



## Making Emotion Visible: Felipe Trigo and *La sed de amar (educación social)*

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*“For if this is a love that is from the start out of the question,  
then it cannot happen and, if it does, it certainly did not; if it does,  
it happens only under the official sign of its prohibition and disavowal.”*  
Judith Butler. *Melancholy Gender / Refused Identification*

In his day, Felipe Trigo (1864–1916) was a polemical yet widely appreciated author. In both his essays and fiction, he proposed and actively promoted solutions for the hysteria, melancholy, and latent violence produced by the nineteenth-century gender construct of the *ángel del hogar*, the initially middle-class ideal that established marriage and the home as the place for all women. Yet, in 1983, Ángel Martínez San Martín could justifiably write: “El desprecio y el olvido han sido, hasta hace muy poco, los dos más fieles compañeros de (su) obra literaria” (239). Today, most critics dismiss his work or apologize for analyzing it. For example, Roberta Johnson’s most recent book, *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*, only states of the *extremeño*: “[. . .] because some of Trigo’s themes would take my discussions in diffuse directions, I do not include his works in this book” (viii). Ricardo Krauel’s discussion of suicide in *Si sé por qué* begins with a profuse apology for reading Trigo’s novels and a critique of his style in the mode of the most established negative criticism of Trigo’s work, in his own time and since.

This study revisits some of Trigo’s literary and social theories, and places them in specific relation to his second novel, *La sed de amar (educación social)* (1903).<sup>1</sup> I also analyze Trigo’s work in the light of Judith Butler’s gender theory and Michel Foucault’s writings on sexuality and the middle-class family. My study shows how in *Sed de amar*, Trigo’s use of modern photography of and by women scandalously uncovers the individual and collective results of the repression and denial intrinsic to persistent nineteenth-century gender roles. Finally, I consider how in the novel’s dénouement, the author rewrites the real-life case of the marriage of two women. It is a fit ending for a text that in general makes visible emotions that Spanish society publicly “disavowed,” and aptly continues Trigo’s effort to change public and private perception.

In brief summary, *Sed de amar* takes place in the fictional town of Argelez, in the south of Spain. The work ostensibly describes the impediments in the development of a healthy sexuality in the young male protagonist, Jorge. His widowed mother, Doña Ángeles, “no supo nunca más que obedecer y amar” (SA 10). Her husband’s political protégé, García Tarenco, controls her finances. Doña Angeles entrusts Jorge’s schooling to a priest; his political future, in turn, depends on Tarenco’s tutelage. The novel begins when Jorge is seventeen, and ends when he is twenty. In the interim, he has a wide variety of sexual experiences, including a disastrous initiation with a prostitute and an affair with his protector’s wife, Marta. He becomes the *novio* of one of his sister’s acquaintances, Justina, as a cover for their affair. When Justina discovers the truth, she writes an anonymous letter to Marta’s husband; her missive precipitates a duel between Jorge and Tarenco that ends the young protagonist’s affair and his political career.

In a critical moment early in the work, his sister Lola’s *novio* seduces her, and Jorge inadvertently overhears their lovemaking. The *novio* immediately abandons Lola, while her family conspires to keep her dishonor secret. Jorge understands her need for love (*la sed de amar*), yet fears for her future. He feels incestuous desires towards her after their mother’s death and encourages her to accept a considerably older man’s offer of marriage and move to the north. After also leaving his hometown to live in the countryside, Jorge encounters Rosa, a former member of his social group in Argelez. She was ostracized because of her education as a teacher and rumors about her living arrangement with her cousin Claudia. Jorge falls in love with her and they become lovers. Pregnant with his child, Rosa hesitates when he proposes marriage, since she has promised Claudia that they would always stay together. On a visit to his sister in her home in Santander, where she is slowly dying of a sort of consumption, Jorge reads in a newspaper that Claudia has disguised herself as a man in order to legally marry Rosa. The novel ends with Jorge equating his own frustration with that of striking workers on the street below his sister’s window.

The critics who have studied Trigo’s work vary as to the extent and nature of their analyses of *Sed de amar*’s exposé of Jorge’s “social education.” According to Martínez San Martín, contemporary critics consistently claimed that Trigo “creó el género erótico con esta obra” (222). More recent general studies of Trigo’s work, however, include the once-bestselling work only to contrast it with more famous writers’ works or opinions (García Lara 137–38, 34; Manera 57). Other critics speak to Jorge’s perception of class conflict (Bordons 151–52; Pecellín 166). Still others give Lola and Rosa as examples of female victims in Trigo’s novels, and state that Claudia dominates a weaker Rosa (Ton 43; Martínez San Martín 167, 215). With good reason, Marie-Stéphanie Bourjac (26) and Alma Taylor Watkins (75, 77) analyze Lola’s and Justina’s hysteria. Watkins, Ton, and H. Péseux-Richard mention the historic case of the marriage between two women that Trigo himself indicates in a footnote in the work. Péseux-Richard cites one motive, included in the novel’s “transcribed” newspaper version: to save a pregnant woman’s honor. He also states that some moments “border on incest” (“friser l’inceste”; 340). Watkins’s study, dominated by psychoanalytical theory, includes considerations of Jorge’s Oedipus complex (77–78) and of his incestuous thoughts in relation to the incest taboo (80).

Explicit critical mention of non-heterosexuality in *Sed de amar* is rare. Watkins considers the “highly emotional and bisexual Rosa” as an abnormal, rare and decidedly negative result of “miseducation” (78, 81–82). Pecellín indicates that the novel contains “escenas intensamente eróticas de adulterios, lesbianismo, etc.” (165), yet there are no erotic scenes between women in the work. For Bourjac, Rosa is a “lesbian in spite of herself” (“lesbienne malgré elle”; 26). In her concise and insightful study, Bordons states that “la buena sociedad” marginalized Rosa because of her profession, indicates how Jorge realizes that Rosa and Claudia’s relationship was “homosexual” (151), and notes how women’s and workers’ futures become entwined at the end of the novel (152–53).

Finally, Manuel Abril, Trigo’s friend and critic, writes the most abstract and yet the most unerring and encompassing observation on the author’s second novel. He states that Jorge only finds “pedazos de amor [. . .] pedazos desintegrados, cuando no corrompidos,” without mention of, or judgment on, sexual orientation (215). Like Abril’s comment, my study of *Sed de amar* emphasizes Jorge’s experiences, since Trigo’s novels consistently advance his proposals of social change through a fusion of third-person narrators with his male protagonists’ conflicted voices. Trigo’s theses therefore form an intrinsic part of his literary work. In his words, his principal goal was to fuse “the angel with the prostitute,” or to combine the Virgin Mary’s spiritual beauty with Venus’s pagan vitality (see Trigo’s introduction to his first novel, *Las ingenuas*, for an early example of his insistence in this regard). He emphasized that the *ángel* model was psychologically and physically devastating, especially for women. According to his theoretical explanation of his novels’ aesthetics and ethics in *El amor en la vida y en los libros* (1907), Spanish society divided all women, in class terms, into housebound, idealized “angels” and “prostitutes,” all women working in the public sphere. Men’s sexual activity, level of education, and finances drove the maintenance of gender definitions, and men were therefore responsible for necessary changes in both men’s and women’s roles.

At the same time Trigo denounced the hypocrisy that maintained the *ángel* model, since Spanish society both publicly repressed and privately speculated on women’s sexual activity. His writings were exceptional in affirming that sexually active single women were true heroines, since, like Lola, they risked immediate abandonment by their *novios* and the loss of their only respectable means of financial support, marriage (*El amor* 112–13). In Trigo’s second novel, Jorge describes the dynamics as that of a “pecado de amor” that “latía, en dramas o en parodias, debajo del manto hipócrita tendido cuidadosamente por la sociedad” (SA 215), together with an exacerbated *sed de amar*. As my analysis of Trigo’s male protagonist and his “social education” will show, an individual man’s questioning of his society’s definitions of femininity perforce undermined masculine roles and conventional concepts of both men’s and women’s honor. For these and other reasons, in Trigo’s view, the turn-of-the-century “social question”—including violent workers’ strikes, anticlerical sentiment and opposition to women’s integration into higher education and the labor force—was ultimately a “sexual question” (see especially the chapter “El problema sexual,” *El amor* 33–37).

In *El amor*, Trigo establishes two basic dichotomies that are crucial to understanding his writing: bestiality vs. “animality,” and passion and lust vs. love. A specifically masculine bestiality, an over-idealizing passion, and indifferent lust are products of the gender

constructs he opposes. A healthy sexual instinct, or “animality,” would form a part of his proposed love, together with a new spirituality and developed intellect. Trigo specifically decries the “human bestiality” which hypocritically results in a combination of “los ultra espirituados, los hipermentalizados y [. . .] un ejército de sesenta mil prostitutas que responde de otro ejército lo menos décuplo de bestias masculinas” (*El amor* 289).<sup>2</sup> His observations reflect a *fin de siglo* reality, the effects of which he has seen in his medical practice—hysteria in chaste middle-class *novias* and the physical and psychological results of their *novios*’ frequenting of prostitutes (for example, *El amor* 121–23; 146–53).

In a lecture in the Madrid *Ateneo* in 1907, Trigo also explains the reasons for classifying himself as a “novelista-biólogo” who writes experimental novels from an emphatically emotional point of view. He transcribes his speech, “La impotencia de la crítica ante la importancia de lo emocional en la novela moderna,” in *El amor*. In it he states his objective: “el estudio del hombre en él mismo, como individuo, en sus propensiones de relación social naturales,” in contrast to the application of artificially imposed, secondary passions (proceeding from art, religion, and politics) (*El amor* 287–88). True to his attempts at harmonizing opposing emotions, Trigo asserts that the modern novelist gives his or her novels an emotional logic that the reader may or may not perceive.<sup>3</sup> But, in the end, “la novela moderna, en efecto, no es de ideas, es de emociones,” and modern novelists write from “el libre paso de la emoción por la conciencia,” not the reverse. Critics who negate or prohibit emotion “por un previo aviso mental” only perpetuate dogmatism and prejudice in the reading public (*El amor* 274–75).

For Trigo, novels can explain the emotions and finances behind gender roles more completely than a psychologist’s analysis: “Todo una vida, todo un amor, no pueden reproducirse en el austero gabinete del psicólogo, ni cabían debajo de su análisis sistemático y severo. En cambio pueden reproducirse y caben bajo la amplia observación de una novela” (*El amor* 265). He, therefore, believes that novelistic language should maintain a maximum ambiguity in order to connect readers with the subconscious, thus giving them access to “la plena inteligencia de sus emociones” (*El amor* 304). He includes his own experience as an example; in his novelistic efforts to harmonize bestiality with love, he states: “no he hecho más que recogerme y armonizarme a mí mismo, porque en mí también, como en todos vosotros, está constantemente, debajo del hipermístico, el hipobestia” (*El amor* 289). But his initial studies and attempts to intellectualize passion and transform it into love (as he defines both terms), in *Las ingenuas* and *La sed de amar*, lead to the conclusion that morbose, idealizing passion is incompatible with “la inteligencia sana” (*El amor* 295).

Trigo’s disorderly language itself corresponds to his goals and to a Modernist protest. He purposefully fragments artificial, false forms imposed by aesthetic norms. As a result, according to E. Gómez Baquero in *El Imparcial*: “Entre el lenguaje de las novelas de Trigo y lo que en ellas se cuenta, hay una rara armonía. Diríase que el estilo es también erótico, apasionado, neurasténico como los héroes de estas relaciones novelescas” (qtd. in *El amor* 308). Ultimately, Trigo’s “amor a lo natural, a lo espontáneo” and thoughtful experiment in the communication of underlying emotions, tolerantly and realistically recognize that “las formas del pensamiento y de la emoción [. . .] son infinitas” (*El amor* 312).

He uncovers a significant number of forms of emotion and thought in his second novel. In *Sed de amar*, the closed space of the home conditions Jorge's experiences. There, the members of the middle-class family constitute "the chief agents in the deployment of sexuality" (Foucault 110). By the end of the nineteenth century, law defined sexuality; soon the psychoanalytical theory of repression and "the analysis of the differential interplay of taboos according to the social classes" characterized it (128). For Foucault, this deployment of sexuality "in terms of a generalized repression" eventually included "tying this repression to general mechanisms of domination and exploitation," in a linkage of the three societal systems of control (repression, domination and exploitation). Freedom from one meant freedom from all (131). Additionally, as Butler argues, part of the definition of sexuality included, and includes, a construction of gender through a "depositing of non-heterosexual identifications in the domain of the culturally impossible," making them "unthinkable and unviable from the start." Homosexuality "is entertained" as both a failure of the symbolic system and as a "subordinate rebellion with no power" (*Bodies* 111).

Thus, the adolescent Jorge first receives pressure from his and his sister's friends to fully establish his sexual identity as masculine. When the novel begins, he is an impressionable, sexually inexperienced young man, imbued with a sense of decorum and honor. He looks like his sister Lola, and his face has both conventionally masculine and feminine features: "A pesar del bozo que se iniciaba en su labio y de la cierta tenacidad viril de sus ojos, de niña era su expresión y su belleza" (*SA* 23). One of his sister's friends calls him a "marica" as she is leaving a social gathering in their home. One of his male friends makes a similar reference when Jorge decides that he does not want to visit a prostitute. He affirms that he is not homosexual, but takes up the implicit challenge.

After his visit to the prostitute, Jorge enters into a crisis in which he feels dishonored, "sin decoro, sin vergüenza" (*SA* 48). But his reaction to his first sexual experience becomes more than the result of repression. It exemplifies the effects of a foreclosure that Butler uses to describe the very constitution of the heterosexual subject: "Becoming a 'man' within this (heterosexual) logic requires a repudiation of femininity [. . .] the desire for the feminine is marked by that repudiation" ("Melancholy" 26). Jorge's initiation provokes a conflictive division in him between "mujeres-hembras" as "algo repugnante [. . .] a las que había que acostumbrarse poco a poco [. . .] a fuerza de nauseas [. . .], de mareos" (*SA* 58) and the ideal woman: "la nueva visión virginal de sus amores: el amor ideal, el amor sensual; el amor del alma, el amor de los sentidos,—del todo diversos, contrarios, contradictorios, pudiendo coexistir en la doble condición de la naturaleza humana" (*SA* 61). He feels disgust at the thought of his mother or sister being, in effect, in the prostitute's place as women who were sexually active, while he repudiates the "mujer-hembra," any woman whom he sees as a sexual object. Jorge will continue with these feelings in different degrees, in what Butler calls "a wanting haunted by a dread," as he attempts to find a woman who balances sensuality and spirituality.

Trigo exposes at least two conventionally prohibited or denied acts through Jorge's and Lola's active sexuality outside of the institution of matrimony, couched in scandalously explicit terms for the time. It bears repeating, however, that *Sed de amar* is not simply an erotic rendering of conventionally silenced activity. The young protagonist's attempts at



reconciling his inner conflicts become a means for Trigo to show that his protagonist's education, both at home and in the Church, has left the young man (and both sexes in general) psychologically and physically at risk. The further development of Jorge's social education makes clearer the psychological processes involved in what Evelyn Blackwood defines as "viewing gender as subjective experience," including resistance and displacement (qtd. in Sinfield 159).

At the core of Jorge's experiences is a familial system of alliances which psychoanalysis would understand as having "incest at the heart of [. . .] sexuality as the principle of its foundation and the key to its intelligibility" (Foucault 113). While there was a "perpetual incitement to incest in the bourgeois family," psychoanalysis would be "busy revealing it as a desire and alleviating—for those who suffered from the desire—the severity which repressed it" (Foucault 129–130). By means of his protagonist's emotional, subjective, psychological space, Trigo communicates both Jorge's experience of these familial tensions and the self-analysis with which the young man attempts to reply to them. He does so in the context of more prohibited loves and the accompanying figures of "the nervous woman" and "the sadistic, perverse husband" (Foucault 110).

While Jorge first seeks his ideal by confronting and losing to his substitute father, both his lover and her husband view him as a child, which intensifies the affair's incestuous overtones. The young man first goes to live in his *padrino's* home after Lola suffers an "ataque nervioso" (SA 117) upon learning that her former lover has married someone else. Their mother entrusts her son to Tarenco and takes her daughter to the countryside to recuperate. Jorge's memories of Marta's kissing him as a boy and, ambivalently, of his childhood fear of desiring her, precipitate the affair. During it, Marta proposes with laughter that she have Jorge as the child her abusive husband has been denying her, ostensibly for economic reasons (he had even forced her to have an abortion). In turn, her irate husband responds to Justina's letter, rumors, and signs of their affair by visiting Jorge and continuing to treat him "como un niño" (SA 241), refusing to see him as a man. Jorge's developing social education permits him to lie ably, and Tarenco then injures him in their duel, definitively ending the lovers' communication.

Jorge, now approaching twenty years of age, feels more prohibited emotions upon returning home and losing his mother. His sister is now his only family, and he swears to his mother as she lies in state that "[él] vivirá para Lola" (SA 312). He feels distanced from Lola after overhearing the episode with her *novio*. But upon his mother's death and Lola's ensuing nervous crisis, Jorge begins to consciously identify closely with her; they both were brought up with love and tenderness only to be "socially educated" in hypocrisy and deceit. Jorge's identification with his sister shows the underlying emotions that ran parallel to "a systematic denial of incest in middle-class families" (Barnes 4). The nineteenth-century middle-class home became "the locus for a nostalgic return to [feudal] kinship exchange." There, the "preoccupation with (affective) affinity" in the form of "kindred spirits" brought up in the same space, romanticized incest even as it established the image of a loving middle class and created a "tension between love and abuse" (Barnes 6–7). Jorge is so dedicated to his sister in their mourning that he stops visiting the chaste Justina, whom he began courting on Marta's suggestion. A now "perverse" Justina becomes jealous of Jorge and Lola's fraternal love, and upon next seeing him, alludes to a

case in an illustrated magazine of two incestuous siblings, conveniently displaced to Italy. Jorge, initially disgusted with Justina's "infamous" allusion, gradually becomes aware that his feelings for Lola are now "la delicia de una pasión desconocida y alta" (SA 328).

The love between brother and sister becomes dangerously exclusive: "las purísimas caricias les borrarán por absorbente exclusión poderosa el ansia de cualquier otras caricias extrañas" (SA 330), and then eroticized for Jorge when he dreams that he is not her brother but her possible lover. The young man attempts to justify prohibited feelings for both his mother and his sister, when he thinks that "Por voluntad de Dios (sería irreverente decir que por torpeza), un hijo de Adán tuvo que enamorarse de su hermana o de su madre" (SA 336).<sup>4</sup> He believes that he and his sister have a perfect union of spirits. But after they color photographs taken on their walks, a now-awake Jorge consciously fantasizes about becoming Lola's lover after taking her away from the society that denies her sexual expression. He immediately realizes that he cannot live with her, and encourages her to accept the marriage offer.

Jorge's feelings first for Marta, his godmother-turned-lover, and then for his sister Lola combine to show how he projects his conflictive ideal of a pure yet sensuous woman onto those closest to him. Jorge and the two women become part of the "multiple and contestatory" identifications that Butler explains: "it may be that we desire most strongly those individuals who reflect in a dense or saturated way the possibilities of multiple and simultaneous substitutions, where a substitution engages a fantasy of recovering a primary object of a love lost—and produced—through prohibition" (*Bodies* 99). Jorge lives related emotions during three years of multiple sexual encounters (including, eventually, with Justina). But he consciously maintains the conviction that his mother, his sister Lola, and his godmother Marta are the three women for whom he feels an infinite love (SA 311). While his identification with these women can constitute "a phantasmatic trajectory and resolution of desire; an assumption of place" (Butler, *Bodies* 99), Jorge further develops his masculine identity within the limits of conventional sexuality's prohibitions, through his projection and displacement of desire onto the figures of two other women, Justina and Rosa.

As I noted, Marta suggested that Jorge enter into a relationship with Justina in order to cover up their affair. In this initial role, Justina is a screen-woman, as Henri, the male protagonist of Balzac's *La fille aux yeux d'or*, explains the term within a definition of "active discretion." Shoshana Felman cites Henri in her analysis of the French novella, in which the screen-woman functions "to displace the focus of attention" in the same pragmatic way for Balzac's Henri as Justina does for Jorge and Marta (29). In Henri's words: "The best kind of discretion [. . .] consists of compromising a woman we're not keen on, or one we don't love or don't possess, in order to preserve the honor of the one we love sufficiently to respect her. The former is what I call the *screen-woman*" (qtd. in Felman 29). The screen itself, Felman further elaborates, "can have a triple function: it can serve to divide or to separate, to conceal or hide, to protect or shield" (30). As we have seen, in *Sed de amar* Justina unwittingly protects and hides Marta from exposure as Jorge's lover. The young woman is also one agent in their definitive separation; when she comes to the clear and abrupt realization that she is being used, she becomes furious and writes the anonymous letter to Tarenco (which provokes his also furious visit to Jorge and the

resulting duel). Justina, however, has an additional function as a screen-woman in the novel. She is, in an early-cinematic sense, a screen for Jorge's emotions when she insinuates and thus reflects his incestuous desire for Lola. In a similar fashion, her gossip concerning Rosa, the last object of Jorge's affection, both projects and silences a story of an unthinkable love, one that is "outside the law" (Butler, *Bodies* 111).

The teacher Rosa is first an example of how public denial of, and private speculation on, women's sexual activity limited possibilities of their economic independence through a public questioning of women students' femininity.<sup>5</sup> Jorge had thought years before that Rosa was "un alma por completo extraña a las pasiones" (SA 68). Early in the novel, however, Justina, with her inclination to indulge in hurtful (yet revealing) gossip, describes the two cousins' then-scandalous life: "Juntas a la Normal, juntas de estudio, juntas durmiendo . . ." In and after the ellipsis, the text silences and therefore denies a prohibited relationship, while it describes Justina's whispering the rest in her listener's ear. With a "fuera la verdad o no fuera," Justina finishes her story by telling of the incapacity of Rosa's parents to separate the two, in a violent altercation that causes Rosa's family to move out of the town and leave her with her companion (SA 147–48).

Rosa's father, an army colonel, had originally and gamely explained his ideal of making his daughter an economically independent woman by having her become a "maestra de escuela distinguida y elegante, que habría de seguir siendo verdadera señorita" (SA 27). Just as her father had, Jorge projects an idealized and conflictive womanly image onto Rosa. She soon replaces Lola's image in photographs that Jorge takes on the same type of excursions to the countryside in which his sister had participated. Like Lola, Rosa helps Jorge develop and color them, and he makes the relationship visible to his sister when he mails her the photographs. Soon Jorge and Rosa enter into a sexual relationship. Lola sees the fantasized substitution when Jorge visits her in her home in Santander; in new photographs she views Rosa "entre los árboles, feliz sin duda con su pasión a Jorge" (SA 454).

Ultimately, Jorge projects elements of idealized images of his sister and his mother onto Rosa, "una mujer con la belleza más femenina que [él] había visto nunca, hecha de obediencia y de ternura" (SA 437). Following the same models, he also idealizes Rosa's companion Claudia when he considers the absolute abandonment of Rosa by her family and thinks, "qué augusto el maternal cuidado de aquella más experimentada Claudia" (SA 391). Although Rosa affirms that the two women live "como dos monjas" (SA 388) as an excuse for him not to visit them, Jorge becomes convinced that there are signs of her former sexual experience. She first haltingly affirms, however, having had no such experience with any other man, and then convincingly tells him that she has had no other lover. As a result, as soon as he and Rosa become lovers, Jorge communicates to his amused servants that they had just married, in an attempt to formalize an alternative union based simply on love.

His involuntary elimination of the possibility of Rosa's sexual experience with Claudia presents another example of the foreclosure implicit in Jorge's imposed heterosexuality, a crucial element in his "social education." As a result, when Jorge reads the news of the two women's marriage at the end of the novel, he first berates society for having



misguided all young people's passions, and then for making a mockery of all love by forcing it into a caricature of marriage, in implicit contrast with his practice of an alternative, extra-institutional marriage with Rosa. Jorge laments that his lover did not trust him with her former sexual experiences with men or women. For him, his own experiences with prostitutes impeded him from judging Rosa for what he terms playing at love with another woman, in his opinion the result of innocence, familial abandonment, and the *sed de amar* (SA 474). He also rebukes himself for not having understood her relationship with her companion. Justina's gossip gave clear hints of their amorous relations, but Jorge, even with his subversive ideal and occasional flashes of intuition, had not recognized them.

If Rosa and Claudia's marriage were the novelist's exclusive invention, his second novel's scandalous ending might have surprised his contemporary readers. But for this final episode of Jorge's education, Trigo uses news from the daily and illustrated press. As I noted, he reminds his readers of the real case in a footnote: "Los lectores españoles recordarán perfectamente un suceso igual acaecido en La Coruña" (SA 467, n1). A series of articles in the liberal newspaper *El Imparcial* in 1901 described the case and compared it to fiction. One article states: "En el juzgado se guarda la más absoluta reserva respecto al asunto, que por lo que se ve arroja a cada paso nuevos detalles, que comprobados y todo parecen producto de la imaginación de un novelista" (28 June 1901; "Dos mujeres que se casan" front page). Four of the articles carry a banner above the headline of "Un folletín en acción" (23, 27, 28, 30 June 1901).

The recurring headline was: "Dos mujeres que se casan." The first article began with a warning that "Este suceso, verdaderamente extraordinario, es de índole tan delicado, que no es posible relatarlo con todos sus detalles" (23 June 1901; front page). The rest, however, described how one of the women disguised herself as a man and how the couple, both teachers, complied with all the legal and ecclesiastical requirements for marriage. The articles also attempted to normalize the marriage through explanations of possible motives. One that Trigo used in *Sed de amar* was to save the honor of the second woman, who, according to rumor, was pregnant (27 June 1901; "Dos mujeres" n. pag.). Ironically, another motive was that the "husband" forced the marriage (30 June 1901; "Dos mujeres" n. pag.).<sup>6</sup> More significantly, prominent lawyers could not find any applicable charges (27 June 1901; "Dos mujeres" n. pag.), and after uncovering the truth, the authorities "inexplicably" did not take action to impede the couple's leaving Spain for parts unknown (10 July 1901; "Dos mujeres" n. pag.). When an illustrated periodical printed the couple's wedding portrait, the publication sold out and was reissued within a day (4 July 1901; "Las casadas de La Coruña" n. pag.). Passersby could also see the portrait on display in a storefront window (11 July 1901; "Casamiento sin hombre" n. pag.).

Like Justina's gossip, the reporters, consumers, and spectators of the real case and its protagonists seem to have either manipulated them to their own advantage or viewed the real couple as a disruptive or amusing exception. Trigo includes an example of the latter reaction in *Sed de amar*. Lola's husband, whom the doctor had informed of his wife's imminent demise, informs Jorge of the news and refers the young man to the newspaper. The narrator then states that the older man left "entre burlón y dolorido" (SA 466).

Again, as Butler states, both the real and the fictional cases represent a failure of the symbolic system and a “subordinate rebellion with no power.” For Jorge, the voice for Trigo’s criticism, the news of two women’s subversion of the institution of marriage shows that a hypocritical dominant order undermines itself in two ways: by disavowing a prohibited relationship, and then by rewriting it in conventionally honorable terms.

Here, and in Trigo’s work in general, there is not only a different mode of literary representation at stake, but an essential change in individual and collective perception. The most graphic way in which the author represents the change in *Sed de amar* is by his use of a medium that one writer of the period described as “el esfuerzo mutuo del corazón y la cabeza” (Donat 159); modern photography, in the form of the modernized magic lantern and stereographic, instant photography. In his efforts to revitalize both hearts and minds, Trigo uses new photographic perception together with the magic lantern in order to differentiate Jorge’s view of thwarted love from Justina’s. Thus, when the young woman makes clear to Jorge that she has realized that he used her to protect Marta, he escapes from her insults in this fashion: “desapareció instantáneo.” In contrast, Justina’s reaction to his departure consists of a hysterical furor, with this effect: “Sobre la fría oscuridad de la noche, creyó ver entonces toda la monstruosidad de la infamia, igual que en una proyección intensa e inmóvil de linterna mágica” (SA 223–24).

Metaphorically, the magic lantern is a particularly apt image not only in the above scene, but also for a critical description of Justina’s general function in the novel. Public spectacles traditionally used the magic lantern’s projection of images in the dark to provoke strong emotion, principally terror: “La mayor parte de imágenes producidas por linternas mágicas se refieren específicamente a visiones extraordinarias y aterradoras: la linterna se asocia a imágenes de muerte, a la dimensión de lo mágico y lo fantástico” (Gómez Alonso 294). Justina as a screen first reflects Jorge’s darker fantasies, while later she projects her own fears with respect to their consequences. But, like the magic lantern’s first true genre, documentaries, she also projects “imágenes para ‘acercar al mundo’ al espectador” (sic) (Gómez Alonso 294), in this case Jorge (and the reader). Given Justina’s gossiping and her eventual hysteria, it seems appropriate to add that there were public and private versions of the apparatus. The original lantern projected images on a public screen or wall; later, middle-class families could buy a version meant for “funciones domésticas” (Gómez Alonso 318).

In addition to Justina’s magic-lantern effects, Trigo’s description of his function as novelist approaches that of the magic-lantern projectionist (*linternista*), who not only had technical duties but also narrated, entertained, and “manipula[ba] las emociones del receptor” (Gómez Alonso 298). The novelist / *linternista* described the young woman’s reaction to Jorge’s deceit as a visualization of monstrous, immobile images. In contrast, after ending his affair with Marta and becoming mentally and physically frustrated in his prolonged relationship with Justina, Jorge reaches a state of “histérica movilidad,” in which impressions “entraban y salían de su consciencia [. . .] con rapidez inverosímil” (SA 294). The stereographic photographs that he takes and modifies, first with his sister and later with Rosa, constitute pre-cinematic images that also move in their circulation among Jorge, Rosa, and Lola. More importantly, the photographs make graphically visible a mobile process of substitution of “impressions” that takes place in the young

man's psyche. In the scene in which Jorge develops photographs with Rosa in his darkroom, he looks at her, dressed in black ("de luto"), and "llegaba Jorge a tener la idea de que era Lola misma, su hermana, sin dejar de ser su Rosa . . . en una gentil confusión muy dulce." Immediately after, Jorge and his lover see a "cliché de instantánea" that he had taken of a nude Rosa (SA 432).

In Jorge's perception of the young teacher as a substitute for his sister, the stereographic photograph, or stereograph, constitutes both an incentive for realistic "impressions" and a deceptive play of illusions. The principal difference between this type of photograph and any other is that, through a scientific trick of mirrors, viewers see it as a three-dimensional image. They use special binocular glasses (the stereoscope) that are perhaps more familiar to us in the form of the Viewmaster. An 1891 article in *La Revista Fotográfica* interprets the distinction more abstractly—the unique quality of the stereoscope "es la vida, la fiel representación de la naturaleza" (Unal 70). Later, the article describes in detail the stereographic effect: "Allí las figuras se destacan del fondo; la tercera dimensión, la profundidad, se presenta a nuestra vista; ya no es el papel, es la naturaleza lo que vemos [. . .]; en fin, un poco de aire que sintiéramos haría que nuestra fantasía diera movimiento al bello espectáculo" (70). Thus, in *Sed de amar*, the stereograph serves Trigo's aesthetic and ethical purposes in at least two distinct ways. First, Jorge sees "natural" life in his substitution of Rosa for Lola in their colored stereographs. Second, the young protagonist's fantasies of the ideal woman become strangely real.

A dying Lola first perceives the life and passion in the "muchas instantáneas" of Rosa that Jorge brings with him on his last visit. Shortly before her brother reads the news of Rosa's marriage to Claudia, however, Lola looks through her stereoscope at his lover, now strangely without coloring, and sees the demise of her own amorous longings. The description also foreshadows the death of her brother's hopes by exposing the only partial, black-and-white image he has of Rosa. Last, it anticipates Lola's physical death:

Por los lentes, con la caja negra que tenía forma de ataúd delante de los ojos, devoraba la enferma de sed de amores con avidez de espectro la radiosa dicha amante cuajada allí dentro en figuritas de Rosa que se destacaban de relieve y sin color entre el ramaje,—quieto también y pálido en las tintas fotográficas, como en petreas escenas de ensueños lejanos de la vida [. . .] fantástica que jamás existió [. . .] (SA 455).

Here, in Lola's eyes, fantasy clearly governs her brother's image of Rosa. Shortly after the description, Jorge reads the news of Rosa's disappearance, Lola almost immediately dies, and the novel ends. While Justina has served as society's screen for a fearful projection of Jorge's emotions and her own reaction, he, his sister, and Rosa are active in the production and enhancement of women's photographic images in an effort to envision a modern perception of them and their relationships. Instead, in the end, the photographs screen or project Jorge's melancholic, idealized incorporation of a doubly feminine, prohibited image; his vision began with Lola and ended when his sister viewed both her own and Jorge's displaced amorous joy, projected onto Rosa's miniaturized figure. Trigo employs these photographic illusions in conjunction with his rewriting of one of the real women's purportedly masculine qualities, according to the real newspaper versions. By

doing so, he further intensifies the blurring of reality and fantasy taking place in *Sed de amar*, and also his criticism of Jorge's social education in masculine roles. Compare, for example, Trigo's description of Jorge as an adolescent, cited above, and his (either Jorge's or Trigo's) use of technical enhancement of photographs, with this newspaper description of the woman disguised as a man in the real-life wedding portrait: "Este, o por mejor decir ésta, viste correctamente el traje masculino. Un ligero bozo le cubre el labio superior. En la fotografía el bigote aparece más pronunciado por el efecto del retoque" (27 June 1901; "Dos mujeres" n. pag.). On 28 June 1901, *El Imparcial* reports about the "husband" in the real couple's case: "Cuentan que Elisa, cuando vestía faldas, propinaba frecuentes palizas a Marcela, viendo con malos ojos a cualquier mozo que se permitiera requebrar a ésta. / Dícese también que en una ocasión en que un joven propusiera relaciones amorosas a Marcela, no sólo se opuso, sino que trató de plantear un duelo" ("Dos mujeres" front page).<sup>7</sup> In *Sed de amar*, Marta is first attracted to Jorge because she considers his domineering jealousy to be manly. Her husband and Jorge resort to a duel in order to resolve Tarenco's doubt concerning Marta's honor, and Argelez society applauds the young man's wounds. In contrast, Rosa describes Claudia's jealousy and domination in mainly fearful terms. Trigo gives Rosa's version of the two young women's relationship and also a fictional newspaper account of Claudia's dominance. The combination obliges Jorge (or a male reader) to see himself. In the process, "male self-identity [. . .] and the mastery to which it makes a claim, turns out to be a sexual as well as a political fantasy, subverted by the dynamics of bisexuality and by the rhetorical reversibility of masculine and feminine" (Felman 31).

In the novella Felman analyzes, there is an expressed triangle with one woman as the lover of both a man and another woman. *Sed de amar*, however, does not specify whether Rosa did or did not have a lover other than Jorge, or whether or not she chose to marry Claudia. Written from Jorge's point of view, the novel only indicates that he did not understand their relationship and that he is disappointed by what he perceives as his lover's deceit. The resulting silence, the lack of definition concerning Rosa's bisexuality, would have the same effect on a contemporary reader that an adolescent Jorge's androgynous appearance did on his peers. That is, the possibility of bisexuality, or of non-heterosexuality in general, functions in *Sed de amar* in the way expressed bisexuality does: as "a dangerously fluid mode of desiring that must, by both characters within the plot and critics regarding it, somehow be made to disappear" (Garber 457). Nevertheless, in Trigo's second novel it becomes clear that the disavowed, "fluid" relationships are two of the most steadfast. Rosa had promised long ago to stay with Claudia—two women alone, without any other family—just as Jorge had said he would "live for" Lola until her death. *Sed de amar* ends with both Rosa and Jorge remaining true to their original vows.

The two relationships reflect, above all, the importance that Trigo places in *Sed de amar* on the "rhetorical reversibility of masculine and feminine." His representation of men's and women's variable roles and images both confronts and subverts dominant gender definitions throughout the novel. Perhaps an even more destabilizing example is Jorge's will to understand Rosa's past and present relationships, since readers would perceive his effort as decidedly feminine. In all, Jorge identifies himself with his sister and then with Rosa. Yet Trigo makes explicit the negative results of a silence that all three maintain; they feel the impossibility of openly communicating to their partners details of

relationships that would include women's active sexuality. Thus, aside from Rosa's not explaining her relationship with Claudia, Lola never tells her kind husband about the dishonorable episode with her previous *novio* (although she believes he might already know), nor do she and Jorge ever speak of it. Trigo's uncovering and analysis of their difficulties again show how *la sed de amar*, his characters' need for love, affects not only their individual sexual or amorous relations, but society as a whole. At the novel's end, when the idealistic Jorge decides that the generalized thirst for love parallels the demands of striking port workers, he transfers his love for his dead sister and his thwarted love for Rosa into a political commitment to the also-repressed *pueblo*. In one last projection of his own inner conflicts, the young man decides that the answer for both feminine and masculine hysteria, the result of hypocrisy and repression, can only lie in the violent revolution of the body politic.

Trigo ostensibly writes of Jorge's "miseducation," projection of an ideal of change, and blind denial of a socially unacceptable relationship. Yet his novelistic version of a real and public scandal (controlled and silenced like his own writing afterward) educates his readers to see broader social implications. Ultimately, the most intense and pervasive scandal in the novel is one that his contemporary readers already knew but disavowed, like the two real women's story that *El Imparcial* and their portrait screened: beneath society's definitions of gender roles, there lay a powerfully undefined "amor del alma, [. . .] amor de los sentidos,—del todo diversos, contrarios, contradictorios [. . .]"

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Henceforth, I will abbreviate the title of this work to *Sed de amar* in my text and *SA* when giving parenthetical page references.
- <sup>2</sup> Lily Litvak explains that *fin de siglo* erotic literature “reaccionaba [. . .] contra la hipocresía de una sociedad que secretamente cultivaba las aberraciones sexuales más perversas y que tras una fachada de respetabilidad, mantenía un ejército de prostitutas” (232). Litvak also explains that at the time men’s sexual initiation was confined to prostitutes, friends of their mothers, or servants (199).
- <sup>3</sup> I include both genders in my description of the modern novelist, since Trigo explicitly includes Pardo Bazán as a *novelista-bióloga*. She was also an influence in his work: “En la Pardo Bazán aprendí [. . .] la pulcra corrección, para poder destrozarla a sabiendas.” He applauds her as a “psicóloga,” and states that in his opinion she is the novelist who makes the most able use of literary Spanish (*El amor* 302).
- <sup>4</sup> This statement is comparable to Gabriel Pardo’s in *La madre Naturaleza* (1887): “Si en los tiempos primitivos de una sola pareja se formó la raza humana, ¿cómo diantres se pobló el mundo sino con *eso*?” (358). *Sed de amar* speaks to incestuous desire in a conventional middle- to upper-class home, however, while in Pardo Bazán’s work an incestuous relationship evolves between two siblings with no knowledge of their kinship and almost exclusively in Nature.
- <sup>5</sup> There is, however, a case in the novel of the *diputado* Tarenco’s using a teacher’s femininity in exchange for maximum placement in a state exam (*oposición*). When Jorge moves in with Tarenco’s family, a woman teacher arrives to complain, because, in her words, one by one “quería acostarse el tribunal conmigo” in exchange for a first-place ranking. The abusive Tarenco appears to make arrangements with her to use his political authority in her favor, while he makes the same exchange for himself and with the same result of a “número uno” for her (*SA* 120–21).
- <sup>6</sup> Trigo rewrites the newspapers’ report of an altercation between the two women (Elisa and Marcela) and Elisa’s parents, as one between Rosa’s parents and the novelistic couple, as I state when I describe Justina’s gossiping. Like Rosa’s father, Elisa’s was in the military. In Elisa and Marcela’s case, the reported altercation ended with Elisa’s father ejecting Marcela from the parents’ home (23 June 1901; “Dos mujeres que se casan” front page).
- <sup>7</sup> The same newspaper reports: “Marcela declaró al cura que Elisa o Mario le proponía cosas horribles y repugnantes.” There is also a description of the nature of Elisa’s “carácter y tendencias varoniles,” when it states: “Usaba revólver, fumaba, blasfemaba y tenía costumbres y maneras más propias de un hombre rudo que de una delicada mujer” (30 June 1901; “Dos mujeres que se casan” front page).

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