



Crafting the Female Subject: Narrative Innovation in the Short Fiction of Emilia Pardo Bazán

Susan McKenna

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Susan McKenna presents the innovative narratives of Emilia Pardo Bazán, Spain's preeminent nineteenth-century female writer, in *Crafting the Female Subject*. Known for her novels and essays, Pardo Bazán (1851-1921) also authored more than 580 short stories, whose literary experimentation and concern for female subjectivity strikingly redefine her corpus. Breaking with the traditional limitations of the short story, Pardo Bazán's themes and narrative structures investigate how women both challenged and conformed to prescribed gender roles in Spanish society.

Basing this study on twenty stories written between the years 1883 and 1914, McKenna demonstrates how Pardo Bazán deployed the idiom of ambivalence to explore positions on women, narrative, and the conventions that attempted to govern them both. The study centers on the narrative structures of beginning and endings, displaying the ways in which Pardo Bazán manipulated form to create an authentic female subject.

The book also embeds and resituates Pardo Bazán's short fiction within the canon of contemporary short-story theory. Several chapters examine narratological strategies of resistance that accent her long and often controversial career. Through discursive techniques that developed over time, these stories simultaneously contest and exploit the limitations of formal narrative design. At the forefront of an evolving genre, Pardo Bazán ruptured the conventions of short fiction to delimit a new cultural space for female subjectivity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Susan M. McKenna is assistant professor of Spanish at the University of Delaware.

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