



## PRESENT CHANGES IN SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND STEREOTYPES ABOUT WOMEN IN MAGAZINES FROM DIFFERENT PERIODS

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### Abstract

This work describes and analyzes the social representations and stereotypes of women as presented in two Spanish magazines separated in time: *La Ilustración Española y Americana* ( *The Spanish and American Illustration* ), which was published between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the magazine *Telva* , addressed to the female public, which has been published since the 1960s and currently has its own digital version.

Methodologically, a qualitative bibliographic-documentary study was developed, elaborating a corpus of images from both publications, contrasting the social representations and stereotypes present in each publication, contemplating the different contexts, the evolution in the roles and characterization of women, and the current limitations regarding ambitions and rights; conceptions that prevailed, and prevail, concerning women during the Age of Enlightenment and in contemporary times. The discursive characteristics and visual devices of both magazines are presented, in relation to the image of women in the societies of both times.

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Among the main findings were knowledge of the secondary role played by women and the association of women with various domestic tasks, which could be found in the publication *La Ilustracion Española y Americana*, reflected in the different moments of the daily lives of the women; although within the elite which the publication represented, there were avant-garde women who had begun to assume roles of greater prominence and leadership in society. For its part, although in *Telva* we find images of autonomous and independent women, they are generally related to housekeeping, food preparation and consumption, and the avant-garde in the world of fashion, being able to consider that this magazine also responds to a stereotype of woman belonging to the ruling classes.

*Keywords:* social representations, journalistic discourse, gender roles, meanings, cultural industry, subjectivities.

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## Introduction

This paper develops an analysis of the social representations and stereotypes of women and gender roles that appear in two Spanish graphic publications separated by a century of existence: the *Spanish and American Illustration magazine*, published in Madrid, between 1869 and 1921, and the *Telva magazine*, a publication born in the middle of the last century that is one of the most prominent women's magazines in Spain. The analysis compares the image, the statements and the representation of women, which prevail in the graphic media.

The condition of women is an issue that has been increasingly occupying various studies in the academic field, mainly in those spaces where it is possible to recognize and identify their transit by the examination of certain records, such as the pages of the graphic communication media, in both the 1920s and in the current 21st century.

The most evident example of the extension of this theme may be the current attention that the treatment of the role of women as a field of interest arouses in the Spanish civil society, and of struggles where diverse discourses participate in a political and ideological dispute that has exclusive participants, highlighting the unequal power relations and how some identifications and practices are legitimized or stigmatized.

In this sense, there is a renewed interest in contrasting views and perceptions that the press has been defining during the last century concerning the figure of women, with the declared purpose of undoing the tensions and paradoxes that sustain it, both in images and in words. Such an approach finds its extreme in the possible confrontations that discursively enunciate the reproduction of bodies and subjectivities adjusted to the predominant sexual and gender ideals of each era.

From this perspective, the proposed analysis will attempt to establish a dialogue within the same medium -the graphic medium- between two participants separated chronologically, but who

coincide in capturing the other half of the story -that of women- within the same peninsular geography. -Spain-.

Only from an analytical reading of the selected corpus will it be possible to find the traces that demarcate the verbal and iconic expressions in print, signs that bear a substantiality where those social representations that legitimize behaviors, attitudes, gestures and practices of an entire society reside. For this, it is necessary to refer to various theoretical perspectives, beyond the discourse analysis, to examine the practices of a dominant order and dismantle the assumptions that circulate in them; that is, how women are defined, represented, evaluated and organized.

Socially idealized women, as real and symbolic objects, were predestined to marriage and motherhood, while others were locked into the role of sexualized bodily objects, to be exploited and silenced. Originally absent from economic production, political organization and cultural creation in the public space, they emerged as the irrevocable ideal of femininity within the private sphere in the modern world.

These socially and historically constructed tendencies, reflected in the periodical press (both yesterday and today), are the natural result of a naturalized operation that promotes the control and regulation of the desires, emotions and bodies of women, where the illustrations function as mirrors that fulfill the function of reflecting the feminine as a passive experience, relegated to subordination and submission to the power of the other (men).

The socioeconomic and political changes that took place from the mid-20th century to the first decades of this millennium, despite their importance, continue to be held back by the prevailing forms of symbolic domination continue to control the definitions that appear in the devices that make up the industry of culture. In short, the objectives that determine the perspective to be analyzed imply the commitment to reveal a framework that, despite the time that has elapsed, still survives under the guise of new signs.

## **Problem Statement**

From the point of view of multiple disciplines, a consensus has been generated on the importance of building a system of ideas -and their dissemination- within a community, not only to guarantee the functioning of a regime of truth but also, fundamentally, to exercise regulatory control over it.

Since its origins, the media have contributed to this role, becoming an instrument that is the mouthpiece of a hegemonic order, with the implicit purpose of giving shape and substance to a reality, while, at the same time, they operate so that the contents that it broadcasts are perceived by its receivers as the product of a natural order.

In this sense, within the framework of a culture where the media not only fulfill the mission of informing but also one of mediating human relations, in times in which history is pierced by permanent tensions, marked by constant advances and setbacks, the question about whether in truth the social representation, elaborated and disseminated by the media concerning women, has not also been the bearer of meanings in which the future of Spain can be symbolically reconstructed.

It is in this line of interpretation, that of an equivalence, in which the analysis of the representation concerning women is assumed (sometimes as an object and always as a subject, as long as it is tied to institutions and linked to the social mandates of the time) and which is reflected in the pages of selected graphic publications, both analog and digital, where a manner of being and existing is taught and learned. In short, the problem to be addressed can be formulated by the following question: What *social representations of women prevail in the magazine La Ilustracion Española y Americana, from* the 19th century, and in the magazine *Telva* , *in* the 21st century.

## **Objectives**

### **Overall objective**

To carry out a comparative analysis of the social representations and stereotypes of women present in a Spanish magazine from the beginning of the 20th century and in a women's magazine from the 21st century.

### **Specific objectives**

- Recognize and identify the changes that were appearing in the graphic media of circulation in Spain, over a century, in relation to the perceptions that were built in reference to women.
- Contrast similarities and differences around the configuration of the feminine, taking as a chronological reference those publications that circulated more than a hundred years ago compared to contemporary ones.
- Investigate the historical and contemporary relevance that graphic media gives to the role that women have within local, national and global society.

## **Hypothesis**

*Despite the advances and social conquests of women in the last century, social representations and stereotypes still predominate in the graphic press that account for the hegemony of patriarchy and its symbolic domination.*

## Theoretical framework

Since the emergence of the media within the social community, its power and influence on human relations have been known, being on many occasions an instrument from which behaviors and behaviors are imposed. As Giroux and McLaren (1995) point out, “ *there is pedagogy in any place where knowledge is produced, in any place there is the possibility of translating experience or constructing truths, even if these truths seem hopelessly redundant, superficial and close to the common place* ” ( pp. 144-158).

Thus, the media, in general, and the news, in particular, have been assuming the role of agents of the cultural industry, teaching habits, forms of behavior and values through their pages, by words and illustrations which have mapped out a viable and functional reality to the status quo.

From this perspective it is possible to reconstruct a whole framework that articulates a compendium of archetypes to be imitated and emulated by their readers, thus promoting the appropriation of a set of “mandates” about how men and women should behave in order to be accepted, respected and valued. What, in the words of Louro (2008), would be “ *one of the privileged ways to teach which behaviors should be valued, which attitudes and gestures are appropriate for each gender, as well as what can and should be done* ” (p. 92).

When the need arises, from the analysis, to propose the existence of a discriminatory approach, it will be done from a cultural understanding of the differences between men and women, interpreting the gender, according to the statement of Scott (1995), “ *as a constitutive element of social relations based on perceived differences between the sexes and as a primary way of giving meaning to power relations* ” (p. 86).

From all that has been said so far, it is to be assumed that the notions of what is feminine and what is masculine are apprehended by those who are exposed to the messages that circulate through the media in newspapers and magazines –both analogically and digitally– in accordance with the particularities of the historical context. Of the culture from which they are produced. Therefore, it can be stated as Butler (2010) affirms that “ *every discursive construction is historically signified from multiple discourses that regulate, produce hierarchies, normalize, transgress and legitimize knowledge* ” (p. 67).

This idea is evidenced in the different graphic resources that the press possesses to encase with various signs – both verbal and non-verbal – notes and articles that are apparently dissimilar but bear the same meaning, beyond the historical moments that condition and determine each one of the publications that make up the chosen corpus.

From this perspective, Spain has been, until recently, a bastion quite akin to a moralizing and/or religious position, linked to models considered dominant from the point of view of Canciano

(2007), “ *establishing guidelines on some identities and practices on the role of women, defending the patriarchal, nuclear and heterosexual family model* ” (p. 51).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, population growth increased urban density, demanding more and better services, including access to mass media. From these same bodies, Lagarde (1997) states, “ *this demand was answered by designing instruments that would be extremely useful to the ruling powers to disseminate effective policies and actions -both public and private- for their control and management* “ (p.113).

In search of this, the prevailing social representations that crystallized the hegemonic project on those who made up that society were surveyed, granting women a space limited to the home, in the private sphere, and to protocol, in social situations. The analysis of these representations will make it possible to visualize in the press, according to Coria (2008), “ *the ways in which historical-social changes are interpreted and processed, the impact of which reaches traditional gender roles and mandates* “ (p. 93).

According to Jodelet (1992), “ *representations constitute complex phenomena that are always active and intervening in social life, which combine informational, cognitive, ideological, normative elements, beliefs, values, attitudes, opinions and images* “ (p. 146). They are presented as a significant whole, as “*knowledge that says something about the state of reality*” (p. 148) and whose task is to describe it, analyze it, explain it in its dimensions, forms, processes and functioning.

Social representation finds itself, with its object, in a relationship of symbolization –it takes its place- and of interpretation –it confers meanings-. It plays a fundamental role in the dynamics of social relationships and practices.

The stereotype is a conceptualization concerning certain types or human groups that is universalized, lacking for this rational foundations; it constitutes a cognitive operation that contemplates reality in a reductionist way. The operation of the stereotype lies in the fact that it allows quick adaptations, based on shared beliefs; that is, those included in the processes of socialization, such as those that occur in the family, school, and increasingly today, from the media. According to Amossy and Herschberg Pierrot (2010), stereotypes emerge as a transversal object of contemporary reflection in the human sciences, and they do not always have a negative connotation. They transverse the issue of opinion and common sense, of the relationship with the other and categorization. They allow the study of social interactions, the relationship of discourses with social imaginaries and, from a broader perspective, the relationship between language and society.

Bourdieu’s (1979) analytical perspective makes it possible, based on the notion of habitus developed in his theory of practices, to explain the relationship between representations and behaviors. “*The habitus is constituted in a generating principle of practices as well as in a system of classification of the same, by means of which the represented social world is constructed and the bases are laid for the understanding of common sense* “ (p. 214) .

Both the symbolic constitution and the socio-historical interpretation of these differences allow us to visualize and understand different forms of relationship between women and men, between the feminine and the masculine: male domination (patriarchal or others), female domination or egalitarian relationships. As Cirillo (2005) points out, “ *gender is a principle of order, it reveals the existence and effects of a power relationship, of a difference, of an unequal encounter...*” (p. 87).

On the other hand, as Burin (1996) states, gender is defined as “ *the network of beliefs, personality traits, attitudes, feelings, values, behaviors and activities that differentiate women and men*” (p. 64). If such differentiation is conceived as the product of a historical process of social construction that also generates hierarchies and inequalities, it is interesting to identify how the meanings attributed to women become mandates, imperatives that constitute limitations to action, they direct and give it a particular meaning, reinforcing or questioning historically established power relations.

### ***State of the Art***

One of the most recent contributions to the subject studied corresponds to a work carried out by Almansa Martínez (2017), who deals with investigating how the stereotype about women crosses the content of women's magazines. Although it contemplates the recent history of the most representative Spanish publications in the field, it does so only to prepare the conditions for an in-depth analysis of the entry into Spain of the large international press groups responsible for the most emblematic magazines of the sector: Cosmopolitan, Glamour, Elle or Vogue, to name a few.

From a gender perspective, the author takes a special look at those issues identified in the social imaginary as of women's own interest in traditional terms: fashion, beauty, personal relationships and home care. Each and every one of these facets will be represented by a female model, ranging from the typical mother and housewife through the independent and autonomous super woman to the successful entrepreneur.

Another study that mentions the issue of social representations in print media is the one carried out by Márquez (2005), who has the figure of Abelardo de Carlos and the Spanish and American Enlightenment as the center of his analysis. In this work, the author emphasizes the personality of its creator and director, who knew how to extend these qualities to a publication that is an obligatory reference, due to its quality and excellence, in the Spain of the last third of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. In his study, the analyst also highlights the imprint of this director in editing a publication that, from its origins, intended to transcend its time by being printed in such a way that it could later be bound into volumes and, in this way, allow it to be integrated into libraries and more demanding newspaper archives, as a verbal and iconic record of his time.

Reading today his notes and the plates, which fill his copies, is the best testimonial to trace a history where it is possible to encounter the reflection of a Spain that assumed itself to be the

protagonist of the world, through its men and, to a lesser extent, its women. It is precisely in this line of work where the greatest contribution of the studio resides, in finding the keys to a time crystallized in its pages.

In this regard, and broadening the analytical view of the Iberian press as a whole, the intellectual effort undertaken by Matud Aznar (2017) is of great value when he addresses the social representations of women and men in contemporary times, and how they crystallize in the configuration of the news chronicle.

Focusing on the newspaper *El País*, it describes the profiles that define stereotypes in relation to editorial content, pondering their physical and intangible resolution: while outlining the fulfillment of certain roles (assigned by tradition to each gender) it establishes, at the same time, the coordinates of a recognition of those activities that seem to demand the establishment of certain correspondences, in relation to the personality of those who are qualified to exercise them.

In perspective, it is worth mentioning the description he makes of the dimensions that configure the medium when he elliptically addresses the characteristics associated with each sex, determining and conditioning their performance in society: active, competent and ambitious when it comes to men, while the warmth, understanding, and kindness are the exclusive currency of women. Which translates into greater power and authority of one over the other.

In a parallel line of analysis, it is worth mentioning the research carried out by Davara (2010), when proposing to make an in-depth reading of Spanish newspapers in terms of the presence and image of women and the implications that these configurations have on the ultimate formation of public opinion. Taking as a reference both newspapers with a national presence and those circumscribed to a locality and/or region, the author recognizes and identifies those news articles that have women as protagonists, either in positive or negative terms, and identifying those activities with which they are linked more frequently (politics, entertainment and sports to a greater degree, over those related to the field of science and the field of culture).

It is also worth mentioning the classification that the researcher carries out when weighing the notes and articles addressed, not only in terms of treatment but also the location and space assigned to women within each of the respective newspapers.

Also noteworthy is the contribution that Crespo Sánchez (2014) makes when he focuses his study on discourse analysis, emphasizing the messages disseminated by the Iberian press in direct relation to moral values and the family in a period that ranges from mid-eighteenth century to the present. From the relief of the publications considered as the most representative spokespersons of the dominant institutions of each era (especially the Catholic Church), the analyst grants them the responsibility of being the privileged shapers of public opinion, with the ultimate purpose of being the ones who guide the social organization, in tune with their interests and forms.

Finally, it is worth mentioning a recent approach, which pays attention to the growing presence in the graphic media, mainly in the first decades of the 21st century, in relation to the



treatment that magazines have been carrying out on female empowerment. Luque Ortiz and Pérez Curiel (2018) are the authors of a study that focuses on well-known fashion publications (Telva, Vogue and Elle), which have the particularity of having an editorial direction and staff of collaborators made up mostly of women.

However, despite the sponsorship of their credentials (a media designed from and for women) the fact is not very encouraging -from the reading of the analysts- that these publications present few innovations on the matter, contributing, paradoxically, to reinforce those patterns of behavior which are so stereotyped and which are the ones that they want to combat.

### ***Material and method***

A bibliographic-documentary study was carried out, which privileges pointing to the complex relationship between social mandates and individual representations that are reflected in the images that circulate in the media. Within the framework of the analysis and interpretation undertaken, it has been decided to articulate the traditional views (traversed by roles, values and norms) with an approach built from the demands of the women's collective (ethnic, cultural and situational).

To delimit the corpus, the importance of each of the media in relation to its time frame was considered, weighing its trajectory in years, circulation of copies and recognition among its peers in the peninsular press.

The research included the visualization, and its subsequent selection in digitized format, of the material available for consultation on the web, in order to make a record where the beliefs, perceptions and ways in which women are reflected are represented, meaning in this way the contexts themselves in their sociocultural dimension.

Finally, the methodology is complemented by the subjective readings and interpretive processes inherent to the job that every researcher undertakes, especially when the matter to be analyzed starts from the record and testimony of a given social semiosis: which implies recognizing that in every construction there are underlying factors that condition from the social to the individual level (and vice versa).

### ***Corpus of analysis***

The characteristics that define each of the analyzed publications, from which the selected images were extracted, are briefly described below.

The trajectory of the Spanish and American Enlightenment (1879 to 1927) can be recognized as a time of journalistic prosperity in general, encouraged by a certain peninsular political and

economic stability. Thus, the publication was the quintessential model to imitate, appearing on its pages the first images reproduced by photogravure, in a period marked by transition.

Subtitled as " *Newspaper of Sciences, Literature, Arts, Industry and Useful Knowledge* " it came out every two weeks starting on December 25, 1869. Profusely illustrated, with 16 pages, with a format similar to newspapers, double that of other publications at the time, its success was fundamentally based on three aspects: its large format, the supplements and the cast of collaborators.

The period of splendor of the magazine coincided with the application of engraving and its development (1880-1900). At this stage it was directed by the son of the founder Abelardo José de Carlos, being a pioneer in the application and development of photoengraving (1883), achieving in 1888 the publication of the first color engraving.

With the turn of the century, magazines reduced their formats to save paper and devoted more space to current information, however the Spanish and American Enlightenment maintained their style and continued to reproduce engravings, largely made from photographs, which were very soon they would attract the attention (and consumption) of an uneducated public, due to their illiterate condition: the masses.

Considered for more than 50 years as an icon among Spanish magazines aimed at women, *Telva* is a monthly publication, both in analog and digital format. Its beginnings date back to October 1963, having an imprinted source from Opus Dei (from which a large part of its management and editorial staff came), which sought -through the pages of the magazine- to transmit a traditional and conservative message on Spanish women.

In 1995 the publication changed owners, as well as its editorial line, passing into the hands of RCS Media Group to this day, being its current director Olga Ruiz. Beyond its well-known career, the magazine has installed a style for women that has transcended the medium, socially installing the expression 'Chica Telva' to refer to a current woman, with initiative, personality and glamour.

*Telva* 's longevity has not taken away its current status of being recognized as the emblematic Spanish women's magazine, architect and visual witness of the changes that have taken place in the universe of women in recent decades. In this sense, it is possible to risk a virtual alliance between the *Spanish and American Enlightenment* and *Telva*: the former, assuming responsibility for providing timely and detailed information as a newspaper, while the latter deals with reviewing those issues that ~~they~~ are presumed to be of general and particular interest to women, with some degree of knowledge among their readers. Both making use of the visual resource as their privileged way of reporting reality, conquering larger spaces to the detriment of the written word.

Prioritizing the image, disseminating reality, offering new content, democratizing, was ultimately the engine that printed the path of both publications and the image the means of making it possible: with the aim of instructing some, recreating others and being accessible to all.

## **Results**

The selected corpus could be defined as not extensive, scattered and irregular. Universal vocation, didactic, exemplary, and socially optimistic, they are attributes or elements that are part of a creed where images serve as support, as an expression and manifestation of a cultural industry that seems to encompass everything, with the declared intention of enlightening its readers of a world where everyone, despite feeling part of it, fundamentally aspires to be protagonists.

At the same time responsible for offering their audiences -preferably female- the dominant meanings of the time, they also construct their messages iconically to show -with the most advanced technologies in the treatment of images- those signs that make the difference between standing out or going unnoticed. The language of understanding -the word- establishes a pact of reading with the language of the senses, fundamentally first with engraving -in relation to the plates that the *Spanish and American Enlightenment* bequeathed us- to later give way to photography, a visual resource par excellence fully exploited in publications such as *Telva* .

To begin with, it will be possible to verify that the plates based on the engravings fully fulfilled both an aesthetic and informative function in *The Spanish and American Illustration* , where the iconic was adopting a greater prominence, relegating the text to a complementary condition, merely clarifying, while its contemporary peer, *Telva*, a century later, resorts without noticing that it is replicating a mimetic operation, to illustrate the real-under the auspices and help of digital technology- thus amplifying the conditions of the perception of reality, ultimately giving rise to a hyperreality.

It is worth referring to the visual plastic aesthetic treatment of the issues and/or characters reproduced in both time periods, to reveal the signs that denote certain archetypes or topics that expand the gallery of those previously studied. The object is to find a symbolic and iconographic system of individual and collective representation, in two iconic media examples, in the full dimension of the word: on the one hand, *the Spanish and American Enlightenment* and, on the other, *Telva* , both custodians -each in its own way- of the Spanish vision that is built on women.

To read images then, many readings are needed. Among them, are those that define what is known as layout: where they converge, on the one hand, the surface of the illustration and, on the other hand, its situation in the magazine. That is, assuming the visual not only as a valid support to perceive the social representations that go through reality, but also its own capture.

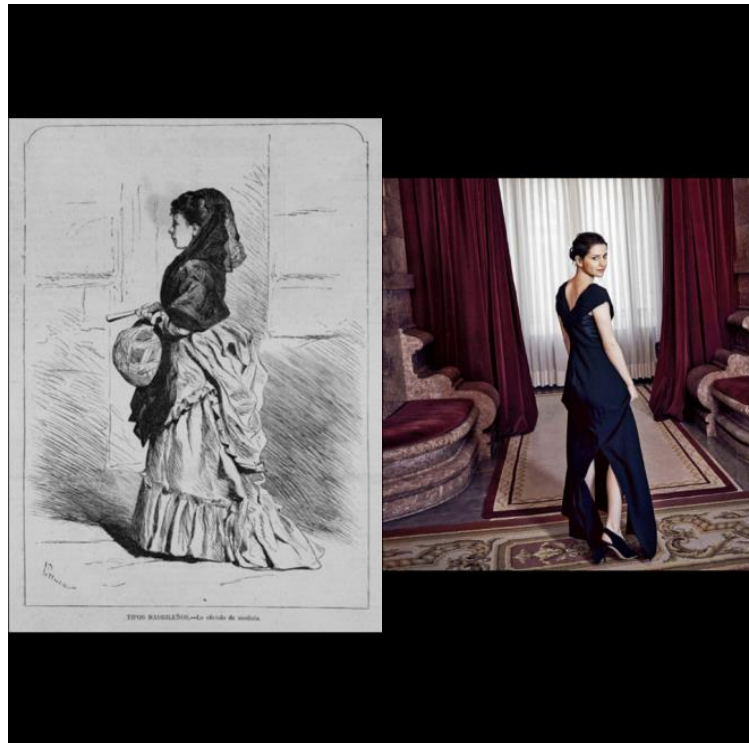


Fig.1 “The dressmaker official” (The Illustration) Fig. 2 “Inés Arrimadas and power” ( Telva )

In the contrast of both images, it is possible to verify that both women are bearers of signs of distinction that speak of a privileged social class, either because of the care of their aesthetics or because of their sobriety and elegance, typical of ladies of high society. However, while the first of them seems to be unaware that her figure is being registered to be the protagonist of an engraving that will become public through *The Illustration*, the other, on the contrary, is aware that her presence will soon be the focus of attention and commentary of the gazes (of her own class) and of those outside their class.

The social representation that prevails in both portraits is that which assimilates the feminine as fragile, as a support for the canons of beauty that prevailed in an era. The message is not neutral, it is loaded with meanings that give the woman a singular character as a protagonist, but at the same time stripped of any type of relationship with others in her environment.



Fig. 3 “The Nymphs of the Manzanares” (The Illustration) Fig. 4 “Casual outdoors” (Telva)

Here we are in the presence of pairs of women who appear sharing an activity: some, portrayed fulfilling a periodic and routine work, without the right to claim financial remuneration, since said task is perceived and assumed as natural to the proper and exclusive obligations of the women. While the opposite image, in the double sense of its meaning, another pair is shown, also in the public space, but this time tasting ice cream, surely in a time left to leisure. In both situations, the perspective of the environment seems to legitimize them, as part of a dominant social convention that is imposed on them: on one hand, the submission to carry out naturalized practices in relation to an implicit sexual division of work and, on the other hand, an explanation with no greater issue than enjoying some time in company.

The illustrations are linked to everyday life, they are loaded with signs and marks that add information to the text, thus giving the image extra value. They constitute, beyond the connotations indicated and the passage of time, a record that they undoubtedly make of the collective and visual memory of an era.

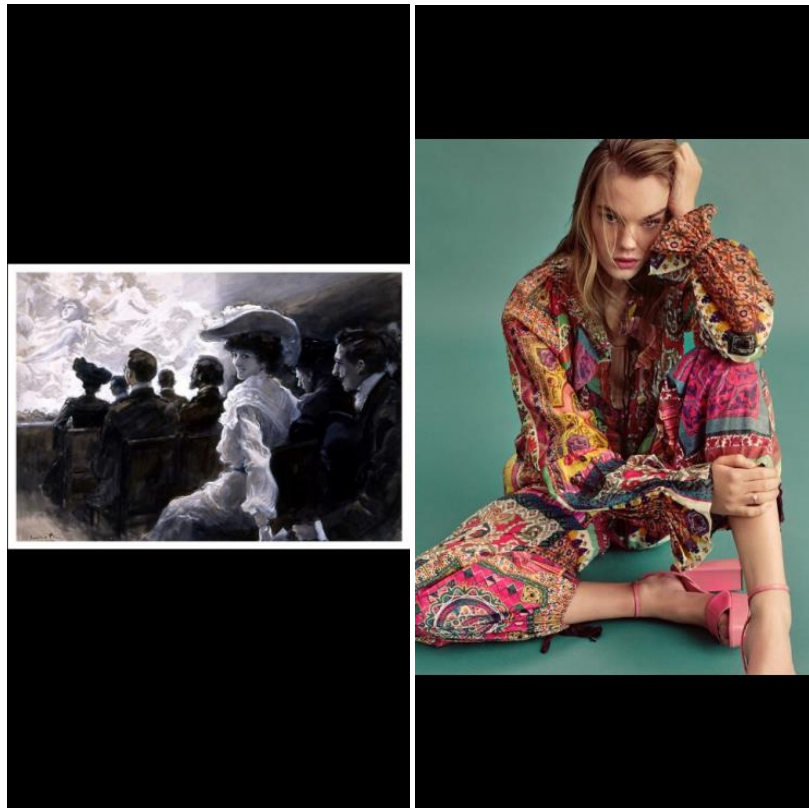


Fig. 5 “Hidden letters at the theater” (The Illustration) Fig. 6 “Spring Sauvage” ( Telva )

In this sequence of images, we are faced with the portrait of women who, at different times in recent history, show themselves with initiative, through attitudes and gestures that can be interpreted as challenging for the time. It is interesting here to observe how the complicity of its protagonists with the potential reader is built, this is through the eye contact that both establish, fixing their gaze on the eyes that examine and judge them, through a device that will make the reflection of their intentions visible.

These confessions are only allowed to women in certain areas, either inside a dark movie theater -away from the curious- or in a private photo session, both stereotypes that socially legitimize the tolerance to accept certain slips, such as those who are still attributed to the so-called "weaker sex" (yet another representation that operates by manipulating women while their protection is declaimed). The aesthetics of the illustrations is at the service of the norms to serve as graphic testimony to both characters and to themes. The treatment of light generally favors those who star in the frames, contrasting with the darkness that gives the crowd its anonymous character.



Fig. 7 “Sardines in Gijón” (Illustration)

Fig.8 “A new generation of designers”(Telva)

Socializing within an environment where a large part of the day is usually spent, whether in the workplace or within the scope of an educational institution, is the most usual way of coping with the weight of obligations and giving shelter to dreams of fulfillment most desired. Although these images can be perceived as the portrait of two legal occupations, it should be remembered that until not long ago, jobs related to the intellect were absolutely forbidden to all women, without discrimination of social class. It is necessary to identify and recognize the relationships between these publications and the society they record, in order to reveal where the political and economic dynamics that have emerged at each juncture have evolved. In this case, despite the fact that the social representations most deeply rooted in time seemed to give up their mandates, in truth, women, by achieving legitimate freedom and autonomy in this field, could not become totally independent of those tasks that even bind and enslave her within the private sphere.



Fig. 9 “The Christmas gift” (The Illustration)

Fig. 10 “Pablo Casado and his wife, in their most personal interview” ( Telva )

Family scenes, in conservative and traditional terms - read heterosexual couple with children - do not seem to be the most popular scenes in the pages of both publications. It can be conjectured that perhaps these circumstances are due to the fact that they refer to experiences often linked to the daily life of their readers, being precisely the time which they dedicate to reading that they use to satisfy their needs to dissipate their attention towards other scenarios and landscapes that temporarily distance her from her everyday practices. Outlining the connections between both moments requires the trained eye to establish equivalences between those elements that seem to be exchanged, signs that come together in the composition (eye contact between the couple, boy and girl of similar ages, the product of a family typified as ideal, etc.), thus producing a synergy that operates as an effect of a sequence that would be impossible to generate if they were approached in an isolated and independent manner.

In this regard, it should be noted that the role of mother is one of those facets most deeply rooted in the social imaginary with respect to the essential role of women. Surely her profile is not perceived as much as a burden and/or responsibility for parenting if the context in which the family scene is portrayed changes from the atmosphere of the home to an environment framed by nature, far from the obligations that civilization demands.





Fig. 11 “At Mass” (The Illustration)



Fig.12 “Casa Telva” ( Telva )

In this case, it is suggestive how the visual composition invites the reader to focus their visual attention on the center of the scene, occupied in each case by a woman who is firm on her feet but at the same time as needing to seek support, support on the back of a chair.

Thus, the context seems to enable certain meanings while simultaneously limiting others. While in the engraving a young woman can be seen, with a very careful appearance in relation to all her clothing, in keeping with other women who are seen, attending like her a religious ceremony inside a church, at the other extreme we can recognize another woman inside another "temple", more pagan in its beliefs but not for that reason far from certain rituals that speak of a liturgy dictated by one of the strongest social representations: the one that identifies the woman as the queen of the home and, therefore, as the supreme authority to dispose of everything that lives or transits in its domain. Perhaps both visual stories have unwittingly revealed an instance where dogmatic truths begin to be perceived as fragile.



Fig.13 “Flirting at the fountain”

Fig. 14 “Perfumes for men that are great for women”

Finally, no images are exposed where the woman is transformed into a good worthy of being admired, not only because of the one who is assumed to possess it (and who is shown within the safe framework of the bond) but also because she, the protagonist, is aware of its exhibition, and therefore, it is shown, knowing that its presence will generate the desire of all those who contemplate it.

Perhaps, the stereotype that prevails around her female figure, whether it is the size that denotes a perfect silhouette -according to the dominant models of each era- or a face that gives her an air of angelic purity, are the result of the same operation. that, despite the passage of time, seeks to perpetuate that condition that privileges forms over the human soul.

The present analysis does not exhaust the multiple meanings that are still possible to recognize and identify in the iconic messages that circulate in the media about women, from social representations that still survive among us, but their unmasking may be the beginning to give the opportunity from unlearning to look to begin to see.

## Discussion

Since its inception, current graphic media have set themselves the goal of creating content in an attractive way that addresses, both verbally and visually, a reality that seduces both male and

female readers from its pages, inviting them alike to recognize and discover each other throughout each of its pages.

The declared aspiration to neutrally describe the events was a highly valued currency in those graphic media at the end of the 19th century, which assumed the mission of informing and disseminating everything that went through the future of humanity. Being sparse in praise and serene in attack on the one hand, while trying to reconcile tradition with the irruption of new aesthetic currents on the other, were the expression of an editorial line that was often more implicit than explicit.

The treatment of the social has always been superficial without attacking the structures of the system or subjecting it to any criticism. That is why, beyond addressing some event or certain character of notoriety, the content travels on issues assumed to be timeless, current. Therefore, their reading comprehension must parade between two parallel cultures, the educated one on one side and the popular one on the other, reconciling both transversally in a third way, inaugurated among others under the endorsement of printed publications such as *The Spanish and American Illustration*, where what we identify as mass culture will take its definitive form.

The enlightened bourgeoisie found in this means of dissemination the privileged instrument to make their thoughts known, educate the people, ultimately transmit their political, cultural and economic ideals. From a timid use of images as a complementary resource to the text, little by little the visual representation occupied a greater role in graphic media in each of the installments. This gave rise, over the years, to a change in the status of the image: changing its original condition as a secondary resource of the word, that is, transforming writing into a virtual appendix of it, virtually disclosing the illustration of a class in an enlightened attitude to be imitated by the majority. In this way, it could guarantee the expansion of its diffusion, beyond a traditionally elitist, select and conservative minority, although its message was loaded, most of the time, as an expression of erudite knowledge, self-defined as sensible and moralistic.

Said transfer, in favor of a growing use of the iconic resource over the text, was also the need to respond by the written media to a population -at the end of the 19th century- mostly illiterate. Precisely a lawful way to increase the print run over the number of printed copies was to challenge that public through the use of images. According to the data recorded at the time, a large part of Spanish citizenship lacked reading-writing skills, reaching percentages above 65% on average between men and women, bringing together a greater number among the latter.

Magazines or illustrated magazines were shown as an expression or manifestation of the bourgeoisie, with the intention of exhibiting themselves as an example to be imitated by the majority. In this sense, moderate ideas predominated in them. The model pursued was to establish itself as a reference to educate the people. The characteristics of these illustrated magazines were: the careful external presentation (important size dimensions, excellent printing quality, designed to be bound in order to form a collection), the use of illustrations and plates interspersed between the texts, an

accessible price for its acquisition and the body of permanent and special collaborators, as well as positive discrimination between owner and publisher of the publication.

In this way, in that founding period and until well into the first decades of the 20th century, the declared absence of women in all areas with responsibility for the information created for its dissemination was the norm for a large part of the press, with the exception of those publications that ideologically carried a strong identification with the parties of the left (socialists, communists) and anarchist tendencies, among others.

## Conclusions and suggestions

The approached analysis sought to expose some dimensions related to the impact caused by the dissemination and exposure -through the media- of certain models or stereotypes to emulate and deny (by omission) others. It was also possible to verify a certain marked trend -foundationally- from the end of the 19th century to the present day, in terms of an increasing predominance of the image over the written word, both in newspapers and magazines.

*“The bravest act for a woman is to think for herself and out loud.”* (Montijo, 2020, p. 50). This phrase by Gabrielle Chanel would reflect the evolutionary transition reflected in the time span that separates both publications: in the first, the oldest, as an aspiration of a woman ahead of her time; in the second, the current one, as a reflection of the social conquest achieved throughout the last century

Stereotypes are figures, images or ideas habitually accepted by a group or a society, it can also be said that it is the simplified conception of a character or personality. The dominant vision of sexual division is expressed in social discourses and popular narratives. In many societies, machismo and submission describe these stereotypes and roles of men and women. In their case, as a general rule, masculine virility is worshiped, characterized by aggressiveness, intransigence and arrogance. Submission is related to feminine spirituality, shyness and dependence on men. Regarding the models of gender constitution, in Spanish culture, the attitude of men towards women is expressed with brutality and precision in two proverbs: "The woman at home and with a broken leg!" and "between [female] saint and [male] saint, a wall of lime and stone!" (Fernández and Dio Bleichmar, 1992, p. 33).

As for the treatment of women as a merely decorative and aesthetic figure in the recent past, as reflected in the pages that make up the analyzed corpus, it has been displaced (although not completely eliminated) from current publications privileging their role in activities where intelligence and creativity are weighted to excel socially, in pursuit of a role that enhances their autonomy and self-determination, thus legitimizing their actions to achieve said conquest.

However, it is necessary to underline the paradoxical character that has been tried to map out the potential trajectories in relation to the universe of women, where it seems that the mandates for the feminine gender register some modifications in some of its dimensions and, at the same time, others are reinforced. In other words, the gender equality achieved in recent times -and reflected in the media-, from the active performance in the public sphere and the continuity of the struggle to expand it, end up trapping it in a game of tensions between the should be and can do.

In the field of subjectivities and social imaginaries, those ideas that materialize in iconic – mystified- images that persist in a story that speaks of the essence of the feminine still prevail, with some resistance. In this regard, the images and circumstances analyzed reveal the contradictions that arise from the installation of an ideology of gender equality from the political point of view, while the media continue to show/express against the current the demands that still weigh on the social mandates concerning women.

In this sense, the appearance of tensions and contradictions in the representations about women and the feminine only revealed a crisis situation, in light of which certainties and securities are weakened: conflicts that, ultimately, have not disappeared and persist (after the passage of several generations), mutating into other signs that herald new times to come.

Thus, an attempt has been made to find the keys that constitute the construction of meanings that prevail in a given space-time context without neglecting (and responding to) the question that originally guided this study.

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### Corpus of selected images

*The Spanish and American Illustration. Publication of plate engravings.*

Fig. 1 "The dressmaker official." (p. 656) 7/16/1872

Fig. 3 "The Nymphs of the Manzanares" (p. 404) 12/30/1897

Fig. 5 "Hidden letters at the theater" (p. 360) 15/XII/1905

Fig. 7 "Sardines in Gijón" (p. 137) 8/III/1912

Fig. 9 "The Christmas gift" (p. 369) 22/XII/1906

Fig. 11 "At Mass" (p. 252) 9/30/1901

Fig. 13 "Flirting at the fountain" (p. 88) 8/15/1898

*Telva. Photographs. Publication of the digital edition*

Fig. 2 "Inés Arrimadas and power" (3/26/2018)

Fig. 4 “Casual outdoors” (11/X/2015)

Fig. 6 “Spring Sauvage” (16/IX/2017)

Fig. 8 "A new generation of designers" (VI/6/2014)

Fig. 10 “Pablo Casado and his wife, in their most personal interview (18/III/2019)

Fig. 12 “Casa Telva” (24/VIII/2016)

Fig. 14 “Perfumes for men that are great for women” (28/XI/2918)

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