

"PATHS OF RESISTANCE": THE COST OF PATRIARCHAL VIOLENCE  
FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN ROSARIO FERRE'S "SLEEPING BEAUTY"  
AND "THE YOUNGEST DOLL"

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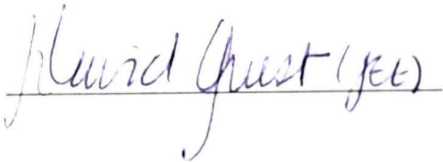
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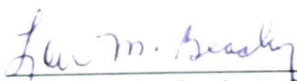
  
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**“Paths of Resistance”: the Cost of Patriarchal Violence for Men and Women in  
Rosario Ferré’s “Sleeping Beauty” and “The Youngest Doll”**

A Thesis Presented for the  
Master of Arts Degree  
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Lourdes Fernández Kolva

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## **DEDICATION**

To my two loves, Dan and Lucas.

Dan, thank you for giving me the  
space I need. Lucas, thank you  
for being here.

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## ABSTRACT

This research attempts to show the cost patriarchy exacts of both men and women in Puerto Rican culture. Drawing on the social theories of Allan G. Johnson's *Privilege, Power, and Difference* and *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*, and James Gilligan's *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic* this essay maps the dynamics of violence in Rosario Ferré's stories "The Youngest Doll" and "Sleeping Beauty." Traditionally, feminists study the oppression women suffer within patriarchal systems. Surprisingly, men also pay when society assigns them strict gender roles, an emotional and spiritual price to maintain control and power in patriarchal systems to avoid feelings of humiliation and shame. In Rosario Ferré's stories, violence defines relationships because patriarchy requires that men maintain control and power at all costs. Ferré's stories depict violence of men against women in Puerto Rico, when women's sexual autonomy threatens men's sense of control. "The Youngest Doll" and "Sleeping Beauty" show how men act violently to preserve their patriarchal definition of manhood. Women suffer as victims of violence, as men benefit from oppressing women and other men. The essay concludes that indeed both men and women pay a cost for patriarchal violence. In Ferré's stories, women remain dolls and men remain the indifferent and unemotional owners of those dolls. Men are encouraged to react violently when their sense of control and ownership is threatened by these living dolls. While the essay attempts to point ways in which we might resist patriarchy, Ferré's stories caution the risks of resistance for women.

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## I. Introduction

Like many others, I am transfixed by the amount of violence in our society. I watch closely as journalists, psychologists, teachers, politicians, preachers, and men and women from many professions offer their answers as to why we are violent. This proliferation of analysis--from documentaries like Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* to heated sermons by Jerry Falwell—show that the need to explain violent acts consumes us. Poverty, human nature, minorities, the weather, homosexuals, feminists, the National Rifle Association, abortionists, and atheists--all have been blamed for causing the violence. But even after offering all these possible solutions, we remain bewildered by the unabated violence.

I believe literature offers tools to discuss violence in our society and alternatives to our actions and reactions when confronted by violence. The violence authors portray may involve men, women, children, nature, or any combination of these elements. The protagonists may be perpetrators, victims, or both. Regardless of the type of violence described, authors supply explanations of why violence seems a permanent ailment of modern civilization. Of course, analyzing texts in the context of violence is just another way of obsessing about violence, but it provides opportunities to discuss constructive solutions based on collaboration and positive change, rather than the current choice of increasing punishment to stop the already existing violence.

One way of analyzing violence is by understanding how patriarchy shapes it. Deeply rooted in the Western cultural psyche, patriarchy permeates all of our actions and attitudes. Since we must live within patriarchy, we need to question its role as a system that establishes not only oppression, but also the brutality and hostility that maintain the

status quo. The patriarchal system guarantees that violence will benefit some and that everyone who belongs to a given society will remain in his or her appropriate place. In this sense, both men and women suffer from patriarchy. But even as men gain power by violently repressing women (and other men), they damage themselves spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

For this essay, I analyze the violence in texts written by Rosario Ferré from Puerto Rico, a patriarchal society heavily influenced by Spanish and Western values. Ferré's short stories, set in Puerto Rico, offer a good representation of the violence men inflict against women in patriarchal systems, beyond the geographical borders of the United States, but shaped by paradigms generated in America. Ferré's "The Youngest Doll" and "Sleeping Beauty" show the steps men will take to ensure their fragile sense of control is maintained at the expense of women. In these stories, patriarchal practices ensure that men remain in control, presiding over homes and society. These practices confine women to roles that take away their independence, and put them at risk of violence from men when they assert their sexual autonomy. From men, these practices exact an emotional and physical price. Feminists are accustomed to account for the prices women pay in patriarchy, and I demonstrate women's lack of sexual autonomy and lack of independence here. However, what feminists often overlook is the emotional and physical price men pay in patriarchy, and in this analysis I emphasize these high costs and their impact on men's well-being.

In order to analyze how patriarchy encourages violence to preserve the status quo, I have developed the following structure. First, I will describe the theory that best explains the dynamics of violence within patriarchy. Second, I will analyze the stories in



the context of how both men and women suffer from patriarchal systems. Finally, I will offer suggestions that undermine patriarchy in our everyday lives.

## II. Examining the Dynamics of Violence in Patriarchy

In *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*, sociologist Allan G. Johnson explains how patriarchy encourages destructive behaviors, such as violence, because it offers paths of least resistance for people to follow. As a system, “patriarchy provides paths of least resistance that encourage men to accept gender privilege and perpetuate women’s oppression, if only through silence” (Johnson 14). In addition to silence, men preserve the status quo by using violence against those who step outside of their pre-established roles (women or men). Although violence seems like an extreme reaction, it is in fact a path of least resistance for men to follow within the constraints patriarchy provides for them, since patriarchy “encourages men to seek security, status, and other rewards through control; to fear other men’s ability to control and harm them; and to identify being in control as their best defense against loss and humiliation” (Johnson 26). When men perceive their sense of control is threatened they react with fear, and this fear may lead to violence, the path of least resistance in systems where control is an organizing force (Johnson 28-31).

In *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*, James Gilligan, a psychiatrist whose work includes treatment of inmates in maximum security prisons, further explains why men react with violence when their sense of control is questioned. Gilligan uses the concepts of shame, humiliation, and honor to explain violence within patriarchal systems. He describes how violent behavior among men has been encouraged in patriarchal societies since the inception of civilization, since, in patriarchal societies “men are the only possible sources, or active generators (agents), of honor” (Gilligan 230). In our



society men are “expected to be violent...honored for doing so and dishonored for being unwilling to be violent” (Gilligan 231). In contrast, a

woman’s worthiness to be honored or shamed is judged by how well she fills her roles in sexually related activities, especially the roles of actual or potential wife and mother. Men are honored for activity (ultimately, violent activity); and they are dishonored for passivity (or pacifism), which renders them to the charge of being a non-man (“a wimp, a punk, and a pussy”)...[w]omen are honored for inactivity or passivity, for not engaging in forbidden activities. (Gilligan 231)

Since women are expected to be passive, “paths of least resistance encourage women to accept and adapt to their oppressed position even to the extent of undermining women’s movements to bring about change” (Johnson 14). When women attempt to transcend the strict roles established by patriarchal societies, they are punished with violence. A woman’s role is not to decide what a real man is, but to “reassure men that they meet the standards of a patriarchal culture she doesn’t control” (Johnson 32). When women do not affirm patriarchal manhood, they risk the wrath of men, “who may feel undermined, abandoned, and even betrayed” (Johnson 32). The mechanisms operating behind these violent acts often ensure that men will remain competitive and in control. Women who transgress in any way will be “put in their place.” The violence inflicted will take many forms, but within patriarchy it will be swift, allowed, and expected.

Patriarchy not only encourages paths of least resistance for men and women, but it does so in subtle ways. Our actions, as innocuous as they may seem, are influenced by patriarchal notions of how men and women should act. In “More Power Than We Want:

Masculine Sexuality and Violence,” Bruce Kokopeli and George Lakey define patriarchy as “the systematic domination of women by men through unequal opportunities, rewards, punishments, and the internalization of unequal expectations through sex role differentiation” (Kokopeli et. al 17). Gerda Lerner adds that patriarchal concepts are “built into mental constructs of [Western] civilization in such a way as to remain largely invisible” (Lerner 3). The seeming normalcy behind patriarchal concepts means that “femininity and masculinity are important tools for social control,” since gender roles preserve male domination as something natural, obscuring the fact that they are social constructs” (Johnson 68). Gender roles work because in a patriarchal society, “attacking people as being insufficiently masculine or feminine can do a lot to control them because it both challenges their sense of who they are and makes them feel like outsiders” (Johnson 68). Choosing the path of least resistance (behaving as gender roles determine women and men should behave) ensures patriarchy’s triumph as a social system.

Since women to some extent participate in the perpetuation of this domination system, we assume that it is up to women to change the attitudes that enable patriarchal concepts to subsist (change men and women’s attitudes). The feminist movement attempts to show these deficiencies in our culture and bring equality to women. Change should occur once women wake up and stop participating in institutions and social mores that implicitly comply with patriarchy, such as organized religion, politics, the government, our school systems, and marriage. Then, after women stop complying, we can offer a changed paradigm to men by showing them the alternatives and how much richer their lives could be outside of patriarchy.

Even though developing consciousness among women about how patriarchy (and its violence) is imbedded in everything we do in our daily lives is important, trying to change men and women is not enough. Since “patriarchy is organized around male-identified control,” the cycle of “control and fear that drives patriarchy has more to do with relations among men than with women, for it’s men who control men’s standing *as men*” (Johnson 29, 31). Men “look to other men to affirm their manhood,” and even though they “often use women to see how they measure up ... the standards used are men’s, not women’s” (Johnson 31). Since the standards are men’s, patriarchy is a male-centered social system. Johnson defines male-centered as a system where “the focus of attention is primarily on men and what they do” and where male experience “represents human experience” (Johnson 8-9). Men must realize their participation in the cycle of control, fear, and violence before the system itself can be changed. Thus, men and women both suffer from the social constraints and conditions that encourage men to dominate and to be emotionally detached, and encourage women to submit in silence.

The damage that men and women suffer within patriarchy is different for each sex. Men become emotionally detached, hostile, afraid, constantly worried about being humiliated and shamed, and anxious about keeping control. Women, on the other hand, suffer when men perceive that women have compromised a male’s position in society. When women refuse to submit, they undermine patriarchal values of competition and control amongst men. The reaction after a woman’s transgression is for men to act violently against her, in order to preserve their status and semblance of control. In patriarchy, men pay the price of constant anxiety, while women become objects for men to jockey for position in the male hierarchy when competing against other males.



### III. The Cost of Patriarchal Violence

In the short stories I analyze here, women threaten patriarchy and receive punishment for their offense against a male-centered system. Rosario Ferré uses magical realism and the genre of the fairy tale to confront Puerto Rican sexuality and patriarchal values in upper class society. According to Milagros Agosto, in “El cuento puertorriqueño contemporáneo: de Luis Rafael Sánchez al presente,” Ferré “anula la dicotomía entre elementos contrarios y contradictorios, como el tiempo y el espacio (“erases the dichotomy between contradictory and opposing elements, such as time and space”; Agosto 560). By erasing dichotomies like husband/father and woman/doll she highlights how patriarchy turns all of its participants into emotionally detached, spiritually damaged beings who suffer in order to maintain the status quo.

Ferré shows how men’s obsession with status and control diminishes their ability to interact in fulfilling ways with the people around them. Men use women as ornaments and as tools to climb the social ladder. They punish women who undermine their competition for control. The violence may take subtle forms years before any overt physical act is performed, or the women may be raped, mutilated, or killed. In the process, men lose loving partners, become emotionally crippled, and remain in a constant state of greed and anxiety that consumes their relationships. The men in these stories use their power, money, financial supremacy, social status and physical strength to ensure women’s compliance with their assigned roles.

In “Sleeping Beauty,” Ferré tells us the story of Maria de los Angeles Fernández, a woman from the upper class who wants to become a professional dancer, an inappropriate profession for a wealthy girl. Maria de los Angeles’ wishes threaten her



father's position in society, which he will protect at his daughter's expense. Don Fabiano Fernández, the city's mayor, must maintain control of how his family acts; otherwise, he risks losing his respectable position among his social class. He would destroy his daughter's life in order to portray a successful front on the pages of the social news.

Don Fabiano is constantly reminded of the importance of preserving the status quo. The Reverend Mother at Maria de los Angeles' school advises Don Fabiano to curtail her career for fear of hell and most importantly, loss of honor. The Reverend Mother reminds Don Fabiano that his "daughter's disgraceful spectacle, dancing in a public theater and dressed in a most shameless manner, was all over the social pages of this week's papers" (Ferré 17). She further reminds Don Fabiano that the "damage has already been done" and that her "reputation will never be the same," but that he could at least "keep her from persisting down this shameful path" (Ferré 18). His daughter's reputation directly impacts his social status, since the "only active effect that women can have on honor" is to destroy it, and this means that men must save their families from being dishonored by their women, or risk "losing face" in front of other males (Gilligan 230).

To save the family from dishonor, Don Fabiano prohibits his daughter from ever dancing again, and she falls into a coma the "very day" Don Fabiano tells her about his decision (Ferré 21). Despite knowing what caused the coma, Don Fabiano is unwilling to take back his dictate. His anxiety about honor means he must be emotionally detached from his daughter's suffering. To keep control he will sacrifice his daughter's health. Don Fabiano pays the price of not being connected to his only child by trying to preserve power within patriarchy.

Don Fabiano finds a way to maintain his honor when Don Felisberto Ortiz, Maria de los Angeles' love interest, appears and talks Maria de los Angeles into waking up from her coma. Even though he comes from a "humble background," he is "a sensible young man, with feet firmly planted on the ground," and "a Ph. D. in marketing from Boston University" (Ferré 24-25). By marrying Maria de los Angeles immediately Don Fabiano stages what "promises to be the wedding of the year" (Ferré 24). Don Fabiano uses this opportunity to further cement his position in the upper class. He equips the chapel with air conditioning, so that "for the first time in the island's history, the BP's [Beautiful People] will be able to enjoy the glitter of our Holy Mother Church wrapped in a delightful Connecticut chill" (Ferré 25). He does not know the groom well, but Don Fabiano understands that a well-publicized wedding will help people forget about his daughter's dance recitals and inconvenient coma.

Felisberto, like Fabiano, is concerned with honor and control, as any man within a patriarchy must be. In a letter Don Felisberto writes (but never sends) to Don Fabiano, we discover that Maria de los Angeles' marriage occurs because he promises to allow her to dance. But as Don Felisberto explains, Maria de los Angeles "insisted that my promise to let her dance included the understanding that we would have no children," so that she could remain a successful ballerina (Ferre 34). He feels that a child is "the only way to keep her" and he thinks she does not want his child because of his "humble background" (Ferré 34). He assures Don Fabiano that he "won't always be poor" (Ferré 34). Don Felisberto tells his father-in-law that he had no choice but "to get her pregnant against her will" (Ferré 35). Felisberto rapes his wife to ensure that she will remain by his side,

thereby avoiding dishonor to his name. His violent act is deemed a necessary deed to preserve control, power, and the status quo.

Felisberto pays a high price to subsist within a patriarchy. Patriarchy tells men “that their need for love and respect can only be met by being masculine, powerful, and ultimately violent” (Kokopeli and Lakey 18). Since producing children is one way to prove masculinity, Felisberto feels affronted by Maria de los Angeles’ refusal to help him show other men that he is masculine enough to give her children, and he is aware that “a real man is in control or at least gives the impression of being in control” (Johnson 27). Felisberto inflicts violence on Maria de los Angeles because he needs to show other men the proof of Maria de los Angeles’ love and respect for him: the creation of a child in the marital bed. Since patriarchy tells Felisberto that “to love a woman is to have power over her and to treat her violently if need be,” he is permitted to rape her and remain within the roles patriarchy establishes for him (Kokopeli and Lakey 18).

Felisberto also must compete with his father-in-law, since Don Fabiano already is well-established within society, while Felisberto has more climbing up the social ladder to do. Don Fabiano tells his son-in-law to give him a grandson, because Don Fabiano needs “an heir to fight” for his money (Ferré 35). Felisberto resents this comment, because the child would be “my heir” (Ferré 35). The child produced out of this rape is a tool for Felisberto to compete against his father-in-law, and a guarantee that Felisberto’s masculinity will be affirmed. Felisberto rapes his wife to “save face,” and in the process severs his emotional connection to Maria de los Angeles and commits a crime.

The rape produces the coveted male heir. However, it also causes a disgraceful change in Maria de los Angeles’ behavior. After Fabianito is born, Maria de los Angeles



refuses to baptize him. Don Fabiano is outraged, as he explains to the Reverend Mother that the “party was to take place in the Patio de los Cupidos, in the Condado Hotel’s new wing, and of course, all our friends were to have been invited” (Ferré 32). Don Felisberto emphasizes the importance of these gatherings “since they are good for business” (Ferré 32). The christening is another opportunity for Fabiano and Felisberto to network, to show other businessmen the new male heir, and to display their family as a strong and powerful unit.

Soon after Maria de los Angeles’ decision not to christen Fabianito, Felisberto receives a letter that further threatens his social status. Someone accuses Maria de los Angeles of having an affair. The letter warns Don Felisberto that “a lady’s reputation is like a pane of glass, it smudges at the slightest touch” and that “a lady mustn’t simply be respectable, she must above all appear to be” (Ferré 13). Her reputation is at stake on two sexual fronts: she is still dancing, which involves a woman’s mastery of her own body (with all its sexual implications), and she is a potential adulteress, which means she is using her body in a way not prescribed by patriarchy. Her body belongs to her husband, and adultery denies Felisberto this ownership, while it establishes her autonomy to make sexual decisions. Maria de los Angeles once again brings shame to her family.

Felisberto dies to restore his honor. He kills Maria de los Angeles, and her lover kills Felisberto. Don Felisberto must act violently against Maria de los Angeles in order to preserve his sense of honor. The shame and humiliation she causes must immediately be remedied at the cost of two lives. Violence is a natural result in a system where men must constantly prove their masculinity, and where their precarious control over their



social status is always threatened. A family is destroyed in the name of honor, and Felisberto loses as much as Maria de los Angeles does within this system.

Because of their deaths, another male will benefit and preserve social status. Don Fabiano invents an account in which Felisberto confronts his wife and her “choreographer,” “threatening to thrash her right there unless she promised she’d stop dancing for good” (Ferré 36). Felisberto stumbles and “accidentally” shoots her, while the choreographer, in an attempt to stop Felisberto, accidentally fractures Felisberto’s skull (Ferré 38). This sanitized version of the story does not bring dishonor, and Fabiano feels great comfort that he did not spare any “expense at her funeral,” and that all of “high society attended the funeral mass” (Ferré 39). In the end, he is devastated not by her death, but by “the suffering she was inflicting upon us, insisting on her career as a dancer” (Ferré 40). Don Fabiano also tells us that this “tragedy wasn’t all in vain,” since God has given them the son they wanted so much (Ferre 40). Fabiano finally acquires the most longed for item in a patriarchy: a male heir.

In patriarchal systems, a male heir becomes another tool in the acquisition of power and control. In Ferré’s “The Youngest Doll,” a doctor and his son will sacrifice the well-being of women and their own sense of right and wrong to achieve recognition from the upper social class. In the story, the unnamed female protagonist is unable to marry due to a deformed leg. Crippled after a prawn attacks her, she suffers throughout her life from this absurd accident. Her injury limits her to create life-size dolls for her numerous nieces. The doctor who treats her over the course of twenty years does not improve her situation and the injury worsens with time. Eventually, his son also becomes a doctor who expects to take over his father’s practice, including the care of the aunt’s crippled

leg. As the young man looks at the old woman's leg, he turns to his father and asks him why he did not remove the prawn. The father answers that the prawn "has been paying for your education these twenty years" (Ferré 9). The doctor takes the opportunity this woman's deformity gives him to ensure his son's ability to jockey for power and control.

In a patriarchal system, this woman's tragedy is insignificant as long as it serves the advancement of the males within the system. The doctor commodifies and objectifies the aunt without remorse, since women have no value unless they serve to further men's power. This power involves sex and violence, since for men, violence and sexuality "combine to support masculinity as a character ideal" (Kokopeli and Lakey 18). In the description of how the son looks at the wound we see this sexual characteristic of violence. When the young man lifts the skirt he looks intently at the "huge ulcer which oozed a perfumed sperm from the tip of its greenish scales" (Ferré 9). Even though neither doctor actually caused the prawn to be imbedded, they perpetuate the violence by crippling this woman physically and sexually. They rape this woman by using her disease as a source of income, social advancement, and power.

The young doctor and his father want power and control, which includes acceptance from the older aristocracy. Financial success as a doctor helps the son ascend in status, but marriage to a woman from the upper class becomes a definite way to attain recognition. The doctor and the aunt's youngest niece marry. The youngest daughter settles into marriage, and her husband makes her sit in the balcony "so that passersby would be sure to see that he had married into high society" (Ferré 10). According to Ksenija Bilbija in "Rosario Ferre's 'The Youngest Doll': on women, dolls, golems and cyborgs," the youngest daughter "does not have an intrinsic value but is assigned a value

as a carrier of her father's name," as an instrument that ensures men's social upward mobility (6). The young doctor will use his wife as an ornament, and in the process he will lose any emotional connection to her. Like the aunt, the niece is an object that the doctor may use to further his goals. In the process, he is forced to sacrifice his integrity in favor of his greed.

However, patriarchy damages even more important aspects of the doctor's life. By using the aunt and the daughter as tools of social mobility, he severs any genuine connection to his wife. In order to be a real man, the doctor must reject any meaningful contact with his wife, which prevents any "true intimacy with other people" (Johnson 193). Patriarchy exacts a high spiritual and emotional price from men who participate in it.

While we see that men suffer under patriarchy by becoming emotionally detached, dishonest, and violent over their need to sustain power and control, we also see that women most often pay the price of men's ambition and fear. In the aunt's case, the physical scars determine her fate, because a strong patriarchal and class system allows these scars to endanger her mental stability and compromise her body. In both stories, the men benefit at the expense of the women's suffering, and the women must be reminded not to deviate from their roles and endanger the status quo. Maria de los Angeles, the youngest daughter, and the deformed aunt become pawns for the men around them to ensure their power and control.

These women transgress and are immediately punished for their misbehavior. Maria de los Angeles' misbehaviors are sexual in nature, since dancing and adultery imply sexual independence to control her body. Marriage, rape, and murder are attempts



to curb her actions and shape her reputation to fit in the patriarchal paradigm. Her mother dutifully advises her, “If you believe in God and in His word, if you are a good wife and mother, one who knows how to manage the family budget and makes her home a shelter of peace and love, if you are a good neighbor, always willing to help those in need, you will be happy indeed” (Ferré 27). Maria de los Angeles is transferred from her powerful father to her soon-to-be-powerful husband, so that both men may benefit from her passive behavior through marriage. Her relationship to both men is one of service and submission, since both garner the same benefits from her obedience.

Maria de los Angeles understands that she is an object, and she chooses to make a deal with Felisberto in exchange for a little independence. She is financially dependent on her father, and her livelihood depends on economic resources men provide women of her social class. She binds herself to a different man believing he will reciprocate in a fair manner (by allowing her something her father will not permit). However, Felisberto benefits from a son, and he will ensure she complies, at the expense of his promise. When she cheats on Felisberto, she breaks from her role as ornament to her husband and does not comply with her part of the bargain. Her refusal to accept the role of women “that restricts them to the relatively passive aim of arranging to be loved by men and to depend on men for their social and economic status...limiting or disguising activity, ambition, independence, and initiative of their own” causes the violent reaction that results in her death (Gilligan 237).

When we find out that she is the author of the anonymous letter warning Don Felisberto of her infidelity, we understand that she will use her husband’s anxiety and fear over honor to bring an end to her life. She creates havoc in a society with strict



expectations about her behavior as daughter, wife, and mother. She betrays all the men in her life with her actions: she disobeys her father by dancing, cheats on her husband, and denies her son the opportunity to be introduced into society through the social and religious custom of baptism. Maria de los Angeles cannot conform to the expectations that surround her, so instead she actively seeks the violence that the patriarchal system generates against women who seek sexual autonomy.

The acquisition of female sexual autonomy must be punished in direct or indirect ways. We see the aunt's realization of her sexual autonomy at the beginning of "The Youngest Doll." The aunt is a young woman frolicking in a stream. The girl feels like "melting snow in the marrow of her bones," and her hair "has poured out to sea" (Ksenija Bilbija 5). Bilbija tells us that this moment in the river represents the girl's realization that her "body is the source of joy and satisfaction" and "her physical self is confirmed by the sensual caresses of the waves" (5). Most importantly, the discovery that her body brings joy and satisfaction occurs without the presence or participation of a man. She now may enjoy sensual gratification without a man and without the ties, like conception and motherhood, which would necessitate the involvement of a man in her life. The sexual autonomy she now knows is dangerous to a system that expects women to preserve men's status through obedience, including sexual obedience.

As the girl realizes her sexual freedom, she feels the sharp bite that will cripple her forever. The prawn hidden under her skirt strips her "of all vanity" (Ferré 6). She is deprived of vanity related "not only to the discovery of her young, beautiful body, but also to the pleasure associated with it" (Bilbija 5). Her transgression, to know the sexual potential of her body, threatens the patriarchal balance where a woman's sexuality serves

a man's position in society, by encouraging her to "value her husband's work and needs above her own," and by defining and judging "her sexuality in relation to his experience and needs" (Johnson 152). When she realizes she may enjoy her own experiences and needs first, the violent penetration of the prawn inside her calf ensures that her role in society remains subordinate to that of the men in her life.

Her moment of self-discovery becomes her downfall. The prawn imbedded in her leg becomes a constant reminder of her unsuitability for marriage, since now she knows she may achieve sexual gratification without marriage to a man. She loses the opportunity to marry and reproduce in a society that expects nothing else from her. Her marketability as a wife is diminished by her discovery. The prawn's penetration confirms the sexual nature of her transgression. Agosto relates the prawn's penetration to the myth of the god Dionysius "cuya gestación se culmina ... cosido al muslo de Zeus" ("whose gestation culminates... by being sewn into Zeus' thigh"; Agosto 561). The prawn hidden under the skirts represents "la maternidad frustrada de la tía" (the aunt's frustrated maternity"; Agosto 561) that "se vierte en la creación de muñecas idénticas a la[s] sobrina[s]" ("spills into the creation of dolls identical to the nieces"; Agosto 561). Since patriarchy constrains her role, she must divert her ability to reproduce and create dolls in a ritualistic manner for the rest of her life.

The aunt's dolls allow her to be motherly in a non-sexual way that does not threaten the status quo. The aunt can watch other's people's lives from her position of passivity. She makes life-size dolls in the nieces' "image and likeness" (Ferré 8). As a woman, she is still required to reproduce, and her only viable option is to imitate her nieces' appearances. These dolls become a ritual act of creation through which the reader

enters the aunt's mind. The aunt creates the dolls using only her hands and the best materials available. She makes "a wax mask of the child's face, covering it with plaster on both sides, like a living face wrapped in two dead ones" (Ferré 7). She also stuffs the dolls with "infinite patience" slowly feeding the cottony material into the doll's mouth (Ferré 7). The dolls are silenced and molded just as this woman was molded years ago. The dolls' outfits are the only item that does not mimic the girls' appearances. The dolls remain childlike, in a permanent state of innocence, with the same bow in their heads "wide and white and trembling like the breast of a dove," as most women of her class are expected to remain even after adulthood (Ferré 8). The eyes of each doll are the only part of the creation not handmade, but the aunt makes sure the eyes spend a few days in the stream, so that they learn to recognize the prawns and are not hurt by them, since the "moment she discovered her sexuality she was punished" (Bilbija 6). She was betrayed by her glimpse into sexual autonomy, and she does not want that for the other women in her family.

The dolls, like the aunt, play an important role for their social class. The woman and the dolls are adorned with the best materials, but they cover the ruin and decay of a social class in disarray. The upper class women of the Puerto Rican post-sugar cane era must pretend that the money is still there, so they adorn the plantation homes with pretty dresses, empty stares, and idle activity, which benefits the men around them by maintaining the illusion of power. The aunt manufactures expensive dolls to display her family's financial power, thus serving the men who must show their success.

While she creates dolls, the nieces get married and move. Only the youngest niece is left in the household when she meets the son of the physician who has exploited



the aunt's condition for years. The young doctor, who has already benefited from this woman's pain, will now marry into the family to further advance his position in society. He will join the other men in the family and use the niece to display his power and control. Because of his emotional detachment and callous behavior, the young man gains from exercising his control over these two women by strengthening his ability to show how successful he is to the other men in town. The niece is like one of the dolls created by the aunt, and she will be used for the purpose of solidifying her husband's position in their social circle.

The aunt creates one final doll for this niece, but she is different in several ways. This doll has diamonds in her eye sockets, the girl's baby teeth, and is warm to the touch. We see the doll and the woman begin to merge. If until this moment in the story the dolls represent the innocence and passivity women must preserve within patriarchy, now we see the woman as doll and the doll as woman. According to Bilbija, "the sharing of body parts (teeth) insinuates the same subjectivity behind two apparently identical images" (5). The niece is expected to act like a doll, so it is not a surprise that she adorns the home and serves patriarchy by sitting quietly in the porch.

The youngest daughter lacks value in the eyes of her husband, except as a tool of social mobility. Throughout their marriage, the daughter is not more valuable than the doll the aunt creates for her. Both are a source of power for the doctor. The doctor pawns off the doll's diamond eyes and eventually, the doll disappears. As the doctor grows older he realizes that his wife, who has spent her life sitting in a rocking chair with "lowered eyelids," does not grow old like him (Ferre 10). Finally, one day he touches her and she looks up at him and the "antenna from all the prawns inside her body greet him"



(Ferré 11). The doll has replaced “the original woman in her involuntary sedentary position” (Bilbija 6). This substitution is a natural progression in a system that objectifies women so that men may retain the advantage.

While I agree with Bilbija that this exchange “alters the script written by a patriarchal hand,” and that the niece “cannot co-exist with him...in a context of repression,” I disagree that this niece disappears because she is a “young rebellious woman curious about her own sexuality” (Bilbija 6, 7). The patriarchal script may be altered, but only because instead of a woman, a doll fulfills the role required by patriarchy. However, this alteration should not be considered an act of revenge or emancipation, but only proof of how easily women and dolls can fulfill the same roles in a patriarchal society, specifically in the upper class. After all, it is only after years of marriage that the doctor realizes his wife is the doll, which indicates that this woman’s non-existence is not noticeable. He expects nothing else. Whether the youngest daughter has become the doll or the doll has become the youngest daughter is irrelevant, since both doll and woman serve the same purpose.

#### IV. Conclusion

Patriarchal societies require women to act like dolls. They also require women's sexuality to be subservient to men's need to compete and achieve. Violence ensures obedience and the preservation of the status quo. The violent acts in the stories may have been prevented in a society without the need to use women as instruments of power and influence in order to maintain competition and control needed for patriarchy to subsist. The patriarchal definition of manhood ensures that violent behavior will be rewarded as proof of masculinity. The violence is usually perpetrated by men towards men, or by men toward women, and both men and women are engaged in behaviors condoned and approved by a patriarchal system that condemns them to become potential victims and victimizers.

Men act in cruel and brutal ways to retain control and fight against fear, to compete with other men for material goods, and to preserve the honor that guarantees their position in society. By contrast, women resist men's control at the risk of being punished, or become accomplices of their own oppression. However, as Allan Johnson states, "no amount of denial or cultural magic can alter the simple facts that patriarchy exists and that no one is personally to blame for it" (Johnson 211). That no individual is personally responsible for patriarchy does not mean that it is "a legacy in which we all share ownership" (Johnson 211). We need to take accountability for patriarchy without engaging in guilt or blame (Johnson 211-220). As men and women, we have to take responsibility for patriarchy, "which means we have to look at how we're connected to it," and at "how we participate in it, and the consequences this produces" (Johnson 220, 212).

Violence, an important tool that ensures patriarchy's perpetuation, must be questioned and analyzed in the context of our everyday lives. Even if we are not overtly aggressive, we routinely participate in activities and conversations that promote aggression against both men and women. Our silence at violent jokes, our tacit sponsorship of activities that ridicule, objectify, and humiliate other human beings (from fraternities and sororities to some sporting events), and our use of shame and guilt to reinforce certain behaviors (telling girls to be nice even when they are uncomfortable being nice, laughing at boys when they lose to girls) must change in order for the relationship between violence and patriarchy to be undermined. In other words, we need to take paths of resistance that make people uncomfortable and force all of us to think about our participation in systems of oppression.

The paths of resistance may be small, yet effective, steps toward changing ourselves. These paths of resistance will be heavily influenced by our educational background, financial resources, and the amount of support from our communities. Allan Johnson suggests that by setting an example we “contribute to the slow sea of change of entire cultures so that patriarchal forms and values begin to lose their ‘obvious’ legitimacy and normalcy and new forms emerge to challenge their privileged place in social life” (Johnson 239). Both men and women must engage in this process of change, so that connections between manhood, power, and violence become permanently undermined and alternatives surface as viable courses of action. In the meantime, men suffer the emotional detachment that maintaining control requires, while women suffer the political and social oppression that the patriarchal system uses to maintain the status quo. Ferré helps us map one path of resistance.



In the end, we “choose how to participate in it [patriarchy], and how to relate to the paths of least resistance that patriarchy lays out for us” (Johnson 14). Men and women can create an environment that does not encourage men to compete for power and control, and that does not reward men for benefiting at the expense of women’s obedience and submission. Men and women must choose paths that everyday take them away from the “paths of least resistance” that perpetuate the violence in their lives, and that cripple them emotionally. Until then, we will watch in stupefied horror and shock as men act out their fears through the use of violence against those closest to them.

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## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acevedo, Ramón Luis, ed. Del Silencio al Estallido: Narrativa Femenina Puertorriqueña. Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Cultural, 1991.

Luis Ramón Acevedo traces the development of women writers in Puerto Rico from the beginnings of "Puerto Rican literature" in the 1840s and 1850s. The author uses an extensive bibliography and selected texts from different authors to analyze and explain the evolution of a female, feminine, and feminist narrative on the island. The author guides the reader through the shifts in literature in Latin America and how the changes reflect specifically in Puerto Rican literature. The author also explains the influences Puerto Rican authors have received from other Hispanic authors, and the role of the United States in the development of literature since 1898. The book presents short stories from a variety of female writers that is both entertaining and didactic in nature and scope. His audience is the general public.

Agosto, Milagros. "El cuento puertorriqueño contemporáneo: de Luis Rafael Sánchez al presente." Martínez Masdeu, Edgar, ed. 22 Conferencias de Literatura Puertorriqueña. Ateneo Puertorriqueño. San Juan, Puerto Rico: Librería Editorial Ateneo, 1994. 552-570.

Dr. Milagros Agosto describes the evolution of the contemporary Puerto Rican short story and the influences it has received since the 1960s. The author discusses writers from Luis Rafael Sánchez to the present, emphasizing their technique, style, sources, and political agenda. Agosto's purpose is to report on the development of the modern short story in Puerto Rican literature. Her audience is the academy.

Arrillaga, Maria. "Trabajo literario de la mujer en la literatura puertorriqueña de la segunda mitad del siglo XX." Martínez Masdeu, Edgar, ed. 22 Conferencias de Literatura Puertorriqueña. Ateneo Puertorriqueño. San Juan, Puerto Rico: Librería Editorial Ateneo, 1994. 100-117.

Dr. Maria Arrillaga describes the development of women writers during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The author discusses female authors who have contributed and changed the landscape of Puerto Rican writers. Arrillaga's purpose is to show the development of literary criticism, feminism, national identity, and other literary developments among women writers in all literary genres. Her audience is the academy.

Benjamin, Jessica. "Master and Slave: The Fantasy of Erotic Domination." Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality. Eds. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, Sharon Thompson. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983. 280-299.



Jessica Benjamin looks at the recognition needs that are denied in our culture and how these longings appear in collective or individual deviance and madness. Benjamin first explains how the emphasis on individualism prevalent in our culture promotes a sense of isolation and unreality. This isolation in turn reappears as an attempt to possess and be possessed in order to be recognized. Benjamin uses *The Story of O* as an example of her argument. The author explains that because the woman is usually the controlled one, she must become objectified in order to be possessed. Benjamin concludes that sadomasochistic violence is partially triggered by the tension between issues of differentiation and recognition. The audience for this essay is feminists and the academy.

Bilbija, Ksenija. "Rosario Ferre's 'The Youngest Doll': on Women, Dolls, Golems, and Cyborgs." *Callaloo* 17.3 (1994). 4 Oct 2002 <<http://web2.infotrac.galegroup.com>>.

Ksenija Bilbija believes that Rosario Ferré's "The Youngest Doll" may be interpreted using the golem myth, which represents creation, oppression, and the use of the female as object. The author develops the idea by explaining the golem myth, applying it to Spanish-American literary tradition, and narrowing the focus to how Ferré's story expands on that myth to alter the patriarchal script. Bilbija argues that the doll in the story replaces the woman, since the woman cannot occupy a repressed place and be curious about her sexuality at the same time. The audience for this article is the academic community.

De Beauvoir, Simone. "Woman as Other." *The Gender Reader*. Eds. Evelyn Ashton-Jones, Gary A. Olson, Merry G. Perry. 2nd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000. 53-59.

Simone De Beauvoir analyzes the oppression of women from a historical perspective. De Beauvoir says that women are seen by men as the Other, but unlike other marginalized groups, the woman as Other lacks the common tradition, religion or culture to unite and demand reciprocity. The author shows the complexity of female oppression, and the complicity of women involving their own oppression. The audience for this essay is feminists and the academy.

Gelpi, Juan G. *Literatura y paternalismo en Puerto Rico*. San Juan, PR: Editorial de la Universidad de PR, 1993.

Juan Gelpi asserts that the composition of the Puerto Rican literary canon serves as political strategy by turning the concept of nation into a family. The author describes the paternalistic attitude of authors from Manuel Zeno Gandia to Pedreira's "Insularismo." Gelpi shows that the Puerto Rican literary canon is full of male authors who create works based on cultural nationalism and identity, without leaving space for other groups, such as women, until recently. The author's audience is the academy and anyone interested in canon formation.

Gilligan, James. Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic. New York: Vintage Books, 1997. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1996.

James Gilligan, M.D., argues that the violence epidemic ravaging the United States has its roots in the way we treat criminals within the justice system. He studies the way shame and humiliation play an important role in triggering violence, and how American culture is especially prone to shaming and humiliating its people, especially men. Gilligan uses his experiences within the Massachusetts prison system and his work in hospitals for the criminally insane to show how cultural and economic factors create the conditions conducive to violence. The book provides a different perspective about the cause of violence in the United States and suggests that cultural change regarding distribution of wealth and shifts in gender roles may prevent this epidemic from expanding. The audience includes policy makers, mental health practitioners, and law enforcement professionals.

Johnson, Allan G. Privilege, Power, and Difference. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001.

Allan Johnson explains how systems of privilege and difference operate in our society. The author enables the reader to see privilege, its consequences, and the connections between people and privilege. Johnson attempts to provide a framework for confronting privilege and changing systems of oppression. The audience is anyone interested in social systems and privilege.

Johnson, Allan G. The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997.

Allan Johnson explains how patriarchy leaves a legacy of gender oppression that needs to be dismantled. The author describes the social nature of gender roles, male dominance, and violence. The author's purpose is to provide an understanding of patriarchy as a system, and the difference between systems and the individuals who operate in them. The audience is anyone interested in learning how to become a part of the solution to the problem of gender oppression.

Kokopeli, Bruce, and George Lakey. "More Power Than We Want: Masculine Sexuality and Violence." Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1988.

Bruce Kokopeli and George Lakey explain how the patriarchal definition of manhood equates male sexuality with power, control, and violence. The authors argue that men are taught that "to love a woman is to have power over her and to treat her violently if need be." Kokopeli and Lakey's purpose is to show how masculinity and violence are inextricably connected in patriarchal systems. The audience is anyone interested in understanding the dynamics of masculinity, power, and violence.



Lassén, Ana Irma Rivera, and Elizabeth Crespo Kebler. Documentos del Feminismo en Puerto Rico; Fascículos de la Historia. Volumen 1 1970-1979. Puerto Rico: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2001.

Ana Irma Rivera Lassén and Elizabeth Crespo Kebler chronicle the development of autonomous feminist organizations in Puerto Rico during the 1970s. Each author writes an essay explaining the challenges women face in the feminist movement in the seventies and the achievements they accomplish. The authors also re-print agendas, minutes, newspapers articles, magazine articles, legislation, and other primary sources that document the role of several organizations on the island. The authors' show not only what was accomplished by feminist organizations in the 1970s, but also which issues proved detrimental to the success of some of the groups, especially the difficulty of developing non-partisan organizations in a partisan-driven political arena (since the presence of the United States in Puerto Rico is an ever-present issue that polarizes every segment of the population). The book provides a comprehensive guide and background of the growth and development of modern feminism in Puerto Rico. The audience is students and the academy.

Lerner, Gerda. *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle ages to Eighteen-seventy*. New York: Oxford UP, 1993.

Following the first volume *The Creation of Patriarchy*, this second volume continues the project of distinguishing between History (events in the past) and Recorded History, a process of recording, selecting, ordering, and interpreting events, and the impact of the process of Recorded History on women's consciousness in Western Civilization. The chapters address education, authorship, mysticism, motherhood, creativity, and the struggle for creating women's history. Lerner argues that women's different relationship to the process of Recorded History from men's affects the way women see themselves throughout this period. The purpose of the book is to bring attention to women's absence from recording history and the significance of that absence to women's consciousness, authorship, and creativity. The audience is scholars interested in the formation of feminist consciousness in the West.

Moraga, Cherrie. "From a Long Line of Vendidas: Chicanas and Feminism." Feminist Frameworks: Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations between Women and Men. Eds. Alison M. Jaggar and Paula S. Rothenberg. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993. 203-212.

Cherrie Moraga describes the historical roots behind Chicanas' fear of sexual stigmatization, and attributes this self-hatred to Malintzin Tenepal, the Aztec princess who served as Hernán Cortés' advisor and mistress. Moraga argues that Chicanas turn their backs on each other to avoid being called "vendidas" or sell-outs. Moraga's purpose is to exhort Chicanas in the feminist



movement to not turn their backs on Chicana lesbians and gays, who are an important part of the movement. The audience is anyone interested in learning more about Chicana identity and history.

Roy-Fequiere, Magali. "Contested Territory: Puerto Rican Women, Creole Identity, and Intellectual Life in the Early Twentieth Century." Callaloo. 17.3 (1994). 4 Oct 2002 <<http://web7.infotrac.galegroup.com>>.

Magali Roy-Fequiere demonstrates how two women, Mercedes Sola and Margot Arce, were able to enter the highest intellectual circles of Puerto Rican academics at a time where women were not allowed in those circles. The author explains the elitism behind these suffragists and the weaknesses in their feminist analysis. Roy-Fequiere describes how these two women were able to make their voices heard, while at the same time silencing working class women on the island. The audience for this article is the academy.

Santiago, Roberto, ed. Boricuas: Influential Puerto Rican Writings-An Anthology. New York: Ballantine Books, 1995.

Roberto Santiago gathers the works of various Puerto Ricans to assert the existence of a Puerto Rican culture, something that as a child he was told did not exist. The author uses the works of poets, writers, politicians, nationalists, ex-convicts, and others to provide a glimpse into the meaning of the term Puerto Rican. The authors encompass both the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, and although most of them reflect anti-colonialist points of view, some of the works explore other sides to the dilemma of the role the United States should play in Puerto Rican culture. Santiago uses works written by Puerto Ricans living in the United States and by Puerto Ricans living on the island in an attempt to define Puerto Rican culture in both environments. The book educates the reader about the complexities and subtleties of being part of a nation with limited rights and no sovereignty, with a definite tendency towards anti-colonialist political tendencies. The audience is the general public.

Silén, Juan Angel. Las Bichas: Una interpretacion critica de la literature feminista y femenina en Puerto Rico. 1992. Río Piedras, PR Libreria Nolberto Gonzalez, 1996.

Juan Angel Silén discusses Puerto Rican literature, especially literature written by women, and interprets it using the historical context of colonization, migration, and industrialization. Silén reviews the myths and stories that create a national identity for Puerto Ricans. The author's purpose is to offer criticism using feminine and feminist authors. The audience is the academy.

Solá, María M., ed. Aquí Cuentan las Mujeres: Muestra y Estudio de Cinco Narradoras Puertorriqueñas. Río Piedras, PR: Ediciones Huracán, 1990.

María M. Solá argues that women writers in Puerto Rican literature construct a view of ideology and cultural change that only women can provide to the literary canon. The cultural definition of women, the social construct of femininity, the emphasis of the domestic sphere as the only appropriate topic for women writers, and the consciousness of body among women create a literature uniqueness of their material conditions. Colonialism affects both men and women, but in different ways. The authors chosen for the study break the molds of the social construct of women with their writings, and expand on the topics women have "permission" to write about in literature. María M. Solá uses these authors and short stories to trace the cultural shifts in women's roles that have occurred in Puerto Rico since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The audience includes feminists, students, and the academy.

Vélez, Diana L., ed. and tr. Introduction. Reclaiming Medusa: Short Stories by Contemporary Puerto Rican Women. Aunt lute books: San Francisco, CA: 1988. Rev. ed. 1997. i-xvii.

In this anthology, Diana L. Vélez compiles short stories that define womanhood in a Puerto Rican-specific manner. The editor has collected stories that show the complexity of Puerto Rican politics and culture since the invasion of the United States in 1898. The stories explore how colonialism has separated Puerto Rico from the rest of Latin America and how the women on the island become oppressed not only by a colonialist society, but also by those who live in this society. The short stories show innovations in language and revisionist tendencies that first appeared in Puerto Rico during the late sixties and early seventies. The book serves to revise the established roles of Puerto Rican females and males within the particular social, political, and cultural context of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The audience is the general public.

## STATEMENT OF CRITICAL INFLUENCES

Like my choice about the pursuit of this Master's Degree, the creation of this thesis was accidental and full of fortuitous events that shaped the final product. My original intent was to include Puerto Rican writers within the larger framework of American literature. A translation, an analysis, or an overview was some of the ways I considered developing my work, as long as the stories were written by Puerto Rican authors. Since Dr. Jill Eichhorn's feminist theory class had profoundly changed my life and the way I viewed the world, I decided to focus on feminism and on Puerto Rican feminist theory (if such a topic existed). I researched theory before choosing my stories and found useful information in the work of Ana Irma Rivera Lassén and Elizabeth Crespo Kebler. Their work, *Documentos del Feminismo en Puerto Rico; Fascículos de la Historia. Volumen 1 1970-1979*, helped me understand the history of feminism on the island and the challenges facing modern Puerto Rican feminists. I also found great insights in the analysis provided by Ramón Luis Acevedo, Maria Arrillaga, and María M. Solá.

I chose three authors for my original analysis: Rosario Ferré, Ana Lydia Vega, and Mayra Montero. I planned to present an overview of Puerto Rican feminism using a sample of their short stories. I chose these authors for their political agendas, for the difference in their rhetorical styles, and because some of their work was already translated.

While I was getting ready to write the essay, I read Dr. James Gilligan's *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*, a book Dr. Eichhorn recommended as an interesting work. I became fascinated by Gilligan's analysis of violent criminals. His suggestion that



intolerable amounts of shame and humiliation partly cause these criminals to act violently caught my attention. His theory helped explain the violence in our society as one influenced by the gender roles assigned to men in patriarchy, since deviating from the strict definition of manhood in our society could trigger humiliating reprisals, and this shame could in turn encourage violent behavior as a way of re-establishing control..

I began looking at the short stories in this new context of violence. I was not surprised to discover the texts I was reading described men's violent acts against women. Every woman in the short stories I was reading was victimized by men in physically or emotionally violent ways because the society they inhabited condoned and encouraged such behavior. However, I was surprised to realize that the men also suffered from their violence in physical, emotional and spiritual ways. Needless to say, the focus of my thesis changed to violence and the research shifted to theories as to why such violence occurs, and the price both men and women pay.

As I developed my analysis, I decided to focus on only one author. I chose Rosario Ferré because two of her stories provided me with enough material to develop my new argument. While researching Ferré's stories, I found Ksenija Bilbija's 1994 article, "Rosario Ferre's 'The Youngest Doll': on Women, Dolls, Golems, and Cyborgs," a useful analysis of the intricacies of the female body, especially pertaining to sexuality and reproduction. Bilbija's article helped me clarify my own position regarding the niece's escape in "The Youngest Doll."

Finally, Allen G. Johnson provided the best answers to my questions about the cost of patriarchy for men and women. His analysis about patriarchy and what it does not only to women, but also to men, expanded my understanding of Gilligan's theory. In

Johnson's *Privilege, Power, and Difference*, and *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*, the concept of paths of least resistance clarified why we behave in the ways we do and how our actions, although insignificant on their own, accumulate and create the conditions that promote violence in patriarchal systems. His analysis shed light on my thoughts about the cost of patriarchy for men, without forgetting the benefits men still reap from conforming to patriarchal codes at the expense of women. Johnson's explanation of social systems provided useful insights about our individual roles in patriarchy, and the paths of resistance we can take to change the system.

## VITA

Lourdes Teresa Fernández was born in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. She is a candidate for the Masters degree in English at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee. Lourdes earned a Bachelors of Science in Business Administration from the University of South Carolina. Her change in careers transformed her life. Lourdes currently lives in Wayne, Pennsylvania, with her husband, Dan, and her son Lucas. She currently teaches yoga and takes care of her son.