit to her paternal relatives. This is not the only time Flora leaves her children, later she also leaves Aline Chazal (her only surviving child, only daughter and future mother of Paul Gauguin) in order to be able to live the life of an activist. She is willing to sacrifice her daughter's wellbeing for that of the women of the world. In Vargas Llosa's literature the successful woman is not usually a mother—she is unencumbered by children, ignoring the traditional role that society attributes to her (see below, p. 185). This time, Flora poses as a single woman in hopes that one of the most influential and powerful families in Peru might help her improve her financial situation. Unfortunately, her hopes are not satisfied. She is not granted any right to the fortune her father should have inherited as firstborn. But this trip nevertheless changes her destiny, as

it rounds out her vision of the social differences she later sets out to change. “[Arequipa] te abrió los ojos sobre las desigualdades humanas, el racismo, la ceguera y el egoísmo de los ricos, y lo inhumano del fanatismo religioso, fuente de toda opresión” (2003a, p. 262). During her stay in Arequipa and later in Lima her life was immensely different from the one she had led in France. Her cousin Carmen’s welcoming words foreshadow the kind of life she could expect in Arequipa, the southern city in Peru where her father was born. “Esta esclava, Florita, es para ti. Te ha preparado un baño de agua y leche tibia, para que duermas fresquita” (2003a, p. 226). Flora, who had scrubbed, cleaned, swept, washed, ironed and served the Spence family as maid, domestic or servant (2003a, p. 63) is able now to be on the other side of the relationship. This reversal of roles opened her eyes, and she began to observe attentively the different roles assigned to women. Further, in *El Paraíso* Vargas Llosa has turned his focus from men to women. He is interested in the story of Flora because it is gender inflected. For the first time, his main character is a woman who sees the situation of women clearly and is straightforwardly fighting it.

Women in the eighteen hundreds. Through the eyes of Tristán, Vargas Llosa portrays representatives of different groups of women and their circumstances. Flora’s analysis of the fate of women coincides with that of Lagarde. The latter proposes that the central axis of women’s constraints—in such contexts as marriage, motherhood, seclusion, prostitution, among others—are structured around their sexuality (their bodies) and their relation to power, with social and cultural spaces playing also an important role (1993, p. 173). Tristán represents these categories also as forms of captivity, explicitly defining them as such at times. In her view, marriage is the worst servitude a woman can suffer (2003a, p. 95): women are subjected to a life of slavery where marriage constitutes the bars of the cage. She condemns society for allowing this form of bondage to exist under the subterfuge of wedlock (2003a, pp. 95–145). The focus of Flora’s efforts at this time is on reinstating divorce. She writes and delivers many speeches condemning marriage as a transaction that benefits men and pressing for equal standing of both genders and for the right to divorce (2003a, p. 101). The character who best represents her view of marriage as female bondage is Flora herself. She shares her experiences not presenting herself as an outlier, but as an example of all those women in her situation. Flora may have earned the nickname *Madame-la-Colère*, as a result of her frustration at

being forced into a marriage she did not welcome, but there was also bitterness in her consciousness of her own lack of education. When she becomes aware of the unfairness in the world, she begins to articulate her protest and her limited writing skills become more obvious. Her narrator repeatedly addresses this inadequacy, her lack of culture and spelling mistakes (2003a, pp. 15, 16, 352). She understood that: “Ser inculta además de pobre era ser doblemente pobre” (2003a, p. 60), and wants that to change as well, advocating compulsory schooling for women of the Workers' Union to prepare them for the task of revolutionizing society.

In many cases the lives of women are decided through the exercise of their own free will, in others, they are forced by circumstances or by their families. “Casa, convento, burdel, prisión y manicomio son espacios de cautiverios específicos de las mujeres” (Lagarde, 1993, p. 40), if the choice is embraced freely such restrictive circumstances are, possibly, not as devastating. When these situations are imposed, as Flora’s marriage or her cousin Dominga Gutiérrez’s confinement in a nunnery, their circumstances become so unbearable that escaping at any cost seems to be the only way. Dominga Gutiérrez is one of the many girls during those times whose powerful, socially *relevant* family confines her to a convent for life. Dominga’s story makes a deep impression upon Flora. She was fourteen when her boyfriend married another girl and her mother persuaded her to enter the Santa Teresa cloistered convent as a novice, in order to spare the family public ridicule. A few weeks later Dominga realised that a life of silence and isolation, austerity and self-flagellation were not for her, but it was too late. Her confessor and her mother believed that the demon was speaking through her, trying to get her to renounce her genuine religious vocation (2003a, pp. 264–265). She could not resign herself to that existence and she faked her death in order to escape. It took her eight years to put her plan into effect, and just a few hours for her aunt and uncle to denounce her to the bishop. Flora hears the story two years later when Dominga is living as an outcast, working the land in a small ranch out in the country. She had fled one type of captivity only to fall into a more unforgiving one, the one that society imposes. The only thing she dreams about afterwards is to be allowed to move to Lima to enjoy freedom, albeit while working as a maid.

Among the women showcased by Flora were others who may have led her to believe that her dreams to be free and equal to men were possible. Doña Francisca Zubiaga de Gamarra, la Mariscala, was perhaps the most important in that sense. She too was confined to a convent by her parents, but when she met the then Prefect of Cuzco, Agustín Gamarra, she fell for him, escaped and subsequently pursued him. They got married and she became his most effective collaborator. She wore military clothes, fought on horseback alongside him and replaced him in the prefecture during his absences. It was also popular belief that during the three years of his presidency of Peru, the one who truly governed the country was doña Pancha (2003a, pp. 273, 312). Seeing that a woman was able to shine her own light, was respected and would not tolerate being considered less than a man, inspires Tristán's activism for social change, for equality not only for women, but for the oppressed throughout the world.

Tristán is also impressed by two collective characters she encounters in Peru, *las rabonas* and *las tapadas.* Both groups of women are evidence of the resourcefulness of females. The first were the soldiers' mistresses, lovers or wives who followed their men when they went into war. Their name comes from *rabo,* the tail of certain animals. They were usually indigenous women in typical skirts, barefoot, with braided hair and peasant hats. They were the ones who took care of the battle camps—dug trenches, cooked, washed clothes, were nurses, messengers, lookouts and, of course, ministered to their sexual needs (2003a, p. 277). Flora's opinion about this group of women is ambivalent. In spite of feeling revulsion towards prostitution, she writes about *las rabonas* with a combination of pity and respect. These women had to be brave to follow their men; they also had to have low self-esteem to follow them as their servants. It should be noted that these women did not belong to the wealthy, educated and socially *relevant* class.

Las tapadas on the other hand were the complete opposite, and they truly dazzled Tristán. They were able to circumvent the constraints imposed on women in a daring yet feminine manner. They were an example of resourcefulness and evidence of the possibilities for women who did not resign themselves to a life of confinement. *Las tapadas* did not submit to physical limitations or confinement of spirit and were victorious in an undeclared battle for freedom and autonomy. Before going back to France, she spends two months in Lima and comes across these women whose ingenuity

surprises and impresses her in a positive way. In Flora's view, *Las tapadas* were women who belonged to the "buena sociedad". Although she criticises their frivolousness and numbness in facing the ubiquitous misery of their city, she admires the way *Limeñas*, through their imaginative dress, overcome the restrictions otherwise imposed on them by their gender. *Las tapadas* wore a *saya* or narrow skirt and a thick veil and ventured out followed at a distance by a slave. They owed their name to this face-covering veil they called *manto* that delicately wrapped around the woman's shoulders, arms and head, covering three quarters of the face and leaving only one eye exposed. Flora found this costume "el más astuto e insinuante que se podía inventar". That even their husbands could not recognise them, enabled them to behave as emancipated women, be audacious, mischievous and flirtatious. "¡Pero de qué libertad gozaban!" (2003a, p. 319). The most appealing aspect of this attire then was not its physical attractiveness, but the freedom it provided to the women who wore it. Such freedom would have been unthinkable in France at the time. In a figurative way, it served them almost as the cloak of invisibility did for Harry Potter; when they put on their *manto*, women and their actions were invisible to those around them. Another fetish *Limeñas* had were satin shoes, which they used as a weapon of seduction.

Tristán was given a pair of satin shoes which she gave years later to Olympia Maleszewska as a pledge of love. Olympia was an educated, yet frivolous and fun socialite married to a Polish patriot and historian whom Flora met one night at the opera. Soon the Polish woman invited her to one of her famous *tertulias* and quickly becomes the person through whom Flora learned about intimacy. She confided in Olympia the hardships her marriage imposed on her and her aversion towards sex since then. Her new friend offers to teach her "lo dulce y grato que podía ser el placer entre dos amigas que se querían" (2003a, p. 396). Olympia made her almost forget the nauseating memories of Chazal at night, and with her she was able to enjoy her sexuality for the first time. "Olympia te enseñó que no había por qué sentir miedo ni asco del sexo, que abandonarse al deseo, hundirse en la sensualidad de las caricias, en la fruición del goce corporal, era una manera intensa y exaltante de vivir, aunque durara sólo unas horas, unos minutos" (2003a, p. 396). Vargas Llosa begins to turn to female sexual fantasies that do not involve men. He will introduce an analogous situation in *Cinco esquinas*, where a friendship

between two married women turns into a lesbian relationship focused on physical enjoyment without either woman abandoning her formal life. Although her relationship with Olympia fulfils her, Flora gives it up. She feels guilty, not because of the affair itself, but for devoting her energies to something other than what she believed was her life's purpose. She could not be distracted, she had to remain focused on her self-imposed mission.

That Vargas Llosa brings to the global discussion a woman who believed she had to remain unmovably committed, sacrifice her love and dedicate her life to championing a more just world is precisely, from this analytical perspective, where the relevance of *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* lies. This novel is not considered at the level of one of the intricate masterpieces of Vargas Llosa's first decade as a writer, when he was in pursuit of producing the Total Novel. Although the use of literary devices and the interpolation of the chapters devoted to grandmother and grandson take the reader through different times, and the author's colourful, expert description of these periods builds interest, the theme of the woman fighting for equality is what supersedes everything else. What makes this novel so important when observing the trajectory of women and society through the Vargas Llosa's fiction is that he brings to the forefront the social issues that Flora Tristán relentlessly fought for in her time and that Paul Gauguin endured during his. José Miguel Oviedo believes that he brings an essayistic spirit to this work and turns it into a vehicle to present moral and ideological issues that concern him as an intellectual (2007, p. 73). Through the mere fact of choosing Tristán as the model for a fictional character over other important historical figures, the author induces readers to find contrasts between their own reality and that of the 19th century. It is difficult not to hear the author's voice in Flora's introspections and criticism of the treatment of women and the oppressed. The long and frequent narratorial soliloquies, denouncing the mistreatment of some and the conformism and passivity of others, stand out as overt social commentary. He calls the workers Flora tries to recruit to her cause selfish, ignorant, foolish men who know nothing, lack curiosity and are satisfied with their animalistic lives. "¡Hasta se les habían contagiado los prejuicios burgueses! Les resultaba difícil aceptar que fuera una mujer—¡una mujer!—quien los exhortara a la acción . . . La explotación y la miseria los habían

estupidizado" (2003a, pp. 17–18). It is also difficult not to compare the situation of women and the oppressed 165 years later.

As stated previously, from Foucault's perspective, a certain complicity is needed for power over others to be exerted successfully. Flora Tristán tried to enact change, although fruitlessly in great part because she lacked support from those whom she was trying to help. This transpires through the narrator's interventions in this work of fiction. The importance of works that are based on history is that they bring awareness of what the world went through at one time, and perhaps more importantly, promote self-analysis. The basic struggle for equality between genders and social groups remains, and, consciously or unconsciously, through *El Paraíso en la otra esquina,* Vargas Llosa showcases the continuous struggle of women and the oppressed, a particularly important topic in today's social climate. Vargas Llosa dedicates this book to Carmen Balcells, his editor and friend of decades. She is an example of what a tenacious and courageous woman can accomplish against all odds, in a world that prioritizes the interests of men.

2006 - Travesuras de la niña mala: a woman with a new approach

In 2006 Vargas Llosa published his third major fictional work of the decade and it too features a woman in a fundamental role, completing a woman-centred triad. These works mark a clear distance from the author's first publications of the 1960s when his female characters were constructed mostly to accompany, support or enhance their male counterparts. In this new period, women shine their own light. The first one was Urania, a fictional character who represents the Dominican women during the Trujillo era in *La Fiesta del Chivo*. During those years, women could at any point be subjected to a prevailing system of almost forced prostitution, having to provide sexual favours to *el Chivo* in exchange for preferential treatment for the men in their lives. These women would later typically become complicit with the imposed quid pro quo. Urania does not want to conform to those patterns and manages to escape that destiny, albeit after a violent act interrupts her childhood and leaves psychological consequences which will accompany her for decades. Notwithstanding this, Urania brings a message of hope. Subsequently, Vargas Llosa gives life to Flora in *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, based on the historical French-Peruvian Flora Tristán. The intention of this woman is to expose and change what she understands as the subordination of her gender, which applies across

all classes and throughout different countries. Flora also champions a more just society for all the workers of the world. She sacrifices many opportunities for happiness in pursuit of what she believes to be her life mission. Although sadly in the end she is unsuccessful, the portrayal of her struggles through this novel induces the reader to recognize that the same issues persist almost a hundred and sixty years later, as was discussed in the previous section. Even in 2003, the problems that many continue to fight for correspond to a large extent with those of Flora's time.

In 2006, Vargas Llosa focuses on Peru again, highlighting disparities in this country, while incorporating other modern cities around the world. *Travesuras* brings the main characters to different cities, and this allows glimpses of different realities and people, presenting an overview of the world during Ricardo's lifespan. He and the author are contemporaneous and some of the places that the character describes are the ones where the novelist lived during approximately the same years. Vargas Llosa recognises as autobiographical all that concerns the setting, the environment and the framework of this fiction (Blanco, 2006a, para. 4). In this novel, as time elapses and the protagonists physically relocate, their personal transformations are conveyed, as well as major world changes and changes in the socio-political situation of Peru.

Despite its apparent international emphasis, the narrative is always tied to the birthplace of the main characters, reflecting the disparities in a country county permeated by a postcolonial mentality and bringing in its political and social struggles. For *Travesuras*, the last of his novels of the noughties, Vargas Llosa creates a character who represents not only women, but also a different group: the descendants of indigenous people in a culture that has not yet parted ways with the attitudes and mores inherited from colonial times. The perfect example of the intersection of multiple factors that cause difficulties for women, as theorized by Crenshaw (see above, p. 66). Within this group, women are further diminished, and their life prospects are limited—long-suffering housewives, maids and prostitutes are examples, presented by the author in earlier literature. The driving force of *niña mala* is to avoid becoming someone who embodies any of these women and she will go to great lengths to distance herself from that possibility. The present analysis proposes that at the centre of *Travesuras's* argument is the cultural dominance and social structure that continues to hold back the advancement

of individuals outside of hegemonic groups in a postcolonial society. It is the quest of a woman to forget who she is and to be able to reach a position denied by her society to someone like her. In her journey, she covers half the world and on various occasions is able to access possessions and status that provided material security, but she is never satisfied because what she ultimately wants is to not have been born Otilia. This novel is a metaphor of the country and its inequities and incorporates the period of social unrest caused by the bottled-up discontent of a large sector of the population. *Niña mala* represents women in this context.

Understanding the gravity of this reality is paramount to grasping the underlying reasons for *niña mala*'s escape and her determination to overcome her limited circumstances. Hence, although this analysis will continue focussing on the representation of women, a brief parenthesis is justified at this point to establish the general social structure of the postcolonial country where the protagonists are born. The purpose is to investigate the hardships *niña mala* faces, not only because she is a woman, but because she is a woman of indigenous descent.

A country is not always a nation. While true colonialism, the direct socio-political and cultural domination of Europe over the Americas, in the strict sense of a country being subjugated by another (Quijano, 2014, p. 60), ended in Latin America two centuries ago, the ideology of imperialism/colonialism persists. Colonialism is supported by ideological formations, among them the belief that certain groups need to be dominated by others, that they welcome this domination, maintaining forms of expression words and concepts that made up some of the classic culture of domination of the 19th century—"inferior" or "subject races", "subordinate peoples", "dependency", "authority"—(Said, 1994, p. 9) which have been internalized. They have become part of the Latin American psyche and intrinsic to a hierarchy of class and cast of colonial origins. Prejudices and the sense of an individual's place in the structure of society are not only part of the make-up of the hegemonic class, but also, and more dangerously, they are infused in the spirit of the dominated group.

While the colonial model of power relied on a new idea of "race" based on observable physical differences that placed the conquered in a natural position of inferiority on the basis of phenotypic differences, it also instituted a system of labour by

which the conquered group was controlled by the conqueror (Quijano, 2000, pp. 534–536). This gave way to hierarchical social categories where Europeans occupied positions at the top of the structure, resorting when necessary to the Aristotelian principle of the mastery of the most perfect over the most imperfect and highlighting the servile and barbaric nature of the indigenous which renders them obliged to serve those who display greater ingenuity—the Spaniards (Adorno, 1992, p. 52). The difference benefitting one group over the other had to be maintained and race alone did not suffice. Great efforts were made to eradicate the dominated group's "primitive" culture, mainly through catechizing them for Catholicism, while indigenous people were denied access to European knowledge and learning (Quijano, 2014, p. 61). Over time, the gap between the two groups only widened, as the indigenous culture, beliefs, social organization and ideas (much of which stemmed from their religion and cosmological views) were eradicated. Their whole system of knowledge was suppressed, giving them nothing to replace it. Angel Rama defines the group who had access to knowledge as *letrados*, part of the creole elite whose main attribute was that they could read and write. This gave them great power in an illiterate society. Spanish settlers enjoyed a privileged life through securing land ownership, but their cultural dominance was imposed through their monopoly over speaking and writing Spanish (1996, pp. 17, 29–35). To this day there are groups in Latin America who have not been exposed to Western education and speak only their own minority ancestral languages, frequently not spoken by the vast majority. Even today, there is no unity of language in some postcolonial countries. In the Peruvian film *Magallanes* (2015), a powerful scene is left in Quechua, one of the indigenous languages of the country, untranslated and uncaptioned. It was a conscious decision to highlight the deep divide in the country, which the director considers an abyss generated in history but reinforced through time and still in place, resulting in a society that can hardly be called united; rather it is a territory in which different nations coexist, although dramatically isolated from one another ("Entrevista a del Solar", 2016). The consequences of denying the natives the opportunity to learn and integrate as part of the new culture that was imposed on them remain.

The notion of superiority/inferiority took hold and was accepted by all parties involved becoming the basis of the social, political and power structures in many

postcolonial countries. “Los occidentalizados de América Latina, hemos perseverado en los peores hábitos de nuestros ancestros contemporáneos con los indios durante los siglos XIX y XX”, Vargas Llosa has stated. “Y es un hecho que en muchos países, como en el Perú, pese a la retórica indigenista de los literatos y los políticos, se conserva aún inconmovible la mentalidad de los conquistadores” (2020, p. 44). When one adds to this equation the gender subordination already addressed in Vargas Llosa’s *El Paraíso*, the chances of an Andean woman succeeding in her country of origin are slim. They are especially grim for an ambitious woman such as *niña mala*, who, as her father mentions, “siempre soñó con lo que no tenía, desde chiquita … tenía delirios de grandeza desde que nació. No se conformaba con su suerte” (2008, p. 355). This not only means that *niña mala* wanted more than her parents did, but that her parents believed that what they had was all they deserved, that dreaming for more amounted to delusion of grandeur. *Niña mala* is symbolic of women of the new millennium. Archimedes doesn’t really understand his daughter, but he admires her courage and is proud of her: “No cualquiera se manda mudar al extranjero sin tener un cobre, como hizo ella”. He is also ashamed and angry. She has succeeded economically, and he, a man and her father, had lowered himself to ask for a ticket to Paris in the hope of finding better opportunities as well, only for his request to be ignored. He never hears from his daughter again (2008, pp. 356, 353). There is a reversal of roles as they are envisioned in a patriarchal society. A woman did what her father was not capable of doing. It should also be noted that there is no mention of *niña mala’s* mother; there is no character development, the reader does not know her name. It is only mentioned that she was a cook while *niña mala* was pretending to be a *chilenita*. The reader only meets the father, supporting the notion that in patriarchal society women were not relevant. *Niña mala* represents those who want to break the mould of people who accept an inferior position, as a person of Andean descent and as a woman.

There are diverse opinions about *Travesuras* with regard to its political content. Kristal views Ricardo as “keenly aware of the social injustices of Peru”, although he also considers him politically disengaged (2012, p. 138). Williams concedes “some validity” to Kristal’s opinion, but finds that the appearance of *niña mala* as a guerrilla fighter exposes “blatant and cheap opportunism” by the left and in his view represents Vargas

Llosa's political critique (2014, p. 109). While this analysis shares both perspectives, it underlines that the political connotations of this work of fiction go beyond the superficial. Harsh criticism communicated with veiled sarcasm, irony and a sense of unreality, highlights the circumstances of Latin American countries still under the spell of colonial times, of mores of racial and social perspectives that perpetuate class and economic differences. *Travesuras* is the last novel published by Vargas Llosa before he was announced Nobel laureate in literature in 2010 and his "cartography of structures of power … and individual's resistance" (Nobelprize.org, 2010) can be clearly identified in it. *El sueño del celta*, which also deals with colonial subjugation was published two months after the announcement. Some of the issues that arise in this type of fragmented society are illustrated in *Travesuras*.

***Niña mala* as image of terrorist groups.** In the modern history of Peru there is an unprecedented period of blood and terror that lasted the whole decade of 1980. It brought more than seventy thousand deaths and disappearances (Vargas Llosa, 2008, p. 178). This time will remain part of the official national history and collective memory of the country and it is integrated into this novel through Uncle Ataúlfo's newspaper clips and letters he sent to Ricardito. This period is also brought into the text through the presence of Comrade Arlette, the first persona Otilia assumes in Europe. She is a young woman who has joined the guerrilla group Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR) and stops in Paris on her way to Cuba. She is an illustration of some terrorist women in Peru who, as Otilia, tried to escape their fate by taking a path that ultimately led to self-destruction. Arlette joins MIR as a means of fleeing a *machista* and classist environment, even though *niña mala* expressed no political views (as her first husband will later point out). *Niña mala* may not be a literal terrorist and may be apolitical, but her "becomings" suggest a kind of metaphorical terrorism because they dismantle the traditional role of woman and threaten the foundations of patriarchal society.

As this analysis follows women and their representation, the mention of female terrorists could not be avoided, owing to their notoriety and to their direct relation with this novel. *Niña mala* uses MIR as a steppingstone to leave her country. There are also several references to Shining Path and MRTA: "Los secuestros, las bombas de los terroristas, la destrucción de puentes, carreteras, centrales eléctricas, el ambiente de

inseguridad y vandalismo" (2008, p. 326), feature prominently in this text. These references do not seem to be fortuitous. *Niña mala* toys with Ricardo, uses and abandons him frequently enough for him to become absolutely insecure and to live in constant fear that she will repeat her actions. He becomes extremely nervous, not able to sleep, eat or drink and would not see or talk to anyone (2008, pp. 362–362). She causes unrest and instils in him deep fear, comparable to that induced by terrorism. Terrorist women were portrayed by some of the media as cold as the metal in a war instrument (Kirk, 1993, pp. 34, 17)—as is *niña mala* towards Ricardo and men in general. At a deeper level she could be reflecting the freedom these groups promised but never delivered. Women were also feared. They are viewed as more determined and dangerous than men, with absolutist behaviours and capable of carrying out any mission, utilizing the dichotomy of weakness and hardness; they are indulgent, extremely severe, exploit others, are impulsive and take risks (Fajardo, 2019, p. 15). This description fits well the cold and merciless *niña mala*. Another known and documented fact is that it was customary for women trained in their annihilation squads to be the ones to give the *coup de grâce* to police and military officers (Kirk, 1993, p. 14). Likewise, *niña mala* does not hesitate to deal fatal blows to men who adore her. Monsieur Arnoux, her first husband, an older and fragile man, marries her despite being conscious that her real interests lay neither in the revolution nor in him, but in getting out of Cuba. He shares with her all he has, including his bank accounts. She repays him by running off with his lifetime savings (2008, p. 95). As for Ricardito, she leaves him many times, the fourth and last when he too is married to her and had spent most of his lifetime savings on her medical bills. As a result, he nearly takes his own life. *Niña mala* does not hesitate to strike her victims with no regard for the consequences. In common with members of terrorist groups, she stops at nothing to repudiate the status quo, even if her actions cause extreme suffering. Further, she is unable to enjoy her successes because she cannot identify what might provide fulfilment for her, until it is too late. She seems to want to punish Ricardo (who represents the dominant group) even at her own expense. She repudiates the notions of commitment and loyalty and given her state of flux and metamorphosis she cannot exist in a stable home environment. The narration develops around their relationship.

A different kind of love story. This fiction consists of the memoirs of Ricardo Somocurcio, one of the two protagonists of *Travesuras*. The only narrator, he begins with the reminiscences of his teenage years. Ricardito tells it in the first person, drawing the reader into the events as if he were having a very personal conversation. This dialogue transpires through seven linear chapters. Contrary to much of his previous work, this fiction follows a chronological order. There is only one storyline with no interpolated stories; there is also an absence of some of Vargas Llosa's signature techniques such as *vasos comunicantes* or *diálogos telescópicos*. Instead, the reader finds a variety of scenarios and one character posing as many. That loosely makes up for the absence of interpolation of stories. These settings tie the protagonists and the accounts of their lives to multiple cities at various times. Also, some aspects of this novel are completely unrealistic, almost fantastic. The way in which they run into one another as if the world were a tiny scenario is notable. Each chapter has aspects that are true to history and contrast with other implausible factors. Throughout its chapters, and over the years, this work also incisively recounts the different social and political phases Peru undergoes, beginning with the first government of Fernando Belaunde and ending before that of Alberto Fujimori. Through a couple of visits Ricardo makes to his homeland and some epistolary exchanges with his very few family members, the author manages always to maintain Peru's political history in the background.

Ricardo Somocurcio describes the extraordinary summer of 1950, when he falls in love for the first time. For the entire forty-year timespan of the novel, the object of his love is *la chilenita*, although she will assume different personas and names over the course of that time. She will be dubbed *niña mala* by Ricardito. These two characters will be the protagonists of a dramatic story of encounters and separations, which the author approaches with a combination of tragedy and humour. This work can be read as a romance in the mould of *Madame Bovary*, by Gustave Flaubert (Ahmed, 2010, p. 309; Oviedo, 2007, p. 83; Sánchez, 2007, p. 109). *Niña mala* and Emma certainly have some common features. Emma confronts her family, class and society; she does not allow life to pass her by without experiencing what she craves: elegance, refinement and material beauty, as well as adventure and risk (Vargas Llosa, 1995, p. 22). *Niña mala* is also determined to achieve these goals during her earthly life, although she is not burdened by

any consideration for religion or the afterlife. *Travesuras* can also be linked to Flaubert through Monsieur and Madame Arnoux of *L'Éducation sentimentale* (1869). Vargas Llosa himself insinuates it by naming his character Madame Arnoux during her Parisian time. This intertextuality is made explicit through a nightmare where Ricardito sees Aunt Alberta accusing *la chilenita* (as *niña mala* was known to her) of having stolen one of her names from a character that belongs to the French author.

Niña mala is in Peru only in the first chapter. Afterwards, the storyline takes her to different cosmopolitan cities: Paris, London, Madrid and Tokyo. The different settings will allow for a description of major circumstances in the development of the modern world. Paris in the 1960s will be described as a city where people arrived to participate in the arts, to study, to write or to plan a revolution (2008, p. 58). Into the "swinging London" of the 1960s the author will bring the hippy movement, miniskirts, his bisexual friend Juan Barreto and what was during those times the modern plague, AIDS. In the Tokyo of the 1980s, Ricardito will find that the city in many aspects looks like a hospital, sparkling clean and with people walking on the streets wearing clinical masks (2008, p. 191). As the narrative is unwinding, Ricardito finds himself living in a disorganized apartment in the chaotic neighbourhood of Lavapies, in Madrid, until the love of his life unexpectedly comes to rescue him. During that time, the end of the 1980s, Peru was as chaotic as Lavapies, which could be seen as a microcosm of the whole country. MIR, the guerrilla movement that trained *niña mala*, had failed, but Shining Path and MRTA had emerged and were devastating the country which was in complete disarray. The novel concludes before the 1990 elections, when Vargas Llosa unsuccessfully ran for the presidency of his country. The tragicomic end finds Ricardito in a small house on the hills outside Sète, a peaceful place overlooking the ocean where he will dare to be a writer after his love dies.

The background to *niña mala, niño bueno* and their life long-affair. Ricardito is an orphan who was taken in by his dear Aunt Alberta after the premature death of his parents. What starts as a crush typical of adolescents turns into a destructive love affair, a more than sexual obsession that lasts four decades and only ends with the death of *niña mala.* Miscellaneous feelings are brought into the narrative. There is love, of course, but

there is also cruelty. There is greed, countered by generosity. Also displayed are her deep thirst for power and his profound lack of ambition.

Their differences are so great, that one is almost the antithesis of the other, thus *niña mala* dubs him *niño bueno*. At times, their roles are reversed from those traditionally conceived as natural for women and men. *Travesuras* portrays an inversion of the *machista* code within Vargas Llosa's literary social world: we see a man completely in thrall to a woman's will (Oviedo, 2007, p. 85). She accuses him of telling her *huachaferías* (2008, p. 79). Although *niña mala* makes fun of him, she becomes accustomed to these sugary words and even craves them. Ricardo is conscious of how ridiculous he sounds: "Lo peor no es que las diga. Lo peor es que las siento. Sí, son verdad. Tú me conviertes en un personaje de telenovela" (2008, p. 137). Again, a case of role reversal, as one can draw a connection between Ricardito and Julia and the other women who featured in soap operas in *La tía Julia*. Soap operas are, as mentioned, associated with women and viewed with disdain (see above, p. 95). *Niña mala*, on the other hand, will consciously develop traditionally male traits in order to avoid the dangers and limitations that being a woman entails.

At the characters' personal level, this is an account of love and desire between two individuals who meet almost in childhood and whose lives take different paths, all the while never truly losing contact with one another. Yet, at a broader and deeper level, it is the description of the extreme, sometimes unrealistic, struggles of a woman to change a destiny determined by her birthplace within a country where the colonial hierarchy of power persists. Although the sense of inequality and the remnants of colonialism are present throughout the novel, they are made painfully clear in the sixth chapter, when Ricardito casually meets Arquímedes, *niña mala's* father, while visiting Peru. Although the encounter happens during his short-lived marriage to *niña mala*, he is never able to bring himself to tell her about having met her father or to tell Arquímedes that he was his son in law. *Niña mala*'s father is a man with a special talent which helps others make money while he lives in extreme poverty. Although Vargas Llosa devotes

the whole chapter to him and his situation, this analysis will not elaborate on it.[16] Suffice it to mention that it disturbingly illustrates and brings to the forefront this indigenous man's position in the social scale of a country born from a colony. It is only then that Ricardito can begin to understand why *niña mala* had run away from her original life. A long conversation Ricardito has with Arquímedes helps him grasp the gravity of the situation for people like Otilia (*niña mala's* real name, hidden from him for thirty-four years). He is overcome with sorrow and maybe shame. He could not fathom what it could be like growing up in a *barriada,* a slum neighbourhood where land had been illegally appropriated by poor people: "no había agua, ni luz, ni desagües, ni calles, ni transporte". He was conscious of the impossibility of ever getting close to the filth, promiscuity, and insecurity that had informed her life. His Miraflorino status would never allow him that experience (2008, pp. 325, 358). Ricardito represents the Europeans and Otilia and her father represent the indigenous. Those such as Arquímedes and Otilia were still doomed to serve the others. This novel can be read as a purposeful indictment of the pattern of colonialism still pervasive in Latin American countries.

Better to be a loose *chilenita* than a poor *peruanita*. The reader learns in the first two pages of the story that there are social differences. There are districts Ricardito calls "exotic", in which neither he nor any *Miraflorino* would think of ever having to set foot. Those other areas he refers to as "más allá del mundo y de la vida" (2008, p. 10). Ricardito's view of those neighbourhoods as exotic, being the domain of people different from him and his friends, recalls Edward Said and his notion of Orientalism: almost a European invention based on the Western European experience in the Orient, which has helped define Europeans in contrast with the Other regarding image, idea, personality and experience. In Said's opinion Orientalism "connotes the high-handed executive attitude of nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century European colonialism" and this juxtaposition has helped European culture gain a stronger identity (1978, pp. 1–3). The use of the term "exotic" confirms the idea of a country in which the difference between the descendants of the Europeans and the descendants of the indigenous is still prevalent.

---

[16] See Chapter VI, "Arquímedes, constructor de rompeolas", *Travesuras de la niña mala* (Vargas Llosa, 2008, pp. 319–367).

In Rama's *La ciudad letrada* (1996, pp. 1–8), Miraflores would be closer to the centre of the checkerboard, while those other exotic neighbourhoods would be at the margins. Ricardo lives in a narrow world which may be the reason why his greatest dream has always been to live in Paris (2008, p. 15): *niña mala* is not the only one who wants to escape. Once Ricardito leaves, he does not go back either, apart from a couple of very short visits. When he returns to his country, he is able to perceive things that he had not even considered before. The rich seemed richer and the poor poorer. The gap between those who live well, have access to education, a good job and recreation and those who can barely survive has become wider (2008, p. 325). Absence allows him the perspective to grasp the reality that was difficult to appreciate from within.

From a very young age *niña mala* knew that she had to become someone else to break loose from her "otherness". Linda Alcoff elaborates on the negative elements of imposed identity, an underrated yet significant ascription based on visible physical features and characteristics, [that] one cannot simply "rise above" or ignore and which, while able to open doors and be the source of trustworthiness for some individuals, can maintain the same doors closed and deem others suspicious. She considers that "social identities such as race, ethnicity, and gender remain the most telling predictors of social power and success" and argues that these differences constitute forms of social identity which can be opportunistically manipulated to impose conformism and excuse corruption (2006, pp. viii–ix, 6). N*iña mala* was able to identify these differences and the future they heralded for her. Her father tells Ricardo that when she was no older than nine or ten she won a radio contest imitating Mexicans, Chileans, Argentines (2008, pp. 356–357). That was practice for her future life, as in each chapter she becomes someone else. *Niña mala* is the only consistent (nick)name she will respond to throughout the four decades of their relationship. The first impersonation, at around age fifteen, is when she decides to become a *chilenita*. The name she chooses is Lily, that of Adam's first wife in Jewish mythology. Lilith is not created from a rib as Eve was but from the same clay as Adam. Created as his equal, she would not accept a position subordinate to him: "We are both equal because we both come from the earth". She would not accept a subordinate role, so they quarrelled and she fled (Osherow, 2000, p. 70), just as *niña mala* flees from the inferior position which she is unwilling to accept.

Ricardo recalls meeting her in 1950 as a flashy, blond, flamboyant, talkative, daring and audacious dancer, known as *la chilenita*. She would move her waist dancing mambo more than any girl from Miraflores would dare to, while tía Alberta could not stand her free spirit. "¡Qué niñita! . . . baila como una Tongolele, como una rumbera de película Mexicana. Bueno, no olvidemos que es chilena, el fuerte de las mujeres de ese país no es la virtud" (2008, p. 12). This brings in the image of white women from the colonial perspective. Purity and sexual passivity are crucial characteristics of white bourgeois females, as they must ensure the continuity of the white male bourgeois class and their racial and colonial position (Lugones, 2008, p. 98). Additionally, tía Alberta transmits the idea that well brought up Peruvian girls should behave better than other Latin Americans, conveying the idea of a conservative, close-minded society. Ricardo's friends gossiped about la *chilenita*, yet they still invited her to parties and went with her to the beach, to mass, and to matinées. They envied her freedom, that absolved her from behaving in the manner of *chicas decentes* (2008, pp. 20–21). This adds a component of hypocrisy. After her imposture as a Chilean girl is uncovered, Ricardo and his friends realise that she is poor because she doesn't live like the rest of them in houses with butlers, cooks, maids, and gardeners. She is part of the diminished human species of the poor, as Ricardo calls them (2008, p. 18). The disadvantages individuals like Arquímedes have to endure are only compounded in the case of women, who must withstand multiple sources of oppression and neglect. Feminists have been working in favour of women in Peru but have not focussed on Andean and indigenous women. Maruja Barrig, a respected Peruvian feminist, acknowledges the difficulties she faced in writing *El mundo al revés* (2001), a socio-political text about the reality that the Andean woman confronts. In it, she questions how feminists—including herself—have been rejecting the degradation imposed on women, while at the same time they have been living side by side with a servant, usually of Andean descent, who ranks lowest in the social prestige hierarchy. In reflecting about the reasons for this oversight, she mentions that everything Andean, and indigenous women in particular, had been an elusive presence for the feminist movement: "No las vimos" (Barrig, 2001, p. 20). Those women were not considered part of the relevant universe. Barrig states in an interview: "Ahora, déjame decirte que cuando tú hablas de las mujeres—y yo también—estamos hablando de un

grupo específico de mujeres de clase media y no de las mujeres. Y eso que puede parecerte obvio, no es tal" (Wiener, 2018, sec. Pero...). Further, Andean women become invisible when they wear a domestic servant's uniform, and that was one of the likely outcomes for the daughter of an Arquímedes. When *Travesuras* opens in 1950, women are also invisible politically, as they were not granted the right to vote until 1955, and then only in municipal elections and if they were able to read and write. This requirement for women to be literate (which was only corrected with the new constitution of 1979) becomes an extra layer of discrimination against Andean women, who are the ones with least access to education, another barrier that allowed the hegemonic group to ignore them. One of those barriers comes between Ricardito's friends and *niña mala* the night when her claim to be Chilean is exposed as false. "Eran peruanitas nomás. ¡Pobres!" (2008, p. 25), was the comment about her and her supposed sister. *Peruanitas* in that context is disparaging. In referring to "lighter Latinos" in the United States (those who can physically be assumed to be white) Clara Rodriguez argues that they are treated differently from darker Latinos, but also that once knowledge of their origin is discovered, there is a shift in the way they are perceived and treated (Alcoff, 2006, p. ix), a phenomenon similar to what *la chilenita* experienced. This chapter is full of phrases and allusions to different people and sectors that are not considered *decentes*. *Niña mala* ceases to exist for them when she becomes a *peruanita*. She is no longer considered one of the *chicas decentes* and is branded *cholita* and *huachafita* the minute the others discover she does not belong to the upmarket neighbourhood of Miraflores. She is never again invited to partake in their parties, teas or games (2008, p. 26). It is beyond the reach of the now *huachafita* ever to become a *chica decente* (to whom Teresa refers in *La ciudad y los perros*, see above, p. 49). She too becomes invisible, a quality that she overcorrects during her wanderings around the world.

A guerrilla is also better than oblivion. In the second chapter Ricardo is already living in the Paris of his dreams, and *niña mala* arrives there as comrade Arlette, a revolutionary movement activist who is in Paris in transit to Cuba. Through Ricardo's friend Paúl, the liaison between her and the guerrilla, they meet again. *Niña* Arlette has no interest in a revolution and is scared to go to Cuba. Before leaving, Arlette offers to stay and live with Ricardo in Paris (2008, p. 43). Although that is his deepest desire, out

of a sense of propriety he consults with Paúl who withholds his consent. A disheartened but loyal Ricardo convinces Arlette to go and return to him after her training. This will be a decision Ricardo will regret profoundly. *Niña mala* will later reproach him and blame this act of cowardice as the reason for all his misfortunes, for her having left and for her decision not to marry him. She makes him responsible for his own bad luck. He lost the chance of a lifetime because he was a coward. She would have been his wife if he had been more concerned about her than about conventions (2008, p. 64). If *niña mala* represents the oppressed sector of society and Ricardo the oppressor, this accusation is one of her few references to the prejudices in her home country. This is unlike her, who throughout the rest of the book deals with problems by not addressing them directly but rather by becoming someone else and pretending to have forgotten about the problem. Ricardo, on the contrary, does not forget. He will never let her withdraw from his dreams.

These are Ricardito's ideologically romantic years. Years that reflect the reality of Vargas Llosa's early days as an author in Barcelona, at the dawn of the Boom, a movement which, in his words, occurs during a time when the Cuban Revolution had achieved mythical status, Che Guevara was held as a god (Ayén, 2019, p. 222) and many foreigners had made Paris their hub in order to plot social uprisings for their homelands, movements that would follow the lead of Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba (2008, p. 29), as was the case of MIR, a revolutionary movement created in Ayacucho, Peru. At this point in the narrative, Ricardo seems sympathetic to the cause, or at least to the people who participate in it. He loves Arlette, a supposed guerrilla member, and also loves his good friend Paúl, admiring his infectious enthusiasm, idealism and sense of justice (2008, p. 51). Arlette leaves for Cuba, unwillingly. The last impression he has of her is that of a scared girl in cheap clothes.

Paris with money is not enough. The next time they meet again some three years later, in 1965, she has become Madame Robert Arnoux, the wife of a French diplomat. She is certainly a different woman, well-groomed, manicured and dressed. As Ricardo reflects, she has undergone an extraordinary change and now resembles a Vogue model (2008, p. 63). Aunt Alberta has passed away, and Ricardo has inherited enough money to buy an apartment, which *niña mala* helps him decorate. It feels to him as if they were finally furnishing an apartment to live together (2008, p. 72). They have a short

relationship, passionate on Ricardo's side. "[Ella] hablaba con tanta frialdad que no parecía una muchacha haciendo el amor sino un médico que formula una descripción técnica y ajena del placer" (2008, p. 73). She would let him touch her, but she would not reciprocate. She seemed indifferent. He always had the impression that she was doing what she was doing without really caring (2008, pp. 73, 39, 41, 42). She starts using her body as a tool. She will continue to do so for decades: as she herself says subsequently while in London: "Yo nunca he dicho 'te quiero', 'te amo', sintiéndolo de verdad. A nadie. Sólo he dicho esas cosas de a mentiras. Porque yo nunca he querido a nadie, Ricardito". For her, he is special, "Les he mentido a todos, siempre. Creo que el único hombre al que nunca le he mentido en la cama has sido tú" (2008, pp. 141–142). She doesn't have to pretend to love him, but he is not special enough to make her want to settle down. She would not stay forever with someone who was not very rich and powerful. In her view, money is the only happiness that can be touched: it protects and allows one to enjoy life without having to worry about tomorrow. Whatever she may have she will never be content, but always want more. She embodies flux and transience and repudiates stability and stasis. Further, in her eyes Ricardito has a terrible flaw: his lack of ambition. All he wishes for is to be with her and live in Paris (2008, pp. 88–89). *Niña mala* is repulsed by Ricardito's lack of ambition, illustrating conventional gender role reversal. It is another way in which the *niña mala* provides a graphic representation of Vargas Llosa's progression in female portraiture. She fights any sign of weakness. It seems again that when she finds herself becoming attached to Ricardo—more than she would care to—she makes good her escape. Madame Arnoux ceases to exist, leaving Ricardito in a gloomy state.

London, fighting her feelings. In London during the 1970s she has become Mrs. Richardson. It is a different setting but a familiar situation. She is now an ostensibly Mexican woman married to a flamboyant Englishman, although she is now bored, she feels she is "at the top" (2008, pp. 125, 138). She is also afraid of Richardson. Ricardo has reconnected with a friend, Juan Barreto, an interesting character who shows a different aspect of what was not allowed in Lima. In a way, he is a male counterpart of *niña mala*. He is bisexual and chooses to leave his country and its prejudices. In London he finds freedom, money and friends. He has a good life but likes to live dangerously. "El

secreto de la felicidad, o, por lo menos, de la tranquilidad, es saber separar el sexo del amor. Y, si es posible, eliminar el amor romántico de tu vida, que es el que hace sufrir. Así se vive más tranquilo y se goza más, te aseguro" (2008, pp. 126–127). He pays for this dearly, dying young, as *niña mala* would later.

During a brief secret relationship, *niña mala* seems to let herself demonstrate some emotion, but when Ricardo tells her that, despite herself, she has feelings for him, she reacts quickly: "¿Eso crees? Ya verás que no es así, pichiruchi" (2008, pp. 149–150). *Niño bueno* does not see Mrs. Richardson ever again. It is becoming clear that whenever she is close to feeling something she runs away to find someone else who could help her achieve her goal of being powerful and rich. She views a conventional albeit loving relationship as something that must be avoided as it would thwart the fulfilment of her ambitions.

Japan: a disastrous experience. There has been one period in which Vargas Llosa stops writing to participate in politics. When asked why he decided to subordinate his passion for writing to politics, he has two answers. The first is his: a moral imperative put him in a leadership situation at a critical moment in the life of his country. It was an opportunity to carry out the liberal reforms he had been defending for twenty years. The second answer comes from his ex-wife Patricia: it was to experience the thrill of writing the great novel in real life (Vargas Llosa, 1993c, pp. 36, 46). In 1989 Peru was devastated politically, socially and economically. The populist policies applied by the young thirty-five-year-old president Alan García, had damaged the economy, causing unemployment and rampant inflation (2008, p. 379), which, alongside terrorism were breaking the country. The last straw was García's announcement that all banks and insurance companies were to be nationalized. It was then that Vargas Llosa was encouraged to run for the presidency of Peru. His run was unsuccessful and Alberto Fujimori, became president in 1990. In 2000 this individual, of Japanese origins, fled Peru amid accusations of corruption and human rights violations. He resigned the presidency while in Japan and was later imprisoned for crimes against humanity. This was a dark era for the country just as the chapter that is set in Japan is a dark period for Ricardo and Kuriko (as *niña mala* is now known).

Sometime after the London experience, Ricardito hears from *niña mala* who conveys her regards from Japan, and he embarks on a mission to find her again. She is in Tokyo and has become Kuriko (Fujimori's first-born daughter, who also officiated as his first lady, was Keiko). This time all is different. Divorced, tired and thin, she has been recruited by Mr. Fukuda, a Japanese gangster, trafficker of unspecified illegal goods, who abuses her. "No sé si es amor lo que siento por Fukuda. Pero, nunca en mi vida he dependido tanto de nadie como dependo de él. La verdad es que puede hacer conmigo lo que quiera" (2008, p. 194). During his dreadful trip to Tokyo, Ricardito loses her to her master and torturer. Mr. Fukuda is a metaphor of Alberto Fujimori's dark era and his treatment of the Peruvian people during his presidency (Estrada, 2010, p. 171; Henighan, 2009, pp. 385–386; Quintana Tejera, 2007, p. 6), treatment comparable to what *niña mala* endures while she is with Fukuda, who mistreats her in terrible ways. She believes he is some kind of disease, one that makes her feel alive, useful and active, yet not happy. Fukuda had offered to protect her from Richardson's fury when he discovered her bigamy, but had imprisoned her in a nightmare world once he had her under his spell. She was trapped, as were some dissidents during the Fujimori regime, and she was changed forever, as was Peru. Vargas Llosa is alluding to the corruption during Fujimori's regime. Fukuda is ultimately responsible for *niña mala's* demise.

When Fukuda throws her out as if she were "una perra sarnosa", she goes back to Ricardo—sick, afraid, alone, with no money to her name and her beauty faded. Beauty has a direct correlation with her feeling of empowerment. At that moment, she has no power. Ricardito takes her in again, becomes indebted beyond his means to procure her medical treatment, marries her to allow her to obtain a visa, and for a short while they seem happy together. Soon, asphyxiated by boredom, she leaves him again to marry a wealthy older man. She only goes back to Ricardito, humbly, when she becomes truly ill. She wants to die with him beside her and she also wants him to inherit all that she owns. She finally knows that she should have accepted her destiny and his love and stayed with the mediocre *pichiruchi.*

In the end, in appearance she has succeeded in her life's purpose. She has economic security and owns a home her last ex-husband has provided for her. She now lives in a better place than he. Her little house offers a peaceful view of the ocean, while

he lives in a run down and dirty apartment. They have cross adapted to their new environments. Otilia finally is in the position she always wanted. Of the two, she is the one in a better financial situation, and it is all hers. Now she gives back to Ricardo. She offers him another gift by referring to their story as a love story.

She was always doomed. *Niña mala* is a complex character who impersonates many because she symbolizes many. She represents her class, while Ricardo embodies his. He is content with the life he was dealt, oblivious to what goes on around him and not willing to do much to change it. It was difficult for *niña mala* to forgive Ricardo for it. She also represents the terrorist groups punishing the country as she punishes Ricardito, almost breaking him. Her death may represent the end for those groups whose leaders were imprisoned after inflicting terrible harm on the people. As Kuriko, she represents a dark period of corruption and illicit dealings under a deceitful government. She represents many but does not represent herself. She wants to be someone else. Ricardo understands, late in the novel, why she does not want to go back to her country, why she only wants to "dejar de ser Otilita la hija de la cocinera y el constructor de rompeolas, de huir para siempre de esa trampa, cárcel y maldición que era para ella el Perú, y partir lejos, y ser rica" (2008, p. 360). Otilia wants to disappear, that is why she recreates herself, only to disappear again and again.

There was no way this story could have a joyful ending. From the naturalist perspective, *niña mala* has spent her whole life trying to escape social determinism, yet she is never truly able to elude her fate. Firstly, her early demise is, of course, beyond her control. When she finally admits that she is in love with Ricardito and acknowledges that she needs him and wants to live with him, she dies. She is not allowed to live as a triumphant heroine. Cancer may be a metaphorical expression of how corrosive and fatal the situation of a woman of her class was. No hope of a cure was offered, as there was no cure for the inequities she was running away from or for the ones to which she subjected Ricardito. As Sontag points out comparing cancer to tuberculosis, the latter "provided a metaphorical equivalent for delicacy, sensitivity, sadness, powerlessness; while whatever seemed ruthless, implacable, predatory, could be analogized to cancer". Cancer is the "barbarian within" (1978, p. 61). It is a cruel though fitting irony that *niña mala* who is herself ruthless, implacable and predatory, should die of a disease that may be

characterized by those same features. Secondly, *niña mala* is able to escape her true birthname (a secret that she believes to be taking to her grave) and her path into servanthood, but she is not allowed to keep one of her non-Andean identities. Her last known fake passport reads Lucy Solórzano Cajahuaringa.[17] Otilita has dressed up as different people, taken different names, lived in different countries and adopted different nationalities and personalities, but in the end, her fate had to catch up with her.

This novel brings women to a different level. There is a noticeable reversal of the traditional gender roles. Patriarchal concepts that kept the idea of women in the house and men outside are gone. *Niña mala* is far from the image of the first women in Vargas Llosa's early literature. She is courageous, determined, assertive, resilient, defiant and independent. She almost accomplishes her aims. *Niña mala* is nearly freed of patriarchal dominance. In the end, though, this protagonist is not really allowed to succeed. Along the way she has to sacrifice happiness with Ricardito, happiness which she finally recognizes as such; she undergoes sterilization, which she regrets; her beauty—her source of pride—is violated by bad doctors; she is sexually liberated, but she is not able to enjoy her sexuality anymore. Further, she looks for a man to help her die. *Niña mala* is close to being a successfully liberated woman, but in the end falls just short.

[17] This is interesting considering "inga" from the perspective of the popular phrase attributed to the Peruvian author Ricardo Palma, "El que no tiene de inga tiene de mandinga" ("inga" referring to Andean people and "mandinga" to former slaves).

Chapter 4

The 2010s: a decade of consequence

Full cycle

The 2010s is the last period included in this analysis, and it was a pivotal one for Vargas Llosa in diverse ways. During it, the routines of his daily life were transformed by extraordinary events. Early on the morning of October 7, 2010, when he was in New York working as visiting professor at Princeton University, a phone call with momentous implications for him came through: he learned that he was the recipient of the most prestigious honour in the world of letters. Mario Vargas Llosa had been awarded the 2010 Nobel Prize in Literature "for his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat" (The Nobel Foundation, 2010). Many, among them Alan García, then re-installed as president of Peru, thought it was "un acto de justicia" that the world finally recognized the author's intelligence and his libertarian and democratic determination (Rodríguez Marcos, 2010, para. 3). A grateful Vargas Llosa admits that he believed he had been completely forgotten by the Academy, revealing that when his wife, Patricia, received the call, she thought it could be a prank. He also observed that such a remarkable honour often has a negative effect on its recipients who become rigid and almost cease to live. He promised himself that he was not going to allow that to happen to him. He was going to continue acting and writing with the same freedom as he had before (Cruz Ruiz, 2017, p. 237). The long-awaited call made Vargas Llosa the centre of global literary attention.

In his personal life there was another turning point in 2015 when he and his wife of fifty years separated. He began a new relationship with Isabel Preysler, a Spanish woman of Filipino origin and a well-known figure in Madrid's social circles. The generous commentator might interpret this development as evidence of Vargas Llosa fulfilling his resolve to continue to live his life to the full, including its final stages. A few months later, days before his eightieth birthday, he stated he was approaching this age "en un estado realmente maravilloso de vida, de vitalidad, abierto al mundo, viviendo experiencias riquísimas que me rejuvenecen y que, sobre todo, me dan una gran fuerza para hacer proyectos como si no hubiera límites. Es lo mejor que le puede ocurrir a una persona" (Cruz Ruiz, 2017, p. 238). Living this new phase in his life, Vargas Llosa has

had to adapt to some changes. After his second marriage, he had mostly been portrayed as conventional in his personal life. Interviews and news pieces about him showed someone who reached his goals through responsible, disciplined and methodical work, someone who respected a strict working routine and did not enjoy the more mundane aspects of notoriety. One of those who interviewed him was Preysler herself, who in 1985 worked for the Spanish magazine *Hola*. She posed a question about frivolity, referring to Vargas Llosa's reputation as a great writer but one given to frivolousness. Vargas Llosa dismissed the idea, stating that what is usually associated with frivolity had always bored him. Referring specifically to social life, he said that it is something that he does not care about and does not enjoy, something that he resigns himself to when he cannot avoid it (Preysler, 1985, para. 7). Life with his new partner, a socialite well-known in her own right is different. Preysler was singer Julio Iglesias' first wife and is singer Enrique Iglesias' mother. She was also married to Marquess Carlos Falcó and is the widow of Miguel Boyer, Minister of Economy, Treasury and Commerce of Spain. Previously, Vargas Llosa's encounters with journalists were organized and the interviews dealt mostly with his intellectual work and political opinions. During his decades as a public figure, he had demonstrated little regard for the tabloid press or for sharing his personal life. After 2015, Vargas Llosa had to adjust to a new way of life and to a new approach from the press. "Desde el inicio de su noviazgo, ambos han acaparado los lentes de la prensa europea, convirtiéndose en una de las parejas más solicitadas de España" (Livia, 2019, para. 15). In a lengthy interview with Juan Cruz, he discloses that he has embarked on a journey which has transformed his private life profoundly. On the one hand he regrets that it has caused pain around him, but on the other, he declares: "Nunca he tenido la exaltación, el entusiasmo, las ilusiones que tengo hoy día a una edad en la que generalmente ya no hay tantos entusiasmos . . . ¡Quien iba a decir que iba a estar viviendo una gran pasión y organizando mi vida como si fuera a vivir eternamente!" One aspect that he loathes, though, is that he, who had been accustomed to its best traditions, now has to accept that even serious journalism is contaminated by the need of scandal and gossip to keep audiences entertained, as the current times demand (2017, pp. 232–247). As a realist writer, he has incorporated this *trasgresión de la privacidad* and his feelings about the tabloid press into one of his latest novels, *Cinco esquina*s in which the media is

centre stage. In December 2022, after eight years together, Vargas Llosa and Preysler decided to end their relationship. It remains to be seen whether he will incorporate this latest event in his life into another novel.

Meanwhile in Perú. History should be analysed from a chronological distance, and at this time it would appear to be too soon for that. Some analysts, though, seem to agree that the economic *milagro peruano*, an unprecedented period of economic growth that lasted for decades, ceased to be such in the year 2010, the last in the second government of Alan García (1985-1990 and 2006-2011). There are different assessments of this government, although there is general agreement that it was completely different from his disastrous first term. Some coincide with Michael Shifter, who considers that "What he did was continue an upward trajectory that started before him. He avoided making any major mistakes and just rode the wave"; while others focus on reports claiming that "García trimmed the salaries of government workers and sold off assets, creating the largest Peruvian budget surplus in four decades" (Smith, 2019, paras. 12, 25). Whichever the perspective, the country's economy continued an upward trend. His government was followed by Ollanta Humala's (2011-2016). According to the Central Reserve Bank, by the second quarter of 2014, the economy had fallen from an average 6.5% growth in previous years to 2%. Humala decelerated the growth of the economy, as instead of giving capital more opportunities, he did the opposite (Justo, 2014, paras. 1, 7–9). Peru did not recover during the governments of Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (2016-2018) or Martín Vizcarra (2018-2020), both of whom had faced serious accusations of corruption and were ousted by Congress. "El insólito fenómeno de obtener este año [1919] un crecimiento inferior al ya magro potencial, solo se puede explicar por aberrantes hechos políticos y la calidad de las políticas públicas. Ello ha dañado la confianza empresarial y la del consumidor" (Abusada, 2019, para. 8). Although as stated, usually the passing of time is necessary to judge a period or someone's government, it is safe to say that the economic situation of the country declined during the 2010s.

Women in the 2010s. The Fourth Wave of feminism has made its way throughout the world in large part thanks to the role of the internet. It is centred around the concept of intersectionality (see above, p. 66), as it postulates that women's situation must be positioned in the context of the relegation of other groups and genders of which

feminism *per se* is only one aspect and feminisms should incorporate racism, age, sexual orientation and class, among other categories, which the Fourth Wave is ready to support (Rampton, 2015, paras. 13, 19). The global interest stimulated by movements as #MeToo and Time's Up, which reveal the intersection between gender and power, owes much to internet access. Previously isolated cases suddenly became universal events, and women found common strength as they realized they shared similar experiences. This kinship between women from very different and distant places awakened a new and powerful consciousness and their formerly individual voices got louder in unity. The organization and mobilization of online activism is reaching previously unimaginable limits of popularity.

In Peru, in general terms, there is limited advancement in terms of women's rights during this decade. While electoral lists are required to fill "quotas of women", political discourses do not focus on sexual and economic struggles and marginalization of women resulting from reproductive laws. This is a flaw in the Peruvian context (Muñoz and Barrientos, 2019, p. 480). Abortion in Peru is still illegal, while equal pay for equal work seems a utopic ideal in the country. Statistics show that there is a correlation between payment for certain jobs and the percentage of women who traditionally perform them; the higher the percentage of women in a certain field, the lower the average remuneration (Portocarrero, 2015, para. 1). There are signs, though, that women are slowly gaining some ground, at least some women. It is undeniable that there is not one paradigm of woman in Peru. The women of the Andes, of the Jungle, of the *pueblos jóvenes*, of the poor sectors of Lima or of other regions of the country are not the same nor do they have the same possibilities as the middle- and upper-class women in Lima and other developed cities in urban areas. Maruja Barrig refers to las *jóvenes clasemedieras* and is firm in conveying to her interviewer that in the Peruvian context when one talks about women one is talking about a specific group of middle-class women and not about women in general (Wiener, 2018, sec. Pero...). The contrasting realities of these women and the others mentioned is evident through the statistics regarding the education of women in the country. On a national level, there are more women, 51%, than men pursuing higher education studies in Peru (Perú 21, 2019, para. 1). While this is encouraging, there is other data that must be considered. According to the INEI, almost 25% of women in rural

zones are illiterate and only 6.2% of women in these areas finish a career in higher education, while 33.5% of women in urban zones do. The gender gap is greater among those whose mother tongue is not Spanish ("Día Internacional por la Educación", 2021, paras. 1, 3, 5). Gender stereotypes that prevent women from accessing an education are more prevalent in rural areas, where a higher percentage of women dedicate themselves to unremunerated domestic work. Among middle-class women the task is now to empower them and achieve a higher percentage of women in careers traditionally occupied by men, such as those in the fields of science and technology (Andina, 2021, para. 1). Women in rural areas must be encouraged to shed ingrained beliefs and limitations regarding gender issues that are holding them back, so that they will take steps to educate themselves. This is not an easy task as, given the geographical, logistical and economic difficulties to access the internet in many areas of the country, this service does not reach the majority and is perceived as a privilege ("Día Internacional por la Educación", 2021, paras. 8, 9). The lack of internet access has exacerbated the educational differences during the Covid 19 pandemic, as schools in the country have turned to it in lieu of face-to-face classes. The benefits of globalization, education and the feminist discussions among them, cannot reach the women in remote areas of the country. As a result, for some women, the gap between genders is aggravated by isolation. Gender stereotypes that lead girls to perform domestic functions, sacrificing their right to education, are more common among women in rural areas, and lack of education hinders their possibilities for advancement. Women in urban circles should be in a better position. They should have no problem accessing services such as the internet, which brings them closer to the world; to study, which opens possibilities for them; and to work, which gives them economic freedom. With these advantages gender equality should be a reality, but as in most of the rest of the world, that is not quite the situation. There is still much to do to attain equal opportunities and remuneration for women and men even in the most developed areas of the country.

The situation of the First Lady of Peru from 2011 to 2016 is important, as she is a role model for fellow women. Ollanta Humala's wife, Nadine Heredia, was a president's wife like no other. The first time Vargas Llosa met with Humala and Heredia, he formed a very good impression of Humala, but an even better one of Heredia. "Me pareció que la

experiencia política mayor en la pareja la tenía Nadine" (No culpes a la noche, 2014, 44:15). Her experience and political poise permeated the couple's image. She was popularly known as *presidenta Nadine*, and there was "la idea de que, a imagen y semejanza de lo que ocurre en muchos hogares, en Palacio de Gobierno quien ejerce la verdadera autoridad no es el presidente, sino su señora" (Cordero, 2014, para. 2). The reason to mention this is that Nadine Heredia, with all her flaws[18], represents the evolution in the women of the new millennium: assertive, prepared, competent—at least of a certain group of women, as Barrig aptly stresses.

Despite considerable progress, there is still a long way to go to achieve an egalitarian society. Peruvian women who have been able to reach executive positions earn 23% less than their male counterparts, even working longer hours (Perú 21, 2019, para. 3). Work needs to be done in Peru and in the world to reverse or at least level the gender disparity. In literature, though, all evils can be corrected, and that is what Vargas Llosa does in his last two novels. The female protagonists of *Cinco esquinas* and of *Tiempos recios* build for themselves a different reality. They take command of their own bodies, of the people around them and of the situations that life deals them, coming out triumphant even over their male counterparts.

The novels of the 2010s

During this personally convoluted decade, Vargas Llosa has continued to write, and the period has been fruitful. His novels *El sueño del celta*, published in December of the same year he received the Nobel Prize, and *El héroe discreto*[19] deal with men who in their own ways are heroic and confront the pettiness and weakness of others. These works are not included in this analysis, as they do not portray central female characters. The reverse applies to the last two novels of the decade, which are also the last novels published by the author at the time of the present study. *Cinco esquina*s and *Tiempos recios* do present important and fully developed women as protagonists and are included in this chapter.

---

[18] Nadine Heredia (as well as her husband Ollanta Humala) was involved in accusations for alleged crimes committed in the bidding for the South Peruvian Gas Pipeline in favour of Odebrecht (Gestión Noticias, 2020, paras. 7–10)

[19] The TV series *Cuando vivas conmigo* (2017) is based on the novel *El héroe discreto*.

These novels not only cast women in prominent roles, but they are portrayed as confident, self-assured, almost fearless characters. These women are daring individuals who will not be corralled through intimidation, either directly or through social constraints. *Cinco esquinas* is set in the same country and the same social circle as *Conversación en La Catedral*, and, in both texts, a corrupt dictatorship serves as a backdrop. *Tiempos recios* is set in a different country, but with the same colonial and patriarchal background. This makes the novels of the last decade perfect for the purpose of contrast regarding female portraiture with those of Vargas Llosa's first decade as a writer. The new novels portray wives and mothers, but they bear no resemblance to the wives and mothers the reader encountered in *La ciudad y los perros, La Casa Verde* or *Conversación*. Women in the second decade of the new millennium are not submissive, nor do they assume the role of victims; on the contrary, they take control of their lives, of their bodies, of the situations in front of them and even of the men around them.

2016 - Cinco esquinas: women finally begin to be successful

In 2016, Vargas Llosa published *Cinco esquinas.* In this novel he returns to Peru as the setting for his plot. Once again, the country's politics are centre stage and serve as background to the narration, as it was in *Conversación en La Catedral* with the dictatorship of general Manuel Odría. *Cinco esquinas,* is a work of fiction that is set during the government of the historical President Alberto Fujimori, who defeated the author in his run for the presidency of Peru in 1990. A constant presence framing the narrative are terrorist attacks, kidnappings, explosions, blackouts, blasting of electrical towers, Shining Path and MRTA. *El Doctor* is a central character based on Vladimiro Montesinos, advisor to Fujimori and head of the National Intelligence Service (SIN). Although his actual name is never mentioned in any chapter, the author does mention him explicitly in the back cover of the book. In this thriller, *el Doctor,* Montesinos's appellative in real life as well, appears as the puppeteer who manipulates the press and others he needs to have under his control. He runs the media through his hold over directors, owners, journalists and other people relevant to his plans, either by offering money and power, through fear, or by means of the secrets he gathers to blackmail them. The country is in the hands of *el Doctor,* who exerts "poder sanguinario", and of Fujimori "su amo y cómplice" (2016, p. 284). Vargas Llosa bases this fiction on situations that

came to light towards the end of Fujimori's regime. These circumstances, in particular the videos that will be addressed in this chapter, were the background for his attempt to resign as president via fax from Tokyo, where he escaped after the films that documented the corruption of his government were publicly aired. Congress did not accept his resignation and rather declared the presidency vacant owing to the permanent moral incapacity of Fujimori. Although politics, the tabloid press, corruption, terrorism and sex are important themes in this novel, from this analytical perspective the most important circumstance is that this is the author's first work of fiction in which women are successful in their endeavours.

Flora Tristán and *niña mala*, characters from the author's previous decade were already independent and daring but they were not granted a successful ending. As Kristal points out, in the case of *niña mala* there is a glimmer of salvation at the end because the protagonist discovers love prior to her death (Reyes, 2019a, para. 24). In *Cinco esquinas*, contrastingly, there are three female main characters, and all leave the reader with the feeling that they have attained a measure of success. What is most striking in this novel is the change evidenced in the women who populate its pages. *Retaquita*, Julieta Leguizamón, is a reporter whose career has been built in tabloid journalism. She is "tan pequeña que, vista de espaldas, cualquiera la tomaría por una niña" (2016, p. 54), although *el Doctor's* opinion of this tiny woman describes her more accurately, "me parece mentira que, con lo chiquita que eres, tengas unos huevos tan grandes" (2016, p. 232). He is right in considering her truly courageous as she would be the one to bring him down. She did what no man was brave enough to attempt. Chabela and Marisa, on the other hand, successfully undertake and continue for years a same-sex relationship, without giving up their husbands, homes, children or even their social status. The affair itself is not the most extraordinary aspect of this episode however, but rather the way in which these women handle themselves. They are able to enjoy their choice with no negative repercussions. They bear no resemblance to the women depicted by Vargas Llosa during the Boom years in his first decade as a writer.

The historic Fujimori and Montesinos era. This narrative is set during the last weeks of the regime of Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000). Though Peru remained a nominal democracy, the methods employed to overcome results unfavourable to the duo Fujimori-

Montesinos's purposes basically turned the country into a covert dictatorship. The gargantuan web of corruption woven during the so called "*dictadura fujimontesinista*" was unveiled on September 14, 2000, with the broadcast of the first of many videos of Montesinos bribing important figures with the purpose of making them his pawns. The Kouri-Montesinos "*vladivideo*" portrayed the then congressman Alberto Kouri taking a bribe and committing himself to abandoning his own political party to join Fujimori's. This episode initiates the fall of the Fujimori regime (Andina, 2017, paras. 1–3). With this "*transfuguismo*" system, Fujimori's group went from 52 democratically elected members in the legislative office to 69, gaining control of Congress (Mejía, 2019, paras. 6–7). Although bribery and manipulation were integral to the political system, the corruption of the regime went much further. Vargas Llosa states that he set out to write a novel about the partnership Fujimori-Montesinos and their use of the press to intimidate their critics and silence them or punish them in a very deliberate, systematic and effective manner. Many critics of the regime were implicated in personal scandals involving sexual depravity, accused of being swindlers and linked to corrupt businesses and illegal activities, in short, dragged through the mud, a situation that turned this dirty war into a very effective mechanism for discrediting many of the government's opponents (Casa de América, 2016, 13:00). The case of the fictional Rolando Garro is similar to that of many businesspeople, politicians, and newspaper, radio and TV station owners, among other well-known figures belonging to the highest echelons of Peruvian society. Montesinos stored an arsenal of compromising videos that kept Andean society in suspense and whose publication would ruin careers, reports Juan Jesús Aznárez. Twenty-five hundred videos were seized, he continues, and quotes Montesinos as threatening to release other recordings of naked or drunken individuals, husbands basking in brothels, people snorting cocaine or engaging in perverted practices: "I have 30,000 more [videos]. I will cause a hecatomb" (2001, para. 2). He used this kind of video methodically, in conjunction with his already "purchased" media moguls, to scare and silence individuals in order to control the country. Montesinos claims that he cannot reveal the hidden videos he holds because he considers them "life insurance" (Andina, 2017, para. 15). Ironically, all the videos that brought the regime down were recorded on his orders and safeguarded in his office. Hundreds of such videos were kept in a safe box to which only Montesinos

and his secretary, Matilde Pinchi Pinchi, had access. It was this woman who extracted the first video that ended in the hands of a journalist and was finally made public. It is Pinchi Pinchi, a short woman—under five feet—whose actions and testimony helped put Vladimiro Montesinos behind bars for 25 years. In *Cinco esquinas* it is another woman, the character dubbed *Retaquita* because of her short stature, who dares record her conversations with *el Doctor*, making 37 audios available to the judiciary and using the press to make her actions public. She denounces Montesinos for ordering the murder of Garro and uncovers his manipulation of the press.

Blackmail, business proposal and murder. The engineer Enrique Cárdenas (known as Quique) is Marisa's husband. He has always been a faithful and dedicated husband—except for one occasion. That one time when he was tricked into attending a business gathering that turned into an orgy with prostitutes for the purpose of photographing and blackmailing him. Those pictures land in the hands of Rolando Garro, a tabloid journalist and director of the rag *Destapes*, who has made a career out of destroying reputations. As will be revealed to the reader later, for years Garro had been an operator for *el Doctor*. The journalist attempts to blackmail Enrique who confides in his friend Luciano Casabellas, Chabela's lawyer husband. Luciano advises Quique not to contact Garro again. "Si es necesario llegaremos hasta Fujimori. O al mismo Doctor" (2016, p. 50), the lawyer asserts, knowing that *el Doctor* can solve anything or ruin anyone. One more detail that is interesting about that statement is that it implies that it is easier to reach Fujimori than *el Doctor*. The head of the SIN is the one who runs the country.

On a second visit Garro makes his proposal: he wants the powerful engineer to become a partner and invest a hundred thousand dollars and his prestige in his publication. That way the journal would be able to reach people in Enrique's social strata. While the idea of a scandal terrifies Quique since, in his world, that is one of the worse situations imaginable, the notion of being associated with Garro—mousey smile, greasy hair, flashy clothes, unsightly, smelly and *huachafo* in the ugliest way (2016, p. 21)—was even more disturbing. Quique dismisses the coercer harshly. As Garro is leaving his office he recommends him to read the next number of *Destapes*. "Le juro que le interesará mucho, de principio a fin" (2016, p. 102). Garro delivers on his promise and

publishes the pictures of a drunk, drugged and naked Enrique Cárdenas surrounded by flamboyant prostitutes, all in compromising positions. This causes a scandal in Lima as well as a marital crisis, but it is even worse for Garro, who is found beaten to death shortly thereafter.

***Una gran Retaquita*.** Here is where Julieta, Garro's right hand woman in *Destapes*, takes precedence over other characters and begins to show her true strength. Ceferino Arguello, the photographer who brought Quique's pictures to Garro, is terrified even before Garro's death is revealed. *Retaquita*, who has signed the article and thus faces more risk, reproaches him: "No seas tan mariconazo. De todo te asustas" (2016, p. 146). Attitudes traditionally ascribed to each gender are reversed. He is frightened and asks for her support. Although she is also scared, *Retaquita* scolds him and emboldens him to calm down and not worry. When Garro misses a meeting, it is clear that something extraordinary has happened. Julieta is the one who takes command of the situation, assigning tasks to the men and women in the *Destapes* office. They are not able to find Garro anywhere and Ceferino reaches out to her again, so nervous he could hardly speak. She urges him not to get flustered. He needs to rest and keep a cool head—while she is thinking: "Cobarde de mierda" (2016, p. 151). She does not understand his cowardice, because she herself is brave. That afternoon she is the one who decides to file a complaint with the police and have them look for Garro. Later that night Julieta is picked up from her home to identify her mentor's body, which she does courageously.

In subsequent conversations with the photographer Ceferino, their roles remain the same. She is the one who makes decisions and gives directives, while he is paralyzed by fear. She is also afraid but overcomes her fear and devises a plan. Julieta accuses engineer Enrique Cárdenas of having Rolando Garro killed. Quique is jailed for one horrendous night, but *el Doctor* arranges to find a scapegoat, Juan Peineta, a poor, arteriosclerotic poet who is incriminated and incarcerated for the crime he did not commit. Quique is cleared of all suspicion, but *Retaquita's* daring move has made an impression on *el Doctor*, who has her amicably kidnapped and brought to him. *El Doctor* reveals to Julieta that Garro had been under his orders and tells her to adjust her salary to whatever amount she wants, because she would be taking her deceased boss's place.

Retaquita advises Ceferino to be calm and to keep a cool head on various occasions during the narrative. She certainly follows her own advice, as before entering the car that would take her to *el Doctor,* she had enough presence of mind to broadcast a message through her mobile phone to the effect that three men, strangers to her, were picking her up and taking her to an unknown place. She encourages her fellow journalists to be alert since anything could happen to her (2016, pp. 226–227). She displays serenity and thinks quickly, and that message is not the only evidence of her fortitude and of the complete shift in Vargas Llosa's female portrayal. Julieta places a recorder in her chest and tapes the first conversation she had with *el Doctor*, as well as 36 later ones. After some time, she discloses their content to her readership. She informs them that she has contacted the National Prosecutor and provided the Judiciary with the original tapes, not before making a copy of each one in case they get lost in the government's offices. *Retaquita* also denounces the murder of her boss and friend Rolando Garro on *el Doctor's* orders, as documented on the tapes.

Julieta Leguizamón is the first female character in Vargas Llosa's world who is truly a strong, round character who not only succeeds in shaking off the grip of patriarchy but defies it by taking on and defeating the most powerful man she will ever meet. Along the way, she also reaches a comfortable life, has her own talk show, is able to leave her *cuartucho* in the rough neighbourhood of *Cinco Esquinas*, move to Miraflores, dress well and make good money. Her father had been right. The only thing he could leave her was an education. Through education she would be able to have a better life than he, an illiterate, had been able to live (2019a, p. 90). Vargas Llosa is conscious of the difficulties women like Julieta Leguizamón face in order to move up in life (see above, p. 164). *Retaquita*'s only power lies in her intellect, and she makes good use of it.

Marisita and Chabelita, the perfect wives. Julieta Leguizamón is not the only successful woman in this novel. Returning to his signature interpolation of stories, and before presenting Quique's dilemma, Vargas Llosa introduces in the first chapter another—erotic—plot. This storyline develops in the chapters that have to do with the personal lives of the characters. Marisa, married to Enrique Cárdenas, and Chabela, married to Luciano Casasbellas, are the protagonists of these episodes. Although the most vicious actions of terrorist groups had ended during the first years of Fujimori's

presidency, the author not only makes these violent acts the backdrop to the narration through the use of anachronism but uses them to develop the lesbian relationship of two of the protagonists. One night, the predictable existence of these upper middle class best friends surprisingly changes. While Enrique is away on a business trip, Chabela and Marisa lose track of time as they chat and drink wine as they had done for years. The government has imposed a police-enforced curfew in efforts to prevent frequent terrorist attacks in Lima, and it would not be prudent for Chabela to risk not making it home on time. She has to spend the night: "Maldito toque de queda". That is how their sexual adventure begins, unplanned, sharing a bed and caresses without uttering a word: "Bendito toque de queda" (2016, pp. 9, 11). The next morning Chabela rises early and is ready to go to her husband and daughters when Marisa wakes up. They still do not mention what happened.

Marisa is unsure of everything. She cannot stop thinking about the experience. Marisa waits for Chabela to call, to "take the initiative". She waits for a week, then the phone rings and she is invited to go to Miami with Chabela for the weekend. If her husband objects Marisa will divorce him, she jokes (or not). For three days she would forget the blackouts, tower blasts, bombs, kidnappings and curfew that everyone in Lima had been enduring for a decade. These women in their late thirties discover in each other a different type of partner and during that trip establish a sexual affair, although they agree that both had been very lucky with their husbands, that they loved them very much, that they were happy with them (2016, pp. 39–40). So, they maintain their "normal" lives and keep the new aspect of their relationship secret—at least at the beginning. It is remarkable that they do not give a second thought to the possibility that having an extramarital affair, whether heterosexual or not, might be questionable. While, following the exposure of the scandal involving Quique and the prostitutes, Marisa agonizes over the possible consequences of her husband's actions. She asks Chabela, "¿No te pareció increíble ver a Quique ahí, desnudo, en medio de esas rameras, haciendo esas porquerías? . . . ¿Pero, no te das cuenta qué va a pasar ahora con mi vida, con mi matrimonio? ¿Cómo puede sobrevivir un matrimonio a una cosa así?" (2016, p. 127). From their perspective, it is not so much the act that is wrong but rather its public dissemination. As the saying popular in some Catholic countries puts it, God does not punish the sin but the scandal.

There is still a double moral standard, but this time it is a woman who applies it. After his one-time mistake is published by Garro, Marisa will not let Quique return to their home for a while, and then only because he had experienced a medical scare.

Sometime later, Chabela demands to know if Marisa has told Quique about their relationship. Marisa confirms she has told him, although not as a fact, but as a fantasy imagined by her. She puts her jealous friend at ease adding that she has only told him: "para que se anime y se ponga en forma. No hay nada que lo excite tanto, te juro" (2016, p. 256). She decides to tell him, not to free her conscience or unburden a heavy weight, but to improve her husband's performance. "Sabes una cosa? A mí también me excita la idea—¿bromeó Chabela?—. ¿Te importaría si me tiro a tu maridito, Marisa?" (2016, p. 257). Marisa jokingly promises her friend to think about it. This conversation between women would have been inconceivable in any of Vargas Llosa's early novels. Women are talking about sharing their men now, while in *La ciudad y los perros* Carmela, had to swallow her pride turning a blind eye to her husband wiping his mistresses' rouge from his lips before entering her home, and Teresa's mother resigned herself to the fact that her spouse would bring in other women. In *Cinco esquinas* it is the women who take their pleasure in their own hands and even contemplate sharing their men if that is convenient for them. These women are almost completely emancipated. "Almost" because society and the famous *¿qué dirán?* still has a hold over them. This is not because they are women, though, but because they belong to a class that will not condone scandal. That is also the reason Quique was so afraid of his pictures being published: he was also afraid of social reaction. The higher the social stratum, the more conservative and hypocritical its members tend to be. Marisa and Chabela are not ready to dispense with men: they will enjoy the benefits that being married to prosperous ones provides, but they will also enjoy their bodies freely as they see fit.

As time elapses, Quique is included in Marisa and Chabela's adventure. They take him on another weekend to Miami and all his fantasies are turned into reality. "Anda, maridito, date gusto, bésala. Te doy permiso" (2016, p. 269), Marisa gives authorization to her husband. This scene evokes that of *Conversación* where Cayo Bermúdez pushes a sexual encounter between Queta and *la Musa*—for his own benefit (Vargas Llosa, 2001b, pp. 616–621). The scene, although perhaps not an everyday occurrence, adheres more to

the traditional power relationship between a woman and a man, while in *Cinco Esquinas* that interplay is completely reversed. A woman is in power, in total command, and a man is in thrall to her: “Gracias amor mío. Te amo, te amo” (2016, p. 274). The female characters in *Cinco esquinas* find their new sexuality, and keep advancing, eventually subjecting their husbands to their will. They are also in sync with Deleuze’s rebuttal of the binary division of sexes. He rejects the binary organization of sexuality and that of a bisexual organization within the sexes: “Bisexuality is no better a concept than the separateness of the sexes” (1987, pp. 278, 276). He also notes that “becoming” is a continuous process, never finalized, to which men are as susceptible as women (Driscoll, 2018, p. 76). Three years later Luciano will be included in the affair as well. Marisa, Chabela and Quique had decided to go to Miami again to celebrate their third secret anniversary. Chabela must have shared this confidential information with Luciano because he surprises them by announcing: “¡He decidido acompañarlos a Miami a celebrar yo también ese tercer aniversario!”. Marisa, although visibly shaken, is the only one who is able to tell Luciano she is glad he will join them. “Menos mal, menos mal que alguien me quiere en este grupo—le agradeció Luciano, cogiendo la mano de Marisa y besándosela—. Seguro que pasaremos unos lindos días allá en Miami” (2016, p. 314). Luciano’s thanks to Marisa for allowing him into the group take up the last lines of the novel. As stated, from this analytical perspective, these women are successful in living their lives in the way they have chosen, and they are the ones who decide whether to open the door for the men in their lives to join them.

This novel has not emerged unscathed from recent critical scrutiny. Jorge Coaguila posits that although the structure of the novel is beyond reproach, there are other matters which make *Cinco esquinas* a book that is quite far from the best Vargas Llosa. He mentions the inconsistencies of the characters and a failed representation of lesbian eroticism (2017, pp. 135–136), although he does not distinctly identify these inconsistencies and misrepresentation. Coaguila is also surprised by the superficiality of Marisa and Chabela, who live on their husbands’ money and have no professional aspirations. It is significant that Marisa and Chabela’s shallowness is considered surprising in 2017, as it highlights the evolution of women since the first fictions penned by Vargas Llosa—the masterfully crafted *La Casa Verde*, *Conversación en La Catedral*

and *La ciudad y los perros*. Most of the female characters in these first novels—unless they were prostitutes or maids—were supported by their husbands, had no professional aspirations and in some cases were superficial. However, that was not commonly seen as a failing. The usual criticism was that they were not round but flat characters. From this analytical perspective, then, the representation of women in Vargas Llosa's fiction, which goes hand in hand with the "real" world, has evolved positively. Whether one agrees or not with these women's choices in life, they attain their purposes, which may be frivolous, as is the case of the blonde and the brunette friends, or serious, as is the case of Julieta: the fact is that they achieve a sense of fulfilment.

Marisa and Chabela find freedom in sex, a choice usually reserved for men or for which women had to pay a price. Flora Tristán and *niña mala*—the previous women in Vargas Llosa's literary world who come close to this kind of freedom—pay with their lives. *Retaquita* finds freedom in fighting corruption and avenging her secretly loved mentor. Men recognize in her traits usually reserved for them, and they make no secret of their feelings. *El Doctor* and Ceferino refer to her as having masculine attributes. "Yo no tengo los huevos que tú te gastas en la vida. Yo soy un cobarde y a mucha honra. No quiero ser héroe ni mártir, sino vivir hasta el fin, con mi mujer y mis tres hijos, sin que me maten antes de tiempo" (2016, p. 278). That is how Ceferino compares himself to Julieta, recognizing that she is braver and thus more "manly".

There are other, smaller details that hint at a more egalitarian world. For instance, every morning Luciano gets ready to go to his office but first he takes his two girls to wait for the school bus (2016, p. 115). Although a small detail, it would still be difficult to imagine Fushía (the father of Lalita's first son), Ricardo Arana's father or even Pantaleón taking their children to wait for a school bus. Another element that should not go unnoticed is that Quique's mother died after his appearance naked in all the newspaper kiosks in Lima. "Mis hermanos creen que la mató la pena y la amargura que le causó este escándalo. Tienen razón, por supuesto. Lo que quiere decir que a mi pobre viejita la maté yo mismo, Luciano. ¿Crees que alguna vez podré perdonarme su muerte?" (2016, p. 252). Quique's mother, a woman of an older generation, was never able to recover from the shame and stigma that his scandal caused. Contrastingly, in the line immediately following Quique's manifestation of guilt, Marisa confides in Chabela about the way

their new relationship has improved her intimate life with her husband, and tries to lessen her jealousy: “No debes estar celosa, Chabelita, porque cuando yo y Quique hacemos el amor tú estás siempre ahí, en medio de nosotros”(2016, p. 252). There is definitely a different attitude towards life in the women of the two generations.

Efraín Kristal points out that *Cinco esquinas* is the first novel in which moral but ordinary individuals help bring down a corrupt government (Kristal, 2018, p. 452). *Retaquita* certainly is the stellar character in this novel not only because she defies the status quo and emerges triumphant, but because she is a woman who dares face the most powerful man in her country and, through her decisive action, brings down his corrupt government. By the same token, although in search of self-indulgent individual gratification, Marisa and Chabela dare to defy their status quo and are successful in their pursuits. At the same time, during the night he spent in jail, Quique was sexually abused by another man, and he had to keep quiet, out of fear and shame.

In both parallel storylines it is women who lead, and men who have to endure situations most commonly experienced by women. There is still a double standard, but those who were always on the wrong side of the situation are now winners. Vargas Llosa seems on one hand to flip gender realities while on the other to mock societal prejudices. *Retaquita* would have been an inconceivable feminine character in earlier Vargas Llosa’s work. Feminine characters were seldom given the opportunity to enter the world outside the home where they could attempt to defy the status quo—and then, at a high cost. Urania, *La Fiesta del Chivo*, escaped her world and accessed the masculine realm through her career as a lawyer, but she gave up dating and the possibility of ever becoming a mother. Flora attempted to effect change in *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, and she died young and unsuccessful. “Good” women were not given the opportunity to fulfil their sexual desires or fantasies either. Chabela and Marisa break all the constraints that had been imposed on their gender, not only because of their relationship but because they are women who decide to have a physical relationship by and for themselves and are unapologetic. One should not forget that Vargas Llosa did create same sex couples previously. *Bola de Oro* and Ambrosio, main masculine characters in *Conversación en La Catedral*, had a homosexual relationship that was a well-known secret in some circles, but was accompanied by guilt: a woman was killed for the sake of concealing it from

Fermín's family. Also, in *Conversación, la Musa* and Queta as well have a friendship that has a sexual component, but its initial motivation was to satisfy the voyeuristic needs of a man, not for spontaneous self-gratification. While what is most relevant to this analysis is the impressive reversal of gender roles with respect to what used to be considered the norm, it is also worth noting that the general attitude towards certain taboo subjects such as homosexual relationships has indeed changed. The relationship between don Fermín and Ambrosio is kept secret and once revealed to the reader it is perceived as shameful by the major players involved: Fermín, Ambrosio and certainly Santiago. *La Musa* dies because of this secret. By contrast, in *Cinco esquinas* the opening chapter includes the lesbian scene. Although it is also kept secret, the reason for the secrecy is the fear of scandal and not of the rejection of such a relationship in their immediate family circles. To prove this, the husbands enthusiastically join in the adventure. In this novel it is not only the feminine characters who are different, but men have also changed—a necessary factor according to Deleuze. What has not evolved to the same degree is society. As he mocks and ridicules its prudery, subterfuge, deception and duplicity, the author brings it to the fore, highlighting the need for social change to accompany that of the individuals.

2019 - Tiempos recios: a woman in control

The last novel published by Mario Vargas Llosa up to the time of this analysis is the fourth he authored in the 2010s and, as is characteristic of his fiction, tells more than one story. The broad plot of *Tiempos recios* deals with politics, vested interests, conspiracies, imperialism and the Cold War era. A second storyline follows the life of a woman who faced her destiny and reclaimed the reins of what was shaping up to be an unfulfilled life in line with those described by Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (see above, pp. 26, 44, **Error! Bookmark not defined.**), and Marcela Lagarde, *Los cautiverios de las mujeres* (see ps. 50, 52, 111, 136, 137, 199). It is important to note that despite the stature of the author, this work has drawn limited critical attention to date. César Ferreira's essay *Verdad histórica y poder en Tiempos recios de Mario Vargas Llosa* (2020) is a detailed analysis of the book that focusses on its relationship to historic truth. There have been interviews and book reviews some of which are referenced here.

This novel focuses again on one of Vargas Llosa's recurring themes: dictatorship. An innovative element of this work is that it clearly holds the United States, the CIA in

particular, to account for its intervention in Guatemalan affairs, for its part in overthrowing a legitimate democratic government and for supporting the establishment of the dictatorship of Carlos Castillo Armas. It also portrays the CIA as responsible for the subsequent assassination of Castillo Armas, using the Dominican Republic's own dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo as its proxy. The novel highlights the devastating consequences of these actions, and the US's responsibility for promoting the confrontational socio-political climate in Latin America that would give rise to the guerrillas, to the Cuban revolution and to the social conflicts that have afflicted Latin America since. This is a work of fiction based on history where real-life figures interact with characters crafted by the author.

Works of fiction based on history have received substantial critical attention, giving rise to divergent approaches. If one follows Enrique Anderson Imbert's definition, a novel may not be considered historical when it presents events known directly by the author (Menton, 1993, p. 40). Further, *Tiempos recios* does not fit within Latin America's New Historical Novel as conceived by Menton, who subscribes to Anderson Imbert's definition of the historical novel, and excludes from his classification any work that does not relate an event that occurred at a time prior to that of the novelist (1993, pp. 40–45) (see above, p. 127). In various interviews and presentations Vargas Llosa has mentioned that he was aware of the events narrated in this book as they were taking place. He has also stated that, at the time, he was profoundly disappointed when democratically elected President Árbenz was overthrown as a result of the reforms he was attempting to implement. Vargas Llosa and his peers at San Marcos University in Lima took to the streets to protest what they considered a wicked outrage (Casa de América, 2019, 34:44; Liber Letras, 2020, 19:49; Razón de Estado TV, 2019, 04:45; RTV Especiales, 2019, 02:53). On the one hand, experiences such as these give the writer almost direct knowledge of the events and thus the possibility of recounting vividly what he witnessed at the time; on the other hand, such close involvement can skew the author's rendering of these events. Ferreira believes with Hayden White that there is a fine line that distinguishes a historical account from a fictional one although both originate in factual information, historic realism being "una forma particular de poética". He also subscribes to the view that this novel in particular has a political agenda: to vindicate the figure of

Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán (2020a, p. 38). Lilly Soto, in turn, considers that, in this book, Vargas Llosa has settled a festering sore by denouncing the dire reality of the "patio trasero" of the United States, a backyard where life and death were decided in accordance with foreign interests (2019, pp. 1–2). These would be reasons for not considering *Tiempos recios* an impartial representative of the historical novel or the New Latin American Historical Novel, but Vargas Llosa does refer to *Tiempos recios* as a historical novel, without considering the temporal factor, and gives his own opinion about it and all the historical novels that he has written. He states that they are based on certain historical facts that are generally accepted but that they also contain many elements of fantasy and imagination aimed at giving certain facts greater prominence, while others are eliminated to focus the reader's attention on certain fundamental characters or situations. These works contain fictitious characters and characters who are historical but who are treated as fictional, adding and subtracting many biographical elements and replacing them with fictional ones. He claims that a novel is not obliged to seek out the "facts" or the "truth" as is the case of a historical work. In short, there is an imaginative and creative element that would be extraneous to a standard work of history (Sin Filtro, Guatevisión, 2019, 01:11). All preceding opinions notwithstanding, this is a narrative about historical facts and significant events and is "nurtured by solid historical evidence" (Ferreira, 2020b, p. 2): as such it does shed light on historical events. In the words of Armas Marcelo, the author transforms historical reality into fiction and fiction into apparent reality so successfully that the reader is unable to distinguish the fiction from the historical reality (2019, para. 5). This is a realistic work of fiction based on true events known to Vargas Llosa at the time of their occurrence, complemented by exhaustive research and literary creativity.

The action begins in the 1940s in Central America, specifically in Guatemala. The setting later moves to the Caribbean Island of the Dominican Republic and subsequently to Haiti. In a *Después* section, the author shares the details of his long conversation with his character Marta Borrero Parra, whom he has traced to the United States. Some of the characters with whom the reader might be familiar from reading *La Fiesta del Chivo* resurface in this novel, tying the history of Guatemala to that of the Dominican Republic. The CIA is central to the plot and remains in focus throughout the narrative. While

economic interests and politics set the context for the leading story, entwined to it is the life of Marta Borrero Parra. Martita is a woman who broke the social norms, with the consequence that she had to accept an unwanted fate at a time when women were generally resigned to their destiny even when it was an unfortunate and undesirable one.

Setting the context. Through an *Antes* section Vargas Llosa gives the background for the novel. This is a review of aspects of the history of the United Fruit Company, a corporation based in Latin America and owned by United States capital, and its influence on the political and economic development of Central America[20]. As Guatemala's President Juan José Arévalo (1945-50) was an obstacle to the company's economic goals, the United Fruit Company secured the support of the United States, the CIA, military men in Guatemala, other Central American governments and the Dominican Republic to finance uprisings and abet coups to oust Arévalo, who did not seek re-election in 1951. His successor, President Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán (1951-54), also fought for a more just Guatemala and was deposed in a CIA-sponsored coup[21]. In breach of undertakings given to Árbenz when negotiating his resignation, Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas became the new president of the country. Castillo Armas was the man who had led the paramilitary Ejército Liberacionista—economically supported by the CIA (2019a, p. 60)—in its efforts to overturn Árbenz's government. This is where the story of Guatemala intersects with the focus of this analysis. This introduction sets the stage for the appearance of

---

[20] For information on the United Fruit Company, the reader may refer to: Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (1982). The third chapter, "The overlord: The United Fruit Company" in particular, is dedicated to the history of the UFC and how it worked "quietly but effectively to convince the American government that Arbenz was a threat to freedom and must be deposed", in effect determining the fate of president Árbenz and his social reforms (1982, p. 77).
Los contratos de la United Fruit Company y las compañías muelleras en Guatemala where Oscar de León Aragón reviews the contracts between The United Fruit Company and the state [sic] of Guatemala. "Se analiza el régimen de concesiones" . . . "una valiente denuncia de la iniquidad imperialista" (1950, pp. 9, 7).
Stacy May and Galo Plaza, *The United Fruit company in Latin America*, focuses on diverse aspects of its role in the banana industry, including relations with governments, labour force and public opinion in the United States and Latin America (1958, pp. xiv, 1–2).

[21] For information about the CIA involvement in Guatemala's internal affairs during this period, the reader may refer to: Nick Cullather, and Piero Gleijeses' *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of its Operations in Guatemala*, 1952-54 (1999). It "offers a fast-moving narrative account of CIA's Operation PBSUCCESS, which supported the 1954 *coup d'état* in Guatemala…[and] delighted both President Eisenhower and the Dulles brothers by ousting President Arbenz and installing Colonel Castillo Armas in his place" (McDonald, 1999, p. 7).
Stephen M. Streeter's *Managing the counterrevolution: the United States and Guatemala*, 1954-61 (2000, p. 2). This book based on archival research explores the overthrow of President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman and "the goals, instruments, and consequences of the Eisenhower administration's policies in Guatemala from 1954 to 1961".

Martita Borrero, who will be the lover of Castillo Armas. One of the storylines of the novel leads the reader to the historical day when President Castillo Armas was assassinated, an event in which Martita was, if not involved, at least in a position to alert him in advance. In a format reminiscent of that of the four men who waited for Trujillo to drive to his death in *La Fiesta del Chivo*, the main plot of *Tiempos recios* deals with the planning, through a series of meetings, of the execution of Guatemala's president. Caca—an unpleasant nickname that his classmates at the Military School had given Carlos Castillo because of his initials. This plot also allowed Martita to escape from an unfulfilling life. Although the political aspect of this novel is gripping and enticing, this study will continue to focus on the development of the feminine characters in Vargas Llosa's literature, concentrating primarily on Martita's story.

Miss Guatemala (que nunca lo fue): a short childhood. Following *Antes*, Chapter 1 introduces Martita, the only daughter of a prestigious lawyer and his wife, a woman who had had many failed pregnancies. Martita's successful delivery left her mother exhausted and depressed, living in her own world of madness until she died an elderly woman in an asylum many years later. As if representing the birth of a new woman who could not coexist with the stereotypical lady of those times, her daughter was born so beautiful, lively and vivacious, that she earned the nickname Miss Guatemala. She had a natural intelligence and such a serene, penetrating and disconcerting gaze that her Maya-Quiché babysitter prophesied: "Esta niña tendrá poderes" (2019a, p. 30)—and power she did have. The mention of her gaze, with attributes not commonly ascribed to women, foreshadows a masculinized woman who stands out against the background of the gender parameters prevailing in the 1950s in Latin America. Her gaze brings to mind, by way of contrast, Laura Mulvey's seminal essay "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema" (1975). Although Mulvey refers to the visual in the context of cinema, her argument can be applied to literature: a feminine character in a patriarchal culture is also a signifier for the male other, objectified for his gratification under a phallocentric order which does not allow her to make her own meaning (such as was the case of the earlier women who populated the 1950s in Vargas Llosa's literary world). From Mulvey's perspective, the ultimate challenge is to "fight the unconscious structured like a language", a language of patriarchy. A starting point to

fight it, she claims, is to examine, through the use of psychoanalytic theory, issues of consequence to the female unconscious that are almost irrelevant to the phallocentric theory ingrained in this language of patriarchy. She specifically mentions the importance of "the sexing of the female infant and her relationship to the symbolic" as well as the "woman as non-mother" (1991, p. 432). Martita's intense gaze as an infant seems to imply the character's early rejection of the dominant order and her repudiation of female passivity that was commonly attributed to women of her time. Certainly, she did not grow up to be the passive object of the masculine gaze, without decision-making power over her own life. Rather, she is constructed as a strong figure from birth, one who, at different crossroads in her life, is able to assess her possibilities and take the paths that she elects, operating with complete independence and putting her own interests before those of others.

She reverses the position of the gaze. For Miss Guatemala to be successful, she needed to subvert the traditional order. She required the reversal of roles, becoming the subject of the gaze instead of its object. Far from being the passive target of male desire, she used that male lustfulness and her physical attributes to break with the patriarchal order that regulates women's behaviour and to banish the castration complex associated with the feminine attitude. Martita embodies a contradiction in relation to what Rosemary Balsam considers Freud's baroque theory, that due to the girl's lack of a penis, a girl is non-existent to herself and others, which places this girl in a disadvantageous position compared to her male siblings in the eyes of her mother (2018, p. 13). Martita's mother never pays attention to her, she looks at her with indifference and never even returns her kisses (2019a, pp. 32–33), but in spite of that, Miss Guatemala does not evidence what Freud designates as penis envy and is in no way inclined to feel inferior to men. In contrast, instead of allowing males to use her as an object, she herself manipulates men in order to achieve her goals. Typical gender relations are subverted as Martita wields the power normally vested in men.

Marta becomes conscious of her physical advantage—beauty—and adept at the art of exploiting it. At fifteen, she became pregnant with the child of doctor Efrén García Ardiles, her father's best friend. It is through the young teenager's own actions that the reader begins to realize her strong personality. Her father allowed her to attend the

weekly gatherings where he and his friends discussed the current situation of Guatemala, which sparked her own interest in politics. Failing to understand the opposition of most of these men to president Arévalo's *socialismo espiritual*, nor García Ardiles' strong defence of the president, she decides to ask the older but good-looking doctor to explain politics to her. The narrator's mention of the doctor's good looks suggests that the personality of the girl was already taking shape. Martita may well have been interested in the doctor even before he offered to instruct her further at his home, after school and behind her father's back. The girl, a budding seductress without scruple who would later use her physical attributes to attain her goals, readily accepted the doctor's offer. As the narrator explains, what drove her to García Ardiles' home was the risk-taking that it involved—which would be the trademark of her life—rather than political curiosity (2019a, pp. 115–116). This risk-taking attitude would always prompt her into action and enable her to effect change when she needed to transform her existence. It also sets her apart from her peers, men as well as women, who passively accept their destinies.

When her pregnancy was discovered, she refused to give away the name of the father, "dando muestras del tremendo carácter que tenía y de lo lejos que llegaría en la vida". All her strength was useless, though, when her father figured out the culprit and, without considering the girl's opinion, agreed with García Ardiles that they would be married so that the expected child might escape the shame of illegitimacy. "¿Qué joven serio, de buena familia y con un futuro asegurado daría su nombre a una descarriada?" (2019a, p. 35) is the thought that drove Marta's father. This is a perfect example of gender subordination in patriarchal societies of the 1940s and 1950s—exactly as depicted in Vargas Llosa's earlier novels, set in a different Latin American country but during the same period. After the ceremony she never saw her father again. In that way, García Ardiles, the older man who in everyone's eyes had groomed her and made her pregnant, was rewarded with a beautiful child-wife; in contrast, the girl who at the time was perceived as the victim was disowned, banished and disinherited. The doctor's actions were reprehensible and, for the time being, went unpunished. Further, Martita's father refused to see her even when years later, out of desperation, she went to beg him to do so. He did agree eventually to a visit from García Ardiles—his sin could be forgiven, but hers could not.

A life she was not going to live. Five years into the marriage, Miss Guatemala in accordance with her risk-taking personality, decided to procure herself a different life. She abandoned her marital home and her imposed husband, taking nothing with her, not even her son. Out in the streets on a rainy night and depending only upon herself, she considered her possibilities. Marta rejected going back to her husband's home or killing herself, instead devising another plan. Resolutely, she went to the Presidential Residence and, using her father's and her husband's influential names and friendships with the president, demanded to see Castillo Armas. This married, unattractive but powerful man listened to the account of her life, her escape, her father's refusal to see her and also how she had decided to look for him to tell him her story: "En un gesto audaz dictado por la desesperación, fue a pedirle socorro y él la hizo su querida" (2019a, pp. 111–112). This would not be the only time that she would use her body to reward a man for his help.

Through García Ardiles' introspections the reader forms a different viewpoint of Marta and of himself. She left him when he became an outcast, losing his job, his patients and his fortune. García Ardiles wonders whether he had been an abuser or a victim. Although he was remorseful for having acted as he did with Miss Guatemala, he also pondered if it had really been all his fault or if he had been a victim of the then probably still subconscious lust of the girl. "¿Era Miss Guatemala una niñita inocente o un ser diabólico?" (2019a, pp. 122–127). Considering that he did not take advantage of the situation and never slept with his wife after they got married, García Ardiles was not completely wrong in weighing up that possibility. Perhaps Martita, had begun then to utilize the attributes which would captivate men throughout her life. She took the first step as a curious fifteen-year-old seeking political lessons from doctor García Ardiles who, despite being twenty-eight years her senior, was caught in the glare of her gaze.

On motherhood. Marta complied with her father and husband's agreement for some years, until she decided against further submissiveness and walked away from the fate prearranged for her by these men. She consigned her ex-husband to oblivion. With regards to her son, she was somewhat remorseful but tried to avoid those thoughts (2019a, p. 109). The desire to bear children, which Freud also attributed to women who, according to him, saw it as a means to replace the penis and thus compensate for this state of inferiority, was not exhibited by Martita. By consciously rationalizing her feelings

towards her son, she exhibits a coldness alien to most mothers. There is no trace of emotional dependency normally associated with women. Rather, she displays relentless detachment and self-absorption that enable her to suppress even maternal instincts. Abandoning her son symbolized personal freedom for her. This represents conventional gender reversal, as Martita's actions conform to the self-serving and ruthless behaviour associated with *machismo*.

Women have traditionally been put in a position in which they have to choose between being a mother and just being. In her ground-breaking essay "Is female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" Sherry Ortner analyses the "universal fact of culturally attributed second-class status of woman in every society", considering it "pan-cultural". Investigating the subordinate status of women across social and economic layers of all societies, she discards genetic determinism, but recognizes that biological facts are relevant, as a woman's traditional roles are associated with the functions of her body. The anthropologist prefers to correlate the secondary status of women to birth giving. This role, Ortner posits, equates women (symbolically) with nature; in contrast culture, that which attempts to control nature, is associated with men. Culture (men), capable of changing nature, are thus considered superior to the lower order nature (women) (1974, pp. 67–73). Beauvoir also theorized in *The Second Sex* that the core problem of women lies in her reproductive role. Because of it, she has been doomed to domestic work, banned from participating in shaping the world due to her enslavement to the reproductive function (1981, p. 132). As women become more independent and pursue goals that go beyond childbearing and rearing, motherhood is postponed, even rejected completely. "Declining reproductive rates throughout the world are linked to female education and employment" (Guy, 2012, p. 3). This is reflected in the development of the female characters Vargas Llosa creates. The more independent and self-directed these women are, the further from motherhood the reader finds them. In *Tiempos recios* the correspondence goes further. Martita's mother lived past her ninetieth birthday but giving birth to her daughter had a devastating effect on her. "Murió en un asilo de ancianos sin enterarse de gran cosa de lo que ocurría a su alrededor . . . luego del nacimiento de la niña quedó exhausta, muda, deprimida . . . " (2019a, p. 30). Her active life actually ceased when she became a mother. There is also the isolated reference of Johnny Abbes García

to his mother. Given the background of motherhood in Vargas Llosa's literary world, the Dominican's view of motherhood, torture, punishment and hurt as being interrelated does not seem gratuitous. "Vez que he tenido que hacer hablar a un tipo, aplicándole castigo, me da por cantar. O por recitar poesías de Amado Nervo, que le gustaban mucho a mi mamá. Normalmente no hago esas cosas. Cantar, recitar. Nunca se me ocurren. Sólo cuando tengo que hacerle daño a alguien para que hable" (2019a, p. 74). As he tortures someone he thinks of his mother. Motherhood seems to become a form of torture, a punishment or a symbol of harm. Looked at through that lens, it is not surprising that a woman would try to escape it and banish it from memory. "A Martita no le gustaba recordar a esa criatura que había abandonado. Poco a poco había ido apartándola de su mente; y cuando, pese a todo, se le metía en la conciencia, no pensaba en él como hijo suyo, sólo como en el hijo de su exmarido" (2019, p. 159). Martita consciously makes the decision to abandon her son, and when her conscience bothers her, she just brushes it off. Perhaps her action was not abandonment but a figurative escape.

And the girl did have power(s). President Castillo Armas had Marta divorced in no time and set up a house for her. He consulted her on a wide range of subjects, including government matters. Unbelievably, the main schism in Guatemala's government, one of almost civil war proportions, was between the supporters of the president's wife, Odilia Palomo, and the backers of his very visible lover. It was a known fact that the one person who held enormous power over the president was Miss Guatemala. This situation served the interests of two crucial characters from *La Fiesta del Chivo* who reappear in *Tiempos recios*, *el Chivo* himself and Johnny Abbes García, now Military Attaché in Guatemala. Caca had used Trujillo's economic help and connections to the CIA to become president, yet had failed to comply with promises he made in return. The Dominican dictator was looking for revenge. As he charged Abbes García with Caca's assassination, Trujillo told him there was no better way to reach a man than through a woman, especially if she was his lover (2019a, pp. 145, 83). By the time Abbes García arrived at his destination, "todo el mundo decía que [Castillo Armas] estaba embelesado con su querida y que era Marta la que hacía y deshacía, incluso en las altas decisiones de gobierno" (2019a, p. 143). In fact, she was in a perfect position to get him access to Castillo Armas, which is what she does.

Although Marta repeatedly declares that her love for Castillo Armas is genuine, she too considers her future at the time her lover's assassination was being organized. Marta's reflections and actions are noteworthy. She was interested in politics, which got her close to her husband, and subsequently became central to her relationship with Castillo Armas. She knew she had attained power, status and economic security, but she also knew she had to use politics and her present power to secure her future economic wellbeing. She was smart enough to realize that her easy living was dependent on Caca's generosity, and that she would be left with a meagre bank account were their relationship to come to an end (2019a, pp. 160–161). Around that time, Abbes García introduced Miss Guatemala to an American known as Mike, CIA Mike. Soon she was receiving envelopes with money in exchange for information. At one point, Abbes García warned "the man whose name was not Mike" that Miss Guatemala had figured out that he worked for the CIA. Mike was not surprised in the least. "Claro que se ha dado cuenta para quién trabajo … Y me ha pedido dinero por las informaciones que me da. Ella y yo hemos hecho un pacto" (2019a, p. 153). Marta is a rational, calculating woman who does not hesitate to look out for herself even if it implies selling information to the CIA behind her lover's back. She was to do that again later when she lived in the Dominican Republic. Miss Guatemala is never portrayed as part of the plot to murder Castillo Armas, but her thoughts about her future and her fantasizing about Abbes García lead the reader to consider her less than innocent. At the very least, she is conscious that something is brewing against her lover. When the plot to assassinate Caca was ready, Abbes García refused to leave this *pobre chica* behind when he fled the country. According to Lieutenant Colonel Enrique Trinidad Oliva, Abbes's co-conspirator, "[Marta] Es una serpiente y una bruja ahí donde la ves, con su carita de chiquilla inocente. La doña es capaz de las peores cosas, aunque no lo parezca. Si no fuera así, no habría llegado donde está" (2019a, p. 56), Martita is certainly portrayed as a woman who would stop at nothing. In Martita, there is no trace of the fear, submission and self-sacrifice displayed by most of Vargas Llosa's female characters of the 1960s and 1970s.

The degree of involvement in the assassination is not communicated to the reader, but she is an intelligent woman who knows something is about to happen. When she was alerted by CIA Mike to be ready to leave secretly and hurriedly at any moment and that

she should not under any circumstances share that information with Castillo Armas, Marta had no doubt that there was a conspiracy against him, yet she did not warn him. She calculated that he would be suspicious of her and that she would be in trouble. “Tenés que calmarte”, she told herself. “Tenés que tener la cabeza muy fría si no querés que te maten” (2019a, pp. 177–179). A woman capable of putting aside her feelings and thinking of possible consequences, Marta decides to look out for herself. The night Castillo Armas was assassinated, she had prepared a small suitcase following Mike’s instructions. Miss Guatemala left when she was told to leave to avoid being incriminated. She did not hesitate, did not warn the man whom she declared was the love of her life, did not shed a tear or say goodbye to her faithful Símula, the woman who had raised her and was by her side. Neither did Martita protest when that night she was taken to San Salvador and found Abbes García at a hotel where a single room with a single bed had been reserved for them and in a very crude manner was told he would make her his lover, “Miss Guatemala” (2019a, p. 185). She, a survivor, does not object and they indeed become lovers, move to the Dominican Republic and maintain a relationship for three years, though Abbes García gets married during this time. On the island, Marta also becomes reacquainted with Mike, and they resume their relationship. This time Martita sells CIA Mike information that she obtains from Abbes García.

Three years later, Miss Guatemala is working as a radio editorial journalist attacking communism and defending Trujillo and other dictators in Latin America, when an unexpected situation forces her to leave the island abruptly. *El Chivo’s* brother, the puppet President Héctor Trujillo, makes her an indecent proposal and is faced with an enraged woman who nearly bites his ear off. “A mí no me ofende usted ni nadie”, she berates the president. For this, she spends some days imprisoned in a cell (2019a, pp. 219–220). Abbes García resorts to Leónidas Trujillo and to CIA Mike to help her escape the island and that is the last the reader knows about Martita Borrero as a young woman. She reappears, turned into an octogenarian lady in the epilogue *Después*. In that section, Marta meets with *don Mario*. Among other things, she tells him that Castillo Armas, the man whom she had failed to warn of the plot against him prior to his assassination, was the love of her life.

Martita is not the only assertive woman: María Vilanova and Odilia Palomo. María Cristina Vilanova is Jacobo Árbenz' wife, and the woman who probably influenced her husband to seek change and social equality in Guatemala. Árbenz was proud to recognize that, thanks to her, he had understood the country where he lived: beautiful, rich in history but tarnished by social injustice. She was part of a very wealthy and influential family in El Salvador, one of the so called "fourteen families". The beautiful and intelligent girl studied in the United States, where her social concern for Central America was born. "María Vilanova habría seguido una carrera universitaria si se lo hubieran permitido, pero no la dejaron, pues, según los prejuicios de la época, una niña decente no hacía esas cosas" (2019a, p. 45). She was interested in literature, politics and arts, and she was the one who introduced her husband to intellectuals, writers and other influential people in Guatemala and Central America. When they got married, she traded a life of wealth for the relatively modest life of the wife of a military man at the beginning of his career in Guatemala. She is described as a woman who was not just decorative, but the main advisor to her husband and, as in the case of Martita and Castillo Armas, hers was frequently the prevailing advice even regarding politics. "No la intimidaban las críticas, hacía lo que le parecía bien sin importarle el qué dirán y esa personalidad era lo que más admiraba en ella su marido" (2019a, p. 47). This is an example not only of another woman who breaks the mould of what is expected of her but of the approval of this attitude by men who admire it.

Odilia Palomo de Castillo Armas is not a character who appears prominently in the novel, yet her importance is implicit. She was not a beautiful or wealthy woman but a modest teacher when she married Carlos Castillo Armas. This is not to say she was not a strong woman, though. In a country divided with regard to sympathies for the two women in their president's life, it is true that Martita exerted the greater influence over the president, but Odilia had successfully attained the support of the powerful Catholic Church and the military. Her husband had been informed of her meetings with the military chiefs, which she kept secret from him. When he berated her for it, she brought Marta into the conversation for the first time. Taken aback, the man said what the men in Vargas Llosa's novels of the 1960s and 1970s would have said, "¡No tengo que dar cuentas a nadie de mi vida privada!" only to be rebuked harshly: "A mí sí tenés que

darme cuentas, pues soy tu esposa ante Dios y ante la ley." Adding that, "El escándalo en el que vivís con esa puta te podría costar caro." As much as he tried, he was not able to make his wife give the names of the men with whom she had met, but he was sure that there had been a conspiracy (2019a, pp. 195–196). Odilia stands directly opposed to another character of Vargas Llosa's: Carmela, from *La ciudad y los perros*. This character, conceived in the 1960s, tries unsuccessfully to reject the behaviour of her philandering husband, but her economic dependency and the social conventions that powerfully marked life at the time make it impossible for her to confront him and be successful in her demands (see above, p. 50). She is not capable of raising her voice to her husband. Contrastingly, Odilia, a character who lived earlier, in the 1940s, but was conceived by the author in the new millennium, does not hesitate to do so and is supported by many. She does end the female acceptance of the *macho* perspective that Basham describes: that the natural place of the woman is the home, that the man can maintain a private life outside of it and that the wife must ignore the existence of a mistress or more (1976, p. 129). The next time Odilia appears in the narrative is when Castillo Armas is assassinated in front of his wife. One of the conspiracy theories that the author mentions is that the perpetrators were supporters of Odilia who had colluded with them.

Marta Borrero Parra is a strong woman throughout. She opens Chapter 1 as a new-born with a penetrating and disconcerting gaze while in the epilogue *Después* she warns the author not to bother sending her his book: she would not read it, but her lawyers would. She is a woman who is sure of herself. She does not ask but commands. This is a much different attitude than that of Julia forty-two years earlier. The protagonist of *La tía Julia y el escribidor* was also a strong character. Not just any woman would have challenged society and family in the 1950s to start a life with a man fourteen years her junior, as portrayed in the novel. She did that for love, yet she put up with his escapades as Patricia, the younger wife representing the new woman, points out: "pues ella [Julia] no se atrevía a decirme nada para que no pensaran que cometía un crimen de lesa cultura" (Vargas Llosa, 2006, p. 489). There is another contrast that hangs between fiction and real life: when asked if the visit he pays to Marta Borrero in the *Después* section really took place Vargas Llosa's answer is: "Eso no se lo voy a decir" (Casa de

América, 2019, pt. 4:17'–3:35'). Thus, we don't know if her threat to take legal action against the author is real or fictitious. We do know, though, that Julia in her time threatened to sue her ex-husband, as she was offended by his account of their story in *La tía Julia y el escribidor*: she would sue him, she states, but she adds: "si puedo" (Urquidi Illanes, 2010, p. 285). Adding that conditional remark takes away the force conveyed by contrast by Marta's warning. Both are strong women, both defied their societies and the limits their gender imposed on them, but only the one who lived in the later, more progressive period was strong to the end. Julia is a protagonist in a transitional time for women and, as Patricia states, she would keep quiet to keep the peace. Marta is a woman who has already attained a full, strong personality that would not take intimidation or coercion from anyone, man or woman.

Martita is a character at the pinnacle of progression among Vargas Llosa's female characters. She is completely devoid of the attitude exhibited by women portrayed in the novels of the 1960s. She is absolutely independent and self-sufficient, although in order to attain her freedom and autonomy she did utilize men. Miss Guatemala is the reverse of most of the mothers in the Nobel Laureate's literary world. She not only does not sacrifice herself for her child, but she decides to renounce motherhood completely. She seems initially to be a token circulated in a game played by men, but she does not adapt to the role of victim. After a handful of years leading a life she did not want, Miss Guatemala decides that living fully is worth the price of leaving her son behind. She takes command of a life that had so far been decided by men and becomes adept at the art of manipulating them. Motherhood ties women to the domestic realm. Martita repudiates that traditional role and the trappings of the respectable woman. She wants a life of freedom that any man can choose. It is interesting that she is portrayed as a mother at all. It is significant that the author devised Martita as a mother who did not want the burden of a child. Instead of making her a fully independent woman, he creates a woman with an anchor in patriarchal ideology, with a son, whom she consciously and explicitly chooses to abandon. Symbolically, she chooses a life reserved for men by unambiguously renouncing the most natural role reserved for women, motherhood. As soon as she frees herself from it, she enjoys power. Marta Borrero is the final arbiter of political decision-

making at the highest level. She was said to be the one who ran Guatemala, as President Castillo Armas followed her advice in every respect.

There is another important element about this character and about female representation. Despite the fact that the author had determined to write a novel in which other characters would be the central ones, specifically Abbes García, it emerges that, almost unbeknownst to him, Miss Guatemala becomes the protagonist (Casa de América, 2019, 18:47, 36:23; Sin Filtro, Guatevisión, 2019, 21:22). Martita is a character who imposes herself even upon the author. Additionally, readers' perceptions have also evolved and have developed a greater acceptance of prominent women. The critic of the second decade of the new century, and the readers of this period now readily accept a woman as the main character, which was not the case a few decades before. If *La Casa Verde* had been written and analysed in this decade, Bonifacia would be recognized as a protagonist without there being any need to make changes to the novel. As things stand now, few critics consider her of equal importance to Lituma, who is the central character, later reappears as the protagonist in other works by Vargas Llosa and has been the subject of diverse analyses. Martita's prominence as protagonist is evidence of the progression of women in Vargas Llosa's novelistic world, which is a reflection of the evolution of women's roles in society in general.

Conclusions

The two main objectives in writing this dissertation were to fill a void in the general study of Vargas Llosa's female characters and to focus on their development during the writer's career that now spans six decades. Vargas Llosa's complaisant literary women of the 1960s have become remarkably different people during the second decade of the new millennium, reaching the status of independent, complex, and often ambivalent characters. This has been a gradual process during which male hegemony began to encounter resistance, gradually making way for a different relationship between men and women. Female characters have become strong and even dominant, taking full possession of their roles. Amalia and Teresa, dating from the 1960s (*Conversación* and *La ciudad y los perros*), are young women born in the same city and social class as *niña mala* Otilia, a character from the first decade of the 2000s (*Travesuras*). Yet, the life that *niña mala* leads goes beyond anything Amalia or Teresa would have dared to dream of living. Her feats would have been inconceivable for these women. What makes the existence of Amalia and Teresa so traditional, so subservient to the social norms that hinder them and so limited in contrast to the life that Otilia forges for herself? It is not the chronological time when they lived or their socioeconomic status. Vargas Llosa created these literary women under similar circumstances: women from the 1950s and 1960s, born to uneducated parents, into working class backgrounds and in the same country, yet only one (Otilia) could escape the constraints imposed by her social background. Correlations can also be drawn between Lalita (*La Casa Verde*, 1965), whose life also transpired during the late 1950s, and Chabela (*Cinco esquinas*, 2016), a woman from the 1990s. Both have children and play the role of mothers, although motherhood impacts them differently, as will be discussed later. There are many coincidences and contrasts also between Julia (*La tía Julia y el escribidor*, 1977), who married Marito in the late 1950s, and Martita Borrero (*Tiempos recios*, 2019), who was forced into marriage in 1949. The author has created them as daring women for their times, but the resolve of the first slowly fades and is overshadowed by the steadfast strength of the latter. To a great extent then, the initial circumstances of these women are similar, yet they engage in different life experiences and achieve contrasting levels of material success.

How do we explain such different outcomes in women of broadly similar circumstances? In all these instances, what is distinctly different is not the characters' own circumstances, but the evolving situation of women as observed by the realist author at the chronological moment of each creation. The world is changing, Vargas Llosa's artistic awareness of these changes and the evolution of his own views of women are inevitably reflected in his work. In parallel, the critics and the public were equally responsive to such changes. Pilar Reyes has remarked that "Vargas Llosa is an intellectual who isn't afraid of changing his mind. …He seems to think that if reality changes, so should the way we think about it" ("History of a Conversion," 2018, para. 22), and thus, the way an author writes about it. As a result, women in his literature progress from secondary characters to dominant individuals representing the full gamut of female psychological complexity.

Niña mala constitutes a fitting example of this phenomenon of "becoming" as viewed through Deleuze's lens. As an often irrational and impulsive woman, she fits his view of becoming, going against the usual pre-eminence of reason, intelligence and structure—in other words not to conform to existing mores, but to become oneself. The emphasis is not on the mind and on intelligence but rather on feelings, on intensities as he calls them, on energies (Deleuze, 1993, p. 116; Stivale, 2011, p. 140). *Niña mala* lives her life in thrall to feelings and intensities. Starting from the position that the female and male genders are "multiplicities"—which sweep up individuals as though they were animals in packs—and disrupt specific roles assigned by cultural and political norms, Deleuze and Guattari claim that in any multiplicity there is an anomalous and exceptional individual who will go beyond the limits imposed by society, family or estate, and foster a change in the nature of that multiplicity, transforming the situation of those who constitute it (1987, pp. 243–246). *Niña mala* inhabits these borders, being a precursor who challenges all norms and exhibits traits previously reserved for male characters. Her defiance of the norms that should define her represents the idea of the anomalous, of breaking from gender regulations and becoming an independent woman. Further, Deleuze and Guattari liken love to a "war machine through which love passes", characterized by many becomings, including man becoming-woman and human becoming-animal (1987, p. 278). The interactions between *niña mala* and Ricardito defy traditional binary

understanding of sexuality. *Niña mala* is fighting to become-woman, to be free from any social restraints and in doing so she loses herself, allowing Fukuda to animalize her. *Niña mala* doubts her feelings for the man: unsure if it is love or not, she recognizes only that it is a dependency, an emotion close to an illness or a vice. This man could do with her whatever he wished (Vargas Llosa, 2008, p. 194). She loses all rationality, becoming closer to an animal driven by her sexual impulses than to a woman. Ricardito, contrastingly, exhibits traits more in line with what is traditionally associated with femininity. He seems to have undergone a process of becoming-woman, which is "key to all the other becomings"[22] (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 277). Although Ricardo seems weak and is content with his uninteresting and non-challenging life (from *niña mala's* perspective), he is actually a mature individual, capable of forgiveness and deep undemanding love, more in line with what *Marianismo* proposes for women. As Lloyd H. Davies annotates: "For Deleuze and Guattari, the globe is not divided into oppositional blocks, one of which is destined to triumph over the other, but into flows, coagulations, escapes" (2020, p. 41). This is what occurs between these two protagonists. The traditional relationship man/woman (majority/minority) has shifted in two simultaneous movements (see above, p. 112). To some extent, a reversal, or at least an adaptation of roles necessary for change to be possible, has taken place.

Later, in *Cinco esquinas*, the male/female gender division is questioned as well through Chabelita and Marisita, who assume enjoying their female bodies as they choose to and in doing so blur traditional divisions of heterosexuality and homosexuality. These two women, and ultimately the two couples, determine that their sexuality is whatever they decide to make of it. They do not leave their heterosexual partners, nor do they assume a homosexual identity. They simply live their lives discreetly, as they choose, maintaining their privacy. They also seem to respond to Kristeva who sees as an essential component of the new generation of feminists' struggle that of a "fourth equality": sexual equality—which involves abortions, contraception and permissiveness, including homosexual relations (1981, p. 21). Although Vargas Llosa previously has included same

[22] Although all becomings must pass through becoming-woman, there is no becoming-man because man is the molar entity par excellence, whereas becomings are molecular (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 292).

sex relations between his characters, either the protagonists kept them concealed (Flora and Olympia, *El Paraíso*), or they happened between women to please men (Queta and Hortensia, *Conversación*) or took place between men and were also kept secret (Don Fermín and Ambrosio, *Conversación*)[23]. *Cinco esquinas* is the first novel in which women opt to have same sex relations. Further, their actions are not only acknowledged by their partners but shared by them. It is true that they keep them secret from the larger society, but nonetheless this is a step in the direction of openness. "En materia sexual, lo que hagan o dejen de hacer entre ellos los adultos en uso de razón y decisión, es prerrogativa suya y nadie, empezando por el Estado y terminando por las iglesias, debe inmiscuirse en el asunto" (Vargas Llosa, 2012, p. 109). The four main characters of this novel, women as well as men, suggest Vargas Llosa's acknowledgement of the imminence of the "fourth equality". Martita Borrero appears in the last novel written to date by Vargas Llosa as another example of a woman who assumes her sexuality, of one who uses her body as she pleases and deems convenient. Further reader acquaintance with the female characters indicates conclusively that time has empowered women in that sense.

It is also apparent that there is an aspect in the women of Vargas Llosa's literary world that has been a constant in most of his work: a mutually exclusive relationship between maternity and success. Already in the author's early production such as *La Casa Verde*, the reader can find this negative correlation. Bonifacia, who opts for an abortion, becomes a successful woman in her chosen profession, that of prostitute, and ends up not only being the breadwinner of her household, but proud of it. Lalita, for her part, chooses to be a mother, making sure that her new love understands that she would never leave her son, foreshadowing that in her case motherhood will take precedence over everything else. Later in the narrative, she becomes dependent on another man who wants more children. Reluctantly, she becomes a mother several more times. This aligns with Beauvoir's reflection on pregnancies. Already in 1949, she believed that, thanks to advances in reproduction methods, women could reduce the number of pregnancies and "integrarlos racionalmente en su vida, en lugar de ser su esclava" (1981, p. 137). She

---

[23] There are also male same sex encounters in *El sueño del celta*, not included in this analysis.

illustrates this point through her short story *The woman destroyed* (1967) where Monique, who had chosen to live her life through her daughters and husband, is discarded after twenty-two years of marriage when her husband finds a younger, professional and better kept woman. “Women who do nothing cannot bear those who work”, was the husband’s reaction when she mentions that his mistress neglected her own daughter in order to get ahead in her practice (2013, pp. 156–157). In a sense, Vargas Llosa gives the same message. As the plot develops, Lalita becomes enslaved to motherhood. Although she loved her children, she gains weight and her beauty—to some extent the source of her power and strength—fades. In her last appearance, significantly, she is traveling to her native Iquitos to attend her older son’s wedding. She is now almost unrecognizable, as Aquilino had mentioned: “Ha engordado una barbaridad. … Tiene un montón de hijos, no me acuerdo cuántos, muchos” (1993b, p. 388). She is back to the beloved Iquitos she left in the prime of her youth and beauty, reproaching her seasick partner, the man who took care of her and her children when she needed him but who insisted on making her a mother several more times than she would have wanted: “Todo lo malogras, Pesado. . . . Vuelvo a Iquitos después de tanto y tú te enfermas” (1993b, p. 400). Her children have become the purpose of her life, and she is a far better mother than her own proved to be. Unfortunately, she lost her physical attractiveness through excessive childbearing, which lies at the root of her reproach to the man on whom she had to depend until the end.

Later, in the first decade of the 2000s, motherhood is avoided. Urania (*La Fiesta del Chivo*) decides not to have any relationship with men and opts for a law career. Although her choice was not one that she would have made purposefully, but rather a consequence of the actions of her “papá y Su Excelencia [que] me volvieron un desierto” (2000, p. 512), she has been able to dedicate herself to her work and is successful in a professional area that was at the time dominated by men. In the case of Flora (*El Paraíso*), she becomes a fighter for women’s rights, but to be able to dedicate herself to her cause, she abandons her only daughter. *Niña mala* in turn decides to fight to have the life of luxury she believes she deserves, and, in order to accomplish that, she undergoes a procedure that she later regrets, “Cuando estaba en Cuba, con ese comandante Chacón, me hice anudar las trompas porque él quería un hijo y a mí me horrorizaba la idea. … Ahora me arrepiento” (2008, p. 306). *Niña mala* is the female character in Vargas Llosa’s

oeuvre prior to the 2010s who is closest to achieving the goal of her life (in her case to be rich). Both her regret at her earlier rejection of motherhood and also Urania's longing for a different life suggest that they were not women ready to part completely with the established stereotypes by renouncing motherhood, but that they felt there was no choice, as society had not changed enough and was not ready to regard children as the shared responsibility of both parents.

The attitude towards motherhood of the women Vargas Llosa depicted in the 2010s is different. The portrayal of Chabela as a mother exemplifies women's rekindled interest in maternity in modern times, which Kristeva attributes in part to improved conditions for women, such as the rise in the number of nurseries and the increased participation of men in childcare and domestic activities (1981, pp. 30–31). Luciano's co-responsibility for their children allows Chabela to have time to herself, to travel and even to enjoy the company of her female lover. She is not portrayed as a "bad" mother, not even as any kind of mother but created as an individual who has children, as would be the case with any male character. In the instances where the daughters are mentioned, their father is always around and helping. Although motherhood is not stressed, it is very clear that in this novel the presence of children does not imply that the mother renounces her own life. Vargas Llosa believes strongly that with respect to family and home, even if mistreated, discriminated against and marginalized, women remain pivotal to the family construct: "El hombre se va, abandona a los hijos, pero ahí está la mujer, ¿no? Resistiendo. Tiene una capacidad para enfrentarse a la adversidad mayor que el hombre" (Godoy Cossio, 2021a, para. 18). This capacity for sacrifice, acceptance and suffering is relinquished by the protagonist of the last of his novels to date, Martita Borrero. She renounces motherhood, consciously and explicitly leaving her son with his father. This represents outright conventional gender reversal. Her actions conform to the self-serving and ruthless behaviour generally associated with *machismo,* as has been discussed (see above, p. 185) and recognized by the author. By making this character a mother who unequivocally chooses to desert her child in order to live a fulfilling life, Vargas Llosa highlights that for a woman of the 1950s, having children was tantamount to sacrificing her own life. This is certainly true in cases such as that of Martita, whose father does not want her to live as a single mother. Single mothers are non-virgins who lack a man to

assume the mark of ownership over them, and since a single woman "must" be a virgin, one who is not is a failure (Lagarde, 1997, pp. 1415–1416). The concept of a mother losing her identity is reinforced by the fact that Martita's mother suffered some kind of dementia as soon as she gave birth, withdrawing into her own shadowy world, again suggesting that success was reserved for childless women (or for men). Women had to make sacrifices and consciously reject patriarchal ideology, sometimes in disconcerting ways such as Martita's rejection of the traditional maternal role in her "unnatural" abandonment of her son in *Cinco esquinas*, as we have seen.

These women refuse to conform: the question is the extent to which such a remoulding of the female is positive. Are women merely infected by male modes of behaviour? Are they merely assuming the worst male traits? Are the themes of excess and possibly evil relevant here? "Evil … is about leeching life from others in order to fill an aching absence in oneself" (Eagleton, 2010, p. 71). Marx used the vampire image as a metaphor for capitalism and in the Spanish tradition the vampire is primarily associated with leeching blood, or in this case money, from the victim (rather than with transgressive sexuality). *Niña mala* best fulfils the role of *vampiresa*, a woman who uses her seductive capabilities to acquire wealth at the expense of those she seduces. As the narration develops, and considering her humble origins, she acquires different degrees of wealth, but it is even more significant that she takes the life savings of the elder Monsieur Arnaux (with no remorse, one might add) and that Ricardito spends his life savings on her medical bills. Discussing vampires, Terry Eagleton refers to the "ghastly twilight world of those who … can be stirred into life only by the taste of destruction on their tongue" (2010, p. 114). The richness of her portrayal is based on ambivalence—she is "*mala*", but because she is female and exercises a high degree of (unfemale) agency, her evil can be seen as a kind of good that aims to redress the conventional gender balance. There is something Miltonic about her—she often operates on the principle of "evil, be thou my good" (1992, bk. IV, line 110).

Martita in turn spends her life trying to climb back to a position that she should have by birth but was stripped of because of a mistake she made during her very early youth. She was sentenced to a lifelong loveless marriage, and in her resolve to regain and maintain her freedom she becomes "una serpiente y una bruja" (Vargas Llosa, 2019a, p.

56), both traditionally related to evil. She leaves her child with no remorse, becomes a femme fatale, takes someone else's husband and then betrays him (the "love of her life") by not warning him of a situation that ended in his death. Those are certainly actions that could be considered evil (contrary to established norms), but one could also see her from a different perspective, as a person trying to survive and avenge the wrongs done to her, to correct the ills of which she was a victim for being a woman who should have kept herself pure and did not. Did she have many options? "Good" and unhappy or "evil" and fulfilled are the choices which illustrate the times.

Society has resorted to the creation of concepts such as race and gender differences, innate to the body, in order to maintain the hegemony of certain groups, fabricating and instilling the idea that these minorities (*otros*) need help and direction in order to survive. "El 'otro' es una proyección de uno mismo, alguien al que vemos de determinada manera y al que de este modo constituimos como tal. . . . [Es] el hombre el que ha creado a la mujer", states Vargas Llosa, an affirmation which is reminiscent of Simone de Beauvoir's famous assertion: *No se nace mujer: se llega a serlo*, possibly her most recognized statement and a great contribution to feminism. How a minority comes to be is described in the following paragraph:

> La libertad de ciertos hombres —grupos o clases—, dotada de cierto poder, les ha permitido reducir o distorsionar la de otros, condicionándolos a determinadas funciones que estos mismos han terminado por asumir como una condición esencial. Pero esto es una mentira, no hay funciones 'esenciales': ser colonizador o colonizado, obrero o patrón, blanco o negro, hombre o mujer, son 'situaciones', hechos fraguados históricamente y por lo tanto transformables. (Vargas Llosa, 1990b, p. 234).

Simply put, power is exerted over the subordinate group kept oppressed by the dominant group, which enjoys the benefits of making and changing the rules.

Vargas Llosa's stand towards feminism may not always be appreciated at first glance. In a statement that could be taken as antifeminist, Vargas Llosa (reacting to a movement that proposes to take off the school curricula literary works written by "rabiosamente machista" authors) has declared that "el más resuelto enemigo de la literatura, que pretende descontaminarla de machismo, prejuicios múltiples e inmoralidades, es el feminismo" (2018, para. 3) and warns of the dangers of opting for a fanatical and uncompromising line, noting that the issue is not about men and women

entering into a war with each other but about correcting an ancestral injustice (2019b, paras. 3, 10), to which process his own work contributes. Whether he could be counted in this light as pro-feminist or not is another matter, but it is beyond doubt that his latest fiction has parted ways with the patriarchal society that he depicted—and seemed to appreciate—during his Boom years. Explaining Sartre's theory of compromise applied to literature, Vargas Llosa states that a writer must fight with the pen, which, when used well, is an effective weapon: "las palabras son actos" (1990b, p. 235). From this analytical perspective, Vargas Llosa is indeed fighting for equality and freedom, and whether knowingly or unwittingly, is supporting the female, perhaps the feminist cause. The secondary status of women can only persist if assisted by the members of this "minoritarian" group, and one way to correct wrongs is to rewrite them through literature. Contrasting Vargas Llosa's novels written during different time periods allows us to see clearly that, in the case of women, although they are still at a disadvantage, progress has been made and more is on the horizon.

There has been change. During the 1970s Vargas Llosa, echoing his admired Flaubert, could have claimed Julia—daring, outspoken, fighting for her dreams—as his counterpart (see above, p. 90). Kristeva reflects on literature and its potential to uncover secret universal truths imposed by social norms, and "Today [she claimed] many women imagine, 'Flaubert, c'est moi'" (1981, p. 31). She is suggesting an "imaginative turn" among women, one which can be appreciated in Vargas Llosa's female characters, who have progressed from servility and intellectual stagnation to new-found imagination and independence. *Niña mala*'s ultimate fate may be negative but at least she invents/imagines a different life after repudiating the socially prescribed formula for a girl of her indigenous background: her script is original and can serve as a precursor for other women (just as Flaubert did for Vargas Llosa in the purely literary sphere). *Retaquita* (*Cinco esquinas*) is as daring as *niña mala*, with the important distinction that she is also successful. She single-handedly avenges her beloved boss's murder, brings down the strong man of a corrupt country and the whole government with him. Meanwhile, Chabela and Marisa, co-protagonists of *Retaquita*, are triumphant characters as well. Nominally they are ordinary housewives, but their activities suggest freedom of action usually associated with men such as the husbands and fathers in *La ciudad y los*

perros (see above, p. 45). Those husbands/fathers who had no names and were identified within the novel only by the names of their wives (Carmela, Beatriz) or their sons (Alberto, Ricardo), who had to endure their behaviour towards them. They were nameless because they were universal: they could represent many men in that patriarchal world. After five decades, it is not the wife who turns a blind eye to her husband's indiscretions, but the men who accept their wives' transgressions and even join in them. The world has changed. Even the fact that Chabela and Luciano do not have a son (who might plan to emulate his father if he were a don Juan) but rather two girls who are being raised by both parents, is a new direction in Vargas Llosa's literature. One may wonder how the future of these girls would be written. How would they imagine their lives would be as adults? Most likely they would not accept a philandering husband.

Finally, Martita, Vargas Llosa's latest female character to date, is certainly not one he would have devised during his early years as a writer. Keys to her personality can be found in the epilogue, where she meets don Mario. In his opinion, her home—"la más original y excéntrica que he visto en mi vida"—mirrors her temperament and the tone of the conversation she has with him—"anárquica, original, confusa, sorprendente"—could describe her life (2019a, pp. 335, 337). In this section, Vargas Llosa also brings up her gaze that, already in her infancy, foreshadowed a woman capable of challenging the prevailing gender parameters (see above, p. 182), and Martita herself reminds the reader—and the author—that she "[tiene] poderes" (2019a, pp. 337–338). She is a suitable character to illustrate how women have evolved in Vargas Llosa's literature. Martita lives her life on her own terms, rebelling against her father and also against her author. She escapes the existence her father had imposed on her through her effective manipulation of men, and she also manipulates the author on the metatextual level as she becomes the unplanned protagonist of a novel originally conceived as focusing on Johnny Abbes García. Furthermore, in the end she has the last word, warning don Mario: "No se moleste en mandarme su libro cuando salga, don Mario. En ningún caso lo leeré. Pero, se lo advierto, lo leerán mis abogados" (2020, p. 348). This woman is self-confident, assertive and, as a younger Marito once said about his ex-wife Patricia (see above, pg. 97), very capable of being as good as her word. In this respect, she represents a stage beyond all other women in Vargas Llosa's novels, accustomed as she is to impose her

will. She has become a fully rounded character and represents what a woman of the 2010s can be, if she so chooses.

As Vargas Llosa declared in his Nobel prize acceptance speech, learning to write has been the most significant event that ever happened to him (see above, p. 4). His own life has been at the root of much of his literature, and he acknowledges that every writer, with no possible exception depends on personal experience: “Todos, realistas o fantásticos, ensayistas o dramaturgos, poetas o novelistas, construyen sus ficciones con la única materia prima de que disponen: su experiencia” (1986c, p. 68). In the case of his own oeuvre, it is not only clearly seen throughout the pages of his novels but acknowledged by the author. He admits that, as a child he must have been a bit like each of the cadets, Alberto, Jaguar, Cava and Esclavo who are the protagonists of his first novel. He also had to have experienced being a cadet in the military school that became the setting for the story and to have lived in the neighbourhoods of Miraflores and La Perla, where much of the narrative takes place (1999, p. Prologue). Vargas Llosa’s first trip to Piura as a nine-year-old and his curiosity about a mysterious place which they called *la casa verde*, forbidden to him and his friends, gave rise to his second novel. His first experiences in a newspaper and at the San Marcos university combined with his forthright aversion to dictatorships also informed *Conversación*. Vargas Llosa incorporated a young version of himself as the *Marito* of *La tía Julia y el escribidor*, where one finds also his first and second wives. Later, he penned some novels based on history and others based on experiences that the author lived, read about or heard. Beginning in 2000, women form the majority among his protagonists, and his experiences influenced their genesis. *La Fiesta del Chivo* and *Cinco esquinas* developed from his outspoken loathing of dictatorships and authoritarianism, from his contempt for the subjugation and coercion of individual freedom by corrupt governments —especially the freedom of expression. In *Travesuras* the author recognizes as autobiographical the movement of the protagonist through cities where he lived as a young writer, particularly Paris, London and Madrid. Ricardo is eternally in love with *niña mala*, and they live a modern love story that goes on for forty years. There are certain indications that there may be more autobiographical inspiration for this novel than the author acknowledges. The author states in an interview that the story “es en gran parte inventada y fantaseada,

pero a partir de ciertos modelos vivos" (Blanco, 2006b, pp. 421–422). There is also the dedication of the book "*A X, en memoria de los tiempos heroicos"*; an *X* who remains anonymous: "El X es un X. Eso vamos a dejarlo a los biógrafos Si (sic) es que los tengo, a ver si lo descubren", and while Junieles speculates about possible identities—Cortázar, Julia Urquidi, García Márquez—(2006, paras. 46–49), the answer to that mystery continues to be of interest to readers and also critics (Ayala, 2017, p. 168; Godoy Cossio, 2021b; Junieles, 2006; Lázaro, 2021). When the question was posed to him directly, he responded: "Mira, está inspirado principalmente en una mujer, pero no te voy a decir quién era, porque sería una imprudencia de mi parte" (Godoy Cossio, 2021b, para. 22). When asked if the woman who "inspired" the character had protested, his response was: "No hubo protestas. 'Solo este comentario despectivo: Esa niña mala era una tontita. Esas cosas no se hacen para recibir en premio una casita en el pueblucho de Sete, sino un penthouse en la avenida Foch de París'" (Lázaro, 2021, paras. 10–11). Everything seems to indicate that the woman did exist.

Ricardo, *poeta*, is also the name of another cadet in *La ciudad y los perros*. He is not mentioned by Vargas Llosa as being among those a little like himself while growing up, although he is the one most clearly identifiable. He fits the description Lázaro makes of the methods of a novelist to create fictional characters, where "en muchas ocasiones … [el] modelo original se transparenta con claridad" (2021, para. 10). The reader meets this Ricardo when he arrives in Lima around the same time as Vargas Llosa did. Both leave behind the family they loved to live with an abusive father whom both had always believed dead. This alter ego of the author is also the namesake of the protagonist of *Travesuras*, who would do anything, risk everything, for the love of his life, to achieve happiness with her: "el por qué escribe un novelista está visceralmente mezclado con el sobre qué escribe: los 'demonios' de su vida son los 'temas' de su obra" (Vargas Llosa, 1971, p. 87). He states that, in his case "la imaginación, la fantasía, trabaja mucho más sobre recuerdos y sobre imágenes de la memoria que sobre puras invenciones. [Su] punto de partida para desarrollar una fantasía siempre son los recuerdos personales" (Godoy Cossio, 2021b, para. 12). This tale may be more closely related to the author's life than may appear at first sight. It would also be the last of his novels to include autobiographical information.

Vargas Llosa acknowledges that: “Cuando revisas tu vida encuentras muchas cosas que hubieras preferido no hacer, o que hubieras preferido hacer de otra manera” (Blanco, 2006b, p. 430). His life seems to have followed the blurb of the next TV series based on one of his novels, *Travesuras de la niña mala.* Production has just begun in 2022[24], and it is being advertised as a television series which “nos invita a desafiar nuestra vida en piloto automático, transformarnos y hacernos cargo de lo que queremos ser, y buscar la felicidad sintiéndonos inmortales porque qué es la vida sin esos momentos en los que olvidamos que todo tiene un final” (Simó, 2022, para. 2). Vargas Llosa’s life is testament to this. His story has taken a few drastic turns, including those late in life, when the ageing writer abandons Patricia for the glamorous Isabel Preysler and begins a very public relationship that ends just as publicly after eight years. Fully aware that his life was drawing to a close, Vargas Llosa opted for a fresh and unpredictable relationship rather than commit to the reassuring (and less thrilling) familiarity that his final years with his wife of fifty years would likely have provided. His conduct suggests another demon: just as he abandoned literature for a new adventure—running for the presidency in 1990—so he is drawn, twenty-five years later, to the promise of romantic novelty, perhaps in rebellion against the uneventful and anticlimactic ending otherwise awaiting him. Vargas Llosa believes that fiction is a tool that brings reality closer to what one desires: it allows the possibility of escaping, even if temporarily, what cannot be changed in life. He has gone further, and indeed reshaped his reality. The path he has chosen when confronted with a crossroads has not always been the easiest, but the one that took him furthest in his pursuit of a fulfilled life. He refreshed his own epilogue by removing all suggestion of stereotype and convention. He chose to ignore constricting social conventions in marrying Julia during his early years, and he does so again during his later years not once but twice, first abandoning his life-long companion and then ending the new relationship that he recognized as a mistake. A hint of his dissatisfaction is found in his latest short story, “Los vientos” (2021), where the main character, a man in his old age, regrets having left his lifelong companion,

[24] The adaptation of *Travesuras* will be produced by ViX Plus, TelevisaUnivision's new premium SVOD service in Spanish. In May, TelevisaUnivision agreed to acquire Spanish-language broadcast platform Pantaya to further increase ViX Plus' programming offering (Simó, 2022).

Carmencita (Patricia's first name). "Creo que solo una cosa hice mal en la vida: abandonar a Carmencita por una mujer que no valía la pena" (Vargas Llosa, 2021, pg. 10). His life has all the ingredients of a great novel still to be written, where the protagonist is always surrounded by women who take centre stage with him—his mother, grandmother, aunts, cousins and the different partners with whom he has shared his life over the years.

Far from being a misogynist, Vargas Llosa has used his weapon, his pen, to fight injustice (literally, since he still prefers a pen to a computer). He has repeatedly repudiated the unfair treatment of women and continues to advocate equality which he does not understand as favouring one gender over the other, but as treating all equally and rewarding the best, whether woman or man. As a writer and as a man, he fights for his personal happiness and for his convictions. His literature, as well as his life, have been marked by women. As stated throughout this analysis, Vargas Llosa's depiction of the world is based on his observation of reality. There is, to be sure, a radical adjustment to the balance of power that informed relations between his early male and female characters, reflecting the trend in the "real" world. The evolution of his work, particularly in this respect, demonstrates that he has not gravitated towards a reactionary conservative position as some hostile commentators have claimed[25] but rather that his irrepressible *joie de vivre* is founded on those humane, liberal and progressive values that underpin the works we have explored here.

[25] Sabine Köllmann refers to the popular dictum "Love his fiction, hate his politics" and notes the view expressed by the official Cuban newspaper, *Granm*a: "Vargas Llosa sigue siendo un canalla que escribe bien". She goes on to quote the less predictably negative view of the Spanish writer, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán for whom Vargas Llosa is a "prophet of neoliberalism and North American capitalism who cannot differentiate between victims and persecutors" (2010, pp. 173–174).

Glossary

- *alcahuete, ta*: person who arranges, covers up or facilitates a love relationship, generally illicit.eauv
- *catchascán* (*cachascán*): (Peru) a variety of wrestling.
- *cholo*: (Peru) demeaning term for a mixed-race person of European and indigenous blood. Said of an indigenous person who adopts Western customs.
- *clasemediera, ro*: a member of the middle class.
- *dejar tirando cintura*: (idiom) to leave someone wanting.
- *fujishock*: the neoliberal economic plan implemented during the government of Alberto Fujimori. It involved an absolute restructuring of prices, recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- *huachafería*: (Peru) twee.
- *huachafo, fa*: (Peru) demeaning expression. When used to refer to people, it suggests someone who is unsuccessfully trying to appear classy.
- *invencionero, ra*: one who pretends or comes up with a plan based more on whim than on practicality
- *leonciopradinos*: cadets of the Leoncio Prado Military Academy
- *mariconazo*: a shy, fainthearted or timid man.
- *Miraflorino, na*: (Peru) Someone who lives in or belongs to Miraflores, an upper-class neighbourhood in Lima. In this context, *Miraflorino* can be taken as bourgeois.
- *ochenio*: a period of eight years.
- *ollas communes*: similar to soup kitchens. Self-managed popular neighbourhood organizations providing food for the destitute.
- *perro*: 3rd year cadet at the Leoncio Prado Military Academy.
- *pichiruchi*: insignificant person.
- *Plata*: money.
- *pueblos jóvenes*: (Peru) human settlements and slums formed irregularly and illegally on the outskirts of Lima. These are areas of low-quality houses, poor construction and little or no public services.

- *recogida*: pejorative term for someone who is a perpetual user of charitable organizations or is taken in to live on the charity of others.
- *Retaquita*: Shorty.
- *rollo*: fat fold on the body.
- *Sendero Luminoso*: Shining Path. A terrorist group led by Abimael Guzmán that devastated Peru the decade of the nineteen eighties.
- *soles*: Peruvian currency.
- *tirarse*: (colloquial) to possess someone sexually.
- *vladivideo*: name given to a collection of Peruvian videos made by Vladimiro Montesinos in the National Intelligence Service of Peru. These videos show Montesinos bribing important businessmen, media directors, politicians and other well-known personalities to support Fujimorism.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Vargas Llosa: fiction

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1972). *Los jefes y otros cuentos*. 3rd ed. Barcelona, Barral Editores.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1981). *La guerra del fin del mundo*. Barcelona, Plaza y Janes.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1983). *Kathie y el hipopótamo: comedia en dos actos*. 2nd ed. Barcelona, Seix Barral.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1984). *Historia de Mayta*. Bogotá, Seix Barral.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1986a). *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* Barcelona, Seix Barral.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1988). *Elogio de la madrastra*. Buenos Aires, Emecé.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1989). *La señorita de Tacna: pieza en dos actos*. 9th ed. Barcelona, Seix Barral.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1990a). *La Chunga*. Barcelona, Seix Barral.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1993a). *Lituma en los Andes*. Barcelona, Planeta.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1993b). *La Casa Verde*. 6th ed. Barcelona, Seix Barral.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1999). *La ciudad y los perros*. 2nd ed. Mexico City, Alfaguara.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2000). *La Fiesta del Chivo*. Madrid, Alfaguara.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2001a). "Día domingo." *Los jefes y Los cachorros*. Madrid, Alfaguara, pp. 68–91.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2001b). *Conversación en La Catedral*. 2nd ed. Madrid, Suma de Letras.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2003a). *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*. Bogotá, Alfaguara.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2006). *La tía Julia y el escribidor*. 3rd ed. Madrid, Punto de Lectura.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2008). *Travesuras de la niña mala*. 7th ed. Madrid, Punto de Lectura.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2010a). *Los cuadernos de don Rigoberto*. 5th ed. Madrid, Alfaguara.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2010b). *Fonchito y la luna*. México, Alfaguara.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2010c). *El sueño del celta*. 2nd ed. Madrid, Alfaguara.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2010d). *El hablador*. Madrid, Punto de lectura.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2013a). *El héroe discreto*. Madrid, Alfaguara.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2013b). *Pantaleón y las visitadoras*. 7th ed. Madrid, Santillana.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2016). *Cinco esquinas*. Lima, Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2019a). *Tiempos recios*. Miami, Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2021). "Mario Vargas Llosa: Los vientos." *Letras Libres*. 1 October. Available at: https://letraslibres.com/ficcion/los-vientos/ [accessed 1 December 2022].

Vargas Llosa: films and TV Series

Amiel, Jon. (Director). (1990). *Tune in Tomorrow...* [Film]. Odyssey, Polar Entertainment Corporation.

Bazzano, Alejandro. (Director). (2022 [In production]). *Travesuras de la niña mala*. [TV series]. W Studios, David Azcano, ViX+.

Contreras, Madeleine. (General Producer). (2014). *El Chivo*. [TV series]. RTI Televisión, Televisa S.A. de C.V.

Fons, Jorge. (Director). (1973). *Los cachorros*. [Film]. Cinematográfica Marco Polo S.A.

Gutiérrez Santos, José María and Vargas Llosa, Mario. (Directors). (1975). *Pantaleón y las visitadoras*. [Film]. Cinema Dominicana.

Llosa, Luis. (Director). (2005). *La Fiesta del Chivo*. [Film]. DRAX audio, Future Film Group, Future Films.

Lombardi, Francisco. (Director). (1999). *Pantaleón y las visitadoras*. [Film]. América Producciones, Inca Films S.A., Tornasol Films.

Lombardi, Francisco J. (Director). (1985). *La ciudad y los perros*. [Film]. Inca Films S.A.

Peñaloza, Manuel. (General Producer). (2017). *Cuando vivas conmigo*. [TV series]. Caracol Televisión.

Stivel, David. (Director). (1981). *La tía julia y el escribidor*. [TV series]. Producciones Panamericana (Pantel), RTI Producciones.

Vargas Llosa: non-fiction

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1969). "Novela primitiva y novela de creación en América Latina." *Revista de la Universidad de México*. June. Available at: https://www.revistadelauniversidad.mx/articles/024c4c71-f82e-4b6c-bea6-348223fb9a3c/novela-primitiva-y-novela-de-creacion-en-america-latina [accessed 21 June 2022].

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1971). *García Márquez, Historia de un deicidio*. Barcelona, Barral Editores.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1978). *José María Arguedas, entre sapos y halcones*. Madrid, Ediciones Cultura Hispánica del Centro Iberoamericano de Cooperación.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1986b). "La literatura es fuego." *Contra viento y marea (1962-1972)*. Vol. 1. Barcelona, Seix Barral, pp. 176–181.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1986c). *Contra viento y marea (1962-1972)*. Vol. 1. Barcelona, Seix Barral.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1990b). *Contra viento y marea (1972-1983)*. Vol. 2. Barcelona, Seix Barral.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1991). *A Writer's Reality*. Edited by M. I. Lichtblau. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co. Available at: http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/25130736.html [accessed 18 June 2020].

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1993c). *El pez en el agua: Memorias*. Colombia, Seix Barral.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1995). *La orgía perpetua: Flaubert y "Madame Bovary."* 2nd ed. Barcelona, Seix Barral.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (1997). "The Truth of Lies." In J. King (Ed. & tran.). *Making Waves*. New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, pp. 320–330.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2001c). *Los jefes y Los cachorros*. Madrid, Alfaguara.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2001d). "Regreso a San Marcos." *El País*. Madrid, 28 April. Available at:

https://elpais.com/diario/2001/04/29/opinion/988495207_850215.html [accessed 25 May 2021].

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2001e). *Historia secreta de una novela*. Barcelona, Fabula/Tusquets.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2003b). "Prólogo: Flora Tristán y Paul Gauguin." *Peregrinaciones de una paria*. Lima, Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristán, UNMSM, Fondo Editorial, pp. 13–33.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2007a). *La verdad de las mentiras*. Madrid, Punto de lectura.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2007b). "*Cien años de soledad.* Realidad total, novela total." *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*. No. 681, pp. 9–12.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2010e). "Discurso Nobel, Elogio de la lectura y la ficción." presented at the Nobel Prize Award Ceremony 2010, Stockholm, 7 December. Available at: https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2010/vargas_llosa/25185-mario-vargas-llosa-discurso-nobel/ [accessed 8 February 2020].

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2012). *La civilización del espectáculo*. México, D.F., Alfaguara.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2018). "Literatura: Nuevas inquisiciones." *El País*. Madrid, 19 March, p. Opinión.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2019b). "Nuevas inquisiciones (II)." *El País*. Madrid, 15 June. Available at: https://elpais.com/elpais/2019/06/13/opinion/1560443841_951481.html [accessed 29 June 2022].

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2020). *La realidad de un escritor*. Madrid, Triacastela.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. (2022). *La mirada quieta (de Pérez Galdós)*. Barcelona, Alfaguara.

Vargas Llosa, Mario and Gallo, Rubén. (2017). *Conversación en Princeton*. Barcelona, Alfaguara.

Vargas Llosa: interviews

Blanco, María Luisa. (2006a). "Entrevista: Mario Vargas Llosa, un escritor de dos mundos." *El País*. Madrid, 20 May. Available at:

https://elpais.com/diario/2006/05/20/babelia/1148081950_850215.html [accessed 18 August 2019].

Blanco, María Luisa. (2006b). “Entrevista a Mario Vargas Llosa: ‘He tratado de hacer una exploración del amor desligado de toda la mitología romántica que lo acompaña siempre’.” *Travesuras de la niña mala*. 7th ed. Madrid, Punto de Lectura, pp. 421–430.

Liber Letras. (2020). *Mario Vargas Llosa - Tiempos Recios*. [Video] YouTube, podbean.com. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbt_kNjjwmk [accessed 20 February 2021].

Moran, Dominic. (2006). “Interview with Mario Vargas Llosa.” *Hispanic Research Journal*. Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 259–273.

No culpes a la noche. (2014). *Milagros Leiva entrevista a Mario Vargas Llosa*. [Video] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZFV63DPeYY [accessed 5 July 2020].

Preysler, Isabel. (1985). “Entrevista aparecida en la revista ‘*Hola’* en 1985 (Fragmentos).” *Entrevistas del archivo del Dr. Max Silva Tuesta*. Available at: http://www.oocities.org/paris/2102/vista00.html [accessed 2 June 2020].

Razón de Estado TV. (2019). *Dionisio Gutiérrez y Mario Vargas Llosa: Tiempos recios, ¿novela o historia?* [Video] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJSiBxbAbrc [accessed 27 February 2022].

RTV Especiales. (2019). *“Tiempos Recios”: Entrevista a Mario Vargas Llosa*. [Video] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKuUNzYrFE4 [accessed 20 February 2021].

Sin Filtro, Guatevisión. (2019). *Entrevista con el escritor peruano Mario Vargas Llosa, sobre su nueva novela “Tiempos recios.”* [Video] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-8J0lIZX0E [accessed 13 May 2021].

Univisión Noticias. (2014a). *Jorge Ramos entrevista con Mario Vargas Llosa sobre Perú*. [Video] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8m_C1fiz3g [accessed 1 July 2020].

Univisión Noticias. (2014b). *Horrorizado por violencia y crueldad del dictador Trujillo, escribió "La Fiesta del Chivo."* [Video] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m09DXO9fcMM [accessed 1 July 2020].

Other fiction

Allende, Isabel. (1995). *La casa de los espíritus*. New York, NY, HarperLibros.

Asturias, Miguel Ángel. (2020). *El señor Presidente*. Edición conmemorativa. Madrid, Real Academia Española.

Carpentier, Alejo. (2006). *El recurso del método*. México, D.F., Lectorum.

Castellanos, Rosario. (1977). *Oficio de tinieblas*. 5a ed. México, D.F, J. Mortiz.

Cortázar, Julio. (1978). *Rayuela*. 4. ed. Barcelona, EDHASA.

Donoso, José. (1990). *El lugar sin límites; El obsceno pájaro de la noche*. Caracas, Venezuela, Biblioteca Ayacucho.

Donoso, José. (1997). *La misteriosa desaparición de la marquesita de Loria*. Santiago de Chile, Alfaguara.

Fuentes, Carlos. (1974). *Cambio de piel*. 1. ed. en Biblioteca Breve. Barcelona, Seix Barral.

Fuentes, Carlos. (1978). *La cabeza de la hidra*. Barcelona, Librería Editorial Argos.

Fuentes, Carlos. (2019). *La región más transparente*. Tercera reimpresión en Debolsillo. Ciudad de México, Debolsillo.

García Márquez, Gabriel. (1967). *Cien años de soledad*. Buenos Aires, Editorial Sudamericana.

García Márquez, Gabriel. (1982a). *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*. 7.ed. Barcelona, Bruguera.

García Márquez, Gabriel. (1982b). *El otoño del patriarca*. 3. ed. Madrid, Ed. Alfaguara.

García Márquez, Gabriel. (2004). *Memoria de mis putas tristes*. Barcelona, Mondadori.

García Márquez, Gabriel. (2010). *Los funerales de la Mamá Grande*. Primera edición Vintage Español. Nueva York, Vintage Español.

Garro, Elena. (1982). *Reencuentro de personajes*. México, D.F, Editorial Grijalbo.

Garro, Elena. (2011). *Los recuerdos del porvenir*. Madrid, España, 451 Editores.

Milton, John. (1992). *Paradise Lost*. Available at: https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/26 [accessed 27 August 2022].

Peri Rossi, Cristina. (1989). *El libro de mis primos*. Barcelona, Grijalbo.

Roa Bastos, Augusto. (1983). *Yo el Supremo*. Madrid, Cátedra.

Rowling, J. K. and GrandPré, Mary. (1998). *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. 1st American ed. New York, A.A. Levine Books.

Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino. (1990). *Facundo: civilización y barbarie*. Madrid, Cátedra.

Tristán, Flora. (2003). *Peregrinaciones de una paria*. Lima, Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristán, UNMSM, Fondo Editorial. Available at: https://books.google.com/books?id=QMWhGXz08O0C.

Secondary sources

Abusada, Roberto. (2019). "¿El fin del milagro peruano?" *El Comercio Perú*. 25 July. Available at: https://elcomercio.pe/opinion/columnistas/crecimiento-economico-milagro-peruano-roberto-abusada-noticia-ecpm-658717-noticia/ [accessed 8 September 2021].

Adorno, Rolena. (1992). "Los debates sobre la naturaleza del indio en el siglo XVI: textos y contextos." *Revista de estudios hispánicos*. No. 19, pp. 47–66.

Agosti, Héctor. (1969). "Las mujeres de Vargas Llosa." *La milicia literaria*. Buenos Aires, Sílaba, pp. 179–182.

Aguilar, Yanet. (2012). "¿Cuál es la novela del 'boom' latinoamericano?" *El Tiempo Casa Editorial*. Colombia, 26 December. Available at: https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-12477345 [accessed 12 September 2020].

Aguirre, Carlos. (2017). *La ciudad y los perros: biografía de una novela*. Sevilla, Editorial Renacimiento.

Ahmed, Tajuddin. (2010). "In 'prison-house of love': The *Bad Girl* and bad girls of Mario Vargas Llosa." *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*. Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 309–318.

Ainsa, Fernando. (1991). “La reescritura de la historia en la nueva narrativa latinoamericana.” *Cuadernos Americanos*. No. 28, pp. 13–31.

Alcoff, Linda Martín. (2006). *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*. New York, Oxford University Press.

Algún día en alguna parte. (2016). *Imprescindibles - La cláusula Balcells*. [Video] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBPK8SiQk4c [accessed 30 July 2020].

Álvarez Rubio, Ariel. (2015). “La toma de rehenes como acto terrorista international: Análisis de la operación de rescate ‘Chavín de Huantar’.” *Revista de Relaciones Internacionales, Estrategia y Seguridad*. Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 43–68.

Andina. (2017). “10 datos del primer ‘vladivideo’ que hizo caer al régimen de Fujimori.” *Andina, Agencia Peruana de Noticias*. Available at: https://andina.pe/agencia/noticia-10-datos-del-primer-vladivideo-hizo-caer-al-regimen-fujimori-683014.aspx [accessed 12 January 2021].

Andina. (2021). “Universidades peruanas organizan Congreso ‘Mujeres STEM que inspiran’.” *Andina agencia de noticias*. Available at: https://andina.pe/agencia/noticia-universidades-peruanas-organizan-congreso-mujeres-stem-inspiran-859389.aspx [accessed 11 September 2021].

Armas Marcelo, J. J. (2019). “*Tiempos recios*.” *El Cultural*. 2 October. Available at: https://elcultural.com/tiempos-recios [accessed 19 February 2021].

Ayala, José Luis. (2017). *Los abismos de Mario Vargas Llosa*. Lima, Fondo Editorial Cultura Peruana.

Ayén, Xavi. (2019). *Aquellos años del boom: García Márquez, Vargas Llosa y el grupo de amigos que lo cambiaron todo*. Spain, Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial.

Aznárez, Juan Jesús. (2001). “Los vídeos de Montesinos.” *El País*. Madrid, 30 June. Available at: https://elpais.com/diario/2001/07/01/internacional/993938410_850215.html [accessed 11 January 2021].

Balsam, Rosemary H. (2018). “‘Castration Anxiety’ Revisited: Especially ‘Female Castration Anxiety’.” *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*. Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 11–22.

Barral, Carlos. (2001). *Memorias*. Barcelona, Ediciones Península.

Barrig, Maruja. (1979). *Cinturón de castidad: la mujer de clase media en el Perú*. Lima, Mosca Azul.

Barrig, Maruja. (2001). *El mundo al revés: imágenes de la mujer indígena*. Buenos Aires, CLACSO-Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales: Asdi.

Basadre, Jorge. (1946). "Flora y sus peregrinaciones." In E. Romero (Tran.). *Peregrinaciones de una paria*. Lima, Editorial Cultura Antártica, p. V–XXIII.

Basham, Richard. (1976). "Machismo." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 126–143.

Beauvoir, Simone de. (1956). *The Second Sex*. Translated by H. M. Parshley. London, Jonathan Cape, Thirty Bedford Square London.

Beauvoir, Simone de. (1981). *El segundo sexo*. Translated by J. García Puente. Vol. III. Madrid, Aguilar.

Beauvoir, Simone de. (2013). "The woman destroyed." *The Woman Destroyed*. New York, Pantheon Books, pp. 122–254.

Belsey, Catherine. (1994). *Desire: Love Stories in Western Culture*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Birmingham Feminist History Group. (2005). "Feminism as Femininity in the Nineteen-Fifties?" *Feminist Review*. No. 80, pp. 6–23.

Boland, Roy C. (2003). *Una rara comedia: Visión y revisión de las novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa.* 3rd ed. New Mexico, Research University Press.

Boland, Roy C. (2012). "The erotic novels: In Praise of the Stepmother and The Notebooks of Don Rigoberto." In E. Kristal and J. King (Eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Boland, Roy Charles. (1990). *Mario Vargas Llosa: Oedipus and the "Papa" State*. 3rd ed. Madrid, Editorial Voz.

Boldori de Baldussi, Rosa. (1974). *Vargas Llosa: un narrador y sus demonios*. Buenos Aires, Fernando García Cambeiro.

Borges, Jorge Luis. (1956). *Ficciones*. Buenos Aires, Emecé Editores.

Braidotti, Rosi. (2003). "Becoming Woman: Or Sexual Difference Revisited." *Theory, Culture & Society*. Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 43–64.

Budgeon, Shelley. (2011). Third Wave Feminism and the Politics of Gender in Late Modernity. England, Palgrave Macmillan.

Cáceres Sztorc, Ágata Cristina. (2017). *Entre el autoritarismo y la democracia: feminismo, relaciones de género y violencia en la cultura peruana contemporánea (cine, televisión y creación literaria).* Bern, Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers.

Cañas, Gabriela. (1995a). "Fujimori, único presidente entre mujeres." *El País*. Madrid, 11 September. Available at: https://elpais.com/diario/1995/09/12/sociedad/810856806_850215.html [accessed 19 July 2021].

Cañas, Gabriela. (1995b). "Acuerdo en Pekín en los puntos más conflictivos sobre anticonceptivos, aborto y violaciones." *El País*. Madrid, 11 September. Available at: https://elpais.com/diario/1995/09/12/sociedad/810856805_850215.html [accessed 19 July 2021].

Casa de América. (2016). *Cinco esquinas, de Mario Vargas Llosa*. [Video] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_MLkbDD-8M [accessed 5 July 2020].

Casa de América. (2019). *"Tiempos recios", de Vargas Llosa*. [Video] YouTube, Madrid, Casa de América. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpIotJtJLY8 [accessed 23 February 2020].

Castellanos Llanos, Gabriela. (2008). "Releyendo el segundo sexo." *La manzana de la discordia*. Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 27–39.

Castro, Juan de and Birns, Nicholas (Eds.). (2010). *Vargas Llosa and Latin American Politics*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Castro-Klarén, Sara. (1990). *Understanding Mario Vargas Llosa*. Columbia, SC, University of South Carolina Press.

Coaguila, Jorge (Ed.). (2016). *Mario Vargas Llosa. 80 años. Entrevistas escogidas*. 4th ed. Lima, Revuelta Editores.

Coaguila, Jorge. (2017). *Vargas Llosa, la mentira verdadera*. Lima, Perú, Revuelta Editores.

¿Cómo llegó Keiko Fujimori a ser Primera Dama de la Nación? (2015). [Video] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sLT0Vr0XEw [accessed 27 September 2021].

"Concertando a Fujimori" (2001). *Caretas*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20190423134543/http://www2.caretas.pe/2001/1666/articulos/vivas.phtml [accessed 28 August 2021].

Contreras, Carlos and Cueto, Marcos. (2015). *Historia del Perú contemporáneo: desde las luchas por la independencia hasta el presente*. 5th ed. Lima, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos IEP.

Cordero, Jaime. (2014). "El poder de la 'presidenta Nadine' crece en Perú más que nunca." *El País*. Madrid, 1 March. Available at: https://elpais.com/internacional/2014/03/01/actualidad/1393690817_340928.html [accessed 29 September 2021].

Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams. (2006). "Mapping the margins." *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. No. 2–3. Available at: https://doi.org/10.7146/kkf.v0i2-3.28090.

Cruz, Mónica. (2016). "Una editorial española retirará una faja que describe a Elena Garro como la mujer y amante de otros autores." *El País*. Madrid, 2 December. Available at: https://verne.elpais.com/verne/2016/12/01/mexico/1480613330_384408.html [accessed 4 August 2020].

Cruz Ruiz, Juan. (2017). *Encuentros con Mario Vargas Llosa*. Madrid, Ediciones Deliberar.

Cullather, Nick and Gleijeses, Piero. (1999). *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954*. California, Stanford University Press.

Curiel Rivera, Adrián. (2006). *Novela española y boom hispanoamericano: hacia la construcción de una deontología crítica*. Mérida, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

Davies, Lloyd H. (2020). *Madness and Irrationality in Spanish and Latin American Literature and Culture*. Cardiff, University of Wales Press.

Davies, Lloyd Hughes. (2007). “Imperfect Portraits of a Postcolonial Heroine: Laura Restrepo’s ‘*La novia oscura’*.” *The Modern Language Review*. Vol. 102, No. 4, pp. 1035–1052.

Deleuze, Gilles. (1993). *The Deleuze Reader*. Edited by C. V. Boundas. New York, Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

“Día Internacional por la Educación: solo un 62% de mujeres en zonas rurales culminan la educación superior” (2021). *El Comercio Perú*. 24 January. Available at: https://elcomercio.pe/respuestas/que/educacion-peru-dia-internacional-por-la-educacion-solo-un-62-de-mujeres-en-zonas-rurales-culminan-la-educacion-superior-noticia/ [accessed 11 September 2021].

Diederich, Bernard. (1978). *Trujillo: The Death of the Goat*. Boston, Little, Brown.

Diez Balda, M. Antonia. (2002). “El movimiento feminista en Salamanca después de la muerte de Franco.” *Revista de Estudios de la Diputación de Salamanca*. No. 48, pp. 243–285.

Dimo, Edith. (2002). “Los géneros sexuales en la obra de José Donoso.” In A. L. Sierra (Ed.). *Me gustas cuando callas: los escritores del “Boom” y el género sexual*. San Juan, Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, pp. 53–64.

Donoso, José and Serrano, María Pilar. (1983). *Historia personal del “boom.”* Nueva ed. Barcelona, Seix Barral.

Drain, Catherine M. (1996). *Soap Talk: The Appeal of Soap Opera to Contemporary Female Audiences*. Presidential Scholars Theses (1990 – 2006). Iowa, University of Northern Iowa.

Driscoll, Catherine. (2018). “The Woman in Process: Deleuze, Kristeva and Feminism.” *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 64–85.

Eagleton, Terry. (2010). *On Evil*. New Haven, Yale University Press.

Edel, Leon. (1973). *Literary Biography*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

EFE. (2006). “El secreto de Alan García.” *El País*. Madrid, 24 October. Available at: https://elpais.com/diario/2006/10/25/internacional/1161727216_850215.html [accessed 27 September 2021].

EFE. (2019). “Vargas Llosa: ‘Las historias que se pueden contar son infinitas’.” *eldiario.es*. 5 October. Available at: https://www.eldiario.es/cultura/Vargas-Llosa-historias-pueden-infinitas_0_897661222.html [accessed 16 February 2020].

“El caso Padilla” (1971). *Libre, Revista crítica trimestral del mundo de habla hispana*. Vol. set. oct. nov., No. 1, pp. 95–145.

El Crítico Noticias. (2013). *Cuando Alejandro Toledo negó a su hija Zaraí ante todo el mundo - Bayly*. [Video] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHWXA0IWuSk [accessed 24 September 2021].

“Entrevista exclusiva a Salvador del Solar realizador de ‘Magallanes’: ‘En el Perú llevamos años sin poder dialogar sobre lo ocurrido en los tiempos violentos’.” (2016). *Nodal Cultura*. Available at: https://www.nodalcultura.am/2016/02/entrevista-exclusiva-a-salvador-del-solar-en-el-peru-llevamos-anos-sin-poder-dialogar-sobre-lo-ocurrido-en-los-tiempos-violentos/ [accessed 22 September 2019].

“Escándalo en la familia del Presidente Fujimori” (1992). *El Tiempo*. 28 March. Available at: https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-77797 [accessed 24 September 2021].

Esteban, Ángel and Gallego, Ana. (2011). *De Gabo a Mario: el boom latinoamericano a través de sus premios Nobel*. New York, Vintage Español.

Estrada, Oswaldo. (2010). “Desplazamientos políticos del discurso sentimental en *Travesuras de la niña mala* de Mario Vargas Llosa.” In P. Popovic Karic and F. Chávez Pérez (Eds.). *Mario Vargas Llosa: Perspectivas críticas*. Vols. 1-401 pp. Monterrey, Mexico, Tecnológico de Monterrey, pp. 149–180.

Estrada, Oswaldo. (2017). “Utopías libertarias y sueños de igualdad: Mario Vargas Llosa y Flora Tristán.” *América sin Nombre*. No. 22, pp. 125–135.

Fajardo, Lucia. (2019). “Mujer en Sendero Luminoso la victoria del patriarcado.” ResearchGate, 23 April. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332593625_Mujer_en_Sendero_Luminoso_la_victoria_del_patriarcado.

Ferreira, César. (2020a). “Verdad histórica y poder en *Tiempos recios* de Mario Vargas Llosa.” *César Ferreira y la cultura Peruana*. Lima, Universidad Ricardo Palma/Editorial Universitaria, pp. 27–39.

Ferreira, César. (2020b). “Review of *Tiempos recios*.” *World Literature Today*. Vol. 94, No. 3, pp. 81–82.

Filer, Malva E. (2002). “Leer a Cortázar como mujer.” In A. L. Sierra (Ed.). *Me gustas cuando callas: los escritores del “Boom” y el género sexual*. San Juan, Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, pp. 65–86.

Flórez, Nélida. (1993). *La mujer en la novela de Mario Vargas Llosa*. Lima.

Forster, E. M. (2002). *Aspects of the Novel*. New York, Rosetta Books. Available at: http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=71874 [accessed 22 December 2021].

Foucault, Michel. (1996). *Foucault Live: Interviews, 1961-1984*. Edited by S. Lotringer, Translated by L. Hochroth and J. Johnston. South Pasadena, CA, Semiotexte(e).

Foucault, Michel. (2003). *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*. Edited by M. Bertani, A. Fontana and F. Ewald, Translated by D. Macey. New York, Picador.

Freedman, Estelle B. (2002). *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*. New York, Ballantine Books.

Freedman, Estelle B. (Ed.). (2007). *The Essential Feminist Reader*. New York, Modern Library.

Friedan, Betty. (1997). *The Feminine Mystique*. New York, W.W. Norton.

Fuentes, Carlos. (2011). “Vargas Llosa, premio Nobel.” *El País*. Madrid, 19 February. Available at: https://elpais.com/diario/2011/02/19/babelia/1298077997_850215.html [accessed 9 July 2020].

Furst, Lilian R. (Ed.). (1992). *Realism*. London, New York, Longman.

Geisdorfer Feal, Rosemary. (1986). “Mario Vargas Llosa’s *La tía Julia y el escribidor*: Life as a fiction.” *Novel Lives: The Fictional Autobiographies of Guillermo Cabrera Infante and Mario Vargos Llosa*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, pp. 94–161.

Gestión Noticias. (2020). “Nadine Heredia: Prisión domiciliaria en su contra sustituye a la preventiva, afirma fiscal Rafael Vela.” *Gestión*. 19 September. Available at: https://gestion.pe/peru/politica/nadine-heredia-prision-domiciliaria-en-su-contra-sustituye-a-la-preventiva-afirma-fiscal-rafael-vela-nndc-noticia/ [accessed 29 September 2021].

Gilman, Claudia. (2003). *Entre la pluma y el fusil: debates y dilemas del escritor revolucionario en América Latina*. Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI Editores Argentina.

Gobierno de España. (1992). “Real Decreto 789/1992, de 26 de junio, concediendo la nacionalidad española por carta de naturaleza a doña Carmen Patricia Llosa Urquidi.” *Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las cortes y memoria democrática, Boletín oficial del estado*. 25 July. Available at: https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-1992-17685 [accessed 7 January 2022].

Gobierno Peruano. (1974). *Plan Inca: Plan de Gobierno Revolucionario de la Fuerza Armada del Perú.* Perú, C.L. Cabrera V.

Godoy Cossio, Ana. (2019). *Arquetipos femeninos. Francisco Umbral y Vargas Llosa, obras y vidas paralelas*. Madrid, Dalya.

Godoy Cossio, Ana. (2021a). “Mario Vargas Llosa: ‘Hubo muchas Uranias en la historia de Trujillo’.” *Zenda*. 21 March. Available at: https://www.zendalibros.com/mario-vargas-llosa-hubo-muchas-uranias-en-la-historia-de-trujillo/ [accessed 7 July 2022].

Godoy Cossio, Ana. (2021b). “Mario Vargas Llosa: ‘La mujer tiene siempre muchos más desafíos que el hombre’.” *Zenda*. 7 March. Available at: https://www.zendalibros.com/mario-vargas-llosa-la-mujer-tiene-siempre-muchos-mas-desafios-que-el-hombre/ [accessed 7 July 2022].

Gómez Sánchez, Santiago. (2018). *La musa asesinada. Conversación en La Catedral, de Vargas Llosa: novela marxista*. Medellín, Universidad de Antioquia.

Gorriti Ellenbogen, Gustavo. (1999). *The Shining Path: A History of the Millenarian War in Peru*. Translated by R. Kirk. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press.

Grosso, Julieta. (2019). “Xavi Ayén: ‘La época era machista y el Boom latinoamericano no fue la excepción’.” *Télam Digital*. 8 May. Available at: http://www.telam.com.ar/notas/201905/356286-xavi-ayen-la-epoca-era-machista-y-el-boom-latinoamericano-no-fue-la-excepcion.html [accessed 3 August 2020].

Guy, Donna J. (2012). *Gender and Sexuality in Latin America*. Edited by J. C. Moya. Vol. 1. Oxford University Press. Available at: http://oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195166217.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195166217-e-13 [accessed 13 April 2021].

Helmut, Chalene. (2002). “El género sexual en la obra de Carlos Fuentes: una excepción a lo posmoderno.” In A. L. Sierra (Ed.). *Me gustas cuando callas: los escritores del “Boom” y el género sexual*. San Juan, Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, pp. 87–106.

Henighan, Stephen. (2009). “Nuevas versiones de lo femenino en *La Fiesta del Chivo*, *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* y *Travesuras de la niña mala*.” *Hispanic Review*. Vol. 77, No. 3, pp. 369–388.

Hernando, Antonio and Valenciano, Elena. (2018). “Constitución y feminismo.” *El País*. Madrid, 24 April. Available at: https://elpais.com/elpais/2018/04/24/opinion/1524574102_225042.html [accessed 18 July 2021].

Heywood, Leslie (Ed.). (2006a). *The Women’s Movement Today: An Encyclopedia of Third-Wave Feminism*. Vol. 1, A-Z. Westport, Conn, Greenwood Press.

Heywood, Leslie (Ed.). (2006b). *The Women’s Movement Today: An Encyclopedia of Third-Wave Feminism*. Vol. 2, Primary Documents. Westport, Conn, Greenwood Press.

“History of a Conversion: A Political Profile of Mario Vargas Llosa, Part Two” (2018). *Words Without Borders*. 19 March. Available at: https://wordswithoutborders.org/read/article/2018-03/history-of-a-conversion-a-political-profile-of-mario-vargas-llosa-part-two/ [accessed 26 June 2022].

Hopkins Rodríguez, Eduardo. (2011). “El sentido de la traición en *La Fiesta del Chivo* de Mario Vargas Llosa.” In M. Á. Rodríguez Rea (Ed.). *Mario Vargas Llosa y la*

crítica peruana. Lima, Universidad Ricardo Palma / Editorial Universitaria, pp. 223–247.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI) Perú. (1997a). “El analfabetismo en el Perú.” *Proyectos INEI*. Available at: http://proyectos.inei.gob.pe/web/biblioineipub/bancopub/Est/Lib0024/2.htm [accessed 22 July 2020].

Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI) Perú. (1997b). “Diferenciales del analfabetismo.” *Proyectos INEI*. Available at: http://proyectos.inei.gob.pe/web/biblioineipub/bancopub/Est/Lib0024/4-1.htm [accessed 22 July 2020].

Iribarne González, María de la Macarena. (2012). *Flora Tristán y la tradición del feminismo socialista*. Madrid, Congreso de los Diputados.

Junieles, John J. (2006). “Carta de batalla por una niña mala.” *Espéculo: Revista de Estudios Literarios*. No. 33. Available at: https://webs.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero33/nimala.html.

Justo, Marcelo. (2014). “¿Fin del milagro económico de Perú?” *BBC News Mundo*. 30 July. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2014/07/140725_economia_peru_contraccion_wbm [accessed 8 September 2021].

King, John. (2012). “The essays.” In E. Kristal and J. King (Eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*. Cambridge; New York, Cambridge University Press, pp. 148–167.

Kirk, Robin. (1993). *Grabado en piedra. Las mujeres de Sendero Luminoso*. Lima, IEP Instituto de Estudios Peruanos.

Köllmann, Sabine. (2001). “*La Fiesta del Chivo*: cambio y continuidad en la obra de Mario Vargas Llosa.” *Iberoamericana*. Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 135–149.

Köllmann, Sabine. (2010). “Vargas Llosa’s Self-Definition as ‘The Man Who Writes and Thinks’.” In J. de Castro and N. Birns (Eds.). *Vargas Llosa and Latin American Politics*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 173–188.

Köllmann, Sabine. (2014). *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK, Tamesis.

Krauze, Enrique. (2000). “La seducción el poder, una conversación.” *Letras Libres*. 31 July. Available at: http://www.letraslibres.com/mexico/la-seduccion-el-poder-una-conversacion [accessed 26 October 2019].

Kristal, Efraín. (1998). *Temptation of the Word: The Novels of Mario Vargas Llosa*. Nashville, Vanderbilt University Press.

Kristal, Efraín (Ed.). (2005). *The Cambridge Companion to the Latin American Novel*. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Kristal, Efraín. (2012). “From Utopia to Reconciliation: *The Way to Paradise*, *The Bad Girl*, and *The Dream of the Celt*.” In E. Kristal and J. King (Eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*. Vols. 1-xvii, 233 pp. Cambridge, England, Cambridge UP, pp. 129–147.

Kristal, Efraín. (2018). *Tentación de la palabra: Arte literario y convicción política en las novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa*. Lima, Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Kristal, Efraín and King, John (Eds.). (2012). *The Cambridge Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Kristeva, Julia. (1981). “Women’s Time.” Translated by A. Jardine and H. Blake. *Signs*. Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 13–35.

Kristeva, Julia. (1985a). “Don Juan o la pasión por el poder.” *Plural: Revista Cultural de Excelsior*. Vol. 14, No. 167, pp. 6–11.

Kristeva, Julia. (1985b). “Stabat Mater.” Translated by A. Goldhammer, *Poetics Today*. Vol. 6, No. 1/2, p. 133.

“La casa” (n.d.). *Casa de las Américas*. Available at: http://www.casadelasamericas.org/casa.php [accessed 2 August 2020].

Lagarde, Marcela. (1993). *Los cautiverios de las mujeres: madresposas, monjas, putas, presas y locas*. 2a ed. México, D.F, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

Lagarde, Marcela. (1997). “Mujeres y hombres, femenidades y masculinidades al final del milenio.” *Revista de Ciencias Sociales*. Vol. 76, pp. 107–113.

Lamula.pe. (2011). *Alberto Fujimori bota a Susana Higuchi de Palacio*. [Video]. YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94r3CDgjwwo [accessed 24 September 2021].

Lavrin, Asunción. (1999). “International Feminisms: Latin American Alternatives.” In M. Sinha, D. J. Guy and A. Woollacott (Eds.). *Feminisms and Internationalism*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Lázaro, José. (2021). “La respuesta a Vargas Llosa de la niña mala.” *Zenda*. 26 March. Available at: https://www.zendalibros.com/la-respuesta-a-vargas-llosa-de-la-nina-mala/ [accessed 7 July 2022].

León Aragón, Oscar de. (1950). *Los contratos de la United Fruit Company y las compañías muelleras en Guatemala*. Guatemala, Editorial del Ministerio de Educación Pública.

León, Fiorella. (2012). “*La tía Julia y el escribidor* y la apertura de nuevas perspectivas en la crítica literaria peruana.” *Contextos, Revista Crítica de Literatura*. No. 3, pp. 81–97.

Livia, Michael. (2019). *Mario Vargas Llosa: Los momentos más polémicos en la vida del Nobel peruano*. Available at: https://rpp.pe/cultura/literatura/mario-vargas-llosa-los-momentos-mas-polemicos-en-la-vida-del-nobel-peruano-noticia-1113125 [accessed 26 August 2021].

Loayza, Luis. (1972). “Los personajes de *La Casa Verde*.” In M. R. Alonso (Ed.). *Agresión a la realidad: Mario Vargas Llosa*. Las Palmas, Inventarios Provisionales, pp. 128–140.

Lugones, María. (2008). “Colonialidad y género.” *Tabula Rasa*. Vol. 9, No. jul-dic, pp. 73–101.

Lukács, Georg. (1966). *La novela histórica*. México, Ediciones Era.

Manresa, Andreu. (1993). “El escritor peruano Mario Vargas Llosa obtiene la nacionalidad española.” *El País*. Madrid, 2 July. Available at: https://elpais.com/diario/1993/07/03/cultura/741650401_850215.html [accessed 26 August 2021].

Martin, Gerald. (1989). *Journeys through the Labyrinth: Latin American Fiction in the Twentieth Century*. London; New York, Verso.

Martin, Gerald. (2012). “The early novels, *The Time of the Hero* and *The Green House*.” In E. Kristal and J. King (Eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*. New York, Cambridge University Press, pp. 22–36.

Martin, Gerald. (2018). “Prologue.” *Tentación de la palabra: Arte literario y convicción política en las novelas de Mario Vargas Llosa*. Lima, Fondo de Cultura Económica, pp. 15–19.

Martínez, Tomas Eloy. (2000). “La resurrección del dictador.” *El País*. Madrid, 14 April, p. Opinión.

Marting, Diane E. (2001). *The Sexual Woman in Latin American Literature: Dangerous Desires*. Gainesville, University Press of Florida.

Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1956). *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Critique*. Translated by R. Dixon. Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House.

May, Stacy and Plaza, Galo. (1958). *The United Fruit Company in Latin America*. Washington, DC, National Planning Association.

McDonald, J. Kenneth. (1999). “Foreword.” *Secret History: The CIA’s Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954*. Stanford, Calif, Stanford University Press.

Mejía, Mario. (2019). “El día que se difundió el primer vladivideo que provocó la caída del régimen fujimorista.” *El Comercio Perú*. 14 September. Available at: https://elcomercio.pe/politica/dia-difundio-primer-vladivideo-provoco-caida-regimen-fujimorista-vladimiro-montesinos-alberto-kouri-luis-iberico-noticia-ecpm-675815-noticia/ [accessed 12 January 2021].

Mendoza, Raúl. (2006). “Alan reconoce a su sexto hijo.” *La República*. 23 October. Available at: https://larepublica.pe/politica/269328-alan-reconoce-a-su-sexto-hijo/ [accessed 27 September 2021].

Menton, Seymour. (1993). *La nueva novela histórica de la América Latina 1979 - 1992*. México, Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Millington, Mark I. (2002). “El género sexual en García Márquez: poder y marginalidad en Crónica de una muerte anunciada.” In A. L. Sierra (Ed.). *Me gustas cuando callas: los escritores del “Boom” y el género sexual*. San Juan, Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, pp. 128–150.

Molinero, Carme. (1998). “Mujer, franquismo, fascismo. La clausura forzada en un ‘mundo pequeño’.” *Historia Social*. No. 30, pp. 97–117.

Moret, Xavier. (2000). “Mario Vargas Llosa: ‘Mi libro quiere ser la novela de todas las dictaduras’.” *El País*. Madrid, 9 March. Available at: https://elpais.com/diario/2000/03/09/catalunya/952567665_850215.html [accessed 2 November 2019].

Mulvey, Laura. (1991). “Visual pleasure and narrative cinema.” In R. R. Warhol and D. Price Herndl (Eds.). *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. New Brunswick, N.J, Rutgers University Press, pp. 432–442.

Muñoz, Fanni and Barrientos, Violeta. (2019). “Un bosquejo del feminismo(s) peruano(s): los múltiples desafíos.” In C. Rosas Lauro (Ed.). *Género y mujeres en la historia del Perú: del hogar al espacio público*. Lima, Fondo Editorial Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, pp. 463–484.

Nobelprize.org. (2010). *2010 Nobel Prize in Literature Announcement*. [Video] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6AWOZp6zZM [accessed 21 September 2019].

Oliart, Patricia. (2017). “Politicizing education: The 1972 Reform in Perú.” In C. Aguirre and P. Drinot (Eds.). *The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule*. Austin, University of Texas Press, pp. 123–148.

Ortner, Sherry B. (1974). “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?” In M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (Eds.). *Woman, Culture, and Society*. Stanford, Calif, Stanford University Press, pp. 67–87.

Orvig, Helen. (2004). “También antes hubo algo.” In G. Cevasco (Ed.). *25 años de feminismo en el Perú: historia, confluencias y perspectivas*. Lima, Perú, Flora Tristán, Centro de la Mujer Peruana, pp. 18–23.

Osherow, Michele. (2000). “The Dawn of a New Lilith: Revisionary Mythmaking in Women’s Science Fiction.” *NWSA Journal*. Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 68–83.

Oviedo, José Miguel. (1978). “*La tía Julia y el escribidor* or the Coded Self-Portrait.” In C. Rossman and A. W. Friedman (Eds.). *Mario Vargas Llosa: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Austin, University of Texas Press, pp. 166–181.

Oviedo, José Miguel (Ed.). (1981). *Mario Vargas Llosa*. Madrid, Taurus.

Oviedo, José Miguel. (1982). *Mario Vargas Llosa: la invención de una realidad*. Barcelona, Seix Barral.

Oviedo, José Miguel. (2007). *Dossier Vargas Llosa*. Lima, Taurus.

Pásara, Luis. (1982). “Perú 1980: Cuenta y balance.” *Working Papers, Latin American Program, The Wilson Center*. No. 105, p. 51.

Pérez Salazar, Juan Carlos. (2016). “‘Las mujeres no escriben y cuando escriben, se suicidan’: las escritoras latinoamericanas durante el Boom.” *BBC News Mundo*. Querétaro, 1 September. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-37176102 [accessed 4 August 2020].

Perú 21. (2019). “Día Internacional de la Mujer: 51% de estudiantes universitarios son mujeres.” *Peru21*. 7 March. Available at: https://peru21.pe/peru/dia-internacional-mujer-51-estudiantes-universitarios-son-mujeres-464252-noticia/ [accessed 11 September 2021].

Piérola, José de. (2008). “At the Edge of History: Notes for a Theory for the Historical Novel in Latin America.” *Romance Studies*. Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 151–162.

Planned Parenthood. (2015). *The Birth Control Pill, a History*. Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Portocarrero, Gonzalo. (2015). “¿Diferentes pero iguales?” *El Comercio*. 11 March. Available at: elcomercio.pe/opinion/columnistas/diferentes-iguales-gonzalo-portocarrero-341604 [accessed 8 April 2018].

Quijano, Aníbal. (1992). “Colonialidad y modernidad/racionalidad.” *Perú Indígena*. Vol. 13, No. 29, pp. 11–20.

Quijano, Aníbal. (2000). “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America.” Translated by M. Ennis, *Nepantla: Views from South*. Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 533–580.

Quijano, Aníbal. (2014). *Aníbal Quijano. Textos de Fundación*. Edited by Z. Palermo and P. Quintero. Buenos Aires, Ediciones del Signo and Globalization and Humanities Project, Duke University.

Quintana Tejera, Luis. (2007). “Seducción, erotismo y amor en *Travesuras de la niña mala*, de Mario Vargas Llosa.” *Espéculo: Revista de Estudios Literarios*. Vol. 37. Available at: https://webs.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero37/seducci.html.

Quiroz, Alfonso W. (2018). *Historia de la corrupción en el Perú*. Translated by J. Flores Espinoza. Lima, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos IEP.

Rama, Angel. (1996). *The Lettered City*. Translated by J. C. Chasteen. Durham, NC, Duke University Press.

Rama, Ángel. (2005). “El boom en perspectiva.” *Signos Literarios*. Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 161–208.

Rampton, Martha. (2015). “Four Waves of Feminism.” *Pacific University*. October. Available at: https://www.pacificu.edu/magazine/four-waves-feminism [accessed 23 July 2021].

Reverte B., Concepción. (1998). “La problemática de la mujer en el teatro de Vargas Llosa.” In A. J. Martín Castellanos, F. Velázquez Basanta and J. Bustamante Costa (Eds.). *Estudios de la Universidad de Cádiz ofrecidos a la memoria del profesor Braulio Justel Calabozo*. Cádiz, Universidad de Cádiz, Servicio de Publicaciones, pp. 409–420.

Reyes, Víctor. (2019a). “Mario Vargas Llosa, Efraín Kristal: ‘Estamos ante sus primeras novelas optimistas, eso nunca se veía en él’.” *RPP Noticias*. 24 July. Available at: https://rpp.pe/cultura/literatura/mario-vargas-llosa-efrain-kristal-estamos-ante-sus-primeras-novelas-optimistas-eso-nunca-se-veia-en-el-noticia-1210452 [accessed 10 January 2020].

Reyes, Víctor. (2019b). “Mario Vargas Llosa, ‘*Conversación en La Catedral*’: Cinco claves para entender la trascendencia de esta novela.” *RPP Noticias*. 24 July. Available at: https://rpp.pe/cultura/literatura/mario-vargas-llosa-conversacion-en-la-catedral-5-claves-para-entender-la-trascendencia-de-esta-novela-noticia-1210002 [accessed 20 January 2020].

Rodríguez, Ileana (Ed.). (2001). *Cánones literarios masculinos y relecturas transculturales: lo trans-femenino/masculino/queer*. Barcelona, Anthropos.

Rodríguez Marcos, Javier. (2010). “Mario Vargas Llosa, Premio Nobel de Literatura.” *El País*. Madrid, 7 October. Available at: https://elpais.com/cultura/2010/10/07/actualidad/1286402403_850215.html [accessed 19 September 2019].

Rogers, Charlotte. (2019). *Mourning El Dorado: Literature and Extractivism in the Contemporary American Tropics.* Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press.

Said, Edward W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York, Pantheon Books.

Said, Edward W. (1994). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York, Vintage Books.

Sánchez, Luis Rafael. (2007). "Dos novelas de ahora mismo: *Son de almendra*, de Mayra Montero, y *Travesuras de la niña mala*, de Mario Vargas Llosa." *Hispamérica: Revista de Literatura*. Vol. 36, No. 106, pp. 103–111.

Saravia, Gerardo and Wiesse, Patricia. (2016). "La niña de sus ojos." *Revista Ideele*. Available at: https://revistaideele.com/ideele/content/la-ni%C3%B1a-de-sus-ojos [accessed 27 September 2021].

Schlesinger, Stephen C. and Kinzer, Stephen. (1982). *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. Garden City, N.Y, Doubleday.

Schulz, Bernhardt Roland. (1990). "Travestismo como falsa liberación." *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*. Vol. 17–18, pp. 217–223.

Shaw, Donald L. (1999). *Nueva narrativa hispanoamericana: boom, posboom, posmodernismo*. Madrid, Cátedra.

Shaw, Donald Leslie. (1998). *The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction*. Albany, State University of New York Press.

Shaw, Harry E. (1983). *The Forms of Historical Fiction: Sir Walter Scott and His Successors.* Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

Sierra, Ana Luisa (Ed.). (2002). *Me gustas cuando callas: Los escritores del "Boom" y el género sexual*. San Juan, Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico.

Sifuentes, Marco. (2008). *La Historia de Susana Higuchi*. [Video] YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozzsZP_PHhk [accessed 24 September 2021].

Silva, José Miguel. (2012). "El autogolpe de Susana Higuchi y la ropa donada del Japón." *La República*. 4 April. Available at: https://larepublica.pe/politica/621734-24-de-marzo-de-1992-el-autogolpe-de-susana-higuchi-y-la-ropa-donada-del-japon/ [accessed 24 September 2021].

Simó, Fernando. (2022). "Macarena Achaga protagonizará '*Travesuras de una niña mala*', adaptación de la novela de Mario Vargas Llosa." *mundoplus.tv*. 3 July. Available at: https://www.mundoplus.tv/series/macarena-achaga-protagonizara-travesuras-de-una-nina-mala-adaptacion-de-la-novela-de-mario-vargas-llosa/ [accessed 16 July 2022].

Skard, Torild. (2014). “Machismo, marianismo and modernism in Latin America.” *Women of Power*. Bristol, UK, Bristol University Press, pp. 197–251.

Smith, Harrison. (2019). “Alan García, ex-president of Peru, dies at 69 after shooting himself during arrest.” *Washington Post*. 17 April. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/alan-garcia-two-term-peruvian-president-arrested-in-bribery-investigation-dies-at-69/2019/04/17/60ef6e08-611a-11e9-bfad-36a7eb36cb60_story.html [accessed 9 September 2021].

Snyder, R. Claire. (2008). “What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay.” *Signs*. Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 175–196.

Sontag, Susan. (1978). *Illness as Metaphor*. Toronto, McGraw-Hill.

Sotirin, Patty. (2011). “Becoming-woman.” In C. J. Stivale (Ed.). *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*. 2nd ed. Durham, Acumen, pp. 116–130.

Soto Vásquez, Lilly. (2019). “La realidad superó la ficción en *Tiempos recios* de Vargas Llosa.” *ResearchGate*. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lilly-Soto-Vasquez/publication/336813027_La_realidad_supero_la_ficcion_en_Tiempos_recios_de_Vargas_Llosa/links/5db3407d299bf111d4c92ca0/La-realidad-supero-la-ficcion-en-Tiempos-recios-de-Vargas-Llosa.pdf.

Spivak, Gayatri. (1988). “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Illinois. Available at: http://www.postcolonialweb.org/poldiscourse/spivak/spivak2.html [accessed 21 August 2021].

Standish, Peter. (1990). “Mario Vargas Llosa: *La Casa Verde*.” In P. Swanson (Ed.). *Landmarks in Modern Latin American Fiction*. pp. 161–182.

Stevens, Evelyn P. and Soler, Martí. (1974). “El marianismo: la otra cara del machismo en América Latina.” *Diálogos: Artes, Letras, Ciencias Humanas*. Vol. 10, No. 1 (55), pp. 17–24.

Stivale, Charles J. (Ed.). (2011). *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*. 2nd ed. Durham, Acumen.

Streeter, Stephen M. (2000). *Managing the Counterrevolution: The United States and Guatemala, 1954-1961*. Athens, Ohio University Center for International Studies.

Sturrock, John. (1977). Paper Tigers: The Ideal Fictions of Jorge Luis Borges. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Swanson, Philip. (1990). *Landmarks in Modern Latin American Fiction*. London, Routledge.

Swanson, Philip. (1995). *The New Novel in Latin America: Politics and Popular Culture after the Boom*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Tanaka, Martín (Ed.). (2016). *Antología del pensamiento crítico peruano contemporáneo*. Buenos Aires, CLACSO.

Thays, Iván. (2012). "Las mujeres del Boom." *Vano oficio*. Available at: https://blogs.elpais.com/vano-oficio/2012/04/las-mujeres-del-boom.html [accessed 4 August 2020].

The Nobel Foundation. (2010). *The Nobel Prize in Literature 2010*. [Video]. YouTube. Available at: https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2010/summary/ [accessed 19 September 2019].

"Toledo reconoce a Zaraí como su hija después de una larga polémica" (2002). *ABC Internacional*. 19 October. Available at: https://www.abc.es/internacional/abci-toledo-reconoce-zarai-como-hija-despues-larga-polemica-200210190300-137020_noticia.html [accessed 27 September 2021].

Totenberg, Nina and McCammon, Sarah. (2022). "Supreme Court overturns Roe v Wade, ending right to abortion upheld for decades." *NPR*. 24 June. Available at: https://www.npr.org/2022/06/24/1102305878/supreme-court-abortion-roe-v-wade-decision-overturn [accessed 15 July 2022].

Trapasso, Rosa Dominga. (2004). "Romper la invisibilidad." In G. Cevasco (Ed.). *25 años de feminismo en el Perú: historia, confluencias y perspectivas*. 16th–17th ed. Lima, Perú, Flora Tristán, Centro de la Mujer Peruana, pp. 24–26.

Tristán, Flora. (1972). *Paseos en Londres*. Lima, Biblioteca Nacional del Perú.

Tristán, Flora. (2018). *La Unión Obrera*. Ciudad de México, Partido de la Revolución Democrática.

Tristán, Flora. (2006). *El tour de Francia (1843-1844): estado actual de la clase obrera en los aspectos moral, intelectual y material*. Translated by Y. Westphalen. Primera edición en español. Lima, Fondo Editorial de la UNMSM.

Tristán, Flora and Constant, Alphonse-Louis. (1948). *La emancipación de la mujer o El testamento de una paria*. Lima, Editorial PTCM.

Urquidi Illanes, Julia. (2010). *Lo que Varguitas no dijo*. La Paz, La Mancha.

Vargas, Virginia. (2004). "Los feminismos peruanos: Breve balance de tres décadas." In G. Cevasco (Ed.). *25 años de feminismo en el Perú: historia, confluencias y perspectivas*. Lima, Flora Tristán, Centro de la Mujer Peruana, pp. 10–17.

Vázquez, Abraham. (2007). "Vargas Llosa ¿misógino?" *El Norte*. Monterrey, Mexico, 19 October. Available at: https://search-proquest-com.exlibris.colgate.edu/docview/312076476?pq-origsite=summon [accessed 12 June 2020].

Viezzer, Moema. (1979). *"Si me permiten hablar...": Testimonio de Domitila, una mujer de las minas de Bolivia*. 4th ed. México, D.F, Siglo Veintiuno.

Villanueva, Victoria. (2004). "Feminismo: Una práctica de acción política." In G. Cevasco (Ed.). *25 años de feminismo en el Perú: historia, confluencias y perspectivas: seminario nacional, 16-17 de septiembre, 2004*. Lima, Perú, Flora Tristán, Centro de la Mujer Peruana, pp. 27–33.

Villegas, María Cecilia. (2017). *La verdad de una mentira: El caso de las trescientas mil esterilizaciones forzadas*. Lima, Planeta.

Walker, Rebecca. (2007). "Becoming the Third Wave." In E. B. Freedman (Ed.). *The Essential Feminist Reader*. New York, Modern Library, pp. 397–401.

Wiener, Gabriela. (2018). "[Entrevista a Maruja Barrig] 'En los 70 entramos asustadas a disputar espacios con los hombres, ahora las que asustan son ustedes'." *Instituto de Estudios Peruanos*. Available at: https://iep.org.pe/noticias/entrevista-a-maruja-barrig-en-los-70-entramos-asustadas-a-disputar-espacios-con-los-hombres-ahora-las-que-asustan-son-ustedes/ [accessed 15 July 2020].

Williams, Raymond L. (1986). *Mario Vargas Llosa*. New York, Ungar.

Williams, Raymond L. (2001). *Vargas Llosa: otra historia de un deicidio*. México, D.F., Taurus.

Williams, Raymond L. (2014). *Mario Vargas Llosa, A Life of Writing*. Austin, University of Texas Press.

Wolff, Cynthia Griffin. (1972). “A Mirror for Men: stereotypes of women in Literature.” *The Massachusetts Review*. Vol. 13, No. 1/2, pp. 205–218.

Zapata, Roger A. (2002). “Ficción, ideología y erotismo en dos novelas de Vargas Llosa.” In A. L. Sierra (Ed.). *Me gustas cuando callas: Los escritores del “Boom” y el género sexual*. San Juan, Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, pp. 207–231.