Marañón, Intersexuality and the Biological Construction of Gender in 1920s Spain

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In an important essay, Mary Nash explored the ways in which 'biological essentialism' replaced religious criteria as the key component in the construction of gender differentiation in early twentieth-century Spain. There she notes that even though the biological model retained the traditional role of women as mothers and childbearers, the value neutrality of this role and the premise of social equality between the sexes was, somewhat paradoxically, 'liberating for many Spanish women'.

Gregorio Marañón, prominent in the sexual reform movement in Spain of the 1920s and early 1930s, was the founder of endocrinology as a discipline in Spain and was both a theoretician and a clinician. As a theoretician his métier was the endocrinology of sex and sexual differentiation; because of his professional prominence and high public visibility, he became the inevitable reference point for all such discussions. His clinical practice was marked by the fact that it took place in the heyday of hormonal determinism. There were broad areas of overlap between the theoretical and practical aspects of his professional life.

The sexual reform movement in 1920s Spain was a loose coalition of progressive physicians, lawyers, and politicians who promoted a variety of reformist causes including sex education, the decriminalization of prostitution, divorce, and a soft version of eugenics aimed at public health measures to improve the lot of women and children. Because of his professional interests Marañón was an outstanding member of this group. He spoke tirelessly in a broad spectrum of available platforms,

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particularly on issues of women's health, the equality of women and men, and the need to spare women the injustices typically imposed upon them by men. As part of his advocacy of sexual reform, he explicitly attacked both the 'double standard' and that quintessentially Spanish masculine trait, Donjuanism. He supported divorce and contraception, both anathema to traditional Catholic mores, yet was generally conservative in his social and political views. Hildegarth Rodríguez, a radical feminist leader of the Spanish sexual reform movement in the 1930s, a socialist far to the left of the conservative liberal Marañón, had nevertheless dedicated her first book *El problema sexual tratado por una mujer española* (Madrid: Morata, 1931) to Marañón, for his role as a precursor of the younger generation. She was later to serve as secretary of the Spanish chapter of the World League for Sexual Reform, under Marañón's presidency. Why would Hildegarth have viewed Marañón favorably? Marañón, after all, was a biological determinist who believed that sex roles, as indeed all secondary sexual characteristics, whether biological or psychological, were determined by hormonal make-up. He therefore perpetuated the notion of woman as, first, an adolescent form of man (a standard quasi-Darwinian position) and, second, a being designed for passive and maternal roles, not active or political ones. It has long been fashionable to deride Marañón as a reactionary, particularly with regard to his views on women, but—as I shall here argue—Marañón's political and social ideology must be, to a degree, separated from his medical views, which were, as he himself said, well within the logic of the biology of the times.

4 For example, Marañón lectured on sex to a female audience at the Escuela de Estudios Superiores del Magisterio (El Sol, 22 January 1926); he was announced as lecturer in a series at the Psychotechnical Institute (ibid., 17 February 1932); he lectured at the First Spanish Eugenics Congress (ibid., 18 April 1933).

5 See Alejandra Ferrándiz and Enrique Lafuente, 'El pensamiento eugénico de Marañón', Asclepio, 51 (1999), 133-148, which is a useful guide to Marañón's programme (e.g., birth control, p. 137; the immorality of unlimited procreation, p. 144).

6 Hildegarth Rodríguez, *El problema sexual tratado por una mujer española* (Madrid: Morata, 1931): 'avanzada de generación juvenil'.

7 By Darwinian, I mean an idea espoused by Darwin, such as sexual selection. By quasi-Darwinian I mean ideas like recapitulation, associated in the tradition of European biology with Darwin, but in fact more comprehensively developed by other biologists, in this case Ernst Haeckel. On Marañón's relationship to Freud's ideas, see Pedro Lain Entralgo, 'Vida, obra y persona de Gregorio Marañón', in Marañón, *Obras completas* (hereinafter cited as OC; when page numbers are provided in the text, the references are to this edition), 10 vols. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1968-77), I, vii-cxxv (i-vi-vii); Thomas F. Glick, 'The Naked Science: Psychoanalysis in Spain, 1914-1948', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 24 (1982), 533-571 (pp. 552-554); and Francisco Pérez Gutiérrez, *La juventud de Marañón* (Madrid: Trotta, 1997), 176-183.
The Darwinian Context of Marañón’s Biology

Because of his interest in gender and his insistence on the primacy of sex in the human psyche, Marañón was widely perceived to have been influenced by Freud and/or to have supported Freudian positions—something he always denied. Both his personal ambivalence in relation to Freud and the difficulty that scholars have had in placing him with respect to Freud can I think be resolved in the following way: I will argue that Marañón tapped into a core of Darwinian biology and that confusion regarding his relationship with Freud is owing to his having tapped into the same core of biology that provided the scientific context for Freud himself. To the extent that Marañón was a ‘Freudian’ it was because he and Freud shared similar Darwinian and quasi-Darwinian outlooks.

Marañón’s ambivalent relationship (and partial dependence) on Freud has been the topic of ample discussion. I will not pursue that issue here. However, Marañón liked to talk about the ‘logic of biology’, and the logic of biology in his times was still a Darwinian (in the broadest sense) logic. And so, I suggest that his views of gender were highly conditioned by a few key elements of Darwinian biology, indeed a fountain from which Freud also imbibed.

In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin several times introduces the notion that among birds there was a common pattern where the young of both sexes resemble the adult female. This Darwinian observation (even though mainly about birds) appears in a number of late nineteenth-century observations of women. Thus, the French anthropologist Paul Topinard located the adult female cranium in a position intermediate between those of children and adult males. Edward Drinker Cope, the great American neo-Lamarckian pioneer of the paleontology of dinosaurs, noted that young men experienced a phase of feminine emotionality. On this line of argument, Cynthia Russet comments that, ‘In identifying woman as a kind of immature man the logic of recapitulation suggested that the fully evolved human male himself passed through a female stage of development’. In a similar manner, G. Stanley Hall identified a ‘feminized stage of psychic development’ through which adolescent boys passed, while the British anthropologist James McGrigor Allan noted that the ‘woman is a kind of adult child’.

Recapitulation or the biogenetic law (‘ontogeny recapitulates phylology’) is the notion that the embryo of any animal recapitulates in its

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10 Ibid., 55.
development the entire history of the animal kingdom. By extension, Freud famously thought that children recapitulated the phylogeny of the species, resembling their own human ancestors and, at the same time, contemporary primitive peoples who were supposed to have been at the same phyletic level.¹¹ Women's bodies and, by extension, their souls or psyches were, in such constructions, phyletically older and more primitive, that is, less evolved, than those of men.¹² Marañón fell squarely within this tradition and was amply acquainted with the relevant literature, both biological and psychological.¹³

Marañón and Women

There is reason for considering that Marañón was a hero, and a genuine hero, among middle-class Spanish women generally and a great number of working-class women, because of his advocacy of greatly stepped-up health care for women, particularly mothers, and children in a society still governed by the norms of what Freud called “civilized morality,” that denied both pertinent information and treatment to women.¹⁴ In advocating vastly increasing medical assistance to women, Marañón formulated what became a well-publicized ‘law’ to demonstrate how heavy child-bearing actually worked against the production of healthy offspring who would survive into maturity. The mortality of a woman’s children is in direct relation to her fecundity. Thus of women with one child only, 25% will lose that child; of women with two children, 28.4% will lose a child; of women with seven children, 35.4% will lose a child; and of women with ten children, 42.7% will lose a child. This law, enunciated in his influential Ensayos sobre la vida sexual (1926) established Marañón as the champion of multiparas. Through medical

¹² Gould, Ontogeny and Phylogeny, 130.
¹³ For example, Marañón was familiar with Darwin’s arguments on the differential morphology of males and females from the French edition of The Descent of Man: La Descendence de l’homme et la selection sexuelle (Paris: Reinwald, 1881) (OC, VIII, 518); and on the tendency of older females (of many species) to acquire male morphological characteristics (OC, VIII, 656, 658) from the French translation of Darwin’s Variation of Plants and Animals Under Domestication (Variation des animaux et des plantes, no ed. cited).
¹⁴ Marañón’s popular acclaim has not been adequately documented. But see, for example, responses to El Sol’s survey on the problems of youth, where Marañón’s great influence is obvious, particularly in the issues of late December 1929, and continuing on throughout January and into early February 1930.
assistance women could be protected from the burden and physical risk of too many pregnancies.  

Marañón’s pronatalist positions (maternidad consciente); his relentless emphasis on the medical, psychological and social problems of multiparas, his campaign for increased medical services to the poor, particularly women, all contributed to the construction of his public persona as defender of women and the poor, as did his great prestige internationally in endocrinological medicine. Marañón was an internationally recognized expert in the 1920s on the climacteric, the period of life when sexual activity and fertility are in decline, for men and women alike.

Marañón’s views on gender were carefully laid out in his 1929 treatise on The Intersexual States in the Human Species. For Marañón, full sexual differentiation in any species was a rarity and all sexual differentiation has its origin ‘en una zona previa de bisexualidad’ (508). Marañón recognized the existence of infantile sexuality and its ‘carácter indiferenciado’ (543). While noting that although Freud was right about infantile sexuality, he considered that he probably overvalued it; Marañón stressed that what is undifferentiated about infantile libido is the choice of object (544). In the mature female (again following Freud), he views the libido as less differentiated than that of men and less intense. Women are polymorphic with respect to object and are similar to children in that respect. The repeated comparison of the adult psyche with that of children (in Marañón, as in Freud) provided a referent in recapitulation for arguing emotional immaturity as a structural feature of the feminine psyche.

In any case, Marañón considered the boundaries of sexual differentiation to be blurred to the point where ‘cada ser humano lleva implícito en su naturaleza un gemelo del sexo contrario, y que cada uno de los dos evoluciona con arreglo a la pauta expuesta para una y otra sexualidad’ (673).


16 On pronatalism, see N. L. Stepan, The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender and Nation in Latin America (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 76-84. Pronatalism included everything contributing to the rearing of healthy children according to modern medical principles.

17 Gregorio Marañón, Los estados intersexuales de la especie humana (Madrid: Morata, 1929). The second edition (1930) was titled La evolución de la sexualidad y los estados intersexuales, and the French edition of 1931 (Paris: Gallimard) bore this title. I have used the text of the second edition as it appears in Marañón, OC, VIII, 499-710.

18 Evolución de la sexualidad, 545. Here, as in many such references, Marañón cites no specific passage in Freud, but rather the Obras completas, generally.
**Secondary Sexual Characteristics**

According to Marañón, secondary sexual characteristics included both physical and ‘functional’ traits including some of personality. Thus women display ‘instinto de la maternidad y cuidado directo de la prole’, while the corresponding character of men is ‘instinto de la actuación social (defensa y auge del hogar)’. Women display ‘mayor sensibilidad a los estímulos afectivos y menos disposición para la labor abstracta y creadora’, while men are endowed with ‘menos sensibilidad a los estímulos afectivos y mayor capacidad para la abstracción mental y la creación’.

In a discussion of ‘viriloid’ and ‘feminoid’ intersexuality, Marañón lays out his famous accounts of two normal instances of intersexuality in all men and women. According to his hypothesis, males pass through a feminoid crisis in adolescence, while females undergo a viriloid crisis associated with menopause. By crisis, Marañón means a turning point, whether for better or for worse. As I have noted, the feminine aspect of male adolescence is a phase of development fully in consonance with the logic of recapitulation as understood by Darwinian biologists of the late nineteenth century. The viriloid crisis of women (‘virilización involutiva’) is at base a hormonal phenomenon. However, its biological rationale is also recapitulationist. It is a ‘revivescencia de los caracteres viriles que originariamente lleva implícito el organismo femenino’, owing to the bisexuality of all organisms.

Marañón’s discussion of homosexuality follows logically from his construal of the modal sexual development of male and female.

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19 Chart in Marañón, OC, VIII, 513.

20 In the title to his book on climacteric, *La edad crítica*, Marañón use crítica in its etymological sense, as the adjectival form of the noun, crisis. The Greek-derived suffix -oide is frequent in medical usage and, as a cultism, also in popular Spanish usage. See Jacques de Bruyne, 'Antolojoide', Boletín de la Real Academia Española, 69 (1989), 91-130 (pp. 99-100) on feminoide, p. 101 on viriloide, and p. 103 on eunucoide. Besides standard lexicographical sources, the author uses a variety of literary works, such as novels, but not medical literature. In relation to ‘eunuchoid’ (Sp. eunucoide), this was a term popularized by E. Kretschmer, *Körperbau und Charakter*, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Springer, 1923) and in Spain by Marañón, whom he greatly influenced. One of de Bruyne’s sources for feminoide is a passage from Enrique Jardiel Poncela (1901-1952), *Pero...¿Hubo alguna vez once mil vírgenes?* (1931), in Obras completas, 5th ed. (Barcelona: Abr, 1969), IV, 817: ‘Don Juan [...] no es un tipo feminoide, porque sabe mover las manos y accionar sus discursos; ni es viriloide, porque disfruta de abundante cabellera’. Given the cultural dynamics of the epoch in which this passage was written, it can only reflect a style of talking about secondary sexual characteristics that Marañón popularized.

The Intersexual Theory of Homosexuality

Marañón begins his discussion by noting that Spain was one of the first European countries to have decriminalized homosexuality: 'Debemos enorgullecernos de ello', he wrote, 'pues no sólo se trata [la criminalización] de una insensatez en el terreno científico, sino, socialmente—una táctica a más de inhumana, notoriamente contraproducente, dada la peculiar psicología de los homosexuales'.

Marañón's views were based not only on the clinical experience of himself and others but also on a series of organotherapeutic experiments (to which I will return) designed to test the effect of sex hormones on libido and on behavior generally. In this, he was following Magnus Hirschfeld, Havelock Ellis, Iwan Bloch, and, among physiologists and endocrinologists, Gley, Steinach, Lipschütz and others.

His approach was based on four distinct considerations: first, libido originates in sex hormones. It followed, therefore, that if it was possible to alter the hormones, it would be possible to 'invert' the behavior. Second, sex hormones themselves display inter- or bisexuality. He mentions, in this regard, evidence emerging in the 1920s that sex hormones were not sexually specific and were found in both sexes. This phenomenon in itself lent powerful support to Marañón's notions of intersexuality. Third, certain therapies which involved testicular transplants seem to have arrested homosexuality in men, although the results were by no means clear. Marañón, as we will presently see, participated in such surgical procedures himself. Fourth, there is an important distinction between inversion of libido and inversion of somatic characters (such as the absence of expected male secondary sexual characteristics in males, or the presence of female ones), in that the two are not necessarily linked and hence an explanation of homosexuality needed to

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22 Evolución de la sexualidad, 607-608. In a long footnote on comparative criminal law regarding homosexuality, Marañón says he cannot ascertain when homosexuality was criminalized. The sanction was still applied in the eighteenth century, but there was no concrete punishment of homosexuality in the old (post-Napoleonic) penal code (p. 607 n. 1). In his 1929 review of A. Hernández-Cata's novel, El ángel de Sodoma, Marañón reiterates that the homosexual 'no es un enfermo, ni un monstruo, ni tampoco un delincuente'. Rather he is 'simplemente el hijo de un extravío evolutivo' ('El problema de la intersexualidad', OC, I, 457-464, [p. 461]).

23 Magnus Hirschfeld was president of the World League for Sexual Reform. He was a source for both Freud's notions on homosexuality and those of Marañón. In Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality [1905] (New York: Basic Books, 1962), p. 120, Freud cites his article, 'Die objective Diagnose der Homosexualität, Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen, 1 (1899). Hirschfeld recognized a type of homosexual as 'sexual intermediates'.

24 On Ellis' connection of sexual inversion to the evolutionary history of bisexuality, see Frank Sulloway, Freud: Biologist of the Mind (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 307.

25 On Bloch's role and Freud's reading of his Beiträge, see Sulloway, Freud, 311, 317.

be sought in ‘pequeños signos de la intersexualidad’, and not in large ones (610-611).

Marañón considered male homosexual gestures to be stylized versions of female gestures, but curiously saw female homosexual gestures (expressed in their walk and bearing) as fully virile (613). In his clinical experience, approximately two-thirds of homosexual men present some physical signs of inversion (e.g. “feminoid disposition of the teeth”), with a lower incidence in women (611, 614). These estimates, he points out, tell us nothing about the genesis of homosexuality; this he presumes, following Hirschfeld, to have something to do with puberty (614 n.1). If hormonal bisexuality is a pre-condition of homosexuality, hormonal factors alone are nevertheless insufficient for its production (615).

In Marañón’s view, the sexuality of homosexuals is less like that of females than that of children, and the ‘objeto erótico de casi todos los homosexuales es[... ] no tanto el hombre como arquetipo viril [... ] sino el efebo, el adolescente antes de la completa determinación sexual’.27

The sexual impulse of a male homosexual is active, aggressive, like that of...

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27 Evolución de la sexualidad, 620. In a note, he refers to Freud’s view that homosexuals at base are seeking women as sex objects. This is a reference, without citation, to Freud, Three Studies on the Theory of Sexuality, 10: ‘It is clear that in Greece, where the most masculine men were numbered among the inverts, what excited a man’s love was not the masculine character of a boy, but his physical resemblance to a woman as well as his feminine mental qualities[...]. As soon as the boy became a man he ceased to be a sexual object for men and himself, perhaps, became a lover of boys. In this instance, therefore[...] the sexual object is not someone of the same sex but someone who combines the characters of both sexes[...]. Thus the sexual object is a kind of reflection of the subject’s own bisexual nature’ [Freud’s emphasis]. Some of these very themes, interestingly enough, have surfaced in the recent debate over the paedophilia of priests. In a review of Michel Dorai Don’t Tell: The Sexual Abuse of Boys (McGill: Queen’s University Press, 2002), Garry Wills notes: ‘The current pope encourages this fixation on the mother by telling priests that they should think of their mothers as the Virgin Mary—they are ‘offered up’ by their mothers, just as Jesus was offered up by Mary. This idealization of the mother-as-Mary may have something to do with the taboo some priests (not all, obviously) feel against touching women, making boys an apparently safe way of avoiding that taboo. Dorais argues that fear of dealing with women makes some pedophiles seek a substitute in the “feminine” aspects of boys—inducing more guilt in the boy, who suspects himself of being targeted because he is not a “real boy”. The matter is not helped by the way boys have been dressed in skirts (as altar boys or choir boys) to enter the sanctuary with the priest, the pair of them set off in their special insignia. The effeminate, in the eyes of the priest-pedophile, is not a female, so he is not breaking his vow of celibacy. The partner he chooses is doubly unmarriageable, since he is not only below the legal age for marriage but of the wrong gender as well. Such men have not betrayed their mothers by having relations with a rival woman. The promise was kept: she did not lose her son’. See Gary Wills, ‘Scandal’, New York Review of Books, 23 May 2002, online ed. (www.nybooks.com). Wills’s logic here is related to the same premises as Marañón’s views on homosexuality; both refer back to the notion of woman and as an undeveloped, or adolescent, man. Marañón might have argued that these priests display a partial inversion, having failed to overcome the feminoid crisis of adolescence, that is, to suppress the feminine part of their nature.
of all men; it is even hyperactive (620).\textsuperscript{28} While such a construction might strike us as contradictory in that Marañón also saw women as being akin to adolescent males, in recapitulationist terms, he was merely locating the phyletic level of each. For Marañón both homosexuals and women were phyletic equivalents of adolescent males.\textsuperscript{29}

In early childhood, Marañón notes, mothers prolong feminine influence unduly. Add to that cultural problem Freud’s finding of the primary fixation of children on mothers and you have a combination of factors favorable to homosexuality.\textsuperscript{30} One way to avoid that outcome, he says, is by instilling ‘un ambiente rectamente viril en la niñez’.\textsuperscript{31} Adolescent boys may experience an inversion of libido, Marañón continues, as when they exhibit terrible shyness towards the opposite sex and display libidinal passivity generally, making them susceptible to advances of older men (649). An older man who is attracted to an adolescent boy, however, is playing out a heterosexual scenario precisely because of the femininity of adolescent boys. Clinical evidence is mixed: there are cases of physical intersexuality without any inversion of libido.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{28} Marañón relates this trait to the fictional figure and socio-cultural archetype Don Juan whom he characterizes as a ‘hypergenital’ individual: see his essay, ‘La psicopatología de Don Juan’, \textit{OC}, III, 89. This state constitutes a ‘partial inversion’ (\textit{ibid.}, 90), because total dedication to love is a female secondary sexual characteristic (‘Notas para la biología de Don Juan’, \textit{OC}, IV, 84). See also Sarah Wright’s article in this issue.

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Evolución de la sexualidad}, 536 (the development of the human female skeleton, compared to that of the male, “queda netamente detenida al lado del esqueleto adolescente”); 538 (when a woman displays “un brote de vello varonil” almost always displays “no la modalidad viril madura, sino la juvenil”). Such features appear systematically in the comparative morphology of men and women: “Esta idea, ya emitida con todo su sentido transcendente por Darwin, es sólo citada a la ligera por la mayoría de los biólogos, salvo excepciones, como la importante de nuestro compatriota Nóvoa Santos” (538).

\textsuperscript{30} Marañón’s reference to “la fijación primaria de la libido en la madre...que señala Freud” is a general one, seemingly a condensed version of ideas found in the third of Freud’s \textit{Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality} (“Transformations of Puberty”), cited elsewhere by Marañón in the same chapter.

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Evolución de la sexualidad}, 626. Here again no specific reference is given for Freud, whose views on these matters were general knowledge to Marañón’s readership, or easily accessible without any further guide. 16 volumes of Freud’s \textit{Obras completas} were published in Spain between 1922 and 1934.

\textsuperscript{32} Marañón, \textit{OC}, VIII, 613. Roberto Nóvoa Santos, who allowed for a greater psychological role in the etiology of homosexuality than Marañón was prepared to admit, declared that, inasmuch as the genital organs are completely normal in the vast majority of homosexuals, ‘tenemos que admitir a fortiori que la perversión del sentido genésico se reduce a una anomalía en la esfera psicossexual, a una diferenciación psicossexual imperfecta o aberrante’ (\textit{Manual de Patología General}, 2 vols. (Santiago de Compostela, El Eco de Santiago, 1930), II, 781. For Nóvoa, “Dentro de la doctrina de Freud se explican satisfactoriamente todas las versiones sexuales estudiadas hasta aquí” (\textit{Manual}, II, 784). By ‘doctrina’, he means Freudian psychology generally.

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Stifling the Double

From the preceding discussion it is evident that Marañón situated his biological concept of intersexuality, radical to the extent that he stressed its normality and universality, within a more traditional bio-social essentialism. To get these two disparate layers to match up, he enlisted an unusual ally, repression. Like the psychology of Freud, that proposed by Marañón was a psychology of repression. But Marañón stands Freudian repression on its head: he presents it not as a danger that can induce (or serve the ends of) neurosis, but as a duty. Marañón recognizes that society demands repression and so the duty to apply traditional sanctions to sex roles is transferred from the social world to the psyche—the superego writ large indeed, and marshaled to served a distinctly un-Freudian goal.

As I have indicated above, Marañón’s views of intersexuality rested partly on Darwin’s notion that the female of a species tends to resemble the immature male of the same species. Another way of looking at sexual differentiation in a biogenetic context was to study it in embryos. For Freud (who derived this line of thought from Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s Psychopathia Sexualis) the undifferentiated bisexuality that all embryos undergo in the course of the individual’s development constituted ‘an ontogenetic struggle...with one sex conquering the other under normal monosexual (adult) circumstances.’ He concluded that inverted sexuality was ‘a developmental disturbance in the present state of monosexual evolution’ and not an atavism, as Lombroso and others proposed.

As Darwin had proposed, ontogeny required that primitive bisexuality resolve into one gender or another, just as phylogenetically hermaphroditism had given rise to sexual dimorphism. However, the theory of

33 See, e.g., Freud, Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, 30, 103-104.
34 For Freud, too, the line between male and female was unstable: hysterical neurosis in women resulted from that ‘wave of repression which, by doing away with her masculine sexuality, allows the woman to emerge’ (Freud, ‘Some General Remarks on Hysterical Attacks, in On Psychopathology (London: Penguin, 1993), 95-102 (p. 102, cited by Paul Julian Smith, The Theatre of García Lorca: Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 36.
35 As summarized by Sulloway, Freud, 294. In Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality Freud provides a history of bisexuality as an explanation of inversion, a notion (he says) that began with the endocrinologist, E. Gley (p. 9 n. 1). Freud also gives a list of authors between 1884 and 1906 who argue on the basis of bisexuality. Gley’s influence on Marañón was enormous. See Glick, ‘On the Diffusion of a New Specialty: Marañón and the “Crisis” of Endocrinology’, passim.
36 The locus classicus for the evolutionary origins of sexual dimorphism in hermaphroditism is the passage on complemental males from A Monograph of the Sub-Class Cirripedia (1851), reproduced in Darwin on Evolution: The Development of the Theory of Natural Selection (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996), ed. Thomas F. Glick and David Kohn, 119-126. Freud, who began his career as studying the neurology of invertebrates under the direction of the Darwinian Ernst Brücke, had studied the evolutionary relationship of the spinal nerves Petromyzon planeri, a bisexual relative of the amphioxus, to the higher vertebrates (Sulloway, Freud, 160).
recapitulation required that all individuals, male and female, carry within themselves a double of the opposite sex, in a biogenetic reminiscence of primitive and ancestral hermaphrodimism. Marañón declared that people who believed they could improve their spirit by isolating themselves from the opposite sex were deluded, and that isolation no puede liberarnos de la compañía de una representación de ese otro sexo que hoy sabemos que va con nosotros, infiltrado en nuestro propio ser, y, como un duende invisible, tiende a cada paso trampas a la rectitud de nuestro instinto. Cada hombre [lleva] un fantasma de mujer, no en la imaginación, que entonces tal vez sería fácil expulsarle, sino circulando en su sangre; y cada mujer un fantasma más o menos concreto, de hombre. Y esa mujer o ese hombre en esbozo, y no los de fuera, los de carne y hueso, son los que pueden conducirnos al dolor y al pecado... Esta noción del otro sexo dentro de nosotros mismos... es una conquista trascendental de la ciencia moderna. 37

In order to mature, however, Marañón held that the individual must suffocate the phantom of the other sex in him/herself. 38 Homosexuals were unable to take that step because their ontogenic development had been impeded by some (usually) exogenous factor, which resulted in unresolved gender segregation in those individuals. Evolution, viewed always in the context of recapitulation, was a complete explanatory system for Marañón: it explained the origins of intersexuality (via the biogenetic law) while also allowing him to predict its end. His view was that the evolutionary trend was towards a more categorical segregation of the sexes and intersexual types (including homosexuals) were increasingly rarer in human populations.

Freud's discussion of 'inversion' has a parallel recapitulationist bias, although centered more narrowly, perhaps, on choice of sexual object. For Freud such 'choice' exercised by homosexuals falls within the range of human behavior:

Psycho-analytic research is most decidedly opposed to any attempt at separating off homosexuals from the rest of mankind as a group of a special character. By studying sexual excitations other than those that are manifestly displayed, it has found that all human beings are capable of making a homosexual object-choice and have in fact made one in their unconscious. Indeed, libidinal attachments to persons of the same sex play no less a part as factors in normal mental life, and a greater part as a motive force for illness, than do similar attachments to the opposite sex. On the contrary, psycho-analysis considers that a choice of an object independently of its sex — freedom to range equally over

37 Marañón, Tres ensayos sobre la vida sexual[1926], OC VIII, 325.
38 Tres ensayos, p. 180.

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males and female objects—*as it is found in early childhood, in primitive states of society and early periods of history, is the original basis from which, as a result of restriction in one direction or the other, both the normal and the inverted types develop.*

Recapitulation gave Freud (as it had Marañón) an explanation of the range of object choice and a reason for asserting the naturalness (if not the normality) of inversion.

### Organotherapeutic Surgical Procedures in Spain during the 1920s

At the same time as Marañón was developing his theory of intersexuality, he was testing some of its hypotheses clinically. The rejuvenation procedures which enjoyed a wide vogue in Spain in the 1920s were referred to in Spanish medical literature as 'Steinach's operation' (ligature or section of the *vas deferens* in order to provoke the proliferation of interstitial tissue, thus augmenting production of gonadal hormones) and 'Voronoff's operation' (testicular transplants from ape to man). Eugen Steinach's rejuvenating procedures, first reports of which were published in 1919, were known in Spain within a year. Impetus to rejuvenation therapy was provided by the experiments of León Cardenal, professor of surgery at the University of Madrid, between 1921 and 1923. Cardenal had first repeated most of Steinach's original experiments with rats and had achieved similar results. His view that vasoligature could help delay the onset of old age was supported by the endocrinological concepts of his colleague Marañón, who promoted the notion that the genital gland predominates in the final endocrine crisis, that of old age, although this was not to deny the functional correlation of the entire endocrine system. The universal emotion which had greeted the operations of Steinach, Voronoff, and Cardenal—Marañón asserted—indicated that the physiological importance of such procedures could not be

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40 A. Oller, 'El rejuvenecimiento (Las operaciones de Steinach para prolongar la vida)', *El Sol*, 2 November 1920; José M. Rosell, 'Las conquistas actuales y los nuevos horizontes en el problema del rejuvenecimiento y prolongación de la vida', *Ibérica*, 16 (1921), 104-108 (pp.124-128). Rosell had observed the procedure first-hand in Germany and Austria and by 1923 had performed the operation himself in Barcelona. See J. Stutzin, '¿Qué puede decirse de los resultados del método Steinach para obtener el rejuvenecimiento?', *El Siglo Médico*, 72 (1923), 175. Cardenal reported in 1923 that his earliest successful operation dated back to January 1921 ('Ensayos de rejuvenecimiento', *El Siglo Médico*, 72 (1923), 676-680, 698-701, 723-726, 749-752, 768-771, 794-797 [769]). Freud himself was famously a recipient of the Steinach procedure (in 1923) which, he hoped, would increase his ability to fight off cancer. See Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988).
41 Cardenal, 'Ensayos de rejuvenecimiento', 725.
42 Cardenal, 'Ensayos de rejuvenecimiento', 724.
doubted, since they appeared to confirm a causal link between the cessation of the hormonal activity of the genital glands and such consequences as diminished sexual activity and the loss of vitality.\textsuperscript{43}

While reading the reports of experiments on human subjects carried out by Lichtenstern and other associates of Steinach, Cardenal noted that those who reported failures never had a single success, and vice versa. Cardenal reasoned that either some surgeons used correct techniques and others did not, or else that the surgeons in question had gone into the operating room with preconceived notions as to what the results would be. Further, there was the possible effect of suggestion if the patient had prior knowledge of the procedure (a cavil raised by all who discussed organotherapy). To obviate the effects of autosuggestion Cardenal informed none of his fifty-eight patients that he was going to use the procedure on them (they were operated on for other symptoms, typically hernia), nor were his assisting personnel informed. Because of his caution and skepticism, Cardenal's results were deemed significant by Steinach himself.\textsuperscript{44}

In three groups of patients (the precociously senile, those in the period of the climacteric, and those in advanced old age) Cardenal obtained some positive results. When the ligature was applied on both sides there was an increase in weight and in muscle strength in the youngest two groups. Most of these patients were rural laborers, a distinctive social group that was singled out consistently in Spanish endocrinological literature as being subject—men and women alike—to premature old age.\textsuperscript{45}

It is a sign of Cardenal's clinical rigor that he had some of these patients tracked, but because most were illiterate peasants it was difficult in many cases to achieve complete follow-up data (in some cases requiring the assistance of the parish priests to secure the data). Cardenal nonetheless thought his results sound enough to embody them in his discourse of reception in the Royal Academy of Medicine in 1923. The official response to this was delivered by Marañón.\textsuperscript{46}

The procedure of Serge Voronoff made its appearance in Spain somewhat later, the chief figures involved again being Cardenal and Marañón. On February 24, 1926, in a marathon session of three endocrinological transplants, they performed an adrenal transplant on a patient with Addison's disease and a pituitary transplant. Then Cardenal made tes-

\textsuperscript{43} Cardenal, 'Ensayos de rejuvenecimiento', 243.
\textsuperscript{44} Eugen Steinach, \textit{Sex and Life: Forty Years of Biological and Medical Experiments} (New York: Viking Press, 1940), 179-180.
\textsuperscript{45} 'Ensayos de rejuvenecimiento', 751-752.
\textsuperscript{46} Marañón, 'Comentarios sobre la vejez' [1925], \textit{OC}, III, 239-246.
ticular grafts on an impotent man and a eunuchoid adolescent.\textsuperscript{47} Commenting on these operations in \textit{El Sol} several weeks later, the pathologist José Madinaveitia remarked that the public was not interested in what were the significant operations of the day, the adrenal and pituitary transplants, but only in whether virility could be restored to an impotent man. Although he praised Cardenal's rigor, Madinaveitia cautioned that only a minority of medical opinion was convinced by Voronoff, in spite of his 'music-hall honours'.\textsuperscript{48}

Rejuvenation was a double-edged blade for Marañón: if the experiments were successful he could use the results to legitimize his developing theoretical position, while the popular support for such research provided a powerful impetus towards the institutionalization of clinical endocrinology as a new discipline in Spanish medicine. The vogue of rejuvenation—in Spain as well as everywhere else—had passed by 1930.\textsuperscript{49}

In an obituary of Voronoff written two decades later, Marañón reflected that Voronoff's therapy, although on the margin of the medical ideas of his time, was still 'ciertamente, dentro de la lógica de la Biología'.\textsuperscript{50}

Marañón had ordered the Voronoff procedure on three of his homosexual patients, which were carried out by an associate on his staff. In the first case, a 'homosexual típico con proporciones eunocoides, la tendencia irresistible de su libido hacia el hombre se modificó completamente después de la operación y se mantenía normal a los seis meses'. The second case was similar, except that the subject had been lacking in libido: 'A los tres meses de la operación su libido había aumentado, pero en el mismo sentido homosexual'. The third case was another eunuchoid adult without libido who was observed with a 'normal' libido until he lost contact with Marañón's clinic two months later.\textsuperscript{51}


48 José Madinaveitia, 'Las operaciones de injertos glandulares en la Facultad de Medicina', \textit{El Sol}, 1 March 1926.

49 The 1919 edition of Marañón's \textit{La edad crítica} had no discussion of rejuvenation. The 1929 English edition (\textit{The Climacteric (The Critical Age)} [St Louis, C. V. Mosby]) had an entire section on rejuvenation that would not appear in the 1936 Spanish edition (text in \textit{OC}, VIII, 11-246 ). It is evident that by his 1927 essay 'El deber de las edades' (\textit{OC}, III, 131-155 [ p. 152 n. 2]) Marañón had become much less committed to the idea of rejuvenation: 'Precisamente acabamos de vivir una serie de años en los que el afán [...] de huir de la vejez ha tomado caracteres pseudocientíficos, y ha llegado a pensarse que el rejuvenecimiento era much más fácil de lo que presumía Fausto. Pero esta cómica historia de los injertos ha pasado ya'. See also David Hamilton, \textit{The Monkey Gland Affair} (London: Chatto & Windus, 1986), 120-121.

50 Marañón, 'El maestro Voronoff' (1951), \textit{OC}, IV, 831.

51 Marañón, \textit{Evolución de la sexualidad}, \textit{OC}, VIII, 610 n. 3.
dence that in the early 1920s Marañón had thought of homosexuality as a kind of deficiency disease which might be cured by increasing the supply of hormones. The mixed results of the procedures, however, might well have inclined him to pursue further work in the relatively safer territory of biogenetic theory.

Freud (in 1920) had also commented on the hormonal approach and reached similar conclusions:

During the past few years work carried out by biologists, notably by Steinach, has thrown a strong light on the organic determinants of homoeroticism and of sexual characters in general. By carrying out experimental castration and subsequently grafting the sex-glands of the opposite sex, it was possible in the case of various species of mammals to transform a male into a female and vice versa. The transformation affected more or less completely both the somatic sexual characters and the psychosexual attitude (that is, both subject and object eroticism. [He goes on to describe sex transformation operations on human subjects.] It would be unjustifiable to assert that these interesting experiments put the theory of inversion on a new basis, and it would be hasty to expect them to offer a universal means of 'curing' homosexuality. Fliess has rightly insisted that these experimental findings do not invalidate the theory of the general bisexual disposition of the higher animals. On the contrary, it seems to me probable that further research of a similar kind will produce a direct confirmation of this presumption of bisexuality.52

This presumption was one which Freud, of course, shared with Marañón. The latter, however, had a much more detailed and biologically grounded approach than that of Freud, whose focus was more on the affective dynamics of 'inversion'.

Conclusions

Marañón's doctrine of intersexuality represented a break with the more common paradigm of biological determinism which had a far more rigid view of gender differentiation. It promoted acceptance and understanding, if not tolerance, of various forms of inversion (particularly homosexuality and the sexuality of professional women, who were ostensibly playing a male role). He notably widened the bounds of the 'normal' and shrunk the range of 'perversions', although this was within a socio-psychological system whose 'gender stereotypes are perversely unstable'.53

53 Smith, *Garc(a Lorca*, p. 29.
It is through this sense of instability or ambiguity that we can perhaps explain Marañón’s appeal to virtually all social sectors. Held in check, as he was, by a variety of social and cultural constraints, Marañón consistently narrowed or ignored the social implications of his doctrine. His doctrine of the feminoid crisis of male adolescence could only have widened the boundaries of traditional sex roles. Here he was consistent with and influenced by Freud’s approach. Freud had also pushed sexual reform in a way congenial to the leadership of the Spanish sexual reform movement, particularly with respect to the double standard of morality and the repression of wives by husbands (one of the social causes, according to Freud, of hysteria). Marañón, however, was less willing then Freud to abandon the notion of sexual perversions, although he tried to destigmatize them morally by recasting them as ‘inversions’, along a putative male-female axis or index.

I have tried to suggest here that Marañón’s notion of intersexuality was a useful tool in extending the boundaries of forms of behaviour that were, if not normal, then at least accepted or tolerated in a society where sexuality was still, to a large extent, considered to be the special province of the Church. His insistence on the primacy of sexual instinct in human behavior, and its normality (an emphasis he shared with Freud) propelled him into the public eye and made him a natural spokesman for sexual reform. If some of his views were closer to the traditional model of woman’s role in society than were views espoused by feminists of the period, his moralizing lectures condemning Don Juanism, his promotion of sex education, and his leadership in the promotion of women’s health issues perhaps explain why many on the left were willing to look beyond his more deterministic pronouncements. Both his prestige as a biologist and his moralizing bent lent strong support to his deliberate, consistent, and public promotion, throughout his career, of the equality of men and women, even within their biologically channeled roles, and contributed to the message of liberation that Spanish women detected in his writings.

Marañón’s discourse of intersexuality was at odds with traditional Catholic norms of sexuality. But his was not a member of an out-group or ‘subculture’. Science, while it constitutes a distinct subculture, is as interwoven with social values and mores as any other part of the culture. Nor was he a dissenter, in the conventional sense of the term. In politics, he was in the centre of the political spectrum, a liberal by default.

54 “If, as Freud argued, hysteria was a somatization of repressed sexual wishes and fantasies, then the social and cultural factors which encouraged and enforced the relegation to unconsciousness of these highly charged mental contents also encouraged the spread of the disease. Freud lumped these factors together under the heading of ‘civilized’ sexual morality.” Jan Goldstein, “The Hysteria Diagnosis and the Politics of Anticlericalism in Late Nineteenth-Century France,” Journal of Modern History, 54 (1982), 209-239 (210).
Here we have an example of an alternative discourse introduced from, and through, the intellectual and political elite. In the 1920s, when Marañón introduced his theory, the Spanish elite was enjoying a rare moment of 'civil discourse', wherein new ideas were debated and considered openly, without being immediately enlisted as weapons of the right or left.\textsuperscript{55} It was this civility that lent its tonality both to Marañón's social and scientific message and accounted for the breadth of its reception.