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Sylvia López

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Carmela Eulate Sanjurjo's *La muñeca*: Narcissism, Education, and Luxury

Sylvia López

Lamenting the poor education that Puerto Rican women received at the end of nineteenth century, Manuel Fernández Juncos (1846–1928), one of Puerto Rico's most distinguished writers, observes in a prologue titled "La mujer en Puerto-Rico":

> Con tan poderosos atractivos, júzguese cual sería el grado de perfección de la mujer puerto-riqueña si no se hubiese mirado su educación con tan punible indiferencia.
>
> Hoy mismo, y á pesar de los laudables esfuerzos que se han hecho para remediar aquel mal, la educación de la mujer es en alto grado viciosa y deficiente, aún entre las clases acomodadas, y existen contra ella infinidad de preocupaciones y obstáculos que importa mucho destruir. (43-44)[1]

Following the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico in 1873, Fernández Juncos and other late nineteenth-century Liberals focused on women, especially women among Puerto Rico's upper classes, in their quest to build the "great Puerto Rican family." Historian Eileen Suárez Findlay notes that, in order to "usher in a new era of Europeanized bourgeois modernity," Liberals advised educating women so that they would be reformed morally and transformed "from useless ornaments into intelligent mothers and wives" (61). Women were to be not only nation-builders but also their husbands' intellectual companions, instead of mindless dolls dedicated to pleasing others. But as Gabriel Ferrer, who advocated strongly for reforming women's roles, makes quite clear, men and not women would rule this new family:

> Submissive and obedient to the will of her husband, she cannot fail to comply with his every mandate, since we all know that the argumentative [*altanera*] woman, moving beyond her sphere of rights, utterly fails to dominate with her demands. Rather, she exasperates and irritates the natural pride of her man. (qtd. in Suárez-Findlay 62)

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That is, women were to continue to be subordinates and therefore did not have an active role in defining their lives.

While these discussions on women's roles and education were taking place among Puerto Rico's elite, Carmela Eulate Sanjurjo (1871-1961) was beginning what would turn out to be a prolific writing career.[2] She wrote poetry, short stories, novels, translations, essays, and monographs on women in history and the arts. Before moving permanently to Spain with her parents in 1898, Eulate was very much involved in the intellectual life of the Caribbean island, not only publishing translations and fiction but also attending gatherings of Puerto Rico's erudite class hosted by Ana Roqué de Duprey, a champion of women's rights who would go on to found the first feminist organization in Puerto Rico in 1917. In fact, Suárez-Findlay finds that Eulate formed part of a small group of early feminists who in 1894 were writing and editing the newspaper *La mujer*, as well as writing fiction. In their writings they not only considered women's social position, but also drew attention to power relations between men and women and in the home, advocating for women's economic self-sufficiency by way of education (Suárez-Findlay 67).

Although Eulate's works have received little critical attention, she wrote nine novels that offer a psychological portrait of women. Ana Morales Zeno observes that these novels "Son historias que narran la vida de mujeres encerradas en códigos de conducta que se convierten en armas de sobrevivencia y destrucción. Los retratos femeninos ofrecen un perfil sicológico de estas mujeres, de los móviles que las mueven y las manipulan y, que ellas como consecuencia también manipulan" (12).[3] Eulate's first novel, *La muñeca* (1895), does indeed offer a compelling example of the way she expresses the female psyche in her works. As will become evident in this study, Rosario, the novel's protagonist, is a modern woman who eschews the roles of caring wife and loving mother that Puerto Rican Liberals believed bourgeois women should fulfill. Instead, Eulate draws for us a young doll-like narcissist who seeks the independence to do as she wishes, consume luxury goods and exhibit them. In fact, Eulate's novel, set in Spain, reads as a study in pathological narcissism, given Rosario's attitude, actions, and overall behavior. Thus, the intention of this essay is to examine how recent studies on narcissism can help explain Rosario's depiction as a reflection of a late nineteenth-century socio-cultural context concerned about, among other things, women's education and consumption of luxury goods. Even though the narrative leads one to view Rosario's narcissism largely in a negative light, through it Eulate succeeds in suggesting to her readers not only that her protagonist's upbringing is inadequate, but also that women seek self-determination.

Though we often use the term narcissism to describe self-absorbed, infuriating individuals with high opinions of themselves, narcissism is in fact healthy in infants, who, by seeing the world as an extension of themselves, consider themselves to be at the center of their universe. But as children grow and develop, they come to perceive that they are separate and distinct from the rest of the world and, as a result, develop age-appropriate narcissism. Some adults, however, do not emerge from this infantile stage and therefore do not experience healthy narcissism. Adults exhibiting five or more of the following symptoms suffer from undeveloped or unhealthy narcissism and are commonly diagnosed as pathological narcissists. They: have an inflated sense of self-importance; are preoccupied with delusions of success, power, and beauty; are convinced that they are special and unique and therefore wish only to associate with persons of high status; need constant admiration; display entitlement; exploit and manipulate others; lack empathy; envy others and assume others envy them; and exhibit haughty attitudes and behaviors (Ashmun). Eulate depicts her protagonist as both a pathological narcissist and what professor of counseling and psychotherapy, Nina Brown, classifies as an exhibitionistic narcissist. Exhibitionistic narcissists are people "who define themselves by their material possessions, such as clothing and jewelry, and by a disregard for rules and cultural conventions; they convey the attitude that they do not have to account for their behavior should anyone be so crass as to confront them" (38).

At the opening of the novel, as friends and family attend to Rosario the bride, she, demonstrating her vanity, is most concerned with appearing better than all others and reflecting upon her own beauty. That is, by having the good fortune to marry with the luxury and ostentation that her friends could never afford, she feels, as she gazes at herself in a mirror, that she has triumphed over her friends:

> La desposada, en pie delante del armario de luna, inmóvil y silenciosa, contemplaba su figura, preocupada con la grave ceremonia que iba a cambiar su vida, pero mucho más con la idea de estar bella, de triunfar de sus amigas que menos afortunadas no podrían casarse con el lujo y boato con que ella iba a hacerlo. (34)

Like the mythological Narcissus, Rosario contemplates her beauty and considers herself superior to those around her.

By telling her readers that Rosario's friends "arreglaban cuidadosamente la flor mal segura o los pliegues del vestido [de Rosario]" (33), Eulate's anonymous third-person narrator highlights the sense of vanity surrounding Rosario—especially when one considers that Fernández Juncos, while discussing the education of women, highlights that bourgeois families disregarded their daughters' moral and intellectual development in favor of ensuring that their daughters were elegantly and luxuriously dressed, so as to be the best among their peers. This behavior, argues Fernández Juncos, undermines girls' education and leads to vanity:

> En efecto; desde los primeros años en que empieza la niña á frecuentar la escuela, se la induce á que fije su atencion—acaso más que en los libros—en el traje y los atavíos con que la visten y la engalanan. Más de una vez, por una leve desperfeccion del todo, por la falta de un adorno en el vestido ó de cualquier otro detalle pueril, no advertido en tiempo oportuno, deja de concurrir á la escuela miéntras aquella falta no se remedie.
>
> Llegado el dia de los exámenes, rara vez se cuidan los padres de averiguar si la niña lleva bien estudiadas sus lecciones; pero no haya miedo de que se olvide una sola cinta del vestido, un solo detalle del tocado, una sola joya de las que en ese dia han de adorar á la pequeña alumna, respecto de la cual hay gran empeño en que vaya tan elegante y lujosa como la más

> espléndida de sus condiscípulas. De este modo se va fomentando insensiblemente, en el corazon de la inocente niña, el gérmen pernicioso de la vanidad. ("La mujer" 44–45)

By being meticulous about Rosario's physical appearance and by adorning her as if she were a doll, friends and family foster her narcissism and role as ornament.

Rosario's first act within the narrative consists of dissembling and falsehood in her quest for attention; her acts and reactions on her wedding day are neither spontaneous nor genuine. Instead, without feeling, she does what she thinks is necessary to present the most attractive picture of herself.

> Rosario fue a la iglesia fingiendo una turbación que no sentía, y conservó toda la ceremonia, los ojos hipócritamente bajos. Arrójose después en brazos de su madre, que la retuvo largo tiempo, con sollozos que no enrojecieron sus ojos, ni le empañaron la serena blancura de la tez. Parecióle que debía llorar y sin sentimiento, escogiendo el instante en que creyó que sus lagrimas podían hacerla aparecer más atractiva, lloró. (35)

Once again, Fernández Juncos might have argued that Rosario pretends because "desde que nace hasta que muere—la sociedad le cierra la boca y el corazón [a la mujer]; la obliga a fingir y disimular; deja su inteligencia viciosa, y enerva su naturaleza para hacer de ella un instrumento de placer" ("La mujer" 46–47). Similarly, the Puerto Rican intellectual Antonio Alfau y Baralt might have maintained that Rosario received an education wrongly founded on the art of pleasing men: "El arte de agradar, llevado á la categoria de sistema de educación para la mujer, da como primer fruto una mujer artificial y artificiosa, y concluye con la mujer natural, sustituyéndola en la mujer ficticia" ("La educación" 112).[4] Moreover, he observes that women taught to please men rely on deceit, perfidy, coquetry, luxury, fashion, and dazzling elegance (112), which, as we will see, appears to be the case with Rosario. She does what is necessary to enhance her looks and, like other narcissists, goes on to "use [her] appearance as a way to seek status and attention from others" (Twenge and Campbell 142).

What draws Rosario to her husband is not love, but rather that he enhances her self-image, since he is considered "[P]or las jóvenes casaderas como el mejor partido de la ciudad" and has the means to make her "[E]nsueños de ambición" come true (40). This too is characteristic of narcissists, as professor of psychology W. Keith Campbell et al. affirm: "In romantic relationships, narcissists seek status and self-esteem rather than intimacy or caring" (341). In short, Rosario chooses Julián because he is a "highly positive and valued" (Campbell, "Narcissism" 1256) man who can make her look good and through whom she can possess the means to a position in society, indulge her every whim, and take the longed-for trip to Paris: "Rosario vio en aquel matrimonio en que su marido ponía toda el alma, la satisfacción de mil caprichos, el inevitable viaje a París tan ambicionado, el medio de obtener una posición en la sociedad, que dadas nuestras costumbres sólo disfruta la mujer casada" (39). Since society does not offer Rosario any other way of getting what she wants, she exploits the institution of marriage. She, like other late nineteenth-century middle- and upper-class women seeking economic support and the means to fulfill their dreams and goals, relies on her looks to secure a husband with financial resources. Suárez-Findlay observes in *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico* that while Puerto Rican Liberals exhorted women to look beyond their beauty, Puerto Rican feminists maintained that an "Education would free all women from the prisons of their bodies; through it, they could gain both intellectual and economic autonomy" (67). Since Rosario appears to lack an intellectual education, she uses her physicality to get what she wants.

The narrator's use of French terms such as *causeuse*, *étagères*, *bibelots*, *portière* and *boudoir* to describe Rosario's furnishings and the fact that when Rosario's mother visits she brings news of the latest models of hats in the local French dressmaker's shop window, accentuate that she and Rosario are *afrancesadas* in their tastes for both French designs and French attitudes (44). Like French bourgeois women of the nineteenth century, Rosario, as a consumer, has two charges: to adorn herself and to "constitute and represent the family's social identity through goods" (Auslander 83). Rosario undertakes both tasks, but with an eye towards highlighting herself. Thus, when she furnishes her home with rich, elegant, and fashionable objects, she also fills it with mirrors and images of herself. The room housing the piano reminds us that Rosario is in love with her reflection: "Esta, era tan aficionada a reproducirse, que por paredes y mesas, en álbumes y marcos, podía hallarse su figura de frente y de pérfil, en traje negro con la mantilla echada a la cara y en la mano el devocionario, y a pocos pasos en *toilette* de baile, o con la airosa mantilla de madroños" (42). But like French women after 1880, whom historian Leora Aulander asserts were encouraged to "express their individuality through their consumption practices" (98) and, therefore, became less preoccupied with the family's image and more concerned with their self-image, Rosario tires of caring for her home and husband. She yearns for her single years when she could focus solely on herself: "Rosario aburrióse pronto de tener que atender a su casa, cuidando de las cosas de Julián. Echaba de menos la independencia de soltera, en que ocupábase sólo de su persona, y vivía lejos de aquellas molestias y fastidios" (43). It is important to note that while Rosario, like many late nineteenth-century women, feels trapped by domesticity, she, ironically, does not attempt to exchange these for a more noble cause, such as a formal education or a profession. On the contrary, as an exhibitionistic narcissist who lacks a proper education, she seeks to be free of the social expectations and cultural conventions of a wife, to care only for her personal appearance. All the same, by having Rosario lament her role as wife, Eulate wishes to "subvertir, transformar e invertir los modelos tradicionales de comportamiento femenino propios de la época" (Grau Lleveria 52). Though dissatisfied with the domestic roles that society expects of her, Rosario lacks the necessary tools to achieve more and thus cannot move beyond herself.

While housework bores Rosario, the shopping needed to nourish her narcissism excites her to the point of pseudo-sexual arousal. As psychologist Jean Twenge notes in writing about materialism and self-absorbed people, "materialism is not only desirable but practically orgasmic in its pleasure" (101). James Twitchell observes that connections have been made between nineteenth-century shoplifters and sexual activity: "According to some commentators, the orgy of shoplifting was just that. After the foreplay of advertising, women were coddled to the point of orgasm by unctuous salesmen and erotic goods in alluring displays" (255). The presence of male voyeurs who enjoyed watching women shop is further evidence to Twitchell that eroticism was at play in stores:

> When questioned, these men admitted that they found stimulation in the physical hysteria of the women who, flushed and sweating, pawed the latest materials and frantically toyed with the newest accessories. Occasionally, one of these males would grope a shopper, sometimes one would reveal himself to the entire group, and there were cases of such men masturbating in crowded department stores. (255)

Elaborating on the connection between shopping and physical pleasure in late nineteenth-century, Hispanic fiction would extend the parameters of this study. Suffice it to say that other literary critics have identified such a connection. Peter Bly, Akiko Tsuchiya, Bridget Aldaraca, and Dorota Heneghan all agree, for instance, that Galdós' portrayal of Rosalía de Bringas' physiological reaction to shopping suggests sexual excitement. Unresponsive to the call for women to dedicate themselves to being caring wives and mothers, both Rosalía and Rosario, as egotistical as can be, are driven to see and be seen by society's elite, and to consume goods. Unlike Rosalía's overspending, which reaches a climax that leads her to prostitute herself to repay her debts, Rosario's reckless use of money overburdens her husband with financial and social ruin, and ultimately destroys him. Like Rosalía, however, Rosario finds great pleasure outside the house when either shopping or exhibiting herself. She experiences "verdaderas voluptuosidades, estremecimientos de placer, al penetrar en las tiendas" (37). As if contesting the late nineteenth-century bourgeois notion of the angel of the house that "proscribe[d] any form of sexual passion" (Kirkpatrick 365), Rosario experiences while shopping a form of masturbation or egotistic sex. Susan Kirkpatrick observes that "what made [woman] angelic was that her subjectivity consisted entirely of love in its domestic aspect–love of parents, family surroundings, husband and children. "'[E]l torpe vicio de la voluptuosidad y el sensualismo' is explicitly ruled out for the true woman" (364). Or, as Catherine Jagoe remarks: "The analogy between women and angels rested on the belief in the sexlessness, and therefore virtue, perceived as common to both. Purity, defined as lack or control of sexual passion, was the prime quality of the angel of the house" (24). Even though white bourgeois Puerto Rican feminists found it difficult to "incorporat[e] pleasure into their conceptualization of sexuality [. . .] because female sexual desire was so closely associated among Puerto Rican elites with the allegedly bestial sensuality of poor black women" (Findlay-Suarez 72), Rosario's voluptuousness and pleasurable tremblings nevertheless defy the notion that women should not and cannot possess sexual expressions.

Upon taking great interest and enjoyment in shopping and adorning herself, Rosario is eager to return home from her honeymoon to exhibit her decorated self and be the focus of attention: "Rosario volvía del viaje contenta, [. . .], ávida de presentarse en sociedad para lucir los magníficos trajes que traía de París, y debían llamar poderosamente la atención (36). Although cultural norms dictated that a woman's realm was the house, Rosario goes on daily excursions around the city. Lounging coquettishly on the pillows of her carriage, she flaunts her luxurious garments for all to see. A calculating behavior to which Eulate returns in a later novel titled *El asombroso doctor Jover* (1930),[5] coquetish displays in *La muñeca* have the power to affect both men and women: "En toda la ciudad no había quien pudiera rivalizar en lujo con ella, se presentaba en el paseo, recostada coquetamente sobre los cojines de su landeau, todas las miradas la seguían y las damas se apresuraban a imitar el corte y el color de sus vestidos" (45). Dressing with great care, Rosario desires others' notice, and in so doing becomes a spectacle for men's eyes and a model for women to imitate. Given that coquetry was censured by late nineteenth-century Puerto Rican Liberals, who believed women "should develop their minds for more effective mothering, not simply define themselves by their beauty or pass their time flirting" (Suárez Findlay 61), one could argue that coquetry was a way for women to exert some power and control over their lives. In fact, one could assert, as Ellen Bayuk Rosenman does in a study on Victorian coquettes, that "attacks on coquetry [are] a kind of cover story that conceal deeper fears about gender roles and heterosexuality, and above all about female agency, autonomy, and eroticism." In Rosario's case, she not only desires autonomy and expresses erotic feelings but also gains agency through the influence she has over women who hurry to copy her style of dress. Consequently, one can suggest that Rosario sees herself as an artist and that her "narcissistic mirror-gazing [is] a form of self-portraiture" (Bayuk Rosenman). While late twentieth-century narcissists are described by partners as being more flirtatious than non-narcissists (Campbell, Foster, and Finkel 349), and while we repeatedly read in *La muñeca* that Rosario is a flirt (37, 39, 46, 97), Rosario, as one might assume of a coquette, is not interested in enticing men to sexual activity. She remains faithful to Julián, because she finds pleasure in shopping and being the focus of attention.

Rosario's pretentious displays during her carriage rides are not the only way Rosario seeks attention and admiration. Though she disdains all serious endeavors and studies, she is willing to practice the piano largely because it will elicit positive feedback: "No le gustaba la música, pero como su limpia ejecución le valía tantos aplausos en las reuniones en que solía tocar, se imponía el estudio para no perderla y por lo tanto la ocasión de aquellos triunfos" (46). Her vanity leads her to fish for compliments however and whenever possible. Therefore, when Julián asks that she play for him but does not applaud, she becomes upset.

Indeed, by exhibiting herself, all Rosario wants is admiration and envy, because, as Joanna M. Ashmun elucidates, "[narcissists] want praise, compliments, deference, and expressions of envy all the time." Rosario constantly tries to impress an old friend from school, Luisa, and make her envious: "Rosario tenía siempre algo nuevo que enseñarle [a Luisa] y complacíase en que su amiga viese su lujo pensando que tal vez la envidiaba" (45). Moreover, she cannot wait to be seen at the next gala event, because she is convinced her friends "rabiarán de envidia" (71). Paradoxically, Rosario focuses on herself but she needs others in order to feel special. In short, what matters to Rosario is the consumption of luxury goods that will make others gaze upon her with envy.

Far from being an intellectual, Rosario reads nothing more than "periódicos [. . .] de moda y alguna que otra gacetilla" (66), or brief news clips inserted in newspapers, and hates serious conversations. Like a man in a cartoon, who while talking to a woman at a party remarks, "Enough about me. Let's talk about you. Have you seen my exhibit at the gallery?" (Brown 23), Rosario would rather talk about her material possessions and their impression on others, which narcissists are more likely to do (Twenge and Campbell 161): "Pero la joven prefería hablar de sus nuevos triunfos, de la impresión que en el paseo de la tarde había producido su abrigo de piel de marta, o su elegante sombrero *La Vallière* con el que pensaba retratarse" (44-45). Unlike her female companions, Rosario has no interest in her husband's work and publications. As a result, Julián does not talk politics with her and even goes out of his way to spare her all contact with his friends. Lacking the "rigorous female intellectual education" that Puerto Rican Liberals thought "would also improve bourgeois marriages by maintaining men's interest in their wives long after the physical attractions of courtship had faded" (Suárez-Findlay 61), Rosario, who has internalized lessons about the importance of a woman's physical appearance above all, can think no more than of how to adorn herself. As such, she is incapable of having a relationship based on intellectual compatibility, as Puerto Rican Liberals and early feminists desired to see in marriages (72).

Unable to understand or experience the same feelings that Julián possesses, Rosario lacks empathy. Self-focused, she cannot see that Julián aches for her affection and intellectual engagement. When she must stay home one night, due to illness, she is bored, repeatedly yawning as Julián tries to find a topic that will engage her. Rosario is far from representing the ideal wives described in "a popular nineteenth-century Spanish marriage manual [who] performed a vital duty by providing daily doses of love and comfort for their mates" (Jagoe 20). Sensing neither love from nor comfort with Rosario, Julián sees "el vacío de su vida, la horrible tortura de un corazón apasionado que lucha en vano por despertar sentimientos análogos en el corazón del que ama" (48). He is clearly cognizant of her lack of empathy and their inability to engage each other:

> No era sólo una mujer sin corazón, una muñeca que se viste y adorna para llamar la atención de la multitud; todo eso lo sabía. Era un ser inconscientemente feroz que acostumbrada a pensar sólo en sí no le afectaban las penas de los demás sino en la relación que pudiera tener con ella misma. (64–65)

Despairing, Julián concludes that Rosario does not love him and never has, allowing the narrator once again to underscore Rosario's doll-like qualities: "Rosario no era más que una muñeca. Y él la había amado con delirio, la amaba aún para su tormento, con el frenesí que debió sentir Pigmaleón ante la hermosura marmoreal de Galatea" (48). Like a marble statue, Rosario lacks the empathy needed to understand the extent of her husband's distress and the emotional intimacy required to save him from deteriorating.

Though the narrator refers to the Pygmalion story to describe Julián's predicament, readers might also evoke Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879). Unlike Ibsen's Nora, who scrimps, saves, and ultimately forges a signature to repay a medical debt that saves her husband's life, Rosario does the opposite. She squanders money, causing her husband's illness and ultimate doom. But, like *A Doll's House*, *La muñeca* suggests that women should not function as dolls. Rather than be raised to be a plaything for men, they should be men's companions and have the right to be properly educated. Lola Rodríguez de Tío, the great Puerto Rican poet and feminist activist who in 1875 published an essay titled "La influencia de la mujer en la civilización," might have opined that Rosario's doll-like qualities are a result of a dismal education. She notes that a people who do not educate women properly are bound to "recibir en su seno un autómata más, ignorante de sus derechos é incapaz para el cumplimento de sus deberes" (2). She then warns:

> Para los hombres, será la instrucción de la mujer un obstáculo acaso para sus malhalados fines, por ilustrada, no tendrá siempre la flexibilidad que su egoismo exige. En vez del autómata encontrarían la mujer fuerte, la mujer de conciencia, responsible de todos los actos de su vida. (2)

Like Rodríguez del Tío, Rosario Ferré reminds her readers approximately a century later with the publication of "La muñeca menor" (1976), that Puerto Rico's patriarchal system regards a woman's role to be acquiescent women and dolls. That is, within a patriarchal society, bourgeois and upper-class women are taught to submit to their husbands and to engender social status. Once deprived of all freedom, Ferré's young wife exacts revenge: the monstrous multitude of prawns residing within the youngest doll that replaces the wife emerges to attack and destroy the husband. Though Rosario does not lose all her freedom, since she has the freedom to consume luxury goods and flaunt them, she too destroys her spouse. In sum, like Eulate, Ferré "rejects the masculinist conception of women as objects" (Sloan 40). Both writers denounce the inequitable gender power relations and repudiate the cultural messages that say that women are supposed to be dolls, beautiful playthings.

Julián's pain intensifies further after his brother Alberto's visit, when he beholds Rosario's negative interactions with family members. Witnessing how amorous and kind his sister-in-law Angustias is with Alberto, Julián reflects on his own marriage and finds his own situation less tolerable. He observes how condescending, dry, and critical Rosario is with Angustias. Rosario's inflated sense of self leads her to denigrate Angustias, finding her "vulgar, fastidiosa, y falta por completo de distinción" (52). She later declares, "¡Ah! con que me encuentra hermosa, y volvió la cabeza hacia donde había un espejo. La verdad es que comparada con ella…tiene…un cuerpo como un colchón…" (53). To boost her own ego, Rosario must criticize Angustias. Moreover, as with Lucia, Rosario tries to make Angustias envious. Thus, when Rosario realizes that Angustias may outshine her in one of her dresses Rosario becomes envious and angry: "Se miró en el espejo, comparó sus brazos delgados que no llegaban a disimular los larguísimos guantes de cabritilla, con la hermosura resplandeciente de Angustias y experimentó un sentimiento de envidia y de ira" (56). Rosario also becomes irritated and dissatisfied with Alberto because she is no longer the center of his attention. If before his marriage he was full of compliments "que halagaban la vanidad de [Rosario]" (51)—Alberto is now busy with Angustias, leaving Rosario "relegada a segundo término" (53). Through her interactions with Angustias and Alberto, Rosario demonstrates her inability to imagine a relationship in which she is not the focus. Though Angustias treats her like a sister, Rosario disparages and envies her. And she thinks less of Alberto because he ceases to focus on and flatter her. As a result, Rosario, feeling that she is now neither envied nor the center of attention, sees no purpose in nurturing the relationships.

Julián is also terribly hurt and humiliated to hear Rosario say before his family and friends that she has no desire to have children:

> Los chiquillos sólo dan malos ratos, y luego, ¡cuesta tanto criarlos! Las mujeres se marchitan, aquí está el doctor que no me dejará mentir, se ajan, pierden la esbeltez de su talle, y la verdad es que para las que nos hemos casado jóvenes, encontrarse a los pocos años de matrimonio con un par de chiquillos que nos impidan salir y convertidas en unas viejas es un porvenir aterrador. Además, mientras son pequeños todo lo rompen y ensucian, y a mí me gusta tener mi casa como un templo, que nadie me moleste cuando me echo a descansar un poco. Me hubieran dado muy malos ratos. (55)

Rather than perceive joy in motherhood, Rosario concludes that offspring would be a nuisance and that she is, therefore, better off without them. Becoming a mother would call for her to be displaced as the focal point and for her to put someone ahead of herself. To be sure, Rosario's egotism allows her to shun the role of mother, one of the central roles assigned to women in the nineteenth century. Jagoe states that "nineteenth-century scientific discourse synecdochically reduced woman to a womb" (23). Bridget A. Aldaraca concurs: "According to the [nineteenth-century] physician [Monlau], what women may or may not want is irrelevant. Their reproductive potential defines and limits them to a unique social role, motherhood" (*El angel del hogar* 76). Late nineteenth-century Puerto Rican Liberals called for educating women because, in their view, "well-educated women would provide Puerto Rico with an army of capable mothers to produce future generations of active, manly citizens" (Suárez-Findlay 61). But Rosario has no interest whatsoever in nation-building or making selfless investments in others, particularly children. Disregarding social and cultural conventions, she prefers "to live by or for herself [which] was anathema to the bourgeois ideologues" of the nineteenth century (Jagoe 25).

Rosario's relationship with Julián suffers further because of her fantasies of grandeur. To fill the void created by his deteriorating private life, Julián thrusts himself into his public life as a political figure, which ends up taking a physical and emotional toll on him. After Luisa points it out to her, Rosario reflects on and reacts to Julián's haggard condition because she needs a healthy husband to accompany her to the upcoming governor's gala. That is, Rosario needs another's eyes to see Julián's true physical state. She is more concerned with how his illness will affect her plans to be among those with status and distinction than with his condition: "Ya ves, aunque tenga a Teresa para que le cuide, una enfermedad larga sería horrible, ahora que voy a quitarme el luto y a poder salir" (67). Rosario's fantasies of grandiosity are underscored earlier in the narrative when she becomes annoyed to learn that Julián did not invite the mayor to preside over her father's funeral (63). By wanting the mayor to be present "for [his] ability to confer social importance by association" (Brown 50), Rosario engages in what Brown terms social exploitation. In other words, Rosario does not value the mayor as an individual, but rather for his prestige.

Though Rosario does not allow Julián to witness that she is annoyed with him for not inviting the mayor to the funeral, she does not hold back her emotions when denied the opportunity to associate with the governor and other people of high status. When Julián refuses to attend the party, since it will compromise his political standing, Rosario sees him only as an obstacle to her fantasies of grandeur. Consequently, unable to regard his perspective or feelings, she becomes irate: "La joven estaba pálida, nerviosa, y sentía que la cólera, la ira al verse contrariada, empezaba a invadirla" (73). Her "narcissistic anger is a response to perceived affronts to [her aggrandized self-image]" (Rhodewalt and Morf 683). She suddenly destroys a luxurious Parisian fan she has just had purchased for herself, ironically accuses Julián of egotism, and then becomes vengeful:

> —De modo que todo era cálculo miserable y me engañabas con una falsa ternura.
> —No te engañaba, quería que te pusieras pronto bueno.
> —¿Para ir a esa fiesta maldita?
> Rosario no vaciló un momento. Pero estaba irritada, ofendida, y sin poderse contener, dejó escapar la verdad de sus labios, adivinando que iba a herirle y viendo en aquella herida su venganza.
> —Sí. (74-75)

Arrogant and vindictive, Rosario still can find no fault in her own behavior and therefore lashes out at Julián, blaming him for their situation:

> —Me has insultado, dijo con rabia que no trataba de disimular, y eso no lo olvidaré. Tus acusaciones, tus necias quejas, no tienen fundamento. Dices que no te quiero, y si así fuera, ¿de quién es la culpa si no de ti que no has sabido hacerte querer? (76)

Rosario does not respond with understanding and affection, because as Campbell and Twenge observe, Narcissists' relationship partners primarily serve to make narcissists look and feel powerful, special, admired, attractive and important. Love, caring, commitment, loyalty and all those other elements at the core of healthy relationships matter less to narcissists, who move on when they cannot get the needed ego gratification (212).

Though Rosario's marriage to Julián lasts years, I have already noted that part of her longs to move on and be single again. Furthermore, both the narrator and Julián repeatedly underscore Rosario's lack of emotional warmth toward him. When the couple first begins to experience economic troubles and Julián asks that Rosario reduce her spending and forgo their carriage, Rosario can only focus on her desire to consume goods, since "narcissism is all about buying and using products that confer status and importance—expensive cars, jewelry, clothing, a nice house or anything that displays status, power, and sophistication" (Twenge and Campbell 160). Needing to satisfy her thirst for luxury, Rosario would rather disdain and torment her husband to get what she wants than consider changes: "Rosario irritada porque la voluntad de su marido le impedía satisfacer aquella sed de lujo que la devoraba, le imponía mil pequeños tormentos" (81). As a result, Julián, adoring his wife and aware that giving her costly gifts will win the affection that he greatly desires from her, yields to her wishes and allows her to resume her extravagant spending. In great debt, careworn, and feverish, however, Julián languishes. When his physician asks that Rosario modify her habits and stay home with her husband in the evenings, she becomes angry and annoyed that he intrudes in her life:

> —¿Yo? exclamó la joven sorprendida e irritada de lo que consideraba una intrusion injustificable del médico. Tiene usted extrañas ocurrencias, Valdés; y a la verdad, para una mujer joven y deseosa de divertirse como yo, el quedarse en casa cuidando a un enfermo imaginario, a un monomaniaco, no tiene nada de halagüeño. (92)

Rosario once again spurns the role of the caring and confined wife.

In addition to stressing her need to be in the public eye enjoying herself, Rosario feels entitled; she wants Julián to fulfill her needs but refuses to reciprocate. Moreover, she devalues him by asserting that he is preoccupied only with his health. Rosario reacts similarly when Julián announces that they are financially ruined. He quietly anticipates that she will sell her recently acquired pearls, emeralds, and sapphires to raise the money that can alleviate their debts. But Rosario, feeling entitled to her lavish jewels, proposes he ask his brother to lend him money. She finds herself to be too special to surrender her luxury goods to contribute to her husband's emotional and physical welfare, and their financial well-being. Fully aware of his damaged reputation and deep debt, questioning once again whether Rosario ever loved him, and too tired to start over, now-hopeless Julián kills himself. By depicting her protagonist with an all-consuming need to possess luxury goods regardless of the negative consequences, Eulate underscores Fernández Juncos' observations about the tyrannizing effects that the perceived luxuries had on Puerto Rican families:

> Entre las clases medianamente acomodadas, el lujo enjendra necesidades que tiranizan á las familias, mata el ahorro bienhechor, produce rivalidades y disgustos y rebaja el nivel moral hasta el extremo de dar más valor al traje que á las buenas acciones, á la exterioridad fútil y pasajera, que á las virtudes privadas y á la nobleza del corazon. ("Sobre el lujo" 22)

On economic and moral grounds, Fernández Juncos was opposed to Puerto Ricans who showed off riches and spent beyond their means because, as he saw it, overspending leads to illegal conduct and the abuse of credit. Alfau y Baralt also found that overspending on luxuries was a social problem worthy of addressing. Writing for a female readership in an essay titled "El lujo," he opined that one needs to find a balance between bare essentials and superfluous ones, and warned that crossing the line means that "el lujo se convertirá en verdadero origen de ruina individual y social, y lo mismo la familia que el Estado, llegarán á sucumbir bajo su imperio y su dominio" (176). Julián does indeed succumb because of Rosario's narcissistic squandering on luxury items.

As one might expect of a narcissist, Rosario continues to be at the center of her universe after Julián's death. Never questioning her role in his demise, she ponders how he could have left her to experience pain: "Era una mala acción quitarse la vida en aquellas circunstancias, sin pensar en el dolor que experimentaría ella" (108). She understands the world only through her emotions and experiences. Ironically, narcissistic Rosario inflicts mental and emotional pain on Julián but does not see herself responsible for his suffering. The narrator intimates that Rosario's parents are at fault for her personality. Idolizing their only child, her parents dressed her elegantly as a youngster; the father doted on her while her mother, the reader is told, was too weak of character to guide her (37). Indeed, though the etiology of narcissistic personality disorder is not known, psychologists have found that both childhood developmental factors and parenting behaviors may contribute to the disorder, including "unpredictable or unreliable care giving from parents" as well as "overindulgence and overvaluation by parents" (Groopman and Cooper). Cognizant of the role parents play in a child's upbringing and psychology, Eulate has her narrator observe that Rosario's parents not only had never denied her anything but had overvalued her:

> [Rosario c]reía de buena fe que lo había hecho completamente feliz [a Julián], como creía por habérselo oído repetir desde niña a su madre, que ella no era no sólo muy hermosa, sino muy buena. Y esta convicción de su superioridad moral y física, halagada por sus padres, formaban el fondo de su cáracter y era la excusa que se daba a sí misma para no sacrificarse por su marido. (88)

Convinced she is special and superior to Julián both morally and physically, Rosario cannot bring herself to sacrifice her luxuries for him. Though Julián's friends are aware of Rosario's role in the death of her husband, Rosario's mother never finds fault with her daughter. In fact, before Rosario can see the letter Julián left her, the mother burns it and thereby prevents Rosario from reading his bitter accusations and learning that she had a central role in his suicide. Instead, Rosario's mother publicly claims that Julián killed himself because he was *loco*. The mother's behavior may lead the reader to conclude that she also lacks empathy and to wonder whether she too is narcissistic. Had she allowed Rosario to read the letter, she could have provided her daughter a moral lesson about the need to empathize and to be less wasteful. Instead, she continues to perpetuate her daughter's narcissism by keeping Rosario from the letter and doting on her.

To conclude, Eulate writes in a letter that her critics felt it was immoral of her to let her protagonist move on with her life with impunity:

> *La muñeca*, a la que puso título don Manuel Zeno Gandía, me costó un disgusto, pues creo salió un comentario en una revista, dirigida por doña Ana Roqué, diciendo que era sorprendente que una señorita tan joven escribiera una obra inmoral. La inmoralidad consiste en que la protagonista es una mujer moderna, una muñeca de carne que por afán al lujo, procurara la tragedia de la obra, muy realista, y para ser moral, esa mujer debió ser castigada literariamente, y en mi obra realista, queda impune. Aquí las personas que conocen mi obra literaria, que consta de más de veinte obras originales, me aseguran que *La muñeca* es superior a todas, porque yo me adelanté medio siglo a la moderna tescuela [sic] realista. (qtd. in Silva 54)

One may concur with Eulate when she remarks that she was ahead of her time in writing a modern realist novel in Puerto Rico, but one can also agree that she had a clear and keen perception of the psychological symptoms and behaviors of narcissists. By allowing Rosario to live with impunity, Eulate does not reject the moral lesson, but rather shows what psychologists assert: "[N]arcissists rarely change, especially in relationships" (Twenge and Campbell 226); they find no fault in themselves. Thus, it should come as no surprise that two years after Julián's death and her move to Madrid with her mother, Rosario "continuaba siempre hermosa y elegante, pues aquella catástrofe parecía no haber alterado la serenidad de su vida" (112).

All in all, one could argue that Eulate offers up a femme fatale and an anti-heroine—a model of what women in late nineteenth-century should not be.[6] Living in a world where most women lacked an adequate moral and intellectual education that could offer them options, encouraged by society to consume goods that would enhance her image, and overvalued by doting parents, Rosario learns only to focus on what she knows best: herself. Negatively affecting her relationships with friends and family, this narcissism is clearly deleterious. But Eulate also uses Rosario's narcissism to remind readers that women want and deserve more. They want to be more than wives and mothers; they can be and are sexual beings, and should possess self-determination and economic self-sufficiency, which an education can make possible.[7]

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Notes

[1] With the exception of quotations from Eulate's *La muñeca,* which Ángel Aguirre has modernized, all other Spanish quotations maintain the original orthography and accents.

[2] A polyglot, Eulate Sanjurjo began her writing career by publishing translations from the French for *La Revista de Puerto Rico*, directed by Manual Fernández Juncos. By the age of 24, she was publishing in various literary magazines in San Juan, Havana, and Madrid.

[3] See works by Luis A. Jiménez, Angel. A. Rivera, Nancy Bird-Soto, Elena Grau Lleveria, Lisa Nalbone, as well as Ángel M. Aguirre's edition of *La muñeca*.

[4] I am grateful to the University of Connecticut's Dodd Research Center for allowing me access to the cited works by Antonio Alfau y Baralt and Lola Rodríguez de Tío.

[5] See Angel Rivera's study "Modernity, Flirting, Seduction, and Urban Social Landscape."

[6] For more on this topic, see Angel Rivera's article titled "Relectura de la 'femme fatale.'"

[7] My thanks to Donna Oliver, Diane Lichtenstein, and Greg Buchanan for commenting on early versions of this essay.

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