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A double take on sexual violence: Mirroring Spain's *La Manada* rape trial in the television series *La otra mirada* (2018-2019)

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ABSTRACT

The television series *La otra mirada* (A Different View) (2018-2019), set in a finishing school for young women in 1920s Seville, is among several recent Spanish series with a feminist slant and a core cast of female protagonists. This development mirrors the resurgence in Spain of feminist movements, particularly in the wake of the case of *La Manada* (The Wolf Pack). This case takes its name from the WhatsApp group used by five men who sexually assaulted an 18-year-old woman during Pamplona's bull-running festival in 2016. In April 2018, the men were cleared of *agresión sexual* – rape – and instead convicted on a lesser charge of *abuso sexual con prevalimiento* – sexual abuse with undue influence – on the basis that the woman did not actively resist in the sense recognised by Spanish law. A major storyline of the first season of *La otra mirada* deals with the rape of student Roberta Luna. Her struggle to assimilate the traumatic event culminates in a trial that disturbingly resembles that of the *Manada* case. This article locates the series in the context of national conversations on sexual violence and matters of consent in order to argue that it serves as a pedagogical "counter-representation" (Barjola 2018) of rape with respect to the victim-blaming discourses dominating in media.

Introduction

The Spanish television series *La otra mirada* (A Different View, henceforth *LOM*, Seasons 1 and 2, 2018-2019) situates the audience in a finishing school for young ladies in 1920s Seville in order to tackle contemporary gender issues through a historical lens. The primary perspective is that of the progressively-minded Teresa, who takes up a teaching position as she seeks answers regarding her murdered father's connection to a student named Roberta Luna. Roberta's distress on returning from a party at her boyfriend's family property, and her subsequent reluctance to be near him, arouses suspicions in Teresa, who shifts her focus to eliciting Roberta's acknowledgement of her rape by her boyfriend, Rafita Peralta. An overarching storyline of the first season is therefore centred on Roberta's struggle to come to terms with the assault and the reactions of others, culminating in a trial depicted in Episode 8, titled *La primera y la última palabra* (The first and last word).[1]

The day that this episode was due to air, in June 2018, a crew member of the art department, Alejandra Sáez (2018a), took to Twitter asserting: "I think it's important for people to know that what we'll see today in #LaOtraMirada8 had already been written by 21 March. After the episode I'll explain why".[2] The importance that Sáez attributes to the date comes down to the striking similarities that the audience was to witness between the fictional trial and that of Spain's landmark rape case known as *La Manada* (The Wolf Pack). The *Manada* trial – of five men for rape of an 18-year-old woman – had recently concluded, with a controversial light sentence, rendered public in April, that provoked feminist demonstrations and widespread rallies of men and women in support of the survivor.

The plot decision for Roberta to have an unsatisfactory outcome in court was, for the screenwriter of *LOM*'s trial episode, María López Castaño, one of "common sense", the implication being that it had to appear plausible in the historical setting. She was reported as stating: "When it came to writing the resolution, it was extremely clear to me: if Roberta wins, Rafita Peralta's sentence needs to be ridiculous" (Rus 2019).[3] As a result, on 20 June 2018, the audience saw *LOM*'s wealthy rapist sentenced to nothing more than a fine of 3000 *pesetas*, with the characters' reactions indicating that this was a meagre fine at the time. The next day, it was made public that the Navarre Provincial Court had granted the members of *La Manada* bail for 6000 euro each, pending the court's final decision on sentencing. Many viewers tweeted about this parallel, as in the following instance: "In this week's episode of #LaOtraMirada8 they let a rapist off with a 3000 peseta fine. Now #LaManada with a 6000 euro one.[4] Different centuries. Same story" (Pico Pala 2018).[5]

This article explores similarities between the real and fictional cases in light of conversations underway in contemporary Spain around gender violence and consent. By pursuing a close reading of *LOM*'s rape narrative within the particular socio-historical context of the series, I address whether this plotline contests or perpetuates rape myths – prejudiced attitudes regarding rape victims and rapists – bearing in mind recent feminist television analysis that has investigated the construction and treatment of female characters. For example, Elena Galán Fajardo (2007) found that, despite women's issues appearing more frequently in Spanish television fiction plots in the late 1990s than previously, female characters continued to fulfil normative roles of patriarchal society. More recently, Mar Chicharro Merayo (2018) has highlighted the way that recent historical television fiction re-reads the past from a female perspective and makes women's experiences central.

I draw on Nerea Barjola's (2018) argument that narratives of sexual danger function as a "disciplinary technology" that sustains male dominance, as María Angulo Egea (2019) does in her discussion of media reporting of the *Manada* case. In light of Barjola's notion of the "discipline of sexual terror", Angulo Egea concludes that the media endorsed a reading of that case as a cautionary tale. I argue that the representation offered in *LOM* constitutes, by contrast, what Barjola terms a "counter-representation" with respect to such narratives of sexual violence. Barjola (2018: 277) proposes that a counter-representation is the best remedy to counteract the effects of a patriarchal rhetoric that victimises and blames women. I therefore claim that the series fulfils a didactic function, one that Paul Julian Smith (2006, 2017) identifies as common in Spanish television drama this century. Smith argues that such a function, "understood in the extended sense of an education in social responsibility" (2006: 71), is achieved by virtue of the viewer empathy that the genre promotes – that its depiction of "events that are resisted or known only intellectually … can achieve in viewers a conviction based on lived experience, or a convincing simulacrum thereof" (73).

That Spanish television is often produced with an "educational mission" is a primary focus of Smith's 2017 book *Spanish Lessons*. He argues that television first acted as a "democratic pedagogy" during Spain's transition to democracy following the end of Francisco Franco's dictatorship in 1975 (4). While Smith does not specifically consider the pedagogical function in terms of gender issues, Chicharro Merayo (2018) touches on these, seeing such an intent in some telenovelas – a genre that targets a female audience in particular – through the reinforcement of collective identity, contributing to nation building.

Various studies have addressed the implications of the *Manada* trial for the national discussion of rape laws, and the reactions of the print/television media and social media to the case. They stress that Twitter discussions brought into public debate what had been previously somewhat limited to feminist circles (Altuzarra Alonso 2020; Idoiaga Mondragon *et al*. 2020; Navarro & Coromina 2020). In her recent Master's thesis, Katy Meyer (2019) examines the platform provided by social media for both challenging and reinforcing a rape-supportive culture, through analysis of reactions to the *Manada* case and a case in the United States.

The scholarship on *LOM* that has arisen in recent years has thus far remained relatively broad. *LOM*'s school setting seems to have led some scholars to identify an "explicit pedagogical vocation from a feminist perspective" (Ruiz Muñoz & Pérez-Rufí 2020: 822), without, I believe, sufficient discussion of the execution and implications of this "vocation". Nerea Cuenca Orellana and Natalia Martínez Pérez (2020) analyse the construction of three of the female characters in *LOM*, including Roberta, concluding that the series overcomes gender stereotypes and conveys a message that female solidarity is the answer to patriarchal oppression and violence. Aurora Forteza Martínez and Manuel Antonio Conde (2021) list Roberta among the female figures in the series who are treated in a stereotypical manner, yet identify the themes addressed throughout the episodes as having a pedagogical and socialising function. To date, however, no scholarship has gone beyond the analysis of Roberta's role by Cuenca Orellana and Martínez Pérez or approached *LOM* specifically in light of the *Manada* case and public debate over it.

To situate my analysis, I first provide a brief outline of events that have established issues of sexual violence as part of the mainstream conversation in contemporary Spain. Whilst recognising that it was these developments that likely influenced the *LOM* scriptwriters to produce parallels, I then analyse those reflected elements that Sáez (2018b) interpreted as premonitory glimpses of what was to come in the *Manada* case, with particular attention to the significance of rape myths in the conduct of both trials. Next, I consider aspects of the narrative treatment of Roberta's plotline that, I argue, render it a counter-representation with respect to narratives of sexual danger that bolster a rape-supportive culture.

Historical context

Spain's first phase of feminist activity, in the early decades of the twentieth century, came to an end with the onset of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Late in the Francoist regime (1939-1975), however, there was a re-emergence of feminist thought following a revival of women's political participation within clandestine political parties and associations. Consequently, during Spain's transition to democracy, demands for gender equality developed alongside the development of democratic rights. Although by the 1990s women's associations were working to address high rates of domestic violence that underlined the inefficacy of the criminal code, law reforms continued to prove inadequate (Balaguer Callejón 2019: 28-31). A campaign against gender violence was launched by the Socialist Party (PSOE) government, in

power from 2004 to 2011, with a gender violence law approved in the first year. Within a few years, however, budget cuts in response to the economic crisis weakened the campaign and gender issues slipped down the political agenda while the centre-right Partido Popular (PP) was in government (2011-2018). Nevertheless, the feminist movement and equality institutions were by then established enough to preclude silencing of the issue in terms of policy decisions (Bustelo 2016: 114; Alonso & Lombardo 2018: 85-86). In fact it was under the conservative administration that the Spanish parliament approved a state pact against gender violence in 2017.

The #MeToo movement provided much of the fuel that allowed the Spanish International Women's Day events on 8 March 2018 to surpass expectations of turnout and support. The widespread attention to the *Manada* case also contributed since, although the *Manada* sentence was not made public until April, there were early indications as to the outcome (Balaguer Callejón 2019: 35-36). According to María Luisa Balaguer Callejón, two crucial elements came together at that moment: widespread societal support, due to feminism becoming a mass movement; and the unified action of Spanish feminists, who set aside their ideological differences to challenge the ineffective laws (2019: 36-37). However, a visible and strong countermovement had also been growing among some sectors of Spanish society, in response to the widespread attention to issues of gender. In December that year, the far-right Vox party, which embodies that countermovement, had its first major electoral success, winning 12 seats in the Andalusian regional parliament, far beyond expectations. Its support was key to establishing the region's first centre-right government after 37 years of social-democratic control (Rubio-Pueyo 2019: 1). Denying the existence of a structural problem underlying violence against women in Spain, Vox proposed to overturn the 2017 state pact against gender violence, with leader Santiago Abascal focusing attention on the risk of false accusations against men and highlighting a supposed threat to the presumption of innocence ("La respuesta de Vox a la sentencia de 'La Manada'" 2018).

The case of *La Manada*

The case of *La Manada* takes its name from the WhatsApp group used by five Andalusian men between 25 and 30 years of age who sexually assaulted an 18-year-old woman, after leading her into a building and surrounding her in a small alcove, during Pamplona's bull-running festival in July 2016. The defendants took videos and photos throughout the incident that were later used as evidence by both sides: the prosecutors saw them as incriminating and the defence as exculpatory (Cobo Sáenz *et al*. 2018: 32). Following a November 2017 hearing, three judges of the Navarre Provincial Court were assigned the case. Their March 2018 deliberations saw two of the three reject charges of *agresión sexual* – rape – to instead sentence the men to nine years of prison for a lesser charge of *abuso sexual con prevalimiento* – sexual abuse with undue influence. Although they accepted that the complainant did not consent and that the accused took advantage of a "privileged" and "superior" position (Cobo Sáenz *et al*. 2018: 98-99), they concluded that the complainant's injuries did not demonstrate the use of force or intimidation, focusing on lack of evidence of "hitting, pushing, and tearing" (96).[6] The third judge, Ricardo González, presented a dissenting opinion – making up 237 pages of the 371-page judgement document – in which he discredited the complainant's account and scrutinised her behaviour before, during and after the incident, concluding that the five defendants should be acquitted of all charges. As mentioned above, the defendants were released on bail on 22 June 2018 – the day after the trial episode of *LOM* aired – until the sentence was confirmed on 30 November 2018 by the Navarre Superior Court of Justice.

The judges' conclusions drew public attention to the inefficacy of national legislation. As Itziar Altuzarra Alonso emphasises, a difficult distinction is made in Spanish law between *agresión sexual intimidatoria* – intimidating sexual aggression – and *abuso sexual con prevalimiento* – sexual abuse with undue influence – such that legal certainty about what constitutes rape is difficult to obtain (2020: 536-538). Thus, while the two judges who found the men guilty agreed that the members of *La Manada* were in a position of advantage, those judges considered that they were required to find evidence of resistance on the part of the victim as proof of intimidation. This lack of clarity in the law meant that, although Spain had adopted the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence – known as the Istanbul Convention – in 2011 (and it had come into force in 2014), Spanish legislation had evidently failed to fully incorporate its recommendations and diverged from international legal standards (Altuzarra Alonso 2020: 542-543). Nevertheless, on 21 June 2019 Spain's Supreme Court overturned the Navarre Provincial Court's 2018 decision, convicting the five men of rape and raising their prison sentences from 9 years to 15 (and, for the one who stole the survivor's phone following the assault, a two-month daily fine of 15 euro was converted into an extra two years of prison) (Polo García *et al*. 2019). Four of the five men were also convicted in November 2020 by the Córdoba Provincial Court of a prior sexual abuse act in 2016 ("Confirman las penas a la Manada que abusó de la joven de Pozoblanco (Córdoba)" 2020). Furthermore, in July 2021, following widespread public discussion, Spain's cabinet approved a draft bill to update the country's rape law, referred to in the media as the "Only yes means yes" bill (Proyecto de Ley 121/000062 2021).

Two trials

In both the real trial of the members of *La Manada* and the fictional trial of Rafita Peralta (*LOM*, Episode 8), the proceedings focused on the complainant, denigrating her and discrediting her testimony, effectively turning her into the defendant. Extensive research into judicial treatment of sexual assault cases in recent decades and various national contexts has identified discriminatory beliefs, often called "rape myths", underlying this practice (for example Bohner *et al*. 2011; Megías *et al*. 2011; Smith & Skinner 2017; Correa Flórez 2020; McDonald 2020). In Spain, the prevalence of these myths was not only made clear by the *Manada* case; it is demonstrated in Esmeralda Ballesteros Doncel's and Francisca Blanco Moreno's (2021) analysis of the treatment of sexual crimes by the Provincial Court of Baleares in 2018, and in Mónica Romero-Sánchez *et al*.'s 2018 study of the perceptions of victim blame among Spanish university students. Gerd Bohner *et al*. group these beliefs into four categories: blaming the victim for their rape; disbelief in claims of rape; exonerating the perpetrator; and judgements that only certain types of women are raped (2011: 19). Various elements that come under these categories are evident in the two trials.

In the trial of *La Manada* in the provincial court, the complainant's sexual history was scrutinised in order to evaluate her character and ultimately decide if she might have implicitly consented. This is evident from the judges' report (Cobo Sáenz *et al*. 2018: 102). Since Susan Brownmiller, in her seminal study on rape, *Against Our Will* (1975), identified this scrutiny as a common strategy with which to establish the victim's "tendency to consent" (1975: 385), it has been recognised as fundamental in many national contexts and remains common practice in Spain (Ballesteros Doncel & Blanco Moreno 2021). Two of the judges in the *Manada* case considered as evidence supporting the complainant's account the fact that she was in the "*albores*" (dawn) of her sexual life, had never participated in group sex or sex with strangers and had never experienced anal penetration prior to the incident (Cobo Sáenz *et al*. 2018: 102). Rebuffing the latter point, judge Ricardo González proposed that the complainant would

probably have suffered significant injuries if in fact she had never had anal sex before the incident (259). He also argued that, since the complainant had lost her virginity at 16 and was almost 19 at the time of the incident, it could not be assumed that she would lack "sufficient personal maturity" to decide "with the necessary autonomy" when to enter sexual relations, especially given the contemporary climate of sexual self-determination (253). According to this judge, further evidence of consent was that she did not instinctively hold on to her clothes as she was forcibly disrobed (220). He insisted that, in the videos of the incident, she showed "no sign of modesty" (245).[7]

In *LOM*, the scrutiny of the victim's sexual history is represented first through Rafita's allusions when he addresses Roberta from the witness stand: "You never said no to me. Not that day either".[8] Secondly, evidence of Roberta's alleged "tendency to consent" is provided by one of Rafita's younger brothers when he tells the court that she engaged in flirtatious behaviour towards him and "you could tell what Roberta was after".[9] As a result, the judge queries Roberta as to whether she recalls these supposed "displays of affection"[10] towards the brother.

As mentioned above, that the victim of *La Manada* did not fight back was used to justify disbelief in her claim to have been raped. Judge González's assertion that the complainant "confirm[ed] without hesitation that she did not resist, nor did she attempt to escape in any way; that she did not yell" (Cobo Sáenz *et al*. 2018: 217)[11] matches Rafita's when he challenges Roberta in court: "Did you yell out for help? You didn't try to defend yourself either. Hit me, scratch me. You didn't leave a mark on me".[12]

Providing evidence of the complainant's supposedly provocative conduct prior to the assault is a form of victim blaming, and of attempting to undermine her claims, that appears in both the real and fictional trials. In *LOM* the judge admits as evidence a photo taken of Roberta during the party at which the rape took place, after her own lawyer elicits her confirmation that she consented to being photographed. It captures her hitching up her skirt to reveal her stockings and suspenders, her top pulled down to expose her shoulders and her head thrown back as she smiles with her eyes closed. In the *Manada* trial a picture was also admitted as evidence in the defendants' favour: a post on the complainant's Instagram page in September 2017 of another woman wearing a t-shirt popularised by a reality TV star that read "Whatever you do, take off your knickers" (Cobo Sáenz *et al*. 2018: 310).[13] The defence's argument was that, had the complainant been raped, she would not post something with these sexual connotations. Although the other two judges attributed this behaviour to an attempt to maintain a semblance of normal life (124), González disagreed, also denying that the complainant had suffered PTSD following the event, discrediting the psychological testing carried out and the conclusions drawn (262-284). This discrediting presents another similarity to the trial in *LOM*, during which Rafita's brother Tomás insists when questioned that if Roberta had just been raped she would have asked for help, she "would have been depressed and crying all over the place",[14] and he would not have seen her enjoying herself at her school's autumn dance.

Employing beliefs that support exonerating the perpetrator, Judge González in the *Manada* case referred to the defendants' behaviour after the incident as proof of their certainty that their victim had participated willingly (Cobo Sáenz *et al*. 2018: 245, 316-325). He stated that video footage showed them leaving the building "without a hint of haste, agitation or wariness"[15] and that, when told about the accusations made against them, they proved to be calm and collaborative (316-317). Barjola discusses how the confidence that men can feel in their power to treat their victims' bodies as they desire without fear of repercussions is

indicative of the structural violence that underpins the "sexist microphysics of power" (2018: 139). Evidence of this dynamic are the boastful messages posted by a member of *La Manada*, José Ángel Prenda Martínez, in two WhatsApp chats immediately after the incident, where he wrote: "fucking one girl between the five of us" and "nothing I say can do it justice" (Cobo Sáenz *et al*. 2018: 19).[16] Judge González resolved that the incident was nothing more than a series of "explicit sexual acts in an atmosphere of revelry and joy" (244),[17] and that lack of consent was not even tacitly communicated, since the victim's "supposed submission" so closely resembled acceptance that the accused could only have intuited it as such (223).

An exchange in one scene of *LOM* plays out the same dynamic. After one session of the trial, the three Peralta brothers drink in a bar, where Rafita expresses a complete lack of concern over the accusations he faces. The youngest brother, Tomás, is struggling with his conscience, so he asks for confirmation of Rafita's innocence, only to receive the opposite:

> Roberta could barely stand so I don't know if she was up for it or not. The bitch didn't make it easy for me. … It was me who had to climb on her. You understand me. … The girl couldn't even talk, either to say yes or no. But, I mean, she didn't need to. A woman never says no to a Peralta.[18]

The trial episode of *LOM* generated a significant social media response, its hashtag #LaOtraMirada8 appearing in 7,551 tweets and the episode becoming a "trending topic" on Twitter for over six hours after it aired ("El capítulo de ayer" 2018). Many responses expressed indignation at the apparent lack of progress with regard to women's issues that the series' historical context highlights, such as this tweet:

> Yesterday I saw the final episode of @laotramiradatve and I thought how sick I was of stories about "olden-days Spain". But today's story wasn't fictional. Nor was it in the past. #ThingsDontChange #LaManada #IBelieveYou #series #LaOtraMirada8 (Marín 2018).[19]

In reality, Rafita's position as the eldest son of an influential family means Roberta's case against him would never have made it to court. Writing about Seville's neighbouring province of Córdoba, Raúl Ramírez Ruiz (2015) reports that, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the sexual violence cases that were tried in court – the crimes were then designated as "against decency and honour" and "of public scandal" (141)[20] – all involved lower-class families. Furthermore, a trial only took place in the event that a particularly "scandalous" outcome meant the authorities could not turn a blind eye; powerful families possessed the means to avoid the scandal of a public trial (153-154). Although the Twitter comments tend not to acknowledge that the *LOM* screenwriters favoured artistic licence over historical accuracy in order to produce parallels with the present day, they do suggest those writers were successful in promoting reflection on contemporary women's issues.

A counter narrative to that of sexual danger

The *LOM* scriptwriters, by producing a representation of the consequences of sexual assault and revictimisation of the survivor in court, risked making a cautionary tale of Roberta's plotline. Barjola (2018) illustrates how a narrative of sexual crime can be constructed as admonitory through her analysis of the media treatment of a 1992 triple rape and murder case in Spain known as the Alcàsser crime, the teenage victims of which had been hitchhiking to a nearby nightclub. Barjola reworks Foucault's (1979) concept of disciplinary power from a

feminist perspective and designates her adapted framework the "sexist microphysics of power". She argues that "prescriptive texts" concerned with sexual behaviour serve as disciplinary technologies that indoctrinate women into submission – through "sexual terror" – thus normalising submissive behaviour and making "docile bodies" of them (2018: 29-34). For Foucault, prescriptive texts come in various forms but have the common goal of setting out rules of conduct. That is to say, such texts push the recipient to question their conduct and adapt it in response. In turn, the recipient becomes a docile body, one able to be subjected to "subtle coercion" (Foucault 1979: 137). With regard to the Alcàsser case, Barjola establishes as a prescriptive text the use made of a voice recording of one of the victims. The day before the girls' disappearance, one of the three, Toñi, called a radio station to make a song request that she dedicated to many friends, among whom were the other two victims, Míriam and Desirée. Prompted by the radio host, she implied that she had no intention of staying in at the weekend. This clip was played during a televised interview with Toñi's family, which showed her sister bursting into tears on hearing it. For Barjola, the public airing of this voice against that background acted as a reminder that the girls would still be alive if they had not set out to go to the nightclub that weekend, and thus served as a warning to their female peers. Barjola demonstrates how the treatment of the Alcàsser crime in the media perpetuated victimising rhetoric when, she claims, it could instead have been deployed as a counter-representation to the narrative of sexual danger. Barjola defines such counter-representations as descriptions or experiences (in books, slogans, actions etc.) that highlight power relationships between men and women and reveal the privilege that men hold over women's bodies and lives, thus challenging the social order in which men are granted that power. Stories of rape thus become a political project rather than a warning that women internalise (2018: 276-277).

According to Barjola (2018: 101-106), a key element in narratives of sexual danger is the notion that increased freedom brings with it increased risk. This notion is first represented in *LOM* through the "Hora Peralta": a time each day when the Peralta brothers drive up to the school gates and the students rush to meet them and flirt through the iron bars. Although Teresa is appalled when she first learns of this ritual, the other teachers seem resigned to it. The home economics teacher, Ángela, even seems to justify the students' behaviour to Teresa, implying that catching the eye of one of the aristocratic brothers could ultimately lead to an advantageous marriage (Episode 1). The teachers' lack of concern reflects their confidence in the barrier that the fence provides between the young men and the girls, which keeps the latter group within the safety of the school grounds. Nevertheless, when the ritual is brought up at the trial as a way of denigrating Roberta, through the suggestion that it constitutes a kind of harassment of the brothers, the teachers regret having permitted the behaviour. The audience learns of the Hora Peralta at the same time as they first learn of Roberta's and Rafita's relationship, with Ángela mentioning to Teresa that the young pair are often seen "making eyes at each other through the fence" (Episode 1).[21] This parallel between women's "improper" behaviour and a threshold developed as a common trope in fiction from the early modern period (Orlin 1997), and it suggests a transgressive space between women's traditional realm of a culturally assigned, contained private sphere and the public sphere, the allegedly exclusive territory of men. The ongoing need to challenge the concept of men's control of public spaces is reflected in one of the protest chants used following the *Manada* verdict: "The streets, the nights, they are ours too" (Álvarez & Lambertucci 2018).[22]

Barjola conceptualises the kind of territory in which women without male protection become the property of anyone and everyone as "no man's land" (2018: 53). Roberta's choice to leave the school grounds to attend the Peraltas' party places her in such a space, and although the plot sees her apparently "punished" for it – by the rape – the prevailing message is, I argue,

a critique of the sexist "rule" that the only way for women to ensure their protection from the danger of male violence is by renouncing certain spaces and activities (Barjola 2018: 105).

LOM formulates this critique in two ways. Firstly, despite Roberta's experience of revictimisation in the courtroom, she is shown to maintain a positive outlook following the trial's conclusion, primarily because of the sense of solidarity it has prompted from her teachers and peers. She declares:

> If there's one thing I've learnt from all of this, it's that you shouldn't stay silent out of fear of ending up alone. There will always be someone prepared to listen to you and join you" (Episode 8).[23]

The reference in her words to a sense of community was echoed by the *Manada* survivor, who on 27 June 2018 released a letter to the media, declaring:

> I want to thank all the people who … gave me a voice when many tried to take it away from me. Thank you for not abandoning me, for believing me, sisters. … Personally, if my case has stirred the consciences [*sic*] of one person or has given strength to another to fight, I am satisfied (reported in English translation in Mwanza 2018).

The survivor felt driven to write this letter to the community of indignant women and men who cried out against the light sentence initially given to her attackers. Some of her supporters appropriated the collective name that her aggressors had chosen for its connotation of dominance, transforming it into an emblem of solidarity as they chanted: "Don't worry sister, we are your wolf pack" (Camps Calvet & Morero Beltrán 2019:13).[24]

Secondly, a parallel storyline to Roberta's within the trial episode of *LOM* depicts an example of a lower-level sexual harassment, of the kind that women are consistently expected to let pass, but which in this case prompts discussion and changes of attitude at the school. When Margarita, a student, is alone in a classroom with the caretaker's young assistant, he interprets her amicable behaviour as an invitation to make a sexual advance. Through this experience, Margarita, whose original opinion has been that Roberta got what she deserved for "airing her dirty laundry", comes to reassess Roberta's situation. Furthermore, in a scene that evokes Spain's version of #MeToo, #Cuéntalo, Margarita informs her teachers and peers of her experience of sexual harassment, prompting them to share similar and previously untold experiences. One student, for example, speaks of verbal harassment in the form of a distinctly Spanish version of catcalls known as *piropos*:

> I don't go to my favourite bakery anymore because there's a pub opposite with regulars who say all sorts of things when they see me. And I'm supposed to feel flattered, but I don't – I feel uncomfortable (Episode 8).[25]

In the early twentieth century, it was still common practice for men to *piropear* and, for women, receiving *piropos* was considered, as Nerea Aresti states, "an unavoidable price to pay for having entered a public space" (2007: 606). With regard to the actions of the caretaker's assistant, one of the teachers, Manuela, challenges the attitude of the caretaker, Ramón:

> MANUELA. If you let it pass once, it's going to happen again.
> RAMÓN. Well, it's just kids being kids, it's not really worth worrying about, is it?

MANUELA. It is more than worth worrying about, Ramón. We can't just let these things happen (Episode 8).[26]

The dramatic irony of this exchange reiterates for the audience the importance of calling out what may seem like minor indiscretions, thus serving a pedagogical function.

In an article that investigates the possibility of coexistence between television and "quality", Carmen Caffarel Serra (2005: 24) claimed that public television should contribute to civic, cultural and social formation and promote critical awareness. For the TVE content manager, Fernando López Puig, *LOM* played such a role. In an interview he claimed that it "represented the values that public television should hold" [27] and explained that it was largely for this reason that a second season was approved. Admitting that the first season could not be considered a success in terms of audience figures, he said the critical acclaim and prizes awarded to the series also contributed to the decision to make Season 2 (Avendaño 2019).

Conclusion

The aim of this article has been to assess the implications of the rape trial depicted on Spanish public television in *LOM* and its relationship to the contemporaneous 2018 *Manada* trial and sentence. I have suggested that the series reacts to the clash in contemporary Spain between a strong feminist movement bolstered by international (and digital) feminisms and a conservative mentality still present in Spain, which is ingrained in its judicial system and of which the significant re-emergence of right-wing politics is symptomatic. Barjola (2018) argues that representations of sexual crimes can function as an admonishment to women to conform to restrictions on their freedom, or can be appropriated to generate resistance (278). I have argued that Roberta's plotline in *LOM* does the latter, since it reproduces victim-blaming discourses and gendered assumptions in order to explicitly critique them and their role in the structural violence that sustains women's oppression. I claim that these demonstrations of the series' engagement with national issues and social change place it among those Spanish television series that Smith insists are "clearly worthy of the close textual analysis they have not yet received" (2016: 2).

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Sáez, A. [@_AleSaez]. (2018b, June 21). *Un mes después dictaban la sentencia a La Manada. Y flipé con la capacidad de la guionista para, sin saber lo que iba a ocurrir, ser capaz de dar con esas similitudes (e injusticias) que sigue habiendo casi 100 años después* [Tweet]. *Twitter*. twitter.com/_AleSaez/status/1009554556315938817

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NOTES

[1] All translations are the author's unless otherwise specified, except the series and episode titles.
[2] "*Me parece importante que se sepa que lo que hoy vamos a ver en #LaOtraMirada8, estaba escrito desde el 21 de marzo. Al final del capítulo explico por qué*."
[3] "*Al escribir la resolución lo tuve clarísimo: si Roberta gana, la condena de Rafita Peralta tiene que ser ridícula*."
[4] Estimates calculated using the site https://www.measuringworth.com/ suggest the value of 3000 pesetas in the late 1920s could indeed be comparable to 6000 euro in 2018.
[5] "*En el capítulo de esta semana de #LaOtraMirada8 absuelvan a un violador con una multa de 3000 pesetas. Ahora a #LaManada con una de 6000. Distintos siglos. Misma historia*."
[6] "*golpes, empujones, desgarros*"
[7] "*Por lo que se refiere a la mujer tampoco percibo signo alguno de pudor en ella*"
[8] "*Nunca me dijiste que no. Ese día tampoco*."
[9] "*Se notaba que Roberta iba buscando lo que iba buscando*."
[10] "*muestras de cariño*"
[11] "*afirma sin reticencias que no se resistió, ni intentó huir de ninguna manera; que no gritó*"
[12] "*¿Gritaste para pedir ayuda? Tampoco intentaste defenderte. Pegarme, arañarme. Ni un rasguño me hiciste*."

[13] "*Hagas lo que hagas, quítate las bragas*"
[14] "*habría estado deprimida o llorando por las esquinas*"
[15] "*sin el más mínimo signo de apresuramiento, nerviosismo o cautela*"
[16] "*follándonos a una los cinco*" and "*todo lo que cuente es poco*"
[17] "*explícitos actos sexuales en un ambiente de jolgorio y regocijo*"
[18] "*Roberta iba que no se tenía ni en pie así que no sé si estaba muy para la labor o no. Fácil no me lo puso, la jodía. . . . [T]uve que ser yo él que la montara a ella. Ya me entendéis. . . . La chiquilla estaba que no podía ni hablar, ni pa' decir sí ni pa' decir no. Pero vamos, que no hacía falta. Una mujer nunca dice que no a un Peralta*."
[19] "*Ayer vi el final de @laotramiradatve y pensé que ya estaba harta de historias de 'laEspañaantigua' [sic]. Pero lo de hoy no ha sido una serie de ficción. Ni era el pasado. #LasCosasNoCambian #LaManada #YoSiTeCreo #series #LaOtraMirada8*"
[20] "*contra la honestidad, el honor y de escándalo público*"
[21] "*echándose miraditas a través de la verja*"
[22] "*Las calles, las noches, también son nuestras.*"
[23] "*Si algo he aprendido de todo esto, es que no hay que callarse por miedo a quedarse sola. Siempre va a haber alguien dispuesto a escucharte y a unirse a ti*."
[24] "*Tranquila hermana, aquí está tu manada*."
[25] "*Yo ya no voy a mi pastelería favorita porque en frente hay una taberna con los mismos de siempre que cuando me ven me dicen de todo. Y se supone que yo me tengo que sentir halagada, pero no – me siento incomoda*."
[26] "*MANUELA. Si le pasas una, ya no hay quién le pare.*
RAMÓN. Bueno, son cosas de chavales, tampoco hay que darle más vueltas, ¿no?
MANUELA. Hay que darle todas las vueltas del mundo, Ramón. Estas cosas no las podemos dejar pasar."
[27] "*representaba los valores que debería tener una televisión pública*"