

**Female Leadership in Francoist Spain:
National-Catholic Restrictions and Female Solidarity
in the Sección Femenina's *Y Revista de la Mujer***

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Y Revista as a Multi-Purpose Propaganda Tool

Y Revista de la Mujer in Context

Y Revista de la Mujer, first published as *Y Revista de la Mujer Nacional-Sindicalista* and later as *Y Revista Nacional-Sindicalista de la Mujer*, was one of several magazines published by the Women's Section (Sección Femenina) of the Falange. It was published for the first time in February 1938, during the Spanish Civil War, and for the last time in 1946. The magazine was printed in San Sebastian, in the Basque region of Spain, in 1938 under Nationalist control. In reading the issues of *Y*, I have been attentive to the magazine's role in enforcing retrograde notions of femininity, but I have also been open to recognizing the existence in its pages of features that I was not expecting to find, as the magazine offered the opportunity for women to create a community in print together, opening up some space for differences among female readers under the regime. In my conclusion, I will ask how these unexpected findings may affect our understanding of the Sección Femenina.

In the first issue of *Y* (February 1938) the first article explains, contextualizes, and defends the magazine's name and its many meanings. It is "un árbol fecundo"; the Yugo of Isabel la Católica (who subsequent issues will go on to idolize perhaps more than any other figure aside from José Antonio and the Generalísimo himself); una "letra que une y agrega aquellas cosas medias que en soledad perecerían, que separadas dejarían deshabitado al mundo y secas las almas". It does not represent an "irritated" feminist movement but aims to complement man (*Y Revista*, Issue 1, 2). In this, the magazine is placed in the context of Fascist Spain. The relationship between history, empire, and the role of women was an important factor throughout its time-span.

Why Magazines?

Within the scholarship on the Sección Femenina and women living through the Franco regime, there have been few in-depth studies on the falangist magazines that were disseminated to women throughout the country. The scholars who have written about *Y* and whose research provides the groundwork for this thesis—Angela Cenarro, Desirée García-Gil, Consuelo Pérez-Colodrero, and Anna Pelka, among others—have emphasized the importance of these magazines as a tool for the Sección Femenina. A substantial task of the regime's Press and Propaganda division was to create these magazines and ensure that they were engaging for the female reader. *Y*'s editor Marichu de la Mora and her assistant Clara Stauffer had begun their tenure in the Press and Propaganda division disseminating propaganda pamphlets to women, but their efforts quickly shifted to focus on magazines (Delgado Bueno 138). This shift shows how important the message of *Y* was to the top leadership of the SF.

There is no single factor that makes the magazine form an interesting form of print culture. In the case of *Y* specifically, several distinct and multi-dimensional factors set it apart: its designation, as a magazine, as popular or mass culture; its function as a space aimed at a female community; and its role as a tool for propagating fascist thought. These three factors work together to create a framework that makes *Y* a particularly interesting object of study within the context of Francoism. I will move from the macro (magazines as a medium) to the mezzo (women's magazines) to the micro (female fascist magazines) in order to describe the interplay between each of these forces. Each level on its own would be inadequate as an explanation of the intricacies of *Y*; the intermingling of each facet, mediating the contradictions and deficiencies of the others, it helps to understand the magazine's goals.

Magazines as Popular Culture

Popular, or mass, culture has often been considered shallow given its consumption by the uneducated masses. This is especially true for magazines, as they have become associated with aspects of femininity like beauty, fashion, and romance which have been deemed vapid or silly by patriarchal society. However, these criticisms are rooted in misogyny and classism. Stephanie Sieburth writes that early modernism “create[d] a dichotomy between men as producers of high culture and women as consumers of mass culture” (14). Further, the criticism of mass culture came about at a time of increased literacy and increased access to print culture thanks to mass production. The insistence on a difference between high vs. low culture is ultimately one that is based on the preservation of elitism rather than genuine concern for the possible harmful effects on society.

At the same time, more recent scholarship on popular culture has seen it as a vehicle for important aspects of their sociocultural landscapes. Martin Conboy, in *The Press and Popular Culture*, stipulates that, as a form of popular culture, magazines mean little when divorced from the context in which they were created. Thus, simple discursive analysis is inadequate for an understanding of the factors at play within the pages of a magazine. In fact, “the magazine form, unlike newspapers, broadcasting and online media, has a unique and powerful role both as a product of its social and cultural moment and as a catalyst for social change” (Abrahamson 667).

In part, this ability to both reflect the reality of the sociocultural moment it is created in while also possessing the ability to change that moment (at least for the specific subset of the population reading the magazine) is due to the mirror-like form that it takes. Popular culture speaks both to and *from* the people, giving it a dual utility. First, it exists, perhaps primarily, as a form of entertainment, but it also speaks *for* (or claims to speak for) the people that it

represents and entertains. The popular aspect of the magazine claims to give some form of agency to the reader-contributor, even if this is an illusion, thus breaking down barriers that tend to exist between those who consume and those who produce culture. It narrows the distance between reader and author, between the consumer and the bureaucracy of the magazine through two-way communication with readers and familiar language. This makes the magazine feel intimate, despite the distance that actually exists between readers and the magazine.

Furthermore, as Conboy also mentions, popular culture invokes the regional and the folk in order to connect with its audience. He says that “there are important reasons why the popular press often claims allegiance to these folk traditions. These might include reference to continuities in the lives of ordinary people, memories of past glories, national iconography, identification with the concerns of the ‘little people’ on money matters, not to mention the single most important element, the printed press itself as a conduit for these common cultural concerns” (15). This evocation of the folk, and ultimately of the common, is a tool that is also used not only to create commonalities between the writers and creators of the magazine and the people who read it, but also to create an “idealized version of [these] ordinary people” (8).

Magazines as Virtual Communities for Women

The idea of “virtual communities” is one developed by Howard Rheingold in reference to online communities, but in a chapter of Tracy Seneca’s book *History of Printing and Publishing 1700-*, she applies the idea of virtual communities to early women’s magazines in the United States and Britain. In this context, a virtual community is one in which people are not interacting face-to-face or even directly, but after “[carrying] on public discussions long

enough, and with enough human feeling, [...] form webs of personal relationships" (qtd. in Seneca). Magazines are aided by their assignment as popular culture in facilitating those public discussions, but this does not quite explain the human factor that contributes to the development of virtual communities.

Instead, the development of these communities amongst readers of magazines creates an intimacy (both real and manufactured) between the reader and the magazine itself. There exists a "two-way communication" that is not present in other forms of media or journalism. This can exist in the form of literal communication between the reader and writers/editors through letters to the editor or other submitted communications from readers that will then be responded to within the magazine's pages. However, I would argue that this two-way communication can also be implicit, through the use of familiar language and humor. When it comes to women, there exists a shared female experience communicated through the magazine that creates an element of intimate knowledge of women that you may not personally know yourself. Because women often have very personal, yet common experiences, this implied communication can exist in the warmth and familiarity that a magazine conveys.

In the case of *Y*, both of these features are present within the magazine. One of the primary columns that appears in almost every issue during its eight-year run is called *Higiene y belleza*. This series is an advice column in which readers submit concerns about hygiene and beauty, and these queries are answered by a female doctor, Ascensión Mas-Guindal. It is important to note here that medical discourse was leveraged in *Y* to build a sense of trust and confidence between readers and the magazine. The close relationship forged in this column with readers was reinforced by the *doctora* even referring to women by their first name as if they were old friends exchanging tips over an afternoon meal.

Further, the recurring role of humor (and, specifically, humor based on shared female experience) achieves the same goal as the advice columns by different means.

Magazines as Fascist Conduits

Finally, *Y* is not just a women's magazine, just as it is not a magazine that fits squarely under the umbrella term "popular culture." *Y* is, perhaps primarily, a fascist women's magazine. It is a state-sponsored, state-run magazine which was subject to the same heavy censorship as the rest of the media that existed under the Franco regime. As one of the official magazines of the Falange, it would not make sense to separate *Y* as a magazine from *Y* as fascist propaganda. As much as the magazine itself can be differentiated, in some moments, from fascist doctrine, and as much as the magazine often concerned itself with non-fascist and even non-Spanish content, the content itself cannot be extricated from the ideology of the Spanish state. Further, the women who controlled the magazine and the people who wrote and contributed to the content within its pages were fascists themselves, proud to spread the prevailing ideals of the regime.

Strict control of popular culture and dissemination of propaganda by fascist regimes is something that has been well studied, although mostly in relation to Italy and Germany. Manuela di Franco, in her doctoral thesis entitled *Popular Magazines in Fascist Italy, 1934-1943*, describes the relationship between magazine journalism and fascism: "periodicals were a commercial product created and moulded in order to gain as many readers as possible, and their entertaining nature gave them a certain freedom under a controlling regime such as Fascism" (Di Franco 11). Thus, magazines served a dual purpose, cloaking any subtle subversive thought under the mantle of a conception of popular culture as shallow

entertainment while simultaneously disseminating fascist ideology under that same allegedly harmless mantle.

At the same time, the cultural goal of fascism and, specifically, of the Francoist project, was to nationalize Spanish identity. Thus, popular culture also served as an extremely convenient medium to build consensus and promulgate the government-supported conceptualizations of what true “Spanish identity” was.

The main goal of *Y*, as a project by the Women’s Section of the Falange, was to standardize and nationalize female identity. As will be detailed in the next chapter, the repeated insistence on both the behavior and aesthetics of Spanish falangist women was a means to achieve this nationalization.

***Y* at a Glance**

Magazines, aside from all of the reasons previously covered, are especially important not only for their textual content but as a visual medium, which brings together texts and images through the magazine's design and layout. Arguably, many magazines could be considered a primarily visual rather than textual medium, but as an object that is viewed and read, magazines depend on both modes of presentation. In studying *Y*, and how it relates to the ways the Falange structured a model for the behavior and appearance of women, it is important to understand how visual aspects of the magazine work together with articles, poetry, and other textual components to create a robust idea of what the ideal fascist woman looks *and* acts like. As Maria Rosón Villena notes, “En este contexto ideológico, el texto era fundamental para la transmisión del pensamiento, pero sin lugar a dudas igual de relevante era la parte visual, en la cual se conserva una selecta iconografía de los mandos” (21).

This combined use of text and image allows a magazine—in this case, a fascist women's magazine—to convey its value system and to model behaviors through multi-layered messaging, wherein readers of varying backgrounds, ages and levels of education can glean different levels of understanding of the fascist woman. I will begin my analysis of *Y* from the standpoint of an illiterate or minimally literate Spanish woman at the time, bearing in mind Rosón Villena's point that “el elaborado lenguaje visual que acompañó a las palabras [...] posiblemente, dado el analfabetismo existente en aquellos años, tuvo mayor incidencia” (23). What would such a reader have understood about womanhood, motherhood, and the role that women should or could play in Spanish society? In the next chapter, I will show that this self-conception, and thus the magazine's intended messaging, is not necessarily uniform across different groups of readers.

For the purposes of this chapter, the first-ever issue of *Y* is a great representation of the general arc, style, and format of the entire run of the magazine. Many of the articles and imagery that were included in the first issue, from 1938, would be utilized until its final issue in 1946. Not only that, but there was never a greater need of support for fascism than in 1938, in the middle of the war and during Franco's struggles with the various political stakeholder groups on the nationalist side. Not only did Franco need popular support and the Church's support, but he and the entire Nationalist cause needed women's support and assistance more than ever.

Although the magazine's categories varied somewhat from issue to issue, they remained more or less standard throughout the magazine's eight-year run. Up until Issue 29, there was no formal categorization of its articles; instead, there was an implicit flow from category to category.

Each issue generally starts with a tribute to either Franco, José Antonio (José Antonio even had his own dedicated *homenaje* issue), or both figures, which allows the magazine, as a Falange-affiliated, State-sponsored organ, to simultaneously introduce the figures and faces of the Movement and establish their authority. This section immediately ties *Y* to the Falange and makes it clear that the subsequent material is official party doctrine.

The next section—present in most, but not all, of the issues—is generally titled either *Sección Femenina* or *Sección Femenina y FET de las JONS*. This is the section in which the SF and its programs are detailed, including the *Servicio Social*, *Organizaciones Juveniles* and other social welfare programs. It gave updates on what the regional leaders, or *jefes*, of the SF were doing, highlighted specific members or regional groups of the organization, and served as a general log of the goings-on of the SF. This section also included articles written by members

of the SF on topics immediately relevant to the organization, ranging from nutrition and physical fitness to religion and infant mortality. This section was a mainstay of the issues up to the beginning of 1941, when the category was eliminated and, instead, news about the SF itself would be put into other categories.

These categories on José Antonio and Franco, and on the Sección Femenina, were featured regularly (although less often after the beginning of 1941) until Issue 50, which was published in March of 1942. At this point in time, the likelihood that the Axis powers would ultimately lose World War II was increasing daily, making it expedient for the regime to distance itself from explicitly fascist associations (in 1941 the alangist-controlled Press and Propaganda division was subsumed under the more innocuously titled Vicesecretaria de Educación Popular). Thus, *Y*, as the official magazine of the SF, pivots toward a more straightforward women's cultural magazine. The magazine undergoes a huge shift, as it goes from articles explicitly praising Hitler and Mussolini to downplaying even the Sección Femenina, responsible for producing the magazine, as an explicit topic of discussion.

The next section—a general culture section—differed widely from issue to issue. The section's actual title varied, including “Literature y reportajes,” “Informaciones, arte y literatura,” and “Religión, arte, historia, geografía, literatura,” with the occasional inclusion of “Politica,” “Medicina” or other similar category. This general cultural focus allowed the editors of the magazine to include so-called high culture amongst the straight propaganda and visual imagery: the column included discussion of (for example) artists, cultural phenomena, science, or fashion, plus philosophical think pieces. These were often the most text-heavy features, which makes sense as they catered to the most well-read and educated members of *Y*'s readership.

There was also another category called “Variedades, modas y decoración” or “Hogar, variedades, y modas”, which was very similar to the previous category. Often, the two categories were interchangeable and certain features would move between the two. However, the significance of this category in terms of the magazine’s prescriptive function is that it often detailed how a woman was to run her home. Given that the SF and the regime believed that a woman’s ultimate role was to have children and maintain the home, this would serve as an incredibly important guide for female readers.

The next major category was called “Consultorios” or “El correo de *Y*.” This was the space in which readers were invited to communicate with the writers, editors, and contributors of the magazine, and they would write back. One of the mainstays of this category was the previously-mentioned column *Belleza y higiene*, written by Dr. Ascensión Mas-Guindal, which answered readers’ questions about health and beauty.

These stand-alone categorizations of *Y* are important, but what is more noteworthy is the way that these categories have the ability to impact the reader. Some are more prescriptive, while others leave more room both for the reader to interpret the content and for the author (of which many were female, even if they remained anonymous) to write content that may have allowed some freedom of interpretation, belief and, as a consequence, behavior. Thus, there is some room within *Y*, although it is a fascist magazine written specifically as propaganda, for women to choose their own path regarding their behavior and aesthetics as long as it fits within the conceptual framework of the National-Catholic woman.

In the following pages, I will elaborate on these categories, with specific reference to certain noteworthy articles and images. I will also discuss two additional types of article not singled out by these named categories: essays on extraordinary female figures throughout

history and their impact not *solely* as procreators and wives but for their own individual merits; and features that subject men to humor and satire, contrasting with the ideals of sternness, rigidity and firm obedience to controlling institutions that is offered as the only option to women in the rest of the magazine.

Cover



Figure 1. Cover of *Y Revista de la Mujer*, N° 1. February 1, 1938.

Because the magazine cover (see Figure 1) is the first thing one sees, and theoretically would have been what enticed women to buy it, it serves as a very important indicator of what might be inside the pages it introduced. As Ferguson explains: “women’s magazines use their front covers as advertisements for themselves” (1), and *Y* is no exception. The front cover of this first issue is packed with indicators of the magazine’s contents, and much of the subtlety that could be afforded to literate readers who might instead read about the intricacies of falangism is lost in its glaring attempts to hit several different markers at once. This makes it clear that the magazine does not aim to appeal only to those who are extremely literate, but to affect consumers across the spectrum of literacy and understanding, as well as expose a broad sector of readers to the imagery of the Falange.

The cover illustration was done by Teodoro Delgado, a prominent artist who worked in the Fine Arts Department of the Falange, specifically in the Information and Propaganda section (Arias Serrano 275). This shows the intervention of agents outside of the Sección Femenina, and may speak to the importance for sectors of the regime beyond the SF of the magazine’s role in ensuring popular support for Franco and the falangist project.

The image that Delgado draws is one with explicitly falangist symbols: first, the yoke and arrows. This is the official symbol of the falangist party, and dates back to the monarchy of Ferdinand and Isabella. This symbol is seen on the woman’s dress, standing out in red embroidery against the soft blue of her dress. Red and black are the two colors of the Falange, and thus the red makes sense -- the interesting choice in color here is the selection of a soft, nonthreatening baby-blue color. This speaks to the implied femininity of the magazine, and the allure it would have for women rather than men. Because it was during the war, one might

expect an inherently political magazine to deal with the horrors of a war in which they had amassed many losses. However, the cover chooses to show a woman in a blue dress and soft white undershirt, walking calmly and confidently with her basket of provisions. There is an evocation of peace, serenity, and a femininity that is unaffected by outside forces at play here, which immediately contributes to the reader's idea of what a woman is.

The woman herself is strong -- unbelievably strong, with unnaturally large arms and hands -- but soft. Her hair is styled, with very soft ringlets, and she appears to be wearing light, but visible makeup. All of this comes together to form a picture of a woman who is both feminine and strong, both hearty and soft, representing the same duality that the magazine itself will come to represent.

Patriarchal Vigilance



Figure 2. Image of Francisco Franco in Y Revista de la Mujer, N° 1. February 1, 1938.

In this first issue, for good reason, the editors put significant effort into familiarizing readers with the characters and mythology of the Spanish state. However, this is not something that becomes less significant in subsequent issues. Instead, the inclusion of Franco and Jose Antonio within the movement only continues to intensify a process of reader-identification in which the leaders of the movement and the SF become almost like personal relations to those consuming the magazine.

Significantly, however, most of the tributes across all of the issues of *Y* are to men -- Franco and José Antonio, to be specific. In every couple of issues one or the other is mentioned, either to establish subservience and loyalty in the case of Franco or to eulogize and

sanctify in the case of José Antonio. The fact that these tributes to male authority figures appear at the start of each issue confers legitimacy on the contents that follow. While this suggests the loyalty of the editors and contributors to the falangist project, it also functions as a safeguard, should any of the following features step outside of the mold of the Fascist Woman.

The third article in the first issue of *Y*, titled *Lo femenino y la Falange*, which was placed only after the recognition of Franco and explanation of the magazine's title and inception, comes directly from José Antonio, and features his signature at the bottom of the text. However, it is important to note that this is a posthumous reprint of a speech made by José Antonio in 1935. This means that the article was not written specifically for *Y* but is used to reinforce the magazine's tight ideological connection with the founder of the Falange. The speech is chosen because it was addressed to Falangist women.

The inclusion of this speech makes it clear that, despite being a magazine for women, *Y* does not strive to be a *feminist* magazine—far from it. José Antonio rejects the feminist label even before there is any question about what the Falange and the magazine itself stands for. Not only that, but he also establishes the at-the-time widely-held “complementary gender roles” viewpoint. He writes, “No entendemos que la manera de respetar a la mujer consista en sustraerla a su magnífico destino y entregarla a funciones varoniles” (*Lo femenino y la Falange* 3).

Ultimately, the first issue of the magazine begins by recognizing *Generalísimo* Franco, describing the magazine's A authorize it by explaining that the place of women, in official falangist doctrine, is as a complement to men. The falangist woman will submit to her divine, feminine function as wife and mother and not complain about her position or wish for something “better.” She will be religious, devoted to God and her family, and self-denying to a

fault. José Antonio goes on to compare this sacrifice to that made by the male martyr who gives his life for the cause. Knowing that José Antonio had been executed by the Republic, the female readers of *Y* would likely have been motivated by this speech to be self-sacrificing in order to measure up to him.

Indeed, an entire issue of *Y* is dedicated to José Antonio which lays out important details about his life, prints letters from friends of his, and enumerates the sacrifices he made for the Falange and for Spain as a whole. Upon his death, José Antonio became a Christ-like figure. For the purposes of giving authority and importance to *Y*, José Antonio was hugely relevant because his sister Pilar ran the entire Sección Femenina. It was Pilar's proximity to José Antonio that allowed her to become the powerful figure within the Falange that she was. Her relationship to José Antonio overrode any doubts about her political efficacy as a woman.

The Feminine Panopticon

Because *Y* was largely written, and entirely published by women, it creates an extremely interesting opportunity for women to self-govern and self-regulate—and to encourage other women (its readers) to self-regulate too. In a way, the references to male power were tools to allow the editorial staff of the magazine to create their own little universe within the SF, and within the magazine's various sections—some openly prescriptive, like those devoted to Sección Femenina; others more open-ended, like the variously-titled culture section and the essays devoted to famous women throughout history.

In comparison with the other categories of article published in *Y*, the section revolving around the home and childcare is perhaps the most prescriptive and rigid in its expectations of women. It does not waver in asserting that women are to take care of the home, keeping it neat

and tidy, and bringing up children to be the glorious future of Spain, Even those women who have not yet become mothers are simply *Futuras Madres* (or Future Mothers). If a person is female, then she therefore must be a mother and wife. Beyond that, she must abide by a very specific set of standards that is neatly laid out in the pages of this section in each issue of *Y*.

Additionally, and importantly, this is a category that does not taper off at any point. Other categories, specifically those concerned with political topics, waver in their permanence and eventually taper off at the end of the magazine's run. The regime's continued insistence on woman's destiny as wife and mother, asserting that cleanliness and attention to the home were paramount to a woman's success, drew on a long history of nineteenth-century depictions of the *Angel del hogar*, sanctioned by the Church. This meant that, even as the Catholic Church gained prominence over the Falange with the defeat of fascism in World War II, the Sección Femenina, in promoting the idea of the Angel of the House, was able to cling to power and influence due to its strong affiliation with a Catholic conception of womanhood.

This category, while rigid in its content and conceptualization of womanhood, cannot be written off as appeasement. In contrast to the sections on Jose Antonio and Franco, which were useful in conferring legitimacy on the magazine, one has to believe that the women who were members of the SF largely believed in fascist doctrine and in the complementary model of gender whereby women were *destined* to be confined to the private sphere, while men occupied the public sphere. This section contributed a significantly large proportion of the page count of the magazine, by contrast with the very small proportion that spoke of women's individuality and strength. But while the magazine's falangist editors and contributors almost certainly believed what they were preaching, they were also catering to regime expectations, knowing they were subject to the watchful eyes of regime officials. In talking about women,

the magazine reinforced the idea that women were subject to a “state of conscious and permanent visibility” (Bartky 467) both for its editors and contributors, and for its readers.



Figure 3-4. Images found in *Y Revista de la Mujer*, N° 1. February 1, 1938.

When it comes to the fashion sections that appear throughout *Y*, what matters is not so much the fashion as the woman who wears it. Everything about the women portrayed in the fashion sections of the magazine conveys a certain aesthetic, to which Spanish woman is expected to conform—from the way she carries herself, standing and posing gracefully, to the shape of her body. The magazine consistently depicts unrealistically proportioned women throughout its pages, setting an expectation for how women’s bodies are *meant* to look that no woman can truly achieve. As pictured in Figures 6 and 7, the women are unnaturally tall and

lithe. They have long legs and thin waists, and in Figure 7 the woman seated at the center of the illustration has comically small feet in comparison to the length of the rest of her body.

While all of the men have the typical dark complexion of many Spaniards, every single woman has bright blonde hair and alabaster skin. The children pictured are also light-complected. Although there is no explicit reference to the men and women in the illustration being married, it seems significant that one hundred percent of the men have dark skin and hair while one hundred percent of the women have light skin and hair, which implies that the women are passing their genes onto the children rather than the men. The implication is that women have more of an impact on children and childrearing.



Figure 5. Images in *Y Revista de la Mujer*, N° 1. February 1, 1938.

At the same time, the illustrations of women's fashion vary greatly even page-to-page. In the above engraving, the women are clothed in Victorian-silhouetted dresses in a garden. They wear floor-length rather than ankle-length gowns, which implies some increased modesty. They are also more realistically portrayed, with normally shaped bodies rather than being idealistic representations. From the average female viewer, this would seem to cast the past in an overly-celebratory light. The suggestion is perhaps that women in this time period

may not have had to be as astoundingly beautiful, or take on so much responsibility in child rearing (the group of three women illustrates female companionship, with no children or husbands present), because they were not battling the values of modernity and the temptations of the present (i.e. the Second Republic's recent changes to public conceptions and behavior of women).

Although the section of the magazine devoted to Sección Femenina serves some of the same functions as the Male Tributes section, it is different in its purpose and interest for readers. It features words not from leading male political figures but from leading women in the SF or women endorsed by them.

One of the main functions of this section was to give regular updates on the leadership of the organization and its activities. It offered an opportunity for the magazine to reduce the barrier between high-ranking members of the SF and the average reader of *Y*. This was crucial to the magazine's role as a propaganda tool. By introducing the women working in the organization, and endearing them through personal stories that told readers what they cared about and what they were involved in, the magazine made them feel less like far-off figures and more like personal friends.

This section was also significant because it set out the organization's agenda. At first, this section was mostly introductory, but as time went on it was able to tell a vivid story about what the SF meant for women. Naturally, this made many of these texts quite prescriptive, describing how women should integrate exercise and physical fitness into their lives, what it meant to be a falangist woman, or likening the SF to women's organizations in Germany. Given the strong association made between Falange Española and the Nazi Party, it is no surprise that, around 1942, *Y* eliminated the stand-alone Sección Femenina category and

instead integrated news about the organization into other sections of the magazine. As the regime started to distance itself from its fascist origins, with Allied victory in World War II now seeming assured, the magazine had to detach itself from the “modelo nazi-fascista [vía] la progresiva eliminación del ritual falangista” (Rosón Villena 26). By this stage, however, loyal readers had become familiarized with the leading figures in SF; the work done at the beginning of the magazine’s run to endear its female officers to readers likely contributed to the SF’s long-term success, compared to the increasing sidelining of the Falange from the mid-1940s.

The categories that dealt with culture, while varying from issue to issue, overall gave an often detailed breakdown of the most important (and most acceptable) cultural phenomena of the time. Although the SF, the Falange, and the regime overall were nationalist in nature, the culture sections range broadly in terms of the countries highlighted. Although Spanish accomplishments and cultural products were often showcased, more broadly European as well as Latin American cultural products were featured as well.

The principal significance of the culture sections lay in their ultimate function: to entertain. Although the morals and values conveyed are no different from those expounded in the rest of the magazine, these sections are not strictly, or even mainly, prescriptive. This is what *makes Y* a true magazine rather than a political pamphlet, allowing the female reader to be fully immersed in it, rather than reading it out of national duty or obedience to a husband. Instead, she is reading for her own enjoyment and is thus more likely to take in and process what she is reading. Although there is no way of knowing the motivation of the writers and editors of *Y* or of this section specifically, the fact that women were imbibing genuinely complex and rich information through a medium—the woman’s magazine—considered to be shallow is an interesting and important matter for consideration. While, in falangist and

Francoist thought, women were not intended to be highly educated or informed in matters of politics, current events, art, or philosophy, somehow the editors and writers of a falangist women's magazine were able to educate women on precisely those forbidden subjects, under the guise of popular culture.

Finally, a major feature of the SF's propaganda efforts was the recovery of powerful historical female figures and emphasis on the impact that women have had on the course of history. Some of the main figures touted by the organization included Isabel la Católica, Beatriz Galindo, Catherine of Aragón, Agustina of Aragón, Cecilia Böhl de Faber, Concepción Arenal, Emilia Pardo Bazán, and María Guerrero, among others, who served as role models for women who prioritized their religion and country above almost anything else (Rosón Villena 13). However, *Y* makes a concerted effort to recover many other women and stories about women that were not as popular in speeches and other propaganda from the SF. Ángela Cenarro says of this topic, "the Falangist female press was contributing to the redefinition of femininity through the recovery of historical female references that, generally located in a glorious Spanish past, were updated in the 1940s to build an archetype that insisted on the excellence of some women, within a masculine and patriarchal symbolic order" (106). This is to say that, while they praised women for doing things outside of the home, which might seem to indicate that they were advocating for similar behavior from modern Spanish women, these opportunities only existed within the existing patriarchal framework. Women were allowed to excel only as long as they fit perfectly into the SF's mold for the perfect National-Catholic woman.

The article titled "El gobierno de las mujeres" is perhaps the shining example within *Y* of the recovery of powerful female figures. The article begins by saying: "Pocas veces tiene la

mujer oportunidad de utilizar sus dotes de gobernante. Sin embargo, rara es la ocasión en que ha ocupado un trono que no haya sido en beneficio del país. Bajo el mando de las Reinas la mayoría de las naciones han llegado a la cumbre de su poderío y prosperidad.” In its own right, the idea that a woman can be a talented ruler whose decision-making and intelligence can benefit a country contrasts with the ideas espoused in the magazine’s issues. By allowing for different roles within the falangist view of women, *Y* encouraged women to first choose marriage and motherhood, but to also consider service to the regime as another way to contribute: the first woman they feature specifically is Isabel I. Noteworthy here is that she is the one credited with the achievements of Spain under her reign, and not her husband. Not once in the description of her feats is King Ferdinand even mentioned, and this is significant as it allows the powerful woman to stand completely on her own, on her own merits.

The article honors women not just of Catholic faith and Spanish heritage, but from all over the world. This diverse group of women, including Queen Victoria, Catherine the Great, Semiramis, Maria Theresa of Austria, and Maria Molina, is credited for military and diplomatic victories. They are given many exceptional attributes: indefatigable, intelligent, giving greatness and splendor to their country. These women were not praised for the reasons that might be expected of the SF, but for their strength as leaders of nations and builders of cities.

The discovery of America is heralded in the article “Influencia de la mujer en el descubrimiento de América” as “una de las hazañas más magníficas de la historia registrada,” arguing that women played a large role in this feat. In this case, Queen Isabel is again heralded as the savior of this mission and an inspiration for women. The article credits her success not just to her “steely Catholicism” as one might expect, but attributes to her an intuition and trust

of which King Ferdinand was simply not capable. This is the skill that, arguably, makes a good ruler into a great one: the instinct to do the right thing. The article also credits the discovery of America to other noblewomen, although in smaller part: Doña Healríz de Lóobndilla, Duchess of Moya, and Doña Beatriz Enríquez de Arana.

An aspect that is not subversive by any means, and rather seems to indicate obedience to accepted norms, is the fact that Doña Beatriz Enríquez is praised for having a romantic relationship with Columbus at the end of the article. Although women were able to exert some influence over the men they loved, courted and married, it seems to be a somewhat haphazard addition to an article that praises women not for their cultural capital as lover, mother or wife, but for their intellectual and diplomatic abilities.

“La obra de la mujer en la Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes by Cecilio Barbarán”, in Issue 48 of *Y*, while not a historical tribute to women but a recognition of women’s current impact on art and prestige as artists, similarly exalts women not just for their reproductive capabilities but as standalone, talented individuals. The article describes the art of women in Madrid’s National Exposition of Fine Art by saying that “Rara es la obra de éstas que no sugiera el más grato comentario”. It details the work of artists such as Marisa Roesset, Julia Minguillón, Magdalena Leroux de Pérez Comendador, Teresa Condeminas, María Rosa Arsalaguet, Englishwoman Nelly Harvey, Natividad Gómez Moreno, Aurora Lezcano, Carmen Martínez Kleiser, María Revenga, María de los Dolores Esteve García, María Luisa Palop, and more of the thirty-seven women who were featured in the exhibition. The works are detailed one-by-one, with the author stressing that he finds them each to be of note, commending them for their technical skill, attention to detail, and artistic vision. Overall, the article shows that

women can be talented in their own right and deserve to have their artwork shown alongside that of men in major exhibitions.

The recovery of traditional historical figures is something that is a tenet of fascism, detailed by Umberto Eco in his thesis on Ur-Fascism, which makes it unsurprising that the SF used a significant portion of its page length to glorify past figures like Queen Isabel or Santa Teresa. However, it is surprising that the magazine goes beyond these Virgin Mary-like figures who represented far-off ideals of centuries past and uplifts women who were not Catholic, not Spanish, and even controversial at times. Issue 17's inclusion of Wallis Simpson in an article about love stories that have changed the course of history is quite an interesting and shocking one, as the Duchess of Windsor was thrice-married and ousted out of the British royal family due to that fact. For a staunchly Catholic magazine like *Y*, she seems an odd choice. Further, in the same article, Anne Boleyn is highlighted despite the charges against her for incest, adultery and witchcraft, along with the modern conception of her as a lustful and scandalous figure. Further, the text accompanying her tribute is all about how Henry VIII's desire to marry her is what caused the split between the Catholic Church and the Church of England. Why would they glorify this? It is hard to say whether they are truly glorifying any of the figures that are featured in the magazine. Some, yes, but some seem to be an inclusion that merely seeks to tell the story of women. The control of women's narratives seems to be central to *Y*'s overall mission, and it is imperative to a conversation about women's ability to create intracommunal power dynamics despite living in an overall patriarchal society.

In Sandra Lee Bartky's *Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power*, she discusses the paradox of Foucaultian analysis in feminine systems. Bartky writes that "The absence of formally identifiable disciplinarians and of a public schedule of sanctions

only disguises the extent to which the imperative to be ‘feminine’ serves the interest of domination" (476). When considering the concept of Foucault’s panopticon, in which there is a centralized power which has the ability to watch subjects without being seen and in which the subjects act according to that invisible power, *Y* would seem like a panopticon in its own right. It is largely created and operated by women, and the women who are reading are acting and reacting in a certain way based on the editorial staff who they do not truly know. However, where the paradox truly reveals itself is in the fact that the SF and this magazine are just a small piece of a larger, structured patriarchal society. Due to this paradox, a few things happen: first, the editors and writers of *Y* must adapt themselves to patriarchal society while simultaneously ingraining ideals of behavior and aesthetic into their readers; and second, there is no clear line between readers and editors, because they have shared oppression within male-dominated society, and therefore the dynamic is less panoptical and more horizontal. This is why one can see, for instance, the aspect of virtual communities within *Y*. More generally, these two factors create interesting complexities within *Y*, which acts as a figure overlooking its readers while simultaneously standing beside them. To recover a plethora of female figures from both distant and recent history is a way of doing this, as well as creating a narrative of femininity that is unique to the magazine and creates solidarity in its readers.

Women’s Virtual Communities

In *Magazines as Virtual Communities* Tracy Seneca suggests that “one of the unique features of magazines [...] is that they allow for two-way communication between readers and writers.” Unlike newspapers, the magazine caters to a specific common ground or interest. *Y* created such a virtual community for its readers through humor and two-way communication

through advice columns and published Q&As. This virtual community developed sorority between a certain group of women within the Franco regime. According to Ganzabal, “sorority is a concept that, being based on other practices of solidarity traditionally coined among girl friends, colleagues or family that, without having proper feminist awareness, builds mutual support relationships” (275). Even though the magazine was expressly not feminist, it served to develop a kind of all-female solidarity between the women who created and consumed it.

A contributing factor to this all-female solidarity is the use of humor in a number of satirical features scattered throughout its otherwise serious pages, which somehow evaded censorship. In all of the descriptions of what a Spanish woman is, or *should be*, throughout the magazine, humor is absent.” These satirical features call attention to the unfairness inherent in the experience of being a woman in Spain of the time.

An example in Issue 3, in the column *Por Mihura*, is the strip cartoon “Lo que odian los maridos/Lo que les gusta a los novios. Humorist Miguel Mihura—editor of the wartime Nationalist satirical magazine *La ametralladora*, who in 1941 would found its famous successor *La Codorniz*—should have been invited, and agreed, to contribute to *Y* is fascinating.”] This particular cartoon is a dig at male hypocrisy, exposing the vastly different expectations that men at the time had of girlfriends as opposed to wives. This cartoon creates a space of mutual understanding between the editorial staff of *Y* and their female readers that is based upon the shared experience of dealing with men’s unreasonable expectations. Some of the situations cited are that boyfriends like it when their girlfriends take a long time dressing up to see them, but husbands don’t; or that boyfriends enjoy a woman who is “espiritual” and has her head in the clouds, so to speak, but husbands don’t. The cartoon repeats the same phrasing on each side of the page, but the images change to reflect whether the same behavior is viewed

as good or bad. Where once the boyfriend adored his girlfriend playing the piano for him, now the husband has disdain and annoyance for his wife's talent. In general, the cartoon pokes fun while criticizing how men of the time expected a woman to be dazzling, interesting, and thoughtful before their marriage, with plenty of positive traits to offer, but then to lessen herself when she became his wife.

This would seem to be a significant deviation from the general message of *Y*, which is that a woman's place was divinely ordained and should not be questioned. However, it is not a complete deviation; it is not a critique of marriage, but of the behavior of men. As such, it allows the magazine to resonate with its female readers. Because "the most important feminine virtues [were] being kind, submissive, tidy, clean, and quiet" (*The Seduction of Modern Spain* 82), for female readers to engage with satire was a rebellious act (significantly, the satirist had license to poke fun because he was a man). Most importantly, such satirical cartoons served to solidify sorority and a sense of togetherness for Spanish women. Efharis Mascha's analysis of the role of political satire within Italian Fascism applies well to the function of satire within *Y*: "Political satire, as a counter-hegemonic project, systematically operates as a war of position, since it smoothly degrades official discourse by revealing the weak aspects of the regime and not by actually confronting the power base of the regime" (195-196). The humor within the magazine is utilized, not as an attempt to dismantle Francoist systems of oppression, but to pick at weak points.

Perhaps the most shocking example of the use of humor in *Y* is the article by an unnamed author, "Nuestros enemigos los hombres," in Issue 19. The article builds on the theme of the previously mentioned Mihura cartoon, but ventures into uncharted territory. The article discusses the inherent unfairness of the fact that men, for centuries, have spoken ill of

women. It cites famous man after famous man who has likened women to things such as thieves, fleas, and animals more generally. These famous men include such influential figures as Cervantes and Schopenhauer. These denigrations of women offer broad-brushed, false definitions of what women as a whole stand for.

As the article notes, women have their own complaints about men, especially because woman is relegated to a private sphere in which her happiness is almost wholly determined by the qualities of the man she chose to marry. The difference is that the woman must keep a smile on her face and keep the household running regardless of her complaints or unhappiness. She does not have the privilege of speaking ill of men, because her livelihood is at stake.

The author writes, “Las mujeres, aún las consideradas por los hombres como profundamente ignorantes, han de tener una suma de conocimientos tan extensos como variados. Mientras el hombre se limita al estudio de una carrera, de un oficio, véase el conjunto de cosas que debe saber una mujer a poco que pretenda cumplir su papel de esposa, madre y ama de casa.” Here the author is comfortable acknowledging that women do more and are responsible for more than men, and yet do not receive any of the praise. This is likely to have been a common feeling in housewives of the time, who were told all they could do was be a wife and mother while simultaneously being ridiculed for being just that. The article’s exposure of the fallacies in criticisms of women made in the past and at the time is compelling. This very-real criticism of men is veiled behind humor, making these statements appear more innocent.

What, ultimately, is the purpose of these humorous features in *Y*? I suggest that their aim was to develop a sense of sorority between the editorial staff and the magazine’s female readers. The othering of men in these features brings women together. In the minimal time

between taking care of children, cooking, cleaning, bettering herself through programs run by the SF, and offering any emotional support to her husband, a woman at this time in Spain would have had little leisure time and probably would have felt unbelievably validated to read that she was not the only one who felt underappreciated and disappointed with how her husband was treating her.

Key tools for creating parasocial relationships between readers and the editors and authors of a magazine are advice columns or letters to the editors that make readers feel heard and acknowledged—something that is particularly important in the case of female readers in a society where women's voices are not valued. In *Y*, this occurs through its Consultorios, which include several sections offering advice on assorted topics (Beauty and Hygiene, Romance, Marriage, and even Handwriting and Agriculture) as well as a general section called “Correspondencias” (Letters) where readers could send in letters to the editorial staff. These columns align *Y* with typical women's magazines of the time.

The advice columns are obviously intended for seasoned readers of the magazine, as they are located at the very end of the magazine, interspersed with the advertisements, and printed in small font. However, they attracted significant engagement across the magazine's various issues, answering and addressing various concerns expressed in the letters sent in by readers.

In “Belleza y Higiene,” Doctora Ascensión Mas-Guindal does not speak to her readers in a way that might be expected of her status as a doctor. Instead, she addresses them familiarly by their first names. María Isabel Menéndez Menéndez and Mónica Figueras Maz note the informal, friendly communicative tone typical of women's magazines: “Las revistas ofrecen un tono de comunicación opuesto al que aparece en la prensa de información general. La revista

habla con su lectora como a una amiga. Este tono íntimo responde al deseo de reproducir la fórmula de comunicación que se utiliza en el entorno privado, apoyada en la confianza mutua, y también a la consideración de la audiencia como mujeres aisladas entre sí. [...] El tono informal y el estilo directo del texto reproducen el tipo de lenguaje usado en las relaciones interpersonales del ámbito privado y manifiestan la voluntad de personalización de las revistas” (33). This reinforces the horizontality of the relationship between the women who are reading and those who are editing and contributing to the magazine. Although she is a doctor, with an education that many women readers would not be able to have or feel entitled to getting, she positions herself as if she were the readers’ friend.

The first issue of the magazine by definition has not yet received letters from readers. Therefore, the first *Consultorio* is a statement of the column’s aims, including the following: “Todas nos ayudaremos, nos protegeremos, y como la unión hace la fuerza no habrá nadie ni nada que se resista a la masa arrolladora de mujeres que han comprendido el verdadero sentido de la palabra solidaridad” (“¿Qué duda tienes?” 44). This idea of female community formation seems hugely important in the case of the Franco dictatorship as a male-dominated society in which women were not only relegated to the private sphere but expected to perform domestic tasks and child rearing without fault. As a magazine of SF, *Y* will have been read by women sympathetic to the Franco regime, likely to have had traditional views about women’s role, but they too experienced the effects of male disparagement of women’s abilities. Menéndez Menéndez and Figueras Maz stress that, “Esta solidaridad entre las figuras del emisor (revista) y el receptor (lectora) construye un Nosotras que sugiere que ambas pertenecen al mismo grupo, eliminando las diferencias entre clases sociales o culturales, unificando a todas las

mujeres” (34). The popularity of the advice columns in *Y*, throughout its run, suggests that the magazine succeeded in creating such a female community.

Conclusion: What does *Y Revista de la mujer* tell us about Sección Femenina?

The sociopolitical landscape of the early Franco regime, from its wartime governments through the 1940s, was complex and underwent significant political shifts, particularly with the fall from favor of the Falange from around 1942, as the course of World War II shifted in favor of the Western democracies. The fact that the SF outlived the political influence of the Falange shines a light on Pilar Primo de Rivera’s ability to not only survive but maintain a position of influence within a masculinist society. For many Spanish women, membership of the Sección Femenina was a positive experience (the same is not necessarily true of the female population required to undertake Servicio Social under the SF’s direction), and after the fall of Franco, many Spanish women looked back on the SF as a quite progressive feminist organization (Mahaney 50). Throughout the dictatorship, the SF had many beneficial social programs that benefited women by offering them experience with philanthropic work beyond their duty as wife and mother. The SF existed for a total of 43 years, outliving the dictatorship. Pilar Primo de Rivera became a major figure within the regime as a procuradora in the non-elected Cortes, and, in the 1950s, the SF and Pilar herself pushed for somewhat lukewarm women’s rights reforms, including integration into the labor market (Mahaney 48). She presented to the Cortes the 1961 Law of Political, Professional, and Labor Rights (LPPLR), which helped to guarantee “equal pay, [overturned] legislation preventing married women from working, [...] moved to end sex discrimination in the hiring process, allowed women to hold public office, and expanded the range of professions open to women, even allowing them to take entrance exams for civil service jobs” (Mahaney 48). Kathryn Mahaney argues that Pilar championed this law

not in order to liberate women, but instead to empower them within the existing framework (49). The SF hosted the Congreso Internacional de la Mujer in 1968, advertising it as a means to make the world a more just place for women.

At the same time, the organization reinforced restrictive and repressive ideals of femininity throughout the regime, continuing to insist on women's subordination to men and greatly limiting the behavior that was expected of women, thereby affecting the overall quality of women's lives. Although Pilar Primo de Rivera pushed for increased labor rights for women with the LPPLR, the SF never pressured the Francoist government or society to accept anything controversially progressive or truly feminist in nature.

All that being said, what does *Y* tell us about the SF's involvement in women's lives? Does the magazine allow us to argue that the SF was not the antifeminist institution that it claimed to be, but was doing what it could in order to make small, incremental changes within the oppressive framework of the regime? On one hand, it insisted over and over again that it was interested primarily in supporting woman's role within the private sphere of the home and family. On the other hand, the very existence of the SF hierarchy of *mandos* and *jefes* created a place for women in Spanish society who did not want to be wives or mothers, and a place of high esteem and national pride at that. And, with *Y*, it created an all-female space in which women could read about the experience of being women, while simultaneously forging parasocial bonds with other Spanish women through the magazine. Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in the gray area between the two opposing views. The nearest we can get to a conclusion is that the SF was not all good, nor all bad, neither feminist nor misogynist.

Through examination of *Y*, it becomes clear that the SF did not, and evidently had no desire to, work outside of the patriarchal system within which they operated. They took the

liberties that were possible within the system, but never sought to push boundaries. Just as Pilar was a reformer rather than a revolutionary, the entire organization sought to teach and empower only within the predetermined guidelines of Francoism and more broadly the National-Catholic ideals that it espoused.

Inbal Ofer writes of the SF, “esta élite política femenina que nació en el bastión del fascismo español y que creció hasta convertirse en uno de los órganos más dinámicos del fascismo, no pudo encontrar un lugar en la España democrática” (“Teresa” 144), describing the organization’s eventual downfall. The SF was an important organization under the Franco regime’s oppressive patriarchy, but as the country opened up to free thought, democracy, and more progressive policies which did not align with the SF’s strict Catholicism and idea of women’s place in the home and family, the SF lost its utility. However, it would be unfair to deny the benefits that it offered women throughout the regime, by offering opportunities for service, to find purpose outside of the traditional avenues of motherhood and serving one’s husband, and lending itself as a resource and tool for women to find a safe space within a stifling regime. I hope to have argued convincingly that its magazine *Y*, despite its espousal of a conservative view of femininity, offered itself to female readers as such a safe space.

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