

From Republican Barcelona to Pre-Nazi Berlin:  
Nudism, Sexuality, and National Identity in Laura Brunet's *Desnudismo Integral* (1931)

Catalan Joan Sanxo Farrerons, alias Laura Brunet, was the editor of the Catalan naturist review *Biofilia* since 1932, and the author of *Desnudismo integral. Una nueva visión de la vida*, a nudist manifesto published in 1931 that became an immediate bestseller. The first edition of 10,000 copies was sold out in August of the same year, and a second edition of 30,000 volumes (10,000 of these meant exclusively for the Latin American market) followed in 1932. *Desnudismo integral* is divided in two parts. The first part offers an historical overview of nudism, with the purpose of re-establishing meaningful links between the ancient practices of nudism (with strong emphasis on the Hellenic tradition) and a modern European nudist lifestyle that was becoming increasingly popular at the turn of the century. The second part, titled “Quince días con la piel bajo el sol,” is a nudist *Bildungsreise*, a fictionalized (autobiographical?) account of the author's experiences first in Berlin and then in several German nudist camps, among them Doctor Walter Fraenzel's famous “Lichtschulheim Glüsinger Land.”

*Desnudismo Integral* and its commercial success did not occur in a void. Nudism, as part of the Naturist movement, was known and practiced on the Iberian Peninsula, particularly in Catalonia and along the Levantine coast, since the turn of the twentieth century. Early naturist associations and magazines such as *Regeneració*, *Helios*, and *Amics del Sol* lead in 1931 to *Pentalfa*, probably the most solid and long-lasting among Catalan naturist and nudist associations. Its founder, Nicolás Capó, was the director of the magazine of the association (also called *Pentalfa*) and the author of what is considered the foundational text of Catalan naturism, *El naturismo y el progreso mecánico y biológico* (1925). Other texts on nudism soon followed, such as the yearly almanac *Almanaque Nudista*; the magazine *Biofilia. Revista mensual de culto a la vida* directed by aforementioned Laura Brunet; the Valencian eugenic review *Estudios*, and the anarcho-naturist-nudist magazine *Iniciales* published in Barcelona; *Elysia. El paraíso de los desnudistas*, the narrated version in Spanish of the American nudist documentary film, *Elysia: Valley of the Nudes* (1933); A. Martín de Lucenay's sexological-sociological approach to *Los fueros del naturismo* (1934); and the Spanish translation of French author Simone May's *Desnudez. La novela pasional del nudismo* (1933).

This paper explores the relevance of Catalan nudism as both a national discourse and cultural practice that effectively resists Castilian centralism, and as an internationalist discourse eager to connect with European modernity. In fact, Catalan nudism shares with the rest of Europe many of its “modern” anxieties, particularly the ones tied to sexuality and gender roles. Moreover, from the fragile standpoint of a newly inaugurated short lived Republic soon to be followed by a fascist dictatorship (according to Farrerons, he finished *Desnudismo integral* the very same day the Second Republic was born, and in the midst of public euphoria) Catalan nudist discourses and narratives witness and cunningly reflect upon the paulatine “nazification” and crescent racism of German nudism or *Freikörperkultur*.