

WOMEN IN THE THEATRE OF GREGORIO
MARTINEZ SIERRA

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INTRODUCTION

A brief resumé of woman's position as reflected
in Spanish literature prior to Gregorio
Martínez Sierra

The theatre has often been looked upon as merely an entertainment medium, but it is indirectly a didactic one as well in that it studies the attitudes that have found favor with certain groups at certain times. For this reason, the theatre may be considered documentary evidence of the evolution of social and moral philosophy if one keeps in mind always who accepts the ideas and when. In this study, we are primarily concerned with the role of woman as she appears in the theatrical works of Gregorio Martínez Sierra, but to make the study more meaningful, this chapter will be devoted to the part played by woman in Spanish literature, particularly the theatre, before Martínez Sierra.

There are several good reasons for accepting the Spanish theatre as a reflection of the times. In Spain, the theatre has been, since the sixteenth century, an extremely democratic medium and has been singularly unhampered by the dictates of the nobility and by Aristotelian concepts of dramatic rules. Unlike the French theatre, for example, the Spanish theatre has traditionally been a

place where all levels of society flocked to see themselves, or perhaps better still, to see their neighbors, portrayed. In the Golden Age, we may assume that there was a normal contact between the classes as exemplified in La estrella de Sevilla, El mejor alcalde el rey, El alcalde de Zalamea, and others. This generation of theatre goers expected colorful action on the stage with themes that catered to certain traditional and national attitudes having to do with patriotism, religion, honor, the proper position of women in society, etc.

High praise as well as slander has characterized the commentary on woman, and rarely has there been an author dealing with the subject who has been lukewarm. The observer has generally been hyperbolic in his praise or vitriolic in his condemnation.

It is the earliest literary documents of Spanish literature that deal most severely with the so-called fair sex. In the thirteenth century, El libro de los engannos y essayamientos de las mujeres was a popular book of exempla in condemnation of women, and uses a trial as its framework. A young man is accused by his stepmother of attempted violence. When he is brought to trial, his legal counselor advises him to keep silent until he is bidden to speak. During the days of silence, the defense uses all the examples of feminine evil that it can unearth to suggest that woman is cunning and vile by nature. At the end of the

defense, when the youth is bidden to speak, the judges are quite conditioned to believe him against his step-mother. She is, subsequently punished by being burned at the stake. According to the story, incidentally, the young man's version of the story is the accurate one.

While these tales, as well as many others circulating in Spain in the thirteenth century, were of oriental origin, by their widespread, acceptance and great popularity show the low esteem in which women were generally held.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries respectively, two ecclesiastics give us an insight into woman's position in Spain. Juan Ruiz, the Archpriest of Hita, in El libro de buen amor, recounts in an amusing and good-natured way that woman is weak and can be deceived easily and loves nothing more than to be the deceiver herself. The book begins with a warning against earthly love and attempts a sanctimonious air that is never really convincing. The author states that it is human to sin, and proceeds to discuss the various ways in which men and women joyfully go about being human.

In El libro de buen amor, woman may sin and may cause man to sin, but the admonishing finger seems wagged in fun, and woman is depicted as a rather desirable creature.

Alfonso Martinez de Toledo, the Archpriest of Talavera, in his fifteenth century book, El corbacho, inspired

by the Corbaccio of the Italian Bocaccio, lacks the wit and sparkle that one associates with El libro de buen amor. The Corbacho, whose alternate title is Reprobación del amor mundano, says that illicit love is an offense against God and is the cause of much earthly suffering. This Archpriest blames woman for the evils of love and proceeds to enumerate her various vices. Among other things, woman is condemned as greedy, vain, boastful, inconstant, hypocritical, deceitful and conniving. The author's perverse and one-sided examples paint a very dark picture indeed of the pre-Renaissance woman.

At the time that the above mentioned works were being written, court poets in Portugal and Galicia were singing lyrical praises to women, an attitude which was in line with the current chivalric trend. The increasing devotion to the Virgin Mary also seemed to improve the over-all position of woman. From this period, there is no survival of lyric poetry in Castilian, but since it existed in Portuguese and Gallician and since Castilians often employed these languages rather than their own for lyrical expression, we may consider that devotion and admiration for women existed side by side with the deepest scorn. Even in traditionally hard and unyielding Castile, there must have been those who adored woman for her soft and simple femininity and considered her the gem of God's creation.

While the battle for supremacy between the sexes is no doubt as old as Eve, the literary controversy concerning the merits and defects of the sexes, so popular in the Golden Age, probably has its roots in Medieval and Renaissance literature. Scholasticism often extended itself to consider the pros and cons of the sexes.

Until the fifteenth century, there is almost no preserved theatre, but the earliest documents show that it was the arena for the attack upon as well as the defense of women. With the appearance of the early playwrights Gomez Manrique, Juan del Encina, Gil Vicente, Torres Naharro and others, we see woman defended as well as vilified in what was to become a very ~~democratic~~ and popular medium. The very early theatre, of course, cannot be considered to represent the views of a broad segment of the population, for its performances were limited to select audiences at court. The court, however, was no deterrent in the controversy of Man versus Woman. Juan del Encina's Egloga de los tres pastores is a primitive tragedy in lyric verse. Fileno, in an impassioned monologue, recites the vicissitudes of love and the cruelties of woman using the arguments from Bocaccio's Corbaccio. This diatribe against women was meant to please the male courtiers but in order not to offend the women present, Encina introduced another character to say that all women were not bad and that one must not condemn them all because of one. The recognition

of her as a power and an element to be deferred to was at least a beginning. By Juan del Encina's time, we see some protest against the extreme and one-sided criticism of woman. Encina has a poem entitled "Contra los que dicen mal de las mujeres," that attacks the attackers of women.

This attitude of open admiration rather than mere deference was a novel opinion for a man in his position to express publicly. This attitude was more in the province of the troubador than of the playwright.

Gil Vicente reworks the argument of the sexes in his Comedia del viudo, in which the widower makes a strong defense of women in eulogizing his dead wife after his neighbor has bitterly complained of their defects.

The disdainful, man-hating woman, who was to become so popular in the Siglo de Oro drama, appears in Gil Vicente's Auto da Sibila Casandra. She sees only misery for married women and refuses the shackles of inconstant man. In the Comedia de Rubena of Gil Vicente, we see an unmarried, expectant mother the object of abandonment and mockery. The situation is made light of and is meant to be funny. Similar treatments of women in the early theatre are to be found in Diego Sánchez Badajoz's Farsa del matrimonio and Alvarez de Ayllon's Comedia Tibalda. These plays reveal that little sympathy and respect were accorded to women belonging to the lower levels of society. They also show that motherhood had not acquired the dignity and reverence

that it was to enjoy later, especially in the works of Gregorio Martínez Sierra.

In the fifteenth century, the sentimental novel was notably sympathetic to women. In Juan de Flores' Cárcel de amor, for example, we find Leriano, the gallant lover, struggling valiantly to be worthy of his lady, who is the embodiment of all that is good and lovely. Leriano commits suicide because of the cruelty of his lady, but he sings her praises up to his dying breath. He is dedicated to the ideals of chivalry that teach him to protect and revere women. Since the Virgin is the mother of God and symbolic of womankind and motherhood, it would be blasphemy to speak evil of woman. In speaking ill of her, one only dishonors oneself, since all men are born of women.

On the brink of the sixteenth century, the Jew Fernando de Rojas, circulated his monumental, dialogued novel, La tragicomedia de Calixto y Melibea, which was later to be known simply as La Celestina, after the Ovidian procuress who forms the hub of the action. This work is in direct contrast to the sentimental novels whose arguments generally degenerated into one-sided sentimentalizing of the feminine theme. Sempronio, Calixto's servant, takes the part of the arch-misogynist and is thoroughly familiar with all the woman-hating arguments. He concedes that only a few women should be exempt from his general condemnation:

Lee las historiales, estudia los filósofos, mira los poetas. Llenos están los libros de sus viles y malos ejemplos, de las caídas que llevaron los que en algo los reputaron... Oye a Salomon do dice que las mujeres y el vino hacen a los hombre renegar. Conséjate con Seneca, y verás en que las llene. Escucha a Aristoteles, mira a Bernardo. Gentiles, Judíos, cristianos, y moros, todos en esta concordia están.... 1

Calixto sees and adores Melibea as an ideal. For him, no other woman has more silken hair, greener eyes, more melodious voice or more delicate features than his incomparable Melibea. While Sempronio does not deny the truth of his master's praise, he says that it is rather meaningless since the mere fact of her being a woman cancels or at least greatly reduces the worth she might otherwise have. He feels that he is more worthy simply by virtue of his sex. So, in the fifteenth century, we see woman praised in the sentimental novel and in poetry while she is defamed on the stage by certain dramatists and we see the two currents contrapuntally interwoven in the dramatic novel, La Celestina.

With the works of Bartolome de Torres Naharro, an early sixteenth century dramatist, we see the general position of woman emerge from that of the object of mockery into the bearer of the family honor. The Comedia Jimena is a nascent cape and sword play in which the heroine's

¹Fernando de Rojas, La Celestina (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1943), pp. 26-27.

honor is a serious and all-important commodity to be defended by the male members of the family at all costs. The honor theme continues its stage evolution in El infamador of Juan de la Cueva. (The theory that this play is the forerunner of Tirso de Molina's El burlador de Sevilla has been suggested and also vigorously denied.) Leucinio, the infamador, is determined to conquer Eliodora since she is the only woman he has not been able to reach through his money. She represents a challenge to him. Feliciana, Eliodora's maid, helps her mistress to retain her honor. In the ensuing struggle, however, Leucinio's servant is killed and Eliodora is accused of murder and is condemned to death. Even Eliodora's father desires her death since she has brought dishonor to the family name and the loss of honor saddens him more than the loss of a daughter. Eventually Leucinio confesses his cowardice and proves the innocence of Eliodora.

The pundonor play comes into full maturity with Lope de Vega and other dramatists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Lope de Vega has portrayed a whole galaxy of women in his voluminous dramatic repertoire. He shows all types imaginable in his minor characters, but his major heroines are, for the most part, beauteous, long-suffering devotees of their honor, which is inexorably joined to that of their men. In Fuenteovejuna, the comendador tries to court unconventional favors from Laurencia, who is in love with Frondoso. On one occasion, Frondoso

fights the comendador after Laurencia has fled from the latter's advances. The comendador goes to Esteban, Laurencia's father, to ask him to reprimand her for her lack of respect. In the conversation, both men speak of their low opinion of easy women, though the hypocritical comendador has just boasted to Laurencia that other girls, whom he has not described as low, have consented to his advances. The comendador has Frondoso abducted at the wedding celebration of his marriage to Laurencia, and when no attempt is made to free him, Laurencia begins to look like a walking ghost and dramatically and eloquently calls the town to action. The people, Fuenteovejuna, in a united action, kill the lecherous comendador. Later, the king absolves the people, for he can find no proof of who the murderer is and suspects that the action is justified. The audience is made to feel that the comendador got what he deserved for trying to dishonor a virtuous maiden.

In La estrella de Sevilla, the king is strongly attracted to Estrella and tries to enlist the help of her brother, Busto, to win her favor. Busto is the sole guardian of his sister's honor and takes his responsibilities seriously. Unknown to Estrella and with the help of a maid, the king comes to Estrella's house in the evening when Busto is customarily out. Busto returns unexpectedly and duels with the king, pretending that he thinks the king is not the king at all but an impostor. Estrella,

throughout the play, zealously guards her own honor. She sincerely loves her soldier sweetheart, Sancho, and is not tempted by the interest of so important a person as the king.

A similar situation exists in El mejor alcalde el rey. Elvira, the daughter of a laborer, loves Sancho, also a laborer on the land of don Tello, a nobleman. At the betrothal of these young people, don Tello is struck by the beauty of Elvira, whom he had never seen before, and arranges to kidnap her. In the ensuing days, Elvira bravely and steadfastly defends her honor in don Tello's palatial home and cannot be swayed by his wealth and station. She loves Sancho and feels that she is already his wife. The king intervenes on behalf of Sancho and frees Elvira. Before he executes don Tello for his offense against the lady, he forces him to marry her, thereby making Elvira a wealthy widow and free to marry her true love.

These virtuous heroines who are so strong to defend their honor were described and extolled in the most lyrical language by Lope de Vega. They were, however, not the only women types prominent on the Siglo de Oro stage. Women had become so closely guarded as the receptacle of the family honor, that a special type of woman emerges on the stage. She feels that since so many other people are looking out for her, she need not bother. The male members of the family are so intent upon preserving their honor that the woman

is virtually a prisoner, and any escape from her humdrum existence is accepted. She and the lover often become accomplices against the family. Thus we see that men do not trust women, for they are likely to be indiscreet the moment the father's or brother's or husband's back is turned. This distrust of women is rather general in the Siglo de Oro drama, and if we consider the theatre as a reflection of the times, ample bases for these attitudes are seen. Some good examples can be found in Tirso de Molina's El burlador de Sevilla, Lope de Vega's Amar sin saber a quien, El remedio en la desdicha, and La dama boba. The galan, who may or may not love the lady, invariably makes her a promise of marriage to gain her confidence. This is a promise that the honor code of the day did not require him to keep. Promises to women were not binding as they were to men.

Tirso de Molina, who is outstanding in the creation of women characters, not only portrays some women as virtuous and witty, but gives them freedom and independence. Until that time, we have seen an increase in the respect and admiration for women, but Tirso carries this even further. In Don Gil de las calzas verdes, doña Juana dons a man's disguise and as don Gil, courts a girl that her betrothed, don Martín, is seeing, supposedly unknown to her. Juana ironically wins the girl for don Gil, but in the meantime, don Martín has recognized the villany of his actions and vows to mend his ways and marry his betrothed.

La prudencia en la mujer is an historical play in which the wise queen acts as regent during the minority of her son and through her prudence saves the throne for him. Many consider this play the outstanding historical drama of the Golden Age. It contains several elements that are not characteristic of plays contemporary with it, however. The protagonist is a mother, a personality type generally absent from the Siglo de Oro stage. The lack of precedent in the portrayal of a mother or a woman of her age may be due to the fact that many women died in childbirth or lived shorter lives because of inferior health measures. It may also have been that the mother was not considered dramatic material because of her supposedly uninteresting and unimportant role in real life. She was not necessary in the cape and sword plays, whose outstanding characteristic was flamboyance. La prudencia en la mujer also differs from other plays in that it presents a woman who is wise, loyal, dignified, just, intrepid, devoted to the memory of her husband and dedicated to the preservation of the throne for her son. How far woman has progressed since the Engannos y essayamientos de las mujeres. In selecting this wise queen and in portraying her as an ideal, Tirso de Molina shows us that good women who were not young and beautiful did not go unappreciated.

In El burlador de Sevilla, Tirso de Molina is apparently interested mainly in showing evil, and that it is ultimately punished. In this play, no one character, by

our standards of morality, seems to be wise or possess will power, or even a conscience, with the possible exception of Juan's father, who disowns his son.

A popular feminist device of the Golden Age was the man-hating woman typified by Diana of Moreto's El desdén con el desdén. She censures men harshly as deceivers of the gentle sex and swears never to fall into any man's trap. The feminist argument, however, loses some of its force in these plays, since the authors, who were invariably men, always produce the happy ending in the form of the happy submission of the once proud and haughty beauty to her lord and master.

In the plays of Pedro Calderón de la Barca, the honor theme reaches the peak of intensity. Such a fetish is made of honor in his plays that some modern day scholars have wondered if he was really serious or if he was ridiculing a custom of which he did not approve. Beginning with Torres Naharro, we have seen an increasing tendency for men to point an accusing finger at the woman who is the object of men's advances, regardless of whether or not she responds. In a representative honor play of Calderón, we see what appears to be an extreme situation in which the innocent wife is killed by her husband because of a suspected taint on his honor. He is even commended for his actions by the king. In El médico de su honra, doña Mencía is apparently willing to be unfaithful to her husband with Prince

Enrique, but she never really is unfaithful. Furthermore, the husband, far from being sure about her actions or her intentions, merely suspects his wife's guilt. He, nonetheless, feels justified in cleansing his honor with her blood. Doña Mencía, the wife in this play, is almost incredibly submissive. Her marriage had been arranged for her by her father and was not a love match. Prince Enrique had courted her before her marriage but had left on a trip without making any commitments. In his absence, the father had decided to marry her advantageously to don Gutierre. Doña Mencía is still emotionally involved with the prince but shows no hint of it in her attitude toward her husband. She embraces him when he comes home and prepares his supper. In answer to his suggestion that a slave prepare his meal, she says:

Ya, señor, ¿no va una esclava?
Lo soy, y lo he de ser. 1

Later, when don Gutierre decides that sufficient doubt has been cast upon his honor, he tells doña Mencía that she has but two hours to live. Instead of trying to prove her innocence, begging her husband's forgiveness, screaming for help or trying to escape, she accepts her fate calmly and unquestioningly. Don Gutierre's actions were apparently normal for the seventeenth century, but

¹Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Dramas de honor. Introduction by Angel Valbuena Briones (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1956), p. 142.

from the vantage point of the twentieth century, they seem appalling, and one wonders how such things were possible in so Christian a country as Spain. Perhaps the civil and lay authorities recognized the honor code as barbarous and contrary to Christian teaching and therefore refused to give it official recognition. This would explain the lack of official documentation surviving from the Golden Age. The code is well documented in the plays of the period, however.

With Calderón, the honor theme has reached a climax and now the pendulum must swing the other way. The peak as well as the decline can be noted in his plays. In Calderón's El alcalde de Zalamea, we see quite an advance in man's attitude toward woman's worth and toward her as the bearer of the family honor. Military men in that day were exempt from civil jurisprudence, so outrages similar to those described in this play were not uncommon. Some soldiers have been ordered to remain in Zalamea, and a few have been quartered in the Crespo home where the town beauty, Isabel, resides. As a precaution, Crespo, her father, and Juan, her brother, hide Isabel and her cousin, but one of the officers in the house, a captain, discovers their presence and gains entry to their room. Isabel, not the shrinking violet that we have seen on other occasions in dramas of this period, appeals to the gentleman in the captain. She tells him that men should defend women if **only because** they are women. He leaves her honor intact this time. Soon

the soldiers are ordered to leave Zalamea and Crespo is delighted for he knows of the encounter between Isabel and the captain. The father intends to ignore it, but Juan is determined to seek revenge for the possible damage the captain might have done the family honor. It is significant that his anger is directed toward the captain and not his sister.

Juan enlists in the army so that he may follow the captain, and Crespo, believing that the danger to Isabel is past, allows her to sit in the doorway of the house. The captain appears and carries her off to a mountain. When Crespo tries to rescue her, he is tied to a tree by soldiers. The next morning, Isabel finds her way home and frees her father. She begs him to kill her since not having a daughter is to be preferred to having no honor:

Para que de ti se diga
Que por dar vida a tu honor
Diste muerte a tu hija. 1

Crespo's reaction is also significant. Instead of killing her, he consoles her. He feels that she is not the one at fault so should not be the one punished. They return to the city to help Juan. On arriving in the city, Crespo finds that he has just been elected alcalde and he

¹Pedro Calderón de la Barca, El alcalde de Zalamea (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sopena, 1931), p. 145.

uses his power to imprison the captain. When the captain refuses to marry Isabel, Crespo swears vengeance. Juan has already attempted to kill the captain, and Crespo, despite his own violent emotions, that must correspond to his son's, orders Juan to be locked up for having attacked his superior officer. The king arrives to intervene in the affair and after hearing both sides suggests that the captain should have been hung instead of merely being imprisoned. This represents a considerable change from the attitude of the king in El médico de su honra in which he condones the husband's killing of his wife for a suspected blight on his honor.

With the demise of Pedro Calderón de la Barca, the Spanish theatre goes into a period of decline or at least, of dormancy. The next dramatist of note to come upon the scene with an important message for or about women is Leandro Fernández de Moratín with his comedy El sí de las niñas. Doña Irene, a widow, is very much in favor of marrying her only daughter to a much older man for the simple reason that he is wealthy. It seems not to matter that the young girl, doña Francisca, is in love with a young man, who, ironically, turns out to be the nephew of don Diego, the intended husband. When don Diego finds out the truth of the situation, he deplores the supposedly proper education of young ladies that teaches them to lie and to hide their true feelings to please their families who, in turn, seem to be only interested in material values with little regard for the spiritual values in life:

He aquí los frutos de la educación. Esto es lo que se llama criar bien a una niña: enseñar a que desmienta y se oculte las pasiones más inocentes con una páfida disimulación. Las juzgan honestas luego que las ven instruidas en el arte de callar y mentir. Se obstinan en que el temperamento, la edad ni el genio no han de tener influencia alguna en sus inclinaciones, o en que su voluntad ha de torcerse al capricho de quien las gobierna. Todo se las permite, menos la sinceridad. Con tal que no digan lo que sienten, con tal que finjan aborrecer lo que más desean, con tal que se presten a pronunciar, cuando se lo manden, aun sí perjuro, sacrilego, origen de tantos escándalos, ya están bien criadas, y se llama excelente educación la que inspira en ellas el temor, la astucia y el silencio de un esclavo. 1

In the nineteenth century, further evidence is shown of the progress of woman toward acceptance on equal terms with men, though to be sure, she has not yet arrived at this goal.

In El drama nuevo, by Manuel Tamayo y Baus, Alicia is married to Yorick, an older man. In spite of her good intentions, she falls in love with Edmundo, a young man who had been received as a member of the family by her husband. Alicia, Yorick and Edmundo are all actors in Shakespeare's theatrical troupe and are performing a play that simulates, to a certain extent, their real life predicament. Alicia and Edmundo, out of respect for Yorick, whom they both love, have not yielded to their desires. The play in which they act shows Alicia in love with Edmundo and unfaithful to her

¹Leandro Fernández de Moratín, El sí de las niñas (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tor, 193?), p. 97.

husband, portrayed by Yorick. When Yorick's suspicions are aroused and the drama becomes real in his mind, he kills Edmundo. The important point relative to woman's position in this very popular play is the sympathetic attitude the audiences must have taken toward a woman, who, though she remained legally faithful to her husband, was in love with another man. The sympathies of the audience must have extended to each member of the triangle, for among them there was no villain; each was a victim of circumstances. Yorick's killing of Edmundo was not an act to cleanse his honor, but rather a crime passionnel.

With the advent of José Echegaray, who was to dominate the Spanish stage for the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there is a resurgence of Romanticism with a thesis. While Echegaray uses no Middle Ages settings, the passions and actions described are rather primitive and decidedly reminiscent of Calderón, and cannot be said to reflect validly the customs of his own time. In Mar sin orillas, for example, a man kills the wife he adores for it is said that she has been unfaithful. He knows that she is innocent of the accusation but feels that his honor must be cleansed. Mancha que limpia is another play in this vein. El gran galeoto, however, may give a subtle hint of woman's progress toward freedom and equality in the author's time. A situation somewhat similar to the one in El drama nuevo exists in this play. Teodora is married to Julian, an older man, who invites Ernesto, the son

of a former benefactor, to live in his home as his son. Since Julian is much engaged in business, he leaves the young people at home alone daily. While their conduct is exemplary, the neighbors speak about what they imagine to be happening. When Julian is killed in a duel fought in place of Ernesto, to defend his own honor, Teodora is left alone in a world that is ready to think the worst of her. Ernesto realizes that he does love Teodora and that the world has played the Galeoto, or go-between. By the end of the play, the suggestion is given that Teodora loves Ernesto, but only when all, including her husband, have turned against her. She does not, at any time, admit to anyone else or to herself that she loves Ernesto in any but a fraternal way. The reader may suspect that she does but the fact is never substantiated.

It should not be surprising that Benito Pérez Galdós, the great liberal, should have favored women's rights. Thus far on the stage we have seen sympathy for women in affairs having to do with their virtue only when they were innocent. Galdós portrays an adultress in Realidad and shows that her husband, far from killing her or the man involved, pardons her and tries to help her to readjust her life. Although this situation must always have existed in real life, men in the past didn't care to talk about it or admit that it might happen. Since Galdós theatre is such a realistic and sane one, it seems only logical that it should be he who first presents this situation on the

stage. This same philosophical serenity on the part of the wronged husband is portrayed again by him in Amor y Ciencia.

In Galdós' theatre, there are many strong women who not only achieve equality with men, but dominate them and dwarf them. Such a woman is doña Perfecta, the protagonist of the play and novel by the same name. The heroine of La loca de la casa marries to save her family from economic ruin and becomes not only the redeemer of her family but of her primitive husband as well. Galdos' plays, like his novels, are dedicated to progress and tolerance, and while woman's rights were not his main concern, they were purposely included in the broad scope of his liberalism. Although dramatic technique was probably the element that least concerned him in the composition of his works, he may be considered a forerunner of the modern dramatic school in his approach to situation and dialogue.

As the nineteenth century comes to a close, Jacinto Benavente's stage techniques provide a model for the development of the future Spanish drama. He makes a sharp break with the school of Echegaray, whose success largely depended upon bombastic speeches, violent passions and turbulent action, and whose appeal was popular and strongly national. Benavente's theatre, on the other hand, was generally universal in tone. It is true, however, that in his later years Benavente tended to use more traditionally Spanish themes and material. Benavente continues the general

trend of admiration for women that was apparent in his predecessors for women in his plays are characteristically strong and ambitious. They may have humble beginnings but are able to rise above them, as does Imperia of La noche del sábado. Benavente favors the right, in extreme cases, to divorce, as in La moral del divorcio and depicts the working wife in El pan comido en la mano. In some plays, however, women are shown as decidedly inferior to men. (El rival de su mujer, Literatura, La verdad inventada.) In answer to the accusation that he suffered occasional attacks of mysogeny, Benavente replied in this manner and showed himself to be at least a sentimental feminist:

El feminismo merece triunfar porque las mujeres, aun cuando en puestos inferiores, siempre han sido sin duda superiores a los hombres, y ¡si mejorasen! ¹

While Benavente continued to write, Gregorio Martínez Sierra produced plays whose themes deal almost exclusively and most often romantically and ideally with some facet of woman's life.

¹Irene Zimmerman, "Benavente's Picture of Spain in the Early 1930," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Chicago, 1937), p. 230.

GREGORIO MARTINEZ SIERRA

Gregorio Martínez Sierra was born in Madrid in 1881, the city in which he was to die sixty-seven years later in 1948 after a brilliant and varied career.

Martínez Sierra showed his literary genius early with the publication of his Poema del trabajo in 1898 at the age of seventeen. He attended the University of Madrid but discontinued his studies there to devote his energy and time to writing. Of his university career, he says:

Estuve a punto de ser filósofo por obra de la Universidad de Madrid, pero me malogré en la Historia Crítica, sin duda por mi horror a las batallas. ¹

In 1900 he married María de la O. Lejárraga, a brilliant and cultured young lady who shared his literary enthusiasm. To her the theatre of don Gregorio is deeply in debt for many ideas, characterizations as well as actual dialogue. While María's name does not appear on the title page with her husband's, it is common knowledge that she was her husband's co-author. Of her refusal to take credit at the time of publication, she says:

¹Andrés González Blanco, Los contemporáneos (Valencia: Editorial Cervantes, 1921), p. 73.

Decidí que los hijos de nuestra unión intelectual no llevarán más que el nombre del padre. Otra [razón], que siendo maestra de escuela, es decir, dispensando un cargo público, no quería empañar la limpieza de mi nombre con la dudosa fama que en aquella época caía como sambenito casi deshonroso sobre toda mujer "literata." Sobre todo literata incipiente. ¡Si se hubiera podido ser célebre desde el primer libro! La fama todo lo justifica. La razón tercera, tal vez la más fuerte, fué romanticismo de enamorada.... Casada, y joven y feliz, acometiome ese orgullo de humildad que domina a toda mujer cuando quiere de veras a un hombre. "Puesto que nuestras obras son hijas del legítimo matrimonio, con el nombre de padre tienen honra bastante." Ahora, anciana, y viuda, véome obligada a proclamar mi maternidad para poder cobrar mis derechos de autora. La vejez, por mucho fuego interior que conserve, está obligada a renunciar a sus romanticismos si ha de seguir viviendo..., aunque ya sea por poco tiempo. 1

María Martínez Sierra was born in San Millán de la Cogulla in 1875 but moved to Madrid where she met Gregorio. She had been trained as a teacher and was teaching at the time of her marriage. The families of both María and Gregorio were of the middle class and had long been friends.

María and Gregorio worked happily and successfully as a team for many years, until Catalina Bárcena, the actress who played the heroine in so many of their plays, came to occupy a similar place in Gregorio's heart. She has been described as the delightful embodiment of the Martínez Sierra heroine, outgoing, independent, beautiful and feminine. When Gregorio saw her, he must have felt an

¹María Martínez Sierra, Gregorio y yo (México: Biografías Ganesa, 1953), pp. 29-30.

emotion similar to Pygmalion's when he saw Aphrodite give life to Galatea. The irony of the situation, however, is that María was probably as responsible for the creation of this ideal as Gregorio. Although he never married Catalina Bárcena, Gregorio lived very close to her for the last twenty-five years of his life, and while she was never a literary collaborator as María had been, she was an artistic collaborator in the stage portrayals. It is not surprising that Gregorio's works are characterized by a strong feminine influence when one realizes that a large measure of his success is the result of the help given him by the two women whose influences span all of his adult life: María Martínez Sierra and Catalina Bárcena.

Gregorio Martínez Sierra, at the outset of his career, was considered a modernist. His works were light and fanciful and very reminiscent of Maeterlinck, whom he admired. Los diálogos fantásticos and Teatro de ensueño, for example, were written in this vein. Under the influence of the more practical María, though, his works became a combination of the ideal with the real. His subject matter, after his first fanciful sallies, came to be most often concerned with small domestic problems which were solved through the resourcefulness of the heroine. While Martínez Sierra follows the lead of his dramatic maestro, Jacinto Benavente, in the use of normal, conversational dialogue, there are frequently passages delicately tinged with

lyricism. While the dialogue never approaches the bombastic quality of Echegaray's, there is real eloquence in some plays. His works prove him to be an incurable optimist. Of this quality of her husband's, which was always an anticipation of future successes, never a dwelling on past defeats, María says:

Para quien hace tan poco desapareció, jamás hubo pasado ni presente: vivió siempre en mañana, en proyecto, en deseo, en ansia de hacer y de lograr lo que no habíamos hecho ni logrado. Mi primer lamento, cuando la voz impersonal de la radiodifusión londinense me trajo la noticia de su muerte, no fué por mí, sino por él. Dentro del alma viuda clamó una voz: "¡Infeliz! Ha muerto sin realizar lo que tanto anhelara." Luego pensé: "Aunque hubiera vivido mil años, lo mismo sería." Porque la esencia de su vivir fué el anhelar. 1

Martínez Sierra treats no really controversial themes nor does he undertake any universal problem of any magnitude. He rather limits himself to problems revolving around the Spanish home. It is for these reasons that his theatre is often considered rather light.

He was not satisfied to be merely a poet and a dramatist. He also wrote highly successful novels, such as Tú eres la paz, Sol de la tarde, La humilde verdad, El amor catedrático and others. In addition, he wrote many essays on the modern woman that have been collected in several volumes. He managed the Teatro Eslava and supervised the movies that were made from his plays in North

¹Ibid., pp. 9-10.

and South America. He directed the publications of his firm, El Renacimiento and was the head of the literary review, Helios. Under his name, though probably with a great deal of help from his linguist wife, were translations to Spanish of the works of Rusiñol, Brieux, Ibsen, Bjorson, Dumas, Goldoni, Barrie, Shakespeare and Maeterlinck.

In this study we are concerned with the various types of feminine characters found in the theatre of Gregorio Martínez Sierra. At times it seems that our author was writing for a stock company that included a conservative mother of forty-five, a giggling ingénue of eighteen, a beautiful, independent heroine of undefined age but who is eternally youthful and a man who might be a conniving don Juan or a spineless señorito. The reasons why he chose these characterizations for the various types seem simple but may be complex and of course all of the pertinent information is not known to this writer. We have only assumed what was probably the case from the material at hand. These literary types are full-length portraits of types well known in Spanish society. In some cases, not only were they well-known social types, but they were types intimately related to the author's own experience, as in the case of the mother, who fits the description that María Martínez Sierra makes of her mother-in-law:

Ni el padre ni la madre tuvieron jamás curiosidad científica ni literaria.... En casa de mis suegros no entró más muestra de literatura que un periódico ultra-conservador ni otro libro que los de texto que exigieron los estudios del primogénito, el cual salió avisado y buen estudiante.

Era mi suegra católica que hubiera merecido ser calvinista, enemiga de toda blandura para sí y para el prójimo, atisbando el pecado hasta en un suspiro, trabajadora encarnizada, exigiendo de todos los suyos intransigente adhesión al dogma católico tal como ella, educada por monjas, lo entendiera, y no les consentía momento de ociosidad material que pudiera dar lugar a un ensueño pecaminoso o siquiera frívolo. 1

From the description of the grandfather that María makes, one might believe that the grandmother, too, had been suggested from his real life experience:

La familia de Gregorio Martínez Sierra pertenecía al grupo comerciante-industrial. Su abuelo materno, hijo del pueblo, vivo de inteligencia y emprendedor, fué uno de los primeros españoles que comprendieron la importancia práctica de la recién nacida electricidad e introdujo en España el uso de no pocas novedades, arriangando su vida al instalar con medios improvisados, en la celebración de un fausto acontecimiento palatino, un arco de triunfo iluminado eléctricamente.... Herencia suya debió ser el infatigable espíritu de empresa, la curiosidad por toda cosa nueva, el desenfrenado amor al trabajo del que durante medio siglo fué mi compañero. 2

The abundant references to the maternal instinct and all that is ideal and beautiful about motherhood may have been inspired by María's own frustrated childhood. It may also have been the expression of her own subconscious feelings, which were never given release in children of her own. According to María, she never wanted children. Rather than play with dolls as a child, she had preferred her cardboard theatre. Her adult preferences did not change, though, of course, her theatre was no longer cardboard and was very much a public rather than a private demonstration.

¹Ibid., pp. 23-24.

²Ibid., p. 23.

Since the plays of Martínez Sierra almost all revolve around women, and since the story is almost always told from a feminine point of view, it is to be expected that the men characters will suffer in comparison to the women. While it is not true, as some writers have said, that there are no strong or admirable men in the theatre of Martínez Sierra, there are very few.

In the following chapters, the name of Gregorio Martínez Sierra will be used to designate the author of the plays discussed, but it should be kept in mind that María was his collaborator.

THE HEROINE: THE MODERN WOMAN

The heroine in the plays of Gregorio Martínez Sierra is essentially Spanish, but she is an independent young woman who desires and actively seeks full equality of opportunity and responsibility in a world that traditionally has favored men. She is attractive without being glamorous and is poised and aggressive without being masculine. She is sympathetic, feminine and strong, all at the same time and is consistently able to solve the domestic problems which confront her and around which most of the plays revolve. Though it is true that the man playing opposite the heroine is often weak in comparison to her, she never intentionally makes him aware of this. She solves whatever situation arises discreetly and takes as little credit for the accomplishments as possible.

The heroine, portrayed so often and for so many years by Catalina Bárcena, is the subtle blend of the ideal and the real that has had such a long and successful tradition in Spanish literature. She has high ideals and ambitions but never loses sight of the smallest problem of those around her. In the case of the heroine who is not a nun, religious fervor is not a factor, but she holds

dear the sanctity of marriage and the home. Divorce never enters her mind as a solution to her marital problems. Rather she seeks to solve them, when they arise, through planned action. She diagnoses the ills of her marriage, then sets about to correct them. She is not one either to bemoan her lot or to resign herself to a life of misery. She is essentially a woman of action.

Estrella, of Mujer, is a rather typical Spanish wife whose consuming interest in life has been her husband. She has lived a simple and very uncomplicated life until she finds out that her husband is involved with another woman. While she is a traditional Spanish wife who does not consider divorce, she shows that she is modern enough to be repelled by what her grandmother or mother might have accepted as a normal part of marriage: the menage à trois:

¿Pretendes que sigamos representando a la ultima moda la divertidísima comedia del amor a tres? Puede que tu pasión ... arrolladora te permitises (Con burla.) hasta hacerme limosna de lo que es mi derecho.... Pero mi dignidad no me permite ciertas combinaciones. Por lo cual (Muy seria.) yo te digo: ¡Elige entre las dos! (Sonriendo.) Ya sé que no te causo pesar ninguno, porque es precisamente lo que has ido buscando con tus ... sinceridades.... 1

Estrella loves her husband and has no intention of accepting defeat at the hands of another woman. Three months have elapsed between the first and second acts and

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras completas (Madrid: Estrella, 1920), VIII, 43.

by the setting we see immediately that Estrella has spent the time in analyzing her difficulties and has taken steps to change the situation. Instead of the very conventional furniture, decorous Watteau painting and the rather drab maid that were in evidence in the first act, we see a bold arrangement of furniture, a painting of a nude that has replaced the Watteau and a sculptured piece of Cupid and Psyche. The atmosphere is seductive, modern and infinitely more interesting. There are cigarettes and coffee available and a very pretty and refined young maid to serve. A change is equally apparent in Estrella. She now wears very chic clothes and has learned to smoke cigarettes and is frequently absent from home without making any explanations about her activities. Gabriel, who has been away for these three months, is taken aback and somewhat dismayed at his wife's new-found independence, although he attempts not to show it. Estrella is giving him a taste of his own medicine and he does not like it. When he complains that she is going out on his first evening home, she says:

(Con vehemencia dolidá.) Después de una ausencia de tres meses, ¿verdad? ¿Qué quieres? ¿Que me siente en una butaquita, frente a ti, que mande encender la chimenea, porque a fin de septiembre son los anocheceres un poquito más frescos que lo eran en junio, cuando te marchaste, y que te pida (Sonriendo.) que me cuentes tus impresiones de viaje? ¿Me las vas a contar? ¿Entonces? Ya sabemos que has ido ... de negocios ... y que las mujeres no entendemos de eso.... Cuando te fuiste, dejándome completamente sola, al día siguiente de casarse mi hermana, me guardé muy bien de preguntarte a donde ibas ni con quién ... ¡pero al cerrar la

puerta, perdiste para siempre el derecho de preguntarme a mí! ¡Mi vida es mía! Agradece el silencio discreto con que dejo a la tuya correr libre y feliz por los caminos que más te convienen y en la compañía que más te agrada. Aprovecha mi buena disposición y déjame a mí en paz. Es lo único que pido, ¡y me parece que bien me lo he ganado! 1

Although Estrella is essentially a traditional Spanish wife of her period, she feels that she and Gabriel are equal partners and that in their marriage, he has no more right to stray than she. When crisis strikes her marriage, she becomes fiercely aware of the necessity of this equality that she wants, and makes Gabriel aware of it too. Since he has the liberty to come and go without question, she takes the same liberty. Since he has sought companionship and love outside of marriage, she will at least have the satisfaction of tormenting him with the thought that she has done likewise. She wants him to think that she is not helpless or without admirers and wants him to realize that she is still desirable and that for the moment she is lost to him. Her intention is to awaken masculine pride in him so that he will be challenged to win her back even though he is her husband. She has roses sent to herself with a suggestive note in English and then manages to drop the note so that it will be found by Gabriel. Her ultimate coup, however, is allowing Gabriel to believe that she is out with her lover, when in reality she is in her room. After searching the streets frantically for his

¹Ibid., p. 73.

wife, Gabriel returns home at three in the morning and bursts into Estrella's room where he finds the very sleepy but still dignified lady's maid, Carlota, keeping vigil. After a few loud words with her, a small light goes on that illuminates with a rosy glow the sleepy face of Estrella as she rises from the bed seductively swathed in silk, tulle and lace. The serviceable bathrobe that she might have worn in the first act is no longer part of her attire. She hides her feelings behind yawns of feigned disinterest as Gabriel becomes more and more desperate. She sends him away in the hope that if she can be strong for a little while longer, she will have won him back permanently. She has learned from this experience that independence in a woman is more likely to be appreciated than blind devotion and submission.

Rosario, of Sueño de una noche de agosto, is the epitome of the Spanish young lady who ardently desires the freedom to assert herself and be the mistress of her own fate. Resenting the liberty of her three brothers to come and go without any explanation to anyone, she feels the great injustice of being a woman with many civil liberties but no personal ones. She envies their right to work and be respected for goals they have accomplished. Rosario does not want to shine by the light reflected by her brothers or the man she may some day marry. She wants to be responsible to and for herself alone, as she explains to her grandmother:

No les envidio la libertad de pecar, ni la de divertirse, ni siquiera la de salir por el mundo en busca de su propio amor, mientras que nosotras nos tenemos que estar esperando, ¡eventadas!, a que el amor ajeno se antoje venir a buscarnos.... Les envidio la fé, la confianza que tienen en sí mismos, la seguridad de vencer al destino por sus propias fuerzas.... Ya les oyes.... (Mirando en derredor como si estuvieran presentes sus hermanos.) "Trabajaré, ganaré ..., lucharé...." ¿Y yo? (Imitando a Pepe.) "Pues tú, te casarás, naturalmente." (Levantándose enfadada.) ¡Te casarás! Es decir, hablando en plata, te dejarás comprar y mantener por un caballero que haya triunfado.... Y si no me caso. (Imitando a Emilio.) "Tú, pídele a Dios que nosotros lleguemos a ricos, y verás que vidita te pasas." (Enfadada.) ¡Pues no me da la gana de pasarme vidita ninguna a costa de nadie! (Imitando a Mario.) "¡Ahí va la hermana de Mario Castellanos!" (Muy digna.) ¡Qué fatuidad! ¡No es eso, señor mío, no es eso! Lo que a mí me hace falta que digan, si dicen, es: ¡Ahí va Rosario Castellanos ... ella ... ella ... ella ... sí, señor, ella misma, fea o bonita, tonta o discreta, triunfante o derrotada, pero orgullosa de su propia vida y no de los laureles de ningún hombre. ¡Ea! 1

On another occasion, Rosario says to her grandmother:

Acabo de cumplir veintitres años: soy mayor de edad; la ley me concede el uso pleno de no sé cuántos derechos civiles; puedo vender, comprar, emprender un negocio, tirar mi corta hacienda por la ventana, marcharme a América, meterme a cupletista..., en vista de lo cual desearía tener un llavín, lo mismo que cualquiera de mis hermanos, y usarle para entrar y salir libremente como ellos, sin darle cuenta a nadie, a cualquier hora del día y de la noche.... ¿Qué te parecería? 2

One evening as Rosario puts out the light to retire, the wind blows a man's hat into her room and in a

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Sueño de una noche de agosto. Ed. May Gardner and Arthur L. Owen (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1926), pp. 13-14.

²Ibid., p. 13.

few moments, the owner appears at the window to look for it. Believing the room to be empty, the well-dressed but hatless gentleman climbs in to retrieve his possession. On entering the room, however, he is confronted by a terrified Rosario, and in trying to assure her that his intentions are honorable and that he seeks only his hat, her hair becomes entangled in his buttons. Rosario's hairdo is symbolic of her rebellion and desire for freedom. She wears it unbound and defends her right to wear it as she pleases:

El Aparecido: He querido decir tan ... enredoso ... se engancha en todas partes. ¿Es que le lleva Ud. siempre flotando al viento?

Rosario: (Con mal humor.) ¡Le llevo como me parece! 1

We are reminded of the injustice of a double standard of morality for men and women as we will be reminded again in La pasión and Torre de marfil.

Rosario: Si Ud. salta por mi ventana y el mundo se figura que salta Ud., con mi consentimiento, su fama de Ud. no va perdiendo nada en la opinión, y en cambio la mía se hunde para siempre ... ¿le parece a Ud. bien? 2

Although Rosario is from a well-to-do family and has no financial obligation to work, she feels that she wants to do something for her own self-satisfaction and stimulation:

¹Ibid., p. 28.

²Ibid., p. 32.

¿Ganarme la vida? Es verdad ... no lo necesito ... lo cual quiere decir que en mi familia hay hombres que pueden trabajar para mí.... (Patética.) ¡Esa es precisamente la amargura más grande, la humillación más negra de mi destino de mujer! Quiero trabajar, quiero ganar el pan que como. ¡Estoy cansada de ser un parásito! 1

As we will observe in the chapter on the idealization of motherhood, Martínez Sierra seems to question the wisdom of placing women behind convent walls. He shows the frustration of women who are denied the rights of natural motherhood, and shows that a woman in such a position has a sense of futility, loss and incompleteness for which no amount of rules, work, ceremony or religious devotion can compensate. Although the sacrifices of these women may be heroic and touching, Martínez Sierra favors an active public and domestic life for woman rather than a cloistered one.

While all of Martínez Sierra's plays seem to advocate marriage for women, it seems that he would not have them devote all of their time and talents to the home. The typical Martínez Sierra heroine combines successfully a career with marriage. No doubt the feminist María was responsible, to a great extent, for this factor in the plays. The right of the woman to work outside the home was defended in such a way as to indicate the writer's belief that the best wife and mother was the one who did

¹Ibid., p. 38.

not stagnate in the home but who got out and developed her talents and intellect. He felt that she would thereby be better able to understand her husband and her children and would be contributing to the progress and economy of a country that stood sorely in need of both. We are shown the potential power of woman in various heroines who cherish their liberty and their right to take their place independently in a society that begins to cede them at least some professional equality. These are the capable, ambitious young women so admired by María Martínez Sierra.

The woman in these plays is never the feminist in the sense that she is part of an organization to fight for women's rights. Perhaps the Spanish personality is too independent to conform in such a way or perhaps it would have been considered unfeminine. At any rate, the heroine who represents the modern woman in Martínez Sierra's plays, exerts herself and is active because she herself wants to be, not because she is blazing a path for the future of womankind. Her brand of feminism is typically Spanish in that it is an individual effort and is only subtly related to feminism in the sociological sense of the word.

Fernanda, of Seamos felices, is in her own way a feminist if we accept the definition of feminism that Martínez Sierra gives in La mujer moderna:

... entiendo por feminismo la igualdad de la mujer y el hombre en derechos civiles y políticos, y por lo tanto, la facultad de intervenir efectivamente y directamente en la vida de la nación. ¹

Fernanda is a pianist who has always dreamed of a concert career. She lives with her mother, a member of the older generation that felt it was in poor taste for a girl in the upper class to do work of any kind outside of her own home. When Fernanda falls in love and marries Emilio, she solves the problem with her mother temporarily. Suddenly, however, she is presented with the opportunity to make a concert tour. She will be paid well and believes that her husband will be delighted since he hasn't had the economic success that he had hoped for. She believes that he will be happy at the prospect of the unexpected trip with all their expenses paid. Emilio is a modern young man, but his modernity has its limitations. He is not happy at the idea of his wife's enjoying economic success while he is suffering failure, and he is particularly unhappy at the suggestion that she support both on her income, even though this would be a temporary arrangement. Emilio is academically in favor of the equality of the sexes, but loses his objectivity when the problem touches his own life:

Fernanda: Sí. (Sonríe.) Pero piensa que yo te dijese: "Vida mía, ... puesto que eres mi amor, ... renuncia a todo, ... vive para quererme, ... exclusivamente, ...

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, La mujer moderna (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1930).

no más esperanzas de ser algo en el mundo, de afirmar tu poder, de dominar la vida con tu arte, con tu voluntad. ... Adórame ... y deja que te adore ... ¿Para qué más?" ¿No te despreciarías a ti mismo si te sintieras capaz de aceptar? ¿No me despreciarías a mí por haberme atrevido a proponértelo? ¡Verdad!

Emilio: (Sincero.) Es distinto. ... Soy hombre. ...

Fernanda: (Con terror y con pasión al mismo tiempo.)

¡Emilio!

Emilio: (Realmente sobrecogido por el tono en que ella ha pronunciado su nombre.) ¿Qué?

Fernanda: (Pasándose las manos por los ojos en su gesto familiar de espantar negruras y mirándole como si no le conociese.) ¿Eres tú ... quien ha dicho eso? Tú un hombre tan moderno ... en tu arte, ... yo creía que en tu espíritu, ... has sido capaz de decir ... de decir, ... de pensar ... esa (Sonríe.) ¿Aberración? (Repite.) "Yo soy hombre" ... es decir, soy un ser ... sobrenatural, ... el único del par que formamos tú y yo que tiene derecho a la vida (Se ríe con buen humor.) ¡Es broma! ¡Qué tonto eres y que susto me has dado! (El la mira con bastante desconcierto.) ¡De repente creí que me había casado con el hombre de las cavernas! ¡Ja, ja, ja! ¡Pídemelo perdón! 1

Fernanda is a modern girl who treasures her liberty and has a deep and long-standing ambition for a career. Her music teacher considers her talent to be an extraordinary one and feels strongly that she should share it with the world. Fernanda, as well as many another Martínez Sierra heroine, refutes the opinion Lord Byron expresses in Don Juan that:

Man's love is of man's life a thing apart;
'Tis woman's whole existence. 2

While she loves her husband and is happy in her home, she feels frustrated and incomplete. The challenge

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras completas, XIII, 90-91.

²George Gordon Byron, Don Juan (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Dover and Co., Inc., 1935), p. 94.

of the home is not sufficient and she feels thwarted in her desire to be recognized and respected for her accomplishments. These feelings are not new or peculiar only to Fernanda. Doubtless they are frustrations that have been borne with varying degrees of patience down through the ages. Fernanda, however, is fortunate enough to live in a changing Spain where her ambitions are viewed with some degree of tolerance and sympathy. The Generation of '98 favored liberalization and a breaking away from the old ways of life. The feeling was that a general stagnation had been at the root of Spain's disaster and that drastic changes had to be made. Young people the world over have always favored more freedom for themselves so they would hardly fail to rejoice and rise to the occasion when they heard the suggestion from the lips of their elders. Women saw their opening and fought for more rights in the changing society. Most of all, these women wanted to prove that they had talents that were valuable outside the home. They wanted a fair market for their abilities in which they would not be discriminated against or paid less simply because they were women. They wanted equality and the right to shoulder responsibilities, if it became desirable or necessary, and to work side by side with their men. As Fernanda says to Emilio:

¡Afortunadamente! ¡Y yo tu mujer! ¿Ya no te acuerdas de lo que te dijo el cura? "Para tu mutuo auxilio."

¿Mutuo, eh? ¡Si vieras el gusto que me da gastar el dinero que tu ganas! ¿Por qué te ha de dar a ti menos que gastemos juntos el que gane yo? 1

Fernanda would have liked to erase forever the image of the little woman who is supremely happy and normal and respectable only when she is in her own home performing small services for the adored members of her family. She speaks with sarcasm of this attitude:

Fernanda: Le he dado a firmar el contrato ... y no ha querido. ... Se opone ... terminadamente a que yo dé conciertos.

Cristina: ¿Por qué?

Fernanda: Por nada, ... es decir, por lo mismo que mi madre ... corrección, abnegación, modestia femenina, amor exclusivo, ... huerto cerrado, perfume misterioso que se evapora, ... palabras sin sentido, no sé ... él, un hombre tan moderno, ... ime parece mentira! 2

She feels that the concept of the wife whose every thought centers around her husband is a romantic one perpetuated by men because the picture pleases them and is accepted by women because they haven't the education or the freedom to do anything else. When Fernanda says that she will work because she needs to be a person in her own right, and that love, no matter how great, is insufficient to keep her satisfied, she touches a universal note that women, the world over, will understand:

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras Completas, XIII, 85.

²Ibid., p. 89.

(Separándose de él con un poco de impaciencia.) ¡Ay, no seas testarudo! Parece mentira que con el talento que tienes, finjas creer ... porque creerlo de verdad no es posible, ... que yo, ¡YO! soy capaz de pasarme el día entero, desde que te marchas por la mañana hasta que vuelvas por la noche, pensando únicamente: "Ya falta una hora menos para verle. ... ¡Cómo le quiero! Ahora estará subido en un andamio. ... ¡Cómo le quiero! Esta noche, al volver, subirá la escalera muy de prisa ... ¡Cómo le quiero! ¡Me dará un beso aquí! (Señala graciosamente un rinconcito en la mejilla cerca de la boca.) ¡Cómo le quiero, cómo le quiero, cómo le quiero!" Hijo, te lo confieso con sinceridad, ... te quiero ... hasta un poquito demasiado, (Sonríe con picardía.) digo, ... me parece, ... ¡pero si no tuviera otra cosa que hacer, me moriría de aburrimiento! (Coge el contrato que está sobre la mesa y se lo ofrece sonriendo.) En vista de lo cual, firma, hijo mío. 1

While the traditional Spanish mother is constantly preoccupied with institutions, conventions, appearances and opinions, the heroine concerns herself with the more abstract values of truth, honesty and freedom. She wants the right to choose her own husband and insists that there are more criteria than financial or social gain involved in this choice. María Luisa, of El corazón ciego, has a special problem. She has been attracted to a man who has left her in a compromising situation. She swears to her family that nothing serious has happened and that she will not go out alone again. When tongues begin to wag in the town, María Luisa's mother becomes anxious for her daughter to accept the proposal of Antonio, a penniless young man who is obviously marrying her for her money. The mother is anxious for the protection she feels marriage offers her daughter at this time. To María Luisa, the thought

¹Ibid., p. 87.

that to be honorable and to be respected one has to marry someone one does not love is hideous. She sees the hypocrisy of people and is revolted. She feels trapped by her mother, by institutions, by society, by conventions, and by gossip.

María Luisa: (Violenta y casi delirante.) ¿Qué? ¿Que también, según tú, merezco el mal que me pasa? ¡Sí, sí, sí lo merezco, por necia, por ilusa, por inocente! Sí, he querido, he querido a un hombre con toda mi alma ... creo que, ni yo misma lo sabía; pero ahora lo sé, ahora que le he perdido lo sé ... ¡y me pesa! ¡Miserable él, miserables todos! Y por lo visto, no hay remedio! ¡Para tener honra, no hay que ser honrada; para poder ir con la frente alta, para poder vivir en este mundo hipócrita, siendo mujer, no hay más recurso que colgarse legalmente del brazo de un hombre, por deshonrado que él esté! Es curioso ... muy curioso: con un juramento en falso y una firma, da honra el que no la tiene. ... ¡Hay que casarse!

Aurelia: (Asustada.) ¡Cálmate, cálmate!

María Luisa: ¡Hay que casarse! ¿Verdad? Tú lo has dicho. ... Para que Pierrot y todos los Pierrots del mundo me respeten, me tengo que casar; para que tú, mi madre, te quedes tranquila, me tengo que casar; para que tus amigas, las señoras correctas, no me abrumen con su noble desprecio, me tengo que casar; para que las niñas no me insulten, con su curiosidad del mal género, me tengo que casar. ... ¿Con quién? ¡Con uno! ¿Con cuál? ¡No importa! Con el más cobarde, que a fuerza de tenerle miedo a la vida, es él que a más se atreve. 1

María Luisa has the preoccupation of the typical Martínez Sierra heroine: equality of the sexes, professional as well as moral. Both she and Antonio, whom she ultimately marries, have made their mistakes in the past, but Antonio would like to believe that his are less grave because he is a man:

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras Completas, X, 99.

Antonio: ¡Es muy distinto!
 María Luisa: (Con apasionamiento.) ¡Es igual! (Se aparta de él.) Cada uno quiere a quien quiere. (Bajando la voz.) ¡En el cariño no hay por qué! 1

After their marriage, María Luisa and Antonio have taken up residence in Tangier, where Antonio is struggling to make a lot of money so that he will not feel that he is being supported by his rich wife. In order to fill her life, María Luisa has begun to study Arabic. She feels that her knowledge of the language may serve her husband in some way. The Martínez Sierra heroine is not content to lead a sedentary and perhaps stagnating life. María Luisa, for example, feels compelled to work or do something outside of her domestic duties that will further the career of her husband and give her a feeling of accomplishment. (Often shared work is the basis for building a sound marriage that had begun under rather shaky circumstances, as is the case with El corazón ciego, Amanecer and the novel El amor catedrático.) Sidi Mohamed, María Luisa's tutor, gently criticizes her way of helping her husband by telling her what he feels is the obligation of the wife:

María Luisa: No como mimarido, sino con mi marido; quiero ayudarle. ¿No es mi obligación?
 Sidi Mohamed: La obligación de la esposa buena no es ayudar al hombre en su trabajo, sino en su descanso. La mujer es el jardín del hombre fatigado, la flor que perfuma su sueño, el agua que calma su sed. ¿Quieres ser útil al hombre? Dale el placer, dale los hijos, que son el fruto de su vida, dale la casa con silencio, la sombra con paz, dale el amor. 2

¹ Ibid., p. 29.

² Ibid., p. 116.

Although Sidi Mohamed presents a very attractive and convincing picture of the matrimonial idyl, María Luisa knows herself and knows that she will be happiest being a partner with her husband. Equality is almost an obsession with the Martínez Sierra heroine.

María Luisa: Quiero vivir aquí ... en silencio ...
(Viendo que no deja de mirarla.) contigo ... traba-
jando. ...

Antonio: (Con protesta masculina.) ¡Tú, no!

María Luisa: ¡Yo, sí! (Sonriendo.) ¡Soy muy orgullosa!
No quiero, como dice Mohamed, ser el jardín del hombre
fatigado; quiero plantar a medias y cosechar a medias.
(Alargándole la mano.) ¿Quieres? 1

El palacio triste is superficially a fairy-tale type of play, but the protagonist is a very down-to-earth young princess who fits perfectly into the pattern of Martínez Sierra's modern woman. Princess Marta had left the palace three years before at the age of twelve to look for the meaning of life. She became tired of her idle life and of her sterile knowledge, and decided that she would explore the world for herself. Like the Martínez Sierra heroine, she is brave and her main defense is action. After three years, she returns to the palace but finds that little has changed in her absence. She tells her little brothers about the wonderful things that exist outside their limited world. She tells them that outside of their fairy-tale lies reality and that it is beautiful. Martínez Sierra's optimism and lyrical expression are most apparent in Marta's speech to her little brothers:

No hay duendes, no, pero en el corazón de la tierra están guardados los tesoros; no hay ninfas en las fuentes ni dentro de los árboles, pero los árboles dan sombra y buen olor, y muchos, fruta para comer y esencias, y flores que sirven de adorno y de remedio, y las fuentes tienen el agua clara, que es limpieza y salud y vida de la tierra; no hay hadas en los bosques, pero si los niños pierden el camino y se les echa encima la noche, le encuentran sin que lo diga nadie. 1

Marta is the practical girl who had been frustrated with her studies in the palace for they seemed unrelated to life. She has a burning desire to earn a living and be independent. Rather than be a parasite, she wants to work for what she has. She is prouder of her little cottage in the woods than of her palace, for she has worked for it, and feels a pride of accomplishment and ownership. The doll that she will buy with the money she has worked to save will be dearer to her than the hundreds of dolls she has been given in the palace, because she will have worked and sacrificed to get it:

¡No señor! Ahora tengo una casa mía, toda de madera, chiquita como un puño, pero donde hago siempre lo que me da la realísima gana; y al lado de la casa un huerto chico también, con una parra que da uvas blancas y otra que da uvas negras, y un cerezo, y un guindo, y un peral, y un manzano, y un cuadro de judías y otro de berzas y otro de guisantes, y muchísimas flores, y una colmena para que las abejas hagan miel, y una cabra que dá leche tibia, icon una espuma! (A Juan.) Sí, sí, relámete, y un borriquillo para llevar la fruta y la verdura que me sobran al mercado y comprar con los cuartos que me dan una porción de

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, El palacio triste (New York: Ginn and Co., 1921), p. 30.

cosas: ropa, jabón, cintas para el moño, libros de cuentos, estampas, papel de escribir, esta gargantilla de cristal. ¡Qué sé yo! Con lo que ahora ahorre de aquí al invierno quiero comprarme una muñeca así de grande. 1

Marta has come back to get her brothers and their mother so that they may live happily together, each contributing something to the life and happiness of the others. The normal family group that works and loves in harmony is Marta's dream. She, her mother and her brothers, will live far from the dark palace in the light of liberty and love, where their mother may share their dreams as well as their table and where she may kiss them when she wishes:

Marta: Nos marchamos todos ahora mismo.

Teodora: ¿Todos?

Marta: Augusto, Reinaldo, Juan, tú, yo ...

Teodora: Sí, hija, sí. ...

Lejos de este palacio, de este tedio; a vivir solos, libres; ¡tú, con nosotros, madre!

Teodora: ¿Dónde, hija?

Marta: Con nosotros ... donde puedas besarnos siempre que te lo pida el corazón. 2

Marta, even at fifteen, is a person of decision and action. She seeks responsibility rather than protection. She epitomizes the Martínez Sierra heroine in her search for love, responsibility and freedom:

(Gravemente.) Van a vivir fuera de este palacio triste, lejos del tedio, al aire, al sol, fuera de las palabras que no quieren decir nada indudable, con libertad, con responsabilidad, con amor, con deberes que sirven de algo, con leyes que no vengan de libros viejos, pasando por bocas de maestros que no las entienden, sino que nazcan en el fondo mismo de sus conciencias. ¡Van a vivir como hombres! ¡Paso franco! 3

¹Ibid., p. 31.

²Ibid., p. 34.

³Ibid., p. 37.

In the Martínez Sierra theatre there are a series of heroines who seem to be more admirable because they work to support themselves. Unlike Rosario of Sueño de una noche de agosto and Fernanda of Seamos felices, who want to work to prove a point, these heroines work from pure financial necessity.

Madame Pepita in the play by the same name has established a very lucrative dressmaking business and has supported herself and her daughter for many years. In La mujer del héroe, Mariana supports not only herself and her several children on the proceeds from her ironing shop, but she supports her husband as well. The title character of La suerte de Isabelita has worked long and hard in a shop which makes artificial flowers, and dreams of winning the national lottery and taking life easy. When her dreams come true and she wins the premio gordo, she quits her job to take a trip abroad. She falls in love on board ship with a wealthy Spaniard who believes that she is his social equal. When Isabelita disillusioned him with the truth of her background, they separate and Isabelita, having spent all of her money, returns to the flower shop where she is loved and respected for herself, not for her station or money. Juan, Isabelita's shipboard sweetheart, meanwhile, has become aware of her true nobility of spirit and comes to the flower shop to ask her to be his bride.

Vida y dulzura, written in collaboration with the Catalan artist and writer, Santiago Rusiñol, was Martínez Sierra's first dramatic effort to be seen on the boards.

Julia, the heroine of the play, must have been the prototype of what was called, derisively or admiringly, the modern woman around the turn of the century. She has an education that had formerly been accorded only to men. She expresses her convictions forthrightly and without apology, for she feels that they may be of some interest or value to others. Gay, witty and like a catalyst at work, she manages to convert the men, at least, to her philosophy of life, which includes large measures of laughter, love and the enjoyment of life. She is married to a city dramatist but has come unaccompanied to the country to visit her relatives and to get some rest and fresh air. In spite of her independence and erudition, she is attractively feminine and completely human. Unlike her scholarly relatives whose research seems unconcerned with humanity, she feels that learning should make life happier or more beautiful. To the extent that she thinks that all things should be useful, she is a pragmatist. The most important factor in life, she feels, is love, for without it, nothing else can matter. Sterile wisdom is a commodity she thinks the world can do without. She sums up her philosophy of life this way:

¡Pero éscuchenme, infelices! Si no hablan Uds. nunca de amor, ¿Cómo pasan la vida en este pueblo? ¡Si el amor es lo único que vale la pena de vivir! ¡Si todo va a parar lo mismo! Que ya no hablen los viejos, lo comprendo; pero Plinio, y Uds. ... ¡Los jóvenes! ¡Qué lástima les tengo! Suerte que no lo dicen Uds. en serio, porque si no, sería una cosa de renegar de la sabiduría. 1

The philosophy of Genio alegre of the Quintero brothers is similar to the one expressed in Vida y dulzura. Consolación puts it in these words:

Yo he hecho siempre, y hago, y haré todo lo posible para alegrar mi vida y la de aquellos que me rodean. Alegrar la vida es quererla, y quererla es una manera de adorar a Dios que nos la ha dado. Convéznase Ud. don Eligio: El que está alegre es más noble, más bueno, menos egoísta, más fuerte. 2

Both plays put the accent on happiness for the present. Love and happiness are two terms that seem to become interchangeable in both plays.

After reading Vida y dulzura and noting the personality and attitudes of Julia, María Martínez Sierra's commentary on Santiago Rusiñol's opinion of women is interesting and suggests that his role in the composition of the play was a minor one:

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras completas, I, 34.

²Serafín y Joaquín Álvarez Quintero, Obras completas, II, "El genio alegre" (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S. A., 1947), 1689.

En sus comedias, en sus novelas, en sus ensayos no hay más que hombres ... y algún suave y desvanecido fantasma de mujer. Porque a las mujeres nunca nos entendió. Nos tenía por seres irresponsables, sin otra virtud que la instintiva de la abnegación maternal, lindos pájaros que cruzan la vida del hombre cantando, para adormecerle, canciones sin sentido, llorando cuando quieren lograr un capricho, gatas que saben ronronear imitando el arrullo de la paloma, y que, a mitad de arrullo, dan un arañazo ... por el gusto de afilarse las uñas; flores en el jardín del hombre, pero flores cuyo perfume hay que respirar sin demasiada insistencia porque suelen dar jaquecas molestas. ... Un día le oí decir, ¡y con qué convencimiento! "La mujer no ha nacido para ser la perdición del hombre; la mujer no ha nacido para la felicidad del hombre; la mujer ha nacido para molestar al hombre." Sentía hacia las hembras pánico mortal, no por fatales, sino por insoportables. Y en toda su obra se nota este desdén tan profundo y sincero que llega en ocasiones a ser compasivo. A veces--pocas--al estudiar un tipo de mujer del pueblo, su claridad de visión le hace casi topar con la fuente escondida, pero aun entonces no comprende del todo lo que va diciendo el agua que corre. Siempre hemos leído las comedias que estábamos escribiendo y le hemos pedido su opinión y consejo porque era maestro en técnica dramática y consejero y crítico leal. Y recuerdo que al escuchar el tercer acto de nuestro "Amanecer" exclamó indignadísimo: ¡"Ese final inverosímil! ¡No hay mujer capaz de alegrarse de que su marido se quede sin dinero!" No podía creer en el desinterés de mujer ninguna. Su antifeminismo era el de la vieja copla andaluza: "De la costilla del hombre hizo Dios a la mujer para darnos a los hombres ese hueso que roer." 1

Since it seems unlikely that Rusiñol would have created such a character as Julia, and since she is so typical of the heroines to follow in the theatre of Gregorio Martínez Sierra, it would seem likely that she was the creation of the latter. Indeed, the entire play may have been largely his. Rusiñol was a generous artist, always

¹María Martínez Sierra, Gregorio y yo, pp. 51-52.

ready to help and encourage young talent. Martínez Sierra had not succeeded in having his plays performed because he had become known to empresarios through his Modernist poetry, and a Modernist, at that time, was considered to be an incurable idealist who wrote lyric and symbolic works that were not understood by the respetable público. Since the life blood of the empresarios was the box office, their attitude was understandable. When, however, so formidable and popular an artist as Santiago Rusiñol was willing to place his name in collaboration with the young playwright, the staging was assured.

Rusiñol wrote a Catalan version of the play called Els savis de Vila Trista (Los sabios de Villa Triste) which opened in Barcelona simultaneously with the Spanish version in Madrid. Rosario Pino, who was considered the best actress of the day, played the part of Julia and doubtless contributed greatly to the success of the work. So it was through the generosity of a friend that Martínez Sierra got his opening into the theatre and it was largely thanks to a woman's role and the actress who interpreted it that his career as a dramatist was successfully launched.

Isabel, of La pasión, has a nature that is dreamy, sweet and fiery at the same time. She is very feminine but treasures her liberty. She is an actress, as her mother was before her, and is about to make the same mistake that her mother made. Her mother had fallen in love with an

adventurer who left her with a daughter to rear alone. Although she knows first-hand the problems that befall the offspring of a socially unsanctioned love affair, she persists in being unconventional. She goes out alone for walks when she wants to and insists on continuing the relationship with Alfredo, a very immature and selfish young man, in spite of the counsel of Pascual, an older friend of the family. In this case, her love of independence and liberty bring her unhappiness, a rather novel idea in the plays of Martínez Sierra. Perhaps he wanted to convey that liberty for women must be tempered with judgement and a sense of responsibility, and that equality simply for the sake of promiscuity was not what he had in mind. Isabel continues to flaunt convention and ultimately has Alfredo's child outside of wedlock. On the eve of the opening of an important play in which Isabel has the leading role, a friend tells her that Alfredo plans to marry the very unattractive daughter of a wealthy politician for he needs the money. At this moment, Alfredo enters and confesses sheepishly that what she has heard is true, but that he sees no reason for them to change their relationship. Isabel, crushed by the realization that she has ruined her life and at least hampered the chances for a happy life for her daughter, attempts to end her baby's life and her own by jumping from the balcony. A family friend, Pascual, whose entrance is perfectly timed, stops her and tries to

calm her. He reminds her that it is time to go to the theatre, suggesting that her salvation is in dedicating herself to work, at least for the present. The rehabilitative power of work is an oft-repeated message.

Another working girl, Teresa, of Torre de marfil, has a similar problem. She meets the Marqués Gabriel, who has been completely dominated all his life by his mother. She responds to his need to be loved, but hers is not the consuming passion that Isabel felt in La pasión. Sensing the great tragedy in Gabriel's life and his lack of will and strength, she responds protectively, almost maternally. In a way, she becomes the mother he has always wanted and gives him the tenderness and belief in himself that he has always needed. For several months, the marqués and Teresa live happily on the money he has left and on what Teresa earns as a seamstress. Gabriel, who had been a student, has abandoned his classes. The marquesa, his mother, at last finds out where he is and when she comes to get him, he faints and is carried unconscious from the little home that he and Teresa have happily shared without any blessing but that of their mutual love. In the months to follow, Gabriel is sick and delirious. Teresa writes him telling him of the son they have had and that she has almost died, but the letters are intercepted by Gabriel's mother. When Gabriel is better, Teresa comes to the house and tells him of her letters and their contents. He seems to gather

strength from knowing of Teresa's deep and sincere love and of their child. For the first time in his life, he has responsibilities and feels that he is a man. He decides to leave his idle existence and his domineering and scheming mother for a life of honor and happiness with those he loves.

These two plays, La pasión, written in 1914 and Torre de marfil, written in 1924, deal with the illegitimate child, although this theme is subordinate to the main plot. In the first play, Isabel makes a mistake in judgment and suffers for it. The basic as well as the social inequality of the sexes is shown in that Isabel must accept the responsibility of their child and is made to feel guilt while Alfredo feels neither responsibility nor guilt. He is even left free to marry whom he pleases. His reputation is left intact and if anything, is enhanced by the knowledge that a beautiful young actress has lost her head over him. In Torre de marfil, the treatment is somewhat different. Teresa does not flaunt her freedom simply because she feels entitled to it, as Isabel does in La pasión. She gives Gabriel her love because that seems to be the most natural thing to do. Her actions have no overtones of feminism but are the actions of a kind and generous girl who loves another more than she loves herself. She shows the spirit of feminism in her refusal to accept defeat when Gabriel is taken from her and knows that he loves her and will come to her when he knows the truth. This play has a happy ending in the

reunion of Gabriel and Teresa. Teresa has suffered temporarily but we are led to believe that great happiness awaits her. In the case of Isabel, we feel that she will continue to suffer for her mistake in judgement and that her immediate hope of salvation lies in her career, for work is a healing balm.

In La pasión as well as in El corazón ciego, there is an implied criticism of the double standard that punishes the woman who errs and sets free her equally guilty paramour.

La Tirana, of a play by the same name, works as a singer in a dance hall. The play as well as its heroine are a combination of realism and idealism. Tirana has earned her title by being aloof to the attitudes of those around her and by clinging tenaciously to her own ideals. She wants to prove that, although she must work for a living, she is decent and will be respected. Although she sings suggestive songs and listens to nonsense from men because it is part of her job, her private life is above reproach. Her exalted concept of honor is reinforced by her constant struggle to live a decent life in the midst of those who would have her follow another pattern.

Although Tirana is idealistic about her responsibility to lead a decorous life, she is realistic about earning a living. Unlike Rosario of Sueño de una noche de agosto, she does not work to prove a point; she works

because she has to. Her realism in this respect is contrasted to the idealism of Quintín, a young man who loves her:

Quintín: Gracias a que de todo le consuela a uno la esperanza, la visión de la gloria futura, el ideal ...

Tirana: ¡El ideal! ¿Y eso con qué se come?

Quintín: No se come.

Tirana: Lo siento, chico.

Quintín: ¡Pero se sueña!

Tirana: Algo es algo.

Quintín: ¡Es mucho, Lucía, muchísimo!

Tirana: ¡Ah, sí!

(Música)

Quintín: ¡El ideal, el ideal es una cosa de una importancia capital!

Tirana: ¡El ideal, el ideal! Lástima grande que no alimente un poco más.

Quintín: Yo me consuelo de mis penas soñando con el porvenir.

Tirana: ¡Pues ya verás cuando te despiertas como te vas a divertir! 1

A millionaire falls in love with Tirana and wants to buy her jewels. Tirana is highly insulted and tells him firmly that although she is poor, she is decent and cannot be bought at any price. Again the realism of her manner of speech is contrasted with the idealism of what she feels:

¿Pero Ud. se ha creído que la Tirana, porque baila pa' todos desde unas tablas, y canta cuatro cosas desvergonzadas va a perder la vergüenza pa' andar por casa? ¡Pues echó Ud. la cuenta equivocada! ¡Esos tratos no sirven con la Tirana, que es más pobre que nadie, pero es honrada! 2

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras completas, III, 179-180.

²Ibid., p. 178.

When Fernando knows Tirana better, he realizes that her morals are not just a pose. He loves her and asks her to marry him. In her case, beauty, virtue and steadfastness have rewarded her. They have found her a husband who loves and respects her and will give her all the comforts that she deserves. As usual in the plays of Martínez Sierra, marriage to a man who respects her as an individual in her own right is the goal of the heroine. When she has acquired respect, love and a certain degree of independence, the play is over.

Fernando sums up the heroine of this play this way:

Sí señores, me caso con la Tirana, con la furia española, con la aberración de la naturaleza, con el enigma que nosotros, hombres miserables, no acertábamos a decipher, porque éramos indignos de comprenderlo. Esta mujer feroz, esta rareza, este prodigio contra naturaleza, era sencillamente una mujer honrada. 1

Carmen, the heroine of Amanecer, is a typical frivolous debutante in the first act. She has just put on her first long dress and hopes to be married in a year to some young man who has not yet been chosen. The flight of her father after embezzling some funds in his keeping considerably alters Carmen's future as well as her philosophy of life. She goes to work to help support her mother and retains her ideals and her honor even when her sister seems to prosper without benefit of these luxuries. When Mariano, the young man Carmen thinks she loves, leaves for

¹Ibid., p. 185.

a business position in Africa, she is dejected. Julián, her wealthy employer loves her and wants to marry her if only to make her life easy once more. She refuses at first because she does not love Julián, but gives in when her mother takes for granted that she will marry him in order to save the family. During three years of marriage to Julián, Carmen is a martyr, for she believes that she has sacrificed her ideals and has sold herself to Julián. She believes that she loves Mariano until he returns from Africa and finds her in much improved circumstances. Even though he knows that she is married, he comes and declares his love for her. Carmen realizes for the first time how Mariano suffers in comparison with Julián, and that what she thought was love for Mariano was only a childish illusion. She knows now that she does love her husband. When Julián tells her that he has lost his money and that she need not share his poverty, she is almost pleased, for now she may prove her love by remaining at his side in adversity. She will become a partner with her husband and help him regain his lost fortune. No longer must she be the parasite that she has been since the beginning of the marriage. The stage directions and final speech of Carmen sum up the importance of work and the sense of accomplishment and partnership in marriage:

(Mira a su marido con inquietud afectuosa. Se levanta con mucho cuidado, poniéndole almohadones junto a la cabeza, para que no note su ausencia; le besa sobre

el pelo muy levemente. Luego apaga la luz central, enciende la del portátil que hay sobre la mesa y sentándose, empieza a revisar los papeles que ha traído el criado, y abre los telegramas, tomando notas con lápiz en un pedazo de papel; levanta los ojos y dice, con sonrisa de felicidad: ¡Hoy empieza mi vida! (Vuelve a leer los telegramas mientras cae el telón muy despacio.) ¹

That the woman is happier and the marriage more stable when husband and wife share responsibilities and work side by side is an idea portrayed repeatedly not only in the theatre of Martínez Sierra, but in the novels and poetry as well. The importance of partnership in marriage was not just something Gregorio and María Martínez Sierra wrote about; it was something they lived. Perhaps this explains the frequency with which the theme appears.

Although Marta is only a secondary character in Amanecer, she has many of the characteristics of the typical heroine. She is very much the modern woman who wants independence and equality for herself and other members of her sex. She plans for herself a career in medicine and has no intention of allowing another to make so important a decision for her as whom she will marry. She has her feminine dream of a handsome Prince Charming, but is realistic enough to know that such a man may not exist and that if he did, he might not be attracted to her. Her speech about independence occurring early in the play inspires Carmen who at this point may not have thought about such things before.

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras completas, V, 117.

Carlos: Pero vamos a ver, (Dándose de hombre superior.) ¿para qué necesita Ud. estudiar, siendo tan bonita?

Marta: (Con viveza.) Para no tenerme que casar con un feo.

Carlos: ¡Con un feo! El hombre más buen mozo de España se merece Ud.

Marta: Es posible: pero, aunque yo me le merezco, primero tiene que existir, y luego le tengo que encontrar, y luego me tiene que gustar, y luego le tengo que gustar a él ... y por si era poco, tiene el hombre que tener dinero para mantenerme ... y entre tanto, no tengo una peseta. Conque ya ve Ud. si son dificultades, y si me sobran motivos para querer ganarme la vida.

Carmen: (Con entusiasmo.) ¡Haces bien! ¡A mí también me gustaría saber mucho, y servir para algo, y ganar dinero!

Doña Cecilia: (Molesta.) ¡Niña, qué dices!

Carmen: Si madre, sí; ganar dinero, para que lo que uno gasta fuera suyo, y no tenérselo siempre que agradecer a un hombre. Algunas veces, cuando entro en el despacho de mi padre, y le veo tan preocupado, siempre haciendo números, digo: ¡Es por nosotras! Si tuviera hijos en vez de tener hijas, ellos trabajarían también, ¡y nosotras no hacemos más que gastar! ¡Y cuando pienso en eso me da mucha rabia porque todo esto que llevo encima me parece que me lo dan de limosna! ¹

Irene, of Cada uno y su vida, has the double task of working to support herself in medical school and of retaining her respectability. To help pay expenses for her schooling, she works for a doctor whose wife looks upon her as inferior because her family is poor. Carolina, the doctor's wife, further considers Irene improper because she is trying to follow a man's career. The doctor points out to his wife that Irene's academic record in medical school is superior to that of their son, Carlos, who is more than mildly interested in Irene. In the face of

¹Ibid., pp. 13-14.

Carolina's coolness and insulting insinuations, Irene is long-suffering and respectful without ever being subservient. She is extremely ambitious but would never consider recourse to marriage to further her career or even make her life easier. She is very aware of her obligation to the doctor who had bought her shoes when she was a child and had provided her with other things her family could ill afford. Her mother has washed clothes to pay for her first year's tuition fees. Irene is proud and would like to rise above her former life and knows that for Carolina she will never be any more than a laundress's daughter. When she realizes that she and Carlos are becoming more and more attracted to each other, she tries to break away. She tells Carlos that she has decided to leave her job with his father:

Irene: Ud. es el primogénito de un doctor ilustre ... que me ha protegido desde que nací; que me ha comprado botas cuando era niña, por la pena que le daba verme andar descalza; aceite de hígado de bacalao después, por la tristeza que le causaba mirarme en camino de ser mujer, amarilla de anemia; libros más tarde, por la compasión de verme estudiar de prestado; que me ha tomado como ayudante por la misericordia de que mi madre se pudiera morir en una cama ganada por su hija ... Ud. es hijo del hombre a quien más tengo que agradecer. Sí, me he enterado, ¿qué mujer no se entera? de que le soy a Ud. ... demasiado agradable ... y por ser Ud. quien es, no quiero verme en el trance de sufrir un agravio que no merezco. Tiene Ud. razón, por eso me marchó. ...

Carlos: ¡Soy un hombre decente! ...

Irene: Y yo una mujer nada mojigata, ... pero muy orgullosa ... por lo mismo que vengo muy de abajo, quiero llegar muy alto y sin tener que inclinar la cabeza ... ante nadie. Por lo cual vale más poner tierra por medio. 1

¹Ibid., XIV, 153.

Carolina's daughter, Luz, shocks her mother with the news that she too would like a career in medicine. One of the major reasons the heroines in Martínez Sierra want to work is so that they will not have to marry merely for the sake of economic expediency. Luz shares the heroine's role with Irene in that she wants a career. She envies the independent career girl who is not obligated to bow to the family's wishes about whom she will marry. The heroine very much wants equality of opportunity with men and resents the traditionalist assumption that her place is in the home, in a position subordinate always to the man. Equality is an often repeated word and concept in these plays:

¡Por eso quisiera tener una carrera como mi hermano, como Irene. ... Me da una envidia! Ayer dijo papá que será una eminencia, un gran médico alienista ...
 Carolina: ¡Tu hermano! Ya lo sabemos, ...
 Luz: No, ... ella, ... ya ves, se ganará su vida y su fama y el respeto del mundo, igualito que un hombre, ... y se casará con quien le dé la gana, ... y yo, ... por muchos ascos que le haga, ... pues tendré que acabar por casarme, ... bien, como dices tú. ... 1

Carlota, of El ama de casa, has worked during many years of her life due to financial necessity, but she enjoys the feeling of independence and perspective that the experience has given her. After being a widow for several years, she marries don Felix, a widower with three nearly grown children. She has quit her job at the time of her

¹Ibid., p. 144.

marriage to devote herself to her home. Carlota runs the house efficiently but has difficulty with the children, who refuse to accept her. To promote their independence, she asks her husband to give them a regular allowance, but her suggestion is misinterpreted and not appreciated:

Gloria: ¿Con dinero quieres sobornarnos?

Don Felix: No, hija, no ... es que, verás ...

Carlota me ha dicho esta mañana que os debía dar una cantidad a cada una ... fija ... todos los meses ... dice que para alfileres. ... A mí no se me había ocurrido. ... ¿Te parece que tendréis bastante con cinco duros cada una?

Gloria: ¡Cómo a la criada!

Don Felix: Pero, hija, si dice ella que es para evitaros la molestia de tener que pedir para esas pequeñeces de mujer. ... 1

When don Felix despairs and feels that his daughters will never accept his wife, he suggests that they move to another house and leave the girls in the care of his sister-in-law, who has been with them for thirteen years. Carlota refuses. She asks don Felix to leave everything to her and to back her in everything she says. She has seen that kindness and patience have brought her no results, so now she is determined to show some will. In her first move in this direction, as mistress of the house, she shows that she may not be entirely satisfied with her exclusively domestic duties. She advises don Felix's business manager that she will assume half of his responsibilities. Her conversation with him reveals her shrewdness:

¹Ibid., I, 229.

Carlota: Es decir, que desde ahora voy yo a echar del taller, y yo iré allá los sábados a pagar los jornales; Ud. corre los aparatos y yo llevo la contabilidad; Ud. hace los cobros, y yo los pagos, porque todas las cuentas me las manda Ud. a casa ... o, lo que es lo mismo; que este banquito va a tener tres patas: inventor, corredor y administrador.

Patricio: Eso será si a mí me conviene.

Carlota: Naturalmente, y sentiría mucho que no le **conviniera** a Ud. porque no hay otro medio.

Patricio: Eso es decirme que aquí estoy yo de más.

Carlota: ¡Quiá, no señor; si es Ud. un hombre muy listo ... y muy útil!

Patricio: Tantas gracias.

Carlota: No hay de que. ¿Hace o no hace?

Patricio: (Con mal humor.) ¡Estos no son asuntos para señoras!

Carlota: Ay, amigo, va en gustos: ¡tengo yo una pasión por la partida doble! De modo que esta tarde me trae Ud. aquí el libro de Caja, y el Mayor, y el Diario, o los que haya, y si no hay ninguno, que no me asombraría, todos los papelotes que Ud. tenga, y verá Ud. la maña que me doy para abrir una contabilidad. ... 1

After having taken care of the business, she proceeds to clear the air with doña Genovena, don Felix's sister-in-law, who has resented greatly her loss of status as the ama de casa. Carlota makes it quite clear that she expects her domestic efficiency to become the rule and will tolerate no return to disorder. When doña Genovena feels insulted and obliged to leave, Carlota makes no move to stop her. Her next project is to establish a rapport with the daughters. Carlota makes Gloria wash the make-up from her face and comb her hair in a style more suitable for her age. When her sister, Laura, tries to elope with

¹Ibid., pp. 233-234.

her sweetheart to escape her stepmother, she fails because her fiance is unwilling and reveals the plan to Carlota. Carlota tells Felix to get Laura and not lecture her; she knows that Laura will be feeling sufficient shame.

The last problem on her list is one with Pepe, her stepson. He is going through the minor emotional crisis of thinking that he is in love with Carlota. She decides that engineering school for him in Belgium for two or three years would be advisable and profitable. When Carlota has established her authority in the home, life there begins to run very smoothly.

In Esperanza nuestra, several character types seem to be unusual, as the carping grandmother and the strong idealistic man, but the heroine runs true to form. While Rosina does not have the important role generally given to the heroine, she has the qualities of strength, pride and independence indispensable to being the heroine in these plays. Rosina is the illegitimate daughter of Fuensanta and don Carlos. Carmita and Lorenzo, the latter's grown children, discover an old picture of Fuensanta, obviously an old flame of their father's, in a forgotten chest. At that particular moment, Rosina appears at the door looking for Don Carlos. They notice that she has the same eyes and hair that they admired in Fuensanta's photograph and suspect the truth. Fuensanta, on her death bed, had told Rosina to resist temptation so that she might

lead an easier life than had been her own. She told her that if she ever desperately needed help, to go to don Carlos, but she encouraged her to live independently and honestly without expecting favors from anyone. Gabriel, Rosina's sweetheart, tells her that he wants to marry her but that his family opposes the match because she has no father. The people with whom Rosina lives show no personal interest in Rosina and allow Gabriel too much freedom to come and go. Fearing that she will be compromised, she has come to don Carlos as a last resort. Though don Carlos is mildly touched by Rosina's beauty and her striking resemblance to her mother, he treats her impersonally and tells her that he will see what can be done and not to worry. When it becomes apparent that Gabriel's interest in Rosina is the political favor that he may gain through don Carlos, Rosina shows her true strength of character and independent spirit. Heeding the last words of her mother to stand proudly on her own two feet, she renounces Gabriel, although this apparently leaves her quite alone. She has the integrity and character typical of the Martínez Sierra heroine, and in the same tradition, her virtue is rewarded. Carmita and Lorenzo, recognizing her nobility of spirit as well as their need to help her, welcome her into the family and share with her what has rightfully been hers for many years.

As has been said, Rosario, played by Catalina Bárceña in the original staging of Esperanza nuestra, does not

command the attention and dominate the action that the typical feminine lead does in so many Martínez Sierra plays. The explanation, perhaps, is that social implications take precedence over those concerned primarily with women and their specific attributes and ambitions. The author wanted to show the injustice that allows inherited wealth to make slaves of tenant farmers who have no choice but to work the land and accept what little the owners decide to pay them. The workers themselves, who are responsible for the profits, do not share the benefits. It is rather the landowners who prosper in leisure. Carmita and Lorenzo feel great guilt that they have lived in ease at the price of poverty for others. The latter feels it so acutely that he decides to leave home and do his part to compensate for the injustices of his father. While Lorenzo does not succeed, in the course of the play at least, in bringing his father to his own type of idealism, he does get him to consent to some changes. There may even be some hope for don Carlos, who, unlike his mother, places greater value on keeping his son than his fortune. The ending, however, is rather unusual for this author. A typical situation would have had don Carlos converted to become a defender of the rights of the people. In this play, one feels that don Carlos is doing the right thing for the wrong reason. He will help the people only because he cannot bear to lose his son. The triumph of Lorenzo's idealism seems incomplete since he can enlist only the financial aid of his father.

The heroine of Triangulo, rather than being a single person, is the result of the fusion of two quite different personalities. In the tradition of Don Quixote, Martínez Sierra uses two women to symbolize two aspects of the feminine personality. Cervantes has created the idealist in don Quixote and the realist in Sancho Panza, two beings who fuse into one in each of us and can never be separated, for one without the other would be incomplete. Diana and Marcela conform to the same general pattern in that the former is a primitive type while the latter is extremely refined and ladylike. Were their two personalities combined, Diana and Marcela would form the perfect woman.

Diana is Faustino's first wife whom he loses on a shipwreck while they are on their honeymoon. She is outgoing and violent and knows how to make herself loved. She is aggressive, self-assured and frankly sensual. She is completely open in her emotions although she has been taught to hide them in the best European tradition. To accentuate her primitive nature, Martínez Sierra has her spared in the shipwreck to live four years with a tribe of negro natives who accept her as a goddess. When she is finally brought back to civilization by a flier who had been forced to make a landing in the jungle, she is well tanned and carries a crocodile skin filled with precious stones. She is annoyed with chic clothes now after the simplicity of the jungle. She tells a friend:

Margarita: ¡Yo que pensaba que una de las cosas que más te alegrarían de haber vuelto al mundo civilizado serían los trapitos elegantes! ¡Cómo eras tan coqueta!
 Diana: Te diré. Me gustan los trapos, pero me molesta la ropa.
 Margarita: (Muy divertida.) ¡Ja, ja, ja!
 Diana: ¡El ideal sería poder ir muy compuesta y desnuda! 1

After the supposed death of Diana, Faustino has married Marcela, a girl who in many ways is the opposite of his first wife. He was very much in love with Diana, but he married a different type of girl this time because perhaps unconsciously he felt the lack of sweetness and softness in Diana and has married Marcela to compensate for this lack. Faustino had felt that he was happy with both women, but both had felt that he needed something that each was unable to supply, for each had asked him anxiously:

Marcela: ... Con saber que eres feliz, me basta.
 (Le mira a los ojos, cogiéndole por las solapas.)
 ¿Eres feliz?
 Faustino: (Sincero.) ¡No sé que le voy a pedir a la suerte!
 Marcela: (Tan triste como Diana en el primer acto.)
 ¡No eres feliz! 2

Diana is independent and in the tradition of the modern woman, makes a life for herself outside of her home and has interests other than her husband's happiness. For Marcela, there is no other life than the one she shares with her husband. She identifies herself with him to the point of seeing him in the mirror rather than herself.

¹ Ibid., XIV, 89.

² Ibid., p. 58.

¡Aunque tengamos ciento! Tú eres tú, y serás siempre lo primero en mi corazón; el motivo y la explicación de mi vida. ... Te voy a decir una cosa, pero no te pongas tonto. Muchas veces, al mirarme al espejo, en vez de verme a mí, te veo a ti! ¡Ya ves si te debo llevar dentro! 1

One evening, after the complicating and incredible return of Diana, Marcela puts on a kind of white tunic dress that accentuates and complements her angelical nature. When Faustino sees her, he believes that he has made his choice and that he must have the quiet affection and consoling devotion that she can give him. Just when he believes that he has made his decision, Diana appears in a low cut, intensely red gown that seems to give a tawny glow to her dark skin. The cut and color of the dress, the gold at her throat, ears and wrists suggests an elegant wild savage. When Faustino sees her, his animal nature responds and he suddenly believes that it is Diana that he loves and needs. Then he realizes that he needs both of them; that together, they satisfy all of his physical and spiritual needs and that one of them now would be incomplete. He thinks that in another society or in another age, the three of them could live very happily together, but here and now it would be unthinkable. Faustino discusses the problem with his father, don Gerardo:

¹Ibid., p. 71.

Faustino: (Fatal.) ¡No sé cual de las dos me gusta más!

Don Gerardo: (Inefable.) ¡Hombre, ... hasta cierto punto ... es natural!

Faustino: ¡Es trágico!

Don Gerardo: Claro, sí, ... desde cierto punto de vista. ...

Faustino: (Sombrio.) ¡Las dos, las dos! Marcela, ... claro, ... siempre me ha parecido bien, muy bien. ...

Don Gerardo: (Admirativo.) ¡Es una estatua!

Faustino: ¡Precisamente! Una estatua admirable, ... más, ... una imagen. A veces, ... lo confieso, ... he echado de menos en su perfección un poco de humano desequilibrio, de pasión pecadora, de ... ¡no sé si me comprendes!

Don Gerardo: (Que le escucha con los ojos muy abiertos y la boca de par en par.) Sigue, ... sigue ...

Faustino: ¡Pero ahora, ... ahora, ... no sé qué tiene, ... parece otra, ... me mira de un modo tan, tan, ... le arden los ojos con un fuego tan, tan, ... entorna los ojos y se muerde los labios despacito, ... y a mí, ... soy un salvaje ... se me va la cabeza, veo en el aire chispas, me dan vértigos, ... me abofetearía a mí mismo, pero me dan vértigos!

Don Gerardo: (Comprensivo.) ¡Hombre, después de todo, estábais todavía en la luna de miel!

Faustino: (Desesperado.) Sí, pero es que la otra me dá mareos. Siempre me había vuelto un poco tarumba.

Don Gerardo: (Recordando, ilusionado.) ¡Era una centella!

Faustino: Es que ahora es un volcán. ¿Te has fijado? En vez de decir ¡Ay! dice ¡Au! Un sonido extraño, gutural, de la selva. ... ¡Cuando la oigo, me da un escalofrío! ¡Y luego, ese color tostado que es suyo y no es suyo! ... esa elasticidad de movimientos; parece una pantera, un tigre, ... se queda quieta y se estira despacio, despacio, ... y yo, ... ¡soy un miserable! ¡pero pierdo el sentido! ¡Y me siento antropófago! 1

Faustino, realizing that there is no solution to his problem, decides to go away. It is as if the author had arrived at the final scene of his drama without being able to solve the problems that he had created for his

¹Ibid., pp. 109-110.

characters. In desperation, that perhaps reflects the desperation of the author, Faustino addresses the public:

¿Dónde voy? He pasado la noche en el Palace, he comprado este par de maletas, he tomado billete circular-combinado, ... tren, ... vapor, ... auto-car, ... avión, ... para las cinco partes del mundo, ... pero ¿dónde voy yo? ¿De qué me sirve salir de Madrid, de España, de Europa, del planeta, si no puedo salir de mí mismo? ¡Y no puedo, no puedo! (Mira con desvarío en derredor de su persona como buscando resquicio por donde escapar.) Y dentro de mí mismo (Con desolación.) están las dos, ... ¡las dos! Señores, ¿cómo se libra un hombre de esta obsesión? Amigos, entre tantos ... ¡iluminenme. ¿Qué hace un hombre cuando le gustan por igual dos mujeres que, ¡ay! son su mujer? Señores, ¿cómo se libra un caballero, ... ¡porque soy un perfecto caballero! de dos señoras? (Parece escuchar a un espectador.) Elegir una de ellas, imposible. Adoro a las dos y las dos me adoran. La ley me quita a Marcela, y Diana no quiere ampararse en la ley. Si engañase a la una con la otra y a la otra con la una, sería pagar con una deslealtad el amor que me tienen. ¿Establecer un turno pacífico? Presumo que no iban a querer. ¿Consolarse con otra? (Con horror.) ¡No, no, no! ¡Un cilicio más! ¡Vade retro, Satanás! Señores, por el amor de Dios, ... señores, entre todos ustedes, ... ¡una solución! 1

When he hears Diana call him and realizes that she is pursuing him, he leaps from the stage to become a spectator. He does this rather than make a decision. When Diana sees that Faustino has left the stage, she knows that the end has come and that the comedy, if it can be called that, is over.

The heroine, as she must have been portrayed by the actress Catalina Bárcena, is a lively Spanish girl who is not content to accept the traditions and conventions

¹Ibid., p. 119.

that have ruled her mother's life. She is strongly individual and feels the need for expressing herself, her talent or her intellect outside of her home. While a career can never replace marriage and motherhood for her, she often feels that the best way to occupy her time until the right man comes along is to work. After marriage, she often collaborates with her husband in his business or profession or she may choose some career that will not take her too far from home. The heroine, unlike the ingénue, knows what she wants and how to get it. Unlike the conservative mother, she is free of religious dogmatism and would like to break with the traditions of the past, especially with regard to her right to a career, and to marry for love. She is a self-assured young woman who very much knows where she wants to go and is in command of herself at all times. The heroine, as seen in these plays, was more of a symbol of woman's aspirations than a reality in the author's lifetime.

MOTHERHOOD: THE IDEALIZATION OF THE
MATERNAL INSTINCT

The pervading theme of almost all of Gregorio Martínez Sierra's plays is the idealization of womanhood, and to him, the maternal instinct is the essence of femininity and is its loftiest expression. In many works, such as El reino de Dios, Navidad, and especially Canción de cuna, femininity and the maternal instinct are equated and almost inseparable. It seems strange that María Martínez Sierra, who probably contributed greatly to the creation of the characters of the works published under the name of her husband, never wanted children of her own:

Siempre engendró en mi espíritu tedio insufrible jugar a las muñecas. Por lo visto, faltábame el instinto maternal. Jamás, jamás, ni aún en el más sincero de mis "trances" de amor, he soñado con tener en los brazos a un hijo de mi carne y de mi sangre. Jugar con mi teatro de cartón era mi gran deleite. ¹

The maternal feeling she claims not to have in her private life emerges eloquently and beautifully in the plays that she helped her husband to write. Perhaps she

¹María Martínez Sierra, Gregorio y yo, pp. 26-27.

channeled her creativeness and her maternal instinct into her literary output and looked upon the plays that she and her husband produced somewhat as a parent regards his children, and she was satisfied. Almost unfailingly, the admirable female characters are endowed with a deep maternal feeling that is idealized in a delicate, almost romantic way. Despite María's disavowal of her own maternal instinct, it seems unlikely that the sentiments expressed in the theatre on this theme are shallow or insincere. They are too often repeated to be dismissed as mere theatricalism.

The maternal theme is apparent on almost every page of Canción de cuna. In this, Martínez Sierra's most successful work, we find a group of women, all nuns, who have been denied the natural outlet of their basic and common need to mother. Even before the arrival of the baby, Teresa, who is to fill this need, in some measure, the novices are portrayed in the role of children who consider the Prioress a mother. Martínez Sierra capitalizes on the very structure of the religious house here. The nuns are sisters and they have a mother to guide them. The nuns keep the subordinate roles that they had known in their families before they entered the convent, so the community remains much like a family might that has never given thought to the marriage of the daughters. The Mother Superior treats her charges like a loving mother treats her own children

in that she guides them gently and is indulgent with their minor transgressions. She feels that their laughter and joviality are normal manifestations of their youth, and defends them lovingly against the Vicareess, who is inclined to be more severe:

Vicaria: (Muy humilde.) Lo que todas sabemos, reverenda madre: que la bondad de vuestra reverencia es inagotable.

Priora: ¿A su reverencia le pesa que lo sea?

Vicaria: (Remilgada.) Por mí, no; que con la ayuda del Señor, procuro cumplir mi obligación, ajustándome a la letra y al espíritu de nuestra Santa Regla; pero no faltará quien, alentada por tanta indulgencia, pueda resbalar, y aun caer. ...

Priora: ¿Es que tiene su reverencia algo que proclamar determinadamente? Si es así, hable.

Vicaria: Vengo observando, y el Señor me perdona la malicia, que de algún tiempo a esta parte, en la comunidad abundan esas tentaciones de risa que unida a otras manifestaciones de regocijo, no menos extemporaneas, demuestra cierto relajamiento en la virtud de la circunspección.

Priora: No se preocupe Ud. por eso. La providencia se ha servido últimamente traernos al rebaño ovejuelas jóvenes, y triscan un poquillo por los prados del Señor; pero no llevan malicia las pobres. ¿No es éste el parecer de la señora maestra de novicias? ¹

At the outset of the play, the novices, who live in the protected and rather unnatural life of the convent, have not felt acutely the void that might have troubled them in time. Sor Juana feels lonely and incomplete early because she is accustomed to caring for little ones. She reminisces wistfully about caring for her younger brothers and sisters:

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras completas, II, 142-143.

¡Más veces he cantado yo eso, lavando los pañales de mi hermano el pequeño! Porque somos siete, y yo, la mayor. ¡Y lo que es ése, (Con entusiasmo.) me tiene dada a mí más guerra! (Limpiándose los ojos con las manos.) ¡Ay, Señor, siempre se me saltan las lágrimas cuando me acuerdo del dichoso crío! ¡Más malo es! Pero me quiere a mí más que a mi madre, y el día que salí de casa para venir aquí, ¡tomó una perra! 1

It is in Sor Juana that we see all that is beautiful and ideal associated with the maternal instinct. Her hunger for a child is so great that she imagines that she receives the Lord as a little child when she receives Holy Communion.

In the tradition of the Spanish mystic, she feels this real presence acutely, except that there is a reversal of roles. San Juan de la Cruz and Santa Teresa, for example, feel themselves enveloped and protected in the arms of their Lord, while Sor Juana imagines that she is comforting the baby Jesus and that she holds him close in her arms and asks his mother's help to stop his crying. She longs to sing him lullabies:

... Yo, siempre que comulgo, me figuro que recibo al Señor en figura de niño, y así lo aprieto contra el corazón y me parece que como es tan pequeño y tan desvalido, no me puede negar cosa que le pida. Y luego se me antoja que llora, y le pido a la Virgen que me ayude a callarlo. Si no fuera porque me dá vergüenza y porque se iban a reír de mí, le cantarí coplas. 2

¹Ibid., p. 161.

²Ibid., p. 162.

This play might be compared to an opera in which the idealization of motherhood is the major theme and is sung by Sor Juana. The other nuns, who are all affected in one or another way by the stifling of their innate needs, form the chorus or the background.

Before the arrival of the baby, Sor María Jesús suffers unexplained spells of melancholy, falls asleep during the singing of the choir and has no appetite. After examining her and finding that she has been in the convent for two years and is now only eighteen, the doctor seems to favor sending her home to get married, but prescribes an alternate remedy of daily cold showers and exercises. The implication is that under normal circumstances, all of her yearnings would be expressed naturally and that perhaps this novice would be better off married and the mother of several children. She has not as yet found another outlet for her frustrations and has actually become ill.

Sor Marcela also suffers from melancholy, but has different manifestations. She is moved to sigh when she sees flowers in the garden and the blue skies above. She is reprimanded for keeping a small mirror in her cell and is accused of vanity, a serious sin for a nun. She explains, however, that she uses the mirror to catch the light and make it dance around her cell pretending that it is a bird or butterfly. She has an almost irresistible

impulse to leap over the walls and plunge into the water outside or to do other things that a religious does not do. Instead of yielding to her temptations, she catches a ray of light and lets it dance as she would like to do. This sister shows by her actions and her explanations of them that she longs for the freedom of the world, and that, like Sor María Jesús, perhaps was not truly destined for the convent.

The Vicaress, in her sour ill-humor, is a good example of the maternal instinct that has somehow become frustrated and warped. She unconsciously yearns to be a mother, but doesn't know how to begin. She craves love but cannot admit it to herself or to others, so she covers it up by apparently rejecting love. She criticizes and nags unduly. She sees the laughter and high spirits of the novices and is irritated because she is not a part of their joy. She is the result of frustrated motherhood that is manifested as the reverse of the kindly understanding attitude of the Mother Superior and of Sor Juana, who are mothers by instinct. The Vicaress expresses herself in terms that show that she has neither sense of humor nor tolerance for the minor foibles of her charges. She wants to be obeyed and is ignored; she wants to be loved and is unloved. It is probable that had she married and had children of her own, she would have treated them in the same way that she treats the novices. She is, in

fact, rather representative of the conventional Spanish mother portrayed repeatedly by Martínez Sierra. This type will be discussed in a later chapter. Like Bernarda of Federico García Lorca's La casa de Bernarda Alba, she is one of those unfortunates who do not know how to endear themselves to others. She fails, partly because she does not know how to go about getting other people to love her and partly because she is unable to express the basic maternal instinct that is out-going and protective at the same time. She overlooks the fact that often the beginning of receiving love is giving it. This would never occur to Sor Juana either, who gives love spontaneously simply because it is part of her nature.

The end of the first act has almost arrived when the baby is discovered at the convent door. The reaction of all the nuns, with the exception of the Vicarress, is that they want to keep this child, who seems to have appeared miraculously as if in answer to their unspoken prayer. The legal question is settled when the doctor offers to adopt the child if the sisters will educate her. When the bell summons the community to choir, Sor Juana stays to care for the baby. This short scene tells more of the tenderness and the beauty of motherhood than many pages of description or analysis:

(Las monjas salen todas. Sor Juana coloca la cesta en el suelo y se arrodilla delante de ella. Se oye dentro el rezo que guía una sola monja, y al cual

contestan todas las demás, incluso Sor Juana de la Cruz.)

Voz: (Dentro.) In nomine Patri et Filio et Spiritui sancto.

(Sor Juana se santigua y dice con las demás monjas:)

Sor Juana y voces: (Dentro.) Amén.

Sor Juana: (A la niña.) ¡Qué bonita eres, chiquilla, rica! ¿Me vas tu a querer mucho, corazón?

Voz: (Dentro.) Deus en injutorium meum intende.

Sor Juana: (A la niña.) ¿Verdad que sí, preciosa, vida mía?

Voz: (Dentro.) Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui sancto.

Voces: (Dentro.) Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et saecula saeculorum. Amén. Alleluia. (Pero esta vez Sor Juana de la Cruz ya no responde, sino que, inclinándose sobre la cesta, abraza a la niña apasionadamente, y dice:)

Sor Juana: ¡Ay, que abre los ojos! ¡Vida, vidita!
¿A quién quieres tú? 1

In the period between acts, the poet reads a poem, the second stanza of which seems to sum up and emphasize this play's theme of motherhood. The thoughts expressed in this stanza apply not only to this play but to several other Martínez Sierra plays as well:

¡Ay amor de mujer que así nos ilusionas, a quien tanto ofendemos y que tanto perdonas! ¿de dónde te ha venido tu excelsa caridad? ¡De que, sencillamente, eres maternidad!
Sí; todos, somos hijos, mujer, para tus brazos. Tu corazón es pan que nos das en pedazos, como niñosnos diste las mieles de tu pecho; siempre es calor de cuna el calor de tu lecho, aunque lo prostituya nuestra carne villana. ¡Madre si eres amante, madre si eres hermana, madre por pura esencia y madre a todas horas, si con nosotros ríes, si por nosotros lloras, ya que toda mujer, porque Dios lo ha querido, dentro del corazón lleva a un hijo dormido! 2

¹Ibid., pp. 180-181.

²Ibid., p. 184.

In the second act, Teresa has grown up. She is an innocent, happy young girl, but perhaps the impulses of the blood that flows in her veins are stronger than the influence of the atmosphere that has surrounded her for eighteen years. She loves the convent and all of her mothers, but is irrepressibly gay and is drawn to the outside world. She has fallen in love and plans to be married soon. The nuns are resigned to losing their daughter, knowing that she has no true vocation for the convent, but cannot hide their disappointment that she has chosen to go into the world rather than remain in the community. It is not for Teresa's sake that they would have her stay; it is rather because she has been the living expression of their maternal instinct and when she leaves they will feel a tremendous void.

The time is approaching for Teresa to marry and leave her convent home. Before saying good-bye to her community of mothers, she speaks to Sor Juana alone and it is apparent that she has been Teresa's special favorite:

Teresa: Ahora que estamos solas, bendígame Ud. aparte de todas, más que ninguna, porque es Ud. mi madre, más que todas juntas.

Sor Juana: Levántate. (*Teresa se levanta.*) No digas eso; en la casa de Dios todas somos iguales.

Teresa: Pero en mi corazón es Ud. la primera. No se ponga Ud. seria porque se lo diga. ¡Qué le vamos a hacer! ¿Ud. qué culpa tiene de que yo a fuerza de darle guerra, le haya tomado a Ud. este cariñazo? ¹

¹Ibid., p. 207.

Teresa has told her fiance, Antonio, that Sor Juana is her true mother and introduces him to her through the convent grille. The scene is a poignantly unforgettable one that has elements of humor and tenderness mixed with abundant but restrained love:

Antonio: ¿No puedes correr la cortina?

Teresa: No, porque no estoy sola. ¿A qué no aciertas quien está conmigo? Mi madre.

Antonio: ¿Sor Juana de la Cruz?

Teresa: (A la monja, con alegría porque él ha adivinado.) ¿Lo vé Ud.? (A Antonio.) Sor Juana de la Cruz, precisamente. Te hemos estado viendo desde aquí, y dice que te encuentra muy buen mozo.

Sor Juana: ¡Jesús! ¡No haga Ud. caso a esta cotorra!

Teresa: No se apure Ud., madre, que a mí también me lo parece.

Antonio: Pues no me lo habías dicho nunca.

Teresa: Es que aquí dentro, como no me ves, no me dá vergüenza. Mira, tenemos que avisar que has llegado; pero antes dile a mi madre una cosa bonita, que si te estás ahí con la boca cerrada, después de las ausencias que he hecho de tí, me vas a dejar mal.

Antonio: ¿Qué quieres que diga?

Teresa: Lo que te pida el corazón.

Antonio: Es que no sé si a una religiosa se le puede decir, aunque el corazón lo pida, que se la quiere mucho.

Teresa: ¡Anda! Yo se lo digo lo menos un millón de veces al día.

Antonio: Pues vayan dos millones; porque ha de saber Ud., señora, que es imposible conocer a Teresa y no quererla a Ud.

Teresa: ¡Como que es un tesoro esta madre que tengo! ¹

The treatment of the nuns in the 1959 Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, The Sound of Music, is very reminiscent of Canción de cuna, though this similarity is apparently only a coincidence. Richard Rodgers, in a personal communication, states that he is unaware of any influence of the earlier work on the 1959 production:

¹Ibid., pp. 214-215.

. . . I blush to say that I have never seen nor even read Sierra's "Cradle Song," and perhaps it is just as well. I might have been self-conscious about treating the sisters as I did. ¹

María, the heroine of The Sound of Music, is a novice at the beginning of the play but decides not to take her vows after being the governess of some children whose father she comes to love as much as she loves them. In the convent, María is lonely and goes alone into the hills outside the convent and is often late for services. She sings in the abbey and wears curlers under her wimple. The Vicarress disapproves of her actions and feels that she is not an asset to the community. The Mother Superior is captivated by María's openness and spontaneity and defends her lovingly in way that parallels the action of Canción de cuna.

Ironically enough, it is in plays having to do with nuns that the maternal instinct is a prominent factor. For Martínez Sierra, the physical reality of giving birth has little to do with being a real mother. We see this attitude in Canción de cuna and see it repeated in El reino de Dios. Although Sor Gracia has turned her back on motherhood through natural channels and lives a supposedly elevated life, she becomes a mother in the purest sense of the word and is drawn to life in its most indelicate aspect

¹Letter from Richard Rodgers, New York, N. Y., Oct. 6, 1961.

first in a home for the aged, then in a maternity home and finally in an orphan asylum.

In the second act of El reino de Dios which takes place in a home for unwed mothers, Candelas, a very special kind of mother is portrayed. This dark-skinned girl who comes from the lowest class of society has just given birth to an illegitimate child, but by the end of the act she has won for herself admiration and respect for her loving and human outlook. She has loved and continues to love the father of her child, but there is no bitterness in her because she feels she has expressed herself in a natural way. In her mind it is no disgrace to have had a child, and she is sad because it did not live:

Sor Cristina: ¡Y! ¿Y te corría mucha prisa que en tu pueblo supieran que estás en una Casa de Maternidad?
 Candelas: (Muy convencida.) ¡Eso no es deshonra!
 Sor Cristina: No; es un honor muy grande.
 Candelas: (Con apasionamiento.) La maternidad no es ningún presidio; que no me ha traído la Guardia Civil por robar ni matar ni hacerle mal a nadie. He vivido yo por mi voluntad, porque he tenido la desgracia de querer a un hombre más de lo que él se merece, y de no haber nacido duquesa o infanta de España pa que hubiera venío mi hijo al mundo en pañales de oro. 1

In Candelas we see the true maternal instinct without any of the affectations or fetishes of our so-called civilized society. She says that if her child had lived, she would have taken him in her arms and gone out into the world, proud of having created something. Candelas is a natural woman with natural instincts completely

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras completas, V, 46.

unfettered by convention. Since she is a mother, she cannot understand how another mother can abandon her child. Sor Cristina explains that some mothers leave their children at the convent and suggests that since her baby has died, she might care for one of these little ones for six months. This is her reaction to a mother's abandoning her child:

¡Lobas, más que lobas! Echar un hijo al turno! ¡Lo mismo que si fuera un perro! ¡Si me yega a vivir er mío, no iba yo a haber salio por ese portón con la frente poco alta, yevándolo a él en brazos! 1

In the third act of El reino de Dios, Sor Gracia, now old, is in an orphanage, where she has been for a number of years. Suddenly, Juan de Dios, a twenty-year-old boy, enters. He had grown up at the home but he is now a bullfighter, and he has just had his first great success in the ring, where he has been awarded an ear. He rushes in looking for his mother, Sor Gracia. He at last has something of value and he wants to share it with her and honor her with it. For Juan de Dios, the bloody ear he was awarded for his bravery is the greatest gift he can give her. This scene, in the hands of a less skillful dramatist, could have been ridiculous. Here, it is full of pathos and truth, and is very tender. The real mother of Juan de Dios abandoned him but Sor Gracia took him in and loved him, and did all the things a real mother is supposed to do:

¹Ibid., p. 47.

Juan de Dios: ¡Ríase usted, madre! (Con orgullo, pasando un brazo por encima de los dos hombros de Sor Gracia y mirando hacia el patio.) Porque ésta es mi madre ... ésta, ésta, ésta ... la otra me echó al turno y ésta me recogió, ésta me ha criado, ésta me ha querido. Viva mi madre, que no quiero otra. 1

Of El reino de Dios, María Martínez Sierra says:

De todas nuestras obras, ésta es la que prefiero, y no porque haya sido afortunada en sus peregrinaciones y navegaciones; aunque hubiese fracasado en Europa y naufragado en el Atlántico, no le tendría menos amor. Las madres sabemos querer a los hijos desafortunados. 2

When the little nun, Sor Teresa, of Lirio entre espinas, happens to seek refuge in a house of prostitution during a revolution, she is ill at ease until her maternal instinct is given a chance for expression. She consoles the mentally retarded Ricardito, and tells him that she will take him to her convent where she will give him candy and where he will be taught to earn a living. Although Ricardito is chronologically a man, she speaks to him on his level, as one might address a child:

Ricardito: (Sentimental.) Es que a mí no me quiere nadie. (Se echa a llorar como un niño.)

Sor Teresa: ¡Qué tontería! Te quiero yo ...

Ricardito: ¿Me conoces? (Mirándola con asombro.)

Sor Teresa: A ti, no; pero en casa tenemos muchos como tú. ...

Ricardito: ¿En tu casa?

Sor Teresa: Sí, que es muy grande y muy limpia y muy alegre; muchos, a los que son muy buenos les queremos más, y les damos tantas cosas, ¡si vieras! ¿A tí te gusta el chocolate? Pues tengo yo allí una de bombones ... A ver si me queda uno. (Busca en el bolsillo.)

¹Ibid., p. 97

²María Martínez Sierra, Gregorio y yo, p. 82.

Es un caramelo ... de piña; mira qué suerte tienes. Ya verás mañana, cuando pase todo esto, te llevan a casa y te curas, ... porque a ti te duele muchas veces la cabeza, ¿verdad?

Ricardito: Sí. ...

Sor Teresa: Por eso dices tonterías. ... Pero allí, ya verás ... te curamos y aprendes a ser bueno ... y a leer ... y a rezar ... y un oficio, y luego eres un hombre de provecho y te ganas la vida; ¿Qué te parece?

Ricardito: (Chupando el caramelo.) ¡Qué rico está!
Sor Teresa: ¡Infeliz! Anda, véte tú también a dormir, que ya es hora. 1

In the one-act play, Navidad, Martínez Sierra again uses a religious background to give dignity and meaning to motherhood. The scene opens in the interior of a cathedral of Christmas Eve. Midnight Mass has just ended and the faithful have left. The nave of the church is aglow with countless candles that give a celestial and mystical appearance to the life-like statues of the Mother and Child. Miraculously, the statues come to life and the Virgin takes her babe out into the night. She goes to the poorest section of town where she brings joy and faith into the lives of people who had begun to wonder if the love of God extended out of the beautifully decorated church into their lives of poverty. The theme of the play is hope for the outcast and sympathy for the oppressed-- Martínez Sierra's typically optimistic and charitable expressions. Mary, as the symbolic mother of us all, is seen leaving the church where she is not needed to go out

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras completas, II, 251-252.

to bring beauty and renewed faith to those who have strayed from the path. She chides no one and is at all times the loving mother who understands the faults of her children and forgives. Finally, the sacristán comes to find Mary and pleads with her to come back. She is unmoved as he tells her of the fine music that will be sung and of all the wealthy people who will come to pay her homage. She agrees to go only when the sacristán says that he will be blamed for her absence. Before she leaves, she hands her baby to the people in a supreme expression of love. She gives them her most precious possession, the baby Jesus, the symbol of faith and redemption. She has brought into the lives of her children the things that they most needed: faith and hope.

María Martínez Sierra was educated in a convent and shows great respect and affection for these religious characters who were no doubt her exclusive creation. It is not likely that Gregorio would have had such a background or understanding. While Mary and some of the nuns are idealized and are almost too good to be true, they are in no sense sanctimonious. In their desire to alleviate suffering and bring some happiness, they are drawn to the most miserable element of humanity. The ambitions of these characters represent femininity and motherhood at its noblest. In general, the nuns are realistically portrayed and are completely human and feminine.

Princess Teodora of El palacio triste, bears no resemblance to the conservative Spanish mother who will be the subject of the next chapter. She is, rather, an idealization of motherhood, a fairy-tale mother and, as such, is in perfect harmony with this little fantasy in which she appears. She has three small sons, all younger than her fifteen-year-old daughter, Marta. Three years ago, Marta disappeared in the forest and the king, her grandfather, has declared the child dead and has had a statue of her built on the spot where she was last seen. Teodora, the mother, however, has never given up hope for her daughter and asks all travelers and beggars who come to town if they have seen a beautiful little princess in their travels. In the absence of her adored daughter, Teodora wants especially to show love and affection to her three sons, but is restrained by her childhood English governess, Miss Quick, who feels that a queen should be a queen even to her children. The princes are taught to bow to their mother and to kiss only her hand:

(Al ver entrar a su madre, el príncipe Juan, el príncipe Augusto, y el príncipe Reinaldo se precipitan hacia ella, queriendo abrazarla; pero Miss Quick les detiene dignamente, aunque ya la madre les ha abierto los brazos.)

Juan: ¡Ay, mamá!

Reinaldo: ¡Mamá!

Augusto: ¡Madre!

Teodora: ¡Hijos de mi alma! (Se queda con los brazos abiertos un instante, y luego deja caer lentamente las manos.)

Quick: Príncipe Juan, no sea vuestra alteza incorrecta. Modere vuestra alteza, príncipe Reinaldo, esa viveza de mal tono. ...

Teodora: Quick, ¿Por qué no dejar que me abracen los niños? 1

Teodora is not even allowed to eat with her children, for it is considered plebeian. She is by nature a mother and would give up her title of princess for the one of mother. She has no ambition at all to rule and hopes that her father's reign will last until her eldest son is old enough for this responsibility:

Teodora: (Mirando en derredor con cierta melancolía.)

¡Ya no están aquí!

Quick: Ya he tenido el honor de decírselo a vuestra alteza: ésta es la hora destinada a la comida de los príncipes.

Teodora: Ya lo sé, ya lo sé. La hora de la comida.

¡Ay, Quick, puede que sea un sentimiento plebeyo, como tu dices, pero lo que me gustaría, cuando comen mis hijos, estar con ellos a la mesa y partirles el pan! ...

Quick: Vuestra alteza es demasiado sensible y ha leído demasiadas novelas.

Teodora: ¡Novelas, Quick! Todas las madres lo hacen.

Quick: Vuestra alteza es princesa y pronto será reina. ...

Teodora: ¡Ay, no por Dios! ¡Ojalá viva mi padre cien años! Por lo menos, hasta que el príncipe Augusto sea mayor de edad y pueda llevar él la corona. ¡Reina yo! Sólo de pensarlo me duele la cabeza. (Pasea la habitación de un lado para otro, cogiendo, mirando y acariciando los libros y los papeles que han tocado sus hijos. Coge el papel en que ha escrito sus consonantes el príncipe Augusto.) 2

Marta finally returns to take her brothers and her mother away from the sad palace to her humble little cottage where they will live together in freedom and happiness and where Teodora will be what she has always wanted to be: a mother.

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, El palacio triste (New York: Ginn and Co., 1921), p. 8.

²Ibid., p. 15.

Marta: Si, madre, nos marchamos todos ahora mismo.
 Teodora: ¿Todos?
 Marta: Augusto, Reinaldo, Juan, tú, yo ...
 Teodora: Sí, hija, sí ...
 Lejos de este palacio, de este tedio; a vivir solos,
 libres; ¡tú, con nosotros, madre!
 Teodora: ¿Dónde, hija?
 Marta: Con nosotros ... donde puedas besarnos siem-
 pre que te lo pida el corazón. 1

In Mama, we see an unmistakable similarity to Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House. It is as if Martínez Sierra had taken the Nordic characters created by Ibsen and made them Spanish. Nora, of A Doll's House, is a woman who pretends to be frivolous to cover up her real astuteness. To save her husband's life, it had been necessary to take an expensive trip to a warmer climate. At the time, they had no money, so Nora borrowed the money and told her husband that she had inherited it. During the years after the trip, Nora begs her husband for money for new clothes and then gives the money to the usurer. She pretends to be very empty-headed and very extravagant, but actually she is very clever and dresses well on a small fraction of the money that Helmer, her husband, gives her. When Helmer finds out that Nora has forged her father's name on some documents and is being blackmailed, his only thought is that he has been deceived. He does not appreciate what Nora has gone through to save his life as well as his masculine pride. Fearing that a scandal will endanger his

¹Ibid., p. 34.

position at the bank, he tells her that she must leave because she is a bad influence on the children. Later Helmer receives a letter from the usurer promising to keep all the transactions secret. At this point, when Helmer realizes that his position in the bank is safe, he decides to pardon Nora. Nora, however, has already been relieved of her mask of frivolity so there is no longer any reason to pretend. She realizes that Helmer has been treating her as a doll all these years and that she is really not one. Since there is no understanding and communication between them, there is no marriage, Nora reasons, and decides to leave.

Mercedes, of Mama, is superficially almost as frivolous and giddy as Nora pretends to be, but she is less nervous and is not aware that she is deceiving anyone. She thinks that this is her true personality. In order not to age his beautiful wife, her husband, Santiago, has sent their children away to boarding school. For many years, Mercedes has had little responsibility as a mother or wife. For diversion, she has gambled. She feels she cannot ask her husband for money to pay her debts at this particular time since he has complained recently about her extravagance and has asked her to economize. In desperation, she borrows the money from Alfonso, a don Juan type who is deceived by her gait into thinking that he may receive in return more than the money. When Mercedes' son

becomes aware of his mother's predicament, he cashes a check on his father's account and tells him that he needs the money to pay a gambling debt. Santiago knows that he is lying and believes that Mercedes has asked her son to do this dishonest deed to get money for her father's debts. He then tells Mercedes that she is an unfit mother for their children and that they will have to be removed from her unfavorable influence. It is at this point that Mercedes begins to assert herself as a wife and mother. Alfonso, who had had no success at all in courting Mercedes, had turned his attentions to a more vulnerable prey, her eighteen-year-old daughter, Cecilia, who was both flattered and confused by the attentions of this rather attractive man of the world. When Mercedes finds out her daughter's situation, a drastic change seems to come about in her personality. All of her maternal instincts, anesthetized for so many years, awaken almost violently. She undergoes a metamorphosis and emerges no longer the social butterfly but rather the mother who is intent on defending her daughter. She minces no words with the blackguard Alfonso, and when Santiago delivers his ultimatum that she will have to be separated from the children, her defense is absolutely eloquent. Under no circumstances will she leave her children for it is now that they most need a mother:

Mercedes: (Después de una ligera pausa, empieza a hablar como si hablara consigo misma; primero, con tristeza y resignación; pero poco a poco se va exaltando hasta llegar a una explosión de amargura rebelde y de dignidad herida.) Sí, es posible que tengas razón; ... pero con todo eso, y aunque fuera más grave de lo que tu crees, yo no puedo apartarme de mis hijos, tú no tienes derecho a separarme de ellos, porque me necesitan. (El hace un gesto de incredulidad.) ¡Sí, a mí, tan poca cosa, tan irresponsable, tan loca, según tú! Hay peligros que tú ni sospechas, porque eres hombre, y de los cuales yo sabré defenderlos a costa de mi vida. Son hijos tuyos, pero yo soy su madre; son tu orgullo, pero son sangre mía; tu quieres que tu hijo sea hombre de honor, yo necesito que mi hija sea mujer honrada y además feliz.

Santiago: ¿Por qué dices eso?

Mercedes: (Exaltándose y conteniendo las lágrimas.) Y aunque ellos no necesitaran de mí, ¿quién dice que yo no necesito de ellos? ¿Y mi derecho, no es tan respetable como el de los demás? ¡Mi pobre derecho de mujer, siempre pisoteado por los que dicen que me quieren tanto!

Santiago: ¿Ahora vas a quejarte de mí?

Mercedes: Alguna vez ha de ser la primera.

Santiago: ¡Tú dirás que he debido yo hacer por tí y no he hecho!

Mercedes: Es muy fácil hablar de deberes ajenos; puede que todos hayamos faltado por igual a los nuestros. Tú dices que soy loca, que soy así ... ¿Por qué tú, que tenías el secreto de la perfección, no me has enseñado a ser de otra manera? Dices que por mi amor has sido cobarde, ... que por evitarme cuidados alejaste de casa a nuestros hijos. ... ¡Es falso! Me los quitaste porque pensaste siempre, desde luego, porque decidiste, en tu orgullo de hombre, que yo no era capaz de cumplir mis deberes, ¡y eso habría que haberlo visto! Temiste que fueran para mí un juguete, las muñecas que, por no tener madre desde niña, no he tenido nunca. ... Acaso hiciste mal. ¡Jugando a las muñecas, aprenden a ser madres las mujeres! 1

In Primavera en otoño, Elena has turned her back on her child in favor of a career as a professional singer.

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras completas, IV, 92-93.

After eighteen years of wealth and applause, she realizes that a career is not worth the loss of a daughter and gives up her career in the hope of recapturing the maternal joys she had forfeited in her youth. In her case, the flowering of the maternal instinct comes later in life than one would ordinarily expect, and she finds that becoming a mother in her daughter's eyes is no simple matter. Agustina has become adjusted to her mother's absence and has given her father the love and confidence that might have been Elena's had she stayed.

Elena: Le quieres más que a mí, ¿verdad?

Agustina: Sí, madre.

Elena: Me gusta la franqueza.

Agustina: Sí, madre, ya ves, quince años ... solo conmigo; él me ha enseñado a hablar, a andar, a mirar las cosas, a quererte ...

Elena: ¡Lo poco que me quieres!

Agustina: ¡Lo mucho que te quisiera querer! 1

Agustina's father loves Elena very much and defends her actions and her ambitions. He is understanding, tolerant and patient, but in a moment of pique, he speaks sarcastically of Elena's conception of the maternal instinct:

Don Enrique: Hija mía, porque tu madre te quiere mucho, mucho; pero como ha corrido tanto mundo, tiene una idea del amor maternal muy distinto de esta sencillota y a la pata de la llana que tenemos los que no hemos salido de entre las cuatro paredes ... material y moralmente hablando que nos vieron nacer. Nosotros, infelices, creemos que, puesto que los hijos no nos pidieron venir al mundo, estamos obligados a pagarles todas las ilusiones con que los engendramos, sacrificándonos por ellos cuando sea preciso; pero te

¹Ibid., II, 105.

repito que éstas son ideas de gente atrasada. ¡Qué le vamos a hacer! Puede que tu madre sea quien esté en lo cierto ... 1

As happens in Mama, the maternal instinct surges to the surface in defense of her daughter. When Elena sees that Agustina's sweetheart, Manolo, has made her child unhappy, she attacks him, emphasizing the words hija and madre.

No faltaría más sino que aquí, un caballero, con sus manos lavadas, se permitiese venir a mi casa a darle un disgusto a mi hija. No llores tú, alma mía, no le hagas caso a nadie, que aquí está tu madre para defenderte. 2

In Mama, the situation is both similar to and different from the one in Primavera en otoño. Mercedes, of the former play, has not been a real mother to her children because her husband has not wanted her to grow matronly rearing them. Instead, they have been cared for by servants and have been educated in boarding schools. Mercedes has longed to mother her children and they may have sensed this because they adore her. She has complied with her husband's wishes concerning the education of the children, however, and has turned to beautiful clothes and parties to occupy her time. She is outwardly frivolous but is inwardly mature and strong and cannot be tempted to stray

¹Ibid., p. 142.

²Ibid., p. 130.

by Alfonso, a handsome young don Juan. Mercedes can take care of herself and knows it but when Alfonso turns his attention to Cecilia, Mercedes becomes the mother lioness defending her cub:

Mercedes: Salga Ud. ahora mismo, salga Ud. de esta casa, y no vuelva Ud. en su vida, ¿lo ha oído Ud.? ¡en su vida, a pasar esa puerta!

Alfonso: (Con toda calma y mala intención.) Hasta que alguien me llame.

Mercedes: ¡Ah! ¿Ud. cree?

Alfonso: O me venga a buscar.

Mercedes: ¿A Ud.?

Alfonso: De poco servirá que yo me vaya si queda aquí alguien que desea que vuelva ... y lo desearán, y volveré, y sucederá lo que ha de suceder ... ¡sí, señora!

Mercedes: ¡Afortunadamente, no está mi hija tan indefensa como Ud. se figura!

Alfonso: ¡Ya! ¡Piensa Ud. advertir a su marido!

Mercedes: ¡No, por cierto! ¡Mía ha sido la culpa, mío será el remedio! ¡Para defender a mi hija contra Ud. me basto yo y me sobro! 1

The differences between the two women is that Mercedes has a strong maternal instinct and has longed to care for her children herself. She has remained a mother in spirit even during the years of separation from them so that stepping back into the role of mother suddenly is no great shock or transition for her. Elena, of Primavera en otoño, had given up her child willingly for a career and in the fifteen years that she has spent away from her daughter, she has stopped being and feeling like a mother. When she tries to step into the part again, she seems to

¹Ibid., II, 88.

be forcing herself. It is not nearly so easy and natural for her as it is for Mercedes.

In Seamos felices, Fernanda, who has just married, dreams of playing the piano on the concert stage and of augmenting her husband's meager income. She is unquestionably one of the most aggressive and self-sufficient heroines in Martínez Sierra's theatre, but despite her strong personality and her dreams for a career, she feels that the essential ingredient in her plan for personal success is motherhood. She loves Emilio, but would not have married him if she had thought that with him she would have been unable to have children:

Fernanda: ... ¡No hay vida completa sin un hijo!

Emilio: (Celoso.) ¡No tanto!

Fernanda: (Con fuerza.) ¡Sí tanto! (Sonríe.) Ya ves lo que te quiero ... y sin embargo ... si antes de casarnos, una bruja ... (Sonríe.) o un médico me hubieran dicho con seguridad: "Casándote con él no tendrás hijos..."

Emilio: (Interrumpiendo con vehemencia.) ¿No te hubieras casado?

Fernanda: (Sonriendo.) Me parece que no. 1

We have observed in the plays having to do with the nuns that the maternal instinct is a basic expression of womanhood and is not limited to one's own offspring. In Ama de casa, again the maternal instinct is apparent in a woman who has no children of her own. Carlota is a thirty-four-year-old widow when she marries don Felix. She immediately identifies herself as the mother and tries to

¹Ibid., XIII, 92.

help her stepdaughters to groom themselves more attractively. With her patience and kindness, she ultimately wins the girls' respect and affection. When Carlota's stepson, Ricardo, thinks that he is in love with her, she wisely understands that he is in love with clean and pressed clothes and with the idea of having a mother after so many years without one. She sums up the author's feelings when she says:

No hacen falta hijos propios para ser madre. No ha reparado en que todo el que sufre aunque tenga cien años dice "madre mía"--pues la mujer que acude a socorrerle, y también habrá reparado en que casi siempre acude una mujer, es la madre que estaba pidiendo. 1

Carlota believes that the maternal instinct is the essence of womanhood:

Mujer quiere decir madre, ni más ni menos. Madre desde que nace hasta que se muera. 2

In Martínez Sierra's plays, woman's love for her husband or her sweetheart often becomes mingled or confused with the maternal instinct. She wants to protect the man she loves and the author portrays this idea without detracting from the femininity of the character. Indeed, in many instances this shielding of the man makes the woman appear softer and closer to her basic role in society as the comforter, the soother; in a word, as the mother.

¹Ibid., I, 71

²Ibid., p. 89.

The woman treats her man much as a mother treats her child. She understands his weaknesses and shortcomings and overlooks them or forgives him for them even when they hurt her. In La mujer del héroe, for example, Mariana runs an ironing shop to support her husband, José María, and their three children. He is a flying enthusiast who feels that he cannot spare the time from this avocation to work and unashamedly allows his wife to support the family. Mariana looks upon her husband's activities stoically. She loves him and is uncomplaining. At the moment, José María has won a flying contest and is the idol of the city. A young girl begins to admire him greatly and he is flattered. She comes to his house ostensibly to ask him to give her a flying lesson. When Mariana sees her, she defends her man and sends the girl on her way telling her that her husband will not fly that day. José María stands up for his masculine rights and insists on giving the girl a lesson, since he had promised. Mariana tells him that if he leaves, he may not come back. José María leaves and both he and Mariana subsequently suffer some lonely days apart. Mariana refuses to take José María back until she sees him bandaged and believes that he is hurt. She rushes to him with no thought of the injustice he has done her. Her only concern is for his welfare and happiness. The maternal instinct has won out over her feminine pride.

The desire to protect and guide is seen again in Ana María of Madrigal. She is still in love with Agustín, her artist cousin, although he has been away for several years and believes that he is in love with Carmelina, who has served as the model for his prize-winning piece of sculpture. Carmelina and Agustín have quarrelled and separated, but she comes to Agustín's home to make up with him and get him to leave with her again. At first, Ana María refuses to allow Carmelina to see Agustín, but changes her mind and calls him. The result of Agustín's comparison of Carmelina and Ana María is disastrous to the former and he realizes that he loves Ana María. His reaction to Ana María, however, is more filial than amorous. He fears the turbulent life he knows awaits him if he leaves with Carmelina and longs for the peaceful, secure life he feels will be his with Ana María:

Agustín: (Acercándose a ella y cogiéndole las manos.)

¡No me dejes marchar!

Ana María: ¿Yo?

Agustín: ¡Sí, tú!

Ana María: ¿En qué quedamos?

Agustín: Sí: te he ofendido, y mucho más de lo que tú puedes figurarte; sí, he prometido que me marcho mañana, lo he jurado ... me esperan, es decir ... ni siquiera sé si me esperan; pero deténme tú, defiéndeme, porque si tu no me detienes me voy a la tristeza, al fracaso, al envilecimiento de todas las horas del día; me voy con ella, ¡porque no sé estar solo! Pero te juro que me dá terror; tú no sabes la vida que me espera, la que siempre hemos llevado juntos ... (Levantándose un mechón del pelo de la frente.) mira, ¿ves esta cicatriz? (Con sarcasmo.) Pues es el símbolo de todo nuestro amor. ¹

¹Ibid., IV, 172.

Ana María's response is a maternal one. When Agustín apologizes for his apparent weakness, she says:

(Grave y dulcemente.) Hijo, las mujeres no podemos vencer esta compasión pícara, que hace que cuando el ídolo se nos cae del altar le recojamos en los brazos ... ¡como a un hijo! (Abre los brazos y Agustín se precipita en ellos. Se abrazan larga y emocionadamente.) ¹

The love that Mariana feels for Juan in Pobrecito Juan is a maternal one and she knows it. She and Juan have grown up almost like brother and sister, and for her birthday, Mariana has asked her father to buy the mortgage of Juan's family property. His family has suffered financial reverses and is now threatened with the loss of even their own home. Though not of the nobility as Juan's family is, Mariana's father is a wealthy factory owner and Mariana knows that as long as her father has the mortgage, Juan's family will at least have their home. Her love for Juan is protective and maternal. She looks elsewhere for a husband.

When Juan declares his love for her, she tells him that while she loves him more than anyone else in the world, she does not love him as she must love her husband. Unlike some of Martínez Sierra's heroines, she wants a strong, independent husband that she can look up to as stronger than herself. She definitely does not want to marry a

¹Ibid., p. 175.

man she will have to mother. In answer to Juan's question about the kind of man she will marry, she says:

No sé ... Verás ... ¿Te acuerdas cuántas veces, yendo por ahí los dos, te has apoyado en mí para subir las cuestas? Pues a mí me parece que el hombre que ha de ser mi marido me tiene que subir las cuestas en brazos. ¹

When she finds the man that fits her formula, she agrees to marry with the provision that Juan accompany them on their trip to America to be the godfather of the first of the nine boys that she will have. Apparently she plans to expend her maternal instinct in the natural way, on her children, and will leave her husband free to be a man.

Even in so unlikely a play as Don Juan de España, the maternal element crops up. In the course of this work, Juan humbles himself before only two women. The first one is La dama velada, who turns out to be death, and the second one is Clara, a girl of fifteen who appears in the last scene and is the one to be considered here. In attempting to stop a fight between two beggars, Juan, is mortally wounded by a knife thrust meant for someone else. Clara is a witness to what has happened and with a calmness and maturity that belie her years, she tries to quell the dying Juan's fears about the eternal punishment that must await him for his wanton life. She is tranquil and

¹Ibid., p. 197.

and shows absolute faith in God's mercy and makes Juan say that he also believes and has hope. Kneeling beside Juan, she asks God to forgive him and offers her own soul in exchange for his. Her attitude in this scene is a maternal one. Here, Juan is the child and Clara is the mother. Perhaps she symbolizes that quality that ideally is part of the feminine make-up at any age. The soothing, healing comforting qualities that she displays are the ones that one most often associates with the maternal instinct.

Not only do women sometimes subconsciously mother their husbands or their sweethearts, but some men openly admit that they are looking for this sort of woman to marry, as for instance Antonio of El corazón ciego:

¡Tan mujer! Como una madre ... como una hermana ... ¡Lo que no saben ser, precisamente, las mujeres de aquí! (Con dolor suave y hondo.) ¡Chiquillo, en el amor, lo menos importante es el amor! Lo esencial, lo que le hace a uno esclavo y feliz, es esa suavidad femenina que envuelve, que acaricia; ese compañerismo comprensivo y atento, ese calor de hogar ... (Pepito sonríe irónicamente.) ¡No te rías! Sí, de hogar, lo que ni tú ni yo hemos tenido nunca. ¡Hogar, hogar! El que no han sabido crear para nosotros nuestras madres, las que fueron niñas de fin de siglo, frívolas, e ignorante. ... 1

In many ways, Miguel de Unamuno's conception of woman parallels Martínez Sierra's. The former equates the woman with the mother and says that:

¹Ibid., p. 35.

La mujer se rinde al amante porque le siente sufrir con el deseo. 1

In his Cartas a las mujeres, Unamuno continues:

Y sé de un hombre que no acabó de descubrir la intensidad y la profundidad toda con que su mujer le quería hasta una vez en que, presa de una sofocante congoja espiritual, le abrió aquella sus brazos al verle llorar exclamando: ¡hijo mío! En este grito es donde descubrió, dice él, toda la profundidad del amor. 2

His feelings about the great importance of motherhood are reflected not only in his essays and novels, but to a great extent in his relatively obscure theatre. Four plays that had previously been available only in manuscript form were published in Barcelona in 1954. They are Fedra, Medea, Soledad and Raquel encadenada. Each belongs to the womanhood-motherhood cycle. The dialogued story, Dos madres, of Tres novelas ejemplares y un prólogo, is a graphic example of an aberrant maternal instinct.

The medical profession has long been associated almost exclusively with men. While women have found acceptance as teachers, nurses and secretaries, the traditional professions of medicine and law have been reluctant and slow to open their ranks. Martínez Sierra unquestionably approved of careers for women, even wives and mothers.

¹Miguel de Unamuno, Del sentimiento trágico de la vida. 3rd Ed. (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1928), p. 113.

²Miguel de Unamuno, Cartas a las mujeres, De esto y aquello, III (Buenos Aires: 1953), pp. 234-235.

By the overwhelmingly large number of his heroines who successfully combine careers and motherhood, he suggests that career women are better mothers than their more conservative counterparts who, in his plays at least, seem to stagnate at home. There is the suggestion, too, that women, aided by their maternal instinct, are better prepared to be doctors than men who lack this special sensitivity. In Cada uno y su vida, for example, Irene and her sweetheart, Carlos, are fellow medical students. Carlos feels only repugnance in contact with illness or imperfection while Irene feels compassion and the drive to alleviate suffering. To her, medicine is a challenge:

Carlos: ¿No le dá a Ud. rabia tener que ocuparse de tanto imbécil y tanto mal bicho? (Irene no responde y se acerca a buscar el sombrero que dejó al entrar sobre la chimenea.) La medicina no debiera emplearse más que para curar a las personas decentes. ...

Irene: ¡Qué precisamente son las que casi nunca están enfermas! ¡Ay, no sea Ud. bolchevique! Déjenos Ud. el fondo inevitable de miseria humana a los pobres que con ellos nos tenemos que ganar la vida ...

Carlos: ¿De veras no le dá a Ud. repugnancia ocuparse de tantos insensatos, hundidos en esa que Ud. llama miseria humana, por su maldad o por estupidez?

Irene: No, ¿por qué? (Gravemente.) Las causas no me importan, ... el dolor es dolor ... y hay que combatirlo. En cuanto la maldad o la estupidez se han convertido en enfermedad, el deber de curar, el ansia, por lo menos, de intentarlo están por encima de todo. ... Frente a un caso, y cuanto más grave o más difícil, más el enfermo no existe; están solos, frente a frente, la enfermedad y el médico. Es un duelo ... apasionadamente, ¿no lo siente Ud. así? 1

In his idealization of motherhood, we see that Martínez Sierra felt that the maternal instinct was only

¹Ibid., XVI, 147-148.

vaguely associated with the physical reality of motherhood. This instinct, when allowed to develop normally and freely, brings great happiness to both mother and child, as expressed by Sor Juana and Teresa in Canción de cuna. When unexpressed it produces frustration and anxiety as seen in some of the other nuns in the same play. The maternal instinct, Martínez Sierra seems to say, is what makes women better doctors and nurses than men; it is also intimately associated with the attraction men and women feel toward one another. Some men seek out this appealingly feminine and soft quality in women and some women are forever searching for someone to protect and love, whether this person be a friend, a husband or a child. The author seems to say that woman's ultimate aim, and the only one that will bring her true happiness and completion, is to marry and have children. While it is true that most of the women in Martínez Sierra's theatre work, they do not aspire to be career women exclusively. The solution to the heroine's problem is almost always in marriage or in the resolution of a marital problem. All of the heroines are prospective mothers, whether they have their own children, act as mothers to their husband's children or, as in the case of some nuns, become mothers to mankind's forgotten children.

THE MOTHER: A SYMBOL OF CONSERVATISM

The type referred to in this chapter is the mother of adult or nearly adult children whose ambitions differ markedly from the ambitions she has for them. She is an emotionally unbending woman, lacking in tenderness and understanding and having none of the desirable characteristics that have been associated with the maternal instinct. This type of mother is conservative in her attitudes and has no patience with the liberal aspirations and ideals of the younger generation. Since the maternal instinct is so apparent in the plays of Gregorio Martínez Sierra, and since he treated the theme in such a delicate and almost sacred manner, the role of the mother would seem to be an enigma.

The mother, as she is portrayed here, is reminiscent of the many traditional mothers to be found in the Spanish literature of the nineteenth century. She is the product of a Victorian age and of a country that has always instilled prudishness in its middle-and upper-class women. She has been educated in a convent and has been well instructed in religious dogma. Her education has consisted largely of religion and the domestic arts, so

it is not surprising that the mother should be convinced that her destiny was to be in the home. She has been taught that this is her place, and that it is her duty to begin early and thorough religious instruction to her children.

Often her marriage was arranged by the family so there was not necessarily a basis for companionship between husband and wife. The husband, in addition, was frequently quite a bit older than she, and his education, both formal and practical, was vastly more varied and extensive than hers. He had been educated in the universities, where few women ventured, and in life, where he was encouraged to explore. Don Juanism, in fact, was often equated in his mind with masculinity. Between this ultra-religious and rather naïve woman and her husband there was often understandable antagonism. The husband, under such circumstances, frequently sought the refuge of the casino or the cafe, where women did not enter, or the company of more entertaining women. The mother, in her isolation, turned to her religion and her children.

It is possible that the mothers in these plays may not have been inspired entirely by a large percentage of the mothers of her time. Gregorio Martínez Sierra may have observed his model at first hand. María Martínez Sierra says of her mother-in-law:

En casa de mis suegros no entró más muestra de literatura que un periódico ultraconservador ni otro libro que los de texto que exigieron los estudios del primogénito, el cual salió avispado y buen estudiante.

Era mi suegra católica que hubiera merecido ser calvinista, enemiga de toda blandura para sí y para el prójimo, atisbando el pecado hasta en un suspiro, trabajadora encarnizada, exigiendo de todos los suyos intransigente adhesión al dogma católico tal como ella, educada por monjas, lo entendiera, y no les consentía momento de ociosidad material que pudiera dar lugar a un ensueño pecaminoso o siquiera frívolo. ¹

Considering how Gregorio Martínez Sierra felt about motherhood, it seems strange that he should have presented the mother in such an unflattering light. In his plays, the abstract quality of motherhood is romanticized while the mother is portrayed realistically to the extent that she represents the conservative faction. She is unrealistic, of course, in that she represents only one point of view.

At the time of the writing of Martínez Sierra's plays, Spain was in the throes of a great struggle between the forces of conservatism and liberalism. The former group would have Spain cling to the institutions that were associated with the Golden Age, the period of the country's greatest glory. The most prominent of these institutions was the Church. The conservative could think only that Spain had spent seven hundred years ridding itself of the infidel Moors and that the expansion of the empire had

¹María Martínez Sierra, Gregorio y yo, pp. 23-24.

coincided with the triumph of Roman Catholicism. Spain had fought too long for its religion, had claimed too many lands in the name of Church and King, and had saved too many savage souls for Catholicism to have been very affected by the Protestant Reformation. In addition, the Inquisition did a formidable job of preserving the traditions of the Church, and the Society of Jesus was formed by the Basque, Ignatius Loyola, to combat heresy and to be the leader of the Counter Reformation. The power of the Church was so great and so feared that it went unchallenged for centuries. Coincident with its continuing power, however, was its intellectual decline. In the eighteenth century, the greatest intellects of Spain were solemnly discussing what language the angels spoke and whether the sky was made of winelike fluid or bell metal.¹ In the nineteenth century, with the rise of liberalism in Spain, Rome evolved a policy of keeping its grasp firm on Spain to save it from liberal atheism. The Church, having already lost power in France, Germany and Italy, spared no effort to retain control on traditionally faithful Spain. While the liberals were successful in establishing public schools and keeping them officially separate from the Church schools, the lay teachers were often conservative Catholics who spent as much time on religion and dogma as was spent in the religious schools:

¹Hugh Thomas, The Spanish Civil War (New York: Harper Brothers, 1961), p. 33.

The State might claim to provide primary education free to all (theoretically) from 1901 onwards. But the schoolmasters were mainly Catholics and children spent much time saying the rosary. These schools were too few--in 1930 in Madrid alone there were 80,000 children who did not go to school. But through its influence over the schools which did not exist, the Church was able to maintain its power over the young Spaniards. 1

The mother, then, is a product of family tradition, institutions and convention. She has been so completely indoctrinated that she fails or refuses to see that times have changed and that people must change in accordance with them. She would like to instill in her children, for example, the accepted traditions of her time no matter how poorly they fit the altered circumstances.

The mother, as seen in the plays of Martínez Sierra, strongly feels that woman's place is in the home and that her success is measured in terms of the man she marries. This type of mother is consistently in the middle-class or higher, and reflects a smug, self-centered attitude that shows that her sphere of interest is exceedingly small. Education, for her, had been considered neither important nor beneficial, so even by the standards of her time, the Spanish mother would be considered uncultured. Her world was limited to her church, her home and her family.

The mother spends extravagantly and is a social climber, especially where her children are concerned. She

¹Ibid., pp. 44-45.

expects them to marry within their social class or preferably higher. She is very much against careers for women in general, and particularly opposes those careers that involve any professional activity or active participation in public life, such as medicine, for example, or the stage. In the scheme of characters, this mother is generally placed in opposition to a heroine with liberal ideas so that the struggle between mother and daughter may become a symbolical one in which tradition and a changing society lock horns. There is never any doubt, however, as to which force will be victorious, for the guiding hand behind the fracas, the author, is on the side of progress. If he were not, the mother would be the heroine and would be an attractive, lovable character whose daughter was an ungrateful brat given to rebellious and unladylike tendencies.

In Seamos felices, there is a typical mother-daughter conflict. Matilde, the mother, had been in love in her youth but had married someone else, her father's choice, who offered her more financial security. Although her own mother, the delightful and understanding grandmother of Fernanda, as the play unfolds, had encouraged Matilde to marry the man she loved, her head won out over her heart and she married the much older man who provided for her well and who died when her two children were small. As a young girl, Matilde had played the piano, but it had never occurred to her to use her talents professionally, as it

occurs to Fernanda now. She feels that the proper young lady should leave all the affairs of money to the husband and would certainly never go on the stage. To her, a concert career is roughly comparable to a career in burlesque. In her mind, both are forms of exhibitionism and are therefore unladylike. Matilde, unlike many another Martínez Sierra mother, is granted a reprieve, for she ultimately gains insight into her own personality and problems and is given a second chance at love. Matilde is forty-five years old at the time of the play's action and is an embittered person who has absolutely no sense of humor. During her marriage, she had tried to forget Ignacio, her first sweetheart, believing that it was disloyal to think of him. Now, twenty years later, Ignacio returns from America very rich and a widower, to court Matilde again. (Convenient but forced situations of this type, incidentally, are somewhat over-used by Martínez Sierra.) Ignacio still loves Matilde and wants to marry her, but she realizes that she is not the same person and that lack of love has embittered and aged her. Although she still loves Ignacio, she feels that she cannot stand his disappointment when he realizes how greatly she has changed. We assume that the reason Ignacio has changed so little is that his spirit has constantly been nurtured by the memory of Matilde and by his love for her. Matilde, on the other hand, has wanted to stifle and forget her love for Ignacio and the result has been a hardening of her personality:

Matilde: ¡A fuerza de vivir sola ... siempre ... ahora comprendo que vivir sin amor es vivir sola ... aunque se tenga madre ... aunque se tengan hijos! ... me he hecho egóista, dura, dominante, ... se me ha secado el corazón, ... se me ha hecho de hierro la voluntad, ... no sé ceder, no sé prescindir de mi misma. ... Estoy muerta por dentro. ... ¡Y tú mereces más! (Exaltándose dolorosamente.) Mereces lo que yo era cuando tú la quisiste. ¿qué te iba a dar ahora casándome contigo más de lo que te doy? ... Cariño, ... amistad, ... todo lo tienes, ... y sin regateos, ... ya lo ves, ... pero amor, ... ¡amor yo! (Se tapa la cara con las dos manos.) ¡Qué vergüenza!

.....
Eres, ... no sé, ... mi vida ... por lo menos, ... desde que te he vuelto a encontrar me parece que no he vivido en vano... ¡Nada en el mundo, nada! ni siquiera el cariño de mis hijos, ... ¡qué mala madre soy! Me ha dado nunca, nunca! la alegría que me dá el que hayas vuelto, el que estés a mi lado, ... el saber que, ... me has querido siempre, ... que me quieres. ...

Ignacio: ¡No digas desatinos! ¡Tú eres Miluca, la misma, la mía, ... la que siempre fuiste, la que siempre soñé!

Matilde: (Con serenidad triste.) ¿Qué podría darte? Un cuerpo deshecho, un corazón cansado. Todo tu amor se estrellaría como contra la piedra de una sepultura. ... Te cansarías, ... te darías cuenta de que yo no soy yo. ... Llegaría un momento en que para abrazarme cerrarías los ojos ... por piedad ... ¡Y eso no! 1

We may assume that Matilde, first in a loveless marriage and then later as a widow, has turned more and more to her children for a feeling of importance. She was dictatorial in their childhood and has not even relaxed her authority on the twenty-two-year-old Fernanda, who has just upset her mother by going out without asking her permission. Matilde laments her daughter's independence to her own mother, Cristina:

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras completas, XIII, 103-104.

Matilde: Podría siquiera haberme pedido permiso.
 Cristina: Habrá temido que no se lo dieras.
 Matilde: ¡Claro que no se lo hubiera dado! Hoy precisamente me hacía falta que estuviese en casa.
 Cristina: ¿Porque es tu día de recibo? ¿Quieres que la pobre criatura se aburra sirviendo tazas de té a las cuatro cacatúas que vienen a vernos? 1

A short while later, even in the company of her friends, Matilde is still concerned about why Fernanda could have left without asking permission:

Luisa: ¿Te pasa algo?
 Matilde: (Con rubor.) No, nada ... Es que ...
 Cristina: Es que su hija ha salido sin pedirle permiso.
 Isabel: ¿Y por eso te alteras?
 Luisa: ¡Ja, ja, ja! ¡Pedir permiso para salir de casa una niña de veintidos años! ¿Pero en qué siglo vives, criatura?
 Matilde: Es la primera vez que sucede.
 Luisa: Pues eres un fenómeno de autoridad o tu hija un arcángel de obediencia. 2

Gabriel's mother, in Torre de marfil, has led a life of material luxury but has been dealt many personal disappointments by her husband, the now defunct marqués. Before she married her husband, she had been warned that she was endangering her soul, but she was in love, so she married him despite the dire predictions. He later lived up to his reputation by deceiving her with another woman and died in what was considered extreme mortal sin. Since his death, the mother has lived a cloistered sort of life to the point of dressing herself as a nun and mortifying

¹
Ibid., p. 9.

²
Ibid., p. 11.

her flesh in order to save the soul of her husband, though theologially this is considered impossible. She has protected her son almost cruelly because she fears that the bad blood of the husband will manifest itself in her son or that he will be punished for the sins of his father. (This aspect of the play recalls Ibsen's Ghosts or Eche-garay's El hijo de don Juan.) Gabriel, having been reared in an atmosphere of over protection and subservience to a strong-willed woman, is emotionally dependent and physically weak. His mother, for years, has built her life around the fanatic purpose of saving the souls of both her husband and her son. She firmly believes that this life is of little value and that it is only the preparation for eternity. The accent in this house has been on death rather than on life, and Gabriel, being the child of both his mother and his father, feels a tremendous conflict between the spiritual calling and physical impulses. This conflict produces in Gabriel a sickly and neurotic state. The situation roughly parallels that of Jesus in the novel Casta de hidalgos by Ricardo León except that in this case, the mother dies first after leaving on her son the imprint of her spiritual, gentle and dreamy nature. In the case of Torre de marfil, the mother, surviving the father, continues to exert her influence to the point of debilitating Gabriel. It would not be difficult to trace the character destruction in young men of so-called good families in Spain to the narrow but very strong domination of the mother.

The resultant weakness becomes a decided social and moral problem. Extreme possessiveness or domination on the part of the mothers is often reflected in the literature of the nineteenth and twentieth century Spain. In the case of Gabriel, whose mother has been a sort of ascetic since his birth, he has never known what a real mother should be. She has been more of a keeper whose orders he has obeyed until Teresa comes into his life and makes him realize for the first time that he is a man. The latter is a young lady with both feet firmly on the ground who shows Gabriel that life can be joyful. With her, he learns to relax and enjoy himself. In this play, the mother is definitely the heavy who never discovers the error of her ways, as does Matilde in Seamos felices.

Doña Cecilia, the mother of Carmen in Amanecer, has been the principal cause of the financial ruin of the family through her extravagant and thoughtless spending. She and her daughters have spent seasons in Biarritz, bought clothes in Paris, and in general have lived on a higher level than the family could afford. When her husband embezzles money to maintain their standard of living and is forced to flee when the theft becomes known, doña Cecilia is frankly shocked. She had been oblivious to financial pressure that she had been exerting on her husband. Although this insensitivity on the part of doña Cecilia is part of the overall personality of the mature mother in

Martínez Sierra's theatre, it is her attitude toward woman's proper place that marks her as the symbol of tradition, if not of stagnation, rather than as a true mother with all that this would imply as we have seen it in the earlier chapter on the maternal type.

At a party, the subject of careers for women comes up, and one young lady speaks of her desire to become a doctor. Doña Cecilia says:

Todo eso de ganarse la vida es muy bonito; pero una mujer como Dios manda no necesita recurrir a ciertos medios para lograrlo. Tú, niña, podrías ser maestra de escuela o profesora de labores, o costurera, o señorita de compañía; pero, la verdad, la carrera de médico en una mujer me parece altamente indecorosa. ¹

Doña Cecilia seems to discount the value of love in marriage and feels that the latter is an institution that the woman looks to for security. This expediency of economic convenience as an attitude of the mother was common not only in Martínez Sierra's plays, but in other literary documents of the nineteenth century as well. The expression of these sentiments should not be surprising since the acceptance of the parents' (usually the fathers') choice was the rule rather than the exception up to the late eighteenth century. Moratin's El sí de las niñas is a criticism of the arbitrary parental powers that were prevalent then and that continue to be exercised quite frequently today in subtler ways. Doña Cecilia, for example,

¹Ibid., V, 20.

is overjoyed when she finds out that Julian has proposed to Carmen, and the thought that her daughter will not accept does not enter her mind since Julian's money can be the economic salvation of the family. She is so happy to think that their days of need are about to end that she does not hear Carmen protest and seems to feel that love at a time like this is irrelevant:

Doña Cecilia: ¡Qué señor tan simpático! ¿A qué ha venido? ¿Qué quería?

Carmen: (Nerviosa.) Quería ... ¡Quiere que me case con él!

Doña Cecilia: (Pasando en un segundo del asombro a la alegría.) ¡Tú! ¿Contigo? ¿Es posible? ¡Dios te bendiga, hija, Dios te bendiga! (Abrazándola.) ¡Nos salvas como siempre! ¡Como siempre! ¡Tú habías de ser! ¡Hija de mi alma! (Entran Manolita y Calixto.) ¡Se casa! ... ¡Se casa! ...

Manolita: ¿Quién, tú?

Calixto: ¿Quién? ¿Con quién?

Doña Cecilia: Mi Carmen ... con el jefe ... se casa ... con el señor que ha salido ahora mismo ... se casa ... se casa ... (Se oye hablar en el pasillo a Elvira con Sebastián.) Hija, Elvira ... ¿Has vuelto ya? Entra, entra ... tu hermana se casa ... (Sigue hablando en el grupo de Calixto, Elvira y Sebastián, que entran.)

Carmen: (A Manolita, con angustia.) ¡No puede ser! ¡No puede ser! ¹

Carolina, of Cada uno y su vida, in many ways seems to be made of the same fabric as doña Cecilia of Amanecer. Her husband, a doctor, works hard to earn the money she loves to spend. Although her own origins were humble, she wants her children to marry within their present social status or higher. Her marriage was a love match, but she

¹Ibid., p. 62.

favours other criteria in the selection of mates for her children. Like doña Cecilia, she also feels that a woman's ambition should properly be to find a companionable man who can support her comfortably and securely. She disapproves of careers for women and shows little respect for the woman whose ideas differ from her own. Irene is a fellow medical student of Carlos, Carolina's son, and is also the doctor's medical assistant. Although Irene is Carlos' academic superior, she is merely a girl of inferior social standing as far as Carolina is concerned. She has sent Irene on an errand to the dressmaker and has caused her to be late for her work at the office. When the doctor points out that Carolina would not approve of a woman's sending their son on a similar errand had he been in this situation, Carolina tells her husband that this is quite different. What she means is that Irene is a woman and if she were worthy of respect she would not be trying to be a doctor:

Doctor: Doctora aún, no pero lo será dentro de un par de años, lo mismo que tu hijo ... Te gustaría que si él, en vez de trabajar conmigo, trabajase en casa de otro médico, le mandase la señora del tal a dar un recadito a la modista?

Carolina: ¡Hijo, es muy distinto! 1

Carolina implies an unquestionable superiority of

¹Ibid., XVI, 136.

men in the business or career world, and accepts it as the most natural thing in the world.

When Luz, Carolina's daughter, tells her that she would like to be a doctor, or at least have a career, a situation that parallels Carmen's in Amanecer, Carolina is rather disdainful:

Carolina: ¿Es que quieres ser también médico?
 Luz: ¡Ojalá, madre! (Con tímido apasionamiento.)
 Médico o cualquier cosa, pero tener una carrera ...
 Carolina: Hija, no seas cursi. (Volviendo a sentarse en el sillón y tirando el libro con desdén encima de la mesa.) ¡La única carrera decente para una mujer es casarse ... bien! 1

When Carolina calls Luz cursi for wanting a career, she is using a word much abused by the people of her class to condemn anything of which they disapprove. While the universal purpose of casarse bien remains popular with young girls and their families, it is a fact that the desirability of a career for women has unquestionably been recognized in the most enlightened countries of the world.

Luz suggests that there is more to marriage than comfort and social position. She feels that mutual love and attraction are important considerations:

Luz: ... Eso de casarse es asunto demasiado serio, y antes de decidirse hay que sentir ... otra cosa ...
 Carolina: ¿Qué cosa?
 Luz: Qué sé yo ... un deseo, ... un cariño especial, ... un impulso que arrastre ... Verás, te lo diré ... a mi modo ... pero no te enfades! Enrique ... me es agradable ... para hablar con él, ... pero ... pero ...

¹Ibid., p. 31.

Carolina: ¿Pero?

Luz: Pero de lejos ... En cuanto me figuro que tengo que dormir a su lado ...

Carolina: ¡Niña! (Escandalizada.) ¡Qué estás diciendo!

Luz: Eso ... (Con tímida valentía.) Que en cuanto pienso que tengo que dormir a su lado toda la vida ... me da ...

Carolina: ¿Vergüenza? (Sonríe condescendiente.)

Luz: No, antipatía ... rabia, ... repugnancia ... no puedo ...

Carolina: Esas son bobadas de niña ñoña ... Además, en eso no hay que pensar, ... antes. 1

Carolina has a contradictory set of standards shared by other women in nineteenth century Spain. She considers it unladylike for her daughter to develop her abilities for financial gain while it is perfectly acceptable for her to marry a man she does not love for the same reason. She sees careers for women as exhibitionism, commercialism and downright vulgarity, but sees none of these characteristics in a marriage of convenience. Her daughter may prostitute herself beneath the supposedly sanctifying mantle of matrimony but may not make an honest living with her talents or education. As a product of an era that was greatly influenced by Queen Victoria, she prudishly tells her daughter that it is not necessary to think of the physical aspects of marriage beforehand. Her point of view is shared by another mother, Aurelia, of El corazón ciego, who is most anxious for her daughter, María Luisa, to enter into a marriage of convenience. She is

¹Ibid., p. 42.

not in the least worried about María Luisa's absence of feeling for the prospective bridegroom. The daughter is disillusioned and repelled by the idea that one may acquire respectability by swearing a false oath of love and by living a life of hypocrisy:

María Luisa: ... Para tener honra, no hay que ser honrada; ¡para este mundo hipócrita, siendo mujer, no hay más recurso deshonorado que éste! Es curioso ... muy curioso: con un juramento en falso y una firma, da honra el que no la tiene ... ¡Hay que casarse!

Aurelia: (Asustada.) ¡Cálmate, cálmate!

María Luisa: ¡Hay que casarse! ¿Verdad? Tú lo has dicho ... Para que Pierrot y todos los Pierrots del mundo me respeten, me tengo que casar; para que tú, para que tus amigas, las señoras correctas, no me abrumen con su noble desprecio, me tengo que casar; ¿Con quién? ¡Con uno! ¿Con cuál? ¡No importa! Con el que más se atreva. 1

Madame Pepita, of the play by the same name, shares the same prudishness shown by Carolina of Cada uno y su vida. Her teen-age daughter is given a book of anatomy which captures her interest as she begins to delve into the mysteries of the human body. The difficulty of understanding and pronouncing new words adds, no doubt, to the wonder and interest of the undertaking, but to the annoyed and shocked mother, there is only one answer to her daughter's strange literary taste:

Madame Pepita: (Interrumpiéndola, escandalizada.) ¡Calla, qué inmoralidad! ¡Ahora mismo tiras ese libro! Esas son cosas de hombres. ¡Una mujer decente no tiene para que estudiar ciertas interioridades! 2

¹ Ibid., X, 99.

² Ibid., VI, 23.

Her daughter's candid reply is amusing and refreshing:

(Con inocencia.) Sí, señora: que dice don Guillermo que las mujeres son las que mejor tienen que saber esas cosas, para cuando sean mayores y madres criar a sus hijos como Diós manda. 1

All semblance of understanding, logic or reasonableness on the part of the mother is summarized in Madame Pepita's reply:

(Sinceramente escandalizada.) ¡Pero ese hombre es un sátiro! 2

For the mother type to fluctuate between high-handedness and self-pity, between moral rectitude and the sacrifice of everything to expediency seems perfectly natural and not at all strange if her conventionally superficial thinking is remembered. She can be cunningly shrewd at one moment and utterly naïve the next. These changes, however, are carried to ridiculous extremes in Madame Pepita. She accepts without question all the lies of the count and his son, and fails to see, in spite of all the evidence, that she is being taken advantage of. But this tendency to exaggerate is one of Martínez Sierra's faults and it is only as a mother type that Madame Pepita is to be considered here. On the one hand, for fear of gossip, she objects to the visits of the very honorable don Guillermo, and on the other hand she pleads with the

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

viscount's mistress to leave her lover so that he may marry her daughter. Expediency is the deciding factor here, and the happiness of her daughter is not in the least considered. Later, when Catalina objects because she does not love the young man in question, the mother brushes aside her objection with an answer that must have been used down through the centuries:

Madame Pepita: ¿Tu qué sabes si le quieres o nó, si no has querido nunca a nadie? Ya le querrás cuando te cases.

Catalina: ¡O no le querré!

Madame Pepita: No sé por qué no le vas a querer. Es guapo, es joven, es elegante.

Catalina: ¡Se riza el bigote con tenacillas!

Madame Pepita: ¿Y eso qué?

Catalina: Nada; que cuando uno no tiene el bigote rizado, no debe rizárselo, porque eso es faltar a la verdad, y la verdad es lo primero.

Madame Pepita: (Con espanto.) ¡También tú!

Catalina: Sí, señora; ¡también yo!

Madame Pepita: (Levantándose nerviosa.) ¡Pues estamos lucidos! (Con enfado, cogiéndole de la mano y sacudiéndola.) ¡Mira, niña: todo eso son bobadas y melindres de chiquilla mimosa! Te casas con Augusto, porque te conviene, porque es un buen muchacho y está loco por tí; porque serás condesa y realizarás el sueño de toda mi vida. ¡Ay, si yo fuera tú! porque es el marido que te corresponde siendo hija de quien eres.

Catalina: ¡Yo soy hija de mi padre, del de ahora!

Madame Pepita: ¡No digas tonterías!

Catalina: Sí, señora; porque es él que me quiere y él que mira por mí, y yo le quiero a él; y si se empena Ud. en que me he de casar a la fuerza, pues se lo diré a él, y me defenderá, y no me casaré; ¡no señora!

Madame Pepita: Te casarás porque yo te lo mando, y te guardarás muy mucho de decirle a nadie esta boca es mía. ¡Miren la niña boba haciéndole ascos a la felicidad! ¡Tendrás algún príncipe guardado en la caja de la costura!

Catalina: No señora; ¡no tengo a nadie, ni falta que me hace!

Madame Pepita: Sí te hace falta. Una mujer sola no es nadie en el mundo. ¡Qué más vas a pedir! Mira que es el porvenir de tu vida, que luego me lo has de agradecer, ¡Ay, si una madre no se preocupa de la felicidad de sus hijas!

Catalina: Bueno; me voy con mi padre, que me estará esperando.

Madame Pepita: ¡Que espere!

Catalina: ¡No se por qué tiene que esperar!

Madame Pepita: Porque estás hablando con tu madre, y tu madre tiene que ser para tí lo primero en el mundo. ¡No faltaría más sino que un caballero que te conoce hace cuatro días! ... 1

Gertrudis, of Vida y dulzura, has selected the man she wants her daughter to marry. He is Dr. Dalmau, a scholarly member of her husband's intellectual tertulia, so Gertrudis is quite satisfied with him as a prospective son-in-law. She ignores the insistence of Mercedes, her daughter, that she is not in the least attracted to Dr. Dalmau and that in fact she finds him quite ugly.

Gertrudis: Ya te gustará cuanto te cases, niña. Los encantos físicos pasan con el tiempo. Lo que hay que buscar es la altura moral, la ética, la ciencia. ¿Te figuras que me gustaba a mi tu padre el día que me casé con él? 2

Gertrudis respects and admires Dr. Dalmau because he is a scholarly doctor and has nothing to do with alleviating human misery. She says:

No es uno de esos que curan enfermos, sino de los de laboratorio. 3

For her, contact with humanity is degrading, and as she sees in her daughter nothing more than an extension

¹Ibid., pp. 102-103.

²Ibid., I, 13-14.

³Ibid., p. 13.

of her own personality, she cannot understand why Mercedes does not consider Dr. Dalmau the perfect husband for her. She has been so busy with her books and her experiments that she has never taken the trouble to know her daughter. This lack of communication and understanding between mother and daughter is characteristic of the mother-daughter relationships in the Martínez Sierra theatre.

Gertrudis seems to ally herself with tradition when she opposes the forces of feminism. She has written an essay about the problem of the modern woman in Spain which has apparently met with the disapproval of Julia, a young woman who represents progress and feminism in this play:

Gertrudis: Es cierto. Ayer, para probar las tenacillas, quemó las tres primeras cuartillas de mi ensayo sobre el problema feminista en España. ¹

Julia and Gertrudis are like two opposing forces. Gertrudis is completely immersed in her science which is in no way related to her life or to that of her loved ones. Julia, on the other hand, is quite human in her outlook and can think of nothing more important than love and happiness.

María Isabel, Sor Gracia's mother in El reino de Dios, was reared in a wealthy family and has forgotten the small privations she experienced at the beginning of her marriage

¹Ibid., p. 52.

before her husband had made his money. She has forgotten that these years were the happiest years of her life, and cannot understand how her daughter can elect to become a nun and voluntarily give up the comfortable life she has known for a life that constantly concerns itself with misery and ugliness. When María Isabel comes with her husband and her other daughter to visit Sor Gracia in the old people's home, instead of feeling compassion for those less fortunate than herself, she feels annoyance and revulsion. She has not yet realized that her daughter is a separate entity and that she can have opinions, ideals and ambitions which are completely different from her own. She seems to feel that her daughter is merely a continuation of her own being rather than a new and independent personality.

In one of the first scenes, Sor Gracia says that she and her mother have never understood each other. When Sor Juliana tells her that her family has come to see her and asks her if she is happy to see them, she answers:

Sí, me gusta, sí, (Con ilusión.) por verlos yo a ellos; (Con pena.) pero mi madre, como siempre, me dará un mal rato. (Sonriendo.) No quiere acostumbrarse a que yo esté aquí ... 1

When she goes to meet her family, she treats her mother with some reserve:

¹Ibid., IX, 19.

Sor Gracia: (Abrazando a su padre con emoción.) ¡Ay, padre, padre, que alegría! (Abrazando con menos efusión a su madre.) ¡Madre! (Besando a su hermana.)
 ¡Lulu! 1

María Isabel feels almost outraged when she finds out that her daughter uses her hands to peel potatoes, and shows how little she understands her daughter's feelings. She believes that her desire to sacrifice and her ambitions are just whims that are not to be tolerated:

María Isabel: (Excitada.) Para capricho ya es bastante. Tres meses de hospital, cuidando lacras y amortajando muertos; seis de noviciado, hecha una facha con aquella, que decís vosotros, y ahora esto ... ¡Estos viejos repugnantes, quien sabe si leprosos! ¡No, hija, no! ¡Ahora mismo te vienes con nosotros! 2

The mother feels that where the children are concerned her decision should be final. Her conviction springs from the position of the Spanish mother, who, having limited civil and social rights, wants her word to be final when it comes to matters that concern the children. It is the position taken by the Spanish mother and is shaped by her own cultural limitations and by her own concept of what a woman should be, based on Catholic teachings in Spain. She is strong in this position, or at least, she tries to be, for this is the only part of life in which she has power. To her, there are no gradations of what is right and wrong, and her circle of what is right is indeed very small.

¹ Ibid., p. 23

² Ibid., p. 29.

In contrast to the very conservative and traditional mother is Mercedes, of Mama. There are several important reasons for her being the light-headed and seemingly irresponsible mother that she is on the surface. Her mother died in her infancy, so she was reared by her father and in his company participated in all the high life that the Riviera offered. It can be said that Mercedes, as a superficial type, is the result of a cosmopolitan and false society. She was made giddy on champagne, excited by the roulette wheel and was blinded to the realities of poverty by the dazzle and sophistication of night life. Mercedes is not truly a Spanish mother in that she has been nurtured in a different background and was either deprived of or spared the conservative Spanish up-bringing. One wonders whether Martínez Sierra did not have this fact in mind when he shows that the true mother is able to rise to the occasion to avert a tragedy in her family. She understands her daughter and her sufferings and will know, one senses, how to heal her broken young heart. She has the courage and the spirit to make her husband understand that his selfishness has been the cause of her gambling, their son's lying and their daughter's falling for a transparent don Juan. One may draw the conclusion that had she been molded in the form of the traditional Spanish woman (as seen not only in Martínez Sierra's works, but in Valera's El comendador Mendoza, in Galdós' La familia de Leon Roch and in the novels of

Fernán Caballero and others), she would not have been so clearly through the sudden crumbling of the artificial life she lived. It was her worldliness and the fact that she was unfettered that gave her the ability to recognize what was wrong and the strength of character and the sense of justice to undertake the solution of the problem. The Señá Isabels, the doña Perfectas, the doña Blancas, the Aguedas and all their kind would fail to accomplish a proper solution due to their rigidity and circumspection.

In El corazón ciego, there is a rather open criticism of the upper class mother whose children are given into the care of a governess or maid while she expends her energy at social functions. Unlike Mercedes of Mamá, Aurelia is drawn to the giddy and empty life of high society, and voluntarily abandons her daughter; unlike Mercedes, she lacks the mother instinct to be able to give her daughter the guidance and support she needs in a crisis. Aurelia has given a large party at which her daughter, María Luisa, has been talked into having a secret farewell meeting with Octavio, a traveling charmer. He is married to a woman in another country but he tells María Luisa that his marriage was a mistake and begs her to meet him for a morning ride in the country before her mother has gotten up. María Luisa, dazzled by the sophistication of this adventurer, consents. During their ride, they are witnesses to a crime, and rather than go to the police

station with her and be compromised, Octavio slips away from María Luisa. She calls her brother, Pepito, to get her at the station. Her disappearance, meanwhile, has been noted at home. Aurelia is unable to get any information from the lady who takes María Luisa for a walk every morning or from Jacinta, her personal maid. Don Luis, María Luisa's father who had taken a trip to avoid the party, has just returned, and although he does not scold his wife for not knowing of their daughter's whereabouts, his impatience is apparent:

Don Luis: (Con violencia.) ¿Dónde está María Luisa?
 Aurelia: (Asustada.) Pero hijo ... ¿Cómo quieres que lo sepa, si me acabo de levantar?
 Don Luis: (Con reproche doloroso.) ¡Aurelia! 1

Aurelia has slept until noon, as apparently is her custom, and until she learned of the disappearance of her daughter, she had planned to go back to bed for the rest of the day. She has entrusted her daughter's rearing to servants, but despite this abdication of her maternal responsibilities, she feels she is entitled to all of the rights of a mother. When María Luisa returns, she demands that she tell her where she has been and with whom:

Aurelia: ¡Ah! no quiere decirlo ... ¿No quieres?
 María Luisa: (Con humildad.) ¿Para qué?
 Aurelia: ¡Tiene gracia! ¡Para que lo sepamos!
 ¿O es que te figuras que tus padres no tienen derecho a enterarse de lo que a ti te ocurra? Soy tu madre, yo, ¿oyes? ¡tu madre!
 María Luisa: Sí, mamá.
 Aurelia: Y tengo derecho a saberlo todo, todo. 2

¹Ibid., X, 48.

²Ibid., p. 63.

María Luisa refuses to name her companion and swears that what has happened has been nothing more than an act of imprudence on her part. She says that she has not been out alone before and that she will not go out alone again. Don Luis' comment is another condemnation of the mother's lack of responsibility:

María Luisa: (Temblando.) ¡Es la primera vez! (Bajando la voz, sombría y resuelta.) ¡Y la última!
 Aurelia: ¡Ya lo creo! ¡Eso es cuenta mía!
 Don Luis: (En voz baja.) ¡Debiera haberlo sido antes de ahora! 1

Later, Aurelia is anxious for María Luisa to get married. She is not sure just what has happened and only knows that many people are saying many things. Rather than accept her daughter's statement that nothing compromising has transpired, Aurelia prefers to get her married as quickly as possible. She is concerned with appearances and what strangers will think rather than what has really happened and that her own daughter is hurt and disillusioned.

María Luisa: ... tengo miedo a molestarte ...
 Aurelia: Antes, antes ... debieras haberlo tenido antes ...
 María Luisa: (Con paciencia.) Pero mamá ... lo de antes, ya ¿qué importa?
 Aurelia: No te importará a tí, porque eres como eres ... pero, a los demás ... como no tenemos esa tranquilidad tan ... modernista ... 2

At the moment, the only candidate for a husband seems to be Antonio Ulcedo, a young man overwhelmed by

¹ Ibid., p. 65.

² Ibid., p. 74.

debts who is willing to overlook María Luisa's questionable past. Aurelia has decided that her daughter must marry and that she is no position to be fastidious. María Luisa insists that she does not love Antonio and that there is no need for her to marry.

María Luisa: (Mira a su madre y vacila un momento, luego levanta la cabeza y dice con firmeza, casi con desafío.) ¡Qué no quiero casarme con Antonio Ulceda!
Aurelia: ¡Ah! ¿No quieres? (Con ironía ofensiva.)
Te parecerá poco.

María Luisa: Me parece indigno.

Aurelia: ¿De tí o de él?

María Luisa: De los dos.

Aurelia: ¡Ah! ¿Y por qué?

María Luisa: (Friamente.) Porque si nos casáramos ... yo, que como hija de padre muy rico, llevaré al matrimonio una gran dote, y que ... hasta según tú ... acabo de tener una aventura, me casaría o parecería que me casara para remediar un daño que no existe! Compraría un hombre para que respondiese de mi indignidad, y él, que está arruinado, perdido de deudas, se vendería para remediar con mi dinero las locuras que otra le ha hecho cometer...

Aurelia: (Ofensiva.) ¡Cuánto sabéis las niñas de estos tiempos de lo que no debieras! 1

When María Antonia, another mother in Aurelia's group, comes to visit, she shows the narrowness of her kind. She would ignore María Luisa if she could and suggests that she has not allowed her daughter to associate with her:

María Antonia: (Que ha visto de sobra, al entrar, a María Luisa, pero que ha hecho como si no la viera.)
¡Ah! ¿Estabas tú allí? ¡Felicidades!

María Luisa: Gracias ... (Sin acercarse y con un poco de timidez.) ¿No viene Isabel? La esperaba ...

¹Ibid., p. 79.

María Antonia: (Secamente.) No viene ... ha tenido que hacer. (Volviéndose a Aurelia.) Tú eres la que nos tienes abandonadísimas ... 1

Luisa, María Luisa's friend, in further criticism of the conservative Spanish mother, explains why she is the only one of María Luisa's friends who has been allowed to visit her.

María Luisa: (Interrumpiendo con tristeza.) Que no han venido ... Tú has sido la única ...
 Lucía: ¡Qué más quisieran ellas que venir! Muertecitas de envidia están a estas horas... (Confidencial y burlesca.) Las mamás, hija, que como son tan requetecorrectas y tan respetuosas de la moral, no las dejan ... (Muy chiquilla.) Esa es la suerte de tener madrastra ... La pobre señora no se mete en nada, papá no se entera de nada, y yo me he venido con mi "carabina" ... en la antesala está ... 2

Although Basilisa of Para hacerse amar locamente is Amalia's and Paquita's aunt rather than their mother, she is the girls' legal guardian, and she takes the typical role of the mother who neither understands nor makes an attempt to understand the problems of her charges. Her name is indeed suggestive of her character. She is indignant when Paquita says that she has bought make-up. (It is for her sister to use on stage.) She reprimands her and sends her to the kitchen where she would like to keep Paquita and where she feels she belongs. In some ways, Basilisa approaches the characterization of the fairy tale stepmother.

¹Ibid., p. 81

²Ibid., p. 83.

While Basilisa is miserly and unloving with her nieces, she considers herself a religious woman and goes to mass regularly to pray for the soul of her dead husband:

Doña Basilisa: ... a misa voy, que es día quince, y bueno se pondría mi difunto Emeterio, que esté en gloria, con el genio que tuvo y que me figuro que seguirá teniendo, si no voy a rezarle en su día ... Anoche se me olvidó encenderle la lamparilla, y habrá que oírle si por culpa mía le han dado unos cuantos tizonazos de más en el purgatorio ... ¡No quiero trifulcas para la otra vida, que bastante me ha hecho padecer en ésta!

Paquita: ¿Quiere Ud. que la lleve la silla?

Doña Basilisa: Eso quisieras tú, para holgazanear otro ratito ... No señora; vuelves en seguida, te vas a la cocina, espumas el puchero, friegas los tazones del desayuno, barres el comedor, haces las camas, y si te queda tiempo, pones una plancha y estiras las enaguas de Amalia ... ¡Ah! y que no se te olvide echar la patata al puchero, si no estoy yo de vuelta antes de las doce ... (Volviendo.) ¡Ah! y cuidadito con el carbón que gastas, que parece que has nacido para princesa por lo que te gusta tirar de largo. 1

The humor of Martínez Sierra is often manifested in situations like these and it is more often found in the woman characters than in the men. These remarks which refer to life after death are quite frequent in Spain. One may hear, for example: "Se murió y es lo único decente que ha hecho en la vida." Almost always, this sort of thing is said with reference to a husband. While doña Basilisa's remarks about her husband's activities from purgatory show her to be rather superstitious and even ignorant, they represent a human and basically realistic approach to

¹Ibid., XII, 56.

life after death. Martínez Sierra probably used them to serve a double purpose: to show the uncultured woman who accepted without question all that her Church taught her while adding a few extensions of her own, and to inject into the play some humor at the expense of a character type for whom he had little sympathy. The idea that doña Basilia's husband could get revenge on his wife from purgatory for her religious neglect is a rather primitive and pagan sort of manifestation. These very human beliefs, or superstitions, regarding life after death are amusing and at times even irreverent or shocking. The last scene of Zorrilla's Don Juan Tenorio, for example, though melodramatic and far fetched, remains a serious affair to thousands of people after the passage of more than a century and attests to the superstition or religious gullibility of a large segment of the Spanish population.

Though contradictory in her behavior, Elena of Primavera en otoño, manifests, in what may be termed one of her several personalities, the typical Spanish mother as she appears in a number of Martínez Sierra plays. There are times when she is almost vulgarly or brutally outspoken in her pose as an independent human being who needs no one and who lives alone and likes it. Under this apparent crust of hardness smoulders a conventional conservative character which flares up easily to the surface. There is even a repressed romantic yearning and an unexpressed tenderness which she reveals through the presents

she buys for the daughter whom she had abandoned to her husband fifteen years before.

It is now, after the fifteen years spent as a singer, that the true Spanish mother manifests itself with that peculiar and typical combination of personality projection, extreme possessiveness and authoritarianism that allows no contradiction. It is a sort of might makes right attitude in which she is never to be questioned regardless of the results of her decisions.

This play is different from the others in that the daughter, Agustina, has not lived under the tutelage of her mother since infancy. She has lived with her father, whom she admits she loves more than she does her mother. Agustina, then, is not under the maternal spell, and reacts to her mother's attempts at absolute control rather maturely. She shows a considerable degree of subtle equanimity, and she retains her right to make her own decisions about her life. There is a conflict in this awakening Spanish mother who suddenly feels a strong drive to manage her daughter's life while she pursues her musical career. There is further conflict when without her having given of herself as a mother, she expects Agustina to assume automatically the role of the loving and obedient daughter.

After fifteen years away from her mother, Agustina comes to stay a few days with Elena, ostensibly to visit,

but really to convince her mother to become reunited with her father so that she, Agustina, may marry the man she thinks she loves. The father of the young man, formerly married but now a priest, demands that his son marry into a respectable family. Respectability, in his opinion, can only be accomplished through the reconciliation of Elena with her estranged husband, don Enrique. What becomes apparent from this visit is that a very conventional and absolute mother lives under the guise of the cosmopolitan singer. It only takes the knowledge that her daughter is in love and has decided to marry for Elena to come to life as the conventional Spanish mother:

Agustina: Si es muy sencillo. Que Manolo me quiere mucho, mucho. ...

Elena: Ya ...

Agustina: Y yo le quiero a él.

Elena: ¿También tú?

Agustina: También.

Elena: ¡Qué sabes tú!

Agustina: ¡Madre!

Pura: ¡Pues si ella no lo sabe!

Elena: No lo sabe, no. ¡Qué vá a saber con diecisiete años que tiene!

Agustina: ¡Dieciocho y medio, madre!

Elena: Hija, no te corre a ti poca prisa para hacermé vieja.

Agustina: No te enfades, madre.

Elena: Esa es otra. ¡No te enfades, mamá! Ni que yo fuera ogro. No me enfado, y menos contigo; pero te digo la verdad de las cosas. Vamos a ver, ¿cuánto tiempo hace que sois novios?

Agustina: Mucho ... no sé ... desde siempre ... es decir, desde hace ya muchísimos años ...

Elena: ¿Muchísimos? ¿Dónde le conociste? ¿Dónde le has encontrado?

Agustina: No le he encontrado ... porque siempre hemos estado juntos ... ya ves ... somos vecinos; la huerta suya, pared por medio con la de casa.

Elena: ¡Muy bonito! Así habrás aprendido de picardías tú con el tal Manolo.

Agustina: No, mamá; he aprendido a quererle.

Elena: Algo es algo.

Agustina: Si vieras, es muy bueno ... tan serio, tan formal. ¡Si no fuera por él sería yo más loca! Pero él tiene una maña para mandarme ...

Elena: ¿Sabes lo que te digo? Que eso no es amor ni Cristo que lo fundó ...

Agustina: ¡Mamá! 1

Elena's antagonism towards her daughter's sweetheart reaches the point of abusiveness. In the hope of breaking relations between the two young people, the mother meddles in a slight disagreement between them. Manolo objects:

Manolo: Señora, permita Ud. que le diga, que en esta cuestión sólo Agustina tiene derecho a quejarse.

Elena: No faltaría más sino que aquí, un caballero, con sus manos lavadas, se permitiese venir a mi casa a darle un disgusto a mi hija. No llores tú, mi alma; no le hagas caso a nadie, que aquí está tu madre para defenderte.

Manolo: Hasta ahora Agustina no ha necesitado que su madre venga a defenderla. 2

Elena arbitrarily insists that her daughter deserves a better husband than Manolo. To her the only answer to Agustina's insistence that she loves Manolo is: "Valiente razón," and "como si bastara quererse para ser feliz." Her remarks are worthy of El sí de las niñas.

Doña Isabelita, of Esperanza nuestra, is a lively eighty-year-old woman who is don Carlos' mother and, of course, grandmother to his children. In classifying types, doña Isabelita has nothing in common with the grandmother,

¹Ibid., II, 100-101.

²Ibid., p. 130.

but falls quite naturally into the mother class. In this play that has a social thesis with only slight overtones of feminism, doña Isabelita represents the landowner who selfishly looks out for his own welfare while ignoring the plight of his workers. Her reactionary attitude is contrasted with the more liberal tendencies of her grandchildren and of the workers themselves. It is the workers who are responsible for the wealth of the land but manage to eke out only a meager living, while the landowners live in wealth and leisure from the profits. Doña Isabelita sees no reason for a change in the pattern, for she owns the land and reaps the profits that she feels are rightfully hers. She is an intense and ruthless individual in the tradition of doña Perfecta of Galdós and doña Bárbara of Gallegos, but has the sharp and ready wit of the Quintero's doña Clarines. She is able to classify people and institutions very neatly: they are good if they serve her own purpose and they are bad if they do not. For example, she asks a journalist:

Periodista? (Mirándole con impertinencia.) De la buena o de la mala Prensa? ¹

She favors keeping the working class in their traditional positions of ignorance and servitude:

Don Carlos (hijo de doña Isabelita): ¡Sí ... hasta los gatos quieren zapatos!

¹Ibid., VIII, 32.

Doña Isabelita: (Mordiéndolo las palabras.) ¡La culpa tiene el que los enseña a leer! ¹

She is so self-centered that her love extends only to her son and does not embrace her grandchildren. She prefers to think of them as the offspring of her daughter-in-law, now dead, because of their liberal ideals. Don Carlos' wife had been the friend of the workers and had felt the injustice of their lot. Doña Isabelita speaks of her to don Carlos:

(Con mala intención.) Pobre sería, cuando tú lo dices ... También a ella le daba por defender a los des-camisados. Cuando venía aquí, siempre andaba rodeada de chicos que la llenaban de mocos y babas, ... y contaba la historia ... o el cuento, de no sé qué rey, que dice que quería que cada súbdito echase una gallina en el puchero. ¡Calcadito a ella ha salido su hijo! ²

Her grandchildren, especially Lorenzo, are acutely aware of the injustice perpetrated on the families who have worked their land in poverty for generations. Doña Isabelita looks upon her grandchildren as traitors and does not want them to inherit her wealth. She apparently feels that her blood flows only in the veins of her son and stops there. As the typical Martínez Sierra mother, she sees her child as an extension of herself and her beliefs. Since her grandchildren's conception of social justice differs so markedly from hers, she refuses to accept them as her own:

¹Ibid., p. 46.

²Ibid., p. 53.

Ese Lorenzo ... ¡Sí! ¡Sí! Es un necio, un iluso, un desquiciado ... con la cabeza llena de paparruchas, que no le dejan enterarse de lo que más le importa. Siempre leyendo ... siempre leyendo ... ¡Esa maldita letra de imprenta! ¡Por algo en mi casa no han entrado nunca más libros que el de misa y el de cuentas!

Don Carlos: (Sordamente.) Es bueno ... es bueno ... Esto no lo merece ...

Doña Isabelita: Es bueno ... Ja, ja, ja! ... Mejor que su padre, ¿no es eso? Mejor que tu madre, ¿no es verdad? Eso se figura ... El sabe más que nadie; ya veremos donde va a parar con su sabiduría. (Sordamente.) ¡Muerto de hambre merecía verse!

Don Carlos: ¡Madre, que es mi hijo!

Doña Isabelita: ¡Eso es lo que siento! ¡Pensar que esta casa mía! (Señalando por la ventana, con los brazos extendidos.) ¡esa tierra mía! (Cerrando los brazos como si quisiera abrazar lo que la rodea.)

¡esta riqueza mía! tiene que ir a parar a sus manos, solo porque es tu hijo! (Con ira reconcentrada.)

¡Herencia! ¡Herencia! Y tener que morirse ... sin remedio, ¡y dejarlo! (Dejándose caer en la silla.)

Morirse ... (Ronca y sordamente.) ¡El que tiene algo no se debe morir; no se puede morir! (Echando espuma por la boca.)

Don Carlos: (Asustado, acercándose a ella.) ¡Madre, madre! ...

Doña Isabelita: (Levántandose con violencia, cogiéndole, con las manos agarrotadas, por los dos brazos, y mirándole con desvarío, en un ataque de avaricia y de amor maternal desesperados.) Todo es tuyo ... todo es para tí. ¡porque tú eres mío! Guárdalo, hijo ... consérvalo tú ... ¡No se lo des a nadie ... a nadie! No consentas que nadie te lo quite ... Yo te lo doy todo (con restricción avara.) cuando me muera; pero a tí solo, a tí. ¿Lo oyes? a tí! (Se desploma sobre el pecho de su hijo con llanto histérico y senil.) 1

Judging from the theatre of Martínez Sierra, it would seem that the forty-five-year-old woman has arrived at an unattractively conservative stage in her life. Doña Genovena of El ama de casa, has attained this age, the most common one for the mothers described in this chapter.

¹Ibid., pp. 79-80.

She is not herself a mother, but has tried to fill this role with her nieces and nephews since the death of her sister, thirteen years before. Like Gertrudis of Vida y dulzura, she has not known how to teach her charges certain refinements of grooming that are usually taught by the mother. Since doña Genovena has been in complete charge of don Felix' house for so many years, she is reluctant to surrender her authority when don Felix marries Carlota, a thirty-four-year-old widow. She complains:

... es que yo he vivido trece años en tu casa, cuidándola como si fuera mía, y ahora soy en ella, como vulgarmente se dice, la última palabra del credo. Nada se me consulta, para nada se pide mi opinión, todo se hace sin contar conmigo. ¹

She uses a typically conventional criticism to discredit Carlota. She says that she has worked and implies that there is something indecent about such a woman. The modern woman, according to doña Genovena, is a blight upon society. The only proper place for a woman, she is firmly convinced, is in the home.

¡Es que hoy es día de tribulación, pobre hermana mía! ¡Tan fina, tan señora, tan educada, porque eso es la esencia! créame Ud., y ver que entra a usurpar su puesto una mujer ... Delante de estas niñas, naturalmente, no se pueden decir ciertas cosas, pero usted me entiende. Una mujer de ahora, de estas que se ganan la vida ... llevando la contabilidad en un escritorio. ¡Cómo si una mujer decente tuviera obligación de ganarse la vida! La mujer en casita, en casita ... pero los hombres, claro, ¡Ud. me entiende! Y este cuñado

¹Ibid., I, 18.

mío, como todos. Ella tendrá su labia ... siempre metida entre ellos. En fin, yo, pase lo que pase, me pienso retirar dignamente, porque en mi habitación soy la reina, y que se hunda el mundo; por las niñas lo siento, que están acostumbradas a otra cosa, pero manda quien manda ... y Ud. ya me entiende. 1

While woman's subordinate position in the scheme of public affairs is accepted and defended by the forces of tradition, we see that woman somehow struggles to build an empire in the home. Since she has no authority outside of it, she often capitalizes on her power within the home. In general, the mother is given absolute authority in questions having to do with the home or children. The husband feels that the home and the children are properly the responsibility of the mother, while it is his to earn the living without having to complicate his life with domestic problems. Carolina, of Cada uno y su vida, asks her husband to speak to their daughter about making an advantageous marriage, but he refuses because he considers the children to be outside of his domain:

Doctor: ¡No, Carolina, no! (Con decisión.) En eso no me meto ... Ya sabes que los hijos son cosa tuya.

Carolina: ¡Pero si se trata de su felicidad! ...

Doctor: Por lo mismo ... ¿Quién va a ocuparse de ella con más clarividencia que tú, que eres su madre? Amores, novios, bodas en perspectiva, conflictos psicológicos-mundanos, todo eso es cosa vuestra ... tuya y de ellos. Déjame a mí que os gane el pan y en gracia de Dios, sin meterme en complicaciones domésticas ... Ea ... ¿No te vas? 2

¹ Ibid., pp. 204-205.

² Ibid., IX, 134-135.

Martínez Sierra seems to imply that when the mother has acquired power, she becomes authoritative, dictatorial and despotic. Her opinions and dictums are based on unflinching convictions of right and wrong based on tradition and the teachings of her religion. She feels that written as well as unwritten laws have established woman's role in life and that any deviation from this role is inconceivable and not to be tolerated.

The mother identifies herself with her daughter to the extent that she does not recognize any differences of opinion as valid. She especially would like to force upon her daughter her own choice for a husband.

The narrow-mindedness and the willfulness on the part of the mother is often the result of the responsibilities that she is forced to assume because of the circumstances. The mother is sometimes left alone with the obligation of supporting her children. If there is a father, he characteristically lacks strength and dignity. The author must have despised these weak men as much as he despised the conventional, uncultured and authoritative mother. Both types form the antithesis of the types he considered beneficial for Spain. They are indeed in sharp contrast to the strong, independent and intellectually curious heroine. In spite of the lightness of his plays, the proof that his social criticism has been heard lies in the disapproval of his works by the Church in present-day Spain.

THE GRANDMOTHER

The enthusiasm of the heroine for independence and a career is contrasted with the prudishness and conservatism of the mother. The mother again fares rather badly in comparison with the kindly, wise and witty grandmother who is no longer actively engaged in making her mark in society and has long ago stopped dreaming of the ideal marriage for her children. The appearance of things has ceased to be of consuming importance to her and minutiae have lost their charm. Time and experience have changed her attitudes about many things, for she is free from the subjective pettiness that characterized the mother, and since she is free of many of the mother's responsibilities, there is less reason for her to be stubborn. The mother's frustration is augmented by her lack of culture and by her lack of any real authority. Her interest and abilities are quite limited. We see, however, that the extreme conservatism of the mother disappears with years and with the lessening of responsibilities and their inevitable frustrations. This does not mean that the domineering or reactionary grandmother did not exist; she did, of course, and she is portrayed in doña Isabelita of Esperanza nuestra, but she is not the grandmother type that Martínez Sierra chose to immortalize on his stage.

The grandmother is probably the most universal type that Martínez Sierra created. She is not exclusively or even recognizably Spanish, but rather could be credible in a variety of national dramas. Martínez Sierra depicts a series of grandmothers that demonstrate the special personality, cynical at times, but always humane, that he apparently associated with this member of the family. She is not a stereotype or a theatrical device, as was the gracioso of the Siglo de Oro, but rather is taken whole from the society of her time and is very likely recognized by the viewer. When she is compared with the possessive and dictatorial mother, she is specially pleasant and amusing. Of course she has not acquired academic culture with her years, but she has acquired a sort of wisdom and philosophical resignation born of her past struggles and disappointments. She smiles, and tolerates youth's desire for progress. At times she is helpful and at others, merely suspends judgment and never does she set herself up as a supreme judge of right and wrong as the mother usually does in the plays of this author.

If we consider the mother as the symbol of conservatism, we may consider the grandmother as the symbol of patience and kindness in relationship with the heroine. She understands and sympathizes with the aspirations of youth if she does not encourage them. Since she is a

generation farther removed, one might expect her to be even more steeped in tradition and more narrow-minded than her daughter, but this is not the case. In addition, she functions dramatically as a source of comic relief in some instances. She keeps the struggle between the heroine and the forces that oppose her from becoming too serious. She may make light of her granddaughter's problems or she may tell her how she managed to have her way in her youth despite the supposedly inferior position of women, as doña Barbarita does in Sueño de una noche de agosto. Doña Cristina, of Seamos felices, in her good-natured summing up of the male ego may be reflecting a more serious opinion of the author. The grandmother may say things that might be offensive in another character because she speaks affectionately, not derisively.

Just as the conservative mother is generally placed in opposition to her freedom-seeking daughter, a grandmother type often appears in the same plays and is a source of consolation and cheer to the depressed or irritated heroine. She is consistently sweet, human and lovable. She has a sense of humor and tends to look on the brighter side of the past as well as of the future. She injects a note of optimism, which must be considered a distinguishing feature of the works of Gregorio Martínez Sierra.

Cristina, Matilde's mother and Fernanda's grandmother in Seamos felices, keeps her life uncomplicated.

At her age, she tells Fernanda, there are only three joys left in life and of these, games bore her, gossip is repugnant and candy is prohibited. She explains this as she munches another piece of candy, indicating that Fernanda's independent spirit may well have been inherited or acquired by imitation. Cristina explains that one must sin from time to time to make life worth living. When Fernanda fails to understand why her new husband will not let her go on a concert tour that will mean a great deal to them financially, doña Cristina makes it very simple:

Cristina: No hay hombre que pueda sufrir con paciencia que su mujer sea algo por cuenta propia.

Fernanda: (Con protesta.) ¡Abuela!

Cristina: La superioridad masculina está fundada en la inferioridad femenina. Si fuéramos igualmente importantes, ¿cómo iban a atreverse esos caballeros a ponerse corona para andar por casa? No hay nada que halague a un buen marido como pensar ... y aun decir, si llega el caso: "¡Mi amada mujercita es una nulidad encantadora!" (Fernanda suspira.) Y no hay remedio, chiquilla, ... si quieres serlo todo para tu marido, ¡no seas nunca nada!

Fernanda: Pero ¿por qué, por qué?

Cristina: ¡Ellos sabrán! ... Aún recuerdo el acento protector e imperial con que tu abuelo, que hubiera dado la vida por mí, suspiraba mirándome: "¡Qué chiquilla eres!" (Se ríe.) O lo que es lo mismo: "¡Qué grande hombre soy!" 1

Later, doña Cristina advises Fernanda to give in and not to make the concert tour. She understands that

¹Ibid., XIII, 99.

for Fernanda to be the breadwinner at this point in her marriage could well be disastrous. She realizes that masculine vanity is deeply rooted and that Emilio, no matter how modern he may be, cannot fail to be offended and repelled at the thought that his wife is supporting him.

Doña Barbarita, of Sueño de una noche de agosto, is typical of the many charming grandmothers who grace the Martínez Sierra stage. She patiently and sympathetically listens to Rosario's complaint that women do not have the same liberties as men. She understands Rosario's frustration but has long been reconciled to her status and has found effective means to get what she wants from men. She is indulgent with those she loves even though she grumbles at them good-naturedly from time to time and she tries to see the lighter side of whatever problem arises. When Rosario complains that her brothers have the liberty to come and go as they choose, she answers, "Me parecería un capricho perfectamente natural." She takes a philosophical view of men's liberties and feels that they receive less satisfaction from them than they would have one believe:

Rosario: (Volviendo a sentarse junto a su abuela.)
Abuela, ¿tú crees que todos los hombres que salen por la noche tan contentos ... van ... a divertirse ... pecando?

Doña Barbarita: ¡Ja, ja, ja! ¿Qué más quisieran ellos? No, hija, no: van a hacerse la ilusión de que pecan y de que se divierten ... pero la mayor

parte de las veces no les sale la cuenta ... o les sale cara: por eso, suelen volver a casa tan de mal humor. (Pasándole la mano por el pelo.) No los envidies. ¹

Instead of combating men openly as the modern woman does, doña Barbarita has preferred to win the small domestic battles. She has had three husbands and has managed to keep all of them in line with some strategy or other. She confides her secret to Rosario:

Doña Barbarita: Hija, la esclavitud no le ha gustado nunca a nadie más que al amo; lo que hay es que vosotras os quereis librar de la tiranía, y nosotras nos contentábamos con vengarnos del tirano.

Rosario: ¿Cómo?

Doña Barbarita: Haciéndole la vida insoportable. (Abriendo un dije de tres hojas que lleva colgado de una cadena al cuello.) Mira ... ¡mis tres dueños! (Sonriendo con amor.) ¡Mi Ernesto! ¡Mi Enrique! ... ¡Mi Pepe! ... ¡Lo que me han adorado! ... ¡Lo que les he querido!

Rosario: (Un poco escandalizada.) ¡A los tres!

Doña Barbarita: (Con naturalidad.) Uno a uno ... ¡Y lo que les he hecho rabiar a todos!

Rosario: (Mirándola con un poco de asombro.) ¡Eh!

Doña Barbarita: (Sonriendo muy satisfecha a sus recuerdos conyugales.) A mi Ernesto con celos míos injustificados, a cuenta de toda mujer a quien se le ocurría mirar cara a cara... y lera pintor de historia! ... A mi Enrique con recelos suyos, prematuros, pero tal vez proféticos, a costa de mi Pepe, que era vecino nuestro y ya me hacía guiños desde el balcón ... A mi Pepe con celos póstumos a costa de mi Enrique ... ¡Las veces que me habrá dado un ataque de nervios al entrar de repente en el estudio de mi Ernesto y ver a la modelo en traje de Eva! ... ¡Las veces que habré suspirado mirando de reojo al balcón de mi Pepe, delante de mi Enrique! ¡Las veces que se me habían llenado los ojos de lágrimas contemplando el retrato de mi Enrique delante de mi Pepe!

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Sueño de una noche de una noche de agosto (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1926), p. 13.

¡Pobrecillos! Ahora que los tengo a los tres en el cielo, ¡casi me dan lástima! (Besa con fervor los tres retratos.)

Rosario: ¡Abuela!

Doña Barbarita: Y he sido un ángel, fíjate bien, un ángel del hogar, con miriñaque; una mujercita sumisa, dócil, amante, silenciosa, poética, ¡una esposa arrancada de una novela de Pérez Escrich! 1

Doña Barbarita has been content with her lot in life and has apparently never felt the disadvantage of being a woman that Rosario now feels so acutely. She has been aware of her powers and has not hesitated to use them. She is sorry for the modern girl who misses out on small skirmishes and the joys of reconciliation by being such a dedicated and straight-forward advocate of her own rights and liberties:

Las mujeres de ahora sois más nobles y más infelizotas; pedís la autonomía y renunciáis al alfilerazo: puede que sea más moral y más justo, pero de seguro es menos divertido. 2

At the end of act one, when el aparecido has thrown Rosario's slipper through the window in exchange for his hat, all look at Rosario for an explanation. At this point, her feminist independence abandons her and she has recourse to a more traditional and feminine subterfuge: she faints. Doña Barbarita seems to approve of this technique of avoiding an explanation, for she says to the brothers:

¹Ibid., pp. 14-15.

²Ibid., p. 16.

(Con autoridad.) ¡Apartad! ¡Retiraos! ¡Toda mujer que ha juzgado prudente desmayarse, es sagrada! 1

In the last act, el aparecido reappears and doña Barbarita serves him and Rosario tea and cookies. At the proper moment, she pretends to fall asleep so that the young people may talk freely. When el aparecido proposes and Rosario seems to have trouble saying "yes," the temptation for doña Barbarita is too much. She interjects:

Doña Barbarita: (Un poco impaciente.) ¡Niña, dí ya que sí o que no de una vez!

(Rosario y el aparecido se separan de un salto y miran con estupefacción y confusión a doña Barbarita.)

El Aparecido: ¡Eh!

Rosario: ¡¡Eh!!

Doña Barbarita: (Con aire de reproche.) ¡Bien está el melindre, pero hasta cierto punto!

Rosario: (Balbuceando.) Pero ... ¿no estabas ... dormida?

Doña Barbarita: ¡Hija! ¿En noventa años, querías que aún no hubiese aprendido a dormirme y a despertarme a tiempo? 2

Nothing sums up quite so well the character that emerges with the years and the philosophical vision that results as does the answer of Cristina, the grandmother, in Seamos felices. Her daughter Matilde, suggests that her mother has shown signs of having gone back to a second childhood. Instead of being offended, Cristina shows perfect self-control and admirable insight:

¡Ojalá! No, hija mía, por desgracia no he vuelto. Pero he pasado de la madurez, edad intolerable e intolerante en que el orgullo se junta con la prudencia y estropea la vida. 3

¹Ibid., p. 42.

²Ibid., p. 108.

³Ibid., XIII, 63.

Together with this admirable perspective with reference to the mature years and combined with a kind of Christian resignation, there is a delightful sense of humor that has overtones of perversity. Surprised in the act of eating forbidden candy, Cristina explains her seemingly irresponsible conduct to Matilde, her daughter:

Cristina: ¿Quién tiene la culpa de que no los pueda comer abiertamente?

Matilde: ¡A tu edad! ¡Es un dolor!

Cristina: Si, es un dolor que a los setenta años no haya podido lograr lo que me da la gana.

Matilde: Pero, mamá, si sabes de sobra que no te conviene.

Cristina: ¿Quién lo ha dicho?

Matilde: El médico.

Cristina: No me creo obligada a respetar una opinión que no he solicitado. 1

In a conversation with her granddaughter, Cristina again makes reference to her irresistible attraction to sweets. Her explanation of the situation is humorous and dispels any suspicions of senility:

Cristina: Precisamente he querido huír de la tentación. Como mi hija y mi médico han decidido que debo renunciar a todas las dulzuras de este mundo ...

Matilde: (Protestando.) ¿A todas, mamá?

Cristina: Tu dirás. A mi edad no voy a ponerme a flirtear, a bailar, a bailar, ni a montar a caballo. Cumplidos los setenta, no quedan en el mundo más que tres distracciones: el juego, la murmuración y la golosina; el juego me aburre, la murmuración me repugna y la golosina me la prohíben. (Come una guinda que saca del pañuelo, aprovechando, como una niña, la imprudencia de estar en visita.)

Matilde: Y tu haces mucho caso de la prohibición!

Cristina: Hay que pecar, hija, hijitas, hay que pecar de cuando en cuando. ¡Si no, no vale la pena de vivir! 2

¹ Ibid., p. 8.

² Ibid., pp. 10-11.

When Cristina refers to her husband's death, there is a mixture of the pathetic and the comic:

Bien sabe Dios que le he llorado con toda mi alma, pero la misma noche que le enterraron, cogí un mantón y un velo, me eché a la calle y no volví hasta la madrugada. ¹

This very mixture of sadness at his death and relief to be free of his tyranny shows another facet of Cristina's character that further humanizes her. Her expression is paradoxical, but feelings are complex and can rarely be expressed in terms of a single emotion. Her ambivalence and candor draw us to her, for we identify in a measure with her. She recalls Unamuno's conflict in his search for truth in life, he contradicted himself constantly.

There are moments when Cristina, like Unamuno, wants to probe life for its truth. She has lived too many years to be fooled by superficialities. When Matilde accuses her daughter of melodramatic actions, Cristina replies:

Permite que te diga que el melodrama nos lo has hecho tú. El recursito de las lágrimas ha sido de efecto fulminante. Tienes una hija que no te mereces.
 Matilde: ¿Porqué me ha obedecido? ¡Es su deber!
 Cristina: Porque ha cedido ante tus lagrimitas sabiendo que no tienes razón. Te has salido con la tuya ... provisionalmente. No te felicito por la victoria... La has ganado por muy malos medios.
 Matilde: Todos son buenos para impedir que un ser a quien queremos cometa una locura.

¹Ibid., p. 12.

Cristina: No te comprendo. Si había de parecerte una locura que tu hija quisiera vivir para su arte, ¿a qué te has pasado toda su niñez y su juventud mortificándola para que estudiase piano? ¿De qué quieres que le sirva la música que a la fuerza le has metido en el cuerpo? 1

It is as if Martínez Sierra had put the mother and the grandmother face to face in combat. The grandmother, however, has the tremendous advantage of having already lived through the trying stage of motherhood. She is cured of the domestic and social virus that makes her seek absolute power in the home. Cristina sees clearly through the maternal lamenting and clichés of her daughter and casts to one side the manifestations of self-pity and maternal dedication:

Matilde: Bastante he hecho ya en la vida por ella y su hermano.

Cristina: No digas tonterías. Los has echado al mundo y sanseacabó. No creo que llames sacrificio a haberlos visto crecer sanos y alegres, a vestirlos como muñecos, a lucirlos como joyas, a comértelos a besos y a dejarles sin postre, a apagarles caprichos y quitarles gustos. Otras madres pueden hablar de sacrificios, las que son pobres, las que trabajan para ellos, las que los ven enfermos, mal vestidos, hambrientos ... ¿Pero tú? Tus hijos han sido la gloria de tu vida. ¡No sabes todavía lo que les debes! 2

These are the words of a woman who remembers with tenderness and nostalgia her own little girl and who realizes what a treasure and a prize children are, especially when they are healthy and provided for.

¹Ibid., p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 34.

While the abuela, Engracia, of Para hacerse amar locamente, is by no means the sweet, understanding type of grandmother that abounds on the Martínez Sierra stage, she is nevertheless to be classified with the other grandmothers in that she has very liberal ideas and understands and gets along well with the young people two generations removed from her. In this play, she is indeed a character and one of the most delightful and refreshingly outspoken personalities encountered in Martínez Sierra's theatre.

Her entrance on the stage must have provoked peals of laughter. These are the stage directions for doña Engracia:

Pasa por delante del escaparate, vuelve la esquina y aparece en la puerta de la botica Doña Engracia. Tiene sesenta años y es una eminente "Madame Pimentón," completamente loca; trae viejísima falda de seda o terciopelo con infinitos volantes y alamares, todos pardos y todos descosidos; sombrero inverosímil con plumas chafadas y caídas; peluca muy negra sobre el pelo muy blanco, despeinada y torcida; guantes con todos los dedos rotos, un cabas, un paraguas, impertinentes, botas pretenciosas, pero rotas, y se da aires de gran señora, hablando con exquisito amaneramiento y acentuando sus palabras con risitas sarcásticas de mujer superior; aunque está chiflada comprende que molesta con su impertinencia voluntaria, lo cual la regocija muchísimo; así es que siempre que dice algo desagradable mira de reojo para observar el efecto de sus palabras. 1

She says to Basilisa, her granddaughter's guardian, what everyone else must be content just to think and she reveals an interesting concept of life after death:

¹Ibid., VII, 48.

¿Y se puede saber de dónde vienes tú, basilisco? De comerte a los santos, ¿verdad? ¡Para que se acuerde de ti tu Emeterio! ¡Menudo lagartón está tu Emeterio! ¿Te figuras que porque les das cuartos a los curas te va a estar esperando en la puerta del Este? ¡No te hagas ilusiones, boticario, no te hagas ilusiones! ¿Sabes lo que te digo? Que tu Emeterio te la pega en la otra vida lo mismo que te la pegó en ésta. 1

Doña Engracia has come to give Amalia a letter from a man who has heard her sing and who wants to meet her. The gentleman has also taken the abuela out to dine:

Doña Engracia: Ayer, sin ir más lejos, me convidó a cenar ... Quería que fuésemos al Rita. (Desdeñosa.) pero no quise, por no vestirme ... Fuimos a Botín ... comida gustosa ... aunque un poco ordinaria ... Hacía tiempo que no cenaba yo con tanto apetito ... 2

Amalia, however, is not interested in the admirer since she is so in love with Roberto. Doña Engracia comments:

No te disgustes tú, luz de mi vida! ¿No quieres leer la carta? ¡No la leas! Puede que el infeliz que te escriba, desesperado por tu crueldad, ponga fin a sus días; pero como dijo un poeta de mi juventud: ¡Qué haya un cadáver más, que importa al mundo! ¿Para qué está la hermosura en la tierra? ¡Para ir pisoteando corazones! ¡Lo mismito era yo a tus años, hermosa! 3

Mamá Pepa and Mamá Inés have small roles in the one-act play, Pobrecito Juan, but within this miniature framework, they conform to the grandmother type. They are elderly but not senile or crotchety, and they adore their granddaughter, Mariana, who returns their devotion. Both

¹Ibid., p. 55.

²Ibid., p. 52.

³Ibid., p. 53.

old ladies have retained a sense of humor, and their conversation is charming, witty and good-naturedly barbed.

It is significant that Martínez Sierra places two grandmothers and no mother in this play. Taking into consideration the character of the mother that the author has developed throughout the plays, her absence here is quite natural. The mother in his plays lacks any trace of a sense of humor and her major function seems to be to scold and argue with her daughter and lament about the deficiencies of her son. For these reasons, the mother would be out of place in a light comedy like El pobrecito Juan. The grandmother, on the other hand, with her acid comments and salty wit is perfectly placed, so Martínez Sierra uses not one, but two of them. Although these two grandmothers contradict one another and argue, the effect is comic. Their blows are superficial and are akin to affection:

Mamá Inés: Extrañábame a mí que no anduviese el pobre Juan al retortero.

Mariana: ¿Por qué decís eso?

Mamá Inés: Porque hasta en la sopa le vamos a encontrar un día.

Mariana: ¡Bah!

Mamá Pepa: Niña, tu mamá Inés tiene mucha razón: no está bien que una señorita de veinte años ande a todas horas y por todas partes con un muchacho de veintidós.

Mamá Inés: Eso es lo de menos: la niña y Juan se han criado casi como hermanos, y no tiene nada de particular que anden juntos; lo malo es que ésta se toma por él un interés que, francamente, es demasiado.

Mamá Pepa: En eso no hace mal, porque de gente bien nacida es amparar al que lo ha menester; lo peor será que el se llegue a figurar otra cosa.

Mamá Inés: ¡Qué se ha de figurar, señora, que se ha de figurar, si es humilde como una malva y bueno como el pan bendito!

Mamá Pepa: Será todo lo bueno que Ud. quiera, pero al cabo, es hombre, y los hombres ...

Mamá Inés: ¿Qué me va Ud. a decir a mí de los hombres, señora?

Mamá Pepa: Nada que Ud. no sepa, probablemente.

Mamá Inés: ¿Qué quiere Ud. dar a entender con eso? 1

The effect of putting a mother in this play would have been detrimental. She would have dampened the optimism and effervescence of the heroine and would have struck a discordant note, for she never approves of her daughter's plans or ambitions. The grandmother, however, does not interfere in her granddaughter's actions or attitudes because she has faith in her basic goodness and common sense. She is tolerant and does not feel the extreme possessiveness that is so characteristic of the mother. She accepts her life and does not try to relive it through her granddaughter.

The comic effect of Mamá Pepa and Mamá Inés is apparent each time they speak. In their exchanges, there is no serious ill-humor or poison. The jibes they exchange are all part of a game that they enjoy playing. The heroine is completely open and frank with her grandmothers, but could not have been with her mother, or not in the plays of this author, at least. When Mariana and her grandmothers talk, Mariana expresses her inmost thoughts.

¹Ibid., IV, 187-188.

The answers she gets from María Pepa and María Inés, however, are not always so direct, for they come in reply to the other grandmother as well as to Mariana:

Mariana: A vosotras, respetables señoras y abuelas, ¿qué os parece? ¿Llega o no llega?

Mamá Pepa: ¿Qué es lo que tiene que llegar?

Mariana: Eso que está una esperando sin saber lo que es.

Mamá Inés: Hija, casi todo lo que llega en la vida o es triste o llega tarde.

Mamá Pepa: No hagas caso. Todas las cosas son según se miran, y a lo más oscuro amanece Dios ... Lo que hay que hacer es no reconcomerse, y pensar, pase lo que pase, que peor sería no verlo; porque hija, ¡viva la gallina y viva con su pepita!

Mariana: ¿Sabéis lo que me han dicho las niñas del taller? Qué Dios me dé un buen novio. ¡Ojalá!

Mamá Inés: ¡Ay, niña, para que quieres novio tan joven?

Mamá Pepa: Para casarse, como todo el mundo. 1

Doña Margarita, the grandmother in Madrigal, has reared her two grandchildren, Ana María and Agustín, so for them, she has been both mother and grandmother. Agustín and Ana María are cousins whose parents died when they were children. Ana María was ten and Agustín was fourteen when they came to live with their grandmother. The grandmother adores her grandchildren and they adore her; her most cherished dream has been to see them married to each other some day. At the time of the play, the children are grown, and Agustín has been in Europe for four years trying to make a name for himself as an artist.

¹Ibid., p. 183.

He has just won a prize for a nude statue that he has sculptured. He has not written during the last two years, so Ana María has written letters and given them to the grandmother as coming from Agustín. Doña Margarita has a serious heart ailment, so Ana María did not want her to worry. Agustín is coming home now because the grandmother has just had a serious attack. Ana María tells him of her deception, and although Agustín thinks that he is in love with the model for the prize-winning statue, he and Ana María, out of love for their grandmother, pretend to be happy sweethearts. Eventually, of course, Agustín's love for Ana María is reawakened and they make plans to marry.

The more modern play, Los árboles mueren de pie, of Alejandro Casona, is in many ways similar to Madrigal. The abuelo has written letters for twenty years and represented them to his wife as letters from their grandson. When it becomes necessary for a grandson to appear with his wife, the abuelo finds two young people who agree to play the parts. In the course of their roles, the illusion of their love becomes a reality and they make plans to marry. The abuela in this play is very similar to Margarita of Madrigal, and both plays exude the optimism that is so characteristic of both authors.

In Madrigal, the light-hearted, playful grandmother type that appears in Seamos felices and Sueño de una noche

de agosto would be out of harmony. Doña Margarita has adored her grandchildren and now lives only for the return of Agustín and the awaited wedding. She waits anxiously and impatiently as though on borrowed time, but she never becomes irascible or loses her characteristic sweetness. Her smiling manner is reflected in Ana María, whose personality she helped to mold. Doña Margarita's speech to Agustín and Ana María sets the tone for her personality and recalls the lyricism of the little gem, Pastoral, of El teatro de ensueño.

Doña Margarita: ¡Ah, vamos! ¿Han venido Uds. juntos? Por eso ha tardado tanto Ana María. Se habrán Uds. ido entreteniendo, como de costumbre, en discutir si son negras o azules las sombras de los chopos, y en contar las vueltas que dá una hoja de rosa en el aire antes de caer del rosal al suelo. 1

One of the characteristics that distinguishes the grandmother from the mother in the Martínez Sierra theatre is the absence of egoism. She has learned to accept the life that has been assigned to her and does not lament her lot or feel that fate has been unkind or unfair. Her resignation is sweet with no traces of self-pity or resentment. She has no desire to control her grandchildren's lives or make them feel obligated to her in any way.

When Ana María worries about how doña Margarita will fare when she and Agustín marry, the grandmother answers:

¹Ibid., p. lll.

Yo me quedo aquí que con Manuela y Pedro no me hace falta nadie.

Ana María: Muchas gracias.

Doña Margarita: No soy una vieja egoísta. Padre y madre he tenido como todo el mundo, y me casé, y me fuí con mi marido cuando me dió la realísima gana ... Tú tienes derecho a tu amor de veinte años. ... No faltaría más! No tengas miedo: Yo he vivido ochenta y tres; ¿Por qué no he de vivir otros veinte? En cuanto los viejos pasan de los setenta, la muerte no se acuerda de ellos, porque le da fastidio gastar el tiempo donde no hay nada que malograr y se va a matar niños como quien corta flores. Además que no vais a pasar la vida lejos. Un viajecito ... el tiempo necesario para traerme un biznieto. Hija, no me quisiera morir sin verlo. 1

Although doña Margarita does not approve of the nude statues that her sculptor grandson has fashioned, she is not shocked or offended. She accepts Agustin's art as a necessary evil, but expresses the hope that he may some day make virgencitas for the church altar. A short while after, Agustin hires a girl of doubtful morals to be a model for the requested Virgin which recalls a practice made famous by Murillo who also used prostitutes for the models of his virgins. The tolerance of the grandmother, as well as her slightly barbed humor, have a chance for expression when she finds out who is serving as a model for the statue she has requested:

Aldeana: Buenas tardes.

Doña Margarita: ¿Quién es?

Ana María: La que tiene Agustín para su santa Margarita.

¹Ibid., pp. 117-118.

Doña Margarita: ¿Pero no decís que te está copiando a tí?

Ana María: Pero es que yo (Sonriendo.) no me deajo copiar mas que los pies, las manos, la cara y hasta aquí ... (Señalando el escote graciosamente.) y lo demás ... sí, abuela, no hay remedio: para esculpir una estatua vestida, hace falta una modelo desnuda. Ya ves como la moralidad no va ganando nada conque las estatuas gasten túnicas.

Margarita: Calla, calla, y ¿quién es ... esa?

Pedro: Una chica del pueblo ... una desdichada que ha estado sirviendo en Madrid. La Valentina ...

Margarita: Ah, sí ... La del herrero. ... ¡Valiente pécora! ... ¡Cualquiera les reza a las santas que esculpe mi nieto! 1

Doña Margarita, a typical grandmother type in the works, brings happiness as well as peace. She leaves us with a smile on our lips and tenderness in our hearts.

Doña Isabelita of Esperanza nuestra, will not be classified with the other grandmothers in this chapter since she shares none of the characteristics of this type and is only coincidentally a grandmother. She has been included, rather with the mother type since she is an arch conservative and functions more as the representative of tradition than as a flesh and blood person. She is much more a mother to don Carlos than she is a grandmother to her grandchildren. For the latter, she has little sympathy, love or interest.

The grandmother is perhaps the most realistic and satisfying of the types Martínez Sierra created. She bears no resemblance to the dogmatic and tyrannical mother for

¹Ibid., pp. 140-141.

whom we have no sympathy and, of course, she is in no way the physical and intellectual perfection that the heroine often is. She has a delightful subtle sense of humor and is a happy combination of the ideal mother without the attendant emotionality and sentimentality that are associated with the maternal instinct in these plays. She has arrived at an agreeable plateau in her life from which she may contemplate rather philosophically and objectively her own life and the lives of those close to her. She is satisfied with the decisions she has made and does not try to live another life through her grandchildren in an attempt to correct her own mistakes. Instead of becoming more conservative and set in her ways, she has a rather modern and liberal outlook, but never, of course, to the extent of the heroine. She often serves as a moderator between her daughter and granddaughter, and her point of view is generally in a middle area between the two. Extremes and excesses are not a part of her make-up as they are of the other personality types considered here. If the circumstances of the play warrant it, the grandmother often is given some very amusing lines. All in all, she is delightfully human and a completely believable creation.

THE INGENUE: THE AWKWARD AND
UNSOPHISTICATED YOUNG LADY

The ingénue depicted by Martínez Sierra is disturbingly unreal and in some cases is obviously forced by the author. She appears to be more the literary descendant of Lope de Vega's La dama boba than a manifestation of a social type.

We may define the ingénue as a young unmarried girl about eighteen years old who has been sheltered all of her life and who reacts rather uncertainly and fearfully in her first encounters with men. She flusters easily and has no will of her own and can be talked into almost anything. She is frequently awkward in her dress, but her outstanding hallmark is her almost incredible naïveté

Considering all of the various personality types created by Martínez Sierra, certainly the ingénue is the weakest and the one least worthy of his dramatic ability. She is more entertaining than profound. This author is at his best in the creation of the woman with a serious purpose and apparently has little patience or charity for the rudderless, frivolous ingénue whom he portrays in a

most unflattering light. She suffers unquestionably in comparison with the beautiful, poised, intelligent, ambitious and long-suffering heroine.

There are many reasons why Martínez Sierra presented the ingénue as he did. First of all, the type did exist in real life, though rarely so extreme as the author depicts it. This type may seem especially exaggerated to American readers because customs in the two countries differ so greatly. In the United States, boys and girls are exposed to one another throughout their lives, while in Spain, at that time, boys and girls were separated in school and in church and in a middle-or upper-class family were almost never allowed to be alone together before the wedding. The Spanish young lady, under these circumstances, is bound to have less poise with members of the opposite sex than her American counterpart simply because she lacks the social experience. Incidentally, the average eighteen-year-old American girl, despite her natural association with boys, is not the epitome of sophistication.

One of the reasons behind the restrictions placed on the Spanish girl is the power of the Roman Catholic Church in that country. This traditionally conservative institution has always submitted slowly to changes of any kind, especially when they involve more freedom for the individual. It takes the attitude that man is prone to

sin and that this tendency must be curbed and carefully controlled. Therefore, young boys and girls in the middle and upper classes are given little opportunity to err. It had been the custom for many years for the girl to be carefully chaperoned by one or several members of her family on all dates. Young women lived with their families until they were safely protected from scandal by the sacrament of marriage. Now, in Spain, some girls are allowed to date without the formerly omnipresent duenna, but these outings are usually in the form of double dates. The feeling is that double dates provide chaperoning of a kind, so there is not a complete concession to the younger generation. Unmarried girls are now allowed to work in cities away from their parents and can keep their respectability if they want to. These girls are no longer considered socially inferior or bad because they earn a living, but are looked upon, by the more liberal element anyway, as independent, modern young women who contribute to the material as well as the spiritual well-being of a Spain that must change and liberalize if it is to keep pace in a fast-moving and industrial world.

In the ingénue, the author may have consciously presented a ridiculous type to show her in unfavorable contrast to the heroine. No doubt he was in favor of education and social reforms that might virtually eliminate from the Spanish scene this dewy-eyed dreamer who was so ill-prepared for the realities of life.

Amalia, Paquita's naïve and idealistic nineteen-year-old sister in Para hacerse amar locamente, runs off with her sweetheart, Roberto, when her guardian threatens to put her in a convent to prevent her seeing him. Although Roberto has admired other girls rather ungallantly in her presence, Amalia is willing to forgive him and overlook his faults, for his handsome face compensates for a great deal to her. In spite of her rather flighty attitude about what qualities are valuable and desirable in a husband, she has learned her lessons of morality well. She has no qualms about going to Granada with Roberto for she has no intention of allowing any personal contact. On their first night in Granada, Roberto has slept on the sofa while Amalia has occupied the bedroom. The thought or temptation to do otherwise has apparently not entered her mind. He has not been able to coax even a kiss from her:

Roberto: Siquiera ... un beso ... uno solo ... chiquito y bonito ... como tu ... anda ... déjame...

Amalia: ¡No! (Muy convencida.) ¡El que me haya escapado contigo no es motivo para que sea una mala mujer!

Roberto: Pero ¡Amalita!

Amalia: ¡No! ¡Eso nunca!

Roberto: (Conteniendo un evidente mal humor.) Pero, vamos a ver ... Amalita, hija mía, sé razonable.

¿Por qué crees tu que se escapa una mujer con un hombre?

Amalia: (Muy convencida.) Toma, ¡porque le quiere!

Roberto: ¿Mucho?

Amalia: (Con sinceridad.) ¡Más que a su vida!

Roberto: Pues, si le quiere tanto, ¿no te parece a ti que está obligada a demostrárselo?

Amalia: (Muy convencida.) ¡Pero, no te lo he demostrado escapándome contigo? 1

Amalia is certain that she loves Roberto, but her idea of what love is and how it manifests itself differs rather markedly from Roberto's. He, naturally enough, has more interest in the consummation of his desires than in Amalia's abstract, idealistic explanation of what love is:

Roberto: (Desconcertado.) Pero vamos a ver, hija de mi alma, ¿qué idea tienes tú del amor?

Amalia: (Sincera, entre llanto y sonrisa.) ¿Del amor? Pues hijo, el amor es quererse, quererse hasta más no poder, y saber que a una la quieren mucho, mucho, mucho, y sentir que tiene una a su lado un cariño muy grande, muy grande, muy grande, y ser tan feliz por tenerle que no sabe una si estar, contenta o triste, y tampoco sabe una que le gusta más, si la pena o la gloria de tenerle ... y pensar: ¡Este hombre que me quiere es lo único del mundo para mí! Y si algún día me deja de querer, más vale morirse ... pero tampoco ... porque si una se muere, le tiene que dejar de querer a él, ¡y eso si que no! ¡Eso es el amor! ... Y además, dar la vida si hace falta por quien uno quiere, y pasar hambre para que el coma, y miseria si es necesario para que él se dé buena vida, y tragarse las lágrimas para que esté contento, y decir: ¡es mío, es mío, es mío, y pase lo que pase, y para eso he nacido y hasta que me muera! 2

The author shows more charity for this ingénue than he generally showed for others. Amalia is somehow less ridiculous than the average ingénue, and while her persistent idealism, considering the situation, may provoke smiles, it also evokes sympathy and a degree of admiration. Her naiveté is more amusing and pathetic than annoying and absurd.

¹Ibid., VII, 142-143.

²Ibid., p. 143.

A more typical ingénue is Marcela, of Vida y dulzura, the first dramatic work of Gregorio Martínez Sierra (written in collaboration with the Catalan artist and author, Santiago Rusiñol). This play establishes the trend for many an ingénue to come. For a girl who has grown up in a university town and who has attended the cultural tertulias of her professor father, she is incredibly unsophisticated. Her mother has not been interested in helping her daughter dress attractively and arrange her hair, so Marcela has been largely on her own in regard to her grooming. She does not know how to style her hair or how to walk attractively and, in short, lacks certain feminine refinements. While she has not learned from her mother, she should have learned when in the course of her contacts with other young girls of her social status. Had Marcela grown up in a small town or had she been the daughter of less privileged parents, her naiveté would have been much more credible. On the other hand, perhaps she was purposely drawn in such a fashion to contrast and heighten the personality of Julia, the sophisticated, self-assured, attractive young woman she would like to emulate. She has tried to dress and arrange her hair like Julia, but the results have been disappointing:

Marcela: No te rías. Vas andando y parece que te sigue la falda; te sientas y parece que has nacido sentada. Yo, si ando, parezco una campana; si me siento, me nace ropa por todas partes; no sé nunca donde poner las manos; se me ven los pies desde

desde media legua. Esta mañana he querido peinarme como tú ... y ya ves ... por poco me arranco el moño de rabia. 1

Marcela is in love with Enrique, a personable young man, but doña Gertrudis plans to have her daughter marry Dr. Dalmau, a member of her scholarly group. Marcela is not at all attracted to the mother's choice, but fears and dislikes to go against her wishes. She has apparently accepted her mother's ultimatum that she knows best. When Enrique speaks of all the means he will use to save her from Dr. Dalmau and marry her himself, she says:

Sí que tengo confianza en ti; pero contra la voluntad de mis padres, antes me moriría que ... 2

The engagement to Enrique does come about, however, and she finally learns the art of feminine grooming from Julia. As happens here, the ingénue's stupidity, naiveté, clumsiness and immaturity are characteristically corrected in short order, and a sort of personality metamorphosis is accomplished as if by miracle.

Like Marcela of Vida y dulzura, Gloria and Laura, eighteen and sixteen years old respectively, of El ama de casa, have not had the guiding hand of their mother who died years before, nor have they had the direction of a more sophisticated older woman to teach them how to dress

¹Ibid., I, 41

²Ibid., p. 25.

attractively, how to apply make-up, and what hair styles are becoming. They have been cared for by their aunt, doña Genovena, who apparently has not been taught these things either. When Carlota marries the girls' father, she wastes no time in washing the abundant powder and rouge from their faces and in relieving them of all the artificial hair and combs. One supposes that Carlota will teach Gloria and Laura those things that will change them from awkward ingénues into graceful young ladies:

Carlota: Porque son ridículos ... Y peinarte como una persona ... Anda de prisita. (La chiquilla no obedece, y ella se acerca y la despeina.) ¿Qué no? Pues no faltaba más ... ¿Con qué te rizas este pelo infame, que lo tienes hecho una pura lástima? ¡Digo con los bucles!

Gloria: (Como si le arrancasen el alma) ¡Ay! ¡Ay! ¡Ay!

Carlota: (Quedándose con los bucles en la mano y llena de asombro.) ¡Jesus! ¡Postizos! (Quitándole el crepe, que le forma un promontorio.) ¡Crepe, y naturalmente! ¡caspa! Lo que te hace a tí falta es una jabonadura que me río yo. Verás ... (Le pasa el pañuelo por la cara y se queda mirando los colores que se quedan en él.) ¡Ave María! Negro ... azul ... encarnado ... ¿Pero que te das en la cara? ¡Habrás visto crimen, con dieciseis años y ese color de rosa que Dios te ha dado! Ahora mismo te vas a lavar, y en la vida vuelvas a darte semejantes potingues. Siéntate aquí. (La hace sentar por fuerza en una silla baja, y la peina después de sacudirle el pelo.) Pero ¿tú sabes lo que estabas haciendo? 1

Clara, the ingénue of Juventud, divino tesoro, is almost as naïve as Marcela, but she has a better reason for being so. She has grown up in a small town with her

¹Ibid., p. 244.

widowed mother and is an only child. Her father died when she was a baby so she has lacked male companionship and therefore has reason to be less poised in the company of men. Her uncle Emilio, who up to now has not taken any notice of her, becomes aware that she is an attractive young woman and talks her into believing that she is in love with him. One is led to believe that she acquiesces to his wishes out of respect for his age and position in the family. It is at this time that her cousin Pedro visits them from Madrid and talks her into believing that youth must wed youth and that he is the one she should love. The ending is rather unsatisfactory in that Clara is so spineless that she can be convinced of anything. She has no convictions or purpose of her own. She is like a weather vane waiting for wind to give it direction. Her response to Pedro roughly parallels her response to Emilio: it is a sort of passive acceptance. She does what she is told and her latest instructions are to discard Emilio because his age is unsuitable and to marry Pedro because he is of the proper age. There is apparently no other basis for marriage and love is no factor at all here.

Since we are dealing with what otherwise appears to be a normal young woman, Clara's passivity is difficult to understand and her apparent immaturity, innocence and unawareness of the facts of life are impossible to accept.

This is all the more incredible since her uncle, who lives in the same house, is a man of many affairs and has a fair share of illegitimate children. Martínez Sierra, as has already been suggested, caricatures rather than draws this ingénue type. In the case of Clara, we are led to believe that her innocence and immaturity will be corrected by marriage. As in the case of Soteliza by Pereda, the author seems to go out of his way to disprove the deterministic effects of environment.

A somewhat parallel situation is found in the play Mama. Cecilia, the ingénue is another Clara or Marcela with a different name and placed in a different play. She has spent most of her life in boarding schools at the request of her father, who did not want to burden his doll-like wife, Mercedes, with child rearing. Cecilia adores her mother and would like to emulate her, but lacks the know-how.

Mercedes, who has been treated more like a child than a wife by her husband, shows her maturity only when it is put to the test. She is approached by Alfonso, a don Juan type who has lent her money and expects other favors in return. She refuses to take him seriously and ignores his pleas. When he fails to win the mother, Alfonso turns his attention to the daughter, who can do little more than stammer and be alternately flattered and frightened

by his declaration of love for her. Cecilia defends herself passively like the typical Martínez Sierra ingénue that she is and is incredibly gullible. Gullibility, in fact, is the common denominator of all these ingénues. It is, of course, left to the mother to save her daughter from the claws of the don Juan, for Cecilia seems not only helpless but willing to submit.

Carmela, Soledad's younger sister in La hora del diablo, is an ingénue who in some ways does not conform to the standard pattern drawn by Martínez Sierra. Carmela is twenty-two years old and lives with her older sister, whose husband's business requires that he travel a great deal. A young friend of the family, Mariano, thinks that he is in love with Soledad and succeeds in convincing her that, since her husband is doubtless enjoying himself, she should lead a less austere life. He further convinces her of the desirability of receiving him in her quarters that evening. Carmela, meanwhile, is secretly in love with Mariano and on the evening of his appointment with Soledad, she is reading Faust and invokes a phantom devil to bring Mariano to her. Mariano bursts into the room at this point to escape a storm that is raging outside. He had been waiting in the courtyard to enter Soledad's room when he saw through the window that her husband, Felipe, had returned unexpectedly. Carmela makes a remarkable

recovery from her initial, prudish reaction at Mariano's sudden appearance and begins to pursue him actively. She takes for granted that he loves her and is going to marry her despite his amazed attitude and his decidedly passive response to her romantic overtures. She has seen him with Soledad and has noticed him in the patio in the evening, but it has not occurred to her that he was interested in her sister. When Carmela makes an advance, Mariano retreats, but she apparently convinces him that he would not do badly marrying her. He reasons that Carmela is better for him anyway since she is of a more suitable age and definitely available. (Soledad is six years older than Mariano.) In answer to her question of whether or not he loves her, Mariano says simply, "Te querré," and that seems to satisfy her. Carmela further suspects nothing when her announcement concerning Mariano and herself to Soledad is met with stunned silence. Soledad had felt that she at last had found a man who truly loved her.

Carmela's unsuspecting and naïve ways make her an ingénue but she seems too stupid to be true. It is quite unlikely that at twenty-two she could be so unobserving, and if she were so innocent, it seems a little odd that she could be so bold with Mariano when he burst into her room. La hora del diablo is an interesting play despite Carmela, certainly not because of her.

Quite different from this ingénue is Lucía, of Los pastores. She is an eighteen-year-old small-town girl who has neither education nor sophistication. She is completely honest, unsuspecting and generous but her ego is hurt by Mateo's mother when she stops him from dancing with her. She makes up her mind to get even with the mother by going out with Mateo and by submitting to his wishes. In doing so, she believes that she has taken appropriate revenge and it never occurs to her that not only is her moral reputation at stake, but that the consequences of these out-of-the-way clandestine meetings will soon manifest themselves to everyone. She doesn't seem to worry in the least and in her mind, her actions are justified because she loves Mateo and she feels that she has gotten revenge on his mother. Since the young man is the son of the mayor and not of her social class, she accepts most naturally that he will not marry her. Her behavior suggests a simple moron but once the priest of the town forces the marriage to save her, in the true Martínez Sierra tradition, the ingénue turns into a different woman, in this case with wiles and tricks worthy of the Engannos y assayamientos de las mujeres. The sudden change is rather inartistic and not easy to accept. Martínez Sierra's tendency to contrast two women may give us the answer in this case. Since the mayor's wife is so very objectionable, anything that Lucía will do to irritate

her by dominating the son's attention and affection is acceptable. However, Lucía as a social type is either grossly exaggerated or is a rare exception and not representative of any group.

In Catalina of Madam Pepita, we again have a type who runs counter to her environment, and it is difficult to believe that she is not capriciously forced by the author. She is a young girl of seventeen and is Madam Pepita's only child. Despite the fact that her mother has an eye for style and operates a very chic dressmaking shop, she does not know how to fix her hair and she appears with skirts that are crooked or hang low to one side, blouses that gap where they should fasten, aprons decorated with ink spots, and dresses that have bows in the most unlikely places. To detract further from her natural good looks, she bites her nails. Until don Guillermo, an academician and neighbor, takes an interest in her education, she has been next to illiterate. She has all the physical attributes of the typical Martínez Sierra ingénue while Madam Pepita, on the other hand, is in a position that should make of her the typical heroine. The latter has had an unfortunate experience but has shouldered the responsibility of her life and that of her daughter without asking help or sympathy from anyone. Her husband was a bigamist and returned to his first wife shortly after his marriage to Pepita. She should be a

sophisticated and shrewd woman by this time in her life but instead, she, not Catalina, has the innocence and the naiveté of the ingénue. When don Luis, an impoverished nobleman, comes to her to get her to pad Galatea's bill in order to give him a little extra money, she is touched rather than insulted and outraged. She has the same reaction when Augusto, don Luis' son makes a similar request. When she has inherited money from her late husband and both don Luis and Augusto want to borrow large sums from her, she gives the money unquestioningly. When don Luis wants to marry his señorito son, Augusto, to Catalina and thus make her a countess, it does not occur to Madam Pepita that he wants only her money. She even believes that Catalina and Augusto are secretly in love because she wants to believe it. Like Carmela of La hora del diablo, she is incredibly blind to what is happening right in front of her. Catalina, on the other hand, who is outwardly the ingénue, is spiritually the heroine. She very much knows what she wants and the perfumed, moustache-curling, utterly false Augusto is not it. The first time she sees the young artist, Alberto, she is attracted to him. She talks to him easily and fearlessly and becomes more and more convinced in their subsequent meetings that she should marry him. When the count and Pepita leave their children alone hoping that they will work out their own engagement, Catalina tells him that he is much too

elegant for her and that she prefers one who knows something about beauty and life. Catalina resembles the heroine in her determination to marry the man of her choice and then help him to achieve success. The implication of the play is that Catalina will do just this with her talented but penniless artist.

Another variation on the theme of the ingénue is Rosina of Rosina es frágil. She is either gullible or weak because she has trouble resisting the compliments of her various admirers. If they tell her that she is beautiful and that they would like to see her again, she is unable to refuse. She is the flighty type of ingénue who takes the path of least resistance and finds herself in one difficult position after another. Not knowing how to solve the problems that she creates for herself, she begs her young uncle, Antonio, to meet the young man she would currently like to discard and tell him anything, just so long as she will not have to see him again. When the uncle suggests that she do it herself, she says:

(Siguiéndole con las manos h hablando muy de prisa, mientras anda.) ¡Imposible! ¡Me conozco! Si llega, si entra aquí, si me vuelve a decir lo que me dijo anoche, que soy preciosa, que son encantadora, que soy adorable, que le tengo hechizado, que se muere por mí, que si no correspondo a su pasión se pega un tiro, ¿cómo quieres que le diga que no, después de haberle dicho que sí? ¡Si desesperará, se arrojará a mis pies, me besará las manos! ¿Y yo, pobre de mí, qué voy a hacer? ¡Sucumbir, como dice mi padre! sucumbiré, ... el seguirá creyéndose el más feliz de

los mortales, me pedirá, nos casaremos, iy seré desgraciada para toda la vida! (Cogiéndole por detrás de la americana.) ¡Tío, tío, tío! ¹

After Antonio has defended her from some of her more persistent suitors, Rosina realizes that she is in love with him and suddenly acquires the strength and will to tell him so. When she has decided what it is that she wants, there is no indecision; she and Antonio will be married soon.

There is nothing similar between Rosina and María Luisa, of El ideal. The latter, in her strict idealism and her devotion to the precepts taught her by her parents, may also be classified as an ingénue. In this play there is no real heroine, for the wisdom, understanding and strength that are usually associated with her are here given to a man, María Luisa's fiance, Antonio. María Luisa has anxiously awaited the arrival of the twenty-one-year-old youth who has just been made ruler by the abdication of his father. All have been taught to think of the king as something approaching the divine. María Luisa dutifully feels that she would even be capable of renouncing Antonio if the cause of the king could be served:

Antonio: Pero me duele no ser para tí más que todos los reyes del mundo.

María Luisa: ¿Qué tiene que ver una cosa con otra?

¹Ibid., VIII, 241-242.

Si; estoy contenta, emocionada, pensando que por primera vez en mi vida le voy a ver de cerca, de verdad, en persona; que dentro de una hora va a estar entre estas cuatro paredes, que le han visto nacer. Porque ha nacido aquí, en el Soto, cuando su padre estaba peleando dos pasos más allá, y su madre seguía la campaña, y la mía fué la primera mujer que le dió el pecho, que también por entonces había nacido yo ... Y desde el día mismo de su nacimiento está desterrado y vencido, y sufriendo por la suerte de este desdichado país, hundido en la abyección de un Gobierno republicano, sin nobleza, sin fé, sin justicia. Y hoy viene ... ¡hoy viene! ¿Tú sabes lo que ha sido siempre para nosotros, como me han enseñado, desde que supe hablar, a bendecir su nombre y a pedir por él? ¡Ricos, dices! Si, lo somos; pero toda nuestra riqueza estamos dispuestos a darla por él, y nuestra sangre. Ya ves, de niña lloraba yo de pena de no ser hombre y no poder ir por él a la guerra, y las mejores joyas de mi padre son las heridas que recibió por él. Yo te quiero, Dios sabe que te quiero, y tú también lo sabes, que no eres tú el primero que me dijiste a mí que me querías, ¡acuérdate! (Un poco de pausa.) Pero si por la causa de la justicia, que es la suya, tuviera que renunciar a la felicidad de nuestro cariño, renunciaría una y cien veces. 1

When María Luisa meets the king, she realizes that he is a playboy and that her idol has clay feet. She is angry with herself and with Antonio, whom she considers to be wordly wise, for allowing her such illusions. The older people, while saddened by their disappointment, are also worried about more practical aspects:

José Luis: ¿Con qué conciencia vamos a hablar a nadie de esperanzas, a pedir sacrificios? ¿En quién ni para quién?

Antonio: ¿En quién ni para quién? Esa es la dolorosa equivocación de casi todas las lealtades: poner una persona en el altar que solo corresponde a la idea. ¿Se nos ha roto el ídolo? ¡Mejor, señores! Con eso nuestra fidelidad al principio estará limpia de personalidades. Afortunadamente, la persona de un rey tiene

¹Ibid., V, 10.

poco que ver con la sangre de la causa que le lleva por estandarte. Su grandeza está en sus atributos; su nobleza, en la de las ideas que otros han puesto al amparo de su corona; su generosidad, en la sangre de lo que bajo la ficción de su nombre, han dado su vida por ellas. ¡No muere el soldado por una bandera, señores, aunque besando una bandera jure que ha de morir cuando sea preciso! ¡Lucidas estaban las religiones si no pudieran sobrevivir a la indignidad de sus sacerdotes! 1

And later María Luisa says to Antonio:

Peor eres tú que los demás, porque lo sabías ... Tu lees, tú viajas ... Estos pobres viejos, aquí metidos, siempre, se han dejado engañar por el deseo; ¡pero tú, que sabías como era, y que no se lo has dicho, tal para cual! 2

María Luisa feels that the older people are trying to overlook the faults of the king and are deceiving themselves. Antonio feels that they are justified in clinging to their ideals because they are old and have nothing left. María Luisa and Antonio have their youth and can form new ideals.

Antonio: ... dejálos que conserven su ilusión, su fé en el ideal ... esa es la única razón de vivir, y si se la quitas les arrancas la vida ... (En voz baja.) Son viejos ... Tú y yo podemos crearnos nuestra propia ilusión, dándole forma y fuego con la sangre misma de nuestra juventud. ... Ellos, ya no. ¡Yo creo en tí, tu creerás en mí, porque te quierol Pero ellos, para creer en sí mismos, tienen que acogerse a la fé toda su vida. ... Hay que tener misericordia. Todo el mundo tiene derecho a un ideal. ...

María Luisa: ¡Pero si es mentira!

¹Ibid., p. 34.

²Ibid., p. 45.

Antonio: Un ideal nunca es mentira; por eso puede purificar la maternidad de todos los símbolos, ennoblecer el barro de todas las personificaciones; por eso puede uno morir por defenderle, y hasta vivir por él; vivir ... que es muchas veces bastante difícil. 1

Of El ideal, María Martínez Sierra says:

Teníamos escrita una comedia en un acto, El ideal, que no había querido aceptar ningún empresario. Galdós, que había oído hablar de ella y conocía su argumento, nos dió una prueba más de amistad pidiéndonosla, decidido a estrenarla. Más, cuando la hubo leído, no se arriesgó a ponerla en ensayo. No es que el tema, bien sencillc y hasta inofensivo, le asustase. Es que, al parecer, el protagonista pretendiente a un trono imaginario hablaba exactamente como el entonces rey de España, Alfonso XIII. Nosotros, simples burgueses, jamás habíamos oído hablar al rey, y el ser humano que nos sirviera de modelo era un señorito madrileño, harto desaprensivo indudablemente, pero sin la menor pretensión a coronas ni a cetros.

"El ideal," encerrado en un libro, no se ha representado nunca, porque cuando Gregorio Martínez Sierra fué, a su vez, empresario y director de escena, tampoco se atrevió a ofrecerle al público. Hay obras dramáticas que nacen condenadas a silencio perpetuo. 2

In summary, the ingénue is a young, unmarried girl who is idealistic and unwordly. She often manifests a woeful lack of ability to dress and groom herself attractively. This ill-at-ease young girl and the conventional mother are the two feminine types attacked by the author. The ingénue is naive to the point of falseness and usually manifests no serious purpose in life. By showing the giddy

¹Ibid., p. 72.

²María Martínez Sierra, Gregorio y yo, p. 43.

awkward, uncultured girl in contrast to the independent and naturally graceful heroine, Martínez Sierra emphasized the undesirable qualities of the former and the desirable ones of the latter.

THE WEAK MAN CONTRASTED TO THE STRONG WOMAN

Institutions and the traditions created by them contribute greatly to the spiritual and emotional isolation of man and woman in Spain and was much more of a problem fifty years ago, when Martínez Sierra was writing, than it is today. One of these institutions is the Church, which has tended to be content with woman's inferior social position. Woman has been a sort of unofficial agent or branch of the Church within the family unit and hence has frequently been placed in direct opposition to her husband. This has happened many times, no doubt, at the expense of matrimonial harmony.

Perhaps at the core of woman's inferior position in Spain was the limited education that was offered her. Prior to the Republic, the majority of Spanish young girls in the middle and upper classes were educated in convent schools. First from their mothers at home and then from the nuns at school, they were given massive doses of religion to the relative exclusion of more cultural subjects. Young ladies were constantly taught to comply with their obligations, keeping in mind always the traditions and the teachings of the Church. Between the woman educated

in a convent by nuns who knew little of the world and were encouraged to know less, and the man educated in the universities and in life, there has existed a sea of difference.

The cultural backgrounds of men and women were so different that intellectual compatibility was often difficult or impossible. Rather than stay at home and listen to sermons, the man often sought refuge in the casino, another institution found in all of the cities of Spain and from which the woman is completely excluded. There the man might waste his time pleasantly at the game table, in small talk or in political discussions and grow farther away from his family. The café, which at the time of the Martínez Sierra plays was another type of institution for the exclusive use of men, offered the same general type of pastime as the casino.

Women were rarely seen in the universities; those who did attend were considered strange and were often the victims of cruel humiliations. If one judges by the Spanish literature of the second half of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century, one might conclude that the Church was satisfied with this separation within the family and with woman's inferior rights and education, for as long as she was kept relatively ignorant and in a subservient position, the Church would

have its faithful servant in the family, who would inculcate certain traditions with the children.

The woman whose husband spent most of his time in the casino turned more and more to her children and to her religion. Perhaps the father was not at home enough to make his influence felt on the children. In addition, the man had so many more legal and social rights than the woman that he was inclined to allow her authority in the home. The effect on the boy children was often disastrous. The mother was frequently overly-affectionate or overly-protective with them, and they grew up weak and spoiled. Perhaps most important, the boys lacked a masculine model and grew up into what is called señoritos, or men without character, energy or direction. They often turned to don Juanism because it made them feel masculine and strong. This is the weak type of man that we see exemplified in Mamá in Mercedes' father and in Alfonso. This is the type who lives in Madrid or who goes to Paris for a while for an advanced course in corruption, sophistication and superficiality, and is hardly an ideal husband for a young girl who has been educated in a convent by nuns.

In the case of the middle classes and the lower classes, there is another contributing factor to weakness or lack of ambition and will in the men. The economic situation is a discouraging one for a young man without influence. For every position there are dozens of applicants,

and the person who is chosen is more often the person who knows someone than the person best qualified. The natural result is resentment and discouragement. In the lowest classes, it is often the woman who is the sole support of the family. She knows that she has to feed her children somehow and she does this in any way she can, often taking in washing or ironing or doing other domestic work.

Perhaps the most important single cause of the weakness of character, especially among the middle and upper class young men in Spain, is the pampering and spoiling of them by the female members of their families. Lorenzo, Fernanda's brother in Seamos felices, explains:

¡Qué quiere Ud.? Mi mamacita, mi abuelita, y mi hermanita se ocupan de tal modo de mi insignificante persona, que no tengo el trabajo de vivir por mi cuenta. 1

In this light-hearted statement, we have the answer not only to why so many young men are weak, but to why so many women are strong-willed. Furthermore, the weakness in the one and the strength in the other is accepted as natural in the family and in society in general.

As a result of the lack of harmony due to differences in culture, tradition, degree of religious belief and in legal and social standing, there grows in the marriages of these classes a divergency which does not end in

¹Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Obras completas, XIII, 14.

divorce or separation simply because it is not in the Spanish tradition and is not sanctioned or recognized by the Church. In revenge for her husband's abandonment or perhaps as a compensation to equalize her socially inferior position, the mother assumes control of the family. Aside from the satisfaction this power gives her, the activities of the children come to fill an emotional vacuum that might not exist in a happy marriage. Since the mother begins to live through her children and identify with them, it is not surprising that she wants to select their friends, their ambitions, their mates. It is also natural that if a boy is born in one of these unhappy unions and to such a mother, extreme dependency will result. If there is only one boy in the family, in addition, he is pampered almost to destruction. This is the case with Lorenzo and so many other weak young men in the theatre of Martínez Sierra. It is almost a physical law that weakness in one sex begets strength in the other. The mother, the daughters, the grandmothers, the aunts, give, and the boy accepts. Whenever he strays from what is considered the right path, he is repeatedly forgiven.

Lorenzo answers again in a light vein when the visitor, Luisa, remarks to his mother that he is a very good-looking and charming young man:

No se lo digas, que me va a poner en algodón en rama para que no me rompa. 1

¹Ibid., p. 14.

He is aware of his helpless position under the strong domination and over-protection of his mother and although he is twenty years old, he refers to the three women in his family as "mamacita," "abuelita" and "hermanita." There are, of course, sarcastic overtones in his remarks, but they spring from a situation which he both enjoys and lightly resents. From the pampered child emerges the irresponsible, characterless señorito so often referred to in the literature and life of Spain. His type is despised by the person of integrity who works to earn a living. He makes a bad father and a worse husband but he is the apple of his mother's eye, and more often than not, fondly regarded by his sisters, who were encouraged, if not compelled, to pamper him too. He symbolizes the weakness that represents a sort of Pyrrhic victory. He is protected and supported by women all of his life at the expense of his own will. Having fallen under the domination of his mother at an early age, he will continue forever to be weak in his associations with women. Being weak, he yields alternately to whatever female happens to catch him in her orbit. The women are stronger than he, but we must remember that it is in contrast to such men that the strength of the Spanish woman is seen in the theatre of Martínez Sierra.

Some weakness can be noted even in the relatively strong Emilio, Fernanda's aspiring architect husband in

Seamos felices. He reveals a strong attachment for his mother and a very antagonistic attitude toward his father. His reasons for his revolt against his father's authority are not entirely clear, for differences of opinion due to architectural preferences would not result in the intense emotional reaction that he displays. He finds refuge and consolation in his mother, and this attachment could not have been developed overnight. It is undoubtedly a situation that has existed since childhood. The mother is willing to help her son behind her husband's back, as probably has been her custom, and Emilio is ready to accept her help if it becomes necessary. He can see no future for himself in Spain and thinks of the rather questionable practice, in his circle, at least, of going to America:

Emilio: Lo más sensato sería marcharme a América, a ver si en la tierra de los rascacielos encuentro un rey del cemento armado que quiera dejarme hacer una casa a mi gusto. Mi madre, por supuesto, a escondidas de mi padre, que quiere convertirme por hombre al capital corintio, me daría el dinero necesario ... y tal vez ... 1

The mother longs to retain control of her son and she hopes to accomplish this with money passed behind her husband's back. At this point, there is a battle between Fernanda and the mother for control of Emilio. Fernanda does not want Emilio to go to America and while he bows to her wishes on this point, he is by no means a typical

¹Ibid., p. 46.

señorito. He is an idealistic architect who takes his work seriously and refuses to bow to what he considers commercialism in his profession. Fernanda agrees with her husband's stand, although it means much less money for them. When Fernanda, who is a fine pianist and longs for a concert career, is invited to make a lucrative concert tour through Europe which would also include her expenses as well as Emilio's, she is jubilant and feels that Emilio should share her joy. The money would mean a great deal to them at this time, but Emilio does not think of the money. He thinks that it is his responsibility to support his wife, and that for her to work now would be an admission of his failure:

Emilio: (Casi con apasionamiento.) No puede ser ... ¿No lo comprendes, tú que dices que no haces diferencia entre mi dignidad y la tuya? No eres tú la que debes ocuparte en ganar nuestra vida ... ¡No eres tú! ¡Es misión mía, es mi obligación ineludible, y la cumpliré sea como sea, cueste lo que cueste! (Con cariño.) ¡Fernanda, mujercita, ten un poco de paciencia, sólo un poco, hazme crédito! ... Fernanda, si me quieres, ¡sufre un poco por mí! 1

If Fernanda is not the strongest, she is certainly among the strongest and most determined heroines in the Martínez Sierra theatre, and while Emilio is no weakling, he is no match for her. She has made up her mind that she will play and play she will, whether it be with her husband's blessing or without it.

¹Ibid., p. 86.

One of the reasons for Fernanda's assumption of power in the marriage is this conflict and inequality between husband and wife that have been mentioned previously. Since the wife feels that she has few rights outside the home, she will compensate by asserting her authority within the home. Since Fernanda as yet has no children to command, she turns to her husband. On his side, he has all the legal rights and tradition; on her side are, in this case, reason and tremendous will. She argues gently and convincingly in an attempt to get Emilio to sign the contract that he must sign for her to give the concerts, but he is adamantly opposed. When Fernanda suggests that if there is no understanding on this issue, there can be none on other issues, he refuses to be intimidated and leaves with the implication that he will not return. He is unable to stay away for long, however, and returns after a short while completely disposed to sign the contract without further discussion. He knows that Fernanda is determined to give her concerts and rather than lose her, he will capitulate:

Emilio: Un momento ... (Se dirige hacia la mesa sobre la cual está el contrato y lo coge.)

Cristina: ¿Dónde vas?

Emilio: A poner una firma en un contrato. Se me olvidó antes de salir ...

Fernanda: No corre tanta prisa ... Gracias, Emilio, gracias.

Emilio: Dime, Fernanda, ¿esperabas que volviese?

Fernanda: ¡Estaba segura!

Emilio: ¿Y si no hubiese vuelto?

Fernanda: ¿Quiere que te regale el oído? De sobra

sabes que si hubieses tardado una hora más hubiese ido a buscarte.

Emilio: ¿Dispuesta a ceder?

Fernanda: No; segura de que tu acabarías por darme la razón, si la tengo. Pero tiempo habrá de entendernos en eso y en todo, noble y serenamente. Ahora me basta saber que ni tú ni yo hemos podido sufrir la angustia de perdernos y que nuestro cariño ha sabido ponerse por encima de lo que creemos nuestro derecho.

Ignacio: ¡A la mesa! ¡A la mesa!

Matilde: Hijo, ¡eres un ángel!

Emilio: ¡Ay, no! Soy ... un marido que tiene la desdicha de estar enamorado de su mujer ... ¡Enfermedad gravísima! ... ¡Qué se le vá a hacer! ¡Resignarse!

1

In Torre de marfil, Gabriel is the sad result of a mother's domination. She was more preoccupied with saving his soul for the next world than with preparing him for manhood in this. When Gabriel meets Teresa, who gives him warmth and happiness, he decides not to go back to his mother. He and Teresa live happily for several months on what she makes as a seamstress and the little money he has left. While Gabriel is not the irresponsible man of La mujer del heroe or the ridiculous weakling of Pobrecito Juan, he apparently looks to Teresa for protection and consolation. He sees in her the mother that he always needed and wanted and never had. Teresa is aware of Gabriel's need and responds to it. She tells him she loves him, but she seems to express greater compassion than love for she treats him more like an adored child than a sweetheart. This maternal attitude is more noticeable at the beginning

¹Ibid., pp. 113-114.

of the play, because in contact with Teresa, Gabriel begins to acquire masculinity and the ability to judge people and ideas independently.

As Torre de marfil develops, it becomes apparent that between Gabriel's parents, the marqués and the marquesa, there had never been harmony. The father had given free rein to his passions and had lived a life of such immoderate vice that it caused his early death. Whether the father's conduct was the result of his basic instability, or a rebellion against the extreme and unyielding religious fervor of his wife, or a combination of both, is left to the interpretation of the reader. It would seem reasonable, however, to assume that while the marquesa became more and more involved in her religion, the husband sought more entertaining company, and vice-versa, until the circumstances had completely destroyed both partners for marriage. When the marqués dies, the reaction of the marquesa is typical of the Spanish woman. She becomes very possessive with her son, Gabriel, who is still a child. Her reasons for dominating her son are typical: "Una madre tiene derecho a todo para salvar a su hijo." The thought expressed in this cliché is, no doubt, universal, but it is more frequent and typical of the Spanish mother who is characteristically highly emotional. Her desire to control the son may also be due to the deep cleavage that often is present between husband and wife.

Gabriel grows up in the shadow of his mother and was enveloped in, or rather, smothered by, her religious fervor. In this play, as in Mamá, we see the influence of the master of the European thesis theatre, Henrik Ibsen. As was the case with the mother in Ibsen's Ghosts, the marquesa fears that the baser instincts of her husband may have been inherited by her son, and to counteract any such natural tendencies, she is especially protective. She also feels that God may punish Gabriel for the sins of his father. Since the child grows up without masculine guidance and few outside contacts, the influence of the mother is almost abnormal. He is being prepared for death but not for life by a woman who subjects herself to privations and mortifications of the flesh in the hope of saving both her husband's soul and her son's. She believes that her actions show her deep love for Gabriel and that they will wash away any tendency to sin that the father may have passed on to him:

Don Gerardo: ¡Señora, creo en Dios y en su misericordia!

Señora: Yo temo su justicia, que castiga en los hijos las culpas de los padres.

Don Gerardo: Señora, ¡Dios no es un verdugo!

Señora: ¡Es un juez inflexible!

Don Gerardo: Y no hay que exagerar ... Después de todo, el pecado de Gabriel no es tan grave.

Señora: (Con apasionamiento doloroso.) ¡Para Ud., no! ¡Dios me perdona! ¡Un hombre que encenaga su vida, que pierde su alma por una mujer mala! 1

¹ Ibid., p. 183.

Basically the attitudes and behavior of this mother can be explained by the antagonism and resentment she feels toward her dead husband and her need to compensate by dominating another human being. Under these circumstances, the character and health of the boy are, of necessity, affected. He grows up timid, sickly and afraid to contradict his mother in any way. The law of the weak and the strong is repeated. The mother's power and desire for power grow with Gabriel's submission. It is not surprising that when he meets Teresa, a young girl of character and lively personality, he should naturally be the weaker of the two. Submission has become his way of life. He is attracted to Teresa's different approach to living. She represents life, the expression of his emotions, liberty, health and understanding. Although Teresa's personality is almost opposite to Gabriel's mother's, it is she who dominates and it is he who follows, but happily and gratefully in this case. He feels an irresistible attraction to Teresa whose health and strength emphasize his own weaknesses and symbolize his goals.

Teresa: Querer, querer ... Es muy cómodo.

Gabriel: Pues yo no sé hacer otra cosa ... No puedo ... Hasta tal punto vivo para tí, que me falta la vida hasta para el trabajo de seguir viviendo. Estás conmigo, y ¿que quieres que haga mientras te tengo aquí? Ni pensar siquiera, ni acordarme de que estoy en el mundo. Mirarte ... ¡y alegrarme de que Dios te haya hecho tan bonita y tan buena y tan mía!

Teresa: ¡Mamarracho! (Se levanta y empieza a quitar la mesa.)

Gabriel: Ya ves tú que crimen. Sentarse ahí en esa butaca, reclinar la cabeza, cerrar los ojos ... y soñar contigo.

Teresa: (Recogiendo el cenicero lleno de colillas.)

Fumando ...

Gabriel: (Sonriendo.) Porque el humo me ayuda a soñar.

Teresa: Ah, ¿sí? ¡Ahora salimos con que necesitas venenos para recordarme!

Gabriel: No necesito nada ... más que a tí. Pero a tí, siempre, siempre, y a todas horas. Tú no lo entiendes. Tú eres fuerte, sana de cuerpo y de alma; te sobra voluntad para tí y para mí y para todo el mundo entero ... Me quieres ... 1

Teresa recognizes Gabriel's excellent qualities as well as his weaknesses, and assumes toward him an attitude that is affectionately decisive. She wants him to finish his studies and she encourages him to fight against the destructive effect of his mother. She wants him to be a man:

Teresa: (Con un poco de exaltación.) Tienes que ser un hombre, Gabriel, de veras, capaz de ganarte la vida, tú solo, ... aunque tu madre se ponga contra tí.

Gabriel: ¿Mi madre? (Con angustia súbita.) ¿Por qué me hablas de mi madre?

Teresa: Hace ya muchos días que no te escribe ...

Gabriel: Sí ... (Queriendo hacerse fuerte.) ¡Pero no importa! Estaba disgustada desde que en la Navidad no fui a pasar con ella las vacaciones ... y como en Carnaval tampoco he ido ... Pero se contentará. (Con un asomo de rebeldía.) Y si no se contenta ...

Teresa: (Mirándole, con esperanza.) ¿Qué, Gabriel? Si no se contenta y te abandona ... ¿Qué? (Le mira con ansiedad, esperando que la energía de hombre despierte en él, y que se afirme su voluntad de luchar con la vida a su lado, pese a quien pese.) 2

Teresa's almost maternal attitude toward Gabriel does not offend him because he has become accustomed to

¹ Ibid., pp. 152-153.

² Ibid., p. 155.

this subordinate position with women and it seems perfectly natural. He is so dependent upon Teresa that when she leaves the room, he feels weak. A friend asks him if he is ill, and he replies:

No me pasa nada. (Con esfuerzo.) Es ridículo,... pero no te burles! ¡En cuanto se separa [Teresa] de mí se me acaba la vida! 1

His weakness is the result of twenty years of absolute domination by his mother. He knows that he has been the victim of his mother's tyranny, but is unable to struggle against her. He doesn't even dare to deceive his mother:

Gabriel: ¡A mi madre no la engaño yo!
 Rafael: (Con sorna.) ¿Por nobleza de alma?
 Gabriel: (Con angustia.) ¡Porque es imposible!
 Nunca he podido decirle una mentira, ni la más pequeña ... Mi única defensa contra ella era el silencio ... Callar, callar siempre, callarlo todo ... y aun así! Solo con mirarme lee en mí como en un libro abierto ... ¡No hay defensa contra ella! 2

When the mother finds out where he is, she has him carried bodily home and during the months that follow, he is seriously ill. During this time, unknown to him, Teresa has their child and writes to Gabriel, but her letters are intercepted by the mother. Teresa never stops loving him or believing that he loves her and finally comes to his house. When Gabriel finds out what has happened and that Teresa loves him and needs him, he feels that he is a man for the first time. He decides to leave this house, where

¹Ibid., p. 157.

²Ibid., p. 159.

the dominant accent has been on death, to live a life of honor and love with Teresa and their son. He feels attracted to the healthy and vital attitudes of Teresa that are in sharp contrast to those his mother would instill in him. He sees in Teresa strength, independence and stability, qualities that draw him to her because he lacks them and longs to acquire them. One is led to believe that he will become a man because he wants to so much and because he has made the first step in that direction: he has left his mother.

The strong woman versus the weak man is readily apparent in Esperanza nuestra. In the light of the contrast, both types seem accented. The octogenarian doña Isabelita is stubborn in her strength, and while she does not represent the ideals of the author, she is adamant in her opinions and admirable to the extent that at her age she is able to stand firm behind her convictions, in the face of the opposition of the entire family. She represents the landed aristocracy who have lived in luxury for generations with no Christian charity in their hearts for the laborers who have worked to produce the wealth. The owners have lived in traditional idleness and have always wanted to pay the lowest possible wages to the workers to keep them impoverished and thereby enslaved. Doña Isabelita represents this point of view not out of miserliness or meanness, but because she feels that the land and

the wealth that it produces are rightfully and exclusively hers. She further feels that the social classes are destined to be sharply defined. She is accustomed to having her orders obeyed in all matters, and no doubt her son was brought up to absolute and unquestioning obedience. This attitude has been previously noted in the mother, who compensates in the home for her lack of authority outside of it.

It becomes apparent in the course of the play that don Carlos has had an affair with Fuensanta, a woman of the lower classes, and that they have had a daughter. That he should not publicly claim the child as his own might be explained in the light of his legal marriage to another woman, but don Carlos, except for a small grant of land that is hinted at, has left the entire responsibility of the child on the shoulders of a woman who would not only be socially outcast, but would be alone and relatively helpless. The courage and independence of Fuensanta are reflected in their daughter, Rosario, who has been reared without bitterness and has been taught to work for what she received, without expecting favors from others. When don Carlos' grown children, Lorenzo and Carmita, find out about their half-sister and reproach their father for concealing the truth, don Carlos tries to excuse himself to them by saying that he had wanted to avoid a scandal for their sake.

Through the minor characters, the theme of feminine strength and masculine weakness or señoritismo is repeated, as if in undertone. Lorenzo's wife, Nené, has been virtually abandoned by her husband because of his crusading activities. Nené has no children and needs to put her time and energy to some use. Natalio, a don Juan type who senses this, offers to console her. Nené is tempted but realizes in time that honor is her most precious possession and rejects Natalio. She feels unneeded and unloved but will not dissipate her self-respect in an affair with Lorenzo. Instead, she turns to that Martínez Sierra healer and ennobler, work. She will divert her unwanted maternal energy to comfort those who need her by becoming a nurse:

Nené: Yo he comprendido también que no es posible que yo siga llevando, sin peligro, la vida que llevo. ¡Es preciso que yo pueda emplear en algo útil el tiempo, tan largo! (Con amargura.) En mi casa ... nadie me necesita. Si fuéramos pobres ... Pero no lo somos ... no tenemos hijos. ¡No hago falta ninguna! Si Lorenzo me deja, (Con tristeza.) que si me dejara ... me marcharé ...

don Carlos: (Asombradísimo.) ¿Adónde?

Nené: (Sencillamente.) A Francia ... a un hospital de heridos.

don Carlos: ¿Tú?

Nené: (Con serenidad triste.) Para ser enfermera, no hace falta mucha sabiduría. Miss Palmer, la que fué mi institutriz está allí desde que ha empezado la guerra ... ¡Iré con ella! (Con apasionamiento.) Allí serviré de algo, allí trabajaré, allí aliviaré penas de verdad y tendré compasión, no de suspiros cursis a la luz de la luna, sino de dolores que duelen de veras ... Allí me podré endurecer las manos y el alma, me ataré con una obligación material, me acostaré rendida, dormiré sin sueños. (Habla como si estuviera sola.) Me olvidaré de mi misma ... No pensaré ...

(Apretándose la frente.) Es curioso; (Con amargura.)
 ¡no sé pensar, y no me deja nunca en paz esta deva-
 nadera del pensamiento! 1

Lorenzo, in contrast to his definitely spineless father, is a strong character and as such is a rarity in the theatre of Martínez Sierra, for, as has been said, strength has been almost exclusively a feminine quality in the plays of this author. Lorenzo is idealistic and determined to right the wrongs committed by his family for generations in the name of tradition. He has decided that the laborers will have the decent life they have earned and does not hesitate to give it to them at the expense of his own inheritance. He is prepared to leave home to help the workers in their struggles to better themselves if don Carlos will not help them. In the face of Lorenzo's ultimatum, don Carlos agrees to the reforms suggested by his son, but does so only because he cannot bear to lose him. He is almost effeminate in his dependence upon Lorenzo:

Lorenzo: (Dando un paso hacia la puerta.) Adiós, padre.

don Carlos: (Con desesperación.) ¡No, no ... no es posible! ¡No te vayas! Creo que estás loco, creo que estás ciego; pero no puedo quedarme sin hijo ... (Con dolor.) ¡No te entiendo, no te entenderé nunca ... pero haz lo que quieras! (Llorando y vencido.) Yo ya soy viejo ... yo ya no soy nadie ... (Tendiendo los brazos hacia Lorenzo.) Haz lo que tú quieras ... ¡pero no me dejes! 2

¹ Ibid., IV, 100-101.

² Ibid., pp. 120-121.

It is implicit in the story that the reason why Lorenzo is strong rather than weak is that although his mother was married to a señorito, don Carlos, she did not turn to her children in frustration and revenge but rather used her energies to help those less fortunate than herself. Here is another example of an admirable female character placed in contrast to a weak man. While her husband was having an affair and subsequently abandoning his paramour when she became pregnant, she was trying to lighten the hearts of the poor laborers' children. We assume that she died in the childhood of Carmita and Lorenzo, but her influence has had its broadening and humanizing effect. We know of her only through the condemnation of her mother-in-law, doña Isabelita, who blames Lorenzo's radicalism on the influence of Conchita, his mother:

Doña Isabelita: (Con rencor retrospectivo de suegra.)
 ¡Es hijo de su madre!
 Don Carlos: (Sentimental.) ¡Pobre Conchita!
 Doña Isabelita: (Con mala intención.) Pobre sería, cuando tú lo dices ... También a ella le daba por defender a los descamisados. Cuando venía aquí, siempre andaba rodeada de chicos que la llenaban de mocos y babas, ... y contaba la historia ... o el cuento, de no se que rey, que dice que quería que cada súbdito echase una gallina en el puchero ...
 ¡Calcadito a ella ha salido su hijo! 1

Rosario, don Carlos' illegitimate daughter, comes to her father in desperation because she feels that she is

¹Ibid., p. 53.

being compromised by her sweetheart, Gabriel, and the people with whom she lives. Her mother's last words to her had been to lead an honorable life and she is determined to follow this advice. When Rosario realizes that Gabriel is only using her for the political favors that he may gain from don Carlos, she doesn't vacillate in rejecting him, though without him she will be left quite alone in the world:

Rosario: (Rechazándole con violencia.) ¡Quita!
 ¡Dejáme! ¡No te vuelvas a acercar nunca a mí!
 ¡Nunca! ¡Nunca! (Con dolor y repugnancia.) ¡Ya
 veo lo que era tu cariño! (Con indignación.) ¡Ya
 entiendo para que te iba a servir el que yo te
 quisiera! (Con asco.) Te pones precio, quieres
 que alguien compre para mí tu querer y tu nombre,
 porque infeliz de mí, solo comprándole puedo tener
 cariño honrado ... (Con altivez.) Pues te enga-
 ñaste, que yo no sé vender ni comprar. 1

Rosario's strength of character cannot go unrewarded, however, so she is ultimately welcomed into the family by Carmita and Lorenzo, who will share with her what has been rightfully hers for so long.

As in Torre de marfil, and Esperanza nuestra, in Madam Pepita there is a thinly-veiled condemnation of the aristocracy and an idealization of the working middle class whose nobility is entirely of the spirit. The contrast of weak men with strong women is again apparent, with

¹Ibid., p. 108.

the emphasis on the former. Don Luis, a count, finds that he needs more income than his properties afford him, and had recourse to some rather questionable dealings with the seamstress, Madame Pepita, whose mother had been his wife's maid. Pepita has been industrious and has built up a comparatively lucrative business designing and sewing stylish clothes. Don Luis laments that democracy has slowly destroyed his way of life and that he finds it difficult to exist on his nobility:

No ... dolencias morales; la sociedad se descompone, Pepita; las aristocracias se derrumban; la moneda, que es la sangre de la vida moderna, huye de nuestras arcas blasonadas; la miseria se come nuestros pergaminos. ¡Ya no somos nadie!
 Madame Pepita: ¡Ay, no diga eso el señor conde!
 La sangre azul no se paga con nada.
 Don Luis: (Sonriendo.) Es cierto, no se paga ...
 y por lo tanto, no se puede vender. 1

Don Luis suggests to Madame Pepita that she add a certain sum to the bill of a client that he has recommended to her and that this sum be paid to him. This client, incidentally, is his son's sweetheart, Galatea, who is a chorus girl.

Don Luis: No, no es eso tampoco. Por esta vez, puedes permitirte el lujo de no reparar en quinientas pesetas más o menos; pongamos un mil más. ... (Madame Pepita hace un gesto de asombro.) Yo, ¡apuros de la vida! necesito setecientas cincuenta (De prisa y con afectación de desesperación.) que

¹Ibid., XIII, 25-26.

tendrás la bondad de reservarme sobre el producto líquido de la factura ... y aun de adelantarme, si puedes.

Madame Pepita: (Desconcertada.) Pero ... señor conde ...

Don Luis: (Con afectación de amargura, paseando por la habitación.) ¡Así está el mundo, Pepita amiga! ¡Así le ha puesto el triunfo de las democracias! Todo un señor de la Veza de Lezo, comisionista en trapos ... ¡Dan ganas de llorar! 1

In her youth, Madame Pepita had gone to South America, where she had married a Russian about whom she knew very little. Two months after the marriage, the husband's father died and he was forced to tell Pepita the truth about his background. He was a Russian duke already married to a lady of rank in his own country. He then returned to Russia to claim his inheritance and to be reconciled with his first wife. Pepita was left quite alone and expecting a child. The child, Catalina, is now seventeen and Pepita has not heard from her husband until she receives news that he has died and has left her a large sum of money. When don Luis and his señorito son, Augusto, find out about Pepita's good fortune, both hasten to borrow money from her and she lends it most willingly. In addition, don Luis decides that marriage to Pepita's daughter, Catalina, is exactly what his son needs. Augusto is not prepared to make a living, so don Luis urges him to solve his financial and professional problems in this way.

¹Ibid., pp. 28-29.

He knows that Augusto is not in the least attracted to Catalina but feels that this is a minor consideration and indicates that marriage need not restrict his activities; it will merely support him:

Don Luis: Al día siguiente de casarte serás tan rico como ella.

Augusto: Sí, es una consecuencia.

Don Luis: Inevitable ... y grata, hijo: hemos llegado al límite, no tenemos un real, el académico no nos puede sufrir; Pepita pudiera desilusionarse; la niña enamorarse de otro ... vivimos de milagro. Es preciso que te declares formalmente, hoy, hoy mismo. ... ¡Sacrificate un poco, que diablo! ¡Ay, si yo fuera tú, es decir, si yo tuviera tus veinticinco años, con que placer me sacrificaría! (Como se exalta hablando, pierde el equilibrio, y está a punto de caer al jardín.)

Augusto: (Sujetándole.) Que te vas a caer. Vámonos ya.

Don Luis: Tienes razón. Este no es lugar a propósito para tratar asuntos trascendentales. ... Baja tu primero y me darás la mano. ... Hijo, hazlo por mí, Toma la caña ... A tí, después de todo, ¿qué te importa? Sujeta la escalera. (Desapareciendo.) ¡Un hombre no se casa nunca del todo! ¹

Don Luis' ruse to marry Augusto to Catalina fails, for Catalina is repelled by the perfumed señorito. She wants a man who is intelligent and industrious, whom she may help to attain fame and fortune. We assume she has found such a man in the talented and ambitious artist, Alberto.

In El corazón ciego, the same pattern of the idle señorito who lives irresponsibly on the money he receives from his parents is repeated with minor differences. When

¹Ibid., p. 92.

he has spent the money from his parents, he finds that he is unprepared to support himself. Finding that decent employment for himself is almost impossible, he sometimes goes to another country, often to America, to seek his fortune, a course that is frowned upon by other members of his social class. A careful study of the literary works of this general period would give us a fairly good idea of the lamentable señoritismo that persisted for so many years when precisely these young men should have been the backbone of the country.

In the case of Antonio, of El corazón ciego, we have a young man twenty-four years old who inherited a fortune from his father and who not having any idea of what it took to amass it, spends it in a short time with the wife of an embassy official from another country. It would be superfluous to say that his behavior suggests that he is weak and like a spoiled child whose father is only someone to support him and whose mother has probably spent her life doting on him and making of him a don Juanito instead of a man. In his financial and personal ruin, Antonio does not shoot himself, for as he himself says, he hasn't the courage. Neither does he have the courage to face life realistically and work. He even robs his mother and forges checks on his uncles' bank account. In addition, he has gotten himself hopelessly in debt by borrowing from usurers.

In Antonio, there is no remorse for the mess he has made of his life. Instead, there is disappointment and self-pity. The woman he has loved and who has been a cause of his financial ruin is very different from Spanish girls, he says. She is strong in a way, and Antonio feels very much under her spell. When he speaks of her, he shows the author's belief that he is not hopelessly insensitive and that he is probably slated for redemption. In criticizing the prototype of the Spanish girl, he expresses what was felt so strongly by the Spanish intellectual of the time. The Spanish girl he describes is the chattering, frivolous, ignorant type that Martínez Sierra would like to eliminate from the Spanish scene. In her place, he would have the energetic, educated, compassionate young woman that he represented so often in his heroines:

Antonio: ¡Tan mujer! Como una madre ... como una hermana! ... ¡Lo que no saben ser, precisamente, las mujeres de aquí! (Con dolor suave y hondo.) ¡Chiquillo, en el amor, lo menos importante es el amor! Lo esencial, lo que hace a uno esclavo y feliz, es esa suavidad femenina que envuelve, que acaricia; ese compañerismo comprensivo y atento, ese calor de hogar. (Pepito sonríe irónicamente.) ¡No te rías! (Casi furioso.) ¡Sí, de hogar! El que no han sabido hacer para nosotros nuestras madres, las que fueron minas "fin de siglo," frívolas e ignorantes; el que tampoco saben formar estas chiquillas locas ... ya las oyes ... la guasa, el coqueteo, la malicia. ... ¡Estos anohecidos madrileños! Ninguna mujer "bien" está en su casa al anohecer. ... Están en el teatro, en la calle, en el cine ... ¿Dónde va a ir un hombre, que aunque sea como yo, un ignorante, tiene hambre y sed de algo más que los chistes de un vaudeville o las aventuras de Fantomas? Alicia es lo que es, ¡Dios la perdone! Pero en su casa hay silencio, hay libros...

Yo, que no había leído en mi vida; ¡he aprendido a leer, porque ella lee! Hay una mujer que casi siempre que hable sabe lo que dice, ¡y que de cuando en cuando se calla! ¡Anda! (Cogiéndose de un brazo de Pepito.) Vamos al comedor, a ver si nos dan algo. (Sonriendo.) Mejor sería dejarme morir de hambre, como una heroína de novela inglesa ... pero siento un vacío insoportable, no sé si en el corazón o en el estómago. ... 1

This is a rather typical denunciation of the Spanish woman of her class and time and bears a decided resemblance to the ingénue type described in an earlier chapter. In her youth she was frivolous and superficial, while in her maturity she was stubborn, narrow-minded and authoritarian, characteristics that are frequently associated with and caused by ignorance. Antonio was fascinated by this foreign woman, Alicia, who was so different from Spanish women. He was instinctively drawn to her because she supplied something that the girls from his own country could not, and she dominated him because his environment had made him weak and even unashamed of his weakness. To demonstrate further his spinelessness, he turns to María Luisa and is willing to be saved financially and used by her and her family. She has committed a minor indiscretion that could have been serious but was not, and when idle gossip threatens to destroy her daughter's reputation, Aurelia, knowing of Antonio's financial difficulties, suggests that he marry María Luisa. He has heard the rumor of the young girl's adventure, but decides to

¹Ibid., X, 84.

ignore it because he finds it expedient to do so. María Luisa, because of her recent experience, is acutely aware of woman's inferior position in Spanish society and cannot understand how a man can ever feel helpless. He has everything on his side. Antonio, however, is desperate and feels that an easy solution to his problem is marrying María Luisa for her dowry:

María Luisa: (Con melancolía.) No sé ... Las mujeres somos tan desdichadas, tan desvalidas ... estamos tan desamparadas ... que, tratándose de otra mujer, lo comprende una todo: las mentiras, las hipocresías, hasta las pequeñas infamias, para resolver un conflicto, para defenderse ... ¡pero de un hombre! (Con envidia.) ¡De un hombre que puede todo lo que quiere, que tiene todos los caminos del mundo de par en par!

Antonio: (Con desconsuelo.) ¡Eso creerás tú! (Con desesperación serena y honda.) Para un hombre como yo ... sin dinero, no hay camino ninguno ... No sé hacer nada, no sirvo para nada. (Dolorosa y humildemente.) ¡No tengo voluntad! ¹

Both realize and acknowledge that this would be a marriage of convenience in which he would salvage María Luisa's respectability and in which his economic problems would be solved. While María Luisa feels shame for having been abandoned by a man she thought she loved, she does not feel guilty and she very much opposes the plan to marry her to Antonio. The will of the mother prevails, however, and Antonio and María Luisa marry. After the wedding, they go to Tangier to live, and a change seems to take place in Antonio. He works very hard to make money and

¹Ibid., p. 126.

insists that his wife's dowry was only a loan and will be paid back in full. One is to believe that in contact with María Luisa, Antonio has become strong, as she is strong. He admires her and would like to be worthy of her love, but to be worthy of such a woman's love, he knows he must be independent materially as well as psychologically. In his determination not to be supported by his rich wife, he has thrown all his energies into his work. María Luisa, seeing his efforts, has been moved to think of him as more than a family convenience. María Luisa's inspiration and his work have been his salvation:

Antonio: (Humildemente.) Porque ya me lo ha dicho mi conciencia, ¡y no quiero oírlo! ¡Esta mujer no es tuya! ¡Pero está a mi lado! ¡Sí, pero tiene el corazón tan lejos! (Con apasionamiento contenido.) ¡No importa! La veo, la oigo, la miro vivir ... ¡esa vida admirable y silenciosa! ¡En la cual, para tí, no hay más que un poco de bondad y de tolerancia, ¡como para todos! (Con apasionamiento.) ¡No importa, no importa! No es mía; pero no es de nadie. Si alguien está más cerca de su corazón, no importa, con tal de que yo pueda seguir viviendo junto a ella, por ella, para ella, que con su dignidad serena, con su lealtad, con su rectitud, con su fortaleza, con su suavidad, inflexible, me ha enseñado como hay que vivir, ¡porque vale la pena de vivir! ¡Soy cobarde!

María Luisa: (Casi con reproche.) ¡No digas eso!

Antonio: ¡Lo sé, lo sabes tú! No me desampares, no me dejes otra vez solo ... Te necesito tanto; ¡pero, no exijo nada! No me hables, no me mires ... me basta con oírte callar. ... Súfreme a tu lado. Me atrevo a suplicártelo hoy por primera vez, porque sé que el único que podría disputarme tu vida no la merece ...

María Luisa: (Gravemente.) Nadie merece nada ... Nadie es de nadie ... Nadie tiene derecho a decir, hablando de otro ser humano: ¡Esta vida es mía! 1

¹ Ibid., pp. 133-134.

As has been pointed out, woman dominates the theatre of Gregorio Martínez Sierra. While she is determined, she is discreet, and while she is strong, she is not masculine. Her brand of feminism is persistent and devoted but it is not militant. Since the interest and action of these plays generally revolve around women, the men characters tend to be less carefully drawn. Their subordinate roles many times make them actually appear weak, especially in comparison to the traditionally strong heroine. There are many men, however, who are purposely drawn weak. Such a man is José María, Mariana's plane-crazy husband in La mujer del heroe, who spends his time flying while his wife supports him and their three children with her ironing business. When don Ramón, Mariana's father, complains that his daughter has to support her husband, José María's mother, Andrea, answers that Mariana has gotten accustomed to this arrangement by supporting him, her own father:

Don Ramón: Le digo a usted que es un bochorno que una mujer como mi hija se case, y después de casada se rompa los puños a trabajar pa mantener a su marido.

Andrea: Suerte que no le pilla de susto, porque ya estaba enseñadita de soltera a mantener a su padre.

Don Ramón: ¿A mí?

Andrea: Y no ha perdido la costumbre. 1

José María, though of the lower classes, has had some of the same forces at work to make him irresponsible

¹Ibid., VI, 132-133.

that the señorito has had. His father died when he was small and the mother attempted to compensate for the loss of this parent by doing too much for him. She has given him everything she was able to give him without requiring anything in return. Andrea has pampered José María so long that he has come to accept as his due this role of the protected. When his mother was no longer able to work to support him, he sought another woman to provide for him:

Andrea: Ya ve usted, faltando el padre ... dinero para estudios no había en casa, porque aunque una tenga su oficio, que yo era peinadora, aunque me esté mal al decirlo, gracias a que la alcance a una para ir tirando; ... en fin, faltarle nada a mi hijo no le ha faltao mientras yo me he podido valer. ...
 Ramón: Ni después tampoco; porque cuando aquí la señora se imposibilitó de las piernas, con perdón sea dicho, el casó con mi hija, que tiene este taller de planchao, y, no es por alabarla, pero aquí se plancha pa lo mejor de Madrid. ¿Ha reparao usted esta tarde en la pechera del subsecretario de Instrucción pública? ... Pues en esta mesa se le ha sacado el brillo. 1

Since José María has no education or training, he is ill-prepared to do any but the most menial of jobs, and his mother has made him believe that these are beneath him. He feels no shame that a woman supports him, for this has been his pattern of existence for as long as he can remember. Andrea still brags about his good looks and fusses about his food as if he were a child:

Andrea: Si que su hija de usted se puede quejar de su suerte. El hombre mas buen mozo de Madrid se ha llevao. 2

¹Ibid., p. 116.

²Ibid., p. 132.

On another occasion Andrea says:

Andrea: Pero hijo mío, ¿por qué no comes? ...
 (Entra llevando un plato con jamón frito. Sin reparar en que no está José María.) Hijo de mi alma, a ver si te mareas por echarte a volar en ayunas ... Come tan siquiera este par de lonchas de jamón frito.
 ... 1

Mariana loves José María despite his irresponsibility, and when she discovers a young lady's picture in his wallet she hastens to let him know that he must watch his actions for she will be watching them too. She has been faithful to him for ten years and expects equal fidelity of him. How far woman has progressed since the seventeenth century and Calderón's El médico de su honra! Mariana speaks to José María:

(Medio vencida.) Quiero que te calles, que como mentes más que la Gaceta, lo mismo dá que digas una cosa que otra, porque ninguna te la voy a creer ... ¡pero ándate con ojo! (Alternativamente con amor y altivez.) Ahora tienes un oficio muy alto, y estás muy orgulloso porque te han caído del cielo unas cuantas pesetas, ¡buen provecho te hagan! y que yo estoy muy acostumbrá a ganarme las pocas que necesito yo y mis hijos, y con esas pocas soy la reina del mundo ... que es mi casa ... Y en mi casa, ¡para que lo entiendas!, no ha habido nunca más hombre que tú, que te quiero más de lo que te mereces ... ¡pero tampoco hay más mujer que yo! y si no te conviene, el mundo es muy grande, y más ahora, que hasta por el aire se puede ir en coche; ¡de modo que volando, y hasta el día del juicio!²

When Julieta, the girl of the picture, comes to get José María for a flying lesson, Mariana sees them before they can leave and hesitates not a moment in fighting for

¹Ibid., p. 169.

²Ibid., p. 161.

her husband. She tells Julieta that José María has been hers for ten years and will continue to be hers. She further advises her husband that he will not fly that day:

Pues lo que es esta tarde mi marido no vuela.

José María: (Sintiéndose digno.) ¿Que no voy a volar esta tarde?

Mariana: (Como si no le hubiese oído a él, contesta, dirigiéndose a Julieta.) No, señora; no vuela, porque esta acatarrao y le van a hacer daño las corrientes de aire. ... De modo y manera que, si no tiene usted otra cosa que mandar ...

Julieta: (Muy seria.) Nada absolutamente. Buenas tardes.

Mariana: (Sin moverse.) Muy buenas.

José María: (Comprendiendo que está quedando mal, quiere adelantarse hacia Julieta.) Julieta ... yo ... ¹

José María is ashamed of his showing in front of Julieta and to save his ego decides that he must keep his flying appointment. Mariana warns him that if he leaves, he may not return:

Mariana: Pues te advierto una cosa ...

José María: ¡Tu dirás!

Mariana: ¡Que si sales, no vuelves a entrar!

José María: (Con sorna.) ¿A dónde?

Mariana: ¡A esta casa!

José María: Pero, vamos a ver, quien manda aquí, ¿tú o yo?

Mariana: Ni tú ni yo. Manda, como en todas partes, el que tiene razón.

José María: ¡Es que soy tu marido!

Mariana: (Dando media vuelta.) ¡Lo mismo que si fueras Garibaldí! ²

José María leaves, and there follow several days of unhappiness for both José María and Mariana. Mariana

¹Ibid., p. 167.

²Ibid., p. 169.

longs to be with her husband but pride will not allow her to make the first move. When José María is brought in apparently wounded, all thought of pride leaves her and she rushes to him. He has pretended to be hurt to arouse the maternal and protective instincts in Mariana and succeeds. Mariana forgives José María then turns to the audience with these closing words about the inherent superiority and purity of the manola:

Respetable público: termino aquí el sainete. Su moraleja es ésta: La mujer que se enamora de veras de un hombre, sea heroe, sea bandido, se ha fastidiado; porque en amor, señores y señoras, él que más pone, más pierde. Historia vulgar y silenciosa, pero acaso por eternamente repetida, más profunda y humana que la más resonante tragedia. Ojalá sus sencillas palabras, que el autor ha pedido prestadas al sobrio lenguaje de su pueblo, hayan logrado transmitirles la emoción sincera que ha hecho temblar su mano al componer por modo humilde un canto de alabanza a la honradez fundamental, a la prudencia, a la fortaleza sazónada de gracia, a la abnegación, a la generosidad y al clarísimo instinto de justicia que forman el alma agridulce, bravía, áspera y admirable de la admirabilísima mujer madrileña, manola inmortal, prodigio de sentido común, con el corazón en su sitio y la cabeza junto al corazón; limpia por esencia, por fuera y por dentro, porque tiene el alma como el modo de andar, y por mucho barro que haya por la calle, no coge ella una mota en los zapatos. He dicho. 1

The title character of Pobrecito Juan is probably the weakest man in the theatre of Martínez Sierra. He and Mariana, whose families are close friends, have been reared almost as brother and sister. Although Juan is the older, he has always depended on Mariana and believes that he is

¹Ibid., p. 183

in love with her. Mariana loves Juan deeply but her love is protective and maternal and she knows it:

Mariana: Porque a ti no soy yo capaz de darte un disgusto ... bueno, éste sí. Porque no hay más remedio ... ni de pedirte que me saques de una dificultad: Me parece que he nacido yo para arreglártelas a tí todas; hasta cuando te duele la cabeza quisiera mejor que me doliese a mí ... Eres mayor que yo, y me parece que eres mucho más joven, casi un hijo mío. 1

In spite of the rather traditionally masculine roles that both Marianas assume in Mujer del héroe and Pobrecito Juan, both women are basically quite feminine. Both are strong in comparison with weak men in that both are the protectors instead of the protected. In Pobrecito Juan, Mariana and Juan discuss their situation:

Juan: No lo sé. Pensándolo, sí que me parecía una cosa inverosímil con esta mala suerte ... pero te sentía tan cerca del corazón, tan mía ... o yo tan tuyo ... no sé ... y eras tan buena para mí, tan suave, tan mujer ... todo el bien de mi vida me ha venido, hasta ahora, de tí ... en moneda menuda, es verdad, en cuidados, en consejos, ... Fué una temeridad, Mariana; pero tan acostumbrado me tienes a contar contigo, que pensé que el tesoro era mío ... Además, te quiero tanto ... quiero decir, te necesito tanto ... por qué no has de ser buena del todo? Mariana, déjame ser en tu vida un niño, un perro, un juguete, pero tuyo, tuyo. ... ¡Te querré tanto! ¡Con un poco que me quieras tú a mí basta!

Mariana: No basta. Para ser ... eso, marido y mujer, ¡hay que quererse mucho los dos, y de otro modo!

Juan: ¿De qué modo?

Mariana: Yo te quiero a ti horrorosamente, a tí y a todo lo tuyo, por ser tuyo ... a tu casa, a tu madre ... hasta a tu padre; me parece que ... Bueno, por defenderte, pondría yo la vida; cuando alguien habla mal de vosotros, le daría de bofetadas; por sacar vuestra casa adelante me quedaría sin comer; hasta vuestro

vuestro título, que tú tienes en poco, me parece una cosa tan alta ... pero ... no sé como decírtelo: no me puedo querer casar contigo porque ... porque a mi me parece ... no te enfades ... que soy ... que soy más lista que tú. 1

Mariana does not want to marry a man that she will have to defend or support. For marriage, she wants a man that she can look up to and that she will not have to mother. She wants her husband to be stronger and more intelligent than she and idealistically wants to believe that he is capable of protecting her in any situation:

Mariana: No sé ... verás ... ¿Te acuerdas cuantas veces, yendo por ahí los dos, te has apoyado en mí para subir las cuestas? Pues a mí me parece que el hombre que ha de ser mi marido me tiene que subir las cuestas en brazos. 2

Madrigal is the dramatization of Martínez Sierra's most popular novel, Tú eres la paz. The plot is faithful to the novel, in general, and even uses the same words of the dialogue in many cases. The main departure from the novel is the omission of the child that Agustín has had with Carmelina, the dancer who made him forget Ana María during two of the four years he has been away from home. The Ana María of the drama also seems more astute and ready to defend what she wants. She is stronger than the Pollyanna type that appears in the novel.

¹Ibid., p. 197.

²Ibid., p. 198.

Ana María continues to love her cousin, Agustín, even though he has apparently fallen in love with another woman during the years he has sought his artistic fortune in another country. When he returns to visit his sick grandmother, Ana María hides her true feelings and leads Agustín to believe that she too has found other interests and is not at all to be pitied. Agustín seems somewhat disappointed when he finds a lively, independent, happy woman instead of a girl weeping because of her broken heart and when he sees that a young poet is writing love poems to her, he begins to feel jealous. One day, Ana María interrupts an argument between the two men and explains that the custom of winning a lady through a fight is antiquated and that modern girls have no need of such things:

Ana María: (A Francisco, con amabilidad que contrasta con la severidad con que ha hablado a Agustín.) Usted, como ya le he dicho antes, es un chiquillo. Tranquílcese usted. Las damas de estos tiempos no necesitamos paladines. Caso de que tuvieramos alguna ofensa que vengar, sabríamos vengarla solitas. Somos muy valientes y tenemos las uñas muy afiladas ... 1

Ana María tells Agustín that in front of the grandmother, they must act as if they were still in love. Ana María, therefore, is affectionate with Agustín and he with her, but his masculine vanity is wounded when she lets him think that she is only putting on an act for the grandmother's sake. Although Ana María feigns indifference to Agustín

¹Ibid., p. 168.

and he believes that she no longer loves him, when Catalina comes to claim what she considers hers, there is no lack of understanding between the women. Both understand perfectly what is in the mind of the other. At first, Ana María refuses to allow Catalina to see Agustín, but later changes her mind. She then orders his bags to be packed and, with apparent indifference, tells Agustín that he may leave any time, and that she will have his things sent. It is at this point that Agustín shows that Ana María's cleverness and self-control have conquered him. He begs her not to let him go. He knows that with Carmelina he will suffer, and it seems that he lacks the know-how or the courage to get rid of her; Ana María must do it. It seems that Ana María's well-planned independence, indifference, affection and attractiveness to others have seduced him.

Agustín: (Con desesperación, cuando ella va a salir.)
 ¡Ana María! (Como quien se tira a un pozo.) ¡No me dejes marchar!

Ana María: (Deteniéndose.) ¿Eh?

Agustín: (Acercándose a ella y cogiéndole las manos.)
 ¡No me dejes marchar!

Ana María: ¿Yo?

Agustín: Sí, ¡tú!

Ana María: ¿En qué quedamos?

Agustín: Sí: te he ofendido, y mucho más de lo que tú puedes figurarte; sí, he prometido que me marcho mañana, lo he jurado ... me esperan, es decir ... ni siquiera sé si me esperan; pero deténme tú, defiéndeme, porque si tú no me detienes me voy a la tristeza, al fracaso, al envilecimiento de todas las horas del día; ¡me voy con ella porque no sé estar sólo! pero te juro que me dá terror; tú no sabes la vida que me espera, la que siempre hemos llevado juntos ... (Levantándose un mechón del pelo de la frente.) Mira, ¿ves esta cicatriz? (Con sarcasmo.) Pues es el símbolo de todo nuestro amor.

Ana María: (Con un poco de temblor nervioso.) ¿Te has batido por ella?

Agustín: (Con desesperación cómica.) Nos hemos roto en la cabeza toda una vajilla de Sajonia y una cristalería de Venecia. ¡En dos años, Anita!

Ana María: (Muriéndose de risa.) ¡Ja, ja, ja, ja!
 ¡Esta era la tragedia! ¡Ja, ja, ja, ja! ¡Esta es la sima negra, el abismo, la desolación! ¡Tirarse los platos a la cabeza! ¡Ja, ja, ja, ja!

Agustín: Ana María ... no te burles de mí ... es decir, búrlate, riéte ... haz lo que quieras, pero dime que me quede a tu lado. 1

In this conversation, Agustín gives the impression of weakness and of needing a mother more than a wife. Instead of saying, "I'm not going," he says, "Don't let me go." Instead of saying that he wants to stay because he loves her, he says that life with her will be less turbulent. He fears unpleasantness with Carmelina and wants to avoid it. Later, in the same scene, Agustín tells Ana María that he loves her and seems ashamed of appearing weak before her. She explains that she has never stopped loving him and perhaps has loved him more for his weakness.

Agustín: ¿Pero, podrás quererme de verdad, de verdad, ahora que tan bien sabes lo poco que valgo?

Ana María: (Grave y dulcemente.) Hijo, las mujeres no podemos vencer esta compasión pícaro, que hace que cuando el ídolo se nos cae del altar le recojamos en los brazos ... ¡como a un hijo! (Abre los brazos y Agustín se precipita en ellos. Se abrazan larga y emocionadamente.) 2

This strong maternal instinct, with which all the heroines are generously endowed, accounts in part for their

¹Ibid., pp. 171-172.

²Ibid., p. 175.

apparent strength in comparison with the men. While it is true that love is a combination of the conjugal, the filial, the maternal, the amicable, etc., any one of these feelings may predominate, depending upon the circumstances. The situation in the theatre of Martínez Sierra frequently called for a predominance of the maternal. As Leonelo says in the first act of *Don Juan de España*:

A las mujeres les agrada más consolar al vencido
que coronar al triunfador. ¹

Estrella, of Mujer, has a problem similar to the one that faced Ana María in Madrigal. After being married to Estrella, a rather unimaginative girl, for several years, Gabriel turns for companionship to Laura Salcedo, one of her friends. Estrella, being Spanish, is denied a divorce, so she decides to attack the problem in other ways. When Gabriel returns from a three-month trip, he finds the house greatly changed. Instead of the traditional and decorous paintings and furniture arrangement, he finds modern paintings, nude statues and rather bold decor. He finds a maid to light his cigars and serve dainty teas. Perhaps the greatest change of all has taken place in Estrella. She seems very sophisticated, gay and quite independent. She smokes, receives roses under rather suspicious circumstances and makes a habit of going out alone.

¹Ibid., p. 10.

Estrella's tactics, though more deliberate and extreme, parallel those of Ana María in Madrigal. While there is much less maternal instinct involved in Estrella's feelings than there was in Ana María's, she succeeds in humbling her husband and bringing him back on her own terms. Both Agustín and Gabriel were bored with the rather traditional, dependent type of girl and sought excitement in her opposite. The independent and modern, if not conniving spirit of the modern girl that Ana María and Estrella were able to acquire brought their sweethearts back, presumably satisfied and disposed not to wander again.

Rosina's father, don Luis, of Rosina es frágil, is as irresponsible as his ingénue daughter. In fact, the mother, a strong woman, finds her husband and daughter so similar that she half-jokingly accuses don Luis of switching babies in the cradle. As don Luis goes out to collect the rent on his properties, doña Marta warns him not to be his usual soft-hearted self:

Don Luis: No mujer, descuida: voy al huerto, cobro la renta, me la guardo en la carterita, tomo la vuelta por la carretera a paso gimnástico y estoy a tus pies antes de las doce.

Doña Marta: ¡Dios lo haga! ¡A ver si le perdonas al casero la mitad de la renta!

Don Luis: Martita, por el amor de Dios, ¿por qué le voy a perdonar al casero la mitad de la renta?

Doña Marta: Porque la lagartona de la casera te contará un sin fin de lástimas, como de costumbre, y tu te dejarás conover. ¡Te conozco! 1

¹Ibid., VIII, 233.

She further warns him against losing in the casino the money he has collected.

Doña Marta: ¡Ay! Si ... si al volver no te dá la ocurrencia de entrar en el casino y acercarte a la mesa de juego. ... 1

Doña Marta has learned the weaknesses of her husband in twenty-five years of marriage and is not averse to reminding him of them. Don Luis, in defense, tries to blame his faults on her suggestion. He comically but pathetically says that it is the strong woman's responsibility to lead the weak man rather than to suggest his perdition. Judging from his theatre, this suggestion is serious rather than humorous on the part of the author:

Don Luis: ... ¡Flaquezas humanas! que yo dominaría si supiera que hay alguien en el mundo que me cree capaz de dominarlas; pero cuando mi esposa, mi mujer propia, da por sentado, después de conocerme como me conoce, que voy a sucumbir, desde luego, ¿a qué tomarme trabajos inútiles? ¡Sucumbiré, sucumbiré! ¡Y tú tendrás la culpa! La mujer fuerte ha de ser la conciencia del hombre flaco, su apoyo, su ángel bueno, ¡tú eres mi demonio tentador! ¡Buenos días! 2

In Rosina es frágil, even a rudderless ingénue dominates her uncle, a man eleven years her senior. She hasn't the will to say "no" to the boys who court her, but can get Antonio to tell them. Antonio helps her once but demurs when she asks him to continue. When he says he has no real right to send the boys away, it suddenly

¹Ibid., p. 234.

²Ibid., pp. 234-235.

occurs to Rosario to give him that right. Antonio even allows Rosario to decide that he loves her:

Antonio: Porque no quiero ... (Ante un gesto ofendido de ella.) y porque, aunque quisiera, no tengo derecho: no soy tu padre, no soy tu madre, no soy tu marido ...

Rosina: (Interrumpiéndole.) ¡Mi marido! ¿Qué has dicho?

Antonio: (Con terror.) ¡Nada! ¡No he dicho nada!, nada absolutamente.

Rosina: (Soñadora.) ¡Mi marido!

Antonio: ¡No, no!

Rosina: (Insinuante.) Es que esa ... puede que fuera la mejor solución ... porque entonces ... si que tendrías ... todos los derechos. (El no contesta, muy malhumorado.) ¿No quieres?

..... 1

Rosina: (Bajando los ojos.) ¡Y tú también me quieres a mí!

Antonio: ¿Yo?

Rosina: (Muy convencida, y mirándole frente a frente.) Si no me quisieras, no me aguantarías. Me quieres, fíjate bien, me quieres. 2

Sor Teresa, of Lirio entre espinas, takes refuge in a house of prostitution when her convent has been burned by revolutionaries and there is fighting in the streets. She does not realize what kind of establishment she has entered at first, but when she does, she does not offend her hostesses with her prudishness. The girls feel protective toward the nun and have no fear of the men's indiscretion, for they feel confident that they can control them. When one of them does admire Sor Teresa's eyes and makes a move toward her, the women do not hesitate to defend her:

¹Ibid., p. 267.

²Ibid., p. 268.

La bailadora: (Poniéndose al lado de la monja y apartando a los hombres con ademán resuelto.)
 ¡Quitad de ahí, estúpidos, idiotas! ¡Largo! ¡No os dá vergüenza, pedazos de alcorcho? ... (A sor Teresa.)

Ana María: ¡No tenga Ud. cuidado de que le lleguen al pelo de la ropa, que aquí estamos nosotras!

Amelia: Si, señora; ¡nosotras!

La bailadora: ¡Eso es!

(Todas las mujeres rodean a la monja.) 1

When Lulu, one of the girls, is hit on the head by a stray rock from the street fighting, sor Teresa takes charge to bandage the wound and to comfort her. There are several men present when Lulu is hurt, but it is sor Teresa who takes the initiative. In further contrast to the nun's efficiency, Martínez Sierra portrays Ricardito, a mentally deficient young man who is made fun of by the others. Sor Teresa is kind to him and tells him that she will take him to her convent where he will be cared for and where he will be taught a trade.

The fact that the men who appear in this play are customers of the house and behave as they do suggests that they are weaklings or they would not be in such a place and behaving in such a manner. Teresa's strength is in her absolute faith in God and in her belief that her ministrings and example are of extreme importance. She is neither sanctimonious in her religion nor self-righteous about the situation in which she finds herself.

¹Ibid., pp. 245-246.

She is completely human in her attitude towards the sinners around her, and believes that there is some good in everyone and that a soul is never completely lost while there is life. In this play, religion and womanhood are somehow related. No matter how low a woman has sunk, belief in God continues and the desire to practice her religion is never quite extinguished. By the end of the play, the house girls are devoutly reciting the rosary with sor Teresa, and as the curtain comes down, the madam exits piously crossing herself. She says:

Doña Tomasa: (Se oyen voces de mujeres que rezan.)
 ¡Pues no están esas rezando el rosario con la monja!
 ¡Pobrecillas! (Con convicción profunda.) Es lo que yo digo. Una puede llegar a ser lo que sea, pero tiene una religión, porque es una mujer, y se ha criado como Dios manda, y no estos sinvergüenzas de hombres que no tiene el diablo por donde desecharlos. (Se santigua devotamente y entra por la puerta del fondo.)¹

With few and minor exceptions, the strong characters in the Martínez Sierra theatre are women. The strong women types are generally divided into three classes: the authoratitive and dictatorial mother, the self-sufficient heroine and the woman of the lower classes who is forced by circumstances to support not only her children, but sometimes her husband as well.

The strong women and weak men in these plays are victims of circumstances. The mother is strong as a defense mechanism. She rebels against, and at the same time

¹Ibid., p. 257.

promulgates, the tradition of woman's social inferiority. She does not want her daughter highly educated or in competition with men professionally. The Church has taught her to instill in her children certain religious principles and to do otherwise would endanger their immortal souls. She preaches to the sons and is overly-protective with them in the hope of making the model Catholics of them that her husband is not. Her domination of the boys often results in señoritismo. Her attempt to control the daughters, on the other hand, seems to result in a ladylike rebellion and a healthy desire for independence.

The heroine is symbolical of the changing times that resulted in beneficial progress for women. It was becoming more and more common for women to demand an education equal to man's and to compete with him in business and professional life. This heroine, who has the spirit and the intellect to compete, is often seen in contrast with the señorito or the don Juan. A superior woman is consistently contrasted with a man of average or less than average character and abilities so it is easy for her to seem especially strong.

APPENDIX
PLAY PLOTS

TEATRO DE ENSUEÑO

This is a collection of works of fantasy that do not lend themselves to stage presentation but are written in dramatic form. The first is called Por el sendero florido and deals with harsh reality on an idealized and lyric plane. While Dinco is traveling through Spain with his little family circus, his wife dies of hunger and fatigue. Dinco refuses to admit that she is dead and says that she has merely fallen asleep. The hatred of the people, who believe that she has died of the plague, drives them to set fire to the cart in which Dinco is carrying his wife's body. When Dinco's father finally convinces him that his wife must be buried, she is laid to rest tenderly with her curls covering her face so that the dirt will not touch it. The father tells Dinco not to cry because his wife would not have wanted it. She would have wanted her love to console him.

The second play is a pastoral and is another tale of fantasy. The grandfather, Eudoro, a shepherd, tells his grandson, Alcino, that the Sun Queen (la reina Sol)

has eyes as blue as the skies and hair that is like shining gold. She represents happiness to Alcino and he sets out in search of her. He passes the door of Rosa María, who is in the doorway spinning and singing. When she learns Alcino's mission, she decides to accompany him. They find the kingdom of spring where they are told that the sun queen can be found only by letting her find them. Later Alcino is told that the Sun Queen is in the grape, in the foam, in the red wine. In spite of Rosa María's pleas, Alcino rushes off and is heard to say, "Viva la vida." In the epilogue, Alcino is once again in his hut. Rosa María had found him delirious and had brought him home. When Alcino awakens and looks at Rosa María, he realizes that she is the Sun Queen. She tells him that she is man's companion but once in life and that she would have stayed with him for life if he had recognized her but that his pride had not allowed him to see her. She then disappears.

The third section is called Cuentos de labios en flor. Two sisters, Blanca y Rosalina, love each other very much and are attracted to the same boy, Pablo, a painter. In the course of the conversation that each has with Pablo while he is painting her, each believes herself to be the favorite and therefore the reason of the sister's unhappiness. Each feels that she should die to solve the problem of the other sister so when they go swimming together, each goes under the waterfall never to return, not

knowing what the other sister has done. From the top of the hill, Pablo calls them but only the river knows where they are.

VIDA Y DULZURA 1908

This play unfolds in the house of don Tomas, a university professor whose wife, Gertrudis, shares his enthusiasm for scientific investigation. Their daughter, Marcela, in spite of her attendance at the philosophical tertulias of her parents, has interests normal for a twenty-year-old-girl. Her parents hope that she will marry Dr. Dalmau, a member of their intellectual group, but Marcela finds him unattractive and prefers a handsome young fellow of her own choosing, Enrique. When her aunt Julia, a vivacious and modern young woman, arrives to spend a few days of rest in the country, things begin to happen. Although Julia is a scholar in her own right, she disapproves of the sterile type of erudition she finds and wants to replace it with life and joy. She helps Marcela by making some subtle changes in the outlook of the men. By the final curtain, Dr. Dalmau has realized that he and Marcela are not well matched and one supposes that she will be able to marry Enrique without great opposition from her family.

JUVENTUD, DIVINO TESORO 1908

This play centers around the attractions that various members of a family feel for one another and the conflicts that are subsequently produced. Emilio, an aging don Juan, feels that he has at last found his true love in Clara, his eighteen year old niece. Clara is very naive and inexperienced and allows herself to be talked into believing that she loves Emilio in return. Suddenly, Pedro, Clara's cousin, appears for a visit. He is very much attracted to Clara and succeeds in winning her away from their uncle by telling her that youth should be wed to youth. Doña Marianita, Clara's mother and Emilio's sister, tries to get Emilio to forget his own troubles by adjusting to his age and by using his energies and influence to help others.

HECHIZO DE AMOR 1908

is a representation supposedly by marionettes and deals with love. Columbine gets a magic potion from Polichinelle that is to make her poet husband, Pierrot, forget the beauties of nature so that his mind and passions may turn to her. The magic fails when in Pierrot's mind, Columbine is classified as a beauty of nature. Columbine turns to Harlequin, who adores her, for distraction. When Pierrot sees them together, love works its own magic to bring him to his senses. Pierrette, Columbine's maid and confident

explains to Polichinelle that love is sacred and eternally simple and does not respond to artificial stimulants. Love is cured by love and disdain with disdain. As the magician makes his exit, the lovers begin a slow and stately dance.

LA SOMBRA DEL PADRE 1909

Don José, the father, has just returned from America where he had gone several years before to make his fortune. Before going, he had been poor and had left with the hope of bettering the economic and social status of his family. During his absence, he has faithfully sent his wife money to support her and the children. Now, with the return of the indiano, the family is very well situated financially and while the children are aware of the sacrifices he has made for them, they do not love him as a father. In fact they are ashamed of his rough manners and would not be sad if business were to call him away for another dozen years. Don José realizes that he has been so intent on providing his children with the material necessities that they have grown up lacking in spiritual values. They have missed that particular brand of discipline, direction and affection that only a father can give. He decides, therefore, to yield to the requests of his wife that he remain with the family.

EL AMA DE CASA 1910

After many years of being a widower, don Felix marries Carlota, a thirty-four-year-old widow. After the death of his first wife, his sister-in-law, doña Genovena, had come to care for the children and the house. She is most unhappy to see her position usurped by another woman, especially by one who has worked to make a living. The daughters, Laura and Gloria, resent Carlota greatly but the son, Ricardo, observes that she brings order where before there was none. Carlota tries to teach the girls to dress attractively and to use make-up to advantage for she sees that doña Genovena has not taught them these things. She tries to win them with patience and kindness, but when she sees that these methods have failed, she resorts to more direct ones. With the approval of her husband, she shows that she is the mistress of the house and of the situation by taking over the responsibility of part of her husband's business and by assuming the rights of a mother. She makes Gloria wash the make-up from her face and changes her hair style to one more appropriate to her age. Laura, the other daughter, has tried to elope with her sweetheart, Pepe, but the latter, not approving of her plan, has told it to Carlota. With understanding and common sense, she tells her husband to go to get Laura and not to lecture her. Ricardo, meanwhile, who has never known a mother, believes that he has fallen in love with

his stepmother. Carlota tells him that he is in love with clean clothes and the idea of having a mother. She advises her husband to send him to Belgium for a year or two to study mechanics, thinking that the problem can best be solved by a separation. The play ends on the optimistic note that Carlota will be able to create a home where liberty and confidence abound and where the children will come when they need companionship or counsel.

CANCION DE CUNA 1911

A baby is left at the door of a convent and the mother asks that the nuns rear her to a more honorable life than she has had. To satisfy civil law and the rules of the convent, the doctor adopts the baby and then gives her to the nuns to educate. During the seventeen years that Teresa is in the convent, she has not just one mother but a community of them who care for her, love her and feel that they are true mothers. Sor Juana, however, is the mother to whom Teresa feels closest, for she, more than the others, has cared for her and understood her. When Teresa leaves the convent to marry Antonio, the nuns are heartbroken but are satisfied that she has no vocation and that her choice is a happy one. When Teresa has left, the nuns must return to their more conventional lives. They file sadly but resolutely into the chapel, except for sor Juana, who is left crying alone on stage as the curtain falls.

PRIMAVERA EN OTOÑO 1911

The action of the first act takes place in Madrid where Elena, a famous singer lives. When Agustina had been born eighteen years before, Elena had sung to her and had become aware of her musical talent. She left don Enrique, her husband, and Agustina in favor of a musical career. Agustina is now trying to reunite her parents because she is engaged to Manolo, whose father became a priest after the death of his mother and who disapproves of the marriage unless Agustina's parents are reconciled. Elena says that it would not be possible to live with Enrique now for they couldn't even make their marriage work when they were young and in love. Elena does, however, accept an invitation to spend a few weeks with Agustina and her husband for she is between singing engagements. Both she and Enrique love each other but are too proud to confess it. During this period, Manolo shows his ill humor when Juan Manuel, a young diplomat friend of Elena's, comes to visit. When it is time for Juan Manuel to report to his new assignment, he asks Agustina, who has broken off with Manolo, to marry him and she accepts. When Elena discovers a book of clippings about her that Enrique has collected over the years, she realizes that he still loves her. She cries for the years that they have lost and she and Enrique happily plan for their "primavera en otoño."

EL PALACIO TRISTE 1911

This is the fantastic tale of three princes who are bored with their lessons, a young princess who favors reality to fantasy and a queen who prefers being a mother to being a monarch. The mother, Teodora, is very sad because her daughter, Marta, has disappeared. Teodora's father, the king, has had a statue constructed of the princess in the woods where she is presumed to have died. As Marta has never been found, the mother has never lost hope that her daughter is alive. She asks all beggars and travelers if they have seen the princess who disappeared three years earlier at the age of thirteen. One day, while the three princes are talking about their lost sister, the princess appears. She tells them about life outside the palace and says that she has come to take them and their mother to a little cottage where their mother may kiss them when she pleases and where they may work out of doors and go to the market with the donkey and do things in the liberty of real life.

LA SUERTE DE ISABELITA 1911

Isabelita works in a shop of artificial flowers. She is a happy girl, but she dreams of inheriting money some day so that she will not have to work so hard and so that she may see the world. One day, while she is working in the shop with her friends, it is announced that she has

won the premio gordo in the lottery. She joyfully quits work and plans to take a trip to distant lands. In the second act, Isabelita is in Switzerland on an excursion. All the passengers believe that she is the rich widow of a marqués, a belief shared by Juan, a rich Spaniard who courts her. Finally, when the money is spent, Isabelita tells Juan that she is the reverse of the story in which the shepherdess becomes a princess. Isabelita, noting Juan's disappointment, decides to return to her old job where she is truly loved and where she knows how to earn a living. She has not been working long when Juan arrives to tell her that he now realizes how much he loves her. He asks her to marry him immediately and the play ends with plans for a wedding party.

LIRIO ENTRE ESPINAS 1911

This one-act play takes place in a house of ill-repute. There is a scene of much lascivious joy that ends suddenly when the people realize that there is a revolution outside. Sor Teresa, whose convent has been burned, appears in the house. The men speak suggestively to her despite her religious dress, but she is protected by the women. She takes care of the sick and wounded that seek refuge in the house. All believe that she is an angel that has fallen from the sky. She is the lily among thorns.

EL POBRECITO JUAN 1912

Juan and Mariana have been reared almost as brother and sister. On Mariana's twentieth birthday, Juan tells her he is in love with her. She answers that for the moment, she is in love with no one, but that when she falls in love, it will be with a man she considers stronger and smarter than she. Mariana is not long in finding such a man, but before she becomes formally engaged, Juan has attempted to kill himself by leaping from the sea wall. As Juan says, he can't even commit suicide successfully. Mariana and Antonio, her future husband, tell Juan that he must accompany them to America where he will be the Godfather of their first son, for Mariana loves him too and could not be happy without him.

MADAME PEPITA 1912

Madame Pepita is the story of a dressmaker in Madrid whose bigamist Russian husband abandoned her shortly after their marriage to return to his inheritance and Russian wife. Their daughter, Catalina, has been reared fatherless but decently by Madame Pepita who has built up a successful business. When word comes that Catalina's father has died and left them a sizeable fortune, count Luis, a former employer of Madame Pepita's family, wishes to marry his son, Augusto, to Catalina for her money. Although titled, he is penniless. Don Guillermo, an

academician who loves Catalina as his own daughter, is willing to marry Madame Pepita to be near the daughter. He later favors Catalina's choice of a husband, a talented but poor artist, over Pepita's choice, the viscount. As the curtain comes down, love has conquered all: Catalina will marry her artist; don Guillermo and Pepita have discovered that more exists between them than love for Catalina, the worthless Augusto will probably marry his equally worthless but beloved Galatea.

MAMÁ 1912

In this drama of Spanish middle-class society, Mercedes has married an older man who treats her like a child rather than like a wife and mother. The two children, José María and Cecilia adore their mother and believe her to be the most beautiful and elegant woman in the world. Both children have spent most of their lives in boarding schools so Mercedes has buried herself in social activities to occupy her time. One night, to relieve her boredom she gambled, and had to borrow money from Alfonso, a don Juan type, to pay her debts. At a large party given for Cecilia, Alfonso tries unsuccessfully to begin a flirtation with Mercedes, who believes that he takes the liberty because she owes him money. She is unable to borrow the money from her irresponsible father, who also has his gambling debts and who lives

with her, and she cannot ask her husband for the money because recently he has complained of exorbitant expenses. When José María finds out about his mother's situation, he writes a check on his father's account to cover his mother's debt and tells his father that it was to pay a gambling debt of his own. Santiago believes that Mercedes has asked her son to lie to get the money for her father and tells Mercedes that the children must be removed from her damaging influence. Mercedes, who has felt herself to be a real mother for the first time when she defended her daughter against the unscrupulous Alfonso, tells Santiago that he has never permitted her to be a real mother and that if she was a frivolous woman, that it was his fault. Santiago realizes his mistake and asks Mercedes' forgiveness.

LA TIRANA 1913

La Tirana, who sings and dances in a cheap music hall, has acquired her title because of her tempestuous personality and great independence. When don Fernando, a millionaire, courts her, she misunderstands and believes that he does not respect her because she is a working girl. She decides to go with another dancer to Russia for she believes that she will be able to better herself there. She leaves don Fernando and her other friends without any explanation. In Russia a duke becomes interested in Tirana

but he also makes the mistake of trying to buy her. When Tirana rather staunchly defends her ideals in the café, she is discharged. When she is about to despair, don Fernando arrives from Spain and tells her that not only does he love her, but that he wants to marry her. Tirana, thinking of her coming marriage, is happy, for her idealism has won out. She will live honorably and in peace with the man who loves her and whom she too has come to love.

SOLO PARA MUJERES 1913

This is a monologue and presumably a lecture given by a lady who has been a victim of love. She humorously recounts her three marriages: the first to an adolescent, the second to an orderly man and the third to a celebrity. While she is warning women not to marry, she is attracted to a male member of the audience who sends her flowers and a note before the end of the lecture. When the speaker reads that the gentleman would like to be her fourth and last husband, she makes a hasty exit saying that she will return in six months to finish the lecture since no husband has ever lasted longer than that.

MADRIGAL 1913

Ana María and her grandmother are awaiting the arrival of Agustín, an artist, who has been away for two years. When he left, he and his cousin Ana María had been sweethearts but after a time, Agustín had stopped writing.

In order not to sadden their grandmother, who has a heart condition, Ana María has written letters and told the grandmother that they were from Agustín. When he and Ana María are alone, he tells her that he has fallen in love with another woman, an artist's model, who is quite different from her. Although Ana María suffers because she still loves Agustín, she hides her feelings and tells him that she too has changed with time. In spite of his claim that he does not love Ana María, he becomes angry when he learns of a young poet's interest in her. When Carmelina, Agustín's lover, comes to look for Agustín, Ana María tells her that he is working and cannot be disturbed. When she finally sends for Agustín and he enters, he is worried because Ana María and Carmelina have met. To get rid of the latter, he tells her that he will pack and meet her later. He realizes that he still loves Ana María and they make plans to marry immediately.

EL ENAMORADO 1913

In this one-act play, a man has avoided tragedy by catching the queen in his arms when she was thrown from her carriage. The queen, who is now forty years old, had noticed that for years this man had been present at the royal processions, so when she invites him in to thank him for saving her life, she asks how it is that she has seen him so much. He answers that he has always made it a point

to be present at her public appearances, even if it meant making a trip to India or to the United States. At one time, he had been a wealthy factory owner but he lost his business because he spent so much money on trips. Now he has a humble position in the same factory, but he doesn't mind because he has more time to be close to the queen. The queen, very impressed, offers her protector a jeweled brooch which he refuses for its material value. Instead, he asks for a railroad pass so that he may be able to watch over his beloved queen on any future trips.

LOS PASTORES 1913

Among the flock of the old priest, don Antonio, is Lucía, an ignorant girl who has never been outside of this village of Castile where she was born. She falls in love with the mayor's son and compromises herself, as the doctor says, "por comer los garbanzos antes de las doce." Don Antonio arranges for an immediate wedding while he prepares his house for its new occupant, a young priest who looks very elegant in his new sacerdotal garments. All the parishioners are impressed with the artistic and aristocratic bearing of the young priest and forget the true beauty of the life and good works of their faithful don Antonio who has served them for thirty years.

LA MUJER DEL HEROE 1914

Although Mariana is married to José María and they have three children, she supports the family with her ironing shop. José María, who can think of nothing but flying, is the hero of the moment because he has just won a contest in his plane. He is the center of public attention and is the honoré at banquets. Soon the daily fare of fish and potatoes becomes unbearable to José María and he seems to lose interest in his wife and home. In looking through his clothes for a possible explanation for José María's attitude, Mariana finds the picture of an attractive young girl. When Mariana asks him about her, José María stammers that she is just a flying fan and that he is going to give her lessons that afternoon. When the girl, Juliet, arrives to get her instructor, Mariana informs her that her husband will not fly that day. José María feels he must go anyway, even in the face of Mariana's ultimatum that he may not return if he leaves. Several days of unhappiness ensue because neither wants to make the first move toward a reconciliation. Finally, when José María pretends to be hurt, Mariana comes to him and all is forgiven.

LA PASION 1914

Isabel is a famous actress following in the tradition of her mother, who was also a famous actress. She

has grown up fatherless due to her mother's youthful indiscretion, but she has had the protection and love of Pascual, a family friend who has always been devoted to her mother. Isabel begins the repetition of her mother's sad story when she falls in love with Alfredo, a young man from a good family but with no money of his own, and who shows his selfishness with every word and gesture. In the second act, two years have passed and Isabel, who now has a small daughter, is about to take one of the major roles of her career. A friend tells her that Alfredo is about to marry the homely daughter of a wealthy political leader. When Alfredo confirms the news and suggests that there is no reason to change their relationship, Isabel sends him away and tries to destroy herself and her daughter by jumping from the balcony. Pascual's timely entrance stops her. He is able to convince her that there is no time for tears now for the show must go on.

AMANECEER 1915

In Amanecer, Carmen's father, a political figure, feels the necessity to flee to escape persecution and Carmen, her mother and her sister are forced to reduce drastically their standard of living. Mariano, who had shown an interest in Carmen in more prosperous times, accepts an interesting job offer in Africa. Julián, the wealthy bachelor for whom Carmen works, loves her and wants to marry

her even though she does not love him. After three years of marriage to Julián, Mariano returns and tells Carmen that he has always loved her. The illusion of love for Mariano that Carmen had carried is destroyed when she sees him in comparison to Julián. When Julián interrupts the conversation between Mariano and Carmen, he suspects the worst and tells Carmen later that his business has failed. He will have to start all over again and tells Carmen that she is free to go. Carmen feels that her marriage to Julián is just now beginning and she tells him that at last she knows how much she loves him. She happily sets about to straighten the books and help her husband regain his business.

EL REINO DE DIOS 1915

The title is symbolic of the celestial happiness that Sor Gracia hopes to create for the world's miserable. In the first act, Sor Gracia is nineteen and is assigned to an old people's home. She is surrounded by the helpless and sick who have no place to go. For her, charity is not enough; she feels obligated to give her own life as an offering to the unfortunate and to God.

In the second act, ten years have elapsed and Sor Gracia is serving in a maternity home for unwed mothers. While she is there, the doctor, Enrique, falls in love with her and begs her to leave this life to serve humanity at

his side. Sor Gracia is too human not to feel temptation when Enrique speaks of a life softened by mutual respect and love so she asks to be transferred. She refuses to allow herself this luxury of worldly love.

In the third act, Sor Gracia, in the twilight of her career, is in an orphanage. An orphan who has grown up to become a bullfighter returns to offer his mother, Sor Gracia, his best gift: the bloody ear of a bull. When the children rebel because of the poor food and want to rob, Sor Gracia tells them that they must remedy the evils of the world with their good works and that in this way they can help to create this kingdom of God on earth.

NAVIDAD 1916

This work is a miracle play in three scenes and is presented with accompaniment. The first scene takes place in the nave of a Gothic cathedral. Midnight Mass has ended and through the haze of incense, a representation of the holy family is seen. Presently, the Virgin gets up, takes her baby and goes out to the street followed by her court of angels. She goes to a very poor neighborhood and seeks out the people who have not remembered her son or who have not had the chance to know him. Meanwhile, the disappearance of the statues has been noted and a priest comes looking for them. He begs them all to come back to the church where all the faithful hope to see them the following day. The Virgin, in

a symbolic act, hands over her baby to the poor people and returns with her court to the cathedral.

PARA HACERSE AMAR LOCAMENTE 1917

Two sisters, Paquita and Amalia live with their uncle and aunt because their parents have died. Amalia is a pretty but empty-headed young lady who sings in a musical comedy and who imagines herself in love with Roberto, a young man who has a way with women and an eye for them all. Paquita is not pretty, but she is an intelligent, serious-minded young girl whose problem is that she loves Isidoro, who has a crush on Amalia. When Amalia's uncle threatens to prevent her seeing Roberto, she and he escape to Granada together but are pursued shortly by Paquita and Isidoro who arrive just in time to salvage her honor. That night, Isidoro stumbles upon Paquita practicing some black magic that she hopes will help to win Isidoro's love. When he realizes that Paquita loves him, he feels that he is very fortunate and asks her to marry him. Amalia, meanwhile, has decided that Roberto is not the kind of man she wants to marry.

LA ADULTERA PENITENTE 1917

Teodora, Natalio's wife, tempted and encouraged by the devil, commits an act of infidelity with Filipo. Immediately she feels profoundly remorseful and to do penance, she dresses herself as a monk and lives a humble

and contemplative life in a community of friars. Natalio goes crazy and looks everywhere with the intention of killing Teodora and thereby cleansing his honor. Meanwhile, Flora falls in love with Teodora believing her to be a friar and to avenge her rejection, she tells the abbot that the supposed friar is the father of her child and had promised to marry her. Teodora is then expelled from the convent and is forced to live in the forest in a cave. She meets there by chance her husband, who does not recognize her, and in whom she is able to inspire Christian pardon. She tells him that he will see his wife in front of the convent when the bells ring. In the meantime she has also been able to convert her seducer. On the following day, Natalio comes to the convent door to be reunited with his wife but finds her dying. The angels that have come to take her to heaven order that the convent doors be opened. The abbot sees that Teodora is a woman so she is cleared of Flora's accusation.

ESPERANZA NUESTRA 1917

Carmita and Lorenzo, the grown children of don Carlos, a wealthy landowner, find to their distress that they have been able to live in luxury because the workers of the land, who are responsible for the wealth, have been paid only enough to exist. They also find that they have a half-sister, Rosario, who has not been claimed as such

by their father for fear of a scandal. Lorenzo succeeds in getting his father to agree to certain reforms for the workers and Rosario, after an amorous conflict, is welcomed into the family. Doña Isabelita, the staunch conservative mother of don Carlos, can only disgustedly bemoan the various turns of events.

ROSINA ES FRAGIL 1918

Rosina is a romantic and rather giddy young lady who has not learned the art of saying "no" and who turns to her young uncle, who is really her mother's cousin and godchild, for help in getting her out of the difficult situations in which she finds herself. When he tells her that he had no right to discourage her suitors, the idea that she should give him that right by marrying him occurs to her. The thought that she loves him happily occurs to her simultaneously and since the uncle corresponds, the play ends on a note of joy.

CADA UNO Y SU VIDA 1919

Carolina, the wife of a famous doctor, is upset by the independence of her children. Her son, Carlos, is in love with Irene, a fellow medical student, who, in spite of her brilliant record, is not her son's equal in Carolina's eyes because she is from a poor family. Carolina's daughter, Luz, also prefers the independence of

a profession over marriage to a man not of her selection. Carolina makes her disapproval of Irene's and Carlos' marriage very apparent, but the young people love each other and plan to marry. When Carlos writes his father a note telling him that he will come to talk things over with him, the doctor is happy that his children have such confidence in him. He is sympathetic to their ideas and does not share his wife's extreme conservatism.

EL CORAZON CIEGO 1919

When María Luisa is twenty, she secretly meets Octavio, a married man to whom she is attracted. When circumstances make Octavio fear that he will be compromised, he abandons María Luisa who then calls her brother to get her. When rumors about María Luisa's escapade are whispered around town, her friends are forbidden by their mothers to see her. María Luisa's mother, who is anxious to have her married soon, prevails upon her to marry Antonio, a decent but penniless young man who sees an advantage to marrying into a wealthy family. María Luisa and Antonio go to Tangier to live. After two years, Antonio tells his wife that he has seen Octavio, who is also in Tangier by chance. When he tells her that he has invited him to lunch, María Luisa confesses that Octavio was the partner in her youthful indiscretion and that he has made previous attempts to see her which she has ignored.

Now that the past is in the open, María Luisa and Antonio feel that they have had a veil lifted from their eyes and that now they are ready to build a strong marriage with mutual love and respect.

SUEÑO DE UNA NOCHE DE AGOSTO 1920

Rosario is a twenty-three-year-old young lady who lives with her grandmother and three brothers. She very much favors the equality of the sexes and would like to work, but her more conservative brothers think that she should aspire to marry well and live a more traditional woman's life. One night while she is reading one of the sentimental novels that she likes so much, a hat blows into the room. When a man appears to claim it, he notices the book that Rosario is reading and writes her a letter of introduction to the author, who is, by coincidence, looking for a new secretary. When voices announce the return of the brothers, the stranger disappears as he had appeared: through the window.

When Rosario goes to apply for the secretarial position, she finds out that the stranger is the author she had admired so much, but is disillusioned about him when she witnesses a scene between him and a chorus girl with whom he had made a date. In spite of his pleas that she be his new secretary, Rosario refuses because she is hurt and angry. When she leaves, the author sits down to write a novel that he will call, "Sueño de una noche de agosto."

In the third act, while Rosario and the grandmother are saying the rosary to help pass the time, a hat comes through the window. The servant, María, throws a statue of a dog through the window that hits the author and owner of the hat on the head. He is brought into the house and is bandaged. The grandmother serves chocolate to the author and to Rosario and then conveniently falls asleep to allow them to make up their quarrel and make plans to marry.

DON JUAN DE ESPAÑA 1921

In seven independent scenes, don Juan is pictured, and in each scene, he is in a different place.

In the first scene, as in the first scene of El burlador de Seville, Juan is in Italy, conquering a woman who had hoped to save her love for another man. In the second scene, he is in Flanders where he drives an innocent girl crazy. In the third scene, he is in Paris where the traditional feast of boeuf Gras is being celebrated. Among the women conquered in this scene is his servant's wife, who is more interested in money and in love than in her husband. In the fourth scene, Juan returns to Spain where he shows his villany and cowardice in an encounter with his own illegitimate daughter. In the fourth act, Juan goes to the cemetery to keep an appointment with the dama velada, who has pursued him for years. After several attempts to embrace the mysterious and ethereal lady, he

falls to the ground as though dead. The lady disappears and with the dawn, a country girl finds him and succeeds in cheering him. In the sixth act, Juan sees the dama velada again. This time she takes her veil off to reveal the skeleton of death. She tells him that she is not ready to take him yet and will come when he least expects her. In the seventh and last scene, Juan has repented of his past life and lives among beggars and lepers. He is wounded trying to stop a knife fight between two beggars. He dies with his head on the lap of a virtuous young girl who asks God to receive Juan into heaven and offers her own soul in payment.

EL IDEAL 1921

María Luisa, her fiancé Antonio, and her family are anxiously awaiting the visit of their newly crowned twenty-year-old king who has just returned from years of exile. All have been taught to revere him and to believe that no sacrifice is too great to make for him. When he arrives, María Luisa and all present realize that the king is just a play boy and a fellow whose company they would avoid were he a commoner. The older people try to hide their disillusion to one another about the young king for their time of action is over and they need to cling to this ideal of the perfect monarch, but María Luisa, who was most shocked by the reality, will be able to build a new ideal aided by her understanding husband to be, Antonio.

MUJER 1924

Estrella is a conventional young wife who has been married for four years to Gabriel, whom she adores. When Estrella discovers that he is having an affair, she confronts him with the evidence and he admits his guilt. Since she still loves her husband and may not get a divorce, she forms a plan to win her husband back. When he returns from a three month trip, he finds many changes. The house now has a sophistication of decor and personnel that it had not had before. Estrella is dressed very stylishly and has learned to smoke. Various remarks and incidents seem to indicate to Gabriel that his wife is now in love with someone else and he is greatly disturbed. After waiting up for Estrella until dawn, he finds that she has been in her bedroom all the time. Gabriel realizes that he loves his wife and begs her to take him back. She refuses but one understands that she is only punishing him and will soon allow him to return.

TORRE DE MARFIL 1924

Teresa, a dressmaker, meets the Marqués Gabriel when she is visiting a friend. The Marqués has been dominated by his mother all his life and feels a desperate need for Teresa to love him. In the second act, several months have elapsed and Gabriel and Teresa are very much in love and very happy. Gabriel, who had been a student, has

stopped going to classes and has not seen his mother. The Marquesa finally finds her son and comes to get him. Gabriel, who has always been weak and sickly, faints when he tries to disobey his mother and is carried unconscious from the home that he and Teresa have shared. During the months that follow, Gabriel is sick and delirious and the letters that Teresa writes to him telling him that she loves him and that they have had a baby are intercepted by the Marquesa. Finally Teresa succeeds in seeing Gabriel and tells him of the letters and their contents. Gabriel feels that he is a man for the first time in his life and he decides to leave the luxury of his house to live honorably with the woman he loves and their son.

LA HORA DEL DIABLO 1930

Soledad's husband, Felipe, travels for a living so she lives with her younger sister, Carmela and in a circle of friends who love her very much. Although she is an expert swimmer, she almost drowns one afternoon and is saved by Mariano, a young friend of the family. Mariano believes that he loves Soledad though she is six years older than he. He tries to convince Soledad to accept his affection with his suggestion that Felipe is probably not suffering from loneliness wherever he is. They make plans for Mariano to come to her room that night, but meanwhile Felipe arrives home unexpectedly. Mariano sees Felipe

through the window and to escape a storm that has come up suddenly, he enters Carmela's room from the balcony. Carmela, who secretly loves Mariano, believes that he has come because he loves her. She seems to take for granted that they will be married despite no word from the stunned Mariano, who decides that this may not be a bad solution to his problem. When the happy Carmela tells Soledad the next morning about her love for Mariano, Soledad feels profoundly disillusioned for she had felt that at last she had found someone who really loved her. In a dream, Soledad hears the voice of the devil and the voice of the earth. The latter tells her that it is never too late; that Felipe still loves her and can be good if she loves him. When she hears Felipe call her, she answers that she is coming.

SEAMOS FELICES 1929

Fernanda is a young pianist who lives with her mother Matilde, a widow who believes that careers outside the home are not proper for women. Fernanda falls in love with an architect and gets married, resolving temporarily the problem of a career. Emilio, her husband, has ambition but no money, so when Fernanda is suddenly presented with the opportunity to make a financially rewarding concert tour, she feels that Emilio will be very happy. She tells him that they can go together and have a wonderful time,

but Emilio is proud and will not allow her to accept the offer. They have an argument and Emilio leaves saying that he will not come back. Meanwhile, Matilde's childhood sweetheart has returned quite wealthy from America and begins to court her again. That night, while they are dining with Fernanda, Emilio returns and asks Fernanda's pardon and allows her to give the concerts.

TRIANGULO 1930

Faustino and Diana are in a luxury steamer on their honeymoon and are very much in love. On board, Diana meets Astrid, a single girl to whom she lends for twenty-four hours a ring that her husband had given her. The first act ends with a shipwreck in which the women are separated from the men to go first in the lifeboats. In the second act, four years have passed and Faustino, believing that Diana has died because the body with his ring was found, has married Marcela. Suddenly Diana appears, explaining that she has spent these years in Africa with a tribe of negroes who considered her a kind of goddess. She has gotten a ride back to civilization on a plane that had been forced to make an emergency landing in her area of the jungle. Faustino loves both women and realizes that there is no solution to his problem so he packs his bags and leaves. When he hears Diana following him, he jumps from the stage and sits in a chair in the audience thus eliminating himself from the play and its problem. Diana and the audience realize that the play is over.

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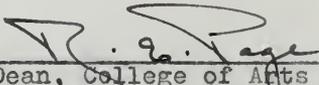
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Patricia Walker O'Connor was born April 26, 1931 in Memphis, Tennessee. She graduated from St. Petersburg High School in 1949 and attended the University of Havana and Florida State University prior to her coming to the University of Florida in 1951. She received her B. A. E. in February of 1953 and her M. A. in January of 1954. She taught Spanish and Latin at Santa Fe High School, Alachua, Florida, before returning to the University to work full time on her doctorate. She is married to David E. O'Connor, who received his Ph. D. in chemistry from the University of Florida in 1961, and has two children, Michael Peter and Erin Anne. She lives in Cincinnati, Ohio where she teaches Spanish language and literature at the University of Cincinnati.

This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the chairman of the candidate's supervisory committee and has been approved by all members of that committee. It was submitted to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

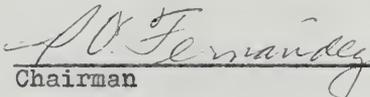
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