



## FINAL DEGREE PROJECT

« “THE FEMALE SPECTATOR” BY ELIZA HAYWOOD AND “LA  
PENSADORA GADITANA” BY BEATRIZ CIENFUEGOS: A  
COMPARISON OF WOMEN’S PRESS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY »

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FIRMA DEL ESTUDIANTE

*To my parents, José and M.<sup>a</sup> Paz, for being my first teachers and teaching me the most important things in life; for your endless effort and sacrifice to give me everything you never had; and, above all, for believing in me unconditionally.*

*To my sister, Laura, my constant role model and my greatest pride. Thank you because your love will always be my lighthouse.*

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## ABSTRACT

This project work provides a comparative study of the periodicals *The Female Spectator* (1744-1746) by Eliza Haywood and *La Pensadora Gaditana* (1763-1764) by Beatriz Cienfuegos. Both works are linked to the socio-economic and cultural context, as well as the rise of spectator-type journalism, characterised in both instances by being addressed primarily to a female audience. Therefore, this study aims to analyse and highlight the similarities and differences found with the core themes of both publications, such as editorial voice, education, morality, politics, and religion.

KEYWORDS: Eliza Haywood, Beatriz Cienfuegos, *Female Spectator*, *La Pensadora Gaditana*, women's press.

## RESUMEN

En el presente trabajo se realiza un estudio comparativo de los periódicos *The Female Spectator* (1744-1746) de Eliza Haywood y *La Pensadora Gaditana* (1763-1764) de Beatriz Cienfuegos. Ambas obras están vinculadas al contexto socio-económico y cultural, además del auge de la prensa de tipo espectador, en la que en ambos casos encontramos como especificidad el destinarse principalmente al público femenino. Así pues, este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar y destacar las similitudes y diferencias que se hallan en los diversos temas que constituyen el eje central de los contenidos de ambos periódicos, como lo son la voz editorial, la educación, la moralidad, la política y la religión.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Eliza Haywood, Beatriz Cienfuegos, *Female Spectator*, *La Pensadora Gaditana*, prensa de mujeres.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 18th century witnessed a transformation in European culture with the consolidation of Enlightenment ideas, based on the priority of reason and progress, and the birth of “spectator” press. Inspired by the success of Addison and Steele, this genre found in women not only a profitable audience (García-Doncel 83), but also authors capable of appropriating public debate. Within this framework, this paper explores the relationship between two fundamental works of early female press: *The Female Spectator* by Eliza Haywood and *La Pensadora Geditana* by Beatriz Cienfuegos.

Both publications, although geographically separated and with a two-decade interval between their original editions, share the purpose of educating and reforming social conduct from a female perspective. A standout feature of these periodicals is their pioneering value, stemming both from the challenge posed by female authorship in a primarily male environment and from their determination to establish journalistic spaces generally directed at a female audience, thus creating a community of critical readers (Yakushkina 293).

As shown in this project, Haywood and Cienfuegos addressed crucial themes of the era such as education, morality, marriage, and the reform of customs. By distancing themselves from mere idleness and superficial topics traditionally associated with women, these authors achieved a disruptive effect: the validation of women's intellectual capacity. In doing so, they sought to elevate their social role to that of citizens capable of participating in serious and rational debate. Consequently, they encouraged Enlightenment ideas regarding the possession of one's own judgment and conscience to be applied not exclusively to men, thereby challenging the exclusion of women from the public sphere.

### 1.1. OBJECTIVES

Based on the premise that both works are generally considered the first “female spectator” periodicals, since they were written by women, and, the fact that they were intended for a female audience, the primary objective of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of both works to examine the similarities and differences between these journals.

Since this Final Degree Project links the degrees in Hispanic Philology and English Studies, its purpose is to establish a connection between the early signs of “female spectator” press and their respective national, cultural, and contextual realities, comparing them with one another. We consider this study timely, as its significance lies in its ability to recover the historical memory of these often-silenced voices and to identify these publications as the seeds of women's intellectual development in the press. By rescuing this “lost voice,” the study demonstrates that the struggle for autonomy was not a late phenomenon, but rather originated from women's participation in Enlightenment journalism.

### 1.2. METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

The methodology applied in this TFG is qualitative and comparative in nature, based on an interdisciplinary approach that combines fields such as the development of the press, gender studies, and the specific analysis of the works' contents. The study relies on the critical analysis of primary sources, such as original copies of the periodicals, as well as secondary sources that contextualize the works, among which we highlight, although others will be cited throughout the work, the research of Canterla (1996), Koon (2008), Hobisch (2012), Candau (2017), and Yakushkina (2025).

Regarding the structure, the work is organized progressively: it begins with the historical and contextual framework of the 18th century, followed by a biographical section that

examines the authors' identities in greater depth. Once the foundations for understanding the periodicals have been established, the study delves into a comparative thematic analysis focused on the editorial voice, education, morality, politics, and religion. It concludes with a technical analysis of the works' materiality—encompassing their editorial morphology and periodicity—and an evaluation of the impact and subsequent recovery of these voices.

## 2. CONTEXT

*The Female Spectator* by Eliza Haywood (1693-1756) and *La Pensadora Gaditana* by Beatriz Cienfuegos (1701-1786) are works published during the 18th century, a period marked by the Enlightenment, the rise of rationalism, and the birth of the press as a tool for moral and social reform. To fully immerse ourselves and understand these newspapers, we must first examine the socio-economic and cultural landscape in which they emerged. It is also essential to highlight the role of women, since both publications feature female editorial voices, and to analyse the origins of the moral press, specifically within the “spectator” genre<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL SETTING

Due to its earlier publication date (1744 – 1746), the socio-economic and cultural context of *The Female Spectator* will be addressed first. During the 18th century England, under the reign of George I, along with the growing power of Parliament, consolidated a political model based on a parliamentary democracy, thus replacing the preceding

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<sup>1</sup> For further information on the “spectator” genre, it is convenient to consult the studies of Schofield (1981), García-Doncel (1996), Guinard (1973), Ertler (2009), Urzainqui (2009), and Sánchez (2010), among others. Additionally, the University of Graz project, coordinated by Klaus-Dieter Ertler, which recovers and digitalizes “spectator” periodicals from across Europe: <https://gams.uni-graz.at/context:mws/sdef:Context/get?mode=&locale=de>.

monarchical absolutism. This scenario, which laid the foundations for a political structure centred on the balance of powers, fostered a culture of public communication in a nation that already led the rejection of the traditional social model prevalent in Europe.

In 1688, following the Glorious Revolution, England became the first country to establish a constitutional monarchy where Parliament limited royal power. Within this political framework, the two great parties that would dominate 18th-century politics emerged: One of them was the Whigs, defenders of parliamentary power and commercial interests, and the other, the Tories, supporters of Crown authority and landed tradition (Black 5). This partisan rivalry turned information into a weapon of mass influence, forcing both sides to compete for popular support through the press.<sup>2</sup>

The constant flow of publications not only served as a practical tool for politics but also functioned as the main channel for disseminating Enlightenment ideals, allowing critical thinking and reason to permeate a vibrant public life. The new bourgeoisie, influenced by these rising ideals, felt the need for education and identified with the values of the moral press and criticism of class divisions. Their political and social rise facilitated the occupation of elegant and renowned neighbourhoods like Mayfair and St. James, which became “the select side of town” (Black 119).

London functioned as the social and financial engine of the emerging British Empire; however, its rapid economic growth, driven largely by trade with the Americas and the Indies, led to a demographic expansion that resulted in severe overcrowding and extreme poverty in neighbourhoods like the East End. With the growth of the city and its economy,

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<sup>2</sup> See Rodríguez Palomero, Luisa Fernanda. “El periodismo inglés en el siglo XVIII”. *Estudios humanísticos. Filología*, n.º 14, 1992, pp. 255-268.

theatres and galleries flourished, and some cultural institutions emerged like the Royal Society of Arts and the British Museum.

London in the 18th century was the epicentre of trends, fashion, and intellectual debate. During this period, one of the great cultural and social trends was attending coffeehouses, already established in England since 1650. These were meeting centres mainly intended for men of various social classes, where the press was read, political issues were debated, or business was negotiated. As Lawrence E. Klein explains in his article “An Aspect of Post-Courtly Culture in England”, coffeehouses served as meeting points where cultural, social, and work life converged, as they fulfilled multiple functions such as mailroom, boardroom, desk space, or, as their name suggests, coffee shop:

The phenomenon of the coffeehouse is inseparable from broader commercial trends in Restoration and eighteenth-century England. The coffeehouse was itself a commercial venture, run by a small entrepreneur, yet tied, by virtue of its premier product, to the grand trade with the East. The coffeehouse was also an important site for commercial transactions. In an era before “offices,” when commerce went on mostly in the Exchange or in markets, the coffeehouse satisfied the functions of mailroom, boardroom, desk space, and, of course, cafeteria. (31)

This process of social transformation would not have been possible without the consolidation of new spaces of sociability like coffeehouses and *tertulias*. As Pérez Samper argues in her article, in contrast to traditional taverns and their glasses of wine, seen as something vulgar or related to drowsiness, coffeehouses, both the place and coffee itself, imposed themselves as symbols of refinement and lucidity, becoming emblems of the Enlightenment in Spain and the rest of Europe (39-40). Furthermore, coffeehouses were the setting where social life emerged from the privacy of homes, as they became

free meeting points where people from various social classes began to mix and relate freely, thus reflecting the change in mentality brought by the 18th century.

Just as the undeniable link established between coffeehouses in England and the 18th-century society, we could also trace a bridge between this century and the emergence of Enlightenment ideas. The origin of Enlightenment thoughts lies in the city of London, where philosophers like Bacon and Locke expressed their interest in discovering and interpreting their surroundings from their own perspective, guided by rationality (Candau 10). This shift challenges traditional scholastic education and religious dogmas, favouring instead an understanding of the world based on personal experience and reasoning. Subsequently, these ideas were adopted by French philosophers who would disseminate them throughout Europe. Enlightenment thoughts along with satirical criticism of the national spirit of the time triggered the creation of epigrams, pamphlets, letters, and moral newspapers to criticise and challenge traditions with a renewed approach.

Having addressed the context of 18th-century England, we will continue with that of the newspaper *La Pensadora Gaditana*. The Spanish 18th century was marked by a strong drive for reform. The main change occurred in the political sphere, as the century began with the death of King Charles II, who died without an heir, and consequently, the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), from which Philip V of Bourbon emerged victorious, thus assuming power. The dynastic change from the Habsburgs to the Bourbons, the precarious and divided situation in which the country found itself after the war, made a series of indispensable reforms. The Spanish society was aware of its deplorable and decadent state; however, opinions were sharply divided as to where the blame should lie (von Tschilske 65). On the one hand, those aligned with the Enlightenment thought blamed the Habsburgs for their excessive military spending, and

the deterioration of the agrarian sector. Furthermore, they criticised the unchecked power of the Church and the Inquisition, advocating for a comprehensive modernisation of the social order, and, as Fernández Palacio says, this was a thoroughly developed political strategy to build a modern state tailored to the European standards (2). On the other hand, there were the traditionalists who considered that the cause of the national problem stemmed from the neglect of conservative ideas and the entry into the country of new foreign ideas. Despite the controversies, Philip V, a supporter of the Enlightenment, introduced new ideas that helped create the reformist movement with repercussions in the social sphere. Spain lacked a bourgeois social class, as it was only emerging in cities with great commercial activity, among them, Cádiz and Barcelona. In the words of Hobisch:

No obstante, hay que tener en cuenta, en la historia de los periódicos morales, que en España apenas se había formado una capa social burguesa. Sólo en los centros comerciales, como Cádiz o Barcelona, se estaba desarrollando una burguesía, mientras que en la mayor parte del país dominaban estructuras rurales y la división entre pueblo y aristocracia seguían intacta. (9)<sup>3</sup>

The most criticised social class was the nobility due to its perceived idleness, being gradually displaced by the emerging middle class with ambitions for social, economic, and political ascent. As a result of this change, artisanal and commercial labourers began to be more valued, despite the continued disdain and mistreatment of the peasantry by the nobility.

This period of class criticism and Enlightenment reforms created an environment conducive to the consolidation of the moral press. Although its first shoots appear at the

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<sup>3</sup> “However, it must be borne in mind, regarding the history of moral weeklies, that a bourgeois social class had barely formed in Spain. Only in commercial hubs, such as Cádiz or Barcelona, was a bourgeoisie developing, whilst across most of the country rural structures dominated and the division between the common people and the aristocracy remained intact”. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

end of the reign and develop under Ferdinand VI, it is with the rise of Charles III, also known as the maximum representative of Enlightened Despotism, that these newspapers are institutionalised as tools of the State. The monarch supported Enlightenment thoughts and their dissemination, on the condition that they did not harm the Church or his own power. This king attempted to redefine the social model, for which he used moral newspapers as mouthpieces to disseminate monarchical reforms, leading them to become moral educators of society, whose objective was to adapt the population to a proto-liberal logic based on the English model (Ertler et al. 20).

However, this climate of openness found a drastic limit and was abruptly halted following the French Revolution.<sup>4</sup> Under the reign of Charles IV, this fear of revolutionary ideas, also known as “Floridablanca Panic”,<sup>5</sup> led to the imposition of iron censorship and closure of many periodical publications, as well as the end of reformist optimism and the laying of the foundations for the crisis of the Old Regime in Spain.

## 2.2. WOMEN’S STATUS IN THE 18TH CENTURY PUBLIC SPHERE

Next, we will specifically address the situation of women in the contexts of England and Spain. During the 18th century, the Age of Lights, in both nations, female identity was subject to a rigid domestic ideal that dictated that woman's natural role was household management and child-rearing, relegating her public life to the background (Candau 20). Regarding her education, access to it was limited and segregated, and her training was

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<sup>4</sup> As Sánchez observes “on the occasion of the French revolutionary uprising, which provoked a desperate attempt by Spanish rulers to preserve the country from any influence coming from beyond the Pyrenees for fear of revolutionary contagion” (10).

<sup>5</sup> The term “Floridablanca” is associated with the Count of Floridablanca, José Moñino y Redondo, the Secretary of State who oversaw the country’s foreign policy and promoted the creation of an “ideological cordon sanitaire”. See Pérez Sarrón, Guillermo. “Sobre los franceses y la crisis de la Ilustración en España. Un esbozo de interpretación.” *Caminos encontrados: itinerarios históricos, culturales y comerciales en América Latina*, edited by Joan Feliu Franch, et al., Colecció Amèrica, 16, Universitat Jaume, 2009, p. 47.

focused on “ornamental” tasks<sup>6</sup> and religious values, for, despite being the century of the Enlightenment and thus of reasoning, the objective of women's education was not to endow them with thought but with manners (Bolufer 16). As Argentina Rodríguez comments:

El discurso ilustrado se cifra en un discurso dual: el del hombre sobre el hombre, y el del hombre sobre la mujer. A la mujer, entonces, sólo se le concede el espacio de objeto del discurso masculino. La palabra y la escritura se cargan de elementos ideológicos que derivan de la necesidad de dominio que tiene una parte del género humano sobre la otra. Al legitimizarse, este discurso dicta el destino de la mujer como un destino donde su palabra carece de valor. (108)<sup>7</sup>

Education was not the only aspect in which they were limited, but economically, women from the lower classes in both countries worked out of necessity in the fields, markets, or domestic service, always in conditions of invisibility, lower wages than men, and with permission from a male figure. Women had to comply with the archetype of “the perfect married woman” of the Counter-Reformation, which would evolve to give rise to the “angel in the house” model prevailing in Spain throughout the 19th century (Cantero *De “perfecta casada” a “ángel del hogar”*). This archetype corresponds to the ideal of a woman who must be of gentle character, pious, and caring for her children and husband. In the words of Fray Luis de León in his work *La perfecta casada*:

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<sup>6</sup> The term “ornamental tasks” refers to the idea of educating women to be docile and sweet companions, rather than fostering autonomy and critical thinking. See Martínez Carreño, Aida. “Los oficios femeniles.” *Historia Crítica*, n.º 9, 1994, p.97.

<sup>7</sup> “Enlightened discourse is codified into a dual discourse: that of man about man, and that of man about woman. Woman, at that time, is only granted the space of an object of masculine discourse. Speech and writing are loaded with ideological elements deriving from the need for dominance of one part of the human race over the other. Upon being legitimised, this discourse dictates woman's destiny as one where her word lacks value”.

No sé yo si hay cosa más monstruosa y que más disuene de lo que es, que ser una mujer áspera y brava [...]. Mire su hechura toda, y verá que nació para la piedad [...]. Y no piensen que las crió Dios y las dio al hombre sólo para que le guarden la casa, sino también para que le consuelen y alegren. Para que en ella el marido cansado y enojado halle descanso, y los hijos amor, y la familia piedad, y todo generalmente acogimiento agradable. (155)<sup>8</sup>

At the beginning of the century, social classes still existed. The rise of the bourgeoisie and the industrial revolution transformed daily life; women from middle to upper classes had more time for cultural consumption, which significantly boosted an increase in the number of people who could read and write (García-Doncel 78-79), which proved very favorable for the population, since the illiteracy rate was extremely high, as education was not provided for free (Hobisch 9). With the expansion of Enlightenment ideas in Europe, women, mainly belonging to the high nobility and the emerging bourgeoisie, could for the first time communicate their concerns and social and political thoughts. This phenomenon took place in private salons (Candau 20), spaces of sociability where they gathered to exchange opinions on current affairs, and which functioned as female equivalents to coffeehouses, from which they were excluded.<sup>9</sup>

Although initially these *tertulias* were underestimated and criticised as places of leisure lacking intellectuality and seriousness (Acón 65), they evolved, starting from banal and superficial conversations to philosophical, scientific, and political reflection, adding to their debates the topics covered in the moral press of the time. In this way, the salon

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<sup>8</sup> “I know not if there be anything more monstrous and more discordant with what she is, than for a woman to be harsh and fierce [...]. Let her look upon her whole form, and she will see that she was born for piety [...]. And let them not think that God created them and gave them to man only to keep his house, but also to comfort and gladden him. So that in her, the weary and angry husband may find rest, the children love, the family piety, and all, generally, a pleasant welcome”.

<sup>9</sup> As Acón Pérez comments, “in the case of coffee houses, it was women who were marginalised and pushed into invisibility” (68).

consolidated as an alternative public sphere in which women could, among other activities, act as intellectuals and speakers.

In 18th-century England, the life of the married woman was governed by the legal doctrine of coverture<sup>10</sup> and *Common Law Female Property Rights*.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, upon marriage, woman lost her individual legal capacity, and all her possessions, dowries, and salaries became the property of her husband, so she could not take any legal action without the spouse's permission (Bailey 351-368). Despite this doctrine, in England a critical consciousness was cultivated and along with it, the rise of the bourgeoisie allowed the appearance of the Bluestockings,<sup>12</sup> groups of women who organised literary *tertulias* to debate intellectual and forbidden ideas in other forums.

Towards the end of the century, pioneering voices emerged such as that of Mary Wollstonecraft, who in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) demanded parity in education and rational equality against the British legal oppression, thus laying the foundations of modern feminism (Torralbo 271):

Consequently the perfection of our nature and capability of happiness, must be estimated by the degree of reason, virtue and knowledge, that distinguish the individual, and direct the laws which bind society: and that from the exercise of reason, knowledge and virtue naturally flow, is undeniable, if mankind be viewed collectively. (Wollstonecraft 39)

Meanwhile, in 18th-century Spain, although social control was persistent, the *Derecho Castellano*, more specifically the *Leyes de Toro* (1505), granted women economic advantages over English women, as it allowed them to keep their own surname after

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<sup>10</sup> See Stretton, Tim, and Krista J. Kesslerling, editors. *Married Women and the Law: Coverture in England and the Common Law World*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013, pp. 4-6.

<sup>11</sup> See Kamp, Amber. *Rights Most Precious: Common Law Female Property Rights from Early Modern England to Colonial Virginia*, Liberty University, 2008, p.4.

<sup>12</sup> See Guest, Harriet. "Bluestocking Feminism." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol.65, n.º ½, 2002, pp. 59-80.

marriage, and to maintain ownership of their goods (Gete 778-779). This means that their dowry and inheritance continued to belong to them, although this only allowed them property autonomy, not management, as the husband was the authorised administrator. With the reforms brought by the reigns of the Bourbons, the State promoted institutionalised female participation, highlighting the creation of the *Junta de Damas de Honor y Mérito*<sup>13</sup> (1787). This was an official entity where women belonging to the nobility and bourgeoisie could validate their administrative capacity.

This transition towards greater participation in the public and cultural sphere did not affect all women equally, as freedom of action depended heavily on their marital status. Thus, while marriage for many entailed huge legal and social restrictions, on the other hand, singlehood and, especially widowhood, represented the states of greatest autonomy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, allowing women to elude a husband's direct authority. However, the laws of each kingdom marked differences in their legal autonomy. On the one hand, in England, single women, also called spinsters<sup>14</sup> or *feme sole*, had full legal rights, but the primogeniture system often left them in a vulnerable economic and social position, for the established stereotype about those women was generally one of misfortune and bad omen. As Simón Hernández observes, being married was linked to virtue and a dignified life, as being under a husband's influence was understood by some as a vital success:

El fracaso por no casarse las sume en una vida sin virtud, lejos de la influencia de un esposo. Puesto que estos manuales de conducta y tratados de moral se dirigían a un público de jóvenes lectoras, en sus ideas se manifestaban una serie de actitudes hacia el deseo de contraer matrimonio y no querer permanecer sola. No solo el sustento

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<sup>13</sup> See Escrig Ferrando, Concha. "Reconstrucción e interpretación de las redes familiares de las socias de nuevo ingreso de la Junta de Damas de Honor y Mérito de Madrid (1814-1833)." *Aportes. Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, vol. 36, n.º 105, 2021, pp. 144-145.

<sup>14</sup> See Erickson, Amy. "Spinsters." *The Populations of the Past*, 12 jun. 2025, [www.campop.geog.cam.ac.uk/blog/2025/06/12/spinsters/](http://www.campop.geog.cam.ac.uk/blog/2025/06/12/spinsters/).

económico primaba, sino la construcción moral y social que establecía una vida digna.  
(138)<sup>15</sup>

In the case of women in widowhood, they economically recovered their autonomy and legal identity, in addition to having access to a part of the husband's rents that protected them. Despite her husband's death, the widow's well-being and future still depended on him, as it was he who established woman's happiness in his last will. This concept is reflected in the following fragment by Jones, where she states that "aristocratic women in the eighteenth century depended upon their jointure to survive their widowhood. They were dependent upon the men who created the marriage contracts, both their fathers and their future husbands" (21).

On the other hand, in Spain, the situation was notably more stable, thanks to the aforementioned *Derecho Castellano*. Single women benefited from an egalitarian inheritance system that guaranteed them individual patrimony against their brothers. Like in England, female singlehood could be likened to non-compliance with the moral norms of the time, as marriage was considered the central axis of a woman's life cycle, followed by motherhood. Any woman in this civil state, whether by her will or not, would be pejoratively called *solterona*, since society at that time rejected the idea of women living outside of male supervision or managing their resources. According to Tovar, single women faced social stigma because they maintained financial autonomy, controlled their own property, and lived free from male dominance (150). However, upon widowhood, the Spanish woman consolidated her economic power, as she recovered full administration of her dowry and maintained ownership of half of the common goods. This

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<sup>15</sup> "Failure to marry plunges them into a life without virtue, far from the influence of a husband. Since these conduct manuals and moral treatises were aimed at an audience of young female readers, their ideas manifested a series of attitudes towards the desire to marry and not wanting to remain alone. It was not only financial sustenance that took precedence, but the moral and social construction that established a decent life".

stable protection allowed Spanish widows to function as influential family heads and business administrators, maintaining an independence that their British counterparts only obtained after complex legal processes.

As it can be observed, the situation of women in England and Spain was marked by social subordination and various limitations that excluded them and linked them directly to the judgment of one or several male figures. However, under the impulse of the Enlightenment, they were able to communicate their concerns and create alternative public spaces like salons, where their capacity for reasoning and public voice were validated.

### 2.3. THE RISE OF THE “SPECTATOR” PERIODICAL GENRE

As stated above, the moral press emerged in England, more specifically in London, in a context of ideological diversity where a conservative and traditionalist mentality converged with social sectors driven by Enlightenment ideas and a will for renewal, both institutional and cultural. Likewise, the Bill of Rights of 1689 and the abolition of prior censorship after the expiration of the Licensing of the Press Act of 1662 were determining factors. These legal events not only consolidated press freedom but also boosted the rise of the middle class, commerce, and the birth of influential public opinion. As Kazan puts it in his article:

The lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695 marked the end of the pre-publication censorship and press regulation system that had existed for decades. It was a momentous milestone for the Liberty of the press. The removal of licensing and the restrictions on the number of printers and printing presses led to a proliferation of the press. (1)

One of the most used channels for the dissemination of these ideas was the press, more specifically the moral press, as it created a new periodical form with the purpose of representing and expressing these thoughts. The first newspaper to appear was *The Tatler* (1709-1711), founded by Richard Steele. It was a chronicle written under the fictional pseudonym of Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff, reporting news, poetry, or entertainment topics from various London coffeehouses and chocolate houses. Understanding the setting of this chronicle is essential, as it highlights how new journalistic styles were shaped by the coffeehouse.

Throughout its publication, other imaginary collaborators were added, including a woman, Jenny Bickenstaff, Mr. Bickenstaff's wife; the appearance of this female character shows Richard Steele's intention to bring his newspaper closer to the female public. The publication of *The Tatler* ended in 1711 with its last issue, number 271, as the author sought to reinvent his literary persona.<sup>16</sup> That is why after a brief period of several weeks, Steele, along with Joseph Addison, launched *The Spectator* (1711-1712). In this more complex and sophisticated newspaper, the fictional author was called Spectator, which would correspond to *Observador* in Spanish. The reason for that name lies in the fact that this character acted as an anonymous observer who analysed society. Additionally, it included numerous letters to the editor as part of its design, as well as pleasant criticism using witty humour and a moral tone.

Richard Steele and Joseph Addison are considered the two great journalistic figures of the 18th century, not only for the success of *The Spectator* but because they were able to interpret the contemporary social changes and see great profitability in the female public. Therefore, they adapted the newspaper's content to themes concerning women's interests;

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<sup>16</sup> According to Candau, "the author wished to appear under a new guise" (12).

these authors attacked social attitudes such as the lack of education for young women, the lack of legal protection for women in marriage, or even the pressure on and disrespect of single women (García-Doncel 82). From García-Doncel's perspective, Addison and Steele did more than just attract a fresh audience, which explicitly featured women, they also revolutionized the press by introducing an entirely new journalistic genre (83). This publication was followed by numerous others, including *The Guardian* and *The Female Spectator* by Eliza Haywood.

The Spanish press of the 18th century was highly conditioned by the legislative framework imposed during the reigns of Philip V and Ferdinand VI. Due to the Council Order of November 24, 1705, every author was compelled to request a printing license for any type of publication. Additionally, another inconvenience presented by the *Reglamento de Curiel* of May 17, 1752, was that works had to comply with the 19 rules established in the regulation for the organisation of censorship; in case of non-compliance, both the printer and the author would face harsh sanctions (Fernández 133). During this period, the Inquisition and the clergy had the power to control and prohibit any publication, so any national or foreign literary production was strictly reviewed before being printed or imported (Hobisch 9). However, that probably did not prevent the Spanish society from reading European newspapers, as Hobisch argues:

En este ambiente, no se podía introducir con facilidad las ideas ilustradas, ya que cuestionaban justo los dos pilares del poder en España: la Iglesia y el Rey absoluto junto con la aristocracia y sus privilegios sociales. Aunque estaban prohibidas, es probable que

se leyeran clandestinamente traducciones de periódicos ingleses y papeles en francés en el público español de cierta instrucción, ya que estaban de moda en toda Europa. (9)<sup>17</sup>

The generalised rise of the press in Spain happened in the early years of the 1760s, when King Charles III decided to foster the activity and dissemination of Enlightenment ideas. This decision must be related to the measures regarding printing and books adopted by the government, among which we can highlight the elimination of the fee on December 14, 1762, and law XXIV of March 22, 1763, which established that the printing privilege must be reserved solely to the author. Additionally, law XXV of October 20, 1764, established hereditary rights for these works, a measure that Lucienne Domergue interprets as an effort to compensate the heirs of writers whose sole contribution to their families was the prestige of their literary achievements. As she explains, “después de haber ilustrado su patria, no dejan más patrimonio a sus familias que el honrado caudal de sus propias obras, y el estímulo de imitar su buen ejemplo” (121).<sup>18</sup>

Against this backdrop, the first moral newspaper published in Spain was *El Duende Especulativo sobre la Vida Civil* (1761). According to Sánchez, its authorship corresponded to the Dutchman Juan Enrique Graef, and it not only imitated the format and critical character of English newspapers, based on simulating *tertulias* with several characters who commented on what was observed in Madrid society; but it also literally

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<sup>17</sup> “In this environment, Enlightenment ideas could not be easily introduced, as they challenged the very two pillars of power in Spain: the Church and the absolute King, along with the aristocracy and their social privileges. Although they were banned, translations of English newspapers and French papers were likely read clandestinely among the Spanish public of some education, as they were fashionable across Europe”.

<sup>18</sup> “Having enlightened their homeland, they leave no other estate to their families than the honourable wealth of their own works, and the encouragement to imitate their good example”.

reproduced up to twenty-five fragments<sup>19</sup> belonging to *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and *The Guardian*, or some of their translations (220).

Following *El Duende Especulativo* were other prints like *El Murmurador imparcial*, *El Pensador*, or *El Censor*, as the leading voices of the press under Charles III, specifically in the 1780s, a period considered the climax of the Spanish Enlightenment (Sánchez 221). As Hobisch comments, *El Pensador* (1762-1763 and 1767), written by Clavijo and Fajardo, is the most famous newspaper and the greatest success of the first publications of this genre. It had the king's approval and enjoyed notable reception among intellectual elites by adapting European thought to Spanish idiosyncrasy, combining Catholic faith dogma with some aspects of rationalism and European Enlightenment ideology (9-10).

In line with this spectator model, various mastheads were edited in Cádiz such as *La Pensadora Gaditana* (1763-1764), *El Curioso Entretenido* (1779-1780), or *El Argonauta Español* (1790-1791). In fact, regarding *La Pensadora Gaditana*, some scholars argue that it was created to counter the influence of the Madrid-based periodical, *El Pensador*, and that it even had a Madrid edition during the same years the Cadiz edition was published (Canterla 21).

### 3. ELIZA HAYWOOD AND *THE FEMALE SPECTATOR*

In the framework of a moral press that aimed to shape social behaviour, Eliza Haywood found the perfect strategy to approach the female public, becoming a pioneering voice through her writings, and blending ethical instruction and the interests of her readers. In this section, we will address her life and literary production to thus conduct a deeper study of her work *The Female Spectator*, one of our objects of study in this project.

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<sup>19</sup> See Guinard, Paul-J. "La presse espagnole de 1737 à 1791: Formation et signification d'un genre." *Centre de Recherches Hispaniques*, 1973, pp. 167-168.

### 3.1. LIFE AND WORKS

Within a journalistic sphere predominantly ruled by men, Eliza Haywood established a historic precedent by launching the first periodical specifically designed by and for women. As stated by García-Doncel, “en este aún incipiente y sin embargo pujante mundo periodístico manejado por hombres destaca la figura de una mujer: Mrs Eliza Haywood, la primera mujer que edita una publicación periódica para mujeres” (83).<sup>20</sup>

Little is known about the life and literary production of Eliza Haywood, as according to Candau, “she herself did not wish to be known by us and took great care to create widespread uncertainty surrounding her own life” (24). The information we have, which is sometimes unanimously supported hypotheses by various scholars, indicates that Mrs. Haywood was the daughter of a London shopkeeper and was probably born between 1690-1693. She got married in 1710 to Valentine Haywood, a clergyman whom she supposedly abandoned shortly after marriage, some time between 1715 and 1720, although the reasons are unknown. There are other theories that state that her husband must have abandoned her or died, as this would explain that she was forced to work to earn money.

About her personal life, it is also known that she was the mother of two children and was probably capable enough to support herself and her children economically. Regarding her professional career, it was equally remarkable for its versatility; while some scholars focus on her work as an actress, her contributions spanned numerous literary forms: Candau notes that she not only performed on stage but also wrote dramatic pieces, while

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<sup>20</sup> “Within this still nascent yet burgeoning journalistic world managed by men, the figure of one woman stands out: Mrs Eliza Haywood, the first woman to edit a periodical publication for women”.

expanding her writing to fiction, political tracts, journals, poetry, and multiple translations from French (24).

Haywood's entry into the literary world of London began strongly, as her first book, *Love in Excess*, published in 1720, was already in its sixth edition after its first five years published; additionally, during this period, the author had written other works. It is known that, around this time, Eliza Haywood was already a well-known person among city readers, and her name was relatively frequently associated with the Whig party, mainly with Richard Steele and Daniel Defoe (Koon 43-55).

However, it was in 1725 that *Memoirs of a Certain Island Adjacent to the Kingdom of Utopia* appeared, a work loaded with satirical tone and suggestive enough to allow identification of the characters. Some writers from the Tory party interpreted it as an offence, like Alexander Pope who was one of those who attacked her. First, he did so personally in his famous *Dunciad* (1728), and later directed his criticism directly against her published works *Utopia* and *The Court of Carimania* (1727), qualifying them as scandalous books.

After these events, there was a sudden interruption in her production, the causes of which are unknown. Nevertheless, it will be in the 1730s when some of her literary activity is apparently perceived, although it is specifically in 1744 when she appears as editor of *The Female Spectator*, the first journalistic publication edited by a woman and intended for women. With the end of the issues, Haywood focused on writing satirical works that appeared in *The Parrot* and also continued writing novels and other works with a didactic tone, although they were less profitable than her previous works. According to Koon, “she continued to turn out novels and essays, but her work had taken a strongly didactic turn, and morality was less profitable than scandal” (44). Haywood died on February 25, 1756, leaving two other novels ready to be printed (García-Doncel 78-79).

This life trajectory, marked by independence and adaptation to the market, is clearly reflected in the evolution of her heroines. In the first stage, during the 1720s and 1730s, Haywood portrayed women torn by conflict who ended in exile or death; however, in her second stage, spanning from the 1740s to the 1750s, she opted for a more conservative profile. Her last protagonists found their reward in marital stability, thus tuning in with the new values of respectability of the rising bourgeoisie. In the words of Mary Anne Schofield:

The majority of the novels of her first period (1720's and 1730's) depict the troubled situation of the divided heroine who is unable to reconcile elements within herself and accept her position in society; she ends her struggle in exile or death. The novels of her later period (1740's and 1750's) offer a more conservative portrait of the virtuous heroine who is tested throughout the novel, but who remains true to her virtue and her womanly position and is happily rewarded with marital bliss at the conclusion. (10)

### 3.2. *THE FEMALE SPECTATOR*

Next, we will focus on her journalistic work *The Female Spectator*, one of the two objects of study in this project. In this section, general information will be provided that will allow us to understand more easily its subsequent contrastive analysis with its Spanish counterpart, *La Pensadora Gaditana*.

This English moral newspaper written by Eliza Haywood was published in London between 1744 and 1746; twenty-four issues were distributed each month divided into Books. The first publication was not Book 1, as could be expected, but the *dedication*, which is a letter addressed to the Duchess of Leeds, to whom the Lady Spectator, the editorial voice of the newspaper, dedicates her work. In it, she explains the objective of the newspaper, which is to fix some social errors that could become vices over time: to

avoid those vices, she proposes that women imitate a lady of impeccable conduct and virtue to achieve perfection. After the *dedication*, the next publication was Book 1, and without interruption the rest of them were published.

Since this newspaper followed *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, and addressed similar themes, questions regarding its originality have occasionally arisen. However, these doubts are quickly dissipated since it is the Lady Spectator herself who declares herself a continuator, and even a sister of *Mr. Spectator*, “in imitation of my learned Brother of ever precious Memory” (Haywood 224). Despite these newspapers being thematically similar and sharing the intention to address the interests of contemporary women, *The Female Spectator* stands out not only for its content and wit, but for being the first moral newspaper written by a woman and for a female audience.

#### 4. BEATRIZ CIENFUEGOS AND *LA PENSADORA GADITANA*

Having generally examined the English newspaper, we will now try to provide enough information for an approach to the fundamental aspects of *La Pensadora*, including its authorship, which will lay the basis for its subsequent contrastive analysis.

##### 4.1. USE OF PSEUDONYM: THE AUTHORSHIP CONTROVERSY OF *LA PENSADORA GADITANA*

Unlike Eliza Haywood and her newspaper, *The Female Spectator*, the identity of the person hiding behind *La Pensadora Gaditana* constitutes, according to Checa Godoy, one of the “great unknowns of Andalusian journalism” (26). Although the work is presented under the signature of Beatriz Cienfuegos, as Cinta Canterla explains in her article “The Authorship Problem of *La Pensadora Gaditana*”, the controversy over whether that name

corresponded to a real woman or was a pseudonym used by a man arose with its publication in 1763 (29).

In the gatherings of the time, the debate did not only focus on discovering the social identity, but on questioning the very possibility that a woman possessed the necessary intellectual capacity to argue (Canterla 30). This question, raised back then, remains relevant to this day, and her identity continues to be a mystery. On the one hand, researchers such as Scott Dale attribute the authorship of the periodical to an Andalusian clergyman, likely named Don Juan Francisco del Postigo (Dale XI). On the other hand, Canterla, among others, introduces certain nuances to this analysis by mentioning the discovery of the surname Cienfuegos in the records of the *Archivo de Indias* and drawing on legislation contemporary to *La Pensadora Gaditana* that prohibited publishing under false names. Nonetheless, she acknowledges that such documentary arguments are not sufficient to prove that the aforementioned Doña María Cienfuegos was indeed the author of the periodical (Canterla 32-34).

However, in her article “Beatriz Manrique Lara Alberro, Marquise of García del Póstigo, autora de *La Pensadora Gaditana* bajo el pseudónimo de Beatriz Cienfuegos”, Cinta Canterla comments that, according to Manuel Ravina's thesis, an 1892 reference attributes the periodical to D. N. del Póstigo (742). Based on this information and following recent research, it has been clarified that those initials were an administrative convention of the Navy, standing for “Don Nombre”, which was used to refer to someone whose name was unknown. This clue allowed Canterla to link the work with the prestigious García del Postigo family, resident in El Puerto de Santa María (Cádiz). Furthermore, considering that the person who wrote *La Pensadora Gaditana* must have remained in the city for a long period, Cinta Canterla consulted the service records of the males of that lineage and

verified that none of the males of that family were in the city with the necessary continuity to write a weekly newspaper between 1763 and 1764 (748).

Nevertheless, Beatriz Manrique de Lara Alberro, already a widowed marquise during the publication period of Francisco García del Postigo, resided permanently in Cádiz, and her profile matched much of the literary description of the *Pensadora* (753-754), as both embody the ideal of a woman of high social standing, endowed with a solid intellectual background and a sharp, critical perspective on the customs and morals of Gaditane society of the time. Likewise, the work is saturated with nautical terms and technical references from the Navy, a natural language for a woman whose immediate family consisted of elite naval officers (754). In addition to this evidence, there is a clear correlation between her periods of economic difficulty after becoming widowed and the successive printings of the newspaper, thus suggesting that she used journalism as a professional means of livelihood under the shelter of anonymity (751-752), although this remains mere speculation.

This unknown circumstance, now cleared up, directly conditions the construction of an editorial voice that brings her closer in likeness to Eliza Haywood, allowing us to recover the Marquise as a philosopher and journalist who participated with great professional conscience and dignity in the protoliberal debate of her time. In the words of Cinta Canterla:

Hay muchas cosas que aún nos quedan por saber, pero hay otras muchas que sobre La Pensadora Gaditana ya sabemos. Démosle el lugar que se merece en el Cádiz cosmopolita, ilustrado y liberal a nuestra querida filósofa y periodista Beatriz Cienfuegos, alejándola de la imagen obsoleta de una Andalucía siempre arrodillada en los confesionarios. Y

después, como decía el Cándido de Voltaire, vayamos a nuestro jardín, y trabajemos.  
(754)<sup>21</sup>

Despite all the investigations, all the conclusions reached by researchers like Manuel Ravina or Cinta Canterla to date cannot confirm with absolute certainty the authorship of the newspaper *La Pensadora Gaditana*. Nonetheless, as Urzainqui says:

Es de esperar que en un futuro próximo nuevas profundizaciones en los cincuenta y dos discursos de *La Pensadora* nos ayuden a penetrar más en el sentido de sus críticas, la filiación de sus ideas, su engranaje con las de otros textos de la época y su utillaje expresivo. Por fortuna, con la reedición completa del texto las bases están echadas. (292)<sup>22</sup>

#### 4.2. *LA PENSADORA GADITANA*

After addressing the uncertainties about the newspaper's authorship, in this section we will try to provide basic information about the newspaper *La Pensadora Gaditana*, as it was done previously for *The Female Spectator*, with the purpose of establishing a basis for the comparative analysis of those works.

This Spanish newspaper was published between 1763 and 1764, under the pseudonym Beatriz Cienfuegos. It was published weekly, more precisely, every Thursday. A total of fifty-two issues were distributed gathered in 4 volumes, each of these numbers referred to as a “Pensamiento” (Thought). Its first publication consisted of the prologue, called

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<sup>21</sup> “There are many things that we have yet to discover, but there are many others that we already know about *La Pensadora Gaditana*. Let us grant our beloved philosopher and journalist, Beatriz Cienfuegos, the place she deserves in cosmopolitan, Enlightened, and liberal Cádiz, distancing her from the obsolete image of an Andalusia permanently kneeling in confessionals. And then, as Voltaire’s *Candide* used to say, let us go to our garden, and work”.

<sup>22</sup> “It is to be hoped that, in the near future, further insights into the fifty-two discourses of *La Pensadora* will help us penetrate deeper into the meaning of her critiques, the affiliation of her ideas, their interlocking with those of other texts of the period, and her expressive toolset. Fortunately, with the complete reissue of the text, the foundations have been laid”.

*Prólogo y Razón de Obra*, where *La Pensadora Gaditana* presents herself and exposes the reason and purpose of her publication, which was to defend women's education and rights, and avenge them from the ideas and thoughts exposed in the moral newspaper *El Pensador*. In the words of the *Pensadora*:

[...] y solo nos hablan en aquellos intereses que, por ser indispensables, se vén en la precisión de tratarlos con nosotras: y con todas estas experiencias, muy llenas de vanidad, nos gloriámos de nuestra suerte, celebrámos sus cortejos (el Pensador sea sordo) y aplaudímos sus rendimientos, quando todo esto son hazañerías con que procuran nuestro engaño, solicitando sus idéas á costa de nuestros pesáres, y muchas veces de nuestro honor. Pues no, Señoras mías, ya tienen Vms. Quien las vengue; ya sale á campaña una mujer que las desempeñe; y en fin con pluma y baquiña, con libros y bata se presenta una *Pensadora*. (Cienfuegos 4-5)<sup>23</sup>

Unlike the English newspaper, the *Pensadora* tries to emphasize originality by disassociating itself from any other similar newspaper, even by denying any similarity with the *Female Spectator* or *El Pensador*. Although on multiple occasions they shared the same topics, she assures that she will never be a copy of them. As she herself says in her *Prólogo*:

Si conceptúas (como se hace de otro) de que para decir verdades, y corregir abusos me valgo de extranjeras noticias, puedes cotejar mis papeles con aquellas, y saldrás de la duda. Basta de Prólogo, y espera la semana que viene el principio de mis trabajos, los que

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<sup>23</sup> “[...] and they only speak to us on those matters which, being indispensable, they find themselves compelled to discuss with us: and despite all these experiences, being full of vanity, we glory in our fate, celebrate their courtships (let *El Pensador* be deaf) and applaud their submissions, when all this is but affectation with which they seek our deception, pursuing their schemes at the expense of our sorrows, and often of our honour. No, indeed, my Ladies, you now have one who will avenge you; a woman now takes the field to vindicate you; and at last, with pen and *baquiña*, with books and gown, a female Thinker steps forward”.

me serán agradables, si logro en su acogida, y en la observancia de sus máximas el premio de mis ideas. (Cienfuegos 18)<sup>24</sup>

Finally, although *La Pensadora Gaditana* is widely recognised as a pioneering 18th-century publication that challenged traditional gender roles in Spain, its historical study remains marked by the persistent debate over its authorship, as critics question whether the voice behind the text truly belonged to Beatriz Cienfuegos. This uncertainty directly shapes the construction of the editorial voice, which is a central element that either aligns it with or distances it from its counterpart, Eliza Haywood.

## 5. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: EDITORIAL VOICE AND THEMES

Once the general features of both periodicals have been outlined, we will delve in detail into the comparative analysis of our objects of study, *The Female Spectator* and *La Pensadora Gaditana*. To do so, we will address in various sections the editorial voice and the themes covered in both works.

### 5.1. CONSTRUCTING THE EDITORIAL VOICE

In this section, we will address the editorial voice constructed for each newspaper, leaving aside the author of *The Female Spectator*, Eliza Haywood, and the authorship controversy of *La Pensadora Gaditana* addressed previously. In the case of the newspaper *The Female Spectator*, the main fictional writer, who oversees writing the moral newspaper, is the Lady Spectator who describes herself as a mature woman who has never considered

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<sup>24</sup> “If you conceive (as is done of another) that in order to speak truths and correct abuses I avail myself of foreign reports, you may compare my papers with them, and you will be rid of your doubt. Enough of the Prologue; expect next week the beginning of my works, which will be pleasing to me if I achieve, in their reception and in the observance of their maxims, the reward for my ideas”.

herself to possess great beauty. Additionally, she presents herself as a very sincere person and eager to demonstrate it to her readers, which is why at the beginning of her newspaper she confesses that in her life there were periods in which she did not have a correct life or according to the social demands of her time.

Nonetheless, she highlights that it is precisely thanks to the company with which she related that she had access to a lot of information. Additionally, in the first book she comments that her education was based on more liberal knowledge than that corresponding to the contemporary women of her time. This overview suggests that her unconventionally liberal education, combined with her personal experiences and innate talent, empowered her to give advice to other women and critique social vices from a distinctly female perspective. In the words of Lady Spectator in Book I:

With this experience, added to a genius tolerably expensive, and an education more liberal than is ordinarily allowed to persons of my sex, I flattered myself that it might be in power to be in some measure both useful and entertaining to the public. (Haywood 9)

Therefore, it is worth to highlight the fact that she never presented herself as a moral referent or source of knowledge, as she admitted that sometimes her information was not enough. For that reason, in the newspaper she is accompanied by three friends who further enhance this knowledge: Mira, the Wise Widow, and Euphrosine.

The first to appear is Mira, a married woman who lives her marriage in harmony; already in her first manifestation in the newspaper, she comments on topics like freedom and youth, arguing that if young people were given absolute freedom, they would be doomed to be unhappy until they reached maturity. The second is the Wise Widow, who, as her name indicates, is a widow, and, moreover, a mother. Her facet as a widow is of great interest as it is a female figure that stands out, among other reasons, for the absent

influence of a man. The Widow, in her case, addresses the theme of reflection, and considers that:

The beautiful and noble widow, who is so good never to fail making one in our little society, was inclined to impute this thoughtless behaviour in many people to the negligence of those who, having the care of their reduction, did not inspire them with proper notions of the necessity there is for every body to enter sometimes into themselves; but we are all against her in this point, and she was easily convinced [...]. (Haywood 175)

Therefore, she emphasises the need to teach the youth to reflect, and to do so seriously, as that will prevent them from belonging to the ignorant and from lacking significant achievements or life goals. And last, Euphrosine, who is the daughter of a rich merchant. Lady Spectator tells in the form of a story how a man courted her, she did not love him and how her family prevented the undesired marriage, thus showing an example of a united, kind, and happy family.

Although the Lady Spectator serves as the primary editorial voice, the publication functions as a collaborative effort among a small circle of four female friends who debate and agree upon all its content (Candau 41). This cooperation among them is reflected in the newspaper, when the Lady Spectator describes and explains how they create and debate the contents of their publications by meeting twice a week: First to communicate everything observed and heard, and then to share their writings; that process is shown in the following quote extracted from Book II:

One of the most material of which is to devote two evenings in every week to the business we have engaged in. In the first of these meetings we communicate to each other what intelligence we receive, and consider on what topics we shall proceed. In the second, we lay our several productions on the table, which being read over, every one has the liberty

of excepting against or censuring whatever she disapproves; nothing being to be exhibited to the public, without the joint concurrence of all. (Haywood 61-62)

Regarding her sources, Haywood seems to have a certain interest in not revealing how she obtained this information; she comments that the stories have been observed by herself, told to her by some friend, or someone trustworthy. Additionally, sometimes she claims to have heard them from creatures like gnomes or birds. In the following quotes, we can observe how in different situations she records the participation of another subject in the process of obtaining her sources: “I have been told by those who are to be depended upon” (171), “I am informed by the Gnomes who preside over midnight revels” (168), or “It was communicated to me by a Sylph [...]” (80). Furthermore, she maintained a level of discretion regarding the identities of the individuals portrayed in her stories. This anonymity was a calculated strategy; by avoiding direct accusations, she could critique their vices. Despite narrating numerous stories with protagonists with proper names, these were invented: for example Erminia, Plavia or Altizeerra (Candau 42).

When both newspapers are compared, the editorial voice is probably one of the most differentiating characteristics (Sánchez 223). While Eliza Haywood uses several characters to make observations and write her newspaper, in Cienfuegos' work there is a single female perspective, *La Pensadora Gaditana*. This editorial voice presents herself in the Prologue and Reason of the Work. To begin with, she proudly clarifies her Andalusian origin, more specifically from Cádiz, as can be seen in the following fragment:

Pues además del privilegio de Andaluza, que me poone en la posesión de ser natural de una Provincia donde las mugeres nacen sabiendo, la circunstancia de hija de Cádiz es otra causa para poder esperar de mis semejantes producciones; pues es notorio á todo el

mundo, que prodiga se muestra la naturaleza con nosotras franqueándonos dotes en el alma. (Cienfuegos 13)<sup>25</sup>

Regarding her personal life, she recounts that her parents wanted her to be a nun and that is why she lived for six years in a convent, which justifies that she knows how to manage books. However, she rejects the idea of being in confinement within a convent (Cienfuegos 11), which is a path that her father, an honorable Montañés, apparently did not agree with. In addition, he, ironically, warned her of the risk of trying to influence young women to study. She shows that she is a well-educated woman as she knew Latin, had knowledge of philosophy, and prayed in Greek; she also comments that she is in her mid-life, “entre merced y señoría” (Cienfuegos 11), and that it is sufficient age to give accurate advice without it affecting her. *La Pensadora* expresses that she is not married by choice, as she valued her freedom over marriage and its inherent limitations.

As noted above, one of the differences with the *Female Spectator* was the plurality of voices and characters it presents, in contrast to the Cádiz weekly where she is the only one in charge of writing the book with discretion. This is clear in the fragment of the *Prólogo* where she states: “la soledad con que esto escribo” (Cienfuegos 13).<sup>26</sup> Another difference is the origin of her sources; while the Lady Spectator sometimes refers to external agents who inform her, the *Pensadora* attributes to herself the absolute merit of all her thoughts, highlighting again the sense of originality.

Both writers resort to letters from readers as a device to incorporate the epistolary genre into their works. As early as the 18th century, the incorporation of letters from readers

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<sup>25</sup> “For besides the privilege of being an Andalusian woman, which places me in possession of being a native of a province where women are born knowing, the circumstance of being a daughter of Cádiz is another reason to expect such productions from me; for it is known to all the world how prodigal nature shows herself to us, freely granting us gifts within our souls”.

<sup>26</sup> “The solitude in which I write this”.

into newspapers constituted a novel resource, providing the writer with the opportunity to offer diverse perspectives and themes (Urzainqui 2). Regarding *The Female Spectator*, letters were sent to Lady Spectator anonymously or under symbolic pseudonyms such as Sarah Oldfashion (219) and Cleora (194). In these letters, readers apparently presented their problems sincerely with the intention of finding a solution or advice, thereby opening a debate between the reader, the writer, and even among the correspondents themselves.

This technique fostered the creation of a female community capable of discussing social and daily conflicts "as effectively as a male one" (Yakushkina 293). As for the authorship of these letters, critics generally agree that Eliza Haywood herself wrote all or nearly all of them; consequently, the author positioned herself as both writer and "reader" simultaneously (Spacks 13).

In the case of *La Pensadora Gaditana*, we likewise find this resource of letters from supposed readers, likely influenced by earlier English newspapers (Azofra 3). As Soler Arteaga recounts, eighteen of the fifty-two *Pensamientos* are writings in which female readers ask for the *Pensadora's* opinion regarding a subject. In her article, Soler highlights eleven of them, which are known as "ladies' letters" and classifies them by theme. Five of them (*Pensamientos* XXVIII, XXXII, XXXIV, XXXVII and LI) revolve around marriage; three are critiques of the defects she finds in men and women (*Pensamientos* IX, XLIV and XLVII); and finally, the remaining three (*Pensamientos* XIII, XXXIII and XLVII), which were letters of protest, that presented an opinion contrary to the author, whether due to the criticism of the customs of the women of Cádiz, fashion or social practices (Soler 167-169). All those letters could appear signed in three ways, whether with initials, with nicknames or with a name related to the topic to be addressed; some

examples of signatures would be “*La Desengañada*” (107), “*El Pobre abandonado*” (49), “*Boca de verdades*” (191), “P. A. Z” (41), and “*Doña Petronila Babioca*” (182).

In this newspaper, this device was used to comment on the work's reception in society, to assume different perspectives or raise new topics, and to criticize vices and customs. As Hobisch notes, epistemic correspondence provides women with a platform in the public sphere to denounce and seek redress for the abuses suffered within the domestic realm (62). Nonetheless, the presence of two types of female voices must be considered, since some of the letter-writers presented justified and respectful criticisms, which were backed by the fictional author's social authority. On the other hand, others, with their unreflective arguments or those contrary to *La Pensadora*'s ideology, unintentionally revealed their own vices, thereby publicly ridiculing both themselves and their letters (Hobisch 54-55). Regarding the authorship of the letters, scholars generally believe that the readers are fictitious and that their creation rests exclusively with the newspaper's author. According to the stylometric analysis presented in the article “Cartas y ‘pensamientos’ en la prensa del siglo XVIII: *La Pensadora Gaditana*” by Azofra, the readers' letters, the responses to them, and the work's prologue all originate from the same person, that is Beatriz Cienfuegos (11). In short, the letters were an intensification mechanism that allowed the journalist to address public response and introduce relevant topics while countering opposing views to strengthen her arguments and authorial image. In Azofra's words:

Brindan a la periodista una oportunidad para comentar la recepción de su publicación en la sociedad, para plantear temas que considera de interés para el público y, con frecuencia,

para rebatir posibles opiniones contrarias a las suyas; en definitiva, para reforzar su argumentación y su imagen personal. (22)<sup>27</sup>

In both works, these alleged texts written by readers are used as a device that makes the newspaper more dynamic and provides multiple perspectives. According to Candau, these letters and stories, which the authors incorporated as a pretext for the narrative and, in turn, for moral instruction, generated a significant impact on their own and captured the public's attention (29). For all these reasons, it must be noted that these newspapers, combined with their female authorial image, consolidated a communicative model without precedent in the field of intellectual expression of the time (Urzainqui 2).

## 5.2. EDUCATION AND THE DEFENCE OF FEMALE INTELLECT

As noted throughout this project, both authors express their interest in the individual consciousness of women and their situation as members of society, which leads us to address one of the most emphasized topics in both productions: women's education.

Education plays a fundamental role in the 18th century, as, based on Enlightenment ideas, it was the only way to progress. Furthermore, the education they proposed differed drastically from the pedagogical tradition that preceded them, since it was based on evolution, well-being, and the mastery of nature from a more practical or utilitarian approach. For Enlightenment thinkers, education was a crucial and necessary right for all citizens; therefore, they considered that it should be public and universal (Candau 54-55).

Both analysed works not only possess an intrinsic didactic and moralising character, but they also openly address the importance of education throughout their texts. In *The*

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<sup>27</sup> “They afford the journalist an opportunity to comment on the reception of her publication in society, to raise topics that she considers of interest to the public, and, frequently, to refute potential opinions contrary to her own; in short, to reinforce her argumentation and her personal image”.

*Female Spectator*, Haywood emphasizes that the education of children is a matter and responsibility that must be tackled by parents and tutors, with the aim of ensuring they are sufficiently endowed with reasoning so as not to fall into harmful vices throughout their lives. Likewise, we can observe how the author follows Enlightenment ideas by advocating that education is also a task that should be attributed to governors:

It is the undoubted business of our parents and governors, to keep all dangerous propensities in us under the greatest subjection, and preserve nature in its purity while we are young, and our own to do it afterward, since the infallible consequences of any neglect on this score, are no less than to render us obnoxious to the world, and irksome to ourselves. (Haywood 112)

Although the text mentions that education also consists of subsequent personal development and learning, Haywood refrains from explaining how this should be structured or what it should be based on. Nonetheless, she suggests and demonstrates through her stories how an educated person finds it easier to achieve virtue and avoid falling into vice (Candau 55).

Regarding the education of women, Haywood presents a duality that lies in the balance between tradition and progress. While she respects the conventions of traditional marriage, in which there is a need for subordination, she simultaneously and firmly defends the exploration of reason and the sciences. The author, through the voice of the Lady Spectator, maintains that women's education is not a threat to the social and family construct, but rather provides them with a self-awareness that will allow them to be better mothers, wives, and citizens (Candau 29). This idea is reinforced by the fact that Haywood presents intelligent and capable women from the very beginning of the work, thereby rejecting the stereotype of the unstable and vulnerable woman, as shown in the following fragment:

Haywood rejects the popular idea of woman as the irrational, emotion ridden embodiment of frailty and presents her as intelligent and reason able, even as she points out why neither her intellect nor her rationality is enough in evidence. She pays women the ultimate compliment in speaking to them as responsible human beings with the same ambitions, desires, and needs as their fathers, their brothers, and their husbands. She does not question existing social patterns-careers for the one, domesticity for the other-nor does she equate the sexes in the manner of fulfillment. While agreeing that men should go forth, women should bring forth, she does suggest the dangers of inequities in education and experience: untrained, ignorant females are not likely to improve the species. (Koon 54)

Haywood postulates that the lack of intellectual instruction condemns women to a superficial leisure,<sup>28</sup> focused on appearance and frivolity. For her, the ideal way to promote female education is to transform the nature of entertainment, that is, to use daily experiences and recreational reading themselves as tools for learning. By applying a critical and pragmatic sense to these pastimes, women could overcome the vacuity of their free time, transforming it into a space for self-reflection and the refinement of their own identity (Yakushkina 293). This defence of women's intellectual autonomy within the social constraints of the 18th century is, in a sense, why this work is considered part of an early feminism (Candau 29).

As noted in the preceding pages, the periodical itself fulfils an educational function, as it instructs while it entertains (Yakushkina 294). In fact, Haywood herself states on several

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<sup>28</sup> This superficial leisure refers to the inevitable interest that women, especially female readers, were expected to have in matters of courtship and marriage, as these formed a fundamental part of their lives, in contrast to the minimal space such concerns occupied in the lives of men. As Koon comments, Haywood was aware that this interest occasionally prevented women from developing their intellectual curiosity or their own rational growth. See Koon, Helene. "Eliza Haywood and the *Female Spectator*." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 1, 1978, pp. 43-55.

occasions that this is one of her purposes in editing this periodical (Díaz 214). In Haywood's words:

I know of no better means than by laying before them such books, as may be most likely to hit their fancy: —even those which seem the least calculated for improvement, provided they have nothing immoral or indecent in them, will be of excellent service to bring the mind to take delight in reading; and when that is once accomplished, others of a more serious nature may by degrees be recommended. Painting, especially history, landscape, and sea-pieces, is also an excellent promoter of reflection. (211)

This duality fosters a new attitude toward reading, as it broadens the range of topics of interest to women and establishes an interaction based on trust between the reader and the editor. By applying a veiled or implicit didacticism, the author ensures that the education of her female audience arises from a close and shared dialogue (Yakushkina 295).

For its part, the education presented in *La Pensadora Gaditana* bears some differences from its English counterpart. On the one hand, while the English periodical advocates that the education of daughters depends on both parents or tutors without distinction, *La Pensadora* attributes the task of educating, in the first instance, solely to the mother, as she should endow her daughters with honesty and modesty (Cienfuegos 84). However, from the publication of *Pensamiento V* (Thought V) onward, she not only includes the father but assigns him the primary command—one who permits or obliges—while the mother fulfils the role of being a role model for her daughters (Candau 56).

On the other hand, unlike the position of Eliza Haywood, who does not delve deeply into educational methodology, the Spanish author adopts a more prescriptive role. *La Pensadora* becomes directly involved by offering specific advice on child-rearing,

making it clear that a path of excessive entertainment and fun results in a miserable life.

In the words of Cienfuegos:

En nada menos piensan estos inadvertidos pródigos que educar á sus hijos en las reglas de la razon y prudencia: antes por el contrario, desde su puericia los acostumbran y crían en la delicadeza, en el regalo, y la profusion, sin enseñarles otras máximas para buscar la vida, que el bayle, los instrumentos, las diversiones, afeminando sus corazones y apartándolos del amor industrioso á saber vivir. Cae precipitada al golpe inevitable de sus gastos la aparente torre de su grandeza, y sorprendidos aquellos tiernos animos de la inesperada desgracia, vacilan inexpertos sin saber què medios elegir para su alivio. (227)<sup>29</sup>

The idea of education upon which *La Pensadora* focuses does not prioritize academic or scientific training, but rather the development of personality. This "education of the spirit" in the Catholic sense, as a priority in the lives of children, is reflected in writings that present the greatest fears of all parents, such as the loss of family honour due to idleness, and the ingratitude or lack of respect from children toward their parents, which could culminate in abandonment, causing an undignified old age for parents deprived of care (Hobisch 37). In this way, a pedagogical model is consolidated which, in the words of the researcher herself, "is based on the clear differentiation of spaces of action to which the two sexes are supposedly adapted by nature itself" (Hobisch 61). By advocating for this strict complementary separation, it is established that men must focus on public life, politics, and financial sustenance, whilst the female intellect is oriented solely towards the virtues of the home. This division proves to be deeply contradictory, as the author

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<sup>29</sup> "Nothing is further from the minds of these inadvertent prodigals than to educate their children in the rules of reason and prudence: on the contrary, from their infancy they accustom and raise them in delicacy, indulgence, and profusion, teaching them no other maxims for earning a livelihood than dancing, instruments, and amusements, effeminising their hearts and turning them away from the industrious love of knowing how to live. The apparent tower of their grandeur falls headlong at the inevitable blow of their expenses, and those tender minds, surprised by unexpected misfortune, waver in their inexperience, knowing not what means to choose for their relief".

herself, by practising journalism professionally, transgresses the mandate of domestic seclusion that she preaches for her own sex (Hobisch 61-62).

One aspect in which both authors agree is the necessary involvement of the government in education; as Candau expresses, "the government advocates for the proper education of girls because they are the future of society, yet mothers, through their attitudes, set poor examples for them" (57).

Ultimately, education in both periodicals functions as an engine for social reform. While Haywood bets on scientific and rational instruction to grant women intellectual autonomy and "self-awareness" against the void of leisure, Cienfuegos proposes a more interventionist model, oriented toward correcting the deficiencies in education that weaken the character of the youth and, eventually, lead them toward harmful activities such as vice. This duality in their educational approaches reveals a shared concern: the conviction that ignorance is the root of collective decadence. Therefore, the defence of female and youth instruction is not an isolated event but rather constitutes the fundamental pillar upon which both authors build their project of ethical reform.

### 5.3. MORALITY, CUSTOMS, AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

For Haywood and Cienfuegos, instruction is not merely a goal, but an indispensable requirement for purifying collective behaviour. In this way, they consider the training of the mind as one of the primary tools for combating the corruption of customs and thus exercising effective social criticism, clearing the path for the analysis of morality and the vices of eighteenth-century society.

In the realm of social criticism, a methodological divergence is observed: while Haywood analyses morality from an internal perspective, linking it to the development of personal

judgment, *La Pensadora* projects it outward, turning her periodical into a stage for social denunciation. The Spanish author does not limit herself to offering advice but instead caricatures the vices of her time.

In *The Female Spectator*, a strategy is deployed based on critical observation and pedagogy through examples, as noted in previous sections. While other periodicals tend to adopt a more imposing tone when addressing the denunciation of customs, Haywood avoids dictating moral lessons in an authoritarian manner; instead, she grants her readers the right to draw their own conclusions, though this freedom is partially guided (Patchias 56-69). Indeed, Haywood constructs her narratives with the intent that their outcomes convey and instruct a specific moral conduct.

Honor was a crucial theme, also addressed by the Lady Spectator. However, its meaning varied greatly depending on the gender to which the concept was applied. In the case of a man's honour, it could involve his good name, gambling debts, or his word (in the sense of a promise), and if it were questioned, the man could fight to reclaim it. Conversely, when referring to a woman, honour was reduced to chastity; should she lose it or should it be questioned, her honour would be irreversibly tarnished. Taking this into account, Haywood presents a community of intelligent women who, being aware of their situation of vulnerability and limitation, seek ways to survive. In the words of Koon:

Her women are neither plastic nor passive, but intelligent creatures who, accepting the fact that they have been into a world they cannot control, seek acceptable models for survival. (5)

For Eliza Haywood, morality manifests in daily life, where virtue is defined through decisions and actions (Koon 54). In this sphere, the woman establishes herself as the guardian of values, tasked with protecting the integrity of the home, also conceptualised

as the private world, against the corruption of the public world (Koon 55). Furthermore, the author's social criticism partially challenges traditional submission by suggesting that "the single woman need not be so passive" (Koon 52). This does not interfere with the author's belief that women should accept their husbands and that being married is the ideal state; as Koon notes, "she repeatedly observes that the ideal life comes with a good marriage" (48).

Despite considering it the ideal state, Haywood denounces the hypocrisy of unions turned into loveless business transactions. In the words of the Lady Spectator: "no sordid Bargains, where Wealth, not Merit is the chief of Inducement, —no notorious Disparity of Years, of Family, or Humours, can ever be productive of a lasting Concord" (Haywood 64). For her, true morality resides in mutual respect, maintaining that no relationship can be productive without "Sympathy of Inclination" and "Sympathy of Humour" (Koon 50) to guarantee concord between both parties. Consequently, she harshly criticizes marriages arranged for family interests as well as clandestine elopements, arguing that they usually end in disaster due to the lack of balance between parental blessing and authentic emotional connection (Koon 51).

Additionally, the author denounces that the literature of her time offers idealized and unrealistic portraits of heroines who are either perfectly good or totally corrupt, thereby reinforcing the prejudice that women are inferior beings who cannot survive without a master (Koon 54).

In the realm of morality and social criticism, Cienfuegos's thought addresses multiple aspects. First, she criticizes the structures of the Ancient Regime, denouncing a decrepit notion of honour and social hierarchies (Canterla 35). This denunciation is not limited to the traditional nobility but extends to the idle bourgeoisie, whom she accuses of lacking

a state consciousness and social responsibility. For *La Pensadora*, true morality does not reside in lineage but in reason and individual dignity, maintaining that logic proves that all human beings are naturally born equal (Canterla 36). Under this premise, the state of subordination of the lower classes is not due to a natural inferiority but to the prejudices and the lack of education previously mentioned.

Secondly, the author, on some occasions through letters from female readers, addresses criticisms of social customs that are unfavourable to women. As Bolufer states, these readers acted as an extension of the author herself to voice things she preferred not to state directly (45), and disapproved of the sexual double standard, the tolerance of men's amorous liberties, and the heightened censorship of women's fickleness, much like Eliza Haywood. In *Pensamientos IX* and *XXVIII*, Cienfuegos denounces the social hypocrisy that normalizes masculine freedoms while harshly subjecting women to scrutiny.

Thirdly, another abuse integrated into social customs, which *La Pensadora* discusses in *Pensamiento XXVII*, is the continuous restlessness of both men and women in yearning for the most perfect and the newest (Cienfuegos 4). She comments that there is a clear hypocrisy in society based on the effort to display a high status or a strong financial position. Consequently, she considers that regarding fashion, one must reach a middle ground between an excessive obsession with trends and a total rejection that borders on the ridiculous (Cienfuegos 8), in order to make a conscious use of it that does not reach extravagance or the ignorance of good taste for the sake of simple trends and appearances. Likewise, she concludes by advocating for proper use without excess, arguing that individuals should dress and adorn themselves according to their status and means, provided they adhere to strict standards of decency and decorum (Cienfuegos 24).

In synthesis, both authors agree on proposing a social regeneration and on understanding reason and decency as the only weapons against the decadence of customs. They

primarily criticize social hypocrisy and the existing inequality between the genders, although themes such as marriage and vice are also mentioned throughout their works. However, such close agreement is not found in the realms of politics and religion, which are the basis of social order that will be analysed in the following section.

#### 5.4. CONTEXTUAL CONTRASTS: POLITICS AND RELIGION

This section will be dedicated to presenting the authors' opinions on politics and religion, two fundamental spheres for the conception of the eighteenth-century social system.

On the one hand, regarding the views found in *The Female Spectator* and *La Pensadora Gaditana* on politics, it could be said that they are, in a sense, similar. The central idea residing in both publications is the metamorphosis of the concept of the "Nation"; this is primarily because, during the Enlightenment, it ceased to be understood as a mere geographical reference and became a bond of social union.

In the English context, a priority is placed on the nation's survival against international threats, which generates a heightened sense of patriotism. As Candau notes, the core idea is that national identity is strengthened through personal sacrifice; therefore, the ideal citizen is one who prioritizes the glory of their Homeland over their own life or happiness (58). Haywood conceives of these men as heroes, noting that it is highly praiseworthy to face the hardships of the field with bravery and to remain fearless when duty calls (Haywood 91). Furthermore, she encourages women to serve as the backbone of domestic morality and to urge their husbands to defend their country, even if that results in their absence from the home or even their death (Candau 58).

Conversely, in the Spanish proposal, politics is understood as a form of internal regeneration, as the Nation is built through public utility. Cienfuegos's vision advocates for a new framework of political relations based on natural morality, the common good, and, above all, public utility. The author redefines the concept of society to transform it into an inclusive political community where the purpose of every individual is to be useful to the Homeland, the State, and themselves (Canterla 37). In this way, politics becomes the necessary tool to correct martiality<sup>30</sup> and the abuses of collective life through the use of reason. As noted:

En opinión de *La Pensadora* la verdadera obligación de la aristocracia para con la Patria debería ser proteger a lo que aspiran a mejorar a la sociedad, dejando que todos los hombres, con independencia de su nacimiento, puedan llegar a ser útiles al progreso moral. La obligación ética y política que se plantea entonces como ineludible es educar para el bien común combatiendo los abusos. Y es precisamente a este mejoramiento democrático de la Patria al que se dirigen las páginas del periódico gaditano. (Canterla 44)<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand, religion is one of the most differentiating themes between the English and Spanish periodicals. During the Enlightenment, religion was heavily criticized, as thinkers generally only accepted what could be supported by a rational basis (Ertler, 12). Consequently, in England, certain aspects of the Church were attacked, such as its

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<sup>30</sup> Regarding this term, Bolufer defines it as a deliberate rejection of polite norms rather than an ignorance of them, manifesting as an insolent and haughty populism that essentially constitutes another form of social distinction (219).

<sup>31</sup> “In *La Pensadora*’s opinion, the true obligation of the aristocracy towards the Homeland should be to protect those who aspire to improve society, allowing all men, regardless of their birth, to become useful to moral progress. The ethical and political obligation that then arises as inescapable is to educate for the common good by combating abuses. And it is precisely towards this democratic improvement of the Homeland that the pages of the Cádiz newspaper are directed”.

hierarchy and the belief in miracles. However, in countries like Spain, Catholicism continued to be maintained.

In *La Pensadora Gaditana*, one observes the continuous presence of Catholic dogmas within Spanish society, portraying Spain as a highly civilized country where piety and religion are firmly established (Cienfuegos 168). Nevertheless, the author avoids directly singling out non-believers or explicitly imposing religious precepts. Instead, she chooses to emphasize the necessity for female conduct to remain within the boundaries established by faith and social decorum; in her view, a woman's virtue is inextricably linked to her adherence to religious principles (Candau 62).

As one of the main cultural divergences, it is observed that *La Pensadora Gaditana* completely omits the debate on divorce throughout her essays and stories. Unlike in Spain, where it was forbidden by the Catholic faith, in England it was permitted, although, in a sense, carrying it out was heavily conditioned by public opinion. In Haywood's words:

This gave the first alarm to that indolence of nature she hitherto had testified; her husband would now have it in his power to sue out a divorce; and though she would have rejoiced to have been separated from him on any other terms, yet she could not support the thought of being totally deprived of all reputation in the world. (21-22)

Despite being a periodical developed in an environment critical of religion, *The Female Spectator* includes references to religious customs and even addresses certain abuses as a lack of respect, not only to oneself but to God (Candau 64).

Both authors retain traces of religious culture in their style using expressions related to the divine. In the Spanish periodical, some examples include “pida à Dios” (86), “Dios se lo pague” (145), and “Válgame Dios” (304); similarly, in the English text, one finds “good

gods!” (77), “we owe to heaven” (120), and “Heaven forbid” (168). Furthermore, both mention religions beyond Catholicism; they coincide in referencing Roman and Greek mythology, which demonstrates an education grounded, in part, in the classics. However, when discussing the tradition of women veiling themselves, *La Pensadora* also cites women from Eastern and African cultures associated with other religious traditions.

In conclusion to this section, we observe that both authors agree on redefining the Nation as a bond of social union, although their approaches diverge. While Haywood promotes a heroic patriotism as a priority for confronting international enemies, Cienfuegos advocates for a social regeneration based on utility to the homeland. Furthermore, on the religious level, despite evident contextual differences such as the topic of divorce, both coincide in integrating religion as a means of moral restraint and decorum. This demonstrates that, notwithstanding Enlightenment rationalism, faith and its precepts remained deeply embedded in the eighteenth century.

## 6. FORMAL AND MATERIAL ASPECTS: PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Once the periodicals and their authors have been contextualized, and after having analysed both the editorial voice and some of the thematic cores of both works, it is pertinent to shift the focus toward their formal and material aspects. In the following sections, the particularities of their publication, edition, and dissemination will be examined.

### 6.1. EDITORIAL MORPHOLOGY: FORMAT, PAGE LAYOUT, AND BINDING

From a material standpoint, both *The Female Spectator* and *La Pensadora Gaditana* share a similar trajectory, for both projects were conceived as short, individual periodic issues

designed from the printing shop with a view to deferred binding, that is, to be subsequently unified either by the reader's own initiative or by the editor themselves through the sale of bound sets..

*The Female Spectator* was originally published in monthly instalments. Each issue consisted of approximately sixty-four pages in octavo<sup>32</sup> format (Penn 2), a manageable size common for the entertainment press of the era. In this initial stage, each monthly issue was distributed protected solely by temporary paper covers known as blue covers. Because the printer did not sell the fascicles with rigid covers, the design of these pieces included provisional margins and stitching intended for the buyer to bind them into permanent leather volumes at the end of the publication cycle (Warner 133).

The uniqueness of Haywood's work lies in its dual editorial format: although it began as a serial publication, her publisher, Thomas Gardner, reprinted the individual parts as early as 1745. Between 1745 and 1746, he consolidated the work into a book-format edition consisting of four volumes (Yakushkina 292). This shift in editorial morphology towards a definitive book structure became entrenched from 1748 when, to combat piracy and reduce costs, Gardner abandoned the original octavo and reissued the work in duodecimo format. This formal alteration allowed the publication to be sustained over time through constant authorised editions in 1750, 1755, 1766, and 1771 (Spedding 194).

Similarly, *La Pensadora Gaditana* followed a similar publishing format. Cienfuegos's work was distributed in individual "papers" or *Pensamientos* which, at the end of their

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<sup>32</sup> The octavo format was the most widespread for the thought press and entertainment literature of the eighteenth century. By folding the original sheet of paper three times to produce sixteen pages per sheet, an ideal balance was achieved between material savings and a pocketbook size (approximately 15–18 cm). This made the volumes easy to transport and read outside of a private study. See Escolar, Hipólito. *Historia del libro*. Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez, 1993, pp. 360-396.

one-year run, were also grouped into four octavo volumes (Canterla 21). As Canterla notes, these booklets constituted a work that had to be bound, and, furthermore, ‘it was not uncommon for individuals to do so by gathering more than one volume in a single binding, and even fragments thereof’ (11); likewise, on occasion, they mixed issues published in Cádiz with others subsequently reprinted in Madrid within the same binding (11). This arrangement into volumes not only facilitated the preservation of the work but also elevated it to the status of a library book, distancing it from the fleeting nature of a daily newspaper. In the subsequent 1786 Cadiz reissue, each *Pensamiento* included in its header the title assigned in the index and the approximate date of its appearance (Urzainqui 288), maintaining an organized structure that allowed the reader to explore the work as a complete moral and social treatise.

Regarding the technical characteristics of their production, both works lacked internal illustrations or drawings for reasons of production speed and cost savings, limiting their visual elements to discreet typographic ornaments or, in the English case, an occasional engraved frontispiece in the bound editions (Spedding 432). The cost of acquisition was significant: each instalment of *The Female Spectator* sold for one shilling (Spedding 432), while the papers of *La Pensadora Gaditana* ranged between four and eight maravedis. These prices positioned these periodicals as cultural products intended for a literate bourgeoisie and aristocracy.

By way of conclusion, it can be observed that the morphology of both periodicals demonstrates a successful transition from loose instalments to books, that is, from the potentially ephemeral to the permanent. The octavo format and technical sobriety not only optimized production costs but also facilitated versatile consumption in public spaces. Their final consolidation as bound volumes encouraged their geographical expansion, giving rise to an entire network of distribution and periodicity that is analysed below.

## 6.2. PERIODICITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF PERIODICALS

The periodicity and geographical reach of both publications reveal the commercial impact they achieved in their respective markets. *The Female Spectator* maintained a monthly frequency for two years, from April 1744 to May 1746, totalling 24 instalments (Yakushkina 292). These copies could be purchased both at the publisher's shop, as noted in the publication itself: "printed and published by T. Gardner, at Cowley's-Head, opposite St. Clement's-Church in the Strand" (Haywood 1), and in the "pamphlet shops"<sup>33</sup> of the capital (Spedding 432). The high demand in the city caused an early shortage that forced the editor to launch a mixed reissue<sup>34</sup> between 1747 and 1748 in order to supply the new subscribers (Spedding 194). Although its distribution was initially limited to London, the project's success, described as Haywood's most lucrative (King 1), soon allowed it to spread throughout Great Britain and Ireland, even reaching the United States. It consolidated itself as a transnational benchmark for the female-oriented press for over three decades (Yakushkina 292). Its international significance was cemented by the German translation of the periodical in 1747, followed by French versions, reissued twice between 1749 and 1751, and an Italian version in 1752 (Candau 30).

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<sup>33</sup> Pamphlet shops were specialized establishments for the sale of brochures and press that allowed the work to reach various neighborhoods in London and Westminster, ensuring the buyer did not have to travel specifically to the Strand. See Spedding, Patrick. "Eliza Haywood at the Sign of Fame." *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era*, edited by Kevin L. Cope, vol. 18, AMS Press, 2011, p. 33.

<sup>34</sup> The term "mixed reissue" (or a mixed collection of reprint and reissue) refers to a common commercial and editorial practice in eighteenth-century periodicals. In response to the sales success and the shortage of copies, the printer Thomas Gardner did not produce an entirely new print run from scratch, but instead ordered the reprint in octavo format of only the first nine monthly issues whose stock had been completely exhausted. These new printings were packaged and distributed together with the surplus and remaining copies of the final fifteen issues from the original print run. In this way, between March 1747 and January 1748, the editor managed to assemble and put into circulation complete and unified collections of the work by combining sheets from different chronological print runs (Spedding 194).

For its part, *La Pensadora Gaditana* opted for a more frequent periodicity, with a weekly instalment appearing every Thursday (Canterla 21). Its publication began on July 12, 1763, the date on which the printing license for the first "paper" was registered. The first edition, the *editio princeps* (1763–1764), was handled by the Imprenta Real de Marina de Cádiz, managed by Don Manuel Espinosa de los Monteros (Canterla 21). The copies were distributed primarily in the Cádiz bookstores of Salvador Sánchez and Manuel Ferrera (Canterla 101).

Unlike Haywood's international expansion, the distribution of *La Pensadora Gaditana* focused on national territory. There, it achieved a resounding success that prompted an edition in Madrid, reprinted from 1763 without the author's permission, and a subsequent reissue in Cadiz in 1786 (Azofra 4), the printing of which was the responsibility of Manuel Ximénez Carreño (Canterla 21). Regarding the Madrid edition, many authors—relying on erroneous catalogues and advertisements in *La Gaceta* promoting the Madrid reprint—consider it to be the original. However, this is incorrect. As Canterla states: “Afirmación errónea, puesto que sabemos perfectamente que *La Pensadora Gaditana* comenzó a publicarse el 12 de Julio de 1763, fecha de licencia de impresión del primer papel de la edición de Cádiz [...]” (20).<sup>35</sup>

It is relevant to highlight that, despite its name, the distribution of this periodical was not merely regional. As Guinard points out, the newspaper lacked a strictly Cadiz-based rooting beyond its title and certain allusions. This allowed its critique to be perceived as a representation of Spanish society as a whole (193).

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<sup>35</sup> “An erroneous statement, since we know perfectly well that *La Pensadora Gaditana* began publication on 12 July 1763, the printing licence date of the first paper of the Cádiz edition [...]”.

Ultimately, both publications managed to transcend their original periodicity and initial geographical scope, consolidating themselves as editorial successes that marked the history of the women's press in Europe.

## 7. LEGACY AND CONTRIBUTION TO WOMEN'S INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

The passage of Eliza Haywood and Beatriz Cienfuegos through the 18th-century press should not be understood as a mere phenomenon of editorial fashion, but rather as the consolidation of female intellectual authority in an environment that, until then, had relegated them to the role of passive recipients. This marked the beginning of a process where women emerged as a social group with their own voice and the capacity to express themselves within the worlds of communication and culture (Capel 2). Both authors did more than simply observe reality; they utilized the journalistic medium to construct an identity endowed with independent judgment and autonomy of thought, as well as to build a female community.

This section explores how these publications were received and, consequently, the impact they had on 18th-century society. Furthermore, we will observe how, after a prolonged historiographical silence, contemporary criticism has rescued their voices to restore their rightful place in the history of ideas.

### 7.1. IMPACT AND RECEPTION

The reception of both periodicals in their time reflects a constant tension between the public's fascination with novelty and the critics' reluctance to grant full authority to a woman.

In the Anglo-Saxon context, the impact of *The Female Spectator* was decisive for the consolidation of women in the publishing industry. However, it had to contend with a polarized reception; while contemporaries like Laetitia Pilkington dismissed the work as a collection of insipid and trite stories (King 114), others recognized its didactic relevance. As noted in the article “Measuring the Success of *Haywood’s Female Spectator*”:

*The Female Spectator* is also mentioned in a number of conduct books. In 1771 it is described in *The Nunnery for Coquettes* as “a performance which deserves a place in every lady’s library.” It is one of a number of “entertaining,” “religious and instructive” works recommended by Lady Sarah Pannington in the revised edition of *An Unfortunate Mother’s Advice to her Absent Daughters*. (Spedding 205)

Although Haywood's earnings for two years of work were lower than those of her male counterparts (Spedding 197-198), the commercial success was resounding. The reach of editions in multiple languages demonstrates that her voice met a European demand that far exceeded the borders of London.

In Spain, Bolufer emphasizes that *La Pensadora Gaditana* introduced a model already tested in other countries, but with unprecedented features that sought the complicity of female readers without alienating the general public (46). The identity of “La Pensadora” was distinguished by disruptive traits, such as being a woman of letters who lived by her pen and rejected marriage—a stance that garnered both admiration and distrust (Bolufer 48).

Despite the success of the Cádiz-born author, male critical reactions were often condescending. In a famous comparison with the *Academia de Ociosos*, one reader praised *La Pensadora* but used the author's sex as an argument for intellectual limitation:

Contraponía el carácter serio y erudito de la Academia a la variedad y vivacidad de expresión de la Pensadora [...] apelando a la caballerosidad para afear a Flores Valdespino que hubiera osado criticar a la Pensadora, en lugar de respetar la “delicadeza” que le imponía su condición de mujer. (Bolufer 48)<sup>36</sup>

Cienfuegos even satirized this reception, mentioning a "silly-discreet" man (*tonti-discreto*) who decided that the *Pensador de Madrid* was "more of a man" than she was (Canterla 78). Despite this, it had a great influence on subsequent periodicals, such as *La Pensatriz Salmantina* (1777). This newspaper, published under the masculine pseudonym of Escolástica Hurtado Girón adopted the bold tone of her mentor to continue defending women's intellectual rights (Olalla “La primera periodista”). Another example of the impact of *La Pensadora Gaditana* would be the newspaper *Ellas, Órgano Oficial del Sexo Femenino* (1851) (Muñoz 60).

This intellectual stirring also influenced figures like Rita Caveda y Solares, who actively recommended that women read the press, believing they could find therein a guide for their learning and behaviour (Capel 3). This paved the way for intellectuals like Josefa Amar y Borbón to elevate the discourse regarding women's aptitude for study and the holding of public office. This network of trajectories suggests that the Spanish author can be considered one of the driving forces of an intellectual movement that redefined the role of women in the Spanish public sphere (Capel 7).

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<sup>36</sup> “He contrasted the serious and scholarly character of the Academy with the variety and vivacity of expression of the *Pensadora* [...] appealing to chivalry to rebuke Flores Valdespino for having dared to criticise the *Pensadora*, instead of respecting the “delicacy” imposed upon her by her status as a woman”.

## 7.2. LOST AND RECLAIMED VOICES

The disappearance of these mastheads was not an isolated phenomenon, but rather the result of restrictive political contexts that affected both nations differently, yet with similar silencing outcomes.

Regarding English journalism, Eliza Haywood's voice suffered a historiographical distortion that, for a long period, reduced her reputation and name to the category of a "hack writer" mired in poverty. However, modern research has reclaimed her true professional standing; studies such as those by Patrick Spedding have debunked these myths by pointing out a lack of evidence for such claims, instead rescuing her figure as a successful publishing entrepreneur (198).

In Spain, following the Esquilache Riots (1766), there was a sharp decline in journalistic production across the country due to restrictive government measures (Sánchez 225). Nonetheless, it is worth noting that during the 1780s, a notable recovery was experienced in the birth of new mastheads. This resurgence was halted by the Royal Resolution of 1791, which banned all newspapers except official ones, thereby forcing a return to more orthodox positions and ideas (Capel 211). Journalism entered a deep recession, effectively silencing *La Pensadora Gaditana* until 1786, when the surge of new miscellaneous publications filled with reproaches toward women prompted the reprinting of Cienfuegos's work as a necessary defensive response (Cebrián 84).

Throughout the 19th century and much of the 20th, both authors were relegated to oblivion or regarded as mere curiosities. The stigma of the "*bachillera*" or the "*mujer*

*pedante*"<sup>37</sup> functioned as a mechanism for exclusion from the official canon. Society accepted women as "docile readers" but penalized them when they sought to be "opinionated authors."

The recovery of these voices has been made possible by the critical shift initiated by authors such as Schweickart and Flynn in *Gender and Reading* (1986). Their approach allowed for the understanding that reading and writing are not neutral acts, but are mediated by gender. Within this framework, contemporary feminist criticism has rescued Haywood and Cienfuegos—not as mere imitators of the masculine model established by Addison and Steele, but as pioneers who contributed to familiarizing the public with the figure of female writers (Bolufer 48). By reclaiming these texts, current historiography does not just recover two periodicals; it restores a lineage of women who, since the 18th century, were already fighting for the right to think, express opinions, and be read on equal terms.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

The 18th century represented a period of contradictory tensions, where the awakening of Enlightenment ideas clashed head-on with traditional power structures that kept women, essentially, on the periphery of public discourse. For this reason, this comparative analysis between *The Female Spectator* and *La Pensadora Gaditana* must be addressed within their respective contexts rather than in isolation. In England, the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution established a landscape of political division between Whigs and Tories within a London society that bustled as a dynamic commercial hub, yet was marked by significant economic inequality. In this environment, coffeehouses emerged as centres for

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<sup>37</sup> The concept of being a "*bachillera*" or a "*mujer pedante*" served as a constant threat to any woman who dared to leap the gap between reading and writing (Bolufer 49).

rational debate; however, these were masculine spaces where women were, at times, prohibited from entering. Haywood emerged within this vacuum, transferring the rationality of the cafés to the private sphere of female readers, in other words, recreating that intellectual atmosphere within the domestic space. This press did not merely inform; it broke female isolation, legitimizing women as rational subjects capable of participating in public opinion and, in turn, transforming reading into an act of citizenship. On the other hand, the Spain of Cienfuegos grappled with the aftermath of the War of the Spanish Succession and the establishment of the Bourbon dynasties under Philip V, Ferdinand VI, Charles III, and Charles IV. The country was in a state of decadence and sharp social conflict, which the Enlightenment reform sought to combat by constantly pitting the traditions against new European ideas.

Under this framework of subordination, women began to claim a space of their own. Through the Enlightenment, they infiltrated the press and the public sphere via "spectator" journalism, genre consolidated by *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* in London, and by its adaptation *El Pensador* in Spain. Shortly thereafter, *The Female Spectator* and *La Pensadora Gaditana* appeared; the former aimed to rectify certain social errors by actively engaging in advising its readers, while the latter sought to defend women's rights and provide a "vengeance of ideas" against the attacks directed at them.

Regarding the editorial voice, Haywood constructs a plurality of voices that simulates a collective debate, whereas Cienfuegos employs a single, forceful voice; both coincide in the use of correspondence to connect with educated women. In this way, while the English author leans toward consensus and fictional sisterhood, the Cádiz-born author establishes herself as an indisputable moral authority to directly confront the prejudices of her time. These editorial stances allow education to be established as one of the fundamental pillars of their reform. Haywood proposes rational instruction to grant women autonomy over

unproductive leisure, while Cienfuegos seeks to correct the formative deficiencies that lead to social vices. Both authors converge on a fundamental premise: ignorance is the cause of a nation's collective decadence.

This concern for intellectual formation inevitably translates to the realm of conduct and belief. In this sense, Haywood questions aspects such as marriages of convenience and rigid gender stereotypes, thus advocating for integrity based on self-awareness. For her part, Cienfuegos denounces sexual double standards and the antiquated system of hierarchies, arguing that subordination is nonsensical in a world where reason makes individuals equal. Politically, while Haywood redefines the nation through a "heroic patriotism" against international threats, Cienfuegos seeks a social regeneration that makes citizens useful to the Fatherland (*la Patria*). Nonetheless, despite being in a period where the concepts of reason and faith were often pitted as opposites, and this tension was felt more intensely in England, both authors integrate faith as a means of moral restraint.

Furthermore, the editorial morphology facilitated the entrenchment and dissemination of this discourse of moral reform; the octavo format ensured the works were easy to carry and could be read in any public space. Despite their initial success, leading to multiple reprints and translations across various countries, these voices were silenced by political instability in Spain and by historiographical prejudices in England, which reduced Haywood to a mere "hack writer." However, contemporary critical recovery is restoring these forgotten voices to their rightful place as fundamental pioneers of modern thought.

Ultimately, the comparison between Haywood and Cienfuegos demonstrates that, despite geographical distances, both shared the same urgency: to transform society through female consciousness. As a conclusion, it is evident that the true legacy of these authors transcends mere journalistic production. Their victory lies in having identified that female

ignorance was not a natural condition, but a tool for political and social control. By proposing instruction and moral reform as the pillars of the nation, they laid the foundations for a modernity that could not be understood without the active participation of women.

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