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4

EDUARDO LÓPEZ BAGO: "RADICAL NATURALISM" AND THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN HIS NOVELS

by

SHARON L. REEVES

VOLUME I

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1998

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

EDUARDO LÓPEZ BAGO: "RADICAL NATURALISM"

AND THE

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN HIS NOVELS

by

Sharon L. Reeves

Adviser: Professor Andrés Franco

This dissertation acknowledges and examines the literary, social and ideological contributions of Eduardo López Bago (1853 or 1854-1931), a Spanish naturalist novelist virtually unknown today, but who distinguished himself as a popular and controversial late nineteenth-century secondary writer. His seventeen naturalist novels published between 1884 and 1895 expose and denounce the worst human vices and societal injustices in: politics, prostitution, the penal system, bullfighting, the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the Catholic Church. López Bago's novels earned him commercial success, severe criticism and censure. His descriptions of the sordid and repugnant, and his provocatively erotic novels satisfied the literary tastes of certain sectors of the reading population, but offended the Establishment's sense of decency and good taste in literature.

The Introduction includes the "Status of Bibliographical Studies Published on López Bago in the Twentieth Century," and Chapter I details the author's life and career. The remaining

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chapters address the dissertation's two primary objectives.

Chapter II defines and characterizes "Radical Naturalism," López Bago's literary and ideological interpretation of Zola's doctrine. As Zola's most avowed advocate in Spain, López Bago was, perhaps, the first Spaniard to purposely endeavor to denounce his contemporaries' eclectic interpretation of Naturalism in favor of the complete acceptance of a very polemic doctrine of foreign origin.

Chapters III and IV are devoted to an analysis of "La prostituta," the novelist's tetralogy against professional female prostitution. The tetralogy documents the progressive physical, moral and psychological degeneration of the two protagonists, innocent young women incapable of defending themselves against the toxic forces in their environment. Chapter III focuses on Estrella Sánchez, the proletarian heroine of the first two novels: La prostituta (1884) and La Pálida (1885); Chapter IV concerns Rosita Pérez, the heroine from the lower middle class and the protagonist of the remaining novels: La buscona (1885) and La querida (1886). In keeping with López Bago's reformative mission, the tetralogy underscores the necessity of formal education and updated vocational training for women, especially those from the lower strata, and calls for a radical transformation in society's misperceptions and mistreatment of proletarian and "fallen" women.

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an undergraduate student inspired my specialization in this area. I am also grateful to her for her continued support and friendship over the years.

The assistance I received from the staffs of the following libraries was invaluable in the preparation of my thesis: the British Library in London; the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid; the Research Library of the New York Public Library at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street in Manhattan; the Benjamin Rosenthal Library at Queens College; and the Mina Rees Library at the CUNY Graduate School and University Center. I am especially indebted to two members of the Mina Rees Library staff: former Inter-Library Loan Librarian, Ms. Amy Beth, and her assistant, Ms. Jane Pollack—who both went beyond the call of duty in diligently fulfilling my numerous requests for library loans and computer searches with humor and good cheer.

I am blessed with many dear friends, family members and former classmates who each in his or her own unique way was always present to offer advice and lend emotional support. There are not words to adequately express the depth of my gratitude and appreciation to my beloved parents, Helen and Johnnie, who have, throughout my life, always lovingly encouraged me in all my endeavors. It is to them that I dedicate this dissertation with all my love.

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INTRODUCTION

The primary purposes of this dissertation are to:

1. define and characterize "Radical Naturalism," Eduardo López Bago's literary and ideological interpretation of Emile Zola's doctrine;
2. examine the role of women in late nineteenth-century Spanish society, as represented in "La prostituta," his tetralogy against professional female prostitution.

The four novels are titled: La prostituta (1884), La Pálida (1885), La buscona (1885), and La querida (1886).

Before directing our attention to the novels, I propose to inform on the life and career of Eduardo López Bago (1853 or 1854-1931), an author whose contributions remain virtually unknown today.

Eduardo López Bago was one of late nineteenth-century Spain's most prolific, popular and controversial secondary writers. Between 1876 and 1911, he published—in Spain and Latin America—at least forty-two known works, including: short stories, essays, poems, lectures, reviews, translations, newspaper and magazine articles, a novelette, and eighteen novels.[1] It was, however, the publication of his first naturalist novels in the mid-1880s which brought him

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commercial success, severe criticism, and even censure. His descriptions of the sordid and repugnant, and his provocatively erotic novels satisfied the literary taste of certain sectors of the reading population, but offended the Establishment's sense of decency and good taste in literature.

In the seventeen novels he published between 1884 and 1895 and subtitled "novelas sociales" and "novelas médico-sociales," or "novela política" (El periodista), López Bago set out to expose and denounce the worst human vices: lust, greed, cruelty, indolence, deceit, hypocrisy, corruption, cowardice, selfishness, materialism, alcoholism, and abnormal sexuality. He found these and other abuses to be pervasive in: the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, the Catholic Church, capitalism, politics, prostitution, white slavery, the penal system, and even bullfighting. López Bago was a social crusader; a sympathetic yet aggressive voice for the undefended and forgotten lower classes, and for the ostracized members of society—prisoners and prostitutes. He was especially drawn to the wretched plight of working class women who confronted adversity and overwhelming obstacles in a daily struggle for survival.

The 1880s witnessed the culmination of one of the most intense polemics in Spanish literary history: the controversy over the validity of Emile Zola's imported literary doctrine, Naturalism. The great debate bitterly divided Spanish intellectuals into two opposing camps: the "anti-

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naturalists"— like Alarcón, Pereda, and Valera—who condemned the new doctrine for representing, as they believed, atheistic and pornographic literature; and the "pro-naturalists" or mitigated naturalists—writers like Pardo Bazán, Clarín, Palacio Valdés, and Galdós—who remained open-minded and receptive to accepting certain aspects of Naturalism while rejecting others.

López Bago's contribution to the study of the naturalist movement in Spain reveals the existence of a scarcely known countercurrent which paralleled the development of traditional Spanish Naturalism. He coined his new doctrine "Radical Naturalism"; and, in effect, it constituted a dramatic break with the mitigated Naturalism of the major Spanish writers. López Bago criticized traditional Spanish Naturalism for being, in his view, unauthentic. Instead, he advocated the complete acceptance and application of French Naturalism, especially Zola's theories and techniques. He conceived a form of Naturalism which is theoretically aggressive, rebellious and militant. He proposed to use his "Radical Naturalism" as a weapon; not only to expose and combat human and societal evils, but also as an attack against his ideological enemies—idealist and romantic novelists who avoid, disguise, or embellish truth and reality, especially Alarcón and Valera.

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The Status of Bibliographical Studies Published on López Bago in the Twentieth Century

Most contemporary scholars of the Spanish Restoration novel of the 1880s and 1890s remain unaware of the existence of Eduardo López Bago. This fact is not surprising since, for the greater part of the present century, conventional critics and literary historians have excluded López Bago from serious scholarly consideration. He received, for example, only cursory attention from early twentieth-century literary historians who essentially dismissed him for representing—in their judgement—a bad imitation of the most unacceptable aspects of Zola's ideology.

In 1918 Julio Cejador y Frauca[2] referred to López Bago as a "fecundo fabricante de novelones, en los últimos veinte años del siglo XIX, que él llamó estudios médicosociales, en los que pretendió imitar á Zola, pero solo en los defectos" (235). In their Historia de la literatura española,[3] authors Juan Hurtado Jiménez de la Serna and Angel González Palencia wrote that the novelist "trató de imitar a Zola en sus aspectos menos artísticos" (900). The entry on the novelist in Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada[4] states: "... aparte de algunas hermosas descripciones, se nota el deseo de imitar á Zola, no consiguiéndolo sino en sus defectos."

Although he makes no reference to Zola, Andrés González Blanco's[5] 1909 review of López Bago is extremely negative, and

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even condescending: "Con la novela de López Bago, supuesto bacteriólogo social ... me ocurre lo que á Pio IX con la civilización moderna y los progresos del siglo: "Poitus mori quam foedari ('Antes morir que pactar')" (703). González Blanco compares López Bago to Abel Botelho, a Portuguese novelist who wrote a series of novels with the subtitle, "Pathología social"; similar to López Bago's "médico-sociales." In a footnote, González Blanco adds: "Con todo, Abel Botelho tiene bastante más instinto de observación, mucho más talento é infinitas más dotes de novelista que el bueno y lamentable López Bago ..." (703).

Other literary historians have excluded the novelist entirely. No mention of López Bago can be found in many of the standard manuals on the history of Spanish literature; even in those written by such authorities as Angel Del Río,[6] Emiliano Díez-Echarri,[7] José García López,[8] Emilio González López,[9] and Angel Valbuena Prat.[10] López Bago's absence from these texts is not attributable to his status as a secondary writer; for, interestingly enough, sections on three of the novelist's more conservative colleagues—the Jesuit priest Luis Coloma, José Ortega Munilla and Jacinto Octavio Picón—are included in the authors' chapters on Realism and Naturalism.[11] López Bago's reputation as an author of scandalous Zolaesque novels, combined with the negative criticism he received by the aforementioned early twentieth-century literary historians, undoubtedly contributed to his

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unjust omission. Nevertheless, in light of his contemporaries' inclusion, López Bago's exclusion is especially misleading and detrimental to students of the Restoration novel. It leaves readers with the erroneous impression that no other expressions of merit were produced by secondary novelists of the period. Whereas citations on Coloma, Ortega Munilla and Picón offered scholars the opportunity for further research, no such exposure was made available for López Bago and other unconventional novelists.

Fortunately, López Bago's status as a disregarded secondary novelist has been challenged significantly. During the past few decades, critics and literary historians have demonstrated an increasing interest in exploring the author's contributions to late nineteenth-century Spanish literature.

Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles was one of the earliest modern scholars to champion a favorable reassessment of López Bago in his 1949 text, Ensayo de un diccionario de la literatura.[12] Although he deems Zola's influence on the novelist as "unfortunate," Sainz de Robles laments López Bago's neglected critical status and praises his artistic skills as a novelist:

> López Bago tuvo indudables cualidades de novelista: inventiva, facilidad narrativa, lenguaje fluido y propio en cada personaje, cierta sutileza de análisis en los caracteres, cierto colorido poético en las descripciones del ambiente.

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> Desdichadamente para él, se dejó ganar por la influencia de Zola—en su intento más naturalista—, y produjo obras, más que realistas, naturalistas o eróticas.
>
> Hoy apenas nadie recuerda a este fecundo escritor. Sus obras ni se reeditan ni nadie las busca. Sin embargo, hay algo de injusto en este total olvido. En las novelas de López Bago existen algunas hermosas descripciones, algunos temas de mucho interés, bastantes tipos de humanidad. (636)

Another early reference to López Bago appeared in Gifford Davis' 1956 article, "The 'Coletilla' to Pardo Bazán's Cuestión Palpitante,"[13] which traces the development of the polemic over Naturalism in Spain in four leading newspapers (La Epoca, El Imparcial, El Progreso, and La Ilustración Española y Americana). Davis reports on López Bago's journalistic contribution in the discussion on Idealism; based on his article, "Naturalistas e idealistas," published in El Progreso on March 3, 1884. Although he identifies López Bago as a "journalist and minor imitator of the novels of Zola" (53), Davis brings to light López Bago's active journalistic involvement in the debate over Idealism versus Naturalism.

In 1969 Walter Pattison published his acknowledged classic, El naturalismo español: Historia externa de un movimiento literario.[14] As an indispensable source of information for the study of the development of Naturalism in

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Spain, Pattison's work succeeded in maximizing the exposure of López Bago to a more modern generation of scholars, receptive to the author as a subject of study.

Pattison contributes several important, heretofore, little known facts about the author; he informs, for example, on López Bago's: 1. translation of Alphonse Daudet's novel Sapho into Spanish (57); 2. participation in the debate between naturalists and idealists (108-09,[15] 111); 3. defense of Naturalism and interpretation of the movement as a reaction against Romanticism (120);[16] 4. career as a novelist (136-37).[17]

Like Sainz de Robles, Pattison acknowledges López Bago's neglected critical status, and also that of Alejandro Sawa, another secondary novelist: "Es significativo que sus libros no son elogiados ni aun reseñados por críticos de autoridad partidarios del movimiento" (138). Pattison was one of the first scholars to recognize López Bago and Sawa's distinct place in the history of Spanish Naturalism. Parallel to the more dominant trend of spiritual Naturalism in the mid-1880s, the two novelists stand apart, as representatives of a countercurrent which attests to the bifurcation of Spanish Naturalism (138, 139). Pattison also points out a fundamental characteristic of the countercurrent movement initiated by López Bago and Sawa (139): its acerbic attacks against the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, which—Pattison believes—is based upon "el socialismo humanitario de Les misérables y,

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sobre todo, de Germinal (1885)" (170).

In the 1970s, López Bago was included in several studies on nineteenth-century Spanish literature. In contrast to the conventional manuals we saw earlier, López Bago is noted in two chapter-articles from coordinator José María Díez Borque's 1974 modern manual, Historia de la literatura española. In "Características generales del siglo XIX (Burguesía y literatura),"[18] Iris Zavala recognizes how the issue concerning the use of language in literature divided Spanish naturalists into two groups: the advocates of proper language —observed by major writers like Pardo Bazán, Clarín and Galdós; and the followers of Zola—Alejandro Sawa, José de Zahonero and López Bago, who employed vulgarity in their novels for the sake of depicting linguistic authenticity in their characters from the lower classes (45-46). In "La prosa en el siglo XIX,"[19] Juan-Ignacio Ferreras provides a short introduction to López Bago and links the novelist to Blasco Ibáñez, "aunque le sea [the former] muy inferior desde el punto de vista artístico" (128). Ferreras also distinguished three categories of López Bago's anti-Establishment novels: 1. the anticlerical trilogy; 2. the novels subtitled "médico-sociales" against specific institutions; 3. the tetralogy against prostitution (128-29).

In the introduction to his 1977 book, El Naturalismo y España: Valera frente a Zola,[20] author Luis López Jiménez gives a chronological summary of naturalist novels published

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in Spain in the 1880s. In his review for the year 1884, he makes reference to López Bago and the novel, La prostituta. López Jiménez is, however, unkind in his assessment of the naturalist and his novel:

> Entre las novelas de un Naturalismo degradado de los mal inspirados imitadores de Zola, encontramos ese año La prostituta del extravagante y anticlerical médico Eduardo López Bago, cuyo escándalo fue ruidoso—trata de un marqués, propietario de cuarenta mancebías, cuyos beneficios envía al Papa en penitencia de haber causado la muerte por contagio venéreo a su mujer, entre otras cosas no menos desorbitadas—. (24)[21]

In the same year, Mercedes Etreros' excellent study, "El naturalismo español en la década 1881-1891,"[22] offered the first detailed exploration of López Bago's interpretation of Naturalism. In the section entitled "novela erótica" (112-19), Etreros groups López Bago along with Sawa and José de Zahonero—for his novel, La carnaza—as representatives of "Radical Naturalism"; or, what she prefers to call, "naturalismo erótico" (112). Based upon an examination of several novels of López Bago and Sawa, she analyzes and characterizes many of the tenets which define and distinguish this countercurrent (112-19).[23]

The 1979 publication of Juan-Ignacio Ferreras' Catálogo de novelas y novelistas del siglo XIX[24] provided scholars of

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the nineteenth-century novel with an invaluable source of diligent research on the topic. This reference book is especially useful for information pertaining to the works of little or unknown minor and secondary novelists. As Ferreras does for all the novelists represented in his catalogue of 2,158 references, the entry on López Bago includes a basic introduction on the author followed by a list of his published novels (219-20).

The 1980s marked the beginning of a major turning point in the status of bibliographical studies available on López Bago. For the first time, articles were published devoted entirely to the author and his contributions.

Miguel Angel Lozano Marco was the first scholar to discover López Bago in this fashion. In 1983 he published, "El Naturalismo radical: Eduardo López Bago. Un texto desconocido de Alejandro Sawa."[25] This outstanding scholarship was followed in 1988 by Pierre Jourdan's, "Les manifestations du Naturalisme en Espagne: Deux romans de López Bago: El Periodista et La Prostituta (1884),"[26] and Yvan Lissorgues' "'El naturalismo radical': Eduardo López Bago (Y Alejandro Sawa)."[27] The contributions of these three scholars can not be overestimated. Lozano Marco, Jourdan and Lissorgues are the researchers who have effectively rescued López Bago from almost a century of critical neglect for the purpose of situating, defining, and characterizing his work. The sources, insights and biographical data they have contributed

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in their articles have been invaluable to my research; they represent the foundation upon which this dissertation is based.

Added to this list are two more major studies which were also published in 1988. Gilbert Paolini dedicated an entire article to analyzing López Bago's last known novel in his "El separatista decimonónico y López Bago: Un análisis científico-literario."[28] Jean-François Botrel's "España, 1880-1890: El naturalismo en situación,"[29] not only contributes valuable information on López Bago, but stands out for its statistical approach to identifying and analyzing the various countercurrents which flourished in the Spanish novel of that decade.

Another noteworthy feature of critical research which appeared on López Bago in the 1980s was the inclusion of comments relative to some of the author's lesser known novels. Heriberto Del Porto's 1984 book on La decadencia de la familia aristocrática y su reflejo en la novela española moderna[30] examines this theme in López Bago's Carne de nobles. Del Porto's contribution represents, to my knowledge, the only study published on this novel. Isabel Román Gutiérrez' study, Persona y forma: Una historia interna de la novela española del siglo XIX[31]—on the role of the narrator and his function in the realist and naturalist novel—looks at: Los asesinos, Carne importada, El cura, Luis Martínez, El Espada. She also offers an analysis of the better known tetralogy, "La

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prostituta" (281-83, 290). In addition to these leading studies of the 1980s, López Bago has also been appreciated as a subject of interest in the scholarship of several other critics of the decade.[32]

To date, four studies have been published regarding López Bago in the present decade. The trend initiated in the 1980s of devoting entire articles to López Bago was continued in 1991 by Francisco Gutiérrez Carbajo in his excellent study, "Las teorías naturalistas de Alejandro Sawa y López Bago."[33] Referring expressly to the primary sources for information on López Bago's ideas on Naturalism—the appendices and introductions from several of his novels—Gutiérrez Carbajo's systematic analysis contributes a thorough investigation on the countercurrent movement cultivated by the two naturalists. A year later in Voices, Silences and Echoes: A Theory of the Essay and the Critical Reception of Naturalism in Spain,[34] Mary Lee Bretz discusses López Bago's defense of Naturalism as a "reactionary literary movement, with roots in the past and in particular in the Spanish literary tradition of Cervantes" (108) from his published letter, "Naturalistas e idealistas."[35]

López Bago appears in two literary dictionaries published in 1993. In his entry, Javier Blasco[36] describes López Bago as a novelist who "intenta combinar la imitación de Zola con un humanitarismo de corte sentimental a lo Eugène Sue y Victor Hugo" (910). López Bago is mentioned briefly in Peter Bly's[37]

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section on "Naturalism" as one of the "minor writers" who "adhered strictly to Zola's prescription for the Naturalist novel" (1156).

A list of López Bago's published prose works is included in Antonio Palau y Dulcet's Manual del librero hispanoamericano[38] and in José María González Herrán's more recent Cronología de la literatura española.[39]

Significant references to López Bago may also be attributed to a number of published studies pertaining to two of his contemporaries: José Ortega Munilla and, especially, Alejandro Sawa.[40] In addition, López Bago is mentioned briefly in several contemporary studies on the period.[41]

It is important to point out that, to date, no book has been published on López Bago.

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NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1] See: Appendix B: A Chronological Bibliography of Eduardo López Bago's Known Published Works.

[2] Julio Cejador y Frauca, Historia de la lengua y literatura castellana, vol. 9 (Madrid: Tipología de Archivos, 1915-22).

[3] Juan Hurtado J[iménez] de la Serna, and Angel González Palencia, Historia de la literatura española, 6th ed. (Madrid: S.A.E.T.A., 1949).

[4] "López Bago, Eduardo," Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada: Europeo-Americana, 1958 ed.

[5] Andrés González Blanco, Historia de la novela en España desde el Romanticismo á nuestros días (Madrid: Sánchez de Jubera, 1909).

[6] Angel Del Río, Desde 1700 hasta nuestros días (New York: Holt, 1948), vol. 2 of Historia de la literatura española.

[7] Emiliano Díez-Echarri, and José María Roca Franquesa, Historia de la literatura española e hispanoamericana (Madrid: Aguilar, 1960).

[8] J[osé] García López, Historia de la literatura española, 8th ed. (Barcelona: Vicens-Vives; New York: Las Américas, 1964).

[9] Emilio González López, Historia de la literatura española: La edad moderna (siglos XVIII y XIX) (New York: Las Américas, 1965).

[10] Angel Valbuena Prat, Historia de la literatura española, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1946).

[11] See sections on: Coloma and Picón in Del Río, 153; Coloma: 10, 862, 1073, 1090, 1096, 1109-10, 1121; Ortega Munilla and Picón, 1110-11 in Díez Echarri; Coloma in García López, 528; Coloma, Ortega Munilla and Picón in González López, 513-20; Coloma and Picón in Valbuena Prat, 744-45.

[12] Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, Escritores españoles e hispanoamericanos (Madrid: Aguilar, 1949), vol. 2 of Ensayo de un diccionario de la literatura.

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[13] Gifford Davis, "The 'Coletilla' to Pardo Bazán's Cuestión Palpitante," Hispanic Review 24 (1956): 53.

[14] Walter T. Pattison, El naturalismo español: Historia externa de un movimiento literario (Madrid: Biblioteca Románica Hispánica-Gredos, 1969).

[15] Pattison comments on "Naturalistas e idealistas," the article previously cited by Gifford Davis.

[16] Pattison refers to the author's article in the July 20, 1884 edition of La Ilustración Militar.

[17] Pattison cites López Bago's first novel, Los amores; his tetralogy, "La prostituta"; his anticlerical trilogy; and the author's ensuing legal battles over the publication of some of his novels. Pattison also includes an analysis of La prostituta.

[18] Iris M. Zavala, "Características generales del siglo XIX," Historia de la literatura española, coord. José María Díez Borque, vol. 3 (Madrid: Guadiana, 1974) 11-57.

[19] Juan-Ignacio Ferreras, "La prosa en el siglo, XIX," Historia de la literatura española, coord. José María Díez Borque, vol. 3 (Madrid: Guadiana, 1974) 59-132.

[20] Luis López Jiménez, El naturalismo y España: Valera frente a Zola (Madrid: Alhambra, 1977).

[21] López Jiménez includes additional references to López Bago. See: 26-27, 40, 306, 335.

[22] Mercedes Etreros, "El naturalismo español en la década 1881-1891," Mercedes Etreros, M. I. Montesinos, and L. Romero, Estudios sobre la novela española del siglo XIX, Anejos de Revista de Literatura 38 (Madrid: C.S.I.C., 1977) 49-131.

[23] Etreros includes other references to López Bago on pages 52 and 96.

[24] Juan-Ignacio Ferreras, Catálogo de novelas y novelistas españoles del siglo XIX (Madrid: Cátedra, 1979).

[25] Miguel Angel Lozano Marco, "El Naturalismo radical: Eduardo López Bago. Un texto desconocido de Alejandro Sawa," Anales de Literatura Española 22 (1983): 341-60.

[26] Pierre Jourdan, "Les Manifestations du Naturalisme en Espagne: Deux romans de López Bago: El Periodista et La Prostituta (1884)," Iris 1 (1988): 69-105.

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[27] Yvan Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical': Eduardo López Bago (Y Alejandro Sawa)," Realismo y naturalismo en España en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX, ed. Yvan Lissorgues (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1988) 237-53.

[28] Gilbert Paolini, "El separatista decimonónico y López Bago: Un análisis científico-literario," Letras Peninsulares 1 (1988): 5-20.

[29] Jean-François Botrel, "España, 1880-1890: El naturalismo en situación," Realismo y naturalismo en España en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX, ed. Yvan Lissorgues (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1988) 183-97. See specific references to López Bago on the following pages: 185, 189, 190, 191, 194.

[30] Heriberto Del Porto, La decadencia de la familia aristocrática y su reflejo en la novela española moderna (Miami: Universal, 1984). For references to López Bago, see the following pages: 9, 25, 59-63, 101-04, 138-40, 145.

[31] Isabel Román Gutiérrez, Persona y forma: Una historia interna de la novela española del siglo XIX, vol. 2 (Seville: Alfar, 1988). See references to López Bago on pages: 281-83, 290.

[32] The following studies include comments on: López Bago's participation in the polemic on Naturalism, his French influences, his popularity with Spanish anarchists (Litvak); and his scandalous novels against prostitution, clericalism and the aristocracy.

Iris M. Zavala, Ideología y política en la novela española del siglo XIX (Salamanca: Anaya, 1971) 121.

Nelly Clemessy, Emilia Pardo Bazán como novelista (De la teoría a la práctica), vol. 1, trans. Irene Gamboa (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1981) 101, 104, 152.

Hipólito Esteban Soler, El realismo en la novela, Cuadernos de Estudios 16, Serie: Literatura (Madrid: Cincel, 1981) 16, 18.

Lily Litvak, Musa libertaria: Arte, literatura y vida cultural del anarquismo español (1880-1913) (Barcelona: Antoni Bosch, 1981) 345.

Walter T. Pattison, "Etapas del naturalismo en España," Romanticismo y realismo, ed. Iris M. Zavala (Barcelona: Crítica, 1982) 427, vol. 5 of Historia crítica de la literatura española, gen. ed. Francisco Rico.

María del Pilar Palomo, Del realismo al vanguardismo

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(Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1983) 88, vol. 5 of Historia de la literatura española, 9th ed., by Angel Valbuena Prat. In contrast to the 1946 edition of Valbuena Prat's manual, it is pleasing to note that this modern updated edition acknowledges López Bago and Sawa for their place in Spanish literature.

Michael A. Schnepf, "Towards an Understanding of Naturalism: A Study of Nana, La Desheredada, and Esther Waters," diss., Indiana U, 1984: 298, 308nn1,4.

María José Tintoré, La Regenta de Clarín y la crítica de su tiempo (Barcelona: Lumen, 1987) 84, 93, 143.

Marie-Stéphanie Bourjac-Froissart, "Naturalisme et érotisme dans les premiers romans de Felipe Trigo," Iris 1 (1988): 26, 27.

Juan-Ignacio Ferreras, La novela en el siglo XIX (desde 1868) (Madrid: Taurus, 1988) 74-75. An almost exact copy of author's 1974 article: "La prosa en el siglo XIX."

Ignacio-Javier López, Realismo y ficción: "La desheredada" de Galdós y la novela de su tiempo (Barcelona: PPU, 1989) 44, 220, 221-22, 223, 224, 225-26, 238.

Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez, and Milagros Rodríguez Cáceres, Manual de literatura española, vol. 7 (Pamplona: Cenlit, 1980-91) 938, 939-40. Synthesis based in part on previously cited studies by Etreros and Pattison (Naturalismo).

[33] Francisco Gutiérrez Carbajo, "Las teorías naturalistas de Alejandro Sawa y López Bago," Epos 7 (1991): 371-91.

[34] Mary Lee Bretz, Voices, Silences and Echoes: A Theory of the Essay and the Critical Reception of Naturalism in Spain (London: Tamesis, 1992).

[35] Bretz makes a second reference to López Bago on page 136.

[36] Javier Blasco, "López Bago, Eduardo," Diccionario de Literatura Española e Hispanoamerica, ed. Ricardo Gullón (Madrid: Alianza, 1993).

[37] Peter Bly, "Naturalism," Dictionary of the Literature of the Iberian Peninsula, eds. Germán Bleiberg, Maureen Ihrie, and Janet Pérez (Westport [CT]: Greenwood, 1993).

[38] Antonio Palau y Dulcet, Manual del librero hispanoamericano, vol. 7 (Barcelona: 4º Mayor, 1948-77) 631.

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[39] José María González Herrán, and Ermitas Penas Varela, eds., Siglos XVIII y XIX (Madrid: Cátedra, 1992) 437-38, vol. 3 of Cronología de la literatura española, gen. comp. Darío Villanueva.

[40] See the following:

Ruth Ann Schmidt, "José Ortega Munilla and His Novels," diss., U of Illinois, 1962: 202-03, 209n1; 210nn14-15. Schmidt discusses Ortega Munilla's opinion of López Bago as a naturalist.

Luis S. Granjel, "Maestros y amigos de la generación del 98: Alejandro Sawa," Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos 195 (1966): 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436.

Ruth Ann Schmidt, Ortega Munilla y sus novelas (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1973) 184, 191n14. Spanish translation of the aforementioned doctoral dissertation.

Allen W. Phillips, Alejandro Sawa, mito y realidad (Madrid: Turner, 1976) 41, 53, 54, 81, 170n7, 174n9, 186n14, 187-88, 191, 193n26, 202, 204, 205, 208, 209-10, 322.

Iris M. Zavala, introduction, Iluminaciones en la sombra, by Alejandro Sawa, ed. Iris M. Zavala (Madrid: Alhambra, 1977) 47.

Luis S. Granjel, Maestros y amigos de la generación del noventa y ocho (Salamanca: Universidad, 1981) 149, 150, 151, 153. Reprint of author's 1966 article.

Gilbert Paolini, "Alejandro Sawa, Crimen legal y la antropología criminal," Crítica Hispánica 6 (1984): 56, 57n10, 59n34.

Gilbert Paolini, "Noche, novela de Alejandro Sawa, en el ambiente científico de la década de 1880," Boletín de la Biblioteca de Menéndez Pelayo 60 (1984): 325.

Allen W. Phillips, "Algo más sobre la bohemia madrileña: Testigos y testimonios," Anales de Literatura Española de la Universidad de Alicante 4 (1985): 328.

Amelina Correa Ramón, Alejandro Sawa y el naturalismo literario (Granada: U de Granada, 1993) 28, 35, 36, 37, 54n94, 62, 65, 66, 70, 73, 77, 80, 100, 105, 112, 113, 170, 192, 193.

[41] Although the following references are made in passing, they constitute a conscious attempt on the part of their authors to inspire reader curiosity about López Bago's role in

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the late nineteenth-century Spanish novel.

Jean-François Botrel, participant, "Compte-rendu du séminaire sur le Naturalisme français," Congrès des hispanistes français, Aspects du XIX^{e} siècle ibérique et ibéroaméricain: Actes du XII^{e} Congrès de la Société des hispanistes français de l'enseignement supérieur, Proceedings of the 12th Conference at the University of Lille, 6-8 Mar. 1976 (Lille: Publications de l'Université de Lille III, 1977) 55.

Marie-Stéphanie Bourjac-Froissart, "Un prolongement de la querelle sur le Naturalisme en Espagne: La polémique autour de 'Academías' de Carlos Reyles," Mélanges à la mémoire d'André Joucla-Ruau, ed. Jean-Louis Picoche, vol. 2 (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1978) 741.

Jeremy T. Medina, Spanish Realism: The Theory and Practice of a Concept in the Nineteenth Century (Potomac [MD]: Porrúa Turanzas, 1979) 90.

Luis S. Granjel, Eduardo Zamacois y la novela corta (Salamanca: U de Salamanca, 1980) 32.

Juan-Ignacio Ferreras, "La generación de 1868," Romanticismo y realismo, ed. Iris M. Zavala (Barcelona: Crítica, 1982) 418, vol. 5 of Historia crítica de la literatura española, gen. ed. Francisco Rico.

Jean-François Botrel, La Diffusion du Livre en Espagne (1868-1914): Les Librairies (Madrid: Casa de Velásquez, 1988) 193, 195.

Yvan Lissorgues, "El Lobumano, novela sociológica, de Ubaldo Romero Quiñones: ¿Evangelismo o prefascismo?" Homenaje al profesor Vilanova, coord. Adolfo Sotelo Vásquez, ed. María Cristina Carbonell, vol. 2 (Barcelona: U de Barcelona, 1989) 301.

Yvan Lissorgues, "Naturalismo y novela," Insula 44.514 (1989): 2.

Noël M. Valis, introduction, La hijastra del amor, by Jacinto Octavio Picón, ed. Noël M. Valis (Barcelona: PPU, 1990) 35.

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CHAPTER I

THE LIFE AND CAREER OF EDUARDO LÓPEZ BAGO

Despite the considerable attention that Eduardo López Bago and his works generated in Spanish literary circles during the last decades of the nineteenth century, little is known about the author's personal life. Contemporary scholars suggest or acknowledge 1855 as the year of López Bago's birth.[1] Lissorgues goes so far as to state: "Queda pues asentado que nuestro autor nació en 1855 ..." ("'El naturalismo radical'" 239). However, both Sawa and López Bago provide information which disputes Lissorgues' conclusion. In "Impresiones de un lector: Eduardo López Bago,"[2] Sawa writes about López Bago and the publication of his first novel, Los amores, "cuando su autor apenas contaba veintidós años...." If López Bago was barely twenty-two years old when Los amores was published in 1876, he could not have been born in 1855, but earlier, in 1854 or 1853. López Bago himself contributes more precise data on the subject. In "La moral del naturalismo," his appendix to La buscona, the author reproduces the sentence he received in the lawsuit brought against him by Madrid's Civil Governor for the alleged immoral content of La Pálida. It reads: "En la villa y Corte de Madrid, á trece de Marzo de mil ochocientos ochenta y cinco, el Sr. D. Angel Pintos Otero,

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Juez municipal del distrito de la Inclusa ... y el acusado don Eduardo López Bago, de treinta y un años de edad...."[3] According to the "sentencia," on March 13, 1885, López Bago had already attained the age of thirty-one. We arrive at two possibilities: 1. López Bago had recently turned thirty-one years old in 1885, between January 1 and March 13; or 2. he celebrated his thirty-first birthday in 1884, on March 14 or later. We are able, therefore, to conclude that Eduardo López Bago was born between March 14, 1853 and March 13, 1854.

The exact location of López Bago's birth remains a mystery. It is conceivable that he was born in Andalucía, since he was educated in the region.[4] The author might have been born in and/or raised in Seville, the Andalusian city to which he has demonstrated definite ties. Seville is often mentioned in his writings. In Campaña crítica (39), López Bago tells of his having witnessed a bull pursue a bullfighter, Manolito Gasquez (sic), in Seville. Two of his characters, for example, the madam, Mari-Pepa, from La prostituta and La Pálida, and Julio Suárez, the protagonist of Los amores, leave their native Seville as young adults to begin a new life in Madrid. Of greater significance, however, is the evidence which suggests that the author was living and working in Seville in 1873 and 1876. López Bago's name is included on a list of editors and collaborators who worked on the staff of Seville's women's magazine, El Gran Mundo during 1873.[5] As Lissorgues has observed, the 1876 publication of

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López Bago's first novel in Seville supports "la hipótesis de que era un sevillano que se trasladó, todavía joven a la Corte" ("'El naturalismo radical'" 239).

Another question about López Bago's biography concerns the dates and location of his medical training. Sainz de Robles states: "Estudió medicina en Madrid" (636). Lissorgues, however, is less certain of the location: "Es casi seguro que estudió medicina pero no sabemos a punto fijo si en Madrid" ("'El naturalismo radical'" 239). It seems more logical that López Bago would have studied medicine immediately, or shortly upon his graduation from secondary school in Andalucía (around 1871-72), before his writing career was well under way in the late 1870s and 1880s. There is no known evidence to suggest that López Bago ever practiced medicine.

López Bago gives us a few pieces of the puzzle of his personal life in his writings. According to the author, he was born into a working class family of artisans;[6] and suffered the loss of both parents—his mother during his childhood,[7] and his father in 1884.[8]

Los amores (1876)[9] marked López Bago's début as a novelist. The work stands apart from the author's later novels for its purpose, romantic subject matter and mode of expression. The fundamental purpose of Los amores is to entertain its readers—a goal made evident from the outset by the novel's subtitle: "Obra entretenida." Later in the novel,

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López Bago explains his intent, adding that Los amores serves as a form of escape from reality into a fanciful world inhabited by romantic characters: "Creo ... que el público debe ser dueño de sus impresiones propias, cuando compra un libro como éste para leer y soñar y entretenerse forjando allá en su múltiple fantasía tipos y creaciones románticas" (43).

Los amores chronicles the amorous experiences of the protagonist, Julio Suárez, a young poet from Seville, and his relationship with the three other main characters, symbolically named: Carlos Caballero, la Marquesa Viuda del Río, and her teenage niece, Doña Purificación. The 305 page novel is divided into four sections: "El primer amor," "La primera ilusión," "El primer deseo," and "Desenlace;" each subdivided into titled chapters. In the last chapter of "Desenlace," entitled "Por vía de apéndice," López Bago includes his two romantic poems, "La confesión de un escéptico (290-93) and "Cristo" (293-94); compositions which would be published in the Revista Contemporánea.[10]

Los amores is punctuated by authoral intervention, especially in the beginning of the novel. In "El primer amor," for example, López Bago interrupts the flow of the narration with comments separated by parentheses in his characters' physical movements ("Sentándose junto á ella," p. 21) and facial reactions ("Aquí una sonrisa picaresca," p. 22), etc. These indications are unusual for a novel: they resemble stage directions in a play.[11] In another section,

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"La primera ilusión," López Bago digresses to include an "artículo intercalado"; acknowledging that "según la pauta novelesca debiera haberse escrito antes" (43). Here, in the chapter entitled, "Album de retratos," the novelist proceeds to provide physical descriptions of each of the four main characters.

An interesting aspect of López Bago's first novel is the reproduction of a letter he received from his publishers expressing their displeasure with the latest chapter submitted by the novelist. Publishers Gironés and Orduña object to López Bago's "descripciones harto poéticas y un tanto oscuras;" preferring that he limit himself strictly to narrating "sin comentarios ni ampulosas imágenes, todos los acontecimientos con estilo menos galano y más claro y preciso" (65). "Los señores" Gironés and Orduña firmly reiterate their requirements: "Ya le hemos dicho, que es nuestro deseo publicar un libro donde el autor no ha de predominar en nada y los personajes sean el todo" (65-66).

Los amores received mixed critical reviews. The author of a publication announcement in La Ilustración Española y Americana stated: "Efectivamente entretiene y agrada esta linda novela que tiene por vía de epílogo algunas sentidas composiciones poéticas."[12] Pattison, however, disagrees. In his opinion, the critic "aparentemente no la había leído" (Naturalismo 136). Sawa, on the other hand, in "Impresiones de un lector," expresses only praise and admiration for his

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colleague's first novelistic endeavor, "un estudio rudo é inexorable del corazón humano, arrancado con valentía del pecho del hombre," which foretold "una brillantísima promesa de más altas y más radicales empresas" (El cura 296).

Ortega Munilla described Los amores as "una novela realista y peligrosamente provocativa;"[13] a judgment which, it seems, was shared by the more conservative sectors of society. Sawa recalls how "el escándalo que produjo el libro fué enorme: se llamaba atrevido al autor ..." ("Impresiones," El cura 296). Lissorgues, in fact, brings to our attention the revelation that Los amores was banned by the Catholic Church: "'La censura eclesiástica ha incluido en el índice de obras prohibidas la novela Los amores del escritor señor López Bago, como contraria a la moral cristiana y a los preceptos de la Iglesia Católica'".[14] The censorship of Los amores introduced López Bago to the major obstacle which would challenge the publication of some of his novels in the following decade.

In 1875, the year before the publication of Los amores in Seville, López Bago had already embarked upon a career as a professional journalist in Madrid. Between 1875 and 1884, he collaborated with eight periodicals: five literary magazines—La Familia,[15] Revista Contemporánea,[16] La Ilustración Española y Americana,[17] El Progreso,[18] and La Ilustración Militar;[19] and three political newspapers—El Parlamento,[20] La Reforma,[21] and La Correspondencia Ilustrada.[22] Two of the magazines to which López Bago

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contributed, the Revista Contemporánea and La Ilustración Española y Americana were ranked among the most prestigious and the most stable of Madrid publications, while the others, it seems, did not enjoy such popularity and longevity.[23]

According to Ossorio y Bernard, in 1875 López Bago was working for La Familia (230), a magazine devoted to "Recreo, moralidad, instrucción." La Familia only published for three years, from 1875 to 1877.[24]

Around 1878, López Bago became a "periodista literario" for the Revista Contemporánea (Sawa, "Impresiones," El cura 299-300), a publication which dealt with a wide range of subjects: politics, law, sociology, geography; and art, world and literary history.[25] The Revista Contemporánea was one of three distinguished and progressive publications of the day which sought Spain's intellectual, political, and scientific regeneration (Cazottes 74). Sawa himself held the magazine in high esteem, recognizing it as "una de las publicaciones científicas que más honran á España. Su tradición periodística es brillante y justa. Tiena hasta leyenda" ("Impresiones," El cura 300). Since its 1875 début (Cazottes 220), the bimonthly publication had established its "brilliant" reputation in just one decade. According to Sawa, it seems that López Bago was not only part of the original staff, but also established his own reputation as one of Spain's foremost journalists: "López Bago era considerado entonces, entre los iniciados de las redacciones, como uno de

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los selectos periodistas de la nación" ("Impresiones," El cura 300). If Sawa's information is correct, López Bago might have started working for the Revista Contemporánea as early as 1875, contemporaneous with his association with La Familia or shortly thereafter. We know for certain that López Bago published three of his works in the Revista Contemporánea. Two contributions included the previously cited romantic poems published in the epilogue of Los amores: "Cristo" in 1878, and "La confesión de un escéptico" in 1879. Also in 1878, López Bago published a three part article for the Fine Arts section of the magazine. In "Una visita al Real Museo," he describes and discusses the world-renowned collections of the Prado Museum. He devoted the first installment to the Spanish school; the second, to the German, Dutch, and Flemish schools; and the final installment to the Flemish and French schools.[26]

López Bago added politics to his journalistic resumé. As Sawa informs us, his colleague was a "periodista político á la queja, en El Parlamento, un periódioco que no ha debido morir nunca ..." ("Impresiones," El cura 299).[27]

In the early 1880s, López Bago contributed to the highly respected magazine, La Ilustración Española y Americana. Presented as the continuation of El Museo Universal, La Ilustración Española y Americana began publishing in 1869 (Cazottes 192; Celma Valero 17). When it ceased publication in 1921, it had become the longest running *fin-de-siecle* Spanish magazine (Celma Valero 21). Subtitled Revista de

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Bellas Artes, Literatura y Actualidades, this upscale, deluxe publication was regarded as perhaps "la revista más representativa del ambiente cultural de la época" (Celma Valero 17). In keeping with its title, the oversized magazine's articles and features shared the leading role with a variety of illustrations: engravings, lithographs, photographs, and drawings were amply displayed (Celma Valero 17). Two of López Bago's works were published in La Ilustración Española y Americana. The first was the allegorical short story, "Las nubes (historia de los bastidores)" in 1882.[28] A year later in "Fotografías instantáneas: Una sesión importante," López Bago gave a detailed report on a recent congressional assembly meeting.[29]

In 1885, López Bago tells how he first met Sawa and of his impressions of the young journalist during the early 1880s when the former was a co-proprietor of a political daily newspaper:

> No hace muchos años conocí yo á Sawa; era yo entonces coproprietario de un diario político.... Alejandro Sawa se presentó solicitando una plaza de redactor. Le fué concedida; prometió trabajar desde el día siguiente. Pues bien: no volvió á presentarse. Yo ignoraba su domicilio. Habíame impresionado, sin saber por qué, el joven solicitante, y casi estoy por asegurar que, aventurando juicios, supuse su talento.

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("Análisis," Crimen legal 277)

In "Impresiones," Sawa also writes about their initial meeting and, fortunately, names the short-lived daily. "Yo lo conocí algún tiempo después [after López Bago's association with El Parlamento and Revista Contemporánea] en La Reforma, periódico que no tenía otro defecto que el de defender la política, bizantina entonces, y ahora risible, del General López Domínguez" (El cura 300). According to Lozano Marco, General José López Domínguez (General Francisco Serrano's nephew), together with Francisco Romero Robledo, founded in 1883, "el Partido Reformista, en cuyo programa figuraban el jurado, el sufragio universal y la reforma constitucional" (354n6). La Reforma, it appears, was the party's official mouthpiece: "El citado periódico debió de ser el órgano de expresión de dicho Partido Reformista ..." (354n6). Lozano Marco provides the specific time frame of the author's association with the daily: "La colaboración de López Bago para el citado periódico debió de efectuarse entre 1883 y 1884" (354n6). The early demise of La Reforma by the very individuals who created it, and for whom the newspaper served, left López Bago with feelings of betrayal, bitterness, and, ultimately, resignation: "El periódico murió, es decir, lo mataron los hombres políticos á quienes defendía, los mismos que lo hicieron nacer para que los encumbrara. Historia de todos los días" ("Análisis," Crimen legal 277-78).

In contrast to the disappointing experience of his

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association with La Reforma, López Bago enjoyed working at La Correspondencia Ilustrada. At the conclusion of "Postdata," the appendix to his novel El periodista (1884), he recalls the camaraderie and cooperative spirit of the entire staff, regardless of rank, from the owner-publisher to the typesetters: "Debo declarar antes que nada, que en la Correspondencia Ilustrada éramos compañeros todos, los cajistas, los redactores y el director propietario de la publicación....[30] López Bago dedicated El periodista to the memory of his beloved friend and colleague José de Alcántara, who died while working at the newspaper, the result of poverty and overwork: "Á la memoria de José de Alcántara, periodista. Murió en la redacción del diario político La Correspondencia Ilustrada en brazos de sus compañeros." Below the dedication, López Bago added: "El exceso de trabajo y el de miseria lleváronle á este fin" (El periodista 5).

In 1884, López Bago published two articles which clearly reflected his career's new direction toward Naturalism. A letter he sent to Ortega Munilla entitled, "Naturalistas e idealistas" was published in El Progreso in March.[31] The author contributed his own comments about Naturalism and the famous ongoing debate between Ortega Munilla and Luis Alfonso, defenders of Naturalism and Idealism, respectively. A few months later, López Bago wrote about the movement in the July 20th edition of La Ilustración Militar,[32] the "revista literaria, científica y artística de la biblioteca económica

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del ejército y de la armada" (Cazottes 193).

The year 1884 marked the beginning of the most important phase of López Bago's professional life. Between 1884 and 1888, the author reached the pinnacle of his career amidst scandal, controversy, legal battles, and commercial recognition. During this period of great intensity, López Bago produced the majority of his words: fifteen novels; a translation of Alphonse Daudet's novel Sapho; the novelette ¡¡ Usted no es hombre!! (or: ¡ Esto no es un hombre!);[33] the short story "El hombre mono;"[34] and probably a second short story, "Carambola conyugal."[35]

An overview of López Bago's novelistic production from 1884 to 1895, including his novels Carne importada (1891) and El separatista (1895), reveals several distinguishing characteristics.[36]

As we noted in the introduction of this dissertation (p. 2), López Bago subtitled sixteen of seventeen novels "novelas sociales" and "médico-sociales,"[37] thus announcing his naturalistic intent to expose and denounce the worst human vices. The novelist pays homage to the renowned French physiologist Claude Bernard by stamping on the title page of each of the sixteen "novelas sociales" and "médico-sociales" his famous motto from Introduction à l'étude de la médicine expérimentale: "La moral moderna consiste en buscar las causas de los males sociales, analizándolos y sometiéndolos al experimento."[38]

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López Bago favored the idea of dedicating a series of novels to a particular theme. To this end, he published one tetralogy with the series title, "La prostituta;" two trilogies: the anticlerical "El cura" (El cura, El confesonario, La monja); and "La mujer honrada," (La señora de López, La soltera, La desposada) on love, marriage and misery. The author never realized his intention of publishing sequels to his novels: El periodista, Luis Martínez, Carne de nobles, El preso, Carne importada and El separatista.

Another salient feature of López Bago's novelistic activity is the inclusion of appendices at the end of most of his novels. Here he: 1. reveals his concept of Naturalism; 2. details the problems he confronted with the publications of his novels; 3. lashes out against his critics, and idealistic and romantic writers; 4. comments on Galdós, Valera, Alarcón, Clarín, Pardo Bazán, Palacio Valdés, Coloma, and Sawa; 5. translates into Spanish passages from some of Zola's theoretical texts; and 6. includes monographs authored by Sawa and [José] Luis Albareda.[39]

In 1884, López Bago successfully utilized his experiences as a political journalist and extracted his first political novel, El periodista. He completed the novel on April 24 (159), and its appendix, "Postdata," on June 5 (193).[40] El periodista was to have been the first novel in a tetralogy entitled, "Cuadros de la vida política." However, he never published the three remaining works already titled: "El

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diputado," "La influencia," and "El ministro y S.M."[41] A reviewer's comments were included in the second "Libros Nuevos" publication announcement for El periodista. The reviewer found the novel's "episodio principal" to be "humano é interesante y puramente *novelesco* (esto es, fantástico); lo que se refiere a la parte política, que es lo secundario del libro."[42]

The "parte política" begins the action of López Bago's second novel. On a beautiful spring Sunday in Madrid, partisans of the Monarchical Right are celebrating the ascension of their party's leader to Prime Minister. Campuzano—the new Prime Minister's right hand man and soon-to-be appointed "Secretario de la Gobernación" (Minister of the Interior)—is surrounded by the members of his clique, one of whom is Suárez, a distinguished writer and publisher of La Voz del País, a political daily and the mouthpiece of the new regime. Suárez would also be appointed to a high ranking position in the new administration as Campuzano's "Subsecretario de la Gobernación."

Among the journalists on the staff of La Voz del País is the protagonist, Luis—an intelligent, diligent, caring, honorable and scrupulous young man. Overworked and underpaid, Luis at age thirty-one looks like a forty year old man. Every day is a struggle for survival. Luis has the added worry of caring for his bedridden, anemic, common-law wife, María, and their young daughter, Laura. One day, the girl's sudden

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appearance at the newspaper warns Luis of María's worsening condition. He is granted another advance on his salary to pay for María's medications, and rushes home in the middle of the day to tend to her. Unfortunately, the landlord takes advantage of his unexpected arrival to collect the overdue rent. When he returns to work, Luis is fired by Suárez for having missed his deadline for submitting the provincial edition of the newspaper. Suárez makes matters worse by voicing his disdain for the couple's unmarried status and Laura's illegitimacy. (Ironically, Luis and María would have legally married had they been able to afford the expenses of a religious ceremony.) Enraged, Luis feels like killing Suárez. While wandering the streets dazed and disoriented, Luis is saved by a renowned elderly novelist, Augusto Vejarano, who employs him as a ghostwriter.

Campuzano's secret life is revealed. Behind the public facade of the acknowledged lover and collector of contemporary art, the "Secretario" conceals a bizarre obsession. Under the pretext of purchasing only those works of art which he has personally witnessed being created, Campuzano is free to indulge in his peculiar form of voyeurism: he ogles the artists' models—young, nude female bodies. With Suárez acting as intermediary, Campuzano commissions the artist Emilio Sierra to depict the allegorical figure Poetry. For such a romantic interpretation, Sierra insists on a special model, a young, beautiful, yet pale and emaciated woman who

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appears consumptive or anemic. Suárez realizes that María would be the ideal model.

In a flashback to Campuzano's past, we learn about his background in Andalucía as the son of a "cacique" who followed in his father's footsteps. Despite his inconstant nature, Campuzano was a charismatic and persuasive speaker who seized his opportunity for national prominence upon the assassination of the progressive General Juan Prim in 1869.

Antonia, the novel Luis wrote for Vejarano, is an amazing best seller, but it also provokes a scandal. The manuscript that Vejarano submitted unread to his publishers is being hailed as an authentic naturalist novel to the degree that Antonia could have been authored by Zola himself. Vejarano's career and reputation are ruined, since he has always been regarded as a staunch defender of Idealism. Luis defends himself by stating that he was unaware of writing a naturalist novel, that he only sought to depict Truth and Reality. Vejarano accuses Luis of betraying him and throws him out of his house.

Luis receives word from María that Suárez wants to see him. Hoping that Suárez wants to rehire him, Luis is doubly insulted when the undersecretary presents his proposal involving María. Devastated, Luis suffers an emotional and physical breakdown and is confined to bed. With no means of support, María accepts the offer to pose for Sierra, but demands one thousand *reales* in advance from Suárez. Sierra is

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overjoyed with María as a model, and acquiesces to her threat not to return if Campuzano and Suárez are present.

One day, a messenger delivers an envelope addressed to María. It contains Luis' "credencial"—his appointment to a civil service position arranged by Suárez. The undersecretary also includes a letter for María in which he compliments Sierra's beautiful model. Imagining the worst, Luis refuses to believe in María's innocence. He later shoots Suárez in the presence of Campuzano, who tries to capture his friend's assassin. Luis shoots himself in the head and Campuzano is splattered with his blood.

López Bago's first novel of the 1880s offers an interesting look into the author's new direction. In El periodista, the author surpasses much of the romanticism which characterized his first novelistic experience: the lengthy digressions, poetic evocations, excessive authorial intervention in the narrative, and his fundamental purpose of amusing and entertaining readers. López Bago wanted El periodista to be a serious study—a critique against the pervasiveness of favoritism in Spanish politics, against the system which enabled the most incompetent, indolent, self-serving, and injurious sycophants to secure positions of great power and influence in the government. López Bago juxtaposes this form of corruption on a national level with the tragic personal story of Luis and his family, who are exploited by the system. For López Bago, Luis is representative of the

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dire consequences of such a system; he exemplifies many honorable, diligent and highly qualified men whose talents are wasted and whose lives are frustrated and ultimately destroyed by poverty and injustice.

In El periodista, members of Campuzano's clique are not developed as literary characters, but presented and satirized as types. Among López Bago's "tipos sociales, dignos de estudio, merecedores de análisis" (9), there is Moreto, the consummate bureaucratic sycophant who started working as an office clerk and flattered his way up the ranks of government to Campuzano's appointee to the position of "Director general de Benificiencia." Representatives of the novelist's disdain for the Catholic Church and the aristocracy include the priest Ceferino, an expensively dressed young, ambitious and extremely arrogant "aspirante a canónigo" (14); and the Marqués de Tierrabaja. As his title implies, this aristocrat embodies the "tipo perfecto del noble arruinado, que busca en la política, en las grandes posiciones oficiales, recursos para sostener su rango y rescatar del poder de los usureros sus hipotecadas casas solariegas" (14). López Bago's disdain for the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church and the uselessness of the Spanish aristocracy—although evident in El periodista—does not compare in extent and intensity with his later novels.

López Bago's contemporary readers were quick to identify two of the novel's political characters with their real-life

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counterparts: the Andalusian native Campuzano with the real-life Andalusian-born Minister of the Interior, Francisco Romero Robledo, and the party leader with the newly elected Prime Minister, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, the man who had led his conservative party's return to power in January 1884.[43] In the wake of criticism directed against El periodista for being "un ataque violento" (López Bago, "Postdata," El periodista 161) against the two politicians, the novelist defended himself against the charges:

> No ha sido nuestro propósito concluir bajo las formas literarias de la novela una injuria....
>
> Lo que hay es que, siendo escritor liberal, en lo que á la política se refiere, y naturalista en lo concerniente á [la] literatura, antójasme estar en mi perfecto derecho al escribir una *novela política,* atacando en buena lid, no á los Sres. Cánovas del Castillo y Romero Robledo, sino á los enemigos que ante y después de estos señores han tenido, tienen y tendrán, por desgracia, las escuelas liberales, que profesan la teoría de reforma y progreso, en contra de los que defienden las ideas de conservación. ("Postdata," El periodista 162)

López Bago's explanation does not hold up to scrutiny. Though his intentions might have been to criticize past and future conservative politicians and their antireformative

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policies, López Bago did indeed attack some of the policies of the current regime, one of which was censorship:

> ¡Ah! El partido que perseguía los libros obscenos, que mandaba retirar de los escaparates las fotografías de cierto género, el partido antipornográfico, el defensor de la censura eclesiástica, el amigo de la moral en el libro, en el teatro, en el periódico; aquel partido intolerante, severo, mandaba en este punto despóticamente y atañía á todos por igual la obediencia .... (El periodista 95)

López Bago was not criticizing an abstract political regime; his portrait of an intolerant government's prohibitions on artistic and literary freedom of expression describes the status quo in Spain after Cánovas first rose to the heights of power in 1876. Instrumental in effectuating the restoration of the Bourbons to the throne with Alfonso XII, Cánovas "exercised virtually dictatorial power" during the first six years of the monarch's reign, a period during which "strict press censorship was imposed" (Beck 104). Although thinly veiled, López Bago sought to disguise his criticism against Cánovas. It seems that in this early novel, the controversial author was reluctant to openly denounce the government of the most powerful political figure in late nineteenth-century Restoration Spain.

The liberal-minded López Bago denounced the religious and

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societal stigmatization of the unmarried couple cohabitating "in sin" and their illegitimate offspring. The contemptuous attitude of both Suárez and Campuzano toward Luis for his personal life is representative of the Establishment's position on the subject. When Luis expresses his anxiety for María's health, Suárez tells him that she is not his responsibility, financially or otherwise, since she is just his "querida," and Laura his "hija natural" (45). Later in the novel, after learning that Luis has been dismissed from La Voz del País, Campuzano questions Suárez's decision. After all, Campuzano affirms, Luis has demonstrated more talent than all the rest of the staff combined. Nevertheless, when Campuzano learns about Luis' living arrangements, the hypocritical minister makes an abrupt about-face, and praises Suárez' decision (83-84). Luis, therefore, is judged not on the merits of his professional skills, but instead condemned for his devotion to his "illegitimate" family.

López Bago raises the issue of societal and religious prejudice against the woman who cohabits with a man who is not her legal husband. Suárez refers to María as a "querida" (45) in conversation with Luis, but labels her a "prostituta" (84) when speaking to Campuzano. López Bago would soon explore in great detail the Establishment's hypocritical mistreatment of the "fallen woman" in his tetralogy, "La prostituta."

In contrast to many of López Bago's later naturalist novels, El periodista does not contain the crude, explicit

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descriptions of the various sexual aberrations of his characters. While Campuzano's voyeuristic expression of sexual gratification is, indeed, abnormal, it remains in the realm of what López Bago calls "sensualismo" (94) rather than sexuality; there are no descriptions of sexual contact between the sexes.

It is conceivable that López Bago had Juan Valera in mind when he created the satirized character, Augusto Vejarano—the "primer novelista español" (74) and "defensor acérrimo del idealismo" (119) who falls from grace when his best seller, Antonia, is deemed a praiseworthy naturalist novel. Vejarano is described as elderly, "un vejete"; while Valera, born in 1824, was sixty years old in 1884, and categorized as a member of the older generation of established Spanish Realist novelists. The title of Vejarano's novel bears a feminine name, as does Valera's own Doña Luz and Pepita Jiménez. On a symbolic level, it is by no coincidence that López Bago chooses Luis, the young naturalist novelist who writes "con verdad [,] copiando la verdad misma" (120) as the one person who unwittingly exposes Vejarano—the epitome of literary idealism—as a plagiarist and a fraud.

After having declared himself as an "escritor ... naturalista en lo concerniente á la literatura" in "Postdata" (El periodista 162), López Bago committed himself fully to producing naturalist novels as the vehicle for expressing his deep dissatisfaction with the many ills of contemporary

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society. The first societal ill under attack was professional female prostitution. When he completed the manuscript for La prostituta, his first "novela médico-social," López Bago confronted the first challenge the novel would present: finding a publisher. Although two of the publishers he consulted approved of the title and the first chapter, they refused to accept the manuscript without making drastic revisions. They objected to "la descripción descarnada de la repugnante llaga social."[44] One publisher laughed at the author's naturalistic proposal and advised: "'Haga usted, en una palabra, una *Prostituta (sic) decente*'" (appendix, La Pálida 263). What the publishers wanted was a Spanish Marguerite Gautier, Alexandre Dumas fils' consumptive, romantic heroine from La Dame aux Camélias (Camille) (appendix, La Pálida 264). Ironically, López Bago was able to find a publisher for a pornographic book, but not for a naturalist novel (appendix, La Pálida 263). Be it a pornographic or romantic representation of a prostitute as a heroine, all of the publishers whom López Bago first consulted "deseaban que las repugnancias se hicieran agradables á la vista" (appendix, La Pálida 264).

When La prostituta was finally published by Juan Muñoz and Company,[45] in late September or early October, the novel "levantó en seguida un tremendo escándalo que, de golpe, hizo popular a López Bago" (Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 239). According to the author himself, La prostituta enjoyed

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such "un éxito fabuloso," that the number of copies sold surpassed even those of two famous Spanish books of chivalry: the Catalonian novel, Tirant lo Blanch, (1490) and the ever popular masterpiece of the genre, Amadís de Gaula (1508) (appendix, La Pálida 266).[46] López Bago was not given the luxury of time to fully enjoy his new status as a best selling author, for he and his scandalous novel were under attack. The Civil Governor of Madrid, Raimundo Fernández y Villaverde,[47] suspended the sale of the novel in bookstores and confiscated the remaining copies (López Bago, appendix, La Pálida 266-67). On October 17, 1884, Fernández y Villaverde officially denounced La prostituta,[48] and criminal charges were brought against López Bago "por haber proclamado ... doctrinas contrarias á la moral ... á las buenas costumbres y á la decencia pública" (López Bago, "La moral del naturalismo," La buscona 262, 263). The suit would not be resolved until the following year.

López Bago was also sued for libel by the physicians at the "Sección de Higiene del Gobierno Civil de Madrid" in Municipal Court, but the case officially ended in "el juicio de conciliación" (López Bago, "La moral del naturalismo," La buscona 262).

As one can imagine, López Bago's first "novela médico-social" generated considerable discussion is Spanish literary circles. Several writers voiced their opinions on La prostituta, including: Ortega Munilla, Narciso Campillo,

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Valera, Sawa, and possibly Luis Alfonso.[49]

As Schmidt has observed, Ortega Munilla objected to López Bago's classification of La prostituta as a naturalist novel based on the author's persistence in depicting the crudest and the most repugnant aspects of human existence in the name of exposing the truth. The editor of El Imparcial's prestigious literary supplement, Los Lunes, defined Naturalism "as a balance of elements" (Schmidt, "José Ortega Munilla" 202), the equal depiction of both the sordid and the sublime in the literary work. A plethora of repulsive elements does not make a novel more naturalistic, he contended. Ortega Munilla expressed his disapproval of La prostituta in an article published in La Ilustración Artística:

> Aunque el autor presenta este libro con el carácter de ensayo naturalista, no lo es en verdad, y si fuera lícito discutir sobre cosas prohibidas [the Civil Governor's censorship of the novel] se lo probaríamos al señor López Bago. Hay un error notable en lo que atañe al naturalismo, que consiste en considerar tanto más naturalista una obra cuanto más obscena, y la verdad es que naturalismo solo quiere decir "verdad."[50]

In a move to defend himself against his detractors, López Bago makes reference to Narciso Campillo's[51] favorable review of La prostituta:

> El Sr. Campillo, catedrático de literatura en el

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> Instituto del Cardenal Cisneros, declaraba en un artículo precioso, que La Prostituta (sic) era una novela perfectamente moral, no sólo ajustada á la moral pública, sino que también á la moral casera. (appendix, La Pálida 266)[52]

There might have been an ulterior motive behind López Bago's decision to include Campillo's favorable assessment of La prostituta in La Pálida's appendix. Campillo, it seems, was a close personal friend of López Bago's literary enemy, Juan Valera. It is possible that López Bago was aware of that friendship and hoped that Campillo's comments would be a subject of animated discussion (or even discord) between the romantic poet and the idealist novelist. Campillo and Valera corresponded regularly when the latter served abroad as a member of Spain's diplomatic corps. J. Domíguez Borbona published many of the letters Valera wrote from abroad to several friends and associates, including Campillo.[53] López Bago was, in fact, a topic of discussion in the correspondence which the two friends exchanged between November 1884 and December of the following year while Valera was living in Washington, D.C.

In a letter dated November 27, 1884, Valera commented on Campillo's review of La prostituta, an article which he described as "lindamente escrito, como todo lo de usted, y con chiste."[54] Like López Bago and Campillo, Valera condemned Fernández y Villaverde's censorship of La prostituta: "Claro

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está que yo, tan partidario como el que más de la libertad de pensar y de escribir, rechazo con usted la competencia del Gobernador en tal negocio ..." (letter to Campillo, 27 Nov. 1884; letter 40, qtd. in Domínguez Bordona, 239).

The writer's right to freedom of expression, however, was the only point on which López Bago and Valera were of one mind. True to his aesthetic literary philosophy of "el arte por el arte," Valera condemned La prostituta.[55] He began with an objection to López Bago's choice of "la prostituta" as a highly inappropriate title for a work of literature, a title which represented for Valera the epitome of vulgarity: "...yo no apadrino a López Bago. Me parece de pésimo gusto dar por título a una novela La Prostituta (sic). Prostitutas hay en el mundo, la palabra está en el Diccionario de la Academia, etc., etc.: pero esto no es razón" (239). Later in the letter Valera made some suggestions of his own for titles which identify the professional woman who trades in the "acción *non-sancta*" (240). Valera believed that his synonyms were superior to the "estilo grave y pomposo" of López Bago's chosen title: "La gamberra, la daifa, la coima, la bagaza (sic), la suripanta, la traviata y hasta la p...carga menos y ofende menos los oídos delicados y púdicos que *la prostituta*" (240). Valera's final piece of advice on this point: "Lo mejor en ciertas cosas es no expresarlas o buscar una perífrasis para expresarlas ..." (240).

Whereas Ortega Munilla's main objection to La prostituta

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was based on the imbalanced portrayal of the seamiest side of humanity, Valera categorically objected to any such inclusion in a literary work. For Valera, the depiction of life's gruesome realities was suitable non-fiction material for books on ethics or medical texts, etcetera:

> Yo no me escandalizo por poco y comprendo y aun aplaudo, a pesar de mis sesenta años ya cumplidos, un libro verde, por estilo jocoso: pero una verdura trágica y socialista, una indecencia *docente* y *humanitaria* es cosa que no se puede sufrir, y perdónenme Zola, López Bago y otros.
>
> Explíquese como se quiera ... es lo cierto que hay vicios, dolencias y deformidades, architrágicos para quien es víctima de ellos, pero que repugna a toda persona de buen gusto el que se presenten en una obra de arte, y por lo serio, y que deben estudiarse, buscando su remedio, en disertaciones sabias, y no en poéticas ficciones.
>
> De tales cosas debe tratarse en libros de moral o de medicina, pero no en los de ameno entretenimiento .... (239)[56]

Ironically, in the end, the campaign against La prostituta waged by both its political and literary detractors had an unexpected and unwelcomed consequence. Censure and criticism only served to increase the novel's popularity with the reading public. Sawa and López Bago both commented on the

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phenomenon. In "Impresiones de un lector," Sawa recognized the irony in Fernández y Villaverde's unwitting role in La prostituta's success; and, in good humor, offered López Bago a piece of advice:

> [Fernández y Villaverde] ha sido un auxiliar poderoso del éxito de La prostituta; sus censuras, redactadas en ese empalagoso estilo administrativo, propiedad real y efectiva de los hombres que tienen más vientre que cerebro, han excitado potentísimamente á la venta del libro; si yo fuera López Bago, escribiría á ese gobernador dándole gracias por sus malquerencias y sus hostilidades .... (El cura 302-03)

In the appendix to El cura, "Vosotros y yo," López Bago proudly declared: "para mayor dolor de mis detractores...*la novela fea* [derogatory term used by opponents of Zola's school to refer to the naturalist novel], con toda la fealdad de La Prostituta (sic), agota sus ediciones rápidamente" (280).

With the extraordinary success of La prostituta, López Bago was able to support himself and his family from the sales of copies of his novel. He gave up his career in journalism to become a full-time professional novelist:

> He sido periodista hasta que por voluntad y propósito decidido dejé de pertenecer al periodismo, consagrándome por completo á las tareas literarias: vivo, pues, publicando mis libros,

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> escribiéndolos con el mayor esmero que se me alcanza, y cobro la subvención que me paga el público que los compra. (appendix, La Pálida 261)

López Bago was extremely proud of his ability to "vivir fieramente de la renta que le dan sus libros" (Sawa, "Impresiones," El cura 303). In fact, the role of professional novelist became a point of honor for him; it symbolized his success in achieving a considerable degree of status on a par with other best selling professional writers, like Galdós,[57] Alas, and the secondary playwright Eugenio Selles (López Bago, "Vosotros y yo," El cura 280-81, 285).

López Bago took advantage of his new status as a successful professional writer "para manifestar su desprecio" (Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 239) for romantic and idealistic literature, and their authors who were not full-time professional writers, specifically Valera, Alarcón, and the poet Gaspar Núñez de Arce. In contrast to the modern literature of the day—realist and naturalist fiction—"la novela bonita" did not sell well in its own period. According to López Bago, its "mediocre éxito de librería" ("Vosotros y yo," El cura 280) was of little concern to its authors, for whom writing only constituted a part-time avocation, rather than a wholehearted commitment to the profession. "Aficionados" ("Vosotros y yo," El cura 283) was the term that López Bago condescendingly applied to those idealists who did not take "la vida y la misión del escritor en serio"

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("Vosotros y yo," El cura 284). Their profession was not literature, he declared, but politics; realized through the procurement of their appointments to high-salaried and socially prestigious government positions—Alarcón in the "Consejo de Estado," Valera in diplomatic service in Washington, and Núñez de Arce in the Overseas Ministry ("Vosotros y yo," El cura 283). So strong were López Bago's feelings on the subject that he concluded "Vosotros y yo" with the following impassioned, militant, and even irrational call to action "¡Echemos de la literatura á los aficionados! ¡Derrotemos á los pedantes! ¡Paso á los escritores de profesión!" (El cura 291).

Shortly after the publication of La prostituta, López Bago published his translation of Alphonse Daudet's novel Sapho: Moeurs parisiennes, from French into Spanish.[58] The novelist's third major publication of the pivotal year 1884 also became the object of a scandal now in the French as well as the Spanish press. The controversy centered around a letter supposedly authored by Daudet which was published in the translation ("Traducción de Eduardo López Bago, precedida de una carta del ilustre novelista francés"). However, when Daudet denied authorship, López Bago was accused of having penned the letter (presumably favorable to himself) and signing Daudet's name.

Pío Baroja believed that López Bago was the perpetrator of the deception. The author of El árbol de la ciencia

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recalled the incident from his youth (Baroja was born in 1872) in the section entitled "Familia, Infancia y Juventud" from his Memorias:

> Sobre López Bago se oía hablar, con escándalo, en Pamplona [where Baroja was living at the time]....
>
> Era un hombre sin escrúpulos. Puso a una novela suya un prólogo falso de Alfonso Daudet, dándose unos bombos terribles a sí mismo. En no sé qué libro francés he leído la protesta de Daudet sobre la atribución de la paternidad de ese prólogo.[59]

In "La moral del naturalismo," López Bago categorically denied the accusation, adding that he too, like Daudet, was a victim in the affair. He blamed the extreme measures taken to discredit him on those detractors who envied his success:

> Otra cuestión que demuestra las armas á que apela en España la rivalidad de profesión para combatir al que logra vivir de su trabajo y consigue que la venta de sus libros le produzca lo suficiente para atender á las necesidades de su familia, es la de la carta inserta en mi traducción de Safo, carta que ha resultado ser falsa, y que el editor de esta traducción, y el librero, D. Fernando Fe, saben perfectamente que ha sido un engaño, que no me reportaba ningún beneficio, y del cual no ha sido, en realidad, tan víctima el Sr. Daudet como yo.

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(La buscona 277-78)

In an effort to dispel the rumors of hostilities between himself and Daudet,[60] and to demonstrate the latter's belief in his innocence, López Bago wrote:

> El Sr. Daudet me honra mucho llamándome *cher confrère* en carta que reconoce como suya.
>
> Yo, novelista español, como tal llamo al señor D. Alfonso Daudet, por deber de cortesía, *compañero*, y le honro de igual manera. (La buscona 278)

The contents and the identity of the author or authors of the controversial letter remain a mystery.[61]

In January 1885, López Bago published La Pálida,[62] just three months after La prostituta.[63] In the same month, La Pálida, like its predecessor, was also officially denounced by Fernández y Villaverde for alleged offenses committed against public morals (López Bago, "La moral del naturalismo," La buscona 263; Lozano Marco 344). On March 13, in Municipal Court, López Bago was convicted and sentenced for infractions committed against several articles of the Penal Code (López Bago, "La moral del naturalismo," La buscona 264-69). He was ordered to pay fines and to remain under houses arrest for three days "sin poder salir de ella durante el tiempo de la condena, bajo la vigilancia de un alguacil de vista...(López Bago, "La moral del naturalismo," La buscona 268).

In his own defense, López Bago accused his

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enemies—specifically, the Civil Governor—of launching a biased and hypocritical campaign against him and Naturalism. According to López Bago, while Fernández y Villaverde was unjustly prosecuting him as an "author inmoral," he took no action himself against "las inmoralidades verdaderas, *auténticas*, que se imprimen y se venden sin que nadie lo estorbe..." ("La moral del naturalismo," La buscona 257). The novelist complained that while the sale of pornographic literature flourished without governmental intervention, "se prohibe la circulación de novelas como La Prostituta (sic) y La Pálida, imponiéndose á los libreros quinientas pesetas de multa por cada ejemplar que de ellas vendan" ("La moral del naturalismo," La buscona 257). To López Bago, it seems that Fernández y Villaverde fulfilled his duties as the official watchdog of public morality only with regard to him.

A few months later, despite his ongoing legal battles, López Bago produced his third "novela médico-social," La buscona, inspired by Daudet's Sapho (López Bago, "La moral del naturalismo," La buscona 279). After his experiences with La prostituta and La Pálida, López Bago expected to be charged in another lawsuit initiated by the Civil Governor against La buscona ("La moral del naturalismo," La buscona 245). However, López Bago's latest novel was not considered to represent a threat to public morals and social decency. La buscona was different from its predecessors—an observation commented upon by both Sawa and Lozano Marco. Sawa was very

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impressed with the third novel of the tetralogy, much more so than with La prostituta or La Pálida. Although the three novels represented "las tres fases de la victoria," La buscona epitomized "la *gloria*" ("Impresiones," El cura 303). Sawa favored La buscona for the same reason Ortega Munilla condemned La prostituta. Sawa, like the editor of Los Lunes, advocated the balanced portrayal of polar human experiences:

> ¡Ah! ¡En Francia se equivocan, como se equivocan en España! La realidad no es lo feo. Es lo feo y lo bonito combinados....
>
> El dilema, lo positivo y lo negativo, la tesis y la antítesis.... Ese es el arte. Ni el color blanco, ni el color negro solo. El blanco y el negro combinados hasta la hermosura absoluta. Un claroscuro que no ha podido soñar Rembrandt.
>
> Por eso prefiero La Buscona á su madre y á su abuela. Porque veo en ella una solución admirable. Es verdad y belleza: *vivante et moderne* al mismo tiempo, como debe ser el arte á la altura del progreso que hemos llegado. ("Impresiones," El cura 306-07)

For Lozano Marco, La buscona is indisputably the best novel in the tetralogy: "No hay aquí nada truculento ni rebuscado: es una historia de amor..." (349). The scholar credits the positive influence of Daudet's Sapho for the dramatic improvement (349).

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López Bago received good news on June 19, 1885, when he was finally acquitted of all charges by the Supreme Court for alleged offenses committed against "la moral, las buenas costumbres y la decencia pública" (López Bago, "Vosotros y yo," El cura 275-79).[64] For López Bago, his acquittal symbolized a triple triumph: personal and professional vindication, a victory for the cause of Naturalism in Spain,[65] and justice in the issue of freedom of literary expression. Based on the following statement he made in La monja's appendix, we can see how López Bago overestimated the importance of his legal victory and his own role in achieving what he termed, "la libertad del libro": "De manera que con verdadero orgullo puedo declararme á sí (sic) mismo el *único defensor de la libertad del libro* en España, defendiéndolo de una manera práctica, real y *efectiva*" ("Al Ministerio público" 252).

Lissorgues ("'El naturalismo radical'" 239) discusses this point, and also cites another statement made by the author in 1891 from the appendix to Carne importada (251n11). Although six years had passed since his acquittal, López Bago still believed that he was the first writer in Spain to successfully affect the law: "La libertad del libro, que solo de nombre existía en España, hasta que yo conseguí, sentar (ó asentar) jurisprudencia de ella por sentencias del Tribunal Supremo...."[66]

The eight months between September 1885 and April 1886

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was a very productive period for López Bago. The author's proclaimed "asiduidad" to his "trabajo" resulted in the publication of four novels: El cura, El confesonario, La querida and La monja (López Bago, "Al Ministerio público," La monja 260). López Bago, it seems, embarked upon his anticlerical trilogy "El cura" before completing his tetralogy "La prostituta."[67]

The September début of El cura (López Bago, "Al Ministerio público," La monja 261) with its provocative subtitle, "Caso de incesto," ignited another wave of scandal and criticism. Shortly thereafter, López Bago was subjected to, and subsequently acquitted, in the same year, in yet a third lawsuit against the laws of public morals and decency (Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 251; Lozano Marco 343n5).

The first critical review of El cura was written by a Sr. Miralta,[68] a "presbítero librepensador," and published in the anticlerical publication, Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento, founded in 1883 (Botrel, "España, 1880-1890" 186). López Bago was outraged by Miralta's disparaging commentary, and took issue with the "presbítero librepensador" in El confesonario's appendix, "La crítica de El cura."[69] López Bago began his rebuttal by denying the claim that he identified himself as "el portaestandarte del naturalismo en España" (240).[70] Though he objected to Miralta's condemnation of El cura as "un pecado literario," (242) our author was more

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angered by the critic's barrage of unsubstantiated accusations (242) and his "tono doctoral irritante" (249). As López Bago informs us, Miralta believed that El cura "no puede ser más inverosímil ni descabellado" (243). In Miralta's estimation, "'los detalles, las descripciones de cosas de la Iglesia, resultan completamente faltos de verdad'" (244). For Miralta, López Bago was an outsider, unfamiliar with the inner workings of the rarefied world of the Catholic Church. Our novelist's attempt to realistically depict this milieu in El cura was the worst thing that López Bago could have done. Miralta also faulted López Bago for having invested his time and effort into reading books on theology, mysticism, liturgy and the rules of canonical life. This course of action was also a mistake: "*'cabalmente lo que hay que hacer para no conocer la Iglesia y sus gustos'*" (243). López Bago countered Miralta's attacks by demonstrating his own knowledge, and by pointing out Miralta's ignorance on various facets of the clerical world (246).

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Miralta's negative review is that it provoked López Bago to reveal little known information about his personal and professional relationship with Sawa. Before addressing this issue, let us consider the pertinent events which were taking place in the lives of the two novelists during this period. When "La crítica de El cura" was published in El confesonario in late December 1885 or early January 1886,[71] Sawa had already published his

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article on López Bago, "Impresiones de un lector,[72] and his first attempt to write a naturalist novel, La mujer de todo el mundo, earlier in 1885 (Correa Ramón 78; Phillips, Alejandro 158n1). López Bago, however, was not pleased with La mujer de todo el mundo; since, in his opinion, it is not a work of Naturalism: "(La mujer de todo el mundo no lo es)" ("Análisis" 277). This opinion is shared by Phillips who notes: "Observo que López Bago, al referirse a La mujer de todo el mundo, niega también su condición de novela naturalista..." (Alejandro 193n26). Phillips concludes, however, that La mujer de todo el mundo can be characterized more accurately as Sawa's "obra de transición," from Romanticism to Naturalism (Alejandro 201-02).

López Bago's feelings about Sawa, based on his assessment of La mujer de todo el mundo, as revealed in the following paragraphs from "La crítica de El cura," offer a radical contrast to those he would express just a year later:

> El Sr. D. Alejandro Sawa no es discípulo mío. Es un romántico de tomo y lomo, como vulgar y malamente se dice. Y usted le llama "reo de los mismos delitos que ha cometido el Sr. López Bago...."
>
> Precisamente el Sr. Sawa está tan distante del naturalismo, que en su mismo artículo *Impresiones de un lector* lo combate con esa brillante energía y esos penachos de caballero de la Edad Media, que

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tiene su romántica manera.... (260)

López Bago writes about his volatile relationship with Sawa, and describes the bitter breakup of their friendship brought about by the two men's stubborn defense of their respective opposing ideologies:

> ¿Quiere usted un detalle de carácter privado? El Sr. Sawa y yo éramos amigos mucho antes de la publicación de El cura, y antes también se trocaron en enemistad nuestras relaciones. ¿Por qué? Es muy sencillo. Sawa es vehemente, nervioso, un soñador, á quien le molesta, como si fuera una herida, el codazo de la realidad que le hace abrir los ojos y mirar por dónde anda.... He dicho soñador. Pongamos que es sonámbulo. Fanático admirador de Víctor Hugo, *sectario* ... como yo lo soy de Balzac, de Flaubert, de Zola y de otros.... Conmigo y con él, la discusión casi parece siempre una riña.... Las palabras salen con la fuerza que tienen los puñetazos. Dos hombres así se interrumpen á cada instante; cada vez que uno habla siente el invencible deseo de taparle la boca al otro con la mano, como para evitar y contener algo que va á explotar.... No recuerdo si fué Zola ó Hugo el que nos separó, para que por defenderle no llegáramos á rodar por el suelo como epilépticos. El caso es que tomó el sombrero ... y se

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> marchó.—"¡Esto no se puede resistir! ¡Hemos concluído!"—"Conformes". Yo creía que las escaleras las bajaba de cabeza. ¡Tan de prisa iba! (261-62)

A subsequent attempt to repair the relationship was unsuccessful, for which López Bago blamed himself:

> Hasta ahora. Mejor dicho, hasta ayer. Los odios de estos temperamentos duran una eternidad de un par de meses á lo sumo. Ayer no pudo resistir más. Hizo bien, y en esto se me anticipó, porque hoy pensaba yo haberle robado la idea. Una idea sencillísima: decir él: "¡Viva Zola!", á condición de que yo vitorease á Victor Hugo. Me equivoqué, y dije: "¡Viva la amistad!"....
>
> Y aquí tiene usted, contado en el estilo de Alejandro Sawa, contado y probado el error de suponer al autor de La mujer de todo el mundo discípulo mío. (262-63)

Ironically, López Bago made a dramatic about face when Sawa's second novel, Crimen legal, was published in 1886.[73] López Bago was so impressed with Sawa's bold treatment of naturalistic themes that he wrote a rave review of the work entitled, "Análisis de la novela titulada Crimen legal." For the leader of the countercurrent, Crimen legal marked Sawa's début as a "radical naturalist": "Sawa, como naturalista, en su primer libro de este género...obtiene lugar de

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eminencia...("Análisis" 277). López Bago applauded Sawa's success in overcoming the Romantic influences of his youth, influences to which he himself succumbed before his full conversion to Naturalism: "Sawa es un naturalista que, por infidelidad literaria, ha llegado, como hemos llegado todos, yo mismo, después de haberse postrado de rodillas, confundiéndose con la multidad de adoradores del Sol-Hugo..." ("Análisis" 253). Based on the merits of Crimen legal, Sawa was officially and enthusiastically inducted into the countercurrent as a member with equal status. López Bago concludes his "Análisis" with the following statement:

> Ésta es la obra con que el autor solicita un puesto de honor al lado del nuevo é irresistible movimiento literario de Europa. Yo le saludo quitándome el sombrero; no es un discípulo, es un compañero. Bien venido sea á la barricada naturalista Alejandro Sawa, el *nuevo* combatiente. ("Análisis" 280)

Although López Bago was overjoyed by Sawa's ideological conversion to Naturalism, it is not know if the two were able to repair the damage to their personal relationship. There is evidence which indicates that a successful reconciliation might not have occurred. Sawa's adherence to Zolaesque Naturalism was intense, but short lived. It paralleled his physical presence in Madrid in the 1880s. When he left the Spanish capital and moved to Paris around 1890, he not only

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forever abandoned his enthusiasm for Naturalism (Correa Ramón 10; Granjel, "Maestros" 433; Phillips, Alejandro 41, 317), but it also appears that he wanted to completely erase López Bago from his memory. In his article, Lozano Marco wonders why Sawa—when referring to his "primera época" in which he "hacía novelas truculentas, de un realismo Zolesco exagerado"[74]—names the lesser known José de Zahonero and Ubaldo Romero Quiñones, yet makes no mention of López Bago, the novelist Sawa himself had called "el temperamento más heroico de la época" ("Impresiones de un lector," El cura 296):

> Nos llama la atención sobre todo, que vincule su obra naturalista con la de Zahonero y la de Ubaldo Romero de Quiñones ... y que no cite el nombre del que fue no sólo el más conocido naturalista, merced a los escándalos que suscitaron sus novelas, sino también su maestro y modelo en esas lides: Eduardo López Bago. (342-43)

As Lozano Marco also observes: "Tampoco aparecerá mencionado en ninguno de los escritos de Sawa posteriores a su regreso de París en 1896, quedando, por tanto, excluido de ese desfile de escritores que discurre por las páginas de su obra maestra, Iluminaciones en la sombra" (343). The acrimonious conclusion to their association perhaps explains López Bago's conspicuous absence from Sawa's recollections of his naturalist period.[75]

After El cura, López Bago completed El confesonario, La

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monja[76] and La querida[77] in rapid succession. El Motín announced the publication of El confesonario in their January 17 issue; La querida, on February 14; and La monja, on April 14 (Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 251n13).[78]

Although López Bago's battles in court were behind him in 1886, the novelist still had to confront what he termed the "guerra sin cuartel" declared against him since he began publishing his novels ("Al Ministerio público," La monja 243). In the appendix of La monja, López Bago accused his detractors——the "Ministerio público," "las autoridades gubernativas" and "los padres de familia" (244)——of conspiring to create "una atmósfera malsana" (243) and of employing all means possible in order to "impedir ó dificultar la venta" of his novels during the days preceding their appearance in bookstores (243). After López Bago's three successive victories in court, his detractors feared that the author would again be successful if he were to file suit against them for "la injuria y la calumnia" (243). They no longer attacked him openly; they never referred to him by name—he declared—preferring instead to operate "de una manera baja y rastrera" (243). As the novelist observed, the underhanded maneuver:

> Actualmente acaba de iniciarse también, con motivo de la noticia de próxima aparición de La Monja. Se delatan mis libros, antes de que se conozca su contenido ... y sin decir concretamente que se

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trata de mis producciones. (243)

Undaunted by the schemes of his detractors, López Bago remained steadfast to his work. The second half of 1886 proved no less fruitful than the first. Our author started "La mujer honrada," his second trilogy and his second series on women. He published the first two novels: La señora de López in September (or early October)[79] and La soltera in October.[80] Moving still in yet another direction, López Bago published his social novel against bullfighting, Luis Martínez, El Espada (en la plaza) in December.[81] He had intended to write a series of novels protesting Spain's national pastime, entitled "La torería." Although listed as a work "en preparación," the second novel to be titled "Luis Martínez, El Espada (en la sociedad)" was never published.[82]

Both Lissorgues and late nineteenth-century critic, Ricardo Monner Sans were favorably impressed with Luis Martínez. In his book Breve noticias sobre la novela española contemporánea,[83] Monner Sans acknowledged the novel as "una de las mejores" from López Bago's "extenso repertorio" (23). Citing the "numerosas páginas costumbristas" in some of López Bago's works, Lissorgues praises the novelist's descriptive skills in recreating "la pintura de la vida de los toreros en Luis Martínez, El Espada," which in many instances anticipates (Sangre y arena)("'El naturalismo radical'" 248), Blasco Ibáñez' famous 1908 novel on bullfighting. Regarded by Lissorgues as one of "los personajes más equilibrados y hasta cultos," the

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protagonist, Luis Martínez, was modeled after a real life bullfighter, Luis Mazzantini, who became governor of Guadalajara and Avila (246).[84]

The year 1886 was very good for López Bago. In all, he published five or possibly six (if El confesonario was released that year) novels in 1886, averaging about one every two months.

López Bago published three novels in 1887: La desposada,[85] the third novel in the series "La mujer honrada";[86] Carne de nobles[87] and Los asesinos. It is not known exactly when La desposada was published. We can assume that it was released early in the year. The author's novel on the dissolute state of the Spanish aristocracy, Carne de nobles: Novela médico-social was published around May.[88]

López Bago devoted most of 1887 to composing his "novela social," Los asesinos.[89] This massive undertaking is, without doubt, the author's longest novel, containing more than two thousand pages, equally distributed into two volumes.[90] In contrast to his other novels, Los asesinos was not originally published as one complete novel, but released in serial form. An entry for Los asesinos is included in the list of "Obras Terminadas y en Publicación: á las que se admite suscrición por entregas" located at the end of La desposada [267]. It reads: "Esta obra consta de dos tomos, y se repartirá cada semana un cuaderno que contendrá cuatro entregas, ó sean (sic) 32 páginas, siendo su precio el de un real."[91]

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The Spanish serial novel known as "la novela por entregas" and "la novela de folletín" flourished between 1840 and 1870, a direct result of the rise of commerce, industrialization and capitalization in Spain during the middle of the century. The "novela por entregas" and "de folletín" was a special format utilized by publishing houses and newspapers to produce, edit and distribute books—especially works of popular fiction—by regular installments. The one major distinction which existed between publications by "entregas" and by "folletín" lay in the method of production and distribution of texts. While the "folletines" (from the French, "feuilleton") were installments published in special sections in newspapers, publishing houses produced narrative texts "por entregas" in "cuadernos," notebooks, or pamphlets of varying length (i.e., eight, thirty-two pages, like Los asesinos) and delivered them to subscribers, usually at their place of residence, at regular intervals—monthly, bimonthly or weekly. Whether "por entregas" or in "folletines," the serial novel was an artistic and commercial phenomenon whose goal was to market books on a large scale aimed at attracting a wider range of readers from different socioeconomic backgrounds. It sought to make popular literature accessible to a heretofore untapped urban consumer market, comprising the petite bourgeoisie and the lower working classes: artisans, students, manual laborers, service employees, and the like.

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The serial novel had certain economic advantages for both publishers and readers. The technical advances of the age afforded the construction of more factories and better machines for printing at a lower cost to publishers. Whereas working class readers could not spare a major part of their salary to purchase a complete book at one given time, they could afford to buy it in installments over an extended period of time. In the long run, however, buying a book "por entregas" was actually five to ten times more expensive than purchasing the whole novel at one time. Only those readers who could not afford to buy a complete work purchased "novelas por entregas." In the end, those who could least afford it were the most exploited.

Authors and editors of serial novels were faced with the constant challenge of sustaining the interest of their readers. Public reaction actually determined the length of a particular work. If the number of subscribers remained steady or increased with each installment, the novel was stretched out or extended. If, on the other hand, the number of readers began to decrease, the novel was abruptly shortened.[92]

In order to keep readers of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds eagerly awaiting the next installment, the serial novel followed a stereotypical formula which required plots filled with action, adventure, intrigue, peripetias and cliffhangers, more often than not at the expense of verisimilitude and historical accuracy. Standard ingredients

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included: stabbings, duels, poisonings, shipwrecks, disguises, secret doors, underground passageways, et similia. The stories were simplistic, the plots essentially always the same, repeated with slight variations in circumstances, backgrounds, and so on. Staple themes of romantic love, love triangles, marriage, adultery, betrayal, abandonment, separation and fortune were expressed in situations like the following:

1. orphans finally reunited with long lost parents who always turn out to be wealthy, powerful, good, and honorable;
2. antagonists committing injustices until they are defeated by the hero who rescues the damsel-in-distress;
3. superhuman efforts by heros, heroines, parents, etc. to locate kidnapped or missing loved ones, or to regain their lost or stolen fortune, inheritance, position, or honor, etc. The adventure always concluded happily for the protagonists; good always triumphed over evil.

Always conscious of the real life circumstances of their working class readers, serial novelists and editors created stories which depicted their milieu; a world in which hunger, poverty and survival were basic issues. A disproportionate number of laborers were included as protagonists and secondary characters. Heroines were themselves working women—servants, seamstresses, laundresses, etc.—or were the wives, sisters, or daughters of laborers, etc. Wealthy employees were

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portrayed in an unfavorable light, as were the Church and the aristocracy.

With the arrival of the Revolution of 1868 and the modern realist novel with the publication in 1870 of Galdós' La Fontana de Oro, the "novelas por entregas" and the "folletines" declined in popularity and fell into disregard. They could not be adapted to suit the changing times, nor could they capture the essence and the reality of the Revolutionary era. Despite the continued publication of serial novels during the Restoration and until the beginning of the twentieth century, the installment genre was deemed inferior by proponents of Realism for a plethora of faults: superficiality, implausible plots and characters, and a simplistic outlook, in addition to a lack of artistic creativity and originality; character analysis and psychological development were also wanting; while narrative techniques, and descriptions of landscapes, objects, characters—in short, of the world in general—fell very short of the mark.[93]

Contemporary twentieth-century scholars of the Restoration novel have tended to criticize many secondary authors—López Bago included—for the inclusion of characteristics representative of the serial novel: stereotypical, one-dimensional characters, sentimentality and excessive melodrama. The impact of the genre on López Bago's work is most evident in Los asesinos. As Lissorgues has

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observed, the novel "combina todos los ingredientes folletinescos (hijos del pueblo arrastrados en una cascada de aventuras inverosímiles en mancebías, sociedades secretas...) con los temas de moda del naturalismo (bestia humana, prostitución...)" ("'El naturalismo radical'" 241). Publishing a "novela por entregas" suited the commercially conscious novelist; it demonstrated his continued marketability while the naturalistic content added a contemporary twist to the once popular genre.

Though he was still occupied with Los asesinos during the first months of 1888, López Bago returned to his usual format of producing "novelas médico-sociales" when he published El preso, probably in April.[94] El preso was the first and only novel published in what was to have been a series of attacks against the existing penal system in Spain entitled: "La Inquisición moderna: Estudios de las vida humana en cárceles y presidios."

In the summer of 1888, López Bago published his only known novelette, ¡Esto no es un hombre! (or: ¡¡Usted no es hombre!!).[95] The novelette was López Bago's last known work published in Spain. It signaled the end of the most intense and scrutinized phase of his professional life. In his memoires of the era, Rubén Darío contributed his own observations regarding our author, summarizing, in effect, López Bago's mark in Spanish literary circles. Moreover, the poet's statement supports López Bago's claim that professional

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envy was a motivating force behind his detractors' unrelenting criticism against him and his novels:

> Era la época del naturalismo. Nadie se atrevía á negar el valer mental de López Bago, de Zahonero, de Alejandro Sawa.... López Bago, en cuya buena intención quiero creer, tuvo un pasajero éxito de escándalo y de curiosidad. Sus obras eran abominadas por los pulcros tradicionalistas del formismo y por los mediocres que le envidiaban su buen suceso. Se trataba de verbosos análisis, de pinturas de vicio, escenas burdelescas, figuras al desnudo y frases sin hoja de parra.[96]

In 1888, López Bago began a new phase in his life when he decided to move to Latin America. Although later in 1895 he would describe the decision as "voluntaria,"[97] he was probably motivated in part by another important factor: the winds of change which were taking place in Spain. The polemic over Naturalism which had divided and dominated the attention of Spanish literati for almost a decade was by 1887 and 1888 losing ground. As Pattison informs us:

> En primer término notemos un cambio de opinión hacia Zola: ahora los críticos que le defendían contra cualquier acusación le observan con más objectividad y hasta subrayan algunos defectos suyos. Esta actitud comienza a manifestarse hacia 1887, es decir, al mismo tiempo en que vimos la

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> influencia catalizadora de la novela rusa en Fortunata y Jacinta y en las conferencias de Emilia Pardo Bazán. (Naturalismo 140)

Representative of the new wave of public opinion against Zola were the articles published in 1887 by his former advocate, José Ortega Munilla (Pattison, Naturalismo 140-43).[98] The influence of Naturalism in Spain was declining[99] over the next decade, and by 1899, it was no longer an issue in literary circles. In an interview that year in the French newspaper Le Soir, Pardo Bazán stated: "El naturalismo en la actualidad está casi caído."[100]

While Naturalism was passé in Spain, it was extremely popular in the national literatures of Latin America; its influence continued to be felt well into the first quarter of the twentieth century.[101]

López Bago arrived in Montevideo, Uruguay probably in the autumn of 1888. Shortly thereafter he published a "folleto" entitled, Campaña crítica: Don Carlos María Ramírez como autor de Los amores de Marta.[102] In the first pages of Campaña crítica, López Bago writes about his arrival in "esta hospitalaria tierra americana" (3). He recalls how immediately upon his disembarkation, he was engaged in animated conversations about journalism and literature. Everyone he met was talking to him about the popular Uruguayan novelist of the time, Carlos María Ramírez, considered a "literato de valer" (4-5) by his followers. The Spaniard

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quickly made enemies with his forty-five page vitriolic review of the author and his novel. López Bago was unrelenting, criticizing every aspect of the two-volume Los amores de Marta, including the title of the first chapter ("La Hig-life [sic] de la fiebre tifoidea," p.9) and launching personal attacks against the Uruguayan's abilities as a writer: "...pues solo (sic) á broma deben tomarse obras como la de Ramirez" (sic) (14). On several occasions, López Bago addressed his criticism directly to Ramírez: "Mire usted, señor novelista, otras desgracias mayores hay. La mia (sic) por ejemplo que es ... la de tener que hablar de los libros de Vd." (16). Later he added: "¡Ah! Señor Ramirez (sic).... Si Emilio Zola supiera que andaba Vd. por el mundo, una de dos, ó rompia (sic) su pluma, ó le rompia á Vd. el bautismo, literariamente hablando" (25). After accusing Ramírez of speaking badly of Europeans, López Bago wrote: "Aqui (sic) y allí hay de todo como en todas partes. Bueno, mediano y malo, y luego usted como escritor" (29).

Ironically and, perhaps, hypocritically, López Bago accused Ramírez of inventing "inverosimilitudes de tamaño monumental" (33), when yet only three years before, the Spaniard himself had been criticized for having committed the same narrative fault by "el presbítero librepensador" Miralta, for his anticlerical novel El cura.

We do not exactly how long López Bago remained in

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Uruguay; but sometime between the end of 1888 and 1891 he moved to Buenos Aires where he published the first of two naturalist novels in Latin America. His "novela médico-social," Carne importada[103] appeared in 1891, the first and only novel in an unrealized series titled: "La trata de blancos." The manuscript for a second novel, "Un vencido (costumbres de Buenos Aires y Montevideo)" was never published.[104]

In "'El naturalismo radical,'" Lissorgues praises López Bago for his skillful depiction of Argentinean manners and customs, as in "la descripión de un transatlántico que lleva a Argentina un contingente de desgraciados de España ... o la descripción de las calles de Buenos Aires" (248).

The "costumbrismo acertado" (Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 248) notwithstanding, López Bago's Argentinean novel addresses a serious vice: the involuntary sexual and economic exploitation of girls and women in the practice known as "la trata de blancas," or the "White Slave Traffic or Trade" (often abbreviated: "White Slavery").[105] Procurers and traffickers would deceive unsuspecting females with false promises of employment or career opportunities abroad. Sometimes the women were kidnapped. As soon as they arrived at their destination, they were sold to brothels. Women without financial resources or those who were alone, orphaned, and recent immigrants like Agustina Cebrian (sic), the twenty-two year old protagonist of Carne importada, were

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ideal victims. By the late nineteenth century, "la trata de blancas" was flourishing as a "negocio redondo y realizado en todas las partes de una manera magistral" (López Bago, Carne importada 157). In effect, the White Slave trade was indeed an international business. Europe to South America was a major trade route, with Buenos Aires a principal port of entry.[106]

Instead of his usual appendix, López Bago included an afterword entitled "Advertencia" at the end of Carne importada ([287-88]). The novelist had originally intended to publish an appendix in response to certain written comments made against him by his alleged "ex-amigo," Pedro Antonio de Alarcón. However, the unexpected death of the author of El sombrero de tres picos in Spain changed his plans. Instead, he used the two-page "Advertencia" to present his own reaction to the latest publications by three of his colleagues in Spain. While he congratulated Clarín for Su único hijo—a naturalist novel, López Bago considered worthy of persecution by the Civil Governor—he bitterly condemned the Jesuit priest Luis Coloma, for his Pequeñeces, and Palacio Valdés for La Espuma ([287-88]). He labeled Coloma's controversial novel against Madrid's aristocracy "un libro pornográfico" and added that "La Espuma es ménos (sic) todavía" ([288]). López Bago's harsh criticism demonstrates his own irrational bias against the two novelists by reason of their personal backgrounds; this sentiment is reminiscent of his disdain for authors like Alarcón, Núñez de Arce and Valera for not being full-time

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professional writers: "El jesuita habla de la aristocracia española desde una celda. Don Armando ([¿] y porqué [sic] *Don?*) habla desde una mesa de café. Las dos novelas son el *quiero y no puedo* ..." ([288]).[107]

In the four years between his stay in Argentina and his arrival in Cuba in 1895, López Bago traveled to several Latin American republics, including Mexico and Spain's other Caribbean colony, Puerto Rico.[108] The author arrived in Havana during the last days of January 1895. He began writing El separatista: Novela médico-social[109] in March, and the novel was published, remarkably, only two months later, in May.[110]

As indicated on the title page, El separatista was to have been the first work in an untitled tetralogy on contemporary Cuban society.[111] In "Al lector," the foreword to El separatista, López Bago announced the titles he had chosen for the remaining novels: "El Bandolero," "La Gente de Color" and "[El] Gobernador General."[112] However, once again López Bago failed to follow through on his plans for an announced series. With regard to the "Costumbres de La Habana" tetralogy, Lissorgues believes that the novels were never written because "la evolución de la guerra en Cuba dio al traste con todas las certidumbres planeadas en la primera" ("'El naturalismo radical'" 240). This hypothesis would be totally acceptable if not for the fact that López Bago's failure to follow through on his plans for the announced

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sequels was, as we have seen, the rule, rather than the exception. With the exception of Los amores and Los asesinos, all of López Bago's novels, whether realized or not, were intended originally to be parts in a series on a particular theme. López Bago gave no explanation for this propensity. We can only suppose that: 1. perhaps he lost interest in the topic, and therefore never wrote or completed the manuscripts; or: 2. perhaps he submitted them (or some of them) to publishers, but the manuscripts were rejected for one or more reasons.

López Bago's arrival in Cuba on the eve of the Spanish-American War[113] was propitious for the naturalist who proposed to "estudiar la sociedad cubana con el detenimiento que merece," which, according to what he had observed "nadie en la Península ni aquí, ha querido consagrar á este análisis cada vez más necesario" ("Al lector," El separatista [5]). The "análisis" to which López Bago referred revolved around the intense political controversy among Cubans as to whether or not the island colony should separate, or, in other words, seek its independence from Spain.

More so than any of his earlier naturalist novels, López Bago, in his analysis of El separatista, was determined to adhere to the fundamental naturalist tenet of maintaining authorial objectivity and impersonality, in order to "exponer el problema cubano y nada más que a exponerlo" ("Al lector," El separatista [5]). In order to expound this objective,

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López Bago—in a departure from his usual format—published a foreword ("Al lector") to El separatista, the only one of his naturalist novels to have one. He wrote:

> Batalla no doy ninguna. No ataco ni defiendo. Exposición de hechos, observación y experimento, aplicados á cosas y personas, con la inexorable indiferencia de opinión que debe ser inspiración única del arte que anhela fortalecerse en la ciencia y mirar la Naturaleza y la Humanidad cara á cara, tal será la tetralogía que escribiré....
>
> En ninguno de estos libros, ha de encontrarse mía, ni siquiera una deducción y mucho menos un comentario. Hablarán los personajes ...([5]).

Not only does López Bago's greater expression of objectivity and impartiality in El separatista represent a major step forward in his evolution as a naturalist, but his neutrality might have spared him from a prison term. When the publication of El separatista was announced, López Bago informs us, several of his enemies began to spread "malévolos rumores," suggesting that the novel "sería anti-española, con sus visos de filibusterismo. Y que fuera muy posible que yo me hubiese propuesto ir á la cárcel" ("Naturalismos," El separatista 284).[114]

How did López Bago feel about Cuban separatism? In "Naturalismos" his position was unequivocal:

> ...deploro el separatismo por considerarlo error,

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> que ha engañado á muchos hombres de reconocido talento .... (El separatista 284)
>
> La idea separatista es un romanticismo, que se deja seducir por la sonoridad de unas cuantas palabras, que hoy día solo tienen la peligrosa hermosura de la forma. Se procede por contagio al aceptarla, no por convinción (sic) profunda, con raices en la esperiencia (sic) ó en la lógica. Toda América es independiente, de la dominación española, y Cuba por estar *geográficamente* en América, se contagia de esas nacionalidades, donde hubo lo que ya no hay en Cuba, dominación y dominadores.
>
> Cuando el mundo entero juzgue de esta sublevación, se definirá diciendo con el laconismo de la redacción telegráfica:
>
> "En Cuba se han sublevado contra el sentido común." (El separatista 283)[115]

López Bago returned to Spain sometime during the second half of 1895, after "siete años de ... emigración voluntaria y viajes por las Repúblicas hispano-americanas" ("Naturalismos," El separatista 279). Summing up his novelistic career in "Naturalismos," he writes about the seventeen naturalist novels he published (he excluded from this number Los amores and the novelette ¡Esto no es un hombre!). The author hopes that his novels will continue to

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sell well, yet still be considered controversial enough as not to be pleasing to all who read them (El separatista 287-88).

After 1895, López Bago's whereabouts and activities are difficult to trace. He was an unemployed professional naturalist novelist without a reading public. By the second half of the decade, interest in Naturalism was gone. López Bago did not adapt to, nor was he influenced by Spain's changing literary currents. Nor did he demonstrate the artistic versatility of other writers of his generation—Galdós, Pardo Bazán, Palacio Valdés, Picón, or Ortega Munilla, for example—who continued to develop as novelists well into the twentieth century. What became of the once controversial novelist? Without the availability of facts, one can only conjecture. The most logical course he would have taken would have been to return to professional journalism.

Amazingly, in 1911, after fifteen years of silence, López Bago published his last known work, a lecture entitled, El obrero y su importancia.[116] It was presented before members of the "Sociedad Auxiliar de Artesanos" on the evening of November 26, 1911 in Maracaibo, Venezuela. The location of this lecture is especially significant. We learn that López Bago returned to Latin America for a second time. The cover page of El obrero y su importancia indicates that the November 26th lecture was López Bago's "segunda conferencia" presented before the association.[117]

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López Bago opens his lecture before an audience of craftsmen and artisans by citing a translated quotation from Benjamin Franklin: "Vale más un obrero de pies (sic) que un noble de rodillas" (3).[118] In the first part of his speech, López Bago extols the virtues of hard work and physical labor, the source of true redemption (4): "El trabajo enaltece, el ocio deprime" (5). True nobility, he contends, is achieved not "en el brillo de la cuna, sino en el cumplimiento del deber, que ha de ser norma de todos nuestros actos" (8). For López Bago, Franklin's eighteenth-century maxim exemplifies the positive changes which were taking place in his own era, as in the breakdown in the rigidity of social class lines:

> Pasaron, afortunadamente, los tiempos en que corrían amonedados el abolengo y la posición. Hoy impera sin disputa el trabajo, potencia milagrosa que permite al hombre levantarse muy alto y merecer el dictado de rey de la Creación. (9)

In the second part of his lecture, López Bago underscores the laboring classes' indispensable role and accomplishments in the building and development of all spheres of modern society: industry, agriculture, science, art, commerce, transportation, urban development, etc. As López Bago illustrates, it is the laborer who plows the earth; descends into the mines in order to extract precious metals like gold and carbon, the "nervio vital de la industria;" operates "la triunfal locomotora y el majestuoso transatlántico;" and

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"vence la selva virgen y levanta las ciudades," etc. (9). These "genuinos adalides del progreso" (10) are the unseen and unacknowledged backbone behind the success of the publicly recognized professionals: scientists, musicians, artists, and so forth. Laborers build the instruments and equipment which are indispensable to these professionals (10-11).

In his concluding remarks, the novelist tells his listeners that they should feel proud to be the "piezas integrantes de ese mecanismo que da movimiento á las naciones" (11). He asks his audience to always remember Franklin's "frase consoladora," and to make it their motto (12). It is no wonder that López Bago wanted to instill in the consciousness of his listeners the image of Ben Franklin and the memory of his quotation. The famous statesman, scientist, inventor, intellectual, and man of letters, whom López Bago considered the greatest American, second only to George Washington (3), was himself born into a working class family.[119] López Bago concludes his lecture as he began it, by citing Franklin's quotation.

The "Sociedad Auxiliar de Artesanos" was obviously favorably impressed with López Bago to have invited him to speak before their association on at least two occasions. As was mentioned in the introduction to this thesis (p. 2), López Bago was genuinely concerned with the welfare of the laboring classes. <u>El obrero</u> reaffirms the author's ties to these groups—he was empathetic and obviously continued to identify

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with this sector of society. Unlike his portrayal of workers in his naturalist novels, in El obrero, López Bago does not discuss any of the underlying social and economic inequities confronted by the lower classes during their entire lives. Rather, El obrero it appears, was intended to serve as a morale booster. The author himself was uncharacteristically optimistic (and even unrealistic), especially, for instance, in his statement regarding a changing class structure: the traditional system whereby the nobility exercised influence and received unmerited privileges was being replaced by a society which values diligence and rewards hard work, regardless of social class. (See López Bago's quote from p. 9: "Pasaron, afortunadamente, los tiempos en que corrían amonedados el abolengo y la posición....") In contrast to his naturalistic objective of exposing and denouncing the exploitation of working classes by members of the upper strata, López Bago's lecture before a receptive audience was designed to acknowledge, praise, support and foster the continued endeavors of the "genuinos adalides del progreso."

El obrero y su importancia may offer us some clues as to the direction López Bago's life might have taken during these later years. He might have been invited to lecture before the "Sociedad Auxiliar de Artesanos" based on his sympathetic portrayal of the "obrero" in his naturalist novels, and/or because of contributions he might have made after 1895 in Spain and/or Latin America. It appears more than likely that

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López Bago devoted a significant part of his life after Naturalism to championing the causes of laborers, in a journalistic, social and/or political capacity.

The last piece of information regarding López Bago's whereabouts and possible activities comes from Pío Baroja. In his Memorias, Baroja recalls having seen López Bago in Madrid in 1915 or 1916: "Luego le vi un momento a este escritor en la redacción del periódico España, el año 1915 ó 16" (Memorias 94; or Obras completas 7:567). Unfortunately, Baroja did not explain the circumstances of his encounter with López Bago. Perhaps the former naturalist novelist was employed on the staff of the newspaper.

Eduardo López Bago died in Alicante in October 1931 (Lozano Marco 343n5).

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NOTES TO CHAPTER I

[1] See: Ferreras: Catálogo 219, Novela 74, "Prosa" 128; Lozano Marco 343n5; Paolini, "Separatista" 5; Pedraza Jiménez 7: 939; Sainz de Robles 636.

[2] Alejandro Sawa, appendix: "Impresiones de un lector: Eduardo López Bago," El cura (caso de incesto): Novela médico-social, by López Bago (Madrid: Juan Muñoz, [1885]) 296.

[3] Eduardo López Bago, appendix: "La moral del naturalismo," La buscona: Novela médico-social, (Tercera parte de "La prostituta"), 9th ed. (Madrid: M. Núñez Samper, n.d.) 264.

[4] In Campaña crítica: Don Carlos María Ramírez como autor de Los amores de Marta (Montevideo: Tipografía "Nacional," 1888). López Bago writes: "Se equivoca quien haya presumido que iba á censurar este español, educado en Andalucia (sic), esta limosna." See p. 39.

[5] El Gran Mundo was described as a "Revista semanal ilustrada, dedicada al bello sexo—Literatura, Modas, Salones, Paseos y Teatros." Established in 1873, the magazine's last confirmed issue was published on May 15, 1876. See: Manuel Chaves, Historia y bibliografía de la prensa sevillana (Seville: Imp. de E. Rasco, 1896) 204-05.

[6] Speaking before an audience of laborers, López Bago declared: "¡Ah! señores, permitidme un ligero rasgo de vanidad, dejadme que os recuerde que quien os habla es un obrero, uno que ostenta como blasón el descender de humildes artesanos...." See: Eduardo López Bago, El obrero y su importancia. Conferencia leída por su autor en el salón de la Sociedad Auxiliar de Artesanos, la noche del 26 de nvbre. de 1911 (Maracaibo [Venezuela]: Imprenta Americana, 1911) 8.

[7] In Los amores, we observe a rare, intimate and touching glimpse of the controversial and combative novelist. López Bago interrupts his narration to share with his readers the very painful childhood memory of his beloved mother's wake, and tells of his family's subsequent flight from the house in which she died: "Recuerdo, lector, que cuando murió mi madre, con esa curiosidad propia de la infancia, que sólo conservan después las mujeres, logré *coger las vueltas* á las personas que formaban el duelo, escabullirme y penetrar sin ser visto en la habitacion (sic) donde estaba su castísimo cuerpo, entre amarillentos cirios que chisporroteaban al arder.—Mi madre

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estaba sola.—El balcon (sic) que daba á la calle abierto, y la noche era fría.—Miré aquellas lívidas facciones, para mí tan queridas, y al resplandor de los cirios me pareció que rodaba silenciosa una lágrima por las mejillas de la muerta.—Me indigné ante aquella soledad que parecia (sic) abandono.—¡Y yo no podia (sic) sentarme al borde del ataud! yo (sic), su hijo, no podia (sic) hacerla compañía, me obligaba salir como habia (sic) entrado, furtiva é inmediatamente.—¡No me iré sin darla (sic) un beso!—pensé, y rápido como el pensamiento acerquéme de puntillas, y con mis labios infantiles la besé en la boca.—¡Estaba helada!— El instinto de mi candidez, la ignorancia de la muerte me hizo correr al balcon (sic), cerrarlo herméticamente y salir con temor, pero vangloriándome para mis adentros y satisfecho de lo que acababa de poner en práctica.—A los pocos dias (sic) *huíamos*, mi familia y yo, de la casa en que ocurrió el fallecimiento." See: Eduardo López Bago, Los amores (obra entretenida) (Seville: Imp. de Gironés y Orduña, 1876) 126-127.

[8] In "La moral del naturalismo," López Bago refers to "la larga agonía de mi pobre padre, cuando estaba yo á la cabecera de su cama." This difficult period in the author's life occurred in 1884 when accusations against him were made in the press upon the publication of his translation of Daudet's Sapho. See: La buscona 278. In "Análisis de la novela titulada Crimen legal," López Bago adds: "... y llegó para mí el año triste, el año en que murió mi padre y en que fuí víctima de una calumnia que atacaba á mi reputación literaria." See: appendix, Crimen legal, by Alejandro Sawa (Madrid: Biblioteca del Renacimiento Literario-Juan Muñoz, [1886]) 278.

[9] The Boletín de la librería: Obras antiguas y modernas (Madrid: M. Murillo, 1873-91) announced the publication of Los amores in its January 1877 issue. See: vol. 4, no. 7, p. 100.

[10] See: "Cristo," Revista Contemporánea 30 Nov. 1878: 247; "La confesión de un escéptico," Revista Contemporánea 15 Jan. 1879: 120-21.

[11] Here, López Bago anticipates a technique that Galdós would later introduce in his novels. See: La desheredada, La de Bringas and Torquemada en el Purgatorio, for example.

[12] See: "Libros Presentados á esta redacción por autores ó editores," La Ilustración Española y Americana 22 Jan. 1877: 56.

[13] José Ortega Munilla, El Parlamento 27 Jan. 1877: n. pag.; qtd. in Pattison, Naturalismo 136.

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[14] El Correo Catalán 19 Apr. 1877: n. pag.; qtd. in Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 251n10.

[15] See: "López Bago," Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada; Manuel Ossorio y Bernard, Ensayo de un catálogo de periodistas españoles del siglo XIX (Madrid: J. Palacios, 1903-04) 230; Sainz de Robles, 636.

[16] Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 239; Sawa, "Impresiones," El cura 299-300.

[17] "López Bago," Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada; Ossorio y Bernard 230; Sainz de Robles 636.

[18] Bretz 108; Davis 53; Pattison, Naturalismo 108-09.

[19] Pattison, Naturalismo 120.

[20] Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 239; Sawa, "Impresiones," El cura 299.

[21] Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 239; Sawa, "Impresiones," El cura 300.

[22] Lissorgues, "' El naturalismo radical'" 239; Eduardo López Bago, dedication page, El periodista: Novela política, Cuadros de la vida política (Madrid: Manuel G. Hernández, 1884) 5.

[23] Unfortunately, after extensive investigation, I have been unable to locate: La Familia, La Ilustración Militar, El Parlamento, El Progreso, La Reforma, or La Correspondencia Ilustrada in the United States; these publications are not listed as part of the periodical collection of an American research library.

[24] Gisele Cazottes, La presse périodique madrilène entre 1871 et 1885 (Montpellier [Fr.]: U Paul Valéry, Centre de Recherches sur les Littératures Ibériques et Ibero-Américaines Modernes, 1982) 180.

[25] María Pilar Celma Valero, Literatura y periodismo en las revistas del fin de siglo: Estudios e índices (1888-1907) (Madrid: Jucar, 1991) 18.

[26] Eduardo López Bago, "Una visita al Real Museo," Revista Contemporánea 15 Oct. 1878: 269-88; 30 Oct. 1878: 385-408; 15 Nov. 1878: 55-69.

[27] It is unclear exactly when López Bago worked for El Parlamento. It seems that he was employed there around the time of his collaboration with Revista Contemporánea. In his

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paragraph on the two publications, Sawa refers to El Parlamento before Revista Contemporánea: "Fué periodista periódico, esclavo sin derecho á la queja, en El Parlamento ... y periodista literario en La Revista Contemporánea.... See: "Impresiones," El cura 299-300.

[28] Eduardo López Bago, "Las nubes (historia de los bastidores," La Ilustración Española y Americana 8 Oct. 1882: 206.

[29] Eduardo López Bago, "Fotografías instantáneas: Una sesión importante," La Ilustración Española y Americana 22 Dec. 1883: 371-72.

[30] Eduardo López Bago, appendix: "Postdata," El periodista 192-93.

[31] Eduardo López Bago, "Naturalistas e idealistas," letter, El Progreso 3 Mar. 1884: n. pag.; cited in Pattison, Naturalismo 108-09. López Bago reproduced this letter in the appendix of El periodista. See: "Postdata" 162-68.

[32] Eduardo López Bago, article, La Ilustración Militar 20 July 1884: n. pag.; as cited in Pattison, Naturalismo 120.

[33] There is a discrepancy in the title of this novelette. According to Antonio Palau y Dulcet, it is ¡¡Usted no es hombre!! See: Antonio Palau y Dulcet, Manual del librero hispanoamericano, 7: 631. Citing the list of "Libros recibidos" from the September 2, 1888 edition of El Motín, Lissourges gives the following title: ¡Esto no es un hombre! See: "'El naturalismo radical'" 241.

[34] This short story was published in Madrid in 1885. See: Palau y Dulcet 7: 631. Thanks to the information provided by Botrel in his article, "España, 1880-1890," p. 185, I was able to verify the inclusion of "El hombre mono" in a collection entitled: Narraciones naturalistas: En carne viva, a collection of short stories by J. Conde de Salazar, José Zahonero and Eduardo López Bago. According to Botrel (185), a publication announcement for Narraciones naturalistas is listed an entry number 10.012 in the Boletín de la librería: Obras antiguas y modernas, vol. 11, no. 11 [May 1885]: 167. The entry reads as follows: "Narraciones naturalistas. En carne viva; colección de cuentos. *Los amigos del marido*, por J. Conde de Salazar. *El Señorito de Ubesa*, por José Zahonero. *El hombre mono*, por Eduardo López Bago. Madrid. Est. tip. de Alvarez hermanos. 1885. José María Faquineto, editor...." Unfortunately, I have had no success in locating this collection.

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[35] According to Palau y Dulcet (7:631), "Carambola conyugal" was published in Madrid without its date of publication. After not being able to find any trace of this work, I conclude that it was published as part of a collection (as was "El hombre mono"). In his list of works published by López Bago, Palau y Dulcet includes the following entry: "Silas, Martínez de la Sagra y Boccacio (sic) ¿Pican..., ...pican? Cuentos naturales. M[adrid], Suc. M. Minuesa de los Ríos. 1901, 8º, 214 p." In his article, "España: 1880-1890," Botrel cites an earlier published edition of the collection: "En 1885, el editor José María Faquineto publicará unos 'cuentos naturales' de López Bago, Sales (sic), Martínez de la Sagra y ... Bocaccio (sic), titulados ¿Pican...pican?" See: 195-96. Unfortunately, after extensive research, I have been unable to find any trace of this collection. It is quite possible that "Carambola conyugal" and perhaps other stories by López Bago are included in the collection.

[36] Consult: A Chronological Bibliography of Eduardo López Bago's Known Published Works in Appendix B.

[37] The author's first novel of this period, El periodista, is not a "novela social" nor "médico-social."

[38] In some of López Bago's novels, this quote includes the word "observación": "La moral moderna consiste en buscar las causas de los males sociales, analizándolos y sometiéndolos á la observación y el (sic) experimiento." See title pages of: La señora de López, La soltera, La desposada, Luis Martínez, El Espada, El preso and Carne de nobles.

[39] A liberal and progressive politician and journalist, Albareda wrote the appendix: "Las novelas," to La desposada (213-63). He served as the Liberal party's "ministro de Fomento" (Minister of Industrial Development) in Práxedes Mateo Sagasta's government (1881-1884). He later served as Minister of the Interior, and represented Spain as ambassador in Paris and London. Albareda founded two celebrated publications: Contemporáneo and Revista de España. See his obituary, "Don José Luis Albareda," in La Epoca 4 Nov. 1897: [1]. Lissorgues calls him "un turiferario de López Bago." See: "'El naturalismo radical'" 246.

[40] A publication announcement for El periodista was included in the June 1884 issue of the Boletín de la librería. See: 11.12: 181.

[41] See the first of two publication announcements for El periodista in the "Libros Nuevos" section of La Epoca 14 June 1884: [4]. In "Postdata," López Bago also announced his plans for the "Cuadros de la vida política" series. See: 161.

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[42] See: "Libros Nuevos," La Epoca 26 June 1884: [4].

[43] Earl R. Beck, "Cánovas del Castillo, Antonio," Historical Dictionary of Modern Spain, 1700-1988, ed. Robert Kern (New York: Greenwood, 1990) 104, 106.

[44] Eduardo López Bago, appendix, La Pálida: Novela médico-social, (Segunda parte de "La prostituta"), 2nd ed. (Madrid: Alvarez hermanos, 1885) 263.

[45] Eduardo López Bago, La prostituta: Novela médico-social (Madrid: Juan Muñoz, [1884]). La prostituta and all of the author's novels published by Juan Muñoz y Compañía, Editores" appeared without their year of publication.

[46] It is interesting to observe that López Bago should have chosen to compare his success to the two "libros de caballerías," novels representative of a genre of literature which depicts the idealized fantasy world of fair ladies and their heroic knight-errants.

[47] Fernández y Villaverde was the Conservative Party's Civil Governor of Madrid from March 1884 until July 1885. See: Lozano Marco 356n10. Clarín writes about the conflicts between López Bago and Fernández y Villaverde in "El testamento de Alarcón" from his 1889 book of criticism, Mezclilla. He observes the irony in their reversal of positions: López Bago, from a more conservative attitude to an ardent liberal and naturalist; Fernández y Villaverde, former liberal turned staunch conservative: "Lo que yo extraño es como el Sr. López Bago, que antes de ser naturalista fue conservador, no conoce mejor a sus antiguos correligionarios. De fijo conoce mejor a sus correligionarios antiguos el Sr. Villaverde, que antes de conservador fue ... ¿novelista? No, liberal." See: Leopoldo Alas, "El testamento de Alarcón," Mezclilla, ed. Antonio Vilanova, Palabra Crítica 3 (Barcelona: Lumen, 1987) 280.

[48] López Bago, "La moral del naturalismo," La buscona 269. Also see: Lozano Marco 343-44.

[49] López Bago accused Luis Alfonso, his "antiguo amigo" and La Epoca's renowned critic, of waging a cowardly and underhanded campaign against him and La prostituta. Based on information he received from unnamed sources, López Bago identified Alfonso as the author of diatribes published under the pen name "Medrano." See: appendix, La Pálida 267-68.

[50] José Ortega Munilla, "La vuelta al año," La Ilustración Artística 3 Nov. 1884: 354; qtd. in Schmidt, "José Ortega Munilla and His Novels," 202, 210n14. Botrel also comments on Ortega Munilla's objections to La prostituta.

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See: "España, 1880-1890" 194.

[51] Narciso Campillo was a journalist, a short story writer, a "catedrático" in Cádiz and Madrid as well as a romantic poet with strong aesthetic ties to José Zorrilla. See: Cejador y Frauca 8:246; López Jiménez 39n17.

[52] López Bago again makes reference to Campillo's review of La prostituta in the appendix to La monja. See: "Al Ministerio público, á la Autoridad gubernativa, á la acción privada," La monja: Novela médico-social, (Tercera parte de "El cura") (Madrid: M. Núñez Samper, 1904) 277.

[53] J. Domínguez Bordona, ed., "Cartas inéditas de Valera," Revista de la Biblioteca, Archivo y Museo 2 (1925): 83-109; 237-52.

[54] Juan Valera, letter to Narciso Campillo, 27 Nov. 1884, letter 40, Domínguez Bordona 239. Unfortunately, neither López Bago in La Pálida's appendix, nor Valera in the letter to Campillo provided publication information on the article. The unnamed article, however, presumably was published in late October or early November.

[55] Edith Fishtine describes Valera's reaction to López Bago's first "novela médico-social" as one of shock and disgust. See: "Don Juan Valera: the Critic," diss., Bryn Mawr, 1933, 39n35.

[56] López Bago is mentioned in two letters written by Valera to Campillo in 1885. In the letter dated November 18, Valera seemed unaffected by López Bago's criticism directed against him: "Siento que ese Sr. López Bago me trate tan mal: pero ¿qué le hemos de hacer? Lo que yo celebraría sería seguir escribiendo novelas como Pepita Jiménez y El Comendador Mendoza.... Si el señor López Bago habla con el mismo juicio de Alarcón y de Pérez Galdós que de mí, no creo que se le debe hacer caso." See: letter 46, Domínguez Bordona 245. In his letter dated December 25, 1885, Valera confessed to not having read any of López Bago's works, though he expressed his disesteem for Naturalism: "Que nada he leído de lo que escribe López Bago, y no sé qué decir de su mérito; pero en cuanto al naturalismo, soy de la propia opinión de usted. Me parece una *blague* francesa." See: letter 47, Domínguez Bordona 246.

[57] Despite his protestations of professional literary independence, it should be noted that López Bago did write five letters to Galdós between 1884 and 1915 requesting "dinero, consejo y publicaciones." See: Sebastian De la Nuez, and José Schraibman, Cartas del archivo de Pérez Galdós (Madrid: Taurus, 1967) 369.

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[58] Pattison makes reference to a publication announcement which appeared in El Imparcial 22 Dec. 1884: [n. pag.]. We can presume that the translation made its début shortly before the December 22nd announcement. Pattison includes López Bago's translation in a list entitled, "Catálogo de traducciones de A. Daudet, 1880-1900": "Safo, costumbres de París. Traducción de Eduardo López Bago, precedida de una carta del ilustre novelista francés, con un prólogo de Eugenio de Olavarría y Huarte. Madrid, ¿Agustín Jubera?, 1884. 3.a edición, 1888; 4.a edición, 1897." See: Naturalismo 57. Fernando Fe, not Agustín Jubera, was the publisher.

[59] Pío Baroja, Memorias (Madrid: Minotauro, 1955) 94. Baroja's Memorias were also published in his: Obras completas, vol. 7 (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1949). See: p. 567 for his cited comments on López Bago.

[60] Sawa indicates that there were, indeed, problems between the two novelists: "...de justísimo resentimiento literario y hasta personal con monsieur Alphonse Daudet, el gran colorista de Francia." See: "Impresiones de un lector," El cura 303-04.

[61] The letter was not published in the edition I consulted. See: Eduardo López Bago, trans., Safo: Costumbres de París, by Alphonse Daudet, introd. Eugenio de Olavarría y Huarte, 3rd ed. (Madrid: Fernando Fé, 1888). Lozano Marco also discusses the scandal over the letter. See: 357n13.

[62] Eduardo López Bago, La Pálida: Novela médico-social. For full citation, see entry for La Pálida's appendix.

[63] Lozano Marco writes: "La prostituta y La Pálida vieron la luz con menos de tres meses de diferencia. See: 343-44. López Bago was already preparing La Pálida when La prostituta was published. A publication announcement for the soon-to-be released second novel in the series on prostitution was published at the end of La prostituta.

[64] In the appendix to La monja, López Bago also reproduces "todas las sentencias dictadas por el Tribunal Supremo de Justicia" (244) regarding his acquittal for La prostituta and La Pálida. See: "Al Ministerio público" 244-51.

[65] López Bago wrote: "El naturalismo no puede ser una literatura prohibida. ¡Qué derrota!" See: appendix: "Vosotros y yo," El cura 275. Lozano Marco makes reference to the author's statement. See: 346.

[66] Eduardo López Bago, afterword: "Advertencia," Carne importada (costumbres de Buenos Aires): Novela médico-social,

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Primera parte de "La trata de blancos" (Buenos Aires: Urbano Rivero, "La Maravilla Literaria," [1891]) [288].

[67] Lozano Marco (344) offers evidence which suggests that López Bago had originally conceived his series on prostitution as a trilogy. In La buscona's "La moral del naturalismo" (245), for example, López Bago wrote: "Procesado por las dos novelas anteriores á ésta [La buscona], con la cual termino el análisis de una llaga social..."; and in the appendix to El cura, the author stated: "A El Cura seguirán El Confesonario y La Monja, así como á La Prostituta seguieron La Pálida y La Buscona. See: "Vosotros y yo" 262. Lozano Marco concludes that "resulta obvio que no había pensado aún escribir la cuarta novela en la que, con la muerte del protagonista, el joven Miguel Loitia, cierra el ciclo: no sabemos, pues, si La Querida sería redactada con posterioridad a las obras que componen la trilogía anticlerical o simultaneamente a éstas" (344).

[68] There is no references to Miralta's Christian name, nor the date nor title of his article.

[69] Eduardo López Bago, appendix: "La crítica de El cura," El confesonario (satiriasis): Novela médico-social, (Segunda parte de "El cura") (Madrid: M. Núñez Samper, [1885 or 1886]).

[70] It is not unreasonable that Miralta should have arrived at this conclusion. After all, López Bago was distinguishing himself as one of the most vocal and zealous admirers and advocates of French Naturalism in Spain. One wonders why at this juncture, López Bago should have so vehemently refuted the title, or why he was so opposed to Miralta and/or others identifying him as Naturalism's standard-bearer, or why he interpreted the title as an insult. López Bago's reaction on this point was out of character. He wrote: "[Miralta] empieza por afirmar que yo pretendo ser el portaestandarte del naturalismo en España. ¡Yo! ¿Dónde he dicho yo eso? El Sr. Miralta no sabe nada de mí, ni tampoco sabe lo que significa la palabra *pretendiente*.... ¿Dicen que yo soy el portaestandarte del naturalismo en España? Pues hay que esperar, para acusarme, á que yo lo diga." See: 240-41. Could it be that López Bago was so upset because someone else had assigned the title to him before he himself had thought or decided to do so? The last sentence of his statement seems to indicate this possibility.

[71] Lissorgues reproduces the publicity announcement for some of López Bago's novels which were published in the "Sección bibliográfica" or in the "Libros recibidos" of El Motín. The "reseña publicitaria" for El confesonario appeared in the January 17, 1886 issue. See: "'El naturalismo radical'" 251n13.

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[72] López Bago was also accused of having authored "el artículo laudatorio," "Impresiones de un lector," himself instead of Sawa. López Bago denied the allegation. See: "La crítica de El cura," El confesonario 259.

[73] Crimen legal made its début in late May or during the first week of June 1886. Phillips cites an announcement in the June 10 issue of El Motín. See: Alejandro Sawa 158.

[74] Alejandro Sawa; qtd. in Rafael Cansinos-Asséns, "Alejandro Sawa, el gran Bohemio," Indice 15.149 (1961): 23.

[75] Another interesting connection between López Bago and Sawa during the middle of the decade has to do with their association with the "Gente Nueva," a newly formed group or generation of young artists and literary anarchists who were profoundly discontented with the world around them. In their works, they expressed their rebellion and their aspirations for improving conditions. The group was named "Gente Nueva" to distinguish itself from the older members of the Generation of '68. Idealistic and progressive, the "Gente Nueva" anticipated the far greater talent, impact and renown of the Generation of '98. See: Correa Ramón 22-24; Granjel, "Maestros" 431; Phillips, Alejandro 41, 53-54. According to Phillips, López Bago was also a member of the "Gente Nueva," as were many others, including Zahonero, and playwright Joaquín Dicenta. See: Alejandro 53-54. For more information on the "Gente Nueva," also see Phillips' article, "Algo más" 329-31.

[76] For complete publication information on these two novels, see previously cited corresponding appendices: El confesonario: "La crítica de El cura;" La monja: "Al Ministerio público."

[77] Eduardo López Bago, La querida: Novela médico-social, (Cuarta y última parte de "La prostituta"), edición ilustrada con el retrato del autor por Nicolás Megía (Madrid: Juan Muñoz, [1886]).

[78] Based on the information provided by El Motín, we can assume that El confesonario was published in late December 1885 or early January 1886; La querida, in late January or early February, 1886; and La monja in late March or April.

[79] Eduardo López Bago, La señora de López: Novela social, La mujer honrada (Madrid: Juan Muñoz, [1886]). A publication announcement for La señora de López appeared in the October 28 issue of El Motín. See: Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 251n13.

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[80] Eduardo López Bago, La soltera (segunda parte de La señora de López): Novela social, La mujer honrada (Madrid: Juan Muñoz, [1886]). An announcement for the publication of La soltera was included in the November issue of the Boletín de la librería. See: 14.5: 68.

[81] The Boletín de la librería announced the release of Luis Martínez in January 1887. See: 14.7: 100.

[82] See: "Obras del mismo autor: En preparación," opposite title page of Luis Martínez, El Espada (en la plaza): Novela social, La torería (Madrid: Fernando Fé, 1886). Also see: Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 240.

[83] R[icardo] Monner Sans, Breve noticias sobre la novela española contemporánea (Buenos Aires: F. Lajouane, 1889).

[84] Authors Pedraza Jiménez and Rodríguez Cáceres also comment on Luis Martínez. See: 7: 940.

[85] Eduardo López Bago, La desposada (amor y miseria), (Tercera parte de La señora de López): Novela médico-social, La mujer honrada (Madrid: Juan Muñoz Sánchez, [1887]).

[86] Interestingly enough, López Bago, it appears, did not comment upon any of the novels from his trilogy as he did with many of his other novels. Two of the novels include appendices authored by others: La señora de López' appendix, "La crítica y el público" (271-87), is a translation of a study written by Paul Alexis, French author and critic, and a friend of Zola's; and Luis Albareda's monograph on Naturalism, "Las novelas," serves as the appendix to La desposada (213-63). La soltera was published without an appendix.

A pattern was developing in the chronological order of the publication of López Bago's serial novels. Instead of publishing the three novels of each of his two trilogies—"El cura" and "La mujer honrada"—successively, he published the first two novels of a trilogy, then published an unrelated novel, and finally published the third novel. In the following order, he published: El cura, El confesonario, La querida (the fourth novel of "La prostituta"), and La monja; La señora de López, La soltera, the unrelated Luis Martínez, and finally La desposada. Although, as was noted before, "La prostituta" was probably conceived as a trilogy, the non-sequential order for publishing "El cura" was probably intentional. The reason: to increase the sales of his novels. The idea of introducing an unrelated novel before completing a series had a double benefit: it kept readers in suspense, waiting in anticipation for the denouement of a series; and it also served to inspire interest in the next project.

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[87] Eduardo López Bago, Carne de nobles: Novela médico-social (Madrid: Juan Muñoz Sánchez, [1887]).

[88] A publication announcement appeared in the June 1887 issue of the Boletín de la librería. See: 14.12: 479-80. According to the Boletín, Carne de nobles was to have been the "primera parte" of an untitled series.

[89] Eduardo López Bago, Los asesinos: Novela social, 2 vols. (Madrid: Juan Muñoz [1887-88]).

[90] The exact number of pages in volume two is not known. Page 1022 is the last page included in my copy of the novel obtained from Madrid's La Biblioteca Nacional's collection. According to the information supplied by the library on the page opposite 1022, pages are missing due to deterioration of the text. Pages are also missing from the beginning of volume two. The volume starts with page 47. Volume one contains 1,008 pages.

[91] Lissorgues makes reference to this "anuncio publicitario puesto al final de La desposada." See: "'El naturalismo radical'" 252n14.

[92] The more than two thousand pages of Los asesinos suggests that the novel was commercially successful.

[93] Jean-François Botrel, "La novela por entregas: Unidad de creación y de consumo, Creación y público en la literatura española, ed. Jean-François Botrel and S. Salaun (Madrid: Castalia, 1974): 111-18, 122-23, 128-29, 132-33, 137-38; Juan-Ignacio Ferreras, La novela por entregas: 1840-1900, Estudios sobre la novela española del siglo XIX 4 (Madrid: Taurus, 1972): 16-17, 19, 24, 26-27, 28, 29, 31-32, 35, 77-78, 86, 120, 242, 246-59, 269-73, 275, 287, 307, 314; "Folletín," Diccionario de Literatura Española e Hispanoamericana, ed. Ricardo Gullón (Madrid: Alianza, 1993); Zavala, Ideología 80-81.

[94] Eduardo López Bago, El preso: Novela médico-social, La Inquisición moderna: Estudios de la vida humana en cárceles y presidios (Madrid: [Juan Muñoz, 1885]). Publication announcements for El preso were published in the May issue of the Boletín de la librería 15.11: 181; and in the June 28, 1888 edition of El Motín, according to Lissorgues. See: "'El naturalismo radical'" 251n13.

[95] According to Lissorgues, on September 2, 1888, El Motín's "Libros recibidos" announced the recent publication of ¡Esto no es un hombre! See: "'El naturalismo radical'" 241.

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[96] Ruben Darío, España contemporánea (Paris: Garnier, n.d.) 227.

[97] Eduardo López Bago, appendix: "Naturalismos: A la crítica," El separatista: Novela médico-social, (Primera parte de una tetralogía), edición ilustrada con el retrato del autor (Havana: Viuda de Pozo é hijos, [1895]) 279.

[98] A disenchanted Ortega Munilla criticized Zola's recent novel, La Terre, in a September 1887 article. Other critics shared Ortega Munilla's sentiments. See: Pattison, Naturalismo 143-46.

[99] The notable exception to this, of course, was the Zolaesque Naturalism of Blasco Ibáñez.

[100] Emilia Pardo Bazán, interview, by Lorenzo di Bradi, Le Soir, n.d: n. pag.; qtd. in La Epoca 24 Apr. 1899: [1].

[101] Among Zola's many enthusiastic followers who produced naturalist works at the turn of the century included the following: Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera (Peru); Gonzalo Picón Febres (Venezuela); Augusto Thomson (Chile); Manuel Zeno Gandía (Puerto Rico); Argentinians: Eugenio Cambaceres, Lucio López, José Miró, Manuel Podestá, and Manuel Gálvez. The latter's Historia de arrabal was published as late as 1922. The most popular naturalist novel in Latin America, Santa, was published in 1903 by the Mexican Federico Gamboa. See: Fernando Alegría, Historia de la novela hispanoamericana, 3rd ed. (Mexico [City]: De Andrea, 1966) 88, 98; Edenia Guillermo and Juana Amelia Hernández, Quince novelas hispanoamericanas (New York: Las Américas, 1971) 35, 36; Seymour Menton, "The Life and Works of Federico Gamboa," diss., New York U, 1952, 52-53.

[102] This work was cited earlier in this chapter.

[103] Eduardo López Bago, Carne importada. For complete citation, see previously cited entry for afterword: "Advertencia."

[104] According to Lissorgues, an "En prensa" announcement for "Un vencido" was included at the end of Carne importada. (He does not cite the publisher.) See: "'El naturalismo radical'" 240, 252. However, my edition of the novel does not include any publicity announcements.

[105] According to authors Bullough, the term "White Slave" "was not technically accurate since the traffic in people included those of all races and colors, and few were actually slaves. The term 'White Slave,' as eventually used in the treaties between different countries and in various federal

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and state laws, applied to the procuring and the transferring of girls and women for prostitution." See: Vern L. and Bonnie Bullough, Women and Prostitution: A Social History (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1987) 265.

[106] Vern L. Bullough, The History of Prostitution (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1964) 173-85; Rosa María Capel Martínez, "La prostitución en España: Notas, para un estudio socio-histórico," Mujer y sociedad en España: 1700-1975, comp. Rosa María Capel Martínez, ed. María Angeles Durán (Madrid: Dirección General de Juventud y Promoción Socio-Cultural, 1982) 275-77; John F. Decker, Prostitution: Regulation and Control (New York: New York U, 1979) 63-65.

[107] For his part, Palacio Valdés was not fond of López Bago. Palacio Valdés makes a passing reference to López Bago in his "Semblanza literaria" of José Zorrilla. In the brief section entitled "Epílogo," he clearly demonstrates his disdain for the contentious novelist: "Alguna vez le [Zorrilla] he vuelto a encontrar en las calles de Madrid, triste, cabizbajo y acompañado de López Bago. El genio, vaya o no vaya acompañado de López Bago, es digno de respeto." See: Armando Palacio Valdés, Obras completas, vol. 2 (Madrid: Aguilar, 1959) 1219.

Based on Palacio Valdés' statement, it appears that López Bago was a companion to the celebrated dramatist and romantic poet in his declining years. (Zorrilla died in 1893.) Unfortunately, Zorrilla scholars make no mention of a personal relationship between the two. López Bago's name is not even cited in Alonso Narciso Cortés' comprehensive study: Zorrilla: Su vida y sus obras (Valladolid [Sp.]: Librería Santaren, 1943).

[108] López Bago did not name the other nations he might have visited, nor did he supply the dates of his stay in Mexico and Puerto Rico. See: "Naturalismos," El separatista 280, 281.

[109] For full citation, see previously cited entry for appendix: "Naturalismos: A la crítica."

[110] The rapidity with which the novel was produced by a professional writer was a fact López Bago did not fail to bring to his readers' attention: "Publícase en Mayo (sic) y con esto dicho queda, como acostumbramos á escribir, los que de esta profesión vivimos en España." See: "Naturalismos," El separatista 295.

[111] Also see: "Naturalismos," El separatista 283, 288.

[112] Eduardo López Bago, foreword: "Al lector," El separatista [5].

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[113] The year before the author's arrival, war had broken out in Cuba (February 24, 1894), precipitated by the colonists' rejection of limited autonomous reforms proposed by the Spanish Parliament (February 12). See: Emilio González López, Historia de la civilización española (New York: Las Américas, 1970) 591.

[114] As common sense tells us, it also would have been very unwise for López Bago to publicly speak out in favor of, or against separatism in the novel. The advocacy of either side would have placed him in a no-win predicament, with possible unpleasant or unhealthy consequences.

[115] It is interesting to note that López Bago wrote the appendix to El separatista not in Cuba, but upon his return to Spain: "La primera impresión que he recibido al pisar de nuevo tierra española ..." ("Naturalismos," 279). One wonders if this was by chance or by design, since a declaration against the separatist movement would have alienated readers sympathetic to the revolutionary cause.

[116] This work was previously cited.

[117] No information is available on the first lecture.

[118] The original quotation reads: "A plowman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees." See: Benjamin Franklin, The Wit and Wisdom of Benjamin Franklin: A Treasury of More Than 900 Quotations and Anecdotes, ed. James C. Humes (New York: HarperCollins [sic], 1995) 27.

[119] Franklin's father, Josiah, was a dyer, a tallow chandler and a soap boiler. See: "Franklin, Benjamin," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1958 ed.

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CHAPTER II

NATURALISM:
A SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LITERARY MOVEMENT
AND
LOPEZ BAGO'S IDEOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION: "RADICAL NATURALISM"

As we observed in Chapter I, López Bago published most of his novels during the 1880s—the decade which produced many of the best Spanish novels of the nineteenth century: La desheredada (1881), La de Bringas (1884), Lo prohibido (1884) and Los Pazos de Ulloa (1884). This decade of novelistic creativity and achievement culminated in the publication of two of the greatest novels in the history of Spanish literature—Clarín's and Galdós' acknowledged masterpieces of the genre: La Regenta (1884) and Fortunata y Jacinta (1886-87). This period was also outstanding for the polemic over Naturalism, the movement which had originated in France in the 1860s and had "gained extreme though short-lived importance during the 1870s and early 1880s" (Medina 31).

The term "Naturalism" has a long history. According to authors Furst and Skrine, originally 'Naturalism' was used in ancient philosophy to denote materialism, epicureanism or any secularism. For long this was the primary meaning of the word."[1] The term also maintained a long history in Spain

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where it had been used for centuries to denote a medieval philosophical school, Pattison informs us in El naturalismo español (9). However, in the nineteenth century the term had three different interpretations: "(1) una actitud religiosa hacia la Naturaleza, es decir, la adoración de la Naturaleza por las gentes primitivas, o (2) la imitación íntima que el Arte hace de la Naturaleza, o (3) el estudio científico de la Naturaleza, y más específicamente, la ciencia experimental" (El naturalismo español 9). It is, of course, this last definition which refers specifically to Zola's doctrine which addresses our interests regarding Naturalism. In the broadest of terms, literary Naturalism is defined, interestingly enough, as both a branch of Realism and a completely separate literary movement. In Medina's words, Naturalism is "in part an offshoot of realism, in part a very different school of thought" (31). Complete with illustrative analogies, Furst and Skrine expound on the unusual dual nature of the movement:

> Naturalism *does* differ from Realism but is not independent of it. The most appropriate image to convey the relationship might be that of Siamese twins, who have separate limbs while sharing certain organs. What the Realists and the Naturalists have in common is the fundamental belief that art is in essence a mimetic, objective representation of outer reality (in contrast to the imaginative, subjective transfiguration practiced

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> by the Romantics). This led them to choose for their subject matter the ordinary, the close-to-hand, and also to extol the idea of impersonality in technique.... In many ways it [Naturalism] was an intensification of Realism.... Realism is like the 1789 Revolution in literature while Naturalism corresponds to the 1793 Reign of Terror. But it was not just a matter of choosing more shocking subjects, earthier vocabulary, more striking slogans or more photographic details. The true difference lies much deeper: at its core is the imposition of a certain, very specific view of man on Realism's attitude of detached neutrality. Thus the Naturalists not only elaborated on and intensified the basic tendencies of Realism; they also added important new elements which turned Naturalism into a recognizable doctrine such as Realism had never been.
>
> Naturalism is therefore more concrete and at the same time more limited than Realism; it is a literary movement with distinct theories, groups and practices. (8)

The purpose of this chapter is to define and characterize the principal elements which constitute "Radical Naturalism," López Bago's little known interpretation of Zola's imported doctrine. Before turning our attention to our author's

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countercurrent, it is important to first trace the development of the movement for which Zola is the acknowledged foremost exponent and theorist. It is not our intention, however, to present a detailed history of Naturalism in France and Spain, but rather to present a summary of those historical, scientific, philosophical and literary events and currents which had a direct impact on the development of Naturalism and "Radical Naturalism."

The Principal Influences of Literary Naturalism: The Scientific Age

Literary movements are products of their era. This is especially true with regard to Naturalism, a movement which developed directly out of "an attempt to apply to literature the discoveries and methods of nineteenth-century science" (Furst 9). Whereas the eighteenth century was characterized as "the Age of Reason" or "the Age of Enlightenment"—the epoch in which man's intellect was the solution to interpreting the world, the universe and himself—scientific discoveries and technological progress defined the nineteenth century in Western Europe and North America.

The Industrial Revolution which had begun in England around 1750 and spread to the rest of Europe and later to North America after the Napoleonic wars effected a rapid, radical and unprecedented transformation in all aspects of

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everyday life. It led to a dramatic shift of the population from a rural environment to fast growing urban centers, as many people sought machine work in the increasing number of factories. Technical skill and knowledge, in addition to the constant practical application of new ideas and improvements—especially in the fields of chemistry and engineering—all yielded amazing achievements in industry, communication and transportation. Some of the numerous extraordinary inventions and the harnessing of natural resources developed during the nineteenth century include the following: gas and coal heating, the steam engine, the electric light, the telegraph, transatlantic cable, the radio the telephone, printing presses, the power loom, the phonograph, photography, the locomotive, regular transatlantic steam ship service, the trolley, the construction of roads, bridges and railways.

The field of science which effected the most beneficial change in the lives of the general population was medicine. The most revolutionary triumph of medicine in the nineteenth century dealt with the study of microorganisms. Chemistry led the way for major breakthroughs with dramatic improvements in the compound microscope which made hitherto invisible microorganisms now visible to scientists for the first time. This led to the revelation that many fatal diseases were caused by these microorganisms. Most importantly, this led to the formulation of the "germ theory" of disease. English

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physician Joseph Lister (1827-1912), the founder of antiseptic surgery, proved that germs caused infections in wounds, and demonstrated the necessity of cleanliness and the sterilization of instruments to reduce the mortality rate of surgical and battlefield patients. French chemist Louis Pasteur (1822-95) contributed a great deal to saving lives when he developed a method of immunization against rabies, until then an invariably fatal disease. He developed the process for sterilizing milk (pasteurization), a process which helped to decrease cases of the fatal typhoid fever, a disease transmitted through polluted water, milk, etc. German bacteriologist Robert Koch (1843-1910) discovered the organisms which caused many infectious diseases, including anthrax (1876), tuberculosis (1882) and cholera (1884). In 1905 he won the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine for developing the tuberculin test for tuberculosis.[2]

Another important effect of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century was the population explosion in Europe. Interestingly enough, it was not attributed to a rise in the birth rate, but to the sharp decline in the mortality rate. Deaths were dramatically reduced thanks to the prevention and curing of many diseases, such as those mentioned above, and also by the adoption of numerous public health measures: safeguarding the water supply, central sewerage and waste disposal systems.

The increase in the population was also attributed to

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economic factors. Greater means of productivity in agriculture and industry brought about an increased means of subsistence with regard to food, clothing, shelter and other basic necessities. Crop failure was no longer synonymous with widespread famine. The new and rapid means of transportation guaranteed the arrival of much needed supplies to the stricken region from other parts of the country. All these factors "reduced the death rate in northwestern Europe from at least 30 per 1,000 persons in 1800 to about 15 in 1914. Thus Europe's population climbed steeply from 140 million in 1750 to 188 million in 1800, 266 million in 1850, 401 million in 1900 ..." (Stavrianos 225).

Despite the extraordinary contributions of science in every phase of life, the never ending demands for increased productivity and the constant implementation of more advanced forms of technology led to the exploitation of both natural and human resources. The capitalist upper classes—represented by industrialists, bankers, financiers, large factory and business owners, etc.—reaped the disproportionate amount of the tremendous financial and social rewards of industrialization to the detriment of their lower class laborers whose toil made their profits possible. The capitalist's life style contrasted appallingly with the deplorable crowded and unhealthy living and working conditions of their impoverished urban employees. The following passages document the plight of the nineteenth-century urban laborer:

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The tenant farmers were dispossessed, and the weavers and other handicraftsmen were wiped out by the irresistible competition of the new machine-made goods. These people, and others like them, faced the strain of moving to the city, finding employment, and adjusting to an unfamiliar environment.... They were completely dependent on their employers, having no land, no cottage, no tools, and no capital. In short, they had become mere wage earners, having nothing to offer but their labor. (Stavrianos 228) Many workers faced the more pressing problems of finding jobs and making ends meet on inadequate wages. The modern Western world had long experienced the business cycle, with it alternations of full employment and drastic layoffs. The Industrial Revolution intensified the cycle, making boom periods more hectic and widespread depressions ... more frequent and more severe. At first factories made little attempt to provide a fairly steady level of employment. When a batch of orders came in, machines and men were worked to capacity until the orders were filled; then the factory simply shut down to await the next batch....

Excessively long hours, low pay, rigorous discipline, and subhuman working conditions were

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> the most common grievances of early industrial workers. Many plants neglected hazards to their employees, few had safety devices to guard dangerous machinery.... Many workers could not afford decent housing, and if they could afford it, they could not always find it. (Brinton 571)

According to Furst and Skrine (12), both the positive and the negative effects of the Industrial Revolution were prominently depicted in the works of many naturalists. "The scramble for money and power through commercial expansion" constituted "the explicit theme," not only in Zola's L'Argent, but also in American Theodore Dreiser's The Financier and Frank Norris' The Octopus and The Pit. In Germinal, Zola underscores the violent confrontation between capitalists and laborers. Here, impoverished miners in a small mining community in a struggle for survival are forced to go on strike against their wealthy proprietor-employers. In Au bonheur des dames, Zola evokes the newly emerging unbalanced form of commercial competition between small and traditional shops and stores against the rise of large business establishments. Furst and Skrine underscore the relationship between the Industrial Revolution and Naturalism; they acknowledge the innovative contributions made by naturalist writers to nineteenth-century literature:

> Such subjects [those cited above] in themselves, with their evident class consciousness, were

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> relatively new in literature. They show how the Naturalists expanded the thematic and particularly the social range of the arts by dealing with a greater variety of people and problems, including many drawn from the newly emergent urban working classes. In this respect the Naturalists are directly linked to the Industrial Revolution and its aftermath. (12)

Men of Science and Medicine

Another key influence in the development of the naturalist doctrine was the highly controversial and revolutionary theory of evolution set forth by Charles Darwin (1809-1882). The English naturalist's theories dominated nineteenth-century science to the same extent that Isaac Newton's discovery of the laws governing the bodies in the universe prevailed in the seventeenth century (Stravrianos 199). After five years (1831-36) of diligent observation in the South Seas and ideas drawn from other evolutionists (Jean Lemarck, Charles Lyell, Thomas Malthus), Darwin shocked the world when, in 1859, he published his conclusions in On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life (Hayes 671). The significance of Darwin's contribution cannot be exaggerated, declare Furst and Skrine, for it is "*the* crucial

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landmark of nineteenth-century science and thought. Whether they wished or not, men were forced into the most radical self-reassessment in human history" (16).

Darwin's theory stated that "the separate species of animals and plants were not the result of special acts of creation" (Hayes 671), but they had "developed from earlier forms by hereditary transmission of slight variations in successive generations."[3] In effect, plants and animals had "'evolved' from earlier species by natural processes" (Hayes 671). Darwin defined the most important process as "natural selection" or "survival of the fittest." This principle stated that "in a given environment, those species survive which are most effectively equipped to survive in that environment, and those which are the less well equipped tend to disappear."[4] Thus, those enduring species are "naturally selected" for survival, transmitting favorable variations from one generation to the next. The cumulative variations result in an evolved new species "so different from the long-distant ancestor" (Brinton 652).

Man too was the product of the gradual development of animal life through the ages Darwin expounded in his second controversial book, The Descent of Man, published in 1871. Darwin was again denounced by enraged theologists when he stated that Man was simply a higher animal, descended from a very remote common primate ancestor (Stravrianos 202). Thus, Man, like plants and animals, was determined by the natural

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forces of heredity and environment. With regard to the development of Naturalism, Medina informs us that "Darwin's studies on heredity as well as his stress on man's basically *irrational* nature were to have a profound effect on literature of the second half of the nineteenth century" (23n6). Furst and Skrine credit Darwin's theory for representing "without doubt the most important single shaping factor. The Naturalists' view of man," they contend, "is directly dependent on the Darwinian picture of his descend from the lower animal. In contrast to the idealization of man by the Romantics, the Naturalists deliberately reduce him to animal level, stripping him of higher aspirations" (16). The image of Man depicted as an animal, a beast or satyr, is a dominant leitmotif in the works of many naturalists.

Zola was indeed "impressed"[5] by Darwin's theories on heredity, but he was even more taken with those formulated by Dr. Prosper Lucas in his Traité philosophique et physiologique de l'hérédité naturelle (1868-69). Lucas' study demonstrated how "the complex phenomenon of heredity manifests itself in diverse ways. Sometimes a child will inherit his physical or moral traits exclusively from his father, sometimes from his mother" (Grant 47). Sometimes "certain traits of both parents are inherited, fused or in a variety of combinations, and that these can also skip a generation,"[6] as is the case in atavism. From Lucas, Zola "extracted the concept of heredity as a governing force in man's life" (Medina 32), and applied Lucas'

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ideas in the creation of his own monumental study, Les Rougon-Macquart, histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le Second Empire, published between 1871 and 1893. In the famous twenty-volume series of novels, Zola traces the pathological degeneration of madness and disease in five generations of a single family; in twenty legitimate (the Rougons) and illegitimate (the Macquarts), descendants of the mad and hysterical Adelaïde Fouque.

An addition to Darwin's and Lucas' theories, the careful observations and laboratory experiments of another man of science had a profound impact on the development of Naturalism, most significantly, of course, on the development of Zola's doctrine. In 1865 the renowned French physiologist Claude Bernard (1813-1878) published his famous work: Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale, and introduced the scientific method to physiology and medicine, making medicine an experimental science. At the time that Bernard published his theories, medicine was considered an art, not a science. Bernard demonstrated that not only was medicine a science, but that the experimental method used by laboratory scientists from the acknowledged fields of science—chemistry and physics—could also be applied to the study of human organisms.[7] In his book, Bernard stated the following:

> Je me propose donc d'établir que la science des phénomènes de la vie ne peut pas avoir d'autres

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> bases que la science des phénomènes des corps bruts, et qu'il n'y a (sic) sous ce rapport aucune différence entre les principes des sciences biologiques et ceux des sciences physicochimiques.[8]

Bernard "sought to demonstrate that the observational and experimental methods of contemporary biology could be applied to all of science, on the assumption that an infallible determinism regulated all animal and human organisms" (Medina 34); these organisms are "nothing in reality but a living machine which functions according to the laws of mechanics and ordinary physical chemistry..." (Knapp 29-30).

Zola was, indeed, very much taken with the physiologist's theory. Just as Bernard had applied the theories of observation and experimentation to his own hitherto untested fields of physiology and medicine, so too was Zola to adapt the same method to the hitherto untested domain of literature. Thus, the idea was planted for the development of Zola's so-called "manifesto of naturalism,"[9] his theoretical text published in 1880 under the befitting title: Le roman expérimental. This collection of essays is regarded as Zola's "best known statement" (Block 7) of his theories on Naturalism and "one of the capital documents of late nineteenth-century literary history.[10] Zola consistently acknowledged his debt to and his admiration for the physiologist throughout Le roman expérimental for being the catalyst for his literary theory. In fact, Zola expressed such gratitude to Bernard that,

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according to Zolian scholar David Baguley, Le roman expérimental contains no less than "a whole battery of more than fifty substantial quotations from Claude Bernard's book...."[11]

As the title of his text indicates, Zola follows Bernard's example: "experimental medicine" becomes "the experimental novel"; "physician" is substituted for "novelist." "Nowhere," declare Furst and Skrine, "is there a plainer statement of the analogy between the writer and the scientist. Like the chemist, the biologist or the physicist, the artist is to 'experiment' with his material ..." (21). Intermingled with his unabashed praise for his mentor, Zola, in the opening pages of his text, announced his intention of applying Bernard's methods:

> Il me paraît donc utile de dire nettement ce qu'il faut entendre, selon moi, par le roman expérimental.
>
> Je n'aurai à faire ici qu'un travail d'adaptation, car la méthode expérimentale a été établie avec une force et une clarté merveilleuses par Claude Bernard, dans son Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale. Ce livre, d'un savant dont l'autorité est décisive, va me servir de base solide. Je trouverai là toute la question traitée, et je me bornerai, comme arguments irréfutables, à donner les citations qui me seront nécessaires. Ce

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> ne sera donc qu'une compilation de textes; car je compte, sur tous les points, me retrancher derrière Claude Bernard. Le plus souvent, il me suffira de remplacer le mot "médecin" par le mot "romancier," pour rendre ma pensée claire et lui apporter la rigueur d'une vérité scientifique.[12]

Paralleling Bernard's demonstration that the scientific method increases our knowledge about living organisms, Zola announced his intention of proving that the same procedure may be applied to assist the novelist in gaining insight into the emotional and intellectual lives of human beings (2). Continuing another line of Bernardian thought, Zola contended that the application of the experimental method was indeed far-reaching; it could be extended to a broader range of disciplines to include not only literature, but the social sciences, specifically, anthropology and sociology (2). The purpose of experimental science is not to explain the "*pourquoi* des choses" (4)—which remains in "the realm of the metaphysician" (Knapp 30)—but to explain the "*comment*" (4).

It is imperative that the novelist-experimentator maintain an open mind, that he have no preconceived ideas as to the conclusion or outcome of his hypotheses and experiments. "They do not become valid until they are verified through experimentation" (Knapp 29). Zola echoed Bernard's opinion on the subject:

> Tout le raisonnement expérimental est basé sur le

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> doute, car l'expérimentateur doit n'avoir aucune idée préconçue devant la nature et garder toujours sa liberté d'esprit. Il accepte simplement les phénomènes qui se produisent, lorsqu'ils sont prouvés. (3)

Zola explained the dual role of the naturalist novelist as observer and experimenter as the basis upon which his characters will move, act and react according to their particular situation:

> Eh bien! en revanant au roman, nous voyons également que le romancier est fait d'un observateur et d'un expérimentateur. L'observateur chez lui donne les faits tels qu'il les a observés, pose le point de départ, établit le terrain solide sur lequel vont marcher les personnages et se développer les phénomènes. Puis, l'expérimentateur paraît et institue l'expérience, je veux dire faire mouvoir les personnages dans une histoire particulière, pour y montrer que la succession des faits y sera telle que l'exige le déterminisme des phénomènes mis à l'étude. C'est presque toujours ici une expérience 'pour voir', comme l'appelle Claude Bernard. Le romancier part à la recherche d'une vérité. (7-8)

As we also observe from the passage cited above, Zola shared Bernard's theories about determinism. Bernard believed

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"in the operation of a determinism without exceptions, such that a set of conditions (a cause) will invariably produce the same phenomenon (an effect)."[13] And, according to Carter, the very "purpose of the experimental method is to find the relation which links the phenomenon to its proximate cause" (68). The belief in the existence of "a fundamental unity among all forms of life" (Simon, "Bernard") was a position held by Bernard. Higher life forms differed from other forms "by their greater independence from their external environment" on the one hand; but on the other, they maintained a "greater dependence on their internal environment," blood constituting the most powerful influence (Simon, "Bernard"). He also contended that the "phenomena taking place in living beings are ultimately reduced to physicochemical processes" (Simon, "Bernard"). This theory would also be applied in Zola's, López Bago's and other naturalists' novels to demonstrate how characters are determined to a strong degree by the physiological changes in their bodies.

Positivism: The Philosophy of Naturalism

The age of science, medicine and technological progress found one of its important philosophical expressions in Positivism—the scientifically oriented system which had the greatest influence on Naturalism. The term "positivism" was

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first introduced in France in the early nineteenth century by Claude Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825).[14] Positivism was later adopted by Auguste Comte (1798-1857)—regarded as "the father of positivism and the founder of sociology" (Knapp 31)—around 1830, and quickly "became the dominant trend in scientific thought" during the Second Empire of Napoleon III (1852-70) (Medina 24). Positivism's influence and diffusion were extensive; it was regarded as a great philosophical movement during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth in all nations of the Western World (Abbagnano, "Positivism," Encyclopedia of Philosophy); "adopted by scholars, historians, and even literary figures" (Medina 24).

Comte's theories were set forth in his major work, Cours de philosophie positive (1830-42).

Comte and his followers totally rejected theology and metaphysics for representing stagnant, useless, outdated and invalid systems of thought. They characterized Man's past; Positivism was to exemplify modern Man's present and future. Positivism was based on the principle that science and the scientific method are the only valid sources of knowledge (Abbagnano, "Positivism," Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Positivists believed that truth and knowledge can only be obtained through facts, and through "solid, observable, identifiable data: objects, natural or historical forces, happenings" (Medina 24). This new system "denies the

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existence of intelligibility of forces" outside the "laws ascertained by science" (Abbagnano, "Positivism," Encyclopedia of Philosophy); it "is in fact an attempt to subject philosophy to the scientific method and to understand the universe in scientific terms" (Furst 19). Despite the perceived rigidity or limitations of the theory, Comte believed that Positivism was to be a benevolent force toward improving the human condition. According to Knapp, Comte:

> suggested that the goal of scientific endeavor was to learn to know man more fully, organizing society in a more positive and, therefore, beneficial manner. To achieve these ends he declared that scientific methods must be adopted to alleviate the difficulties from which society suffers. Idealism and abstraction are to no avail. Knowledge acquired through scientific methods was considered real or "positive" and leads toward evolution. (31)

Zola and López Bago would, accordingly, apply the tenets of Positivism in their naturalist works. Of particular interest would be their strong attacks—especially virulent in the case of López Bago—against the first "obsolete" stage of man's development: religion, specifically Catholicism, manifested in their fierce anticlericalism and Zola's atheism. Positivistic rhetoric would also be directly introduced into the narrative of López Bago's novels.

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It was Comte and fellow countryman Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893)—critic and historian—who sought to apply science to literature. Comte contended that "Bernard's experimental method could be applied to all other aspects of human activity including literature" (Medina 24n7), while Taine was the one "who applied positivism to literature" (Medina 33). Thus, both Comte and Taine were to supply Zola with "the essence of a literary philosophy" (Medina 32). Taine, in effect, functioned in an "intermediary" capacity, linking the two disciplines of science and literature (Furst 17).

In 1864, in his now famous preface to his L'Histoire de la littérature anglaise, Taine set forth the formula that was to be one of the cornerstones of the naturalist doctrine. He stated that man is determined by "race" or heredity, "milieu" or environment, and "moment"—the momentum of cultural forces or historical moment (Medina 33; Knapp 31-32). Bess Sondel explains in greater detail these three crucial factors which, according to Taine, define and govern man's existence, and provide researchers of human nature with the keys to understanding man—as an individual and in the more sweeping historical context:

> By race (sic) Taine means all the innate hereditary qualities, differences in the temperament and structure of the body. In races, as in individuals, whatever the imprints of circumstances or of fortune, the hereditary characteristics are

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> always fundamental. Each race has its own special adaptabilities, its own special limitations, which neither time nor place can totally eradicate. Milieu (sic), Taine uses to designate both external physical and social circumstances which confirm or disturb la race (sic).... In the course of time, climate has played an enormous part in shaping the destinies of races. So also has state policy, as, for example, in the case of the Romans. Sometimes social conditions have impressed their mark.... The third force operative upon man is le moment (sic). Besides the active forces which he terms racial (sic) and the compelling physical and social forces from without, i.e., the milieu (sic), there is still to be considered the "vitesse acquise,"—the acquired momentum. Each epoch has its distinguishing characteristics. Great historical currents, certain dominant ideas, intellectual patterns, all are irrevocably operative upon man.[15]

Taine's contribution held a lasting effect on Zola and his literary evolution toward Naturalism, as evidenced most strikingly throughout his Rougon-Macquart series (Carter 17-18; Knapp 31). Moreover, Zola's interpretation of a character's life depicted as a "human case-history" is based on Taine's theory (Richardson 27).

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As he did for Bernard, Zola acknowledged his debt to Taine. For the 1868 second edition of Thérèse Raquin, Zola used as his epigraph Taine's now well known symbolic statement from his preface to L'Histoire de la littérature anglaise: "Le vice et la vertu sont des produits comme le vitriol et le sucre" (qtd. in: Carter 20; Furst 20; Grant 37; Medina 33; Knapp 32). Since man is a physiological organism, the goodness or evil inside him can be examined or scrutinized in much the same way chemists analyze the composition of sweetness in sugar or the bitterness in the metal sulfate vitriol.

Men of Letters: The Realists and Naturalists

In literature, Zola drew inspiration from France's foremost exponents of Realism—Honoré de Balzac, Stendhal and Gustave Flaubert—as well as from the collaborative efforts of naturalists Edmond and Jules de Goncourt (Furst 25; López Jiménez 139-40). Zola acknowledged the influence of these contemporaries by dedicating a collection of "perceptive essays" (Furst 25) on each in his 1881 book, Les romanciers naturalistes. Zola identified Balzac, Flaubert, and, to a lesser degree, Stendhal as the first naturalist novelists, the precursors of the naturalist movement (Furst 25; López Jiménez 139-40). Zola was especially indebted to Balzac and Flaubert for their "documentary methods" (Carter 20); "their power of

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observation, accurate delineations of societies and civilizations, and philosophical and sociological outlooks which enabled Zola to discover his own technique: 'the slice of life' view" (Knapp 22).[16]

Hailed as both the acknowledged founder of the modern novel,[17] and by Zola as the father of Naturalism (Grant 48; Medina 35), Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) was a man of the new scientific century. He would make his mark in literature at a critical transitional period in history, when "classic literature was dying and new methods of science were encouraging the substitution of analysis for unbridled imagination" (Carter 78). According to Zola, Balzac:

> est venu à son heure, voilà encore une des raisons de son génie.... Il devait se produire juste au moment où la littérature classique se mourait d'anémie, où la forme du roman allait s'élargir et englober tous les genres de l'ancienne rhétorique, pour servir d'instrument à l'enquête universelle que l'esprit moderne ouvrait sur les choses et sur les êtres. Les méthodes scientifiques s'imposaient, les héros pâlis s'effaçaient devant les créations réelles, l'analyse remplaçait partout l'imagination. Dès lors, le premier, il était appelé à employer puissamment ces outils nouveaux. Il créa le roman naturaliste, l'étude exacte de la société, et du coup, par une audace du génie, il osa faire vivre

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> dans sa vaste fresque toute une société copiée sur celle qui posait devant lui. C'était l'affirmation la plus éclatante de l'évolution moderne.[18]

Balzac's masterpiece of novelistic innovation—some twenty years in the making (Knapp 34)—entitled La comédie humaine, represents the "foundation" (Knapp 34) of the modern novel and is one of the sources for the creation of Zola's own Rougon-Macquart series as Balzac employed a variety of interesting and "diverse *milieux* within a series of novels" (Medina 35).

Balzac's ambitious plan for La comédie humaine consisted of recreating with the greatest attention to detail the vast panorama of all of contemporary French society, encompassing the Restoration era (1814-30) and the reign of Louis Philippe (1830-48) contained in numerous volumes.[19] This comprehensive body of interconnected novels and short novels ("Balzac," Columbia-Viking) was to be divided into three main parts: the first and the largest was to include "'studies' of manners, or behavior, subdivided into 'scenes' from private or familiar, provincial, Parisian, political, military, and country life" (Wilkie 804). Philosophical studies would make up the second part, while analytical studies would comprise the third section (Wilkie 804). Since the novels were all interconnected, characters from one novel would resurface in other novels, "in major or minor roles or mere passing mention," revealing the different sides of their personalities

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at different times or stages in their lives (Wilkie 805).

In Angus Wilson's estimation, Zola's admiration for Balzac and the originality of La comédie humaine "was probably decisive in determining the vast scope of the Rougon-Macquart series."[20] It is not surprising that both novelists should have undertaken their monumental sagas, for, despite their differences, they shared "a striking likeness in their passionate interest in power and energy—qualities which they both possessed in abnormal degree—and this gives to their work a common quality of force and violence, of giant proportion ..." (Wilson 32).

As Balzac had captured his own historical era (the Restoration and the reign of Louis Philippe), so too did Zola situate his Rougon-Macquart saga within the historical context of his own era in the reign of Napoleon III (1852-70). Nevertheless, Zola wanted his series to be more scientific, less social and nonjudgmental. Zola eschewed the moralizing tone which runs through Balzac's saga (Knapp 35).

Balzac was also influential in the development of another Zola work. It was Balzac's famous preface to La comédie humaine in 1829 which, Medina informs us, "anticipated the full exposition of realist doctrine later proffered in Zola's Le roman expérimental" (28).

A second important influence in the development of Zola's craft was Stendhal (Henri Beyle—1783-1842) whose contributions to Realism included, according to Medina, the

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pursuit or "attempts" at "vérité du fait," "exactitude de l'observation" and "reproduction objective" (29n26). These three fundamental features would be instrumental in providing "a solid framework within which Flaubert and others were to construct more specific, more documented literary theories" (29n26). Although by comparison Stendhal's impact on Zola did not reach the level of Balzac or Flaubert, the leader of Naturalism always admired Stendhal (Wilson 15) and his talents, and assimilated several of his techniques and methods to his own novels. Wilson attributed "the psychological analysis" developed in Zola's first full-length novel, La confession de Claude (1866), to Stendhal's influence. In her book, Knapp observes how Zola "admired Stendhal's exceptional heroes, objectivity, unsentimental views, search for perception rather than sensation, capacity for observation, and analyses" (34). Moreover, Stendhal "probed into the personalities of the hypocrites about him; he attempted to appear 'cold' and 'calculating' in his attitudes, detached from the romantic fervor flourishing around him and, for the most part, he succeeded" (34).

Perhaps no other literary figure had a more profound impact on Zola's creative development than Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), Zola's much admired mentor and, since 1871, personal friend (Grant 73).

Realism in France reached its apogee with the renowned author of Madame Bovary, characterized by his detached

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impersonality, precise documentation and objectivity. In Spanish Realism, Medina includes James Swain's list of Flaubert's ten "most significant aesthetic principles":

> (1) careful observation, (2) choice of significant detail, (3) impersonality (*impersonnalité, impassibilité;* authorial "presence" is rejected), (4) passionless dealing with subject, (5) exact reproduction, (6) documentation, (7) democracy, (8) avoidance of thesis, (9) use of commonplace (avoidance of the exotic; "proof of artistry is in the artist's ability to make the commonplace different..."), (10) determining influence of environment.[21]

Zola incorporated many (if not all) of the characteristics cited above including, "Flaubert's development of everyday plots and people, his famous *impersonnalité*, his rejection of the extraordinary and the fantastic," combined with "his efforts at exact documentation of facts and places..." (Medina 35). According to Knapp, Zola was deeply impressed by the French master's "analyses of human nature" and his "chaste style" (35). Flaubert soon became identified with his meticulous attention to the employment of the "mot juste," "the expression which would most perfectly suit feeling, thought, and expression" (35). Zola's great esteem for Flaubert is perhaps best observed in his essay on the novelist in Les romanciers naturalistes. Here we see that it

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was in Flaubert's 1857 masterpiece, Madame Bovary, that Zola found the quintessential naturalist novel, principally for its faithful adherence to three required characteristics of the modern novel: 1. the exact reproduction of life; 2. the depiction of real life human characters, not glorified superficial epic heroes (like those portrayed in Balzac's works, for example); 3. complete and absolute emotional detachment and non-intervention on the part of the author in the action of the novel or in the lives and deeds of the characters. In his essay on Flaubert, Zola stated the following:

> Le premier caractère du roman naturaliste, dont Madame Bovary est le type, est la reproduction exacte de la vie, l'absence de tout élément romanesque.... C'est de la vie exacte donnée dans un cadre admirable de facture. Toute invention extraordinare en est donc bannie .... (126).
>
> Fatalement, le romancier tue les héros, s'il n'accepte que le train ordinaire de l'existence commune. Par héros, j'entends les personnages grandis outre mesure, les pantins changés en colosses ... (127). On a voulu la médiocrité courante de la vie, et il faut y rester. La beauté de l'oeuvre n'est plus dans le grandissement d'un personnage ... elle est dans la vérité indiscutable du document humain, dans la réalité absolue des

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> peintures où tous les détails occupent leur place, et rien que cette place.... Dans la formule naturaliste, cette exubérance de l'artiste, ce caprice de composition promenant un personnage d'une grandeur hors nature au milieu de personnages nains, se trouve forcément condamné .... (128)

Of the three requirements, Zola underscores the importance of the last:

> J'insisterai enfin sur un troisième caractère. Le romancier naturaliste affecte de disparaître complètement derrière l'action qu'il raconte. Il est le metteur en scène caché du drame. Jamais il ne se montre au bout d'une phrase. On ne l'entend ni rire ni pleurer avec ses personnages, pas plus qu'il ne se permet de juger leurs actes. C'est même cet apparent désintéressement qui est le trait le plus distinctif.... Quant au romancier, il se tient à l'écart, surtout par un motif d'art, pour laisser à son oeuvre son unité impersonnelle, son caractère de procès-verbal écrit à jamais sur le marbre. (128-29)

In comparing Balzac to Flaubert, Zola faults the author of La comédie humaine for his "continuelle intervention dans le récit;" for his "réflexions d'auteur qui arrivent à toutes les lignes, aux moralités de toutes sortes qu'il croit devoir tirer de ses oeuvres. Il est sans cesse là, à s'expliquer

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devant les lecteurs" (129). Zola goes on to criticize Balzac for his many digressions which turn some of his novels into "une véritable causerie avec le public" (129). Despite these faults which defy some basic tenets of Naturalism, Zola recognized Balzac's greatness, his "puissance avec laquelle on ne discute pas" (129). However, it is upon Flaubert that Zola bestows his highest accolades. Uninhibited in his public praise, Zola enumerates Flaubert's salient contributions to the modern novel in the conclusion to the first section of his essay on the great writer:

> ...il l'a assujetti à des règles fixes d'observation, l'a débarrassé de l'enflure fausse des personnages, l'a changé en une oeuvre d'art harmonique, impersonnelle, vivant de sa beauté propre, ainsi qu'un beau marbre. Telle est l'évolution accomplie par l'auteur de Madame Bovary. Après l'épanouissement littéraire, la féconde production de 1830, il a trouvé moyen d'inventer un genre et de jeter les préceptes d'une école. Son rôle a été surtout de parler au nom de la perfection, du style parfait, de la composition parfaite, de l'oeuvre parfaite, défiant les âges. (130)

It would now be Zola's turn to carry the banner; to take Naturalism to its fullest expression.

Zola was also influenced by the contributions of fellow naturalists, the brothers Edmond (1822-1896) and Jules (1830-

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1870) de Goncourt. In 1865, the brothers published Germinie Lacerteaux, a novel which "has been called the first naturalistic novel" (Wilkie 1134). In contrast to the realist novel which selected its protagonists primarily from the bourgeoisie, the Goncourts broke away from the realist mold by choosing as their protagonist a member of the lower classes. Their novel would chronicle the tragic arduous life of a young female domestic servant in Paris. Zola was impressed with the work for its "grim realism" (Grant 84); and with the brothers' contributions in general for several reasons: their utilization of "real people" as literary models, subjected to "frank analysis," the "slice-of-life technique, their minimal attention to intricacies of plot, and their use of local color" (Medina 35). Added to this list of attributes was Zola's admiration for the brothers' skills in documentation and their talent for applying their findings to the novel with vivid descriptions. The brothers were not only novelists, but historians and painters who "sought to paint 'true life,' to narrate events in their novels and to create protagonists, as the historian interweaves documents and personalities. The Goncourts searched out their facts with fervor and exactitude" (Knapp 36). Undoubtedly, the brothers' constant note taking while investigating the various environments of their novels (Knapp 36) made a lasting impression on Zola. These characteristics and all those previously cited would be incorporated into Zola's novels.

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The Pinnacle of Naturalism: Emile Zola

Literary Naturalism reached its pinnacle in the theories and novels of Emile Zola (1840-1902)—the undisputed leader and most outspoken advocate of the movement. "Almost the entire body of Naturalistic literary theory in France comes ... from Zola," note Furst and Skrine, encompassing some thirty years, from 1867 to 1897 (28). So impressive, in fact, was Zola's "dominance over Naturalism" that it "is perhaps without parallel in the leadership of any artistic movement" (Furst 26). Several factors contributed to Furst and Skrine's assessment, including the following: the "sheer force" (26) of Zola's dynamic personality; the novelist's ability to combine the skills he learned in his youth as a journalist and from working in the publicity department of a publishing house with his own "innate flair" (26), zeal and perseverance for defending and promoting his aesthetic credo; and his personal courage in daring to speak openly and forcefully in the face of vitriolic criticism and even threats against his person on highly unpopular and controversial causes, such as his championship of Alfred Dreyfus (26), the Jewish army captain falsely accused and initially convicted of spying for Germany in 1894.

The 1868 publication of the second edition of Thérèse Raquin is hailed as a landmark in the history of Naturalism. In the famous preface to the novel, Zola gave birth to the

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naturalist movement by using the term "naturalism" in a literary sense for the first time and by setting forth his plans for the scientific novel, underscoring his theories on determinism and mechanization (Carter 18; Medina 32; Richardson 27). Thérèse Raquin would be "the prototype of the Naturalist novel," declare Furst and Skrine; its "originality" is found in Zola's "handling" of "unexceptional material": the premeditated coldblooded murder of an unsuspecting husband by his unfaithful wife and her lover. The murderous protagonists—the title character and her lover Laurent—are depicted not as feeling, thinking human beings, but as "organisms of flesh, blood and nerves;" as "animals devoid of soul," and lower beings determined by their instincts, passions; by their physiology, their inherited disorders and by Thérèse's "stifling environment" (43).

In addition to Thérèse Raquin and its groundbreaking preface, two other previously cited works stand out as major landmarks in the history of Naturalism: Zola's 1880 theoretical text, Le roman expérimental, and his "outstanding" novelistic "achievement" (Furst 46): Les Rougon-Macquart series, the collection of twenty novels published between 1871 and 1893.[22] In Les Rougon-Macquart Zola exemplified many of the theories promulgated in the preface to the second edition of Thérèse Raquin and Le roman expérimental.

Zola's French naturalist adherents grew out, in part, of the regular soirées held in the country home Zola purchased in

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1878 in the small town of Médan overlooking the Seine outside of Paris. The literary guest list included: Paul Alexis (1847-1901), Henry Céard (1851-1924), Léon Hennique (1851-1935), Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907) and Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893). The writers soon became known collectively as "le Groupe de Médan." In 1880, these five naturalists along with Zola collaborated on what would be considered their manifesto on Naturalism, a collection of short stories examining the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, entitled Les soirées de Médan. Other French followers of Naturalism included, of course, the Goncourt brothers and Alphonse Daudet (Baguley 1; Esteban Soler 12; Furst 27; Knapp 76).

Zola assimilated the ideas of his age and the theories and doctrines of his predecessors. And, according to Medina, "the real invention of Zola and his followers was to transform previous elements and concepts into a *system* of thought." Such a new system was based on both "the direct, minute observation of physical, 'external' reality" and Zola's formula of modern science applied to literature (32).

The following list includes a summary of the principal tenets of Zola's doctrine. Moreover, this list will also be useful as a point of reference in our study of López Bago's Naturalism; specifically in the section which details the naturalist tenets adopted by the radical countercurrent.

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1. Genetic and Environmental Determinism

Man is a being whose life is determined by powerful genetic and environmental forces beyond his control. Zola best exemplified this concept throughout Les Rougon-Macquart novels, in which he traces the effects of hereditary transmission and environment on the members of five generations of two distinct branches of a single family. The (legitimate) Rougons pass along hysteria and other mental illnesses, while the (illegitimate) Macquarts are afflicted with alcoholism. Adélaïde Fouque and her descendants struggle to survive and adapt to a variety of oftentimes hostile milieux.

2. Scientific Experimentalism

Functioning in the dual role of observer and experimenter, Zola scrutinizes and experiments with the human types in his novels. After assigning each character certain traits and environmental conditions, the novelist could "watch" them act and react to each other and their circumstances "in the same way that a chemist views the reactions of a formula within a test tube" (Medina 34).

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3. The Relationship Between Human Psychology and Physiology

Zola examined the correlation between human psychology and human physiology. Since man is a purely biological being, an awareness and possible understanding of his psychological state or his emotional problems could be observed through his visible physiological reactions. Naturalists, therefore, emphasized the importance of acquiring physical and physiological data inasmuch as man is greatly influenced by his temperament, nerves and animal instincts ("la bête humaine").

4. Meticulous Observation and Documentation of Data Drawn from the Physical World

As a diligent student of human nature and the environment, Zola thoroughly, accurately and painstakingly collected, documented and analyzed data through first-hand, on site observation of real life events and situations. Data was acquired from a variety of environmental and human resources. In focusing on the milieux of his characters, Zola displays a virtual parade of settings in his novels; from urban to rural, from the commonplace to the unusual: slums, taverns, churches, mines, farms, factories, middle class apartment houses, the railroad, the battlefield and the world of finance and big business. Zola's objective study of human nature is exposed,

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in large measure, through a gallery of occupational types: shopkeepers, priests, aristocrats, stockbrokers, labor leaders, industrialists, physicians, artists, politicians, capitalists and the demi-mondaine.

5. Protagonists Chosen from the Lower Classes and from Ostracized Members of Society

Unlike the realist novel which gave prominence to the bourgeoisie, Zola chose as his protagonists and characters real life people from the forgotten lower classes or societal outcasts: factory workers, miners, manual laborers, prostitutes, the natural born criminal, etc.

6. Preference for Depicting the Base, Sordid, Crude Aspects of Life

In order to accurately depict the harsh realities of life for the lower strata of society, and in order to best demonstrate the harmful influences of environment, heredity and physiology on the human beast, Zola chose to document the more sordid, cruel and degenerate elements of everyday life. No topic would be excluded; traditionally taboo subjects would be treated openly and boldly: adultery, prostitution, promiscuity, incest, criminality, social injustice, etc. Pervasive in Zola's novels are blunt descriptions of sex and

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violence, cases of human pathology—illnesses and diseases, physical deformities and abnormalities, and mental aberrations.

7. Zola's Moral Purpose

Despite the obvious emphasis on the scientific approach to literature, one must not lose sight of the moral and reformative purpose of Zola and his followers, as Medina explains:

> Although Zola was condemned time and time again for the supposed "immorality" of this [deterministic] viewpoint, it is important to note that he was in part a moralist intent on the task of improving society. He claimed that he was a determinist, not a fatalist, and that environment *might* eventually be changed if the factors governing man's life could be understood. By studying scientifically the ways in which society and the individual affected each other, Zola hoped that some day it would be possible to alter that milieu which "determined" man's action and attitudes. (33)

Zola stated that although his method was experimental, his goal was the truth.

8. Narrative Objectivity, Impartiality and Impersonality

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Although strongly motivated by moral purpose to improve society, the omniscient narrator remains detached, objective and impartial before the action, events and characters he is describing. The naturalist writer's moral purpose is demonstrated by example, through the exposition of societal ills and human vices in the experiences of the characters and the consequences therein. Digressions and authorial intervention are to be avoided.

9. Candid Language

According to Zola, the naturalist writer must use language which is natural, candid, true-to-life, and reflective of the linguistic peculiarities of the environment in which it is spoken. This aim is especially important in depicting the more sordid side of humanity. No detail is to be omitted or altered for the sake of delicacy or good taste (Medina 35).

10. Attacks Against the Ruling Classes: The Aristocracy, the Catholic Church, the Capitalist Bourgeoisie

Concomitant to their moral purpose of improving society for all its members, Zola and his followers exposed and attacked the multitude of vices and abuses pervasive in the ruling social classes: the aristocracy, the Catholic church,

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the capitalist bourgeoisie. Condemnation of these classes was most severe when naturalists depicted their abuses and crimes perpetuated against the oppressed urban proletariat and the rural peasantry.[23]

Radical Naturalism

The year 1884 was also remarkable in López Bago's professional career inasmuch as it announced his commitment to the controversial French movement and marked the beginning of the development of his unusual interpretation of Naturalism. Our author first expressed his opinion on the polemic in the two articles published in El Progreso and La Ilustración Militar.[24] Both articles attest to López Bago's participation in the ongoing epistolary debate in Madrid journals between detractors and advocates of Naturalism.

In El periodista's appendix, López Bago reproduces the letter he addressed to Ortega Munilla in El Progreso entitled "Naturalistas e idealistas," a "carta escrita con motivo de la polémica entablada" between the editor of Los Lunes and Luis Alfonso ("Postdata," El periodista 162). Interestingly enough, López Bago's first comments on Naturalism reveal a position much in keeping with that of traditional Spanish Naturalism. Pattison (Naturalismo 108) observes how the author "se muestra bastante timorato" in the letter in which López Bago himself acknowledged that his opinions "'son de

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mucha conformidad con la llamada escuela naturalista'" ("Postdata," El periodista 163). Pattison categorizes him as one of the "partidarios del justo medio" (Naturalismo 109), an observation supported by López Bago's own words: "... hay puntos esenciales en que me encuentro á igual distancia de las ideas que defienden ahora los respectivos redactores de El Imparcial y La Epoca" ("Postdata," El periodista 163). Ironically, the soon-to-be radical naturalist faults both Ortega Munilla and Alfonso for being so blinded by their impassioned defense of their respective opposing positions that neither side comes out a winner:

> ... yo he visto por parte de uno y otro tal deseo de colocarse frente á frente y en completa contradicción, que han resultado ambos contendientes por extremar el ataque y la defensa, incurriendo en exageraciones tales y tamañas, que ni el naturalismo ni el idealismo salen bien parados en el encuentro. Acontece, en mi juicio, entre VV., que cegados como están por la pasión, tíranse tajos y mandobles, sin tener en cuenta las reglas del arte .... (163)

Nevertheless, López Bago reveals a definite propensity toward Naturalism when he discusses the purpose of the letter. He believed that the "polémica entablada" between the two opposing camps was not dealing with "las entrañas del asunto" (164): the only real distinction between the two ideologies.

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The heart of the issue was not whether or not Naturalism was "moral ó inmoral, limpio ó desaseado" (166). The polemic should deal directly with the question of: "cuál de las dos tendencias, la naturalista y la idealista, está más exactamente ajustada á las condiciones de verdad y belleza necesarias en el arte" (167). "Ninguna de las dos" (167) was López Bago's answer to this question:

> El naturalismo y el idealismo mientras luchen, no se perfeccionan, antes por el contrario pierden mucho.... Así, mientras el idealismo sacrifica la verdad á la belleza, el naturalismo siempre que puede exagera la verdad para que desaparezca la belleza, con lo cual se convierten ambos en dos grandísimos embusteros.
>
> Hay, sin embargo, precisión de confesar que si alguien lleva ventaja, es el escritor naturalista, pues mintiendo los dos, no miente tanto el que exagera la verdad como el que la niega. (167)

Although—as we observe in this last paragraph—López Bago recognized the idea of exaggerated truth as a fallacy, he justified its application in literature, specifically, to counteract Idealism's sacrifice of truth for aesthetic ideals. Nevertheless, despite his declaration that Naturalism "no miente tanto" as Idealism, the application of exaggerated truth is incompatible with veracity and objectivity, two fundamental tenets of Naturalism. The author's last paragraph

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offers us an early indication of the biased and extreme measures López Bago would soon undertake in order to defend Naturalism against Idealism, its ideological foe.

"Naturalistas e idealistas" also reveals López Bago's rather conservative position regarding Zola himself. Though even as a radical naturalist he would always express his admiration for other French naturalists, López Bago criticizes Ortega Munilla and Alfonso for citing only Zola, whom they called "el *Goliat* de esta escuela" (168). Ironically, López Bago called the author of Thérèse Raquin a "fanático," in contrast to Flaubert, Daudet, Jules and Edmond de Goncourt, naturalists who "hermanan perfectamente la verdad con la belleza" (168).

López Bago's second article on the polemic was written in response to critic Víctor Balaguer's June 22, 1884, "Carta literaria," published in La Ilustración Española y Americana (Pattison, Naturalismo 118-19).[25] Balaguer maintained a rather conciliatory position, advocating an alliance between the three schools of contention: Realism, Idealism and Naturalism. His letter, presented before the Royal Spanish Academy of which he was director, was well received by an audience of largely staunch conservatives (Clemessy, Emilia 1:101). Balaguer's article afforded López Bago the opportunity to present his own definition of Naturalism, an interpretation which still reflected his moderate stand on the movement. López Bago objected to Balaguer's claim that

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Naturalism was a new sect. On the contrary, the author declared. Naturalism was first and foremost a reaction against Romantic procedures; it represented the return to long standing traditional Spanish ideals and values; a viewpoint which was shared by many Spanish novelists, including Galdós. For López Bago, Naturalism exemplified "la naturalidad en todo, la verdad en todo, lo humano en todo" (Ilustración; qtd. in Pattison, Naturalismo 120).

López Bago first evidences a growing veneration for Zola and his ideology in the appendix to El periodista, dated June 5, 1884. He concludes the "Postdata" by translating some fifteen pages (176-91) of an "admirable análisis" (191), authored by the "reputadísimo escritor acerca de lo que se viene conociendo por realismo literario" (176). López Bago was so taken with Zola's ideas that he exclaimed: "¡Tuviera yo su talento para saber exponer teorías con las que estoy de completo acuerdo y hacer de EL PERIODISTA (sic), en lugar de un libro más, una obra digna de ser analizada en España por críticos semejantes!" (191-92). López Bago's statement clearly illustrates his commitment to Zola's ideology. His wish for El periodista would serve as an impetus in the creation of his own "novelas sociales" and "médico-sociales."

López Bago's transformation from a moderate to radical naturalist could not have been more extraordinary for both the rapidity and intensity of its development. In just a few short months—from June 5 and the date of his second article

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on the polemic in July, to the release of La prostituta in late September-early October—he successfully applied in his first "novela médico-social" many of the salient features which would characterize his radical ideas on Naturalism. During the summer of 1884, López Bago evidently became greatly dissatisfied with the limitations of expression he found in traditional Spanish Naturalism. His radical ideology evolved out of his ambition to surpass these limitations and take Naturalism to its ultimate extremes in literary expression, and to achieve his scientific and reformative goals. The answers for López Bago lay in France, not Spain. López Bago was "radical" for being, perhaps, the first Spaniard to purposely set out to reject and denounce the form of Naturalism espoused by many of his esteemed colleagues in favor of total acceptance of a highly controversial doctrine of foreign origin. According to Jourdan, the study of the author's two 1884 novels (El periodista, La prostituta) bear perfect witness to:

> la volonté délibérée d'un auteur d'acclimater dans son pays un genre littéraire issu de l'étranger. Avant Blasco Ibáñez, il n'a peut-être pas d'écrivain espagnol qui, se réclamant de Zola, ait tenté avec autant de constance de marcher sur les traces du romancier français ou, du moins, de la proclamer. (73)

López Bago's set forth his concept of Naturalism in his

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many famous appendices. El cura's "Vosotros y yo" (1885) and "Al lector," the foreword to El separatista (1895) are the most insightful for gaining an understanding of the novelist's ideology. Moreover, in his continuing effort to diffuse French Naturalism in Spain, López Bago published two appendices consisting entirely of translated excerpts taken from Zola's theoretical texts, including Le roman expérimental: "La novela moderna, según Emilio Zola,"[26] and "Fragmentos de un estudio crítico acerca de la poesía moderna."[27] López Bago introduces "La novela moderna" by reaffirming his allegiance to the theories of "el eminente novelista francés" (267): "... me limitaré á reproducir, traducidas, las apreciaciones del autor de Nana y L'Assommoir, con las que estoy—y era inútil decirlo—completamente de acuerdo" (267).

As we know, Sawa was López Bago's most enthusiastic supporter, a fact clearly documented in his "Impresiones de un lector: Eduardo López Bago." The article in which Sawa praises his colleague as the "heroico campeón del naturalismo radical en España" (309) serves to officially recognize López Bago, "la más brillante mancha artística de nuestra moderna generación de noveladores" (295) as the leader of the new movement, a countercurrent, which, as we recall Pattison's observation, represents "la bifurcación del naturalismo español" (Naturalismo 139).

In "La moral del naturalismo," López Bago proclaims the

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long overdue and much awaited arrival of Zolaesque Naturalism in Spain, and declares himself in readiness to defend the movement: "Este trabajo [to defend Naturalism] habíase experimentado la necesidad de que surgiera en España. La nueva generación literaria á que pertenezco, clamaba por la aparición de la novela moderna" (La buscona 275). López Bago is "el máximo representante" (Lozano Marco 346) of this "nueva generación literaria" in Spain, the leader of the countercurrent which includes Sawa and Zahonero. In España contemporánea, Darío reflects on Sawa's and Zahonero's interpretation of Naturalism. In comparison to López Bago, Zahonero "siguió un naturalismo menos osado. Sawa, muy enamorado de París, y más artista, se apegó á los patrones parisienses, y produjo dos ó tres novelas, que aun se recuerdan" (227).

Our examination of López Bago's Radical Naturalism is divided into three main sections: the first part focuses on the tenets that the author extracted from Zola and advocated in his appendices and applied to his novels; the second discusses the "radical" elements which set López Bago's ideology apart from both Zola and mitigated Spanish naturalists; the final section addresses those characteristics which, according to critics, may be regarded as the weaknesses or defects of Radical Naturalism.

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I. López Bago's Application of Zola's Doctrine

A. Naturalism's Moral, Social and Reformative Mission

Naturalist writers were motivated by a strong moral and social commitment to improve the human condition. In "Lettre à la jeunesse" from Le roman expérimental, Zola underscores this primary objective by citing the following quotation from Claude Bernard:

> La morale moderne aspire à un rôle plus grand: elle recherche les causes, veut les expliquer et agir sur elles; elle veut, en un mot, dominer le bien et le mal, faire naître l'un et le développer, lutter avec l'autre pour l'extirper et le détruire.[28]

Recognizing the critical importance of his mentor's statement, Zola confirms the fact by adding: "Ces paroles sont grandes, et elles contiennent toute la haute et sévère morale du roman naturaliste contemporain" (84). Mankind benefits from the expanded role of experimental science now exemplified in the naturalist novel, with the following results:

> ... vous obtenez nos romans qui recherchent les causes, qui les expliquent, qui amassent les documents humains, pour qu'on puisse être le maître du milieu et de l'homme, de façon à développer les bons éléments et à exterminer les mauvais. (84)

López Bago was deeply influenced by Bernard's and Zola's

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objective. As we recall from our Introduction and Chapter I, the author, through his "novelas sociales" and "médico-sociales," was determined to root out vice, injustice, inhumanity and evil in order to examine these forces, discover the causes and offer solutions for positive change to effect the betterment of those sectors of society traditionally victimized and exploited by individuals or institutions in power and authority.

López Bago was deeply disturbed, for example, by the horrific living conditions suffered by inmates in prisons across Spain, a situation he describes in great detail in El preso. The Spanish penal system did not exact justice by permitting inmates to serve out their sentences, the novelist contended; instead, convicted felons as well as prisoners awaiting trial were condemned to slow, painful and premature deaths resulting from a variety of diseases due to unsanitary conditions:

> Entonces sabreis (sic) que en España la justicia no castiga, sino que enferma y mata al procesado y al delincuente .... y hé aquí que yo os presento á los que vosotros encarcelásteis (sic), convertidos, no en reclusos, sino en enfermos. Vosotros condenais (sic) á la enfermedad y no hay un solo delito, ni siquiera el de regicidio, que en tanto teneis (sic), el cual se pene con la muerte lenta. (98-99)

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These diseases are preventable, López Bago affirmed, when the most basic of sanitary conditions are provided and enforced in all prisons throughout the nation: heat, light, space, fresh air and facilities for bathing. Addressing his criticism directly to penologists, López Bago exclaims:

> Hay algo más que la luz y el aire necesario para la vida, señores legisladores .... (102)
>
> En aquella cueva [in "la Cárcel Modelo"], que ocupa toda la extensión de la galería, á lo largo de los muros hay algunos camastros, y durante el día vénse (sic) recogidos los petates que por la noche son los únicos aisladores entre la dureza y humedad del suelo y el cuerpo del penado.... El aire pesa, huele á sudores acres, á todas las emanaciones de cuerpos en los que el desaseo se tiene por hábito voluntario, además de forzoso, y de los más groseros desahogos, el erupto, la ventosidad y la expectoración hacen chacota y gala y por ende repetición frecuente. La luz del día más espléndida, es allí penumbra. Parece el sollado de un buque. Tienen ocho horas de tarde y dieciseis (sic) de noche. Ninguna de sol, ni de aire libre. (103)

To the late twentieth-century reader, the solutions López Bago proposes are elementary requirements for good hygiene; to Spanish penologists, politicians and other government

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officials of a century ago, they were innovative, if not radical ideas.

López Bago also protested against the prevailing traditional attitude which treated the mentally ill the same as criminals; condemning both groups to the same horrors of the penal system. Society, the novelist declared, failed to realize that so-called criminal acts were not necessarily indicative of the work of evil human beings, but rather were the uncontrollable outward manifestations of mental or psychic illnesses. Distinction between the two groups was essential; the creation of more mental hospitals and asylums, not prisons, was desperately needed for the study, treatment and, hopefully, the rehabilitation of those suffering from the wide range of mental illnesses and disorders: "Más necesita el delito hospitales y manicomios, que cárceles y presidios ...." (116-17). This social issue was important to López Bago, inasmuch as he discussed it in <u>La soltera</u>, published two years previously in 1886. Arturo Salces, the young, progressive experimentalist-physician, and López Bago's spokesperson in the novel, recalls the pessimistic attitude of unfortunate patients victimized by circumstances on the malevolent state of humanity: "'La humanidad es mala'" (121). Arturo's response is in keeping with the more enlightened nineteenth-century scientific and humanitarian thought of the period: "'Hay muchos malvados, que en realidad son enfermos.'" And, "partiendo de esta base," the young doctor "creyó que hacen

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falta en cada nacion (sic) más hospitales que presidios" (121). Even a wife's adultery was not in Arturo's and López Bago's estimation, a crime or a moral sin, but rather symptomatic of the physiological disorder of nymphomania (121).

Returning to El preso, López Bago condemned the "sistema penitenciario español" (159) for the perpetuation of another injustice: "la conducción por tránsitos de justicia" (159). The novelist describes the antiquated and inhumane process by which prisoners were transferred under escort by members of the "Guardia Civil" from one prison to another across Spain in order to complete their sentences. Prisoners in "las cárceles de tránsito" were attached to each other by "la cuerda de presos" and forced to endure the entire distance on foot. The arduous trek sometimes required four to five years to complete. Juan Ruíz, the falsely accused protagonist, is forced to walk from Madrid to Málaga along with "ladrones, homicidas, asesinos, falsificadores, de todo había. Hasta prostitutas, hasta mendigos" (160):

> Entre hombres y mujeres, eran cuarenta los que formaban *la cuerda de presos*. Custodiábanlos dos parejas de la Guardia civil. Iban atados con cordeles, que no impedían la libertad de movimientos á los de menos consideración, y había otros fuertemente ligados codo con codo, para los cuales el cansancio de la marcha, de esta suerte

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> resultaría á las pocas leguas intolerable. Juan Ruíz tuvo la fortuna de pertenecer á la primera categoría.
>
> Estas conducciones se hacen á pie por jornadas diarias, y son muy pocas las que se verifican por ferrocarril en coches celulares .... (156)
>
> La conducción por tránsitos de justicia es ya un tormento parecido al que, según relatan los viajeros, se practica en el desierto, cuando las caravanas condenan á morir de sed al de los suyos que delinque, enterrando en la arena todo su cuerpo menos la cabeza, y colocando allí, cerca de sus labios, un odre lleno de agua. Es el preso de tránsito el hombre en la llanura ... como espectáculo, por todas partes, el sol sobre su cabeza ... atado, rendido de cansancio, cubierto de sudor, soportando el calor, la lluvia, el viento y el polvo del camino, ensangrentándosele los pies con los guijarros .... (159-60)

Although, as López Bago affirmed "los tormentos han desaparecido *oficialmente* ... el sistema continúa de manera abusiva y tolerada" (157). Those who dared to protest were either brutally beaten into silence and submission or succumbed to their injuries as a result (157). Female prisoners were especially vulnerable; many were forced into prostitution while others were raped by guards. Cases of

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"transitorias" giving birth on the highways were not uncommon. Determined by the circumstances of their birth and by their subsequent environment, the products of such couplings also became criminals in later life; thus perpetuating the vicious cycle. All the while, says López Bago, the Spanish government turned a deaf ear to "la inquisición moderna" perpetuated against its ostracized citizens.

Despite the reformative efforts of naturalists, some longstanding harmful practices will not be eradicated, López Bago admitted, citing bullfighting as a case in point. In the appendix to Luis Martínez, El Espada, the novelist conceded: "El mal me parece irremediable."[29] Spain's national pastime endures out of the apathy and the spiritual degeneration of its citizens who "no son ya capaces de la revolución porque han perdido la virilidad" (287). Such virility is deemed indispensable for the successful undertaking and achievement of political and social reform. Bullfighting, however, is not the cause of Spaniards' "perversión moral" (287, 288), but rather its effect. Bullfighting responds to the diseased organism's craving to "sentir las alteraciones que produce la contemplación del peligro," and such "goces del sistema nervioso" would not be easily relinquished, inasmuch as "cuanto más grosera es la naturaleza humana, más queridos y necesarios son para ella" (288).[30]

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B. Hereditary and Environmental Determinism

The application of determinism in the lives of characters from various socioeconomic backgrounds is one of the most constant themes in the "novelas sociales" and "médico-sociales." It is significant to note that López Bago makes a clear distinction between the two manifestations of determinism. While hereditary or genetic determinism is manifested primarily in the aristocracy—the social class which, for López Bago, had been inherently diseased for generations—working class characters suffer the destructive effects of environmental determinism not of their own making.

In La prostituta and La Pálida, López Bago presents a fascinating variation on the theme of genetic determinism in two generations of the Villaperdida family. A promiscuous young aristocrat, Don José, Marquis de Villaperdida, is infected with syphilis after years devoted to sensual and sexual excesses. Fully aware of his condition, he marries a young unsuspecting woman who dies of the disease shortly after giving birth to their sickly son Luis. Years later, the marquis infects the protagonist, Estrella Sánchez, who later becomes Luis' mistress. Luis also becomes infected and will soon die of the disease by the end of the second novel (La Pálida) just as his father died in the first (La prostituta). Luis is the last Marquis de Villaperdida, the last in a once illustrious lineage dating back to the Middle Ages. Thus, the

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sins of the father are visited upon the son; Don José is effectively responsible for ending his own genealogical line.

Symbolically for López Bago, the Spanish aristocracy has outlived its usefulness for society and for itself; it deserves to be an extinct species. More importantly, however, López Bago desired the aristocracy's extinction by reason of the catastrophic effects it had on the lives of members of lower socioeconomic classes who were powerless to defend themselves. Degenerate aristocrats contaminated healthy, normal, productive working class characters, either directly or indirectly, by situating them or by fostering their continued presence in a particular toxic environment. In La prostituta, the Marquis de Villaperdida's deflowering of Estrella Sánchez determines her future, effectively condemning her to two infernal environments or situations: professional prostitution and the incurable disease of syphilis. Paco, Estrella's beloved, honorable young "obrero," is likewise destroyed by the crime that the marquis committed against the protagonist. Traumatized, Paco stops working and resorts to alcohol before his tragic death.

In El preso, Juan Ruíz, the industrious shopkeeper of his prosperous "Fábrica de guantes y caretas" (6) is jailed on trumped-up charges ordered by the vengeful Civil Governor of Madrid, the Marquis de Jibosa, after Juan's beautiful and "honrada" (41) bride, Francisca, refused the aristocrat's repeated sexual advances. The moment he enters the penal

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system, Juan's life is irrevocably determined.

We are better able to comprehend the impact of the catastrophic effects of environmental determinism by comparing Juan's life before and after his forty-three days of imprisonment. In the following passage, López Bago describes his protagonist in his natural state—mentally, physically and emotionally healthy and well adjusted:

> Hermosa es Francisca, ya la hemos descrito, pero Juan no le iba en zaga bajo este concepto estético. Más alto que la buena moza por de contado, de admirable musculatura.... Pelo rizado aunque no mucho sino lo que bastaba para darle de artista en la cabeza apariencias que contrastaban con lo comerciante, barba negra, energía en las pronunciadas facciones, en los salientes pómulos, en el nervudo cuello y distinción en suma aparente.... Y acontecíale como á su mujer, como á Francisca, esto es, mayor hermosura que la física, en lo de espirítu ó inteligencia, de voluntad y de entendimiento. (22-23)

After enduring six weeks in the infernal prison environment, Juan is finally released, but the moral, physical and psychological scars are permanent. López Bago underscores his radical transformation:

> Juan Ruíz no era ya el mismo hombre. Aquellos cuarenta y tres días de jornada habíanle

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transformado por completo. Aquel tránsito en que el andar fué un trabajo excesivo, hízole experimentar como tal un abatimiento moral que determinaba en el odio á la sociedad, á todo y á todos. Oyó la noticia de su segura muerte con indiferencia, justificada por el hastío. La vida le causaba tedio.... Vivir, ¿y para qué? Para caminar á pie entre ladrones, asesinos y guardias civiles por todas las carreteras de España. Era como un hombre que hubiera pasado por todos los círculos del infierno dantesco; si la sombra de anaquelerías y mostradores quebró el sano color que tuvieron sus mejillas en Villaverde [his home town], el sol ahora había tostado la palidez, y las cárceles, las cuarenta y tres cárceles, dieron además á ésta un tinte verdoso como el que caracteriza la hepatitis. Sus ojos perdieron brillo, su musculatura, que antes le modelaba varonilmente, llegó á ser un cuerpo deforme, porque lo que fué belleza de atleta, se convirtió en la ordinaria cargazón de espaldas del mozo de cordel. Aquello lo hizo el peso del petate. Su barba mostraba canas, así como el pelo, y ambos revueltos, sucios de polvo adherido con el sudor, enmarañados, repugnaban, mucho más cuando con frecuente insistencia la mano acudía allí para

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> rascar furisoa la picazón y molestia de inmundos parásitos. El contagio no fué sólo físico, que tan rápida como la degeneración orgánica, tan rápida puede ser la moral é intelectual. Había recibido muchos culatazos por la espalda, había soportado otras traiciones de sus mismos compañeros, y su ánimo, antes valiente, acusaba cobardía, en la mirada, llena de recelo, que no se levantaba de párpados noblemente, para fijarse cara á cara en los ojos de su interlocutor. Inclinada la cabeza, humillando la frente, caídos los brazos, era su actitud como la de la bestia conducida al matadero .... (252-54) En lo espiritual, lo que dominaba ya era aquel miedo y aquel odio que lo convertía en bestia uraña y perseguida. (255)

Aristocrats were not the only self-serving group whose abuse of power, wealth and influence situated other less fortunate members of society in destructive environments. Avaricious capitalist procurers like Arístides in La prostituta and La Pálida or Rodolfo Fick in Carne importada perpetuated the victimization of women in the sexually exploitive environment of brothels; while mothers like Angustias de Pérez (La Pálida, La buscona, La querida) and María de López ("La mujer honrada") sought to determine their unwilling daughters' futures as professional mistresses.

López Bago attached far greater importance to

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environmental—not hereditary—determinism in the "novelas sociales" and "médico-sociales" inasmuch as the novelist believed that the conditions which created and fostered the most destructive consequences could be altered, if the exposed abuses were condemned and corrected.

C. Scientific Experimentalism

Scientific experimentalism was the method by which the naturalist novelist would be able to study man, discover his pathology by closely examining his actions and reactions as he moved in his environment. López Bago was a committed follower of scientific experimentalism as developed by Bernard and applied to literature by Zola. Our author made his intentions clear to all from the outset by first classifying his novels as "sociales" and "médico-sociales" as part of their subtitles and by stamping on the title page of each one the aforementioned maxim taken from Bernard: "La moral moderna consiste en buscar las causas de los males sociales, analizándolos y sometiéndolos á la observación y al experimento." By classifying his novels "sociales" and "médico-sociales," López Bago affirmed the indispensable alliance between the new modern novel, society and science, in a literary art which "anhela fortalecerse en la ciencia y mirar la Naturaleza y la Humanidad cara á cara" ("Al lector," El separatista 5).

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In addition to familiarizing his readers with Bernard's famous purpose, López Bago, Lissorgues observes:

> ...aplica al pie de la letra el precepto del experimentalista francés. Su obra novelesca muestra que efectivamente ha buscado los males humanos y sociales, los ha analizado a partir de sus propios conocimientos y después ha armado una construcción novelesca con relato y descripciones para dar cuenta del dato humano o social estudiado. ("'El naturalismo radical'" 244)

Referring to his first "médico-social" series in the appendix to La Pálida, López Bago explains how he applied the scientific method of observation and documentation in exposing prostitution, "la repugnante llaga social" (263): "Decidí entonces la redacción de La Prostituta (sic), adquirí datos, estudié lo necesario, y cuando tuve en mi poder reunidos y clasificados cuantos documentos necesitaba, empecé el libro" (263). Believing at the time that La buscona would be the last novel in the series on prostitution, López Bago announced the completion of "el análisis de una llaga social, estudiada por la experimentación propia de la escuela naturalista...." ("La moral del naturalismo," La buscona 245).

In La soltera even the process of falling in love and selecting a mate is analyzed scientifically. The honorable Arturo Salces examines his own feelings for Rita López, the titular protagonist, and his decision to select her as his

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wife with the characteristic detachment, objectivity and reasoning of a clinician:

> Y se enamoró de Rita, obedeciendo en él esto, como manifestacion (sic) de la vida afectiva, á las otras manifestaciones [deterministas] que acabo de analizar y quedan comprendidas. Rita, como hembra, le pareció el tipo acomodado á sus anhelos de varon (sic). Le pareció el organismo de la doncella perfectamente equilibrado para emparejarse con el suyo.... (124)
>
> Todas estas preeminencias, adivinadas primero por el fisiólogo, fué comprobándolas como ciertas á medida del trato con Rita López.... Quedaba razonado su enamoramiento.... La union (sic) de los sexos seria (sic) en ellos de perfeccion (sic) intachable, de intimidad completa. (125-26)

D. The Power of the Physiological Laws of Nature

Concomitant with the laws of hereditary determinism and the overwhelming influence of the environment, Man, an organism like any other, is subject to his body's physiological makeup and development, and to its various lifelong transformations. By carefully observing the external manifestations of Man's physiological changes and reactions, naturalists believed they would be capable of understanding

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their subjects' thoughts, feelings, fears, temperament, et similia. Thus, in other words, to understand Man's physiology was an important key to understanding his psychology.

López Bago was already fully cognizant of the importance of this principle early in his career. In La periodista, he wrote: "Obedece [la] naturaleza á leyes invariables, y los sentimientos lo mismo que las sensaciones, sujetos están á fenómenos idénticos" (52). The novelist first applied this tenet in the same novel when he noted how Luis and María's sexual union was the inevitable result of their mutual physical attraction:

> Sucedió lo que sucede en el mundo físico cuando se encuentran dos átomos. Hubo atracción mutua y unión, por último, pero unión forzosa, inevitable, que sigue los mandatos de las leyes naturales. ¡Esto es inmoral! Cierto. María y Luis no pensaron en caer. Cayeron. No se puede culpar á los cuerpos abandonados á sí propios, porque obedecen á la gravedad. (62-63)

Copious examples of detailed physical and physiological descriptions of characters during the various crises of their lives are featured throughout López Bago's later novels. However, one of the most fascinating aspects of the novelist's study on the power of the physiological laws of nature concerns the onset of the two most critical stages in the female's biological life cycle: puberty and menopause. Our

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novelist was very much interested in exploring these two stages—puberty, in particular—as demonstrated by his treatment of the latter with several adolescent characters: Gracia (El cura), Melita (La monja), Rita (La soltera, La desposada), Fanny (Carne de nobles) and Rosita Pérez (La Pálida). With the clinical precision of a medical textbook, López Bago fixes the age of the onset of puberty in females, noting how:

> ...una joven puede adquirir todas las condiciones de mujer á los catorce ó quince años, mientras que en otra aparecerán éstas á los diez y siete, y aún más tarde, sin que exista ninguna razón plausible para explicar la precocidad ó el retardo. Los cambios que se observan en la pubertad no se ejecutan todos al mismo tiempo, sino que necesitan un período de muchos meses para producirse, durante los cuales son más frecuentes las enfermedades; y estas épocas son mucho más fatales en las mujeres que en los hombres. (La monja 122-23)

External manifestations of puberty's arrival in sixteen-year old Melita included: "el desarrollo de los pechos, la aparición del vello, la voz tomando su timbre, y sus inclinaciones cambiando por completo" (La monja 123). Similar changes were taking place in Gracia, who was losing her willowy frame for wide shoulders, "una curva reentrante hasta la cintura, y luégo (sic) la amplitud de las caderas" (El cura

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155).

Menstruation—to which López Bago refers somewhat poetically as "las pródigas hemorragias de su exuberante sexo" (El cura 26)—brought forth in Gracia heightened "estados de sensibilidad exquisita, una verdadera neurosis, en que el menor ruido era su sobresalto, y el roce más leve un cosquilleo de la piel que la estremecía poderosamente" (El cura 26). Melita, on the other hand, complained of "una sensación de plenitud y de pesadez, de dolores lumbares;" and she "padecía frecuentes dolores de cabeza" (La monja 123).

In the following passage, López Bago documents the wide range of turbulent emotional mood swings as well as the physiological transformations experienced by his protagonist Rita López as she adjusted to the process of becoming a woman:

> Ella, Rita, también á su madurez hubo de sentir iguales revoluciones del organismo. Tambien (sic) iba perdiendo sus gustos y predilecciones de niña para adquirir otros nuevos. Querer, sin saber lo que queria (sic); desear, sin poder limitar su deseo. Sentir una emocion (sic) profunda, repentina y enternecedora, y así como precision (sic) de llorar. A veces ... una verdadera sensacion (sic) que la obligaba á cerrar los ojos, languideciendo como en un desmayo. Sentia (sic) la circulacion (sic) de la sangre semejanza de cosquilleo, tan intenso, tan irresistible en

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> ocasiones, que se veia (sic) en la precision (sic) de dar suelta al desahogo de la carcajada. Luego la distension (sic), como de un resorte en el organismo, un resorte que se estuviese desenroscando, y en las caderas y en los pechos el dolor causado por el resorte que apretaba allí para vencer la resistencia que se oponia (sic) á su desarrollo. Además, calor en la musculatura, que la hizo confiar en sus fuerzas como confian (sic) los atletas, sintiéndose capaz de vencer á un gigante, de ahogarlo entre sus brazos.... ¡La pubertad! (La soltera 164-65)

Accompanying the physiological capacity to reproduce was the development of new and intense emotional and sexual longings; evidenced in Melita, for example, as "una necesidad de amar, una inquietud y deseo vagos, confusos, propios de la crisis por que estaba atrevesando; la adolescencia" (La monja 94). According to López Bago, the powerful natural awakening of sexual desire in pubescent females was an issue which must be addressed seriously and openly by society at large and by parents in particular. Contrary to the mores of his era, the controversial and liberal novelist believed that female sexual desire must be allowed to be satiated through sexual intercourse with suitable male partners as soon as possible. This could be achieved with or without the benefit of marriage; for López Bago did not condemn premarital sexual

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relationships; nor did he oppose the practice of unmarried couples cohabiting together "in sin," a position we observed in our study in Chapter I of Luis' and María's arrangement in El periodista. López Bago voiced his radical belief through Arturo Salces from La soltera and La desposada:

> ...tuvo que irritarle en ocasiones el veto social que le impedia (sic) aconsejar á los padres que entregasen, á lo que ellos llamaban la deshonra, los cuerpos de sus hijas si querian (sic) salvarlas de la muerte que amenaza y se apodera siempre de las virginidades prolongadas .... (La soltera 121)

Sexual aberrations were the life-threatening consequences of the state of "prolonged virginity"; specifically, nymphomania and professional prostitution. Nymphomania was preceded by an attack or attacks of hysteria, which, in turn, was preceded by specific, discernible physical symptoms which served as warning signs of the female's deteriorating physical and mental health. López Bago selects Gracia as his prototype who will serve "de norma para generalizar un poco. La virginidad de Gracia préstase al experimento, es más dócil, digámoslo así, para someterse al análisis" (El cura 169-70). The novelist details Gracia's symptoms:

> Indudablemente, su sensibilidad se exaltaba de día en día. Se repitieron los accesos de llanto; tenía á lo mejor que esconderse para que no la sorprendieran llorando y le preguntasen la causa.

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> ¿Qué sabía ella? Lloraba sin motivo, como por una necesidad orgánica, porque el llanto quitaba una opresión que la sofocaba en el pecho y una gran molestia en la garganta. Durante la cena, una noche se le desvaneció la vista, la acometió un vértigo, hasta el punto de que tuvo que agarrarse con ambas manos á la mesa para no caer al suelo, casi perdido el conocimiento; por la noche, su sueño era interrumpido y con sobresaltos; además de estos signos, que acusaban una exageración morbosa de la excitabilidad, en el cerebro ocurrían fenómenos estraños: unas veces le parecía que su cerebro estaba en ebullición; otras que le habían echado por los oídos en el cráneo aceite hirviendo, y llegó á quejarse de un dolor violentísimo limitado á un pequeño espacio de la cabeza, ordinariamente á uno de los lados de la sutura sagital. (El cura 156-57)

The severity of Gracia's condition could no longer be ignored when suddenly "se oyó un grito agudo que partía del gabinete" (180); the young woman was undergoing an attack of "histerismo bajo su manifestación del *globo histérico*" (181), an attack which would last more than six hours:

> Gracia estaba tendida en el suelo, con el corpiño desabrochado violentamente, los pechos al aire, sin haber perdido el conocimiento, pero sí el

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> uso de la palabra .... (180)
>
> El ataque de Gracia empezó por la sensación de un frío interior, propagándose á los miembros y el tronco, y seguido muy pronto de la sensación de *la bola* que dijo sentir en el vientre, una contracción dolorosa; luégo (sic) la bola se corrió por el pecho hacia la faringe, produciéndole falta de respiración, casi asfixia. El ataque era una irritación que obraba sobre los nervios; las sacudidas de los brazos se repetían con cortos intervalos. Los dos hombres [her brother and neighbor, the priest Fermín] se arrodillaron para contenerla. Román cogió la mano derecha de Gracia, y ésta estrechó la suya con placer y fuerza .... (181)
>
> De vez en cuando, con intervalos de tres, cuatro ó cinco minutos, los gritos y movimientos convulsivos cesaban. Gracia se quejaba, pero sin recobrar la palabra. Fué terrible la duración, desde las tres de la tarde hasta las nueve de la noche. ¡Seis horas! Román se desesperaba. (182)

Gracia was given "vapores del amoníaco, del éter y del alcanfor" to breathe (183), but these attempts to revive her failed. What finally brought the young woman out of her attack was the very object of her intense sexual frustration: the close physical proximity of her adored brother Román, a

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Catholic priest:

> Gracia manifestó en su rostro, hasta entonces contraído por el enervamiento, la expresión de una alegría grande; estrechó el cuerpo de su hermano, le abrazó á su vez con un movimiento rápido, el último, que Román no pudo prevenir ni contener; prorrumpió en una ruidosa carcajada y luégo (sic) en abundantísimo llanto. Abrió los hermosos ojos. (183-84)

In the following passage, the physician brought in to examine Gracia explains hysteria. Although most of the theories expressed are no longer recognized as valid, the passage offers an interesting look at how hysteria was defined by the late nineteenth-century scientific community:

> Las circunstancias que predisponen más al histerismo son una influencia hereditaria, la constitución nerviosa, tan desarrollada siempre en las mujeres, y la edad de doce á veinticinco ó treinta años....
>
> ...el histerismo es dolencia exclusivamente propia del sexo femenino, y fácilmente se comprende que sus fenómenos y síntomas deben depender en gran parte de todas aquellas influencias que se refieren á las funciones sexuales. La temperatura elevada favorece el desarrollo del histerismo, y por eso se observa frecuentemente en los climas cálidos y en

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> las estaciones calientes. Las afecciones morales tienen también mucho influjo; y el efecto de este orden de causas puede ser mediato ó inmediato, pues unas veces se presenta el histerismo algún tiempo después de recibir una emoción moral, y otras inmediatamente, como, por ejemplo: á consecuencia de un susto. Igual influencia tienen también las sensaciones tristes ó alegres, la lectura habitual de obras apasionadas ó tiernas. (185-86)

The doctor also advises against Gracia continuing her habit of taking daily baths; it is too powerful a stimulus, producing in her "una excitación demasiado considerable de los sentidos" (188). Gracia becomes aroused by her own nudity; and, if "un hombre se acerca y puede llegar hasta ella en aquel momento, se entregará sin resistencia" (189).

Marriage is the answer to Gracia's hysteria "porque la enfermedad es todavía muy reciente; ahora es cuando el matrimonio puede ser útil satisfaciendo la necesidad del corazón más bien que la de los sentidos" (187). When Román vehemently disputes the doctor's diagnosis of Gracia's neurosis, the physician proceeds to inform the priest about the aforementioned consequences of untreated hysteria: nymphomania. Many (if not all) of the following so-called "dangers" seem quite ludicrous by late twentieth-century medical standards:

> Y ahora sepa Ud. que la ninfomanía es una

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excitación morbosa irresistible de los órganos genitales; inclinación al amor físico hasta el delirio, expresada por palabras obscenas, miradas apasionadas y gestos provocativos....(190) La enfermedad no se hace evidente por ningún carácter exterior; pues aunque las enfermas empiezan á tener deseos venéreos exagerados, son todavía bastante dueñas de sí mismas para no dejar traslucir los pensamientos obscenos de que se hallan poseídas. Por el contrario, avergonzadas de experimentar semejantes sensaciones, hacen los mayores esfuerzos para sujetarlas; y aunque el pudor y la razón destruyen á veces por un instante las imágenes voluptuosas que las persiguen, no tardan en hallarse otra vez poseídas de los mismos desvaríos eróticos, y entonces son presas de un calor intenso, espasmo, tensión con prurito en los órganos genitales y en las mamas, dolores sordos en los lomos; la enferma no puede estar sentada, porque el calor irrita demasiado los órganos; se ve obligada á andar lentamente, separando las piernas para evitar el más pequeño roce; al mismo tiempo se dejan sentir los deseos más violentos; la imaginación se exalta; los ojos y el rostro se animan; pero en algunos momentos este ardor se ve reemplazdo con el abatimiento y la tristeza, y el

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> semblante unas veces se sonroja y otras palidece. (191-92)

The physician concludes his analysis by stating that for the nymphomaniac:

> Parécele la cosa más natural y lícita entregarse á estos goces; así que su porte, sus palabras, sus gestos expresan públicamente las ideas que la asedian (sic); la vista de un hombre exalta los deseos y determina un espasmo voluptuoso en los órganos genitales. La enferma, menospreciando los hábitos más inveterados de honestidad, los sentimientos religiosos más puros, se entrega al primero que llega, y aun solicita los halagos de otras mujeres; y, abandonando á sus padres, á sus hermanos, á su familia, va á buscar muchas veces en la prostitución un remedio, y en ella encuentra casi siempre la muerte. (193)

Frustrated motherhood—women dealing with infertility, loss of children, abnormal maternal obsessions, etc.—is not a problem common to López Bago's female characters. However, at this juncture, between his studies on puberty and menopause, it would be appropriate to observe how the novelist—in order to demonstrate once again the supremacy of the biological laws of nature over all others—presents a case of a female character's intense instinctive imperative to reproduce. In La monja, Sor María de la Soledad's consuming

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passion is to become a mother "para cumplir un deber de hembra, para obedecer un mandato imperiosísimo que en su organismo estaba exigiendo la naturaleza" (200). Temperamentally and physiologically totally unsuited for convent life she "era hembra á su tiempo, y el instinto de la reproducción en ella, como en las hembras de los animales, se despertaba imperiosamente, la inclinaba á buscar al macho, que hasta entonces había tratado de evitar" (201). Unlike López Bago's other pubescent characters—Gracia, Melita, Rita and Rosita—Soledad possessed no erotic longings for members of the male species. For this nun, the male's purpose was to impregnate her, and, once "cumplido este fin, huía nuevamente de él" (201).

Menopause is a traumatic experience in the lives of two of López Bago's aristocratic characters: Antonia, the Duchess de Benimar, in Carne de nobles; and Melita's mother, Gertrudis, the Marquise de la Florida in La monja. The novelist fixes menopause's "pleno período" as occurring at age forty (Carne de nobles 132). This "segunda edad crítica de la mujer" (Carne de nobles 132) is accompanied by the following telling physiological symptoms, observed in Gertrudis:

> Cierta tendencia á la obesidad, debilidades de estómago, languidez y sudores profusos, y, sobre todo, una gran susceptibilidad nerviosa, ó, por mejor decir, la exasperación de la susceptibilidad ya existente é inherente á su constitución, no

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> dejaban lugar á duda. (La monja 116)

López Bago warns of the possible outbreak of several life-threatening illnesses:

> Podía sobrevenir una porción de accidentes, de lesiones, que permanecen en estado latente, y que al atravesar este período llegan á ocasionar la muerte de una manera inesperada. La hemorragia, las úlceras, los pólipos, el terrible cáncer y la hidropesía; podían reaparecer enfermedades antiguas .... (La monja 116)

In order to assist women in adjusting to this new crisis in their lives, López Bago offers advise on hygiene, diet and exercise:

> Alejar todo lo que pudiera producir exaltación de la sensibilidad; someterla á un régimen alimenticio, suave, humectante, poco suculento. Vestidos de suficiente abrigo, para mantener esa abundante transpiración que es propia para disminuir la plétora; evitar la permanencia en un ambiente frío y húmedo; hacer un ejercicio moderado al aire libre; impedir las vigilias ó el sueño demasiado prolongado, y toda violenta agitación del alma. (La monja 117)

For Antonia and Gertrudis the cessation of their reproductive functioning is equated with the loss of their youth, physical beauty, attractiveness and desirability to the

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opposite sex, as well as the loss of confidence in their own sexual prowess. Both women faced "la segunda edad crítica" with anger and trepidation. Antonia de Benimar:

> empezó á sentir el miedo á la primera arruga y á la primera cana. Antes que la vejez fuera visible y externa, sintióse *vieja por dentro*. La naturaleza habia (sic) dado el aviso, y lo que es peor, habia (sic) obrado ya, presentándose no de otro modo, sino como ángel de exterminio y de venganzas y justicias, para arrojarla con la menopáusia (sic) del paraiso (sic) del amor, del cual, á los doce años, con la pubertad, le abrió las puertas. (Carne de nobles 206-07)

Menopause forces Gertrudis to reflect upon the unfulfilled dreams of her unhappy and disappointing life: the men who deceived and betrayed her, and the fact that, despite her many years of fertility, "se vió fecundada una vez tan sólo" (La monja 118). For Gertrudis, her "segunda edad crítica" brings diminished interest in sexual intercourse which "no podía tener más objeto que el de un adquirido hábito vicioso; ahora que el árbol no podía dar flores ni frutos" (La monja 118).

The reactions exhibited by Antonia and Gertrudis to menopause thus far—introspection and anxiety about the future—were both passive and mild in comparison to the drastic actions they would undertake to redirect the course of their lives. The aristocratic Antonia de Benimar began to

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compare herself to the queen: "Aquella mujer gorda de Palacio, que era más vieja, mucho más vieja que ella; que realmente al lado de la magnífica escultura de carne formada por el cuerpo de la criolla [Antonia], resultaba fea..." (Carne de nobles 208). Realizing that, although, she, the Duchess de Benimar, was more beautiful and desirable, it would always be the queen who would be remembered and revered through the annals of history, simply "por ser Reina, por ser Majestad" (208). And, Antonia's now fading beauty would, in time, be forgotten. Spurred by a sense of unfairness for her situation, Antonia's envy deepened into an intense hatred for the monarch. Unable to control her fear of her own mortality, Antonia wanted the throne for herself: "¡El trono! ¿Qué mejor escenario puede existir en el teatro del mundo?" (208). Joining forces with her ambitious husband, Antonia would play a major active role in instigating the revolution which would topple the queen from her throne.

Although her traumatic reaction to menopause does not affect the course of an entire nation's destiny, Gertrudis—unlike the vain Antonia—was nevertheless enlightened by the crisis. Menopause empowers Gertrudis to make decisions which would favorably affect her life. She finally realizes how over the past few years she had been cruelly used—sexually and financially—by her lover and priest, Román (Gracia's brother): "vió por fin, vió con la clara visión que dan los objetos puestos á toda luz, muy cerca

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y observados directamente" (La monja 184). Gertrudis had been Román's slave "en cuerpo y alma. A él le tocaba mandar, y á la otra obedecer" (120). He had successfully made her into "una cosa, en un instrumento que él utilizaba, y del que se servia (sic) para todos sus fines" (183). Gertrudis finally asked herself: "¿Fue la menopausia? ¿Fué la edad crítica la que influyó entonces en el giro que tomaron sus ideas? Ahora, sí. Ahora, desde la decadencia, veía el esplendor..." (187). Although it had cost her 4,000 *duros*, she gained salvation for her soul. Gertrudis no longer "despreciaba su cuerpo, por creerlo inútil. Inútil para la fecundidad, pero estimable como morada del alma, que vale más que todas las riquezas del mundo" (191).

E. The Scientific Approach to Observation and Documentation of Data Drawn From a Variety of Milieux and Human Types

From his first "novela médico-social" to his last, López Bago was very conscious of the naturalist novelist's responsibility to carefully observe and accurately document data acquired from a variety of sources in the real world. As we have already seen with Zola's Rougon-Macquart saga, the observation and documentation of the multitude of "llagas sociales" required the naturalist's physical presence in both typical and unusual settings. Although, perhaps, not as sweeping as Zola's locales, López Bago, nevertheless, followed

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his mentor's example. In the "novelas sociales" and "médico-sociales," our author's on-site investigation of real places included descriptions taken from the following diverse milieux: cafés, taverns, churches, hospitals, elitist social clubs, a convent, an artist's studio, a transatlantic voyage; low income, middle class and aristocratic homes; a royal palace, a boarding school, the bullring; in addition to the traditionally criminal and "immoral" taboo environments of prisons, penitentiaries and houses of ill repute.

For his tetralogy, the author visited one or more low-class brothels for his depiction of "La Casa de Mari-Pepa"; and in order to accurately describe Rosita Pérez' nightmarish experience, he inspected a house of assignation. Late nineteenth-century madrileños were acquainted with at least three of the establishments portrayed in "La prostituta": the hospital "San Juan de Dios" and two of the favorite haunts of the social elite, the exclusive "Café Fornos" and the "Veloz Club."

Providing precise data in <u>El preso</u>, López Bago documented the overcrowded conditions in the "Penitenciaría celular de Madrid," conditions which resulted in the propagation of contagious communicable diseases among prisoners:

> Hay en la Penitenciaría celular de Madrid 408 celdas para correccional, 558 para cárcel de partido, de Audiencia y depósito municipal, 25 de pago, 10 para procesados políticos y un

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> departamento con 35 celdas para menores de quince años. En total, 1.036 celdas. Consúltese el libro ó registro de entrada y resultarán casi siempre 2.000 hombres encerrados en este local construído para contener la mitad de dicha cifra. (99-100)

In Crimen Legal, it is interesting to observe how Sawa makes a passing reference to López Bago's documentation of life in jail and inside houses of ill repute. Mixing fiction with fact, López Bago becomes the topic of gossip among guests at the dinner party celebrating Rafaela's first pregnancy. Sawa ridicules his fictional guest, a staunch Catholic, for slandering his colleague. By his comments, the gossipmonger implies that López Bago's presence inside a prison is his punishment for dissolute behavior, rather than an active decision made by the novelist; his purpose for visiting brothels is personal, not professional: "¡López Bago!.... No me habléis de ese hombre.... ¡Un hombre que, según dicen, se pasa las noches en las prevenciones y en las mancebías.... ¡Que, según dicen también, vive amontonado sobre quince ó veinte muchachas perdidas!" (51).[31]

Like Zola, López Bago's cast of characters is representative of a diversity of social and occupational types which include the following: manual laborers, domestic servants, shopkeepers, the clergy, aristocrats, bureaucrats, politicians, physicians, capitalists, journalists, monarchs, revolutionaries, bullfighters and criminals; as well as the

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stereotypical figures from the world of professional prostitution: prostitutes, mistresses, madams, procurers, and their clientele from every stratum of society.

F. Preference for Depicting the Ugliest, Crudest and the Most Repulsive Aspects of Human Existence

Concentrating their focus primarily on the examination of the lives of the unrepresented sectors of society—the petite bourgeoisie, the proletariat, the ostracized, etc.—the naturalist novelist sought to graphically depict the bitter and ugly realities common to the daily lives of characters traditionally idealized or excluded from major roles in literary works.

In "Impresiones de un lector," Sawa comments upon López Bago's interpretation of "feísmo" in society described in the first two "novelas médico-sociales":

> La Prostituta y La Pálida son obras implacables, sin nervios y sin entrañas, inexorables, en que el autor se oculta por completo para que sea la realidad sola, pero la realidad más antipática, más odiosa, la realidad que mata al padre y deja á los hijos huérfanos, la realidad que parece cómplice de la infamia....
>
> Y resulta feo. Porque esa sociedad que estudia López Bago en La Prostituta y La Pálida es fea,

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> esencialmente fea, monstruosa, y huele más al pus y á los desinfectantes de las salas clínicas que al aroma de los campos.... (El cura 304)

Validating Sawa's observations, our author demonstrated that he was, indeed, committed to Zolaesque Naturalism's sense of duty to objectively document the dark side of humanity; López Bago's novels are replete with passages detailing places, events, characters, and conditions which may be characterized as degrading, morbid, loathsome, nauseating and even scatological.

In La Prostituta López Bago wasted no time in demonstrating his skill and boldness in depicting "el feísmo," as he opens the novel by describing the exterior of Mari-Pepa's low-class bordello, the principal setting of the novel:

> Desde la calle veíase, entre dos edificios de mayor elevación y de construcción más moderna, aquella fachada ruinosa, de color gris, en las que el tiempo dejó impresa la marca de cansancio con que al pasar, apoyándose en los muros, los manchó con sus manos y su cuerpo de atleta envuelto en andrajos; el cuerpo bañado en sudor, los andrajos cubiertos de fango y polvo.
>
> Á cierta distancia, la falta de cal que produjo la caída de grandes cascotes, dejando al descubierto la roja mancha de los ladrillos, da repugnantes aspectos al edificio, recordando esos

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> mendigos asquerosos que explotan la compasión exponiendo en medio de la vía pública desnudeces cubiertas de llagas, miembros podridos, que hacen apartar la vista para contener la náusea, y hurtar el roce del traje para evitar la mancha.
>
> Luégo (sic), la humedad completa el asco, corre por grandes pinceladas de alto á bajo, pinceladas verdosas, negruzcas, terrosas, amarillentas, que serpean simulando derrames y extravasamientos de pústulas, cuya materia, al salir, sigue cauces caprichosos que parten del daño, y manchan, cuando no inficionan la piel sana.... (5-6)
>
> Ya no se montaba la guardia de mujeres en el balcón. En el portal, mal alumbrado, mal oliente, y húmedo con las humedades que allí dejaron los vómitos de la embriaguez y las secreciones de los viciosos .... (9)

In the same novel López Bago underscores the physiological pathology in the repulsive appearance of the Marquis de Villaperdida:

> Y cerrando los ojos, [Arístides] volvió á ver, en sus recuerdos de la entrevista, la palidez amarillenta de aquel semblante demacrado, en que la piel era seca y térrea, y en el que eran los ojos lo único que brillaba, con el brillo intenso de la calentura hética; vió también aquellos miembros

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> enflaquecidos sin duda por los sudores nocturnos de esta misma fiebre subsistente; sintió el terrible calor de aquellas manos, y el olor infecto que, dominando el de los perfumes derramados en la ropa, exhalaba el cuerpo del excelentísimo é ilustrísimo señor marqués de Villaperdida. (42)

"Feismo" takes on the element of the macabre in El cura, inasmuch as Román, the titular protagonist, has turned a room in his house into a shrine in which he idolatrizes the obscene and revolting lifelike statue of Jesus Christ on the Cross:

> Era la imagen de tamaño natural; y aquel cadáver desnudo, destacándose sobre las bayetas negras, resultaba lo más visible en todo el gabinete. Era un Cristo más propio de templo que de oratorio privado .... Las carnes pintadas tenían lividez cadavérica; las heridas, coágulos de sangre. Un médico hubiéralo estudiado como reproducción hecha en cartón-piedra de un caso de puñaladas, de uno de esos asesinados que se llevan desde la esquina en que cayeron á la mesa del anfiteatro. Aquellos cuyo estómago no estuviese fortalecido en las realidades de la disección deberían sentir asco. Sólo teniendo conciencia de que simulaba un Dios no se experimentaba la náusea ante las llagas. Román las cubría de besos. (21)

The bullring is an appropriate venue to underscore the

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brutality of life and death acted out between man and beast. At a Valencian "corrida de toros" in Luis Martínez, López Bago juxtaposes the natural brutality of the bull forced to defend himself against the pathological brutality of man with sanguinary results:

> El *Sevillano* acababa sin duda de conocer por instinto que no se le temía, que se trataba de un duelo á muerte. Enardecido por el mismo destronque que hubo de sufrir al dar en vago su embestida, arremetió con indescriptible ímpetu contra el mayor bulto que se le ponía delante, con toda la velocidad y pujanza adquirida por la mole en la carrera. En vano el picador clavó su puya y quiso detener; era el topetazo como de formidable ariete, la garrocha se rompió como débil caña y el toro metió la cabeza, humilló, y en su derrote el asta izquierda, toda el asta entró en el cuerpo del caballo, levantó á éste con el jinete, túvolos un punto en el aire zarandeando aquel peso en que saciaba su furor, llevándolo así algún trecho como si fuera leve arista, y caballo y picador á la postre, con gran estrépito, vinieron al suelo. Cuando se pudo ver al toro estaba horrible: ensangrentado todo el testuz, toda *la cara*, y ciego de bravura, iba á revolverse de nuevo á recoger á sus víctimas de la arena. El picador había caído

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> delante del caballo; no se movía. En la muchedumbre hubo un grito de horror. Instintivamente muchos espectadores cerraron los ojos. ¡Aquel hombre, aquel hombre que iba á morir allí! (162-63)

Fortunately, the injured "picador" was saved from certain death by the quick thinking actions of his colleagues. The horse, however, was not so fortunate. López Bago begins the following passage by preparing his readers for the gruesome scene he is about to describe; and inspires compassion in his readers for the tortured dying animal:

> La escena que sobrevino fué repugnante. Quisieron levantar al caballo herido. Uno de los mozos, sacándole las riendas del cuello, tiraba de ellas con toda su fuerza. Otros dos, armados con recias varas de fresno, hicieron de verdugos, y lo hicieron á conciencia, descargando á la grupa una tremenda lluvia de palos. Parecía que gozaban en aquel trance. Hasta llegaron á reirse porque tomaron con mucho acierto la vez y el turno para los golpes. El animal hacía esfuerzos penosísimos, no para obedecer, sino para librarse de aquel martirio, pero no podía. La cornada era espantosa. El asta del toro abrió en la piel ancha brecha, hizo tal destrozo y tan profundo, que por la herida salían, con la sangre á borbotones, los intestinos,

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> todo el mondongo de blanda hinchazón, reluciente y jugoso. Debía sufrir horriblemente. Coceaba al sentir la paliza cada vez más nutrida é implacable. (167)

Perhaps the most revolting of all of López Bago's graphic descriptions is the following scene from El preso. When Juan's sadistic prison mates discover that he is a newcomer to the penal system, they take turns sexually assaulting him. Using the pretext of *forcing* Juan to search for a nonexistent coin, they augment Juan's degradation by forcing him to put his hands in their excrement:

> —¡Al zambullo! ¡Que saque la moneda!
>
> Y esta proposición, atendiendo al estado de enfermedad del novato, que para todos resultó indudable, fué la que prosperó.
>
> Dos de los transitorios llevaron á Juan Ruíz, que no podía sostenerse, al extremo de la cuadra, donde había un cubo, depósito del excremento de todos ellos, é hiciéronle meter las manos con el pretexto de que buscase una moneda, que aseguraban haberse caído allí.
>
> —¡Busca la moneda, novato! ¡Busca la moneda!
>
> Y celebraban el caso con grandes carcajadas. (122-23)

As we have seen thus far, most of the discussion and criticism generated surrounding Zola and his followers

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revolves around their preference for describing the most repulsive degenerate aspects of reality. Zola and López Bago both took issue with their critics.

Zola responded to the attacks in Le roman expérimental. According to the French master, his detractors demonstrated their own "imbécillité" (84) by identifying the naturalist novel as "ordure" and "dépravation" for its depiction of human misery, especially in light of Naturalism's greater humanitarian mission to "extirper" and "détruire" (84) evil wherever and however it may be found. To support his point of view, Zola quotes an illustrative statement made by Bernard, whose last sentence underlines the chasm between naturalists and all others:

> Le physiologiste n'est pas un homme du monde, c'est un savant, c'est un homme absorbé par une idée scientifique qu'il poursuit; il n'entend plus les cris des animaux, il ne voit plus le sang qui coule, il ne voit que son idée et n'aperçoit que des organismes qui lui cachent des problèmes qu'il veut découvrir. De même, le chirurgien n'est pas arrêté par les cris et les sanglots, parce qu'il ne voit que son idée et le but de son opération. De même encore, l'anatomiste ne sent pas qu'il est dans un charnier horrible; sous l'influence d'une idée scientifique, il poursuit avec délices un filet nerveux dans des chairs puantes et livides, qui

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> seraient pour tout autre homme un objet de dégoût et d'horreur. (Bernard, Introduction; qtd. in Zola, Roman 85)

In a more conciliatory tone, Zola asks critics to keep an open mind concerning Naturalism's agenda; and, in doing so, they may come to understand and even appreciate the movement's methods:

> Devant un pareil tableau, nous pardonnera-t-on nos quelques audaces á nous, romanciers naturalistes, qui, par amour du vrai, poursuivons parfois avec délices les détraquements que produit une passion dans un personnage gâté jusqu'aux moelles? Nous reprochera-t-on nos charniers horribles, le sang que nous faisons couleur, les sanglots que nous n'épargnons pas aux lecteurs? C'est que de nos tristes réduits nous espérons faire sortir des vérités qui éblouiront ceux qui sauront les voir. (85)

In "Análisis de la novela titulada Crimen legal," López Bago responded angrily to critics' attacks against him and the naturalist movement for emphasizing "el vicio repugnante y abominable, tal como es" (appendix, La Pálida 264). Now Sawa will likewise be an object of criticism, for he too is "dotado de una penetración extraordinaria" and "descubre esas excrecencias y ese cáncer que hace del corazón humano, visto de cerca, el objeto más asqueroso para nuestra observación"

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("Análisis," Crimen legal 261). There is a high price to pay for daring to depict such horror; naturalists are unjustly hated because they are the messengers of "la miseria humana." López Bago tells Sawa to prepare himself for the onslaught of hatred which will surely be directed at him for publishing Crimen legal, as it was directed against the radical naturalist for his first two "novelas médico-sociales":

> Tenemos, pues, los naturalistas, contamos desde luégo (sic) con la polvareda de odio que levantan nuestras novelas; contamos con ella, como cuenta el operador con los gritos, los insultos y las imprecaciones que el dolor arranca al paciente; como cuenta el juez con los rencores de la familia del reo y con los del reo mismo, que, condenado por ladrón, se convertiría en asesino del que dictó los considerandos y resultandos de su sentencia. Hacemos procesos y autopsias. Todavía Alejandro Sawa se maravilla de las cóleras de niño rabioso y castigado, azotado, con que las gentes pronuncian mi nombre y los títulos de mis novelas. Acostúmbrese y sonría como yo, porque después de la publicación y venta de CRIMEN LEGAL (sic) han de pronunciar lo mismo el suyo. Será odiado. (262)

Nevertheless, as López Bago aptly points out, naturalist novelists were not responsible for "la miseria humana." What is so tragic is the fact that there were so many wretched

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beings whose lives served as sources of creative inspiration for naturalist writers: "Después de todo, puesto que nosotros copiamos la miseria humana, la culpa no es nuestra, sino de que hay, de que lo que más abunda para modelo, son los miserables" (264).

G. Extreme Pessimism

A pessimistic outlook on life is a natural consequence of the naturalist novelist's constant immersion in a depressing world ridden with "cáncer" and "excreciones" of all kind. In the novels of López Bago and Sawa this pessimism may be characterized as extreme, and it "reviste unos caracteres exagerados" (Gutiérrez Carbajo 390). In "Análisis de la novela titulada Crimen legal," López Bago speaks for himself and for Sawa when he declares the following:

> Sawa cree, como creo yo, que la humanidad, en tesis general, en conjunto y casi en detalle, se puede definir con una sola palabra, la de canalla; canalla por obediencia á su organismo, si se me permite la frase, por obediencia también á como está construída. (Crimen legal 261-62)

A panoramic view of López Bago's novels bears witness to their author's pervasive pessimism. An overwhelming sense of futility and hopelessness about life dominates the tone of almost all of his Zolaesque fiction. This element is most

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notably accentuated in the tragic fates of many of the characters. Noble characters struggle honorably, valiantly and relentlessly to overcome and survive the malevolent forces against them; but their efforts are always, ultimately, in vain. Most novels conclude unhappily; with the deaths, or anticipated or presaged deaths of many characters or protagonists, including the following: Luis (El periodista); Estrella, Paco, Miguel Loitia ("La prostituta"); Gracia ("El cura"); Melita (La monja); María and Rita López ("La mujer honrada"); Juan Ruíz (El preso); Agustina Cebrian (sic) (Carne importada).

López Bago further heightens the reader's sense of injustice and futility by his choice of unmerited fates for his malevolent antagonists. In contrast to the tradition of the Spanish serial novel, for example, good is defeated and evil flourishes in the "novelas sociales" and "médico-sociales." Although antagonists like José and Luis de Villaperdida (La prostituta, La Pálida) and the Marquis de Jibosa (El preso) die or will soon die by the conclusion of their respective novels, they die with their reputations intact; their crimes are never publicly disclosed. Antagonists indirectly or accidentally responsible for the deaths of innocent characters—Román ("El cura") and the priest Lasoga (La Pálida), respectively—as well as coldblooded murderers like Arístides and Rosita's brother, Juan Pérez ("La prostituta"), and the nuns in La monja, escape

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detection and, consequently, social and religious condemnation, and legal retribution. Arístides and Román are two antagonists who actually thrive and triumph; both ascend the proverbial ladder of fame and success in their respective chosen environments.

The episode which, perhaps, best illustrates this "pesimismo exacerbado" is López Bago's description of the cruel, underhanded and cowardly murder of Paco, Estrella Sánchez' fiancé in La prostituta. Acting out of a chivalrous sense of duty and honor, Paco confronts Arístides, and demands justice for his treachery in surrendering the unsuspecting Estrella to the Marquis de Villaperdida. Paco informs the procurer that he will have to kill him for his crime, but offers Arístides the opportunity to defend himself in physical combat. However, the procurer suddenly and without warning fatally stabs the unarmed young man in the heart. To compound the injustice, the murderer lies to Mari-Pepa and Estrella, declaring that he reacted in self-defense, that Paco was the aggressor. However, it is the penultimate scene in the novel which is most unsettling. López Bago leaves his readers with a keen sense of pathos and utter hopelessness:

> Entre tanto, el cadáver del obrero seguía en medio de la calle, en lo oscuro de la esquina, con dos heridas: una, la de muerte, en el pecho; otra en el cráneo, producida al caer sobre las piedras, y con los brazos abiertos, mirando al cielo, con esa

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> fijeza de los ojos muertos que tienen la expresión de esta última pregunta: "¿Por qué?" (266)

Despite the emphasis or overemphasis on documenting numerous cases of "la miseria humana," and despite the pessimistic ambiance which permeates the novels, it would be unfair to give the impression that López Bago's naturalistic work is devoid of descriptions which portray the pleasant realities of life. Beauty and goodness do have a place in his novels, as evidenced, for example, in the following instances: the "hermosas descripciones" (Sainz de Robles 636) of nature, the luxurious furnishings in the homes of the aristocracy (El confesionario, Carne de nobles); the physical descriptions of many female characters: Estrella, Rosita, Gracia, Gertrudis, Francisca Ruíz, etc.; the expressions of love, tenderness and respect exhibited in the sanguineous relationships between Estrella and Paco; María and Luis Martínez; Juan and Francisca Ruíz; the costumbristic scene depicting a laborer's happy wedding celebration in El cura, etc.

Of special interest is López Bago's creation of Miguel Loitia's father, Don Pedro, a former Moderate party provincial governor. Lozano Marco is impressed with the author's compassionate portrayal of this enduring character from La buscona: "Es este personaje, el Sr. Loitia, el más conmovedor de los creados por López Bago; hombre duro y enérgico en el desempeño de su cargo de gobernador civil en cuantas provincias lo ha ejercido, pero tierno y sensible en la

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intimidad de la familia y de los amigos" (349). This characterization of Pedro Loitia is not the only example of López Bago's interest in depicting the sublime. For Lozano Marco, in fact, the entire novel demonstrates the author's ability to effectively eschew "las descripciones de escenas sórdidas y efectistas para poner el interés en la construcción de los caracteres y en el análisis de los sentimientos" (350).

H. Bold Treatment of Human Sexual Behavior

One of Naturalism's innovations was in the realm of human sexual behavior. Both Zola and López Bago were fascinated with exploring this heretofore traditionally taboo literary topic, as evidenced throughout the Rougon-Macquart series and the "novelas sociales" and "médico-sociales." Moreover, each author devoted part of his fiction to the in-depth examination of prostitution, the intimate professional world of sexual excesses and perversions: Zola, in Nana; López Bago in "La prostituta."

The scandal surrounding López Bago was attributed first and foremost to the so-called "immoral" and "indecent" content of his novels, and to his audacious depictions of violent and/or deviant manifestations of sexual activity. In light of the mores of late nineteenth-century Spain, it is truly amazing that the novels (especially "La prostituta" and "El cura") ever succeeded in being published and distributed,

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inasmuch as the works contain explicit references to, descriptions of, and discussions on the following topics: nudity, sexual intercourse, masturbation, orgasms, prophylactics, abortion, frigidity, impotence, rape, incest, sadism, male and female homosexuality, an attempted threesome involving one man and two women, orgies, necrophilia, and sexually transmitted disease.

Eroticism in López Bago's work is revealed, in part, in his descriptions of the nude human body. In addition to providing the typical external physical attributes (i.e., hair and eye color, body size and type, etc.), the novelist undresses his characters and centers on their genitalia. In Carne de nobles, López Bago uses Antonia, the Duchess de Benimar's preparations for her bath as the pretext for providing the nude "retrato" of this vain "hembra" (50):

> ... bajo los pechos empezaba á oscurecerse la piel con tonos cálidos que iban aumentando gradualmente hasta el moreno oscuro, terminando con el borron (sic) que ponia (sic) en aquellas carnes la gran mancha negra de la sexualidad; hay que repetirlo, el pelo rubio de la Duquesa era pintado indudablemente. Desnuda como estaba se miró con complacencia en aquella pared del cuarto de baño, que era toda ella un espejo, y con estremecimientos y temores propios del caso, entró en el agua que levantó su nivel como orgullosa de recibirla. (51)

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In La prostituta, Luis de Villaperdida, for the first time in his life, is consumed by sexual desire for a woman, the protagonist Estrella Sánchez. Alone in his bed, the shocked young aristocrat observes the visible and powerful physiological manifestation of his sexual awakening:

> ... el heredero del marqués estaba sufriendo algo como una transformación violenta en su organismo. Conoció que en él brotaba el sensualismo con gran empuje y como en terreno propio. ¿Por qué? Lo ignoraba .... (228)
>
> Pero luégo (sic), al día siguiente, al despertar en su cama nueva, elegante, ancha y mullida, pero también solitaria, quedó aturdido. Se abría una válvula hasta entonces cerrada, y por ella sintió subir la ola de sangre, impetuosa, atronadora, zumbando en sus oídos, inundando su cabeza, arrastrando en la roja y cálida corriente, como arrastran las inundaciones, deseos hasta entonces hundidos en el fango, sepultados en el fondo, jamás vistos, nunca presentidos por él. (229)

López Bago further demonstrated this boldness in scenes detailing sexual activity between characters. An examination of this aspect of the novels' eroticism may be divided into the following categories, ranked in order from the most to the least prevalent: 1. consensual or reluctantly consensual acts of perversion; 2. sexual assaults perpetrated by one

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party against another; 3. healthy expressions of sexuality.

Among the numerous scenes depicting sexual excesses or acts of aberrant eroticism, some of the most shocking are those involving the uncontrollable and insatiable libido of his female protagonists.

In La buscona, Rosita Pérez was maintaining two separate liaisons concurrently; she would, in fact, rendezvous with both lovers on the same days. "Por las tardes, cuando Miguel la estrechaba en sus brazos, sentía como antes toda la languidez sensual, todos los espasmos del placer de la carne..." (146). And, when night arrived:

> ...el amor, con todas sus manifestaciones, apoderábase de su ser nuevamente. Ahora no pensaba más que en el amante antiguo. En Mariano .... Y cuando el duque de Tres Estrellas se presentaba en el gabiente, donde vagaba aún el recuerdo del otro, Rosita Pérez abalanzábase á su cuello...y sentíase desfallecer al entregarse, cerraba los ojos, y se estremecía voluptuosa al más ligero contacto. (146-47)

Almost certainly the most shocking sexual taboo breached by López Bago is exhibited in his treatment of the theme of female homosexuality, developed in La Pálida[32] and La monja. In La monja López Bago explores the clandestine sexual lives of the nuns who reside at an unnamed convent in Toledo, where the titular protagonist, Melita—the sixteen year old daughter

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of Gertrudis, the Marquise de la Florida—is sent to take vows of poverty, obedience and chastity. The twenty-seven women from distinct social classes who live inside the convent walls are all young and beautiful, with the exception of four sisters: "La hermana portera ... la refitolera y otras dos hermanas domésticas, mujeres de avanzada edad, con apariencias de perfectas celestinas" (75). The two elderly nuns fulfill their role as "celestinas" or go-betweens in the convent which, in reality, functions as a noncommercial specialized brothel for women only. The daily or nightly exchange of mutually satisfying carnal pleasures was doubly justified, the nuns believed. Inasmuch as "no violaba la clausura ningún hombre" (81), the brides of Jesus Christ remained faithful to their vow of chastity by technically maintaining their virginity, and thus were successful in avoiding the scandals involving men common to other convents. The nuns swore an oath of silence never to reveal their secret to outsiders and never to discuss their activities with each other. This oath of silence was also to be observed during their sexual encounters conducted in the cells: "Un silencio en que sólo se oían ardientes suspiros, un afecto lleno de besos y de caricias" (81). Emotional attachment between lovers were prohibited. To avoid complications such as jealousy and favoritism, the nuns were ordered to sleep with a different partner each night on a rotation schedule. Everyone was required to participate in the convent's peculiar

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interpretation of "erotic equality." The nuns were guided in their responsibility by their leader: "...y daba el ejemplo la superiora durmiendo á diario con una monja diferente" (81).

Chronicling Melita's own experience, López Bago details the process through which each candidate is prepared for initiation into the convent's private world of sexual activities. Sor María Egipciaca de la Ascención, the thirty-year old Mother Superior herself takes charge of the unsuspecting teenager's "education." The seduction ritual begins when Melita is ordered to read aloud passages from "los Ejercicios de Gertrudis," a religious text filled with "lenguaje de exaltación sensual" (61). Sor María Egipciaca:

> hízola sentar en una sillita baja, junto á ella; poner el libro en su falda, en la falda de la superiora; leer allí, entre sus dos opulentos muslos, que se sentían por el poco bulto de ropa interior propio del traje mojil: abrir las páginas al azar.
>
> —Lee, hija mía; pero al leer, fíjate bien—dijo con extraño acento. (60)

Meanwhile, Sor María Egipciaca becomes aroused by both the "Ejercicios"' eroticism and by the proximity of the innocent "novata": "Y poniendo esta vez su mano en la aristocrática cabeza de la lectora, entraron sus dedos dulcemente en el peinado, acariciándole la raíz de los cabellos" (60). For her part, Melita "leyó maravillada, sin comprender apenas estos

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singularísimos párrafos" (60). The Mother Superior's plan to equate religious rhetoric with sensual touching in Melita's consciousness produces the desired effect as the "novata" is ordered to read yet another erotic text: "Retrato del amor divino":

> La mano de la superiora, acariciando sus cabellos, producíala (sic) una sensación de placer inexplicable. Las dos estaban muy serias y pálidas.
>
> Melita, sin saber por qué, sin acertar con lo que la (sic) pasaba, sintiendo sólo grandes deseos de cerrar los párpados sobre los ojos, que se le enrojecían con la subida de la sangre, y reclinar la cabeza sobre aquel ragazo caliente, exclamando como en un suspiro:
>
> —¡Oh, mi buena madre! ¡Mi buena madre! (62-63)

Later alone in her cell, Melita meditates on the question of human love vis-á-vis divine love. The confused protagonist concludes that she, indeed, "podía amar con amor humano á quien la hablase del amor divino":

> Retirada en su celda, á la hora de la siesta, creía oir (sic) en la inmediata suspiros entrecortados, y se preguntaba, al sentir palpitar con insólita priesa su corazón: "¿Qué es esto?" Se lo preguntaba mientras que su pensamiento recordaba primero las caricias de sor María Egipciaca, luego

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> las de sor María Josefa. Las dos, la buena madre y la hermana acariciaban del mismo modo, y ninguna de ellas como en otro tiempo, cuando era niña, la acarició su madre verdadera. No. Sobre todo los besos, los besos que la (sic) daban, no en la frente, sino en los labios, con expansión , casi con ansia, prolongándolos todo lo posible. Jamás el contacto de la boca de la marquesa la (sic) produjo aquellos estremecimientos que ahora sentia (sic). Y volvió á pensar en los libros que la dieron para la meditación. Los *Ejercicios de Santa Gertrudis y el Palacio del Amor divino*. Eso debía ser. El amor divino. Empezaba ya á introducirse en su alma. (95)

The convent's "maestra de novatas," Sor María Josefa del Consuelo, is sexually attracted to Melita. Incapable of controlling her growing lust, she neglects her duties to the other novices in her charge and surrenders to her desire to accelerate the protagonist's "educaton" in "las cosas que *constituyen la sustancia de la religión*" (105). As soon as she locks them both in a cell alone, María Josefa sets her scheme to seduce Melita in motion:

> Rodeó con uno de sus brazos el talle de la virgen, la atrajo hacia sí, y cuando de este modo la tuvo abrazada, en voz muy baja, muy dulce, interrumpiendo el relato para dar besos, explicó el

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> objeto de aquella secreta entrevista.
>
> Habían transcurrido cuatro meses desde la toma de hábito. Era preciso que se aplicara más, porque continuaba en la ignorancia de muchas cosas importantísimas, de aquellas cosas que, como dice la Regla, constituyen *la sustancia de la religión*, y para ella, la maestra, era un deber de conciencia enseñárselas pronto y bien. (103)

López Bago effectively develops a highly erotically charged seduction scene; juxtaposing the complete innocence of the protagonist with the subtle yet frenzied determination of her seducer. María Josefa's resolve to seduce Melita is played out over six more pages of dialogue laden with double entendres. As her scheme approaches fruition, the "maestra" reminds Melita of her vow of obedience while she prepares the innocent nun for the operation which will make her feel "los inefables goces del éxtasis" (108). When the climactic scene finally arrives, López Bago informs his readers that his "pluma se resiste á describir aquella repungnancia" (108). Omitting the precise details, he offers the following account of the event:

> Melita se sintió empujada dulcemente, tendida en el camastro; y la monja, sentada en el borde, inclinándose sobre ella, besábala en la boca, y sus manos se perdían entre las ropas de la inocente novicia, que, asombrada al principio, iba á dar un

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grito.

—¡La obediencia!—la (sic) dijo sor María Josefa.—La obediencia, no la olvides. Me debes la obediencia.

La infamia aquella se consumó. Adquirió el organismo de la virgen el primer vicio, vicio contra naturaleza .... confundió la sensación corporal con una explosión de sentimiento. El éxtasis. (108)

López Bago's most violent sexually deviant male characters transgress both the laws of man and nature by committing the vicious crimes of forcible rape and sodomy. In Carne importada the novelist describes the rape of his protagonist, Augusta Cebrian (sic), attacked in her own bed:

Y un día, á la madrugada, despertó con susto, sintiendo que alguien entraba en su cuarto. Creyó que, como otras veces, fuera la de Martínez Roca, viniendo a (sic) despertarla .... Pero lanzó un grito al ver á Pepe Roca. Avanzaba resuelto. Quiso incorporarse, saltar de la cama, y el hombre ya estaba allí, paralizando su accion (sic), sujetándola con fuerzas hercúleas. La destapó, cayó sobre ella.

—Nó (sic). ¡Por Dios! ¡Nó (sic), por Dios! Se sintió cubierta de besos. Resistía, esquivaba la boca, recibiéndolos en el cuello, en los ojos,

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> en los turgentes pechos. La tuvo abrazada, casi hasta la asfixia. Toda la caricia fué lucha. Brutal violacion (sic), que la (sic) produjo un espasmo de placer y de dolor unidos, mezclados, intensos, quedando tras esto como desvanecida, mientras el hombre, satisfecho, soltándola, y desasiéndose, la dejaba de nuevo sola. (118-19)

El preso's Juan Ruíz is forced to endure a most horrific form of sexual assault. For most of his forty-three day infernal incarceration, he is repeatedly beaten and sodomized by many inmates while witnesses to the crime add to his utter humiliation with their taunts and cheers for the offenders. As he did in La monja, López Bago cites a certain modesty of the pen as the reason which forbids him from being able to graphically describe Juan's trauma: "Lo que proponían los obscenos, imposible es que la pluma lo reproduzca copiando las palabras textualmente, las palabras groseras con que lo dijeron" (121). Instead, he resorts to a periphrastic explanation of "estas perversiones del sensualismo en la vida penal" (122):

> Bastará que se recuerde lo que dejo dicho acerca de la naturaleza eminentemente afrodisiaca (sic) del confinamiento y la reclusión, donde las funciones de reproducción no pueden ejercitarse, presentándose como "propensión del desarreglo nervioso en formas estériles." (121-22)

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The destruction of sexual purity and innocence is a leit motif in López Bago's treatment of cases of pathological sexual behavior, as we observe in the sexual initiations of Melita, Augusta and Juan Ruíz. Perpetrators María Josefa, Pepe Roca and the inmates at the Modelo Prison were especially stimulated by the sexual innocence of their chosen victims. Melita and Augusta were virgins, as was Juan, with regards to pederasty. Threatened by the mere presence of purity and innocence, these entirely perverted erotopaths are compelled to corrupt manifestations of these virtues in their environment.

Though not as common as the first two categories of sexual activity discussed thus far, López Bago does include a few examples of healthy, erotic heterosexual relationships in his novels, as in the happy marriages of Luis and María Martínez and Juan and Francisca Ruíz.

In the following passage from Luis Martínez, the novelist traces the various stages of growth and development of María's all-encompassing love for her husband, a love based on respect, compassion, admiration, as well as physical desire:

> Amó á Luis, al principio, con los enternecimientos de instinto que da la caricia primera; amóle después por la posesión misma, que la dejó rendida y dominada. Y vinieron, tras de acostumbrarse sus cuerpos á la unión sexual, los más intimos contactos en que se penetraron y embebieron otras

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> como musculaturas y nervios, las que son superiores, las que mandan en el organismo, las virtudes, producto del sabio engranaje en los temperamentos como el de Luis sanguíneo-nerviosos, magistralmente equilibrados. Y entonces ella vió en el dueño elegido; no solo la fuerza, sino el valor; no solo la palabra, sino el talento y la nobleza en la mirada serena y profunda de sus ojos negros....
>
> Amaba ya con el amor completo. (54-55)

To best characterize the unique bond of love and affection that flourishes between El preso's protagonists, López Bago resorts to the device of having the narrator directly intervene in the story. Juan and Francisca are perfect for each other; partners who "no eran ni románticos ni naturalistas en su vida en común, en sus acciones y palabras" (20). The narrator elaborates:

> Yo me limitaré á confirmar que eran espontáneos y leales el uno para el otro, que en ellos lo natural llevaba carácter de distinción no buscada, y lo humano se acompañaba siempre con delicadezas de instinto. Yo, como historiador, me debo á la verdad y por ella aseguro que desde el primer día de novios, así como desde la primera noche de bodas, el deseo llegaba en ambos tan en armonía y tan á punto, que estaba unido ya antes de que se

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> unieran sus labios con la unión del beso, y no hubo caricia de ninguna clase que no fuera, al realizarse, tácita decisión mútua que se comunicaban con la mirada. No fueron obscenos en su luna de miel, sino sensuales, con ese sensualismo de la juventud y de la salud, que es como un perfume que desvanece, más que como un vino malo que se sube á la cabeza, llenándola de groserías. Era sorprendente cosa en aquellos dos séres (sic), de escasa instrucción, ver, en ocasiones y momentos dados, no la excitación de la carne, sino la del sentimiento y la inteligencia al contemplarse, más que como enamorados, como artistas maestros en la percepción de lo bello (20-21).

It is noteworthy to point out the fact that the characters who enjoy healthy physical relationships reflect the author's own bias favoring members of the proletariat and the laboring classes. Luis was of very humble origins; while Juan and Francisca found themselves placed between two classes, "saliéndose ya de los límites del pueblo y rayana con la burguesía" (El preso 17). As a general rule, it seems for López Bago, aberrant sexual behavior was not inherently practiced by members of the laboring classes; this behavior, when observed, was the result of external pathological forces.

Naturalists examined the fatal consequences of licentious

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sexual activity. For two of López Bago's male characters—Don José, the Marquis de Villaperdida (La prostituta) and the Marquis de Florida[33] (El confesonario)—syphilis is the medical consequence acquired as a result of a dissolute youth, and an adulterous one-night stand, respectively. With these characters, López Bago contributes an interesting twist concerning the degenerative consequence of the sexually transmitted disease: the sex act serves as the catalyst which accelerates their deaths. The two aristocrats are unable to control their lust when confronted with the presence of young and beautiful females—Don José's for Estrella Sánchez, and the Marquis de Florida for his wife, Gertrudis. Just one sexual encounter between the disease-ridden males and the healthy females proves fatal for the former. Immediately after completing the act, the men's poor health suddenly and dramatically worsens; both die shortly thereafter.

I. Challenging the Established Social Order: Attacks Against the Spanish Aristocracy

In keeping with Naturalism's moral and humanitarian objective to improve society by exposing the multitude of vices within it, López Bago aggressively attacked and condemned the physical, moral, political and sexual degeneration he found rampant in the dominant social classes: "la inútil aristocracia," "la burguesía nociva,"[34] and "el

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absurdo clero" (López Bago, "Análisis," Crimen legal 263).

López Bago's condemnation of the Spanish aristocracy—which he referred to, among other pejorative terms, as a "montoncito de basura" (El confesonario 122)—encompasses two principal areas of criticism. As a class, it merits extinction for the non-productive, vacuous existence of its members, lives wasted in an endless succession of hedonistic activities: parties, bacchanals, orgies, secret clubs and societies, adulterous affairs, shopping sprees, brothels, gambling casinos, and so forth. More importantly, however, for López Bago, is the matter of the aristocracy's abuse of power, wealth and class privileges in order to perpetuate injustices against members of the lower classes without retribution, exemplified, for example in the Marquis de Villaperdida's exploitation of the prostitutes in La prostituta, or in Marquis de Jibosa's illegal, unconscionable forced incarceration of Juan Ruíz in El preso. The novelist's passionate animosity toward this class is manifested in almost all of his "novelas sociales" and "médico-sociales" published in Spain. With the exception of the young and innocent Melita, the only child of the Marquis and Marquise de Florida (El confesonario, La monja), all aristocratic characters are held in varying degrees of contempt, disdain and condemnation.

López Bago devoted an entire novel to expressing his anti-aristocracy sentiments. In Carne de nobles he documents the political, moral, physical and sexual depravity of Spanish

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court life during the period immediately preceding the Revolution of 1868. Alongside the protagonists and court favorites, the Duke and Duchess de Benimar, López Bago inveighs against the Spanish monarchy, represented in the personages of the queen and her king consort. Despite the obvious parallels to the reign of Isabel II and Francisco Asís de Borbón—political corruption, financial mismanagement of the treasury, the queen's wasteful extravagances, her obesity and nymphomania, the consort's homosexuality—López Bago never refers to the queen by name, resorting instead to address her as: "La Señora," "la Reina," "Su Majestad la Reina," and the like. To officially distance himself further from possible unpleasant consequences for attacking the current king's family, the unnamed monarch reigns over the fictitious peninsular nation of, not Spain, but "Liboria."

López Bago blames Liboria's national decadence in large measure on the queen's inability and unwillingness to govern her country. Whenever the running of the government was not subject to her "caprichos régios" (sic) and "veleidades femeninas" (7), she abdicated her responsibilities to her ministers. In reality, the monarch and her consort were mere figureheads, puppets who "no podian (sic) hacer nada" except "comer, dormir y divertirse. Porque era preciso que en la nacion (sic) hubiese alguien, alguna figura que se prestara como un maniquí á vestirse el manto, ponerse la corona y empuñar el cetro" (12).

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Although they were generously compensated for the superficial roles they played before the nation, the sovereigns recklessly squandered their royal allowance, "unas cuantas millonadas que la patria asignaba á las personas reales para sus gastos, á pesar de ser mucho, no daba para tanto. La Reina y el Rey eran pródigos con sus amigos y éranlo más con sus amantes" (16). The monarchs refused to live within the nation's means. When her allowance was spent, the queen would simply request and receive a loan. The throne was her personal playground, the "vínculo de su casta, que nadie seria (sic) osado á negar ó disputar en nombre de ningun (sic) otro principio" (14).

Added to her utter indifference to the draining of her nation's financial resources, López Bago points out a sadistic side of the queen's personality; her "carácter bromista y burlon (sic), noticeably "grosero y bajo, poco noble é indigno" for taking cruel advantage of defenseless subjects who neither dared "dar la réplica ni tomar venganza" (13). Here, López Bago clearly condemns the queen for having abused "las ventajas y privilegios de su elevadísima jerarquía" (13).

Despite his disdain for the monarch, López Bago conceded that the queens herself was both exploited and victimized, surrounded as she was by the depraved sycophants of her regal environment, by her own genetic and sexual pathology, in addition to a ridiculous, mismatched marriage:

> Aquella mujer era tambien (sic) una víctima del

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> estado decadente que hemos acusado en la patria, de la inmoralidad política, de la degradacion (sic) y rebajamiento de caractéres (sic). Una víctima de cuanto la rodeaba. Enferma, porque la enfermaron por conveniencia propia las gentes palaciegas prostituida, porque la prostituyeron para utilidades de la ambicion (sic) las gentes políticas. Se disculparon sus adulterios con la sospecha médica de un caso de ninfomanía. ¿Verdad o lisonja? Ello es que su matrimomio fué cosa infame, y de resultas del matrimomio, la familia, la Real Familia engendrada, concebida y parida, un monton (sic) repugnante de chiquillos escrofulosos. El marido era hombre hermoso de cara y bajo de estatura, delicado de miembros y tiple. Júzguese de aquel ayuntamiento, en que las exigentes exuberancias vitales de uno de los sexos no hallaban sino deficiencias en el otro. Deficiencias y depravaciones del instinto genesico. (9)

Though the monarchs' sex life together was virtually nonexistent, López Bago adds a touch of mischievous humor to their abnormal situation, noting that the king and queen did share the same taste in prospective sexual partners: "Marido y mujer, puede decirse que miraban con igual atencion (sic), y movidos del mismo interés, á los hombres que pasaban" (30).

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However, the novelist's contempt for the monarchs is only surpassed by his animosity for the protagonists, the Duke de Benimar and his wealthy American-born wife, Antonia. In contrast to the comical sexual incompatibility of the nymphomaniac queen and her homosexual consort, the Benimars are perfectly suited to and accepting of each other's sexual depravities, including each other's endless succession of adulterous affairs. Their loveless coupling was violent, insatiable, ferocious, uncontrollable and completely self-serving. For López Bago, their marital life reached the depths of immorality, making a total mockery out of the institution of marriage, inasmuch as "el deber conjugal era en aquel matrimonio el escudo que les servia (sic) para cometer toda clase de delitos contra los amores que inspiraban y sostenian" (sic) (62).

The duchess herself was a natural born harlot, innately licentious. Had she not married an aristocrat, she would have flourished in a long and prosperous career as a professional prostitute:

> Fué una luna de miel, en que se cumplieron todos los gustos. Y ella, la mujer, más sabia y refinada, siendo vírgen, vírgen de cuerpo nada más, pero pervertida de inteligencia y con todas las malicias de la depravacion (sic) que la suministraba su pensamiento, fué la que mostró en la union (sic) sexual á cuánto puede llegar la

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> fantasía en punto á voluptuosidades soñadas, y la que llevó al lecho los conocimientos lascivos que poseen algunas solteras, hasta el extremo de competir en ellos con las mismas prostitutas. Ella, que antes del casamiento supo resistir, entregábase al marido con facilidades y obediencias pasmosas, tomaba iniciativas, que le maravillaron, que llegaron á enloquecerle. No como la mujer propia resultaron sus desahogos, refrenados siempre por el respeto, sino como con la querida, y la americana los preferia (sic) cuando se manifestaban de este último modo. (33)

For his part, the Duke de Benimar was extremely arrogant, ambitious, licentious, a general who made a name for himself at court as well as fighting for his country "contra salvajes" (32) overseas in Africa and America. The "forzadas continencias de la guerra" (32) combined with the brutalities of combat, served to incite his own natural brutality, released in sadistic and animalistic sexual behavior.

While overseas, the duke behaved like a "bestia en celo," completely possessed by the "necesidad del desahogo sensacional tan imperiosa" to the extent that he sought release with the least socially desirable females, looking "con entusiasmo por las calles á las mal vestidas, á las que ya no eran jóvenes y hasta á las negras" (32).

Upon his return to Liboria, the beautiful Antonia became

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the object of the duke's uncontrollable libido, and he determined to satiate his desire "por la fuerza ó por la seduccion" (sic) (32). In Antonia, the duke found his sexual match. Even years after their honeymoon, the duke relished the fact that Antonia:

> ...seguia (sic) siendo para el como en los tiempos de la boda, una idealizacion (sic) del sexo de la hembra, el sueño dorado, no del amor sino de la lujuria. De la lujuria que se le habia (sic) pegado como un contagio en su guerrear contra salvajes de América y Africa, feroz y temible, porque besaba y mordia (sic), y en el beso dijérase que para él todo el cuerpo era cara, y en el mordisco, á semejanza del tigre, su sitio preferido era el cuello.
>
> Antonia en esta lucha, porque más que abrazo verdadera lucha resultaba, para evitar que la hiciera sangre, con las dos manos se avalanzaba al cuello del marido y apretaba, siendo cada dedo de la mujer una amenaza de extrangulacion (sic), hasta conseguir que soltara su presa. No se amaban, pero gozaban juntos, y en realidad, lo que la iglesia (sic) habia (sic) enlazado para siempre, no era el destino de un hombre con el de una mujer, sino las monstruosidades de un sátiro, con las locuras eróticas de una bacante alcoholizada; y si aquel

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> salvaje con entorchados tenia (sic) potencialidades para más de una hembra, aquella criolla lasciva tenia (sic) sexo para muchos varones. (61-62)

The duke and duchess enjoyed an open marriage. Not only were they accepting of each other's adulterous liaisons, but while together in their marital bed, they relished exchanging confidences about the intimate details of their adventures:

> Bajo las sábanas, en el lecho nupcial hablaban de ellos, de los otros, y se hacian (sic) tales confidencias que confidencias que acababan por reirse (sic) á carcajadas; solían oirse (sic) estas frases: "no es como tú, te digo que no es como tú; me fastidia, porque no sabe hacer estas cosas, un pájaro bobo." (62)

The traditional public image of a sovereign—one which inspires the respect and reverence of one's subjects—is effectively destroyed by our novelist, who uses the Benimars to expose and ridicule the sovereigns' sexual and physical depravity and weaknesses. The Benimars counted the queen and her consort among their wealthy lovers. For Antonia, the homosexual king, "aquel tiple de voz y afeminado de gusto" (78), represented the ultimate irresistible challenge: "Hacer que el Rey consorte, con ella y por ella, gustara de las mujeres" (78). The mission to "convert" the king would have been impossible for any other woman; none possessed the superior "poderíos de atraccion (sic) de nuestra heroina"

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(78). Antonia's vanity knew no bounds as the king consort's interests in men began to diminish to a certain extent.

Meanwhile, Antonia's husband felt no love or affection for his regal lover, described as a "mujer gorda, de piel porosa, basta y colorada como la corteza de una naranja" (61). While the duke, a "maestro en todas las ciencias de los lupanares" (83), satisfied the voracious appetites of the queen in bed, he mocked her behind her back. Not only does the duke share the queen's sexual fantasies with his wife and makes fun of the monarch's obesity, but his account serves as a source of hilarious entertainment for the lascivious couple:

> ——"Pues y la Reina, me figuro á veces que soy, no un General, sino uno de esos capitanes aereonautas, y que estoy agarrado á la hinchazon (sic) de un globo, ¡qué gordura aquella! Cuando se quita el corsé se llena de carne toda la cama, es un desbordamiento; deberia (sic) tener el lecho real un cáuce (sic) de barandillas;" y las dos carcajadas, la del marido y la de la mujer, estallaban al mismo tiempo. (62)

The following passage concisely demonstrates López Bago's intense and highly personal hatred for the Spanish aristocracy and the monarchy. In perfect naturalistic form, our novelist graphically illustrates the depth to which the two classes have decayed. He denudates them, exposing the repulsive stench of their rotting flesh which they desperately attempt

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to mask by inundating themselves with expensive English perfumes: "¡Carne de nobles! Carne y sentimientos, instintos, é ideas, espíritu y materia. Todo malsano, todo una podredumbre rociada con perfumes ingleses para que no diera á nadie en las narices el olor á barraganía" (81).

Added to the imagery of rotting flesh in Carne de nobles is López Bago's vivid description of the Marquis de Villaperdida's cold and decaying mansion in La prostituta. The lifeless ancestral home symbolizes the extent to which the aristocracy has outlived its usefulness in the modern world, exemplified in its inability or unwillingness to maintain itself. For López Bago, the Spanish aristocracy, has, for all intents and purposes, already died; it only needs a proper burial:

> El palacio de la calle de Alcalá, residencia del marqués de Villaperdida, era, más que palacio, un caserón inmenso, de ruinoso aspecto, que contrastaba con las nuevas edificaciones .... (56)
>
> Para salones fríos desiertos y oscuridades medrosas, para muebles antiguos, para soledad, abandono y telarañas, no había nada en la corte como el palacio de Villaperdida. La sombra y el silencio ejercían en aquellas habitaciones inmensas tal imperio, que cuando brillaba el sol, sólo calentaba á través del cristal los postigos cerrados, y todo ruido de pasos se apagaba en las

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> alfombras de grueso terciopelo. En las arañas de cristal y en los candelabros de bronce, las bujías, que no se encendieron nunca, amarilleaban como si padecieran el histerismo de su larga virginidad. Jamás el aire de la calle entró juguetón á enredar los flecos de las colgaduras .... (57-58)
>
> Allí, en aquel silencio, estaban imitados los ruidos del sepulcro, el roer de los gusanos y el extravasamiento de la descomposición; y resonaban también allí, en los salones cerrados herméticamente, los pasos de la servidumbre en las habitaciones del segundo piso, como deben resonar en hueco las pisadas de los sepultureros sobre el ataúd. (59)

J. Challenging the Established Social Order: The Use of Satire As a Weapon of Social Criticism Against the Spanish Aristocracy

As a respite from the grimness of their criticism, naturalists employed satire as an effective tool to display the physical and moral degeneration of members of the ruling social classes. In "Análisis de la novela titulada Crimen legal," López Bago underscores satire as an indispensable characteristic of the modern French novel, and of Naturalism in particular. Satire developed in the contemporary works of

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Balzac, Stendhal and Zola is rooted in a longstanding literary tradition dating back to Diderot in France, and Cervantes and Quevedo in Spain. As a radical naturalist, however, López Bago was dissatisfied with the denomination "novel," with its denotation of the "fictitious," used to identify such serious naturalist works of social criticism:

> Y esto que digo de las audacias que campean en las páginas del libro titulado CRIMEN LEGAL (sic), estos comentarios deben hacerse extensivos á la parte de sátira, que es mucha, porque en realidad el naturalismo no puede desprenderse, por su índole analítica y experiemental, por su copia de la existencia tal como es cuando es; no puede desprenderse, repito, de llevar ese sello, esa marca de fábrica que caracteriza mejor á Diderot que á Voltaire, porque Diderot fué naturalista y Voltaire sólo ateo. Escribimos unas cuartillas á las que titulamos novelas, sin estar conformes con este título. No lo estamos, porque no tienen nuestras obras el carácter de las obras de amenidad, sino el de estudio. No son novelas; pero sí son los libros de Balzac, los de Sthendal (sic), los de Zola, *sátiras sociales*. Eso es el naturalismo de ahora, y en eso se parece al de Cervantes y Quevedo. Pues bien: como sátira social, no conviene matar á fuerza de heridas, por

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> el número de heridas, sino por una sola, certera, en el corazón. (Crimen legal 255-56)

In Nana, Zola uses satire to emphasize the depth of degradation to which his lust-crazed male characters—each representative of a particular socioeconomic class—will succumb in order to maintain the privilege of paying for the protagonist's sexual favors. Of special merit is Zola's bitter satirical condemnation of the aristocracy, exemplified in the pathetically ridiculous behavior of Count Muffat de Beuville—a rigid, hypocritical, ultra-conservative religious fanatic, elevated to the enviable position of Chamberlain to Empress Eugénie. Totally obsessed with Nana, the bewitched aristocrat allows himself to be subjected to Nana's sadistic taunts. She treats him like an animal—demanding that he play the part of a horse or a bear, or bark or walk like a dog. The courtesan adds to his humiliation by kicking him in the derrière, etc. To complete his satire on the aristocracy and to provide the reader with a source of comic relief, Muffat finds his own aged and senile father-in-law, the Marquis de Chouard, in bed with Nana.

In his novels, López Bago uses satire as a weapon of criticism directed primarily against the Spanish aristocracy. Though the Marquis de Villaperdida is a powerful malevolent force in the lives of many characters in La prostituta, López Bago strips the aristocrat of his power by caricaturing him with his creation of names for his character—a collection of

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absurd noble titles with fictitious topographical names, leaving no doubt as to the author's opinion of Spanish nobility in particular: "Don José de las Lanzas y de las Medias Anatas, Campo de Gules y León Rampante, conde de Riosucio y marqués de Villaperdida, que todos estos eran los apellidos y títulos de nuestro personaje ..." (59).

López Bago's skills at satirizing the uselessness of the aristocracy are amply displayed in his characterization of El preso's antagonist: the insolent, haughty, selfish, cruel and vengeful Marquis de Jibosa, who is also the Civil Governor of Madrid. López Bago effectively emasculates "la primera autoridad de Madrid" (74) first by exposing his effeminate nature. In the following passage, the aristocrat's vain obsession with youth and beauty is revealed as the novelist satirizes his painstaking but vacuous ritual for preparing his daily toilette:

> El marqués de Jibosa almorzaba tarde, y esto era debido á las numerosas tareas que el aseo personal requería en él desde el punto y hora de levantarse. El más perfecto gomoso pudiera tomar lecciones de afeminación de nuestro aristócrata. Su tocador causaría envidia á las mujeres que se pagan de conservación de las propia belleza. Era, además, un verdadero laboratorio. Sus cincuenta años tenían que apelar á toda clase de reactivos para remozarse. Asegurábase que ningún recurso, por

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> repugnante que fuese, dejaba de utilizarlo si le procuraba algo de la ficticia juventud que en tanto estimaba, hasta el punto de que para conservar la frescura del rostro apeló á dormir aplicándose un trozo de carne cruda ensangrentada en cada mejilla, sujetándola con un vendaje. El el pulido y extenso mármol que ocupaba todo el frente de la habitación del tocador y baño, veíase la más completa colección de tenacillas para rizar, tijeras y limas de las más extrañas formas, cepillos, frascos, botellas y tarros para pomadas, esencias, aceites, tinturas para el pelo, jabones y aguas de olor, y en bolsas de goma y en toballeros un surtido variadísimo de esponjas y paños de toda clase.
>
> En aquella habitación entraba el marqués á las diez de la mañana y no salía de ella hasta la una de la tarde.... Acicalábase con exagerados esmeros, se lavaba y perfumaba; de suerte, que cuando en el comedor entraba, encorsetado el vientre, ceñido y peripuesto...se miraba complacido por última vez, antes de sentarse, en el espejo de la chimenea .... (211-13)

The marquis' obsession with his appearance is matched by his licentious life style. Whenever he failed to seduce a willing female, he would frequent the local hospitals' "Sección de Higiene" in order to solicit the services of

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registered prostitutes. But no woman ever incited his lust or enraged his wounded ego as much as Francisca Ruíz, precisely because the beautiful "burguesa de ... comercio" (216) had dared to reject his sexual advances. López Bago's caricature of the marquis reaches its extreme in the following farcical scene, which describes Francisca's visit to the Civil Governor's office. After securing the official written order for her husband's release from prison, Francisca prepares to submit to the aristocrat's "instintos genésicos" (235). However, López Bago succeeds in emasculating the aristocrat completely when, at the decisive moment, the "enfermo de lujuria y amargado de la satiriasis" (217) discovers to his dismay that he is impotent:

> Era ella, era la mujer cuya posesión anheló tanto, que de morirse, hubiera sido capaz de convertirse en necromano, para realizarla en su cadáver. Era ella, pero viva.... Cayó sobre la hembra con lúbrico furor, y ella no dió un grito, ni manifestó ni opuso resistencia. Se dejó despojar de su traje y hasta ayudó á ello, porque había en él impaciencias de su desenfreno, y en Francisca las hubo mayores de consumar rápidamente aquel martirio horroroso.... Desnuda la cogió en sus brazos, y así frenéticamente estrechada contra su cuerpo, la arrojó en la cama y cayó con ella, pero en el mismo instante un extremecimiento supremo agitóle como á

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> un epiléptico; aflojó los lazos en que se sentía como ahogada, pronunció un juramento seguido de una imprecación soez, y quedóse inmóvil, pálido, desencajadas las facciones y fijando en la deseada hembra una mirada estúpidamente desesperada. ¡Dios de Dios! ¿Estaba decretado acaso por los malos genios enemigos del placer humano, que aquella posesión no fuera nunca un hecho? No. Ya no podía ser. Había bastado con la vista de las desnudas formas, para que la ilusión se desbordase, para que la sensación suprema atacase de improviso á la virilidad, dejándola tras esto inutilizada. Y quedó un punto loco, anonadado é impotente .... (234-36)

López Bago adds insult to the humiliated marquis' injury in the scene following Francisca's abrupt departure. After recounting the details to her confident, Aurora, both women were unable to contain their outbursts of laughter as they returned home.

Undoubtedly, López Bago derived a considerable measure of personal satisfaction in satirizing the effeminate aristocrat. It was by no small coincidence that the ridiculous Marquis de Jibosa was the Civil Governor of Madrid, the very position held by Raimundo Fernández y Villaverde, who, as we recall, led the vigorous campaign to censure the author's novels in 1884 and 1885. Symbolically, of course, Francisca's power to

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render the marquis impotent in his attempt to "manchar" and "profanar" (234) her body parallels López Bago's own successful efforts to render Fernández y Villaverde impotent for his ultimately unsuccessful attempts to prohibit the circulation of his novels.

K. Challenging the Established Social Order: Anticlericalism

Tantamount to his condemnation of the aristocracy, López Bago lashed out against the unchecked abuses of power he found in the "absurdo clero." As with his aristocratic characters, representatives of the Catholic Church are portrayed in varying degrees of antipathy. "El cura" maybe be aptly identified as the author's anticlerical thesis trilogy, since, as he informs us in the appendix of El cura, the series has one major purpose in mind: "combatir el celibato eclesiástico" ("Vosotros y yo," El cura 259).

Zola's own 1875 anticlerical novel, La Faute de l'abbé Mouret—which López Bago deemed "una de sus más admirables novelas"—served as the inspiration for our author's series, especially the first novel of the trilogy, El cura ("Vosotros y yo," El cura 261). Although both novels explore the dangerous consequences of the Catholic Church's position on clerical celibacy, López Bago was of the opinion that in La Faute de l'abbé Mouret, "el maestro no desplegó en esta obra toda la fuerza que caracteriza sus ataques" (261). López Bago

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attributes his mentor's uncharacteristic lack of "fuerza" in dealing with this subject to his creation of "circunstancias atenuantes" (261) which absolve Mouret from being fully responsible for committing his "delito de la carne" (261):

> Mouret, á consecuencia de una grave enfermedad, pierde toda memoria de su estado eclesiástico, y Zola desarrolla una hermosísima sucesión de escenas paradisíacas, en que el sacerdote y la mujer aparecen en verdadero estado de inocencia, como Adán y Eva, y llegan gradualmente al pecado original. (261)

López Bago disagreed with Zola's bucolic interpretation of the problem, resolving instead the following plan for his protagonist:

> Era preciso que el *delicta carnis* se cometiera en pleno uso de todas las facultades, teniendo, el hombre conciencia de sus actos y obedeciendo al determinismo. Me decidí por ello á intentar la empresa. EL CURA (sic) está escrito con este propósito. (261)

For López Bago clerical celibacy was unnatural; it was based "en un absurdo, en una inverosimilitud" (260). It represents man's presumptuous attempt to defy the laws of Nature, God and common sense. Every human organism, López Bago affirmed, possesses the innate need to express its sexuality. When societal laws or religious institutions

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attempt to repress or prohibit the healthy fulfillment of powerful needs, they "vacian (sic) y desequilibran los organismos" (260). The consequences of forced abstinence result in extreme manifestations of sexual pathology: nymphomania in convents, pederasty in seminaries, and satyriasis in churches (El cura 106).

In El cura, López Bago traces the development of the handsome twenty-two year old newly ordained priest Román Acevedo's relentless internal struggle to maintain his vow of chastity in the face of ever mounting carnal desire for the only available female in his environment: his fifteen year old sister, Gracia. The recent seminary graduate lives in his own house near the church. In order to avoid gossip or any hint of scandal, Román refuses to hire a housekeeper. Instead, his parents send his beautiful teenage sister from their native Aragón to maintain the priest's household. Although Gracia was a girl on the verge of womanhood, she was his sister, and therefore exempt from the appearance of impropriety and scandal; or so it was believed. Ironically, of course, Román is attracted to his sister from the very day of her arrival. For her part, Gracia begins to fall in love with her older brother who is virtually the only male with whom she has regular daily contact. The problem with temptation was compounded by two important factors. The first was the siblings' voluntary isolation. With the exception of their neighbors—the priest Fermín and his concubine, Anita,

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identified publicly as his "niece"—Roman and Gracia had no companions or visitors. The second factor was their years of separation as children. The siblings did not grow up together as brother and sister. Gracia was a toddler when Román entered the seminary. Thus, in effect, they were in many ways strangers to each other.

Román begins to question the validity of the doctrine of clerical celibacy mandated as part of the reforms of the modern Catholic Church at the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century. Before the Council of Trent, members of the clergy openly maintained concubines. After the Council even those who set forth the rules for the new doctrine failed to abide by them, Fermín later informs the astonished Román. The ecclesiastical reformers and the generations of priests who followed continued to indulge in sexual activity, including maintaining concubines and mistresses, frequenting brothels—albeit in secrecy. In the face of his growing eroticism, Román feels overwhelmed when he realizes the enormity of the sacrifice that celibacy demands: "¡pero ser casto en absoluto, por completo, de una manera acabada, perfecta, durante la vida!" (49). The Church's solution for dealing with temptation—"la lectura de libros ascéticos, la confesión frecuente, los ejercicios espirituales y el estudio de las ciencias eclesiásticas" (49)—are helpful in maintaining one's faith in all areas except carnal desire where it is most desperately needed.

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As López Bago proposed, his protagonist suffers greatly with his dilemma. He endures insomnia and horrible nightmares in which Gracia is transformed into a she-devil, "una mujer bestializada" (65), and into Eve "la gran ramera" (70, 71). During the day, he has hallucinations, angers easily, tries to avoid his sister and overreacts in her presence, and so forth. While Román tries valiantly to control his feelings, he is, at the same time, no longer capable of employing sound judgment to resolve his conflict. He adamantly rejects the proposed logical solution: return Gracia to their parents, and follow the example set by Fermín and all the other priests in the same predicament: find a suitable concubine or mistress for himself. As López Bago stated in "Vosotros y yo," he was in favor of priests maintaining concubines for the purpose of satisfying their carnal needs. Concubinage was not evil; the Church's doctrine on celibacy was:

> Lo que se debe decir, mientras el celibato subsista, es que todo sacerdote concubinario es un hombre honrado. Todo sacerdote que tiene manceba irá en contra de lo decretado por la Iglesia, pero es en aquella parte en que la Iglesia decreta la guerra á la sociedad y á la familia, menosprecia lo infalible de la ciencia y ataca á la razón natural. (El cura 260)

Returning our attention to El cura, it is interesting to observe that the entire novel evolves as a steady erotic

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crescendo toward the climax—the consummation of incest; it is expected and it is the only possible outcome to the siblings' untenable situation. In the final pages of the novel, López Bago prepares his readers for the shocking dénouement. In the following passage, Román is first tormented by the consequences of his intended act, but the sound of the sleeping Gracia's breathing overwhelms him completely:

> ¡Primero la muerte! ¡Primero la mancilla! ¡La excomunión, la privación de beneficio y de posición! ¡El incesto! ¡Gracia! ¡Estaba oyendo la respiración de Gracia!
>
> ¡Aquello le atraía!
>
> Se levantó, puso en el suelo sus pies desnudos, recorrió la sala; ¡no más sufrir! .... (254)
>
> Llegó á la cama de matrimonio donde reposaba la doncella. ¡La cama de sus padres!.... Levantó el embozo que ocultaba el cuerpo de la virgen:
>
> "Prendiste mi corazón, hermana, esposa mía: has preso mi corazón con tus ojos." (254-55)

After creating more dramatic tension by including an entire page (255) on Román's poetic and erotic evocation describing the various parts of Gracia's beautiful body, the novel reaches its climax. López Bago, however, shies away from detailing the specifics of the consummation of the act, and concludes the novel with the following passage:

> De un solo salto cayó sobre ella. Gracia

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> despertó en los brazos de su hermano. No hubo resistencia ni susto.
>
> —¿Eres tú, Román?
>
> —Yo soy.
>
> Entonces en la oscuridad sonrió. Devolvió las caricias. ¿Por qué ni para qué había de extrañar aquello?
>
> Lo esperaba. (256)

While El cura expounds the dangers of temptation, its sequels—El confesonario and La monja—document the terrible destructive consequences of "el celibato eclesiástico."

In the beginning of El confesonario, López Bago is sympathetic to Román's fall from grace, a sentiment we observe in the following passage in which the novelist acquaints readers unfamiliar with the events of El cura with the protagonist's valiant struggle against the force of nature:

> La culpa era de Román, cierto; pero no era suya toda la culpa. Román había luchado desesperadamente hasta el último momento. Se defendió como un héroe. Todo se conjuró en contra suya. Fué vencido. Si Román no hubiera sido sacerdote católico, y como tal, célibe forzoso, su hermosa naturaleza de varón fuerte, triunfando de todo, hubiese derribado, muerta á sus pies, la monstruosa bestia que trataba de desgarrar sus entrañas.

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> La culpa era de la Iglesia, de los concilios, de la oposición entre los preceptos de los papas y los del mismo Dios de Abraham, de Jacob y de Moisés. (El confesonario 40)

However, the novelist's opinion and portrayal of his protagonist changes dramatically later in the second novel. Ironically, instead of solving the problem, the satiation of Román's appetites with Gracia "había producido un daño mayor" (44). López Bago explains:

> La reacción á la continencia cuando ésta entraba ya en período de desorden. El progreso de su enfermedad, lejos de disminuir, era creciente.
>
> Iba por el gran declive que conduce al abismo de los deseos insaciables. (44-45)

The anguished priest of El cura disappears in El confesonario and La monja. Whereas Román inspired compassion in the first novel, he becomes a dehumanized monster in the last two: cold, vicious, sadistic and calculating. Two vices dominate his every action: insatiable sexual desire, diagnosed by López Bago as an extreme case of satyriasis, and greed and ambition: greed for the acquisition of material wealth to be used to finance his ambition of becoming Pope.

The first major evidence of Román's abrupt moral, physiological, mental and sexual degeneration lies in his mistreatment of Gracia. The love, affection and devotion he expressed for her in El cura is replaced, not even by lust,

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but by "algo monstruoso" (45)—resentment, anger, indifference and cruelty—behavior rooted, of course, in his own overwhelming sense of guilt for his "horrible y nauseabundo delito" (49). Unwilling to come to terms with his own sin and its debilitating effects on Gracia, Román doubly victimizes her. Despite his active and Gracia's passive role in the commitment of incest, the hypocritical priest absolves himself of culpability, and blames Gracia for his own fall from grace. Despite her "arrepentimiento," Gracia will die in a state of "pecado mortal" (58). Gracia will suffer and die for both of them. He, on the other hand, would seek salvation elsewhere. Román abandoned the infirmed Gracia to the care of Teotista, the elderly and alcoholic hired housekeeper. And, while Gracia lived for her brother's rare visits to her room, Román avoided her as much as possible.

After Gracia "supo los misterios de la unión carnal" (75), her love and passion for Román increased, but abnormally so; it was the type of obsessive love "que no se combatía con nada: monomanía. Como pasión y como locura, incurable" (75). As Gracia's unrequited obsession for her brother intensified uncontrollably, as a consequence of their incestuous union, her physical, mental and emotional health deteriorated dramatically. Gracia "en efecto, llevaba una vida miserable, de melancolía.... Gracia ya no era la misma..." (73). She spent her lonely days confined to bed, suffering from a host of maladies: nausea, nervousness, vomiting, heart ailments,

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diminished strength, general muscle rigidity, a dullness of the senses, the mind and movements, complicated by episodes of epilepsy and hysteria which produced a temporary loss of consciousness (73-74). Román considered Gracia's newly developed disorders as a sign of the work of the devil; the superstitious priest "tuvo á Gracia por un endemoniada" (75).

Despite the notices of Gracia's imminent demise, Román returns home, not out of consideration for his sister, but because it was very late in the evening. In the following scene, López Bago juxtaposes the inhumaneness of the Church's doctrine in the face of its sacrifice of the life of a beautiful and innocent woman:

> El sacerdote miró con recelo hacia la cama....
>
> Allí estaba la hermosa doncella que vino de Tudela para ser más casta, más inocente, más pura, completando su educación al lado de *su hermano el cura*.
>
> Allí estaba Gracia, vidriados ya los ojos y hundidos, arrugadas las sienes, perdido el conocimiento, abriendo y cerrando las manos para coger *á puñados* las sábanas que la cubrían.
>
> Estaba con el estertor. (234)

While Gracia lay dying, Román had already begun a new life outside of his home. He immersed himself in the affairs of the clerical world, seeking his own salvation in the confessional, dedicating himself "con entusiasmo á la curación

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de almas" (49). His reputation as a father confessor grew to such extent that in Madrid, he "era conocido, y en las grandes festividades, jubileos y otras ocasiones parecidas, acudían de todos los distritos, aun de los más lejanos, á la parroquia, viéndose precisado algunas veces á confesar de día y de noche ..." (50).

Román's popularity soon attracted the attention of Gertrudis—the young and beautiful Marquise de Florida, a lady-in-waiting to the queen—who requested his services as her personal father confessor. Unhappily married to a wealthy aristocrat infected with syphilis, the marquise has sought refuge in unfulfilling adulterous affairs. Immediately attracted to the beauty in need of comfort and spiritual guidance, the marquise replaces Gracia as the object of Román's carnal temptations. Gertrudis is also attracted to the handsome young priest, but unlike Román, she will fall truly in love.

Román derives a masochistic sense of pleasure from feeling tempted by young, beautiful females who are not only unavailable to him, but are recognized as "taboos," according to secular and nonsecular laws. With Gertrudis, Román repeats the pattern of abnormal behavior displayed in his relationship with Gracia in <u>El cura</u>. He beseeches God to help him resist carnal temptation, yet refuses to avoid the source of such conflict. When he reaches the point where he requires release from the tremendous pressures of his guilt, Román's

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masochistic behavior becomes sadistic as he lashes out against the women he professes love, effecting irreparable harm. While he had rejected Gracia after committing incest, he rejects Gertrudis before consummating his lust for her. During a bout of angry frustration, he orders the marquise to resume marital relations with her lascivious syphilitic husband despite the medical mandate prohibiting such relations. López Bago vigorously condemns the Catholic priest for his crime:

> Él había echado el armiño en el fango, la limpieza en la porquería, y la salud habíala puesto en contacto con la epidemia más repugnante. Eso era obra suya, que se estaba realizando .... (159)
>
> ...él rechazó á Gertrudis, la sometió al férreo yugo, la sujetó y sujetó sus instintos de bestia lasciva; y así atada de pies y manos, la tiró, como una masa de carne palpitante aún de cariño, en la cama nupcial, devolviéndola al poder del marido: "Ahí la tienes. Es tu propiedad. Mátala con el contagio de tus besos. Házla imposible para mí, aléjala del mundo con tu lepra, y acércala á Dios por el camino de la muerte. Un crimen era .... (160)

Ironically, Román's crime against the marquise only serves to fuel his pathology: the thought that Gertrudis may become infected with syphilis excited him even more. As we observe

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in the following passage, the priest has crossed over the edge into madness; he is so out of control that he even contemplates necrophilia:

> De pronto tuvo la visión clara de su amor á Gertrudis, no aniquilado, sino más fuerte, más poderoso entonces, en aquel instante mismo, cuando quizás la obra de destrucción estaba consumada. ¡Apasionado hasta la desesperación, desesperado hasta la locura, así estaba! Amaba á la marquesa, y en vano condenó á la podredumbre aquellas formas tangentes, á la fetidez aquel aliento; amaba y sentíase capaz de todo, hasta de imitar á los necromanos, y muerta la marquesa, desenterrarla y morir abrazando su cadáver. Era horrible, pero cierto. (163)

Nevertheless, Román is obsessed with fantasies of Gertrudis' surrender to her lewd and diseased husband. He insists that she recount the details of the horrible encounter. As she does, the sadistic priest becomes increasingly aroused:

> —¡Cuéntame! No me has dicho lo que pasó anoche. Lo que ocurrió entre él y tú, entre vosotros dos....
>
> Valerosamente [Gertrudis] emprendió la enumeración de los hechos.
>
> Un relato repugnante. Román buscaba en él

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> remedios supremos al sensualismo que le dominaba, á la emoción que sentía. Encontró, en lugar de esto, sobreexcitación mayor.... La escena vista no hubiera producido mayor impresión que descrita por ella misma.
>
> —Cuando quedamos solos se arrojó á mis pies, me abrazó fuertemente las rodillas, luego se levantó. "¡Por fin!", dijo, y me besó en la boca con el ansia frenética de un loco, de un endemoniado. Estaba horrible. ¡Parecía un sátiro! Yo cerré los ojos. Pensé en que era preciso obedecerte. En que eras tú el que me lo mandaba, y me abandoné en sus brazos. Lo que pasó no he de contártelo: fue un delirio suyo, un espasmo de todo mi ser. Yo era una estatua....
>
> Lo que en aquella narración se callaba, suplíalo perfectamente la imaginación del tonsurado. La imaginación, la fantasía, que iba tal vez más allá de lo sucedido. (185-86)

Román, for the time being, resists the urge to seduce Gertrudis, but he desperately needs a release for his powerful libido. He seeks relief in the neighborhood brothel just as he has many times before, even "cuando sintió por Gracia el primer monstruoso deseo ..." (186). Once inside the brothel, Román gives free reign to his aberrations. In his protagonist, López Bago presents a case of an extreme form of

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sexual pathology: satyriasis. The novelist describes the disease:

> Fué la aparición, repentina como una explosión, de la terrible enfermedad que estaba minando su organismo. Siguió á la mujer como un perro sigue á quien le ofrece el alimento. Sólo vió la hembra.... La monomanía erótica. La satiriasis presentándose de improviso .... (187)
>
> Era una locura sin delirio, un estado de integridad mental y de conciencia mezclado con impulsos de un loco; esa fuerza invencible que impele al monomaníaco al mal, no por efecto de una afección del cerebro, sino por una depravación violenta de las pasiones. (189)

Román stands out as the most depraved of all in López Bago's gallery of sexually abnormal characters. A brothel prostitute's reaction underscores the depth of the priest's madness. After having experienced the gamut of sexual abnormalities in her clients, even this hardened professional is shocked and frightened by Román's intense and brutal insatiability:

> ¡Oh! ¡Qué asquerosa y qué innoble tarde pasada allí, en una habitación de paredes desnudas ... al lado de aquella infeliz, que reía cínicamente, que parecía burlarse de él primero, y que luego le miraba asombrada; de aquella infeliz, víctima de

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> una salacidad horrible, de un furor tal, que á la postre comprendió con quien tenía que habérselas, el peligro que corría; y al comprenderlo, de un prodigioso salto se puso en pie y huyó, salió corriendo en camisa, dando voces, profiriendo imprecaciones y palabras groseras, pidiendo socorro á sus compañeras. (189-90)

The brothel also serves to aid Román toward attaining his second obsession: to ascend the ecclesiastical hierarchy all the way to the Vatican. The prostitutes' services allow the priest to resist the overwhelming temptation to attack Gertrudis until his diabolical scheme has been accomplished: "El secreto estaba allí. El lupanar le preservaba de las tentaciones en el palacio [the marquise's home]. En él adquiría fuerzas para la resistencia. En él daba el loco rienda suelta á su locura" (204). It is necessary that the marquise continue to revere and trust her father confessor implicitly: that she believes he loves her, but is strong and saintly enough to control his desire.

Román seizes his chance after the marquis' sudden and unexpected death. Taking advantage of the young widow's vulnerability—her guilt over her husband's death and her adulterous affairs, her physical weakness due to the first symptoms of syphilis—the Machiavellian priest takes control over every aspect of her life, especially her vast fortune. He successfully converts her into a religious fanatic,

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convincing her to renounce her extravagant life style with its material possessions, and to retreat into the nonsecular world as an offering to God in the hopes of obtaining eternal salvation for her tortured soul. As part of her penitence, Román convinces the marquise to make regular enormous donations "para el *dinero de San Pedro*" (204). These large quantities sent to Rome effectively disinherited the marquise's only child, Melita. As the aristocratic fortune disappeared into the coffers of the Vatican, Román anxiously awaited his reward, "la bendición apostólica" (204).

López Bago delivers yet another explicit sexual scene in the last pages of El confesonario when Román and Gertrudis finally consummate their passion. Although the marquise initiates the encounter, Román's sexual aberration takes control of them both. Gertrudis is totally unprepared for the bestial explosion of her beloved confessor's unbridled concupiscence. Román is prepared to kill the object of his sadistic desire, should the female dare to resist him:

> ¡Sonreía! ¡La infeliz sonreía, mirando las alteraciones que gradualmente iban produciéndose en el semblante del loco! Viéndole encendida la color de las mejillas, trémulos los labios, inyectados los ojos, nervioso y casi convulsos todos los miembros. Sí. Era la explosión del amor, la del deseo, la del sensualismo. Eralo todo; pero no como aparece en el ser humano, sino en la bestia.

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> Era el acceso. ¡La satiriasis!.... Vió á Román levantarse, abalanzarse sobre ella, lanzando, no el grito de la pasión, sino el de los instintos brutales y groseros:
>
> —¡Mía ¡Ya eres mía! ¡Tú lo has querido ¡Es inútil que te resistas!
>
> Inútil, sí. No se resiste el torrente ni se detiene el alud. Inútil, porque el único poderoso freno habíase roto....
>
> Sintió el contacto duro del fauno; los brazos la estrecharon, no como caricia, sino como agresión: dos zarpazos de fiera que desgarraron los encajes, el raso; quiso rechazarle, púsose densamente pálida .... Estaba sujeta, no podía moverse. No era un hombre, era un loco furioso.
>
> —¡Quieta! ¡Quieta, ó te mato!....
>
> —¡Román! ¡Por Dios! ¡Déjame!....
>
> ... el satiriaco estaba poseído de un frenesí delirante. Cayó desmayada después de un grito de desesperación, de dolor, de espanto. (228-30)

While Román moves away from center stage in La monja, his malevolent influence is still felt as the setting for the last novel in the trilogy moves to a convent in Toledo. There, Melita takes the veil; Gertrudis retires from the outside world, taking up residence as "la señora de piso"; and, Román, by his own machinations, arranges to be appointed to the

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convent as its new chaplain and father confessor.

Behind the convent walls, Román and Gertrudis continue their illicit affair, with the latter conscientiously playing the role of the new chaplain's clandestine concubine. Gertrudis believed that her lover's aberration was a demonstration of his intense love for her. The father confessor carried her to heights of carnal pleasure never before experienced by the convent's new lay sister:

> Gertrudis amaba á Román, amaba al fauno, como no creyó amar nunca, con intensidad que no tuvo el amor de niña ... porque en aquellas caricias descubrió hasta los últimos límites á que puede llegar el placer de la carne; porque el satiriaco llevábala con sus excesos hasta el delirio, hasta el desmayo; más todavía, hasta el peligro de muerte .... (87) Para Gertrudis, Román, lejos de ser una naturaleza enferma, viciada y miserable, era, por el contrario, un ser de privilegio prepotente, que así como en inteligencia, era también en la parte corporal y física superior á los demás hombres. (88)

In La monja, López Bago informs his readers of the emergence of a second sexual pathological illness manifested in Román as a consequence of his unnatural vow of celibacy. Concomitant to his satyriasis, the father confessor is diagnosed with erotomania. The novelist distinguishes between

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these two seemingly similar aberrations: the former originates from a physiological defect of the reproductive organs; the latter, from a mental disorder of the brain. While satyriasis is the result of "la irritación de los órganos reproductivos, cuya irritación reaccionaba sobre el cerebro;" with erotomania "el mal residía en la cabeza, la imaginación era la afectada; había un error de entendimiento. Era un padecimiento mental en el que las ideas amorosas estaban fijas y dominantes ..." (113). Satyriasis "hacíale víctima de un desorden físico;" erotomania "lo convertía en juguete de su imaginación" (113). The emergence of Román's mental sexual disorder at this time, now combined with his satyriasis, will have devastating consequences and far reaching tragic implications for the future as he ascends the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Inside the convent, the father confessor becomes, in effect, the proverbial rooster in the hen house. Now consumed by his fantasies of the nuns, he becomes obsessed with thoughts of their sexual frustrations. And, he would be available to alleviate their repressed urges. Román soon learns about the nuns' secret life, his suspicions confirmed by the appropriately named nun, Sor María de la Soledad. This rebellious and angry nun was an outcast among her peers, shunned and punished by her sisters for violently rebuffing their advances. However, she eagerly surrenders to Román's "impaciencias y excitaciones inextinguibles de la satiriasis"

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(166). Román insinuates to the Mother Superior his knowledge of their secret; and, despite the penalty of excommunication, the priest wants and receives free access to the cloister. He succeeds in converting the convent into his private brothel, and the nuns into his personal prostitutes.

The novel's climactic dénouement revolves around Sor María de la Soledad. Overjoyed about being pregnant, the rebellious nun announces her intention of leaving the convent; the civil authorities will protect her and her child against the nuns, she boldly informs the Mother Superior. However, "exclaustración" is synonymous with scandal, and the Mother Superior quickly convinces María to remain inside the convent, where she will be protected, and her baby cared for and raised with the assistance of the other nuns. The expectant nun happily agrees.

López Bago's fierce anticlericalism reaches its zenith in the macabre fate he prepares for María de la Soledad. While the focus of the evil acts committed in the trilogy has been concentrated on the diabolical Román, López Bago delivers a *coup de main* by choosing the nuns as the insidious perpetrators of the greatest crime against nature, the law and religion in the trilogy: coldblooded premeditated murder. In a scene reminiscent of a twentieth-century horror film, the nuns (excluding Melita, who had recently died), led by the "maestra de novicias," María Josefa, surround Sor María de la Soledad in her cell, carry her outside into the night to the

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patio where they pronounce a sentence of death before burying her and her unborn child alive in a prepared grave:

> Y se acercaron, se apoderon de ella á viva fuerza, la levantaron, y el numeroso grupo se dirigió fuera del dormitorio, hacia el patio, hacia el centro del patio. La lechuza, asustada, lanzóse desde la cruz con pesado vuelo, y al pie de ésta levantaron una losa, que dejó ver la prisión más horrible; la del sepulcro, porque no otra cosa era aquella cavidad: era como una fosa.
>
> Allí, á pesar de sus gritos, suspendida entre todas, se vió enterrada viva. Cayó la losa sobre ella, y los gritos no se oyeron. (238)

Anticipating the inevitable backlash of criticism, López Bago affirmed that his account of the pregnant nun's atrocious murder as an act of revenge for daring to break the vow of obedience and secrecy is not only accurate, but just one example of the many types of crimes committed by Spain's immoral Catholic Church:

> Mi pluma, por deber de conciencia, ha escrito lo que era preciso que se escribiera, que se presentara tal como es. Y es una parte tan sólo de los crímenes que se cometen contra la naturaleza, la civilización y el progreso en *nuestra católica España*. (239)

Although it is fairly common knowledge that for centuries

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monasteries and convents were notorious for rampant promiscuity in all forms, and that nuns were often impregnated and secretly gave birth to illegitimate offspring fathered by priests,[35] López Bago's inflammatory accusation of disobedient nuns being buried alive seems far-fetched, especially in light of the absence of conclusive corroborating evidence.

L. The Theme of "la Bête Humaine"

In López Bago's novels, as in Zola's, there is no shortage of references to, or descriptions of characters portrayed as "bestias humanas"; primitive creatures incapable of controlling their impulses or instincts, especially powerful libidinal urges. "Bestias humanas" do not use reason, intellect, common sense or moral or ethical judgment to temper their passions, setting them apart from healthy characters. As a result, their pathology lowers them to a type of human subspecies, on a par with members of the animal kingdom. Like animals, their coupling is totally egocentric and violent—devoid of love, affection, respect or even interest in their partner's satisfaction.

Characters from the despised clergy and aristocracy epitomize this subhuman species. Accustomed to having their way in everything—their whims satisfied, their commands obeyed—served to exacerbate their primitive state. In this chapter thus far, we have witnessed López Bago's

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dehumanization of several characters. As we recall, for example, the Duke de Benimar was identified as "una bestia en celo," Carne de nobles (32); the duke and duchess' couplings resemble a fight to the death between two ferocious jungle adversaries. The duke and Román Acevedo (the latter, the embodiment of "la bête humaine" in the author's novels) are constantly identified as "sátiros," or "satyrs"—the mythological man-beast symbol of brutal male lust and uncontrollable sexual desire. Joining them is another "sátiro," the priest Lasoga from La Pálida, an "especie de monstruo lascivo y violento" (Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 247).

López Bago selects several species of mammals as metaphors or similes to capture the beastly nature of certain characters in the throes of carnal excitement. In El preso, Francisca Ruíz' sudden arrival to his office to surrender herself in exchange for her husband's freedom transforms the frenzied Marquis de Jibosa into both a dog and a wolf on the verge of finally being able to seize their long-hunted prey:

> El aristócrata prorrumpía en guturales sonidos, que eran como el latir del perro en las alegrías de la caza que ventea, como las inarticuladas voces con que el hombre salvaje expresa su regocijo en el bosque virgen, como el ahullido del lobo al clavar sus dientes en el cuello de la oveja .... (235)

Characters from other sectors of society are not exempt

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from the author's portrayal of their bestial nature. In La señora de López, civil servant Juan López contemplates the break up of his marriage while "los imperios del sensualismo llegaron á ser, con estos pensamientos, poderosísimos, intensos, avasalladores. Le convirtieron, quitándole raciocinio, en una bestia lúbrica" (123). During their brutal coupling, Estrella Sánchez and her lover Luis de Villaperdida are not longer "dos seres humanos, sino dos animales inmundos." After satiating "todos sus groseros instintos," they fell into such a profound sleep, "con un sueño más semejante á la muerte que al descanso," that through their lips one could hear "el gruñido sordo de las bestias cebadas" (La Pálida 151).

López Bago usually refers to his female characters not as women, but "hembras," or "females," indicating that they too are lowered on the evolutionary scale, inasmuch as "hembra" is invariably used to identify females from the plant world and the animal kingdom. In Carne de nobles, the unnamed Queen of Liboria is described as *"toda una hembra"* (8); while her companion in vice, Antonia de Benimar, "aquella criolla lasciva" distinguishes herself as "una hembra" who "tenia (sic) sexo para muchos varones" (62). Enrique Morán in La desposada and Juan López from La señora de López are not discriminating in their choice of females to fulfill their sexual needs. While Morán's "contacto con las blandas y sobadas carnes de las hembras de alquiler" over the years has

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drained him of "fuerzas para las viriles iniciativas" (140), Juan López takes advantage of the convenience of having a female servant in his household: "¡Ah! ¡La hembra! Allí estaba, aquella mujer no era más que eso, ¡una hembra! Le satisfizo" (124).

For López Bago, a few of his sympathetic females characters rise above the lowly denotation of "hembra." In El preso, Francisca Ruíz is a "tan garrida hembra" (216), while in La desposada, it was necessary that Arturo Salces "hallara en Rita lo que halló, para que viese algo superior al concepto de *hembra* ..." (140-41).

M. Linguistic Authenticity: The Use of Candid and Colloquial Language

Naturalist novelists were concerned with maintaining the linguistic authenticity of their characters' everyday speech, especially those from the lower classes. Slang, colloquialisms and even profanity should be included in characters' dialogues as a reflection of real life.

López Bago was serious about applying authentic expressions in his novels, especially with regard to those published in Latin America, where certain regional or national colloquialisms were unfamiliar to his readers in Spain. Lissorgues, in "'El naturalismo radical,'" tends to agree with López Bago's objective. The scholar writes: "Hay que

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acostumbrar a los lectores a no hacer diferencia entre la obra literaria y la vida; por eso, los personajes deben hablar como se habla en la calle" (243). López Bago accomplished this goal, Lissorgues continues, inasmuch as "en Carne importada (costumbres de Buenos Aires) y en El separatista, los argentinos y los cubanos hablan como se habla en su patria y el novelista da las explicaciones necesarias a pie de página" (243).

In "Naturalismos," the appendix to El separatista, López Bago objected to Galdós' choice of rhyming euphemisms such as: "zancajo," "pingajo," "cuajo," "recuajo" (294), or "ancajo" (Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 243) used in the mouth of the protagonist from Torquemada y San Pedro; especially in light of the fact that this character "figura como uno de los hombres á quienes más complace usar esa palabra grosera" ('Naturalismos," El separatista 294). Despite his great admiration for Galdós, López Bago does not understand:

> ... como en (sic) hombre de inteligencia tan privilegiada como la del autor de El Amigo Manso, pudo caber la idea de que poniendo los susodichos consonantes, por consonancia también, lo indecente y lo decente llegaban á caber en el mismo sitio, y los lectores se harían lenguas de su atrevimiento. (294-95)

In real life, Torquemada would have used "carajo," the "palabra grosera" in question. And, by way of example, López

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Bago explains how a character from El separatista, the "viejo guerrillero" (293), Don José Godínez, despite his "buena educación y otros miramientos" employs the "apóstrofe impropio" "solo una vez" (295) in the novel when he exclaims on page 105 (293): "¡Cállate, carajo!" López Bago, however, defends the use of the term as "muy propio y adecuado á la situación de ánimo que en el momento de la susodicha exclamación le dominaba" (295).

II. Radical Elements of López Bago's Extremist Ideology

In this second section of our study of López Bago's expression of Naturalism, we will address those "radical" characteristics expounded in the author's appendices and his "novelas sociales" and "médico-sociales" which set him apart from Zola and traditional Spanish naturalists.

A. Radical Naturalism's Rebellious, Aggressive and Combative Posture

At the cornerstone of López Bago's radical countercurrent is an approach which is fundamentally: 1. rebellious in its determination to break with the established canons of its era with regard to literature and social class structure; 2. aggressive and uncompromising in putting forth its nonconformist and progressive ideals and proposals; and 3.

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combative or militant in its manner of defending these ideals and proposals.

"Vosotros y yo," the appendix to El cura, which Lozano Marco characterizes as the "cabal expresión" of López Bago's Radical Naturalism (346), perhaps best exemplifies the novelist's "postura extrema y combativa" (Lozano Marco 346). In one critical passage, the author takes issue with the passive and abstract role to which the naturalist movement in Spain has been relegated by both defenders and detractors by remaining thus far only a fascinating source of academic controversy for Spanish literati in the rarefied world of the Real Academia Española and the Ateneo Científico y Literario de Madrid. Naturalism's primary purpose was not to provide intellectual stimulation for the literary elite, he contended, but to communicate its message to the general public, its legitimate domain. López Bago wanted to give decision-making power to the populace for determining the movement's reception in Spain, a reception the author was sure would be most auspicious. The pertinacious author appointed himself the leader of this military campaign which would continue to fight until the victory of the naturalistic cause had been assured:

> El naturalismo había ido en España á los ateneos antes de tiempo, y no se encontraba cómodo en las posturas académicas á que en algunos libros lo condenan á mostrarse escritores que deben ser tachados como eclécticos en este punto; necesario

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> fué sacarlo de los cómodos sillones de terciopelo, descencadenarlo de las atildadas plumas que lo sujetaban y hacer que recuperase su verdadero carácter revolucionario. Para crecer tiene que luchar en las calles, ganar primero la opinión del pueblo, ser un héroe popular; su sitio no es la academia todavía. Es algo mejor que esto. La barricada. Y á la barricada fué conmigo, y en ella sigue hasta obtener el triunfo. ("Vosotros y yo," El cura 262-63)

The passage above attests to López Bago's aggressive ambition to create and lead a separate and radical naturalistic countercurrent which would seek to establish, or, in López Bago's words, recuperate or restore its authentic revolutionary character. This determination was born, in part, out of his deep-seated disdain for prestigious intellectual institutions like the Royal Spanish Academy and the Athenaeum, which represented for López Bago the embodiment of the rigidity, monotony and snobbism of Spain's literary Establishment. The novelist cited boredom as one of the reasons for distancing himself and his countercurrent from the traditional cultural institutions. According to our author, the Royal Spanish Academy presented so many interminable wearisome speeches on Naturalism, among other topics, that even its own members would fall asleep. In contrast, López Bago was sure to point out that he and other progressive

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literary minds would engage in lively, productive discussions away from "los durmientes de la Academia" (290):

> Lo que hay es que, nosotros en la barricada y vosotros en la Academia Española, cada cual ocupamos nuestro puesto; porque á fe que mientras vosotros estéis en los sillones dormitando, los que gustamos de velar no iremos á despertaros con un codazo; preferimos vivir entre los despiertos y hablar y discutir, porque ir allá para escuchar ronquidos nos aburriría mucho. (286)

The battle lines were clearly drawn between the Establishment and "la barricada," between "vosotros á un lado y nosotros al opuesto" (287); a position López Bago reiterated in successive pages of El cura's appendix.[36] Included in the "nosotros" to whom López Bago referred was, of course, Alejandro Sawa. In "Análisis de la novela titulada Crimen legal," "el viejo combatiente" embraced the "nuevo combatiente" (Crimen legal 279) before proceeding to forewarn his new "correligionario" (257) for the barrage of vicious attacks which would assail him for joining "la barricada naturalista" (262). López Bago informed Sawa that, although they stood alone in their own country, there were others who championed the same cause: Zola in France, and Giovanni Verga and Luigi Cappuana in Italy. Radical Naturalism is the authentic expression of the movement, López Bago assured Sawa, its legitimacy validated by the animosity incurred from the

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threatened ruling classes:

> Ahora que viene á compartir conmigo esta reñida jornada, justo es que, no porque yo dude de su valor, sino por lealtad, le advierta los peligros que he corrido solo, y que desde ahora vamos á correr juntos. Zola en Francia, Verga y Cappuana en Italia, y nosotros aquí, tenemos un sello peculiar. ¿Cuál es la característica de este movimiento naturalista? ¿En qué se puede distinguir el verdadero del falso naturalismo? En lo que son odiados por la sociedad todos nuestros nombres, entendiéndose por sociedad el conjunto de esos poderes que están y sostenidos con puntales, la burguesía nociva, la inútil aristocracia, el absurdo clero. (263)

López Bago's "alta conciencia de su papel de soldado" was shared by Sawa; inasmuch as both novelists "manejan el naturalismo como si fuera un arma de combate ideológico" (Lissorgues, "'El naturalismo radical'" 242). In "Impresiones de un lector," Sawa also used military vocabulary to describe López Bago's difficulties with his detractors after the publication of La prostituta and La Pálida: "... me apercibieron de que López Bago daba otra vez la batalla de las calles: la guerra civil de las ideas" (El cura 301). Ernesto Bark, a member of "La Gente Nueva" and friend to both novelists, recognized the combative character of Sawa's work:

> La obra de Sawa era sobre todo una protesta contra la hipocresía reinante y su estilo se asemeja á la

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> oratoria guerrera de un Napoleon I y le faltan los tintes finos que acompañan las descripciones delicadas y que no deben buscarse en esta clase de literatura militante.[37]

B. Reaction Against Romantic and Idealistic Literature and Their Authors

The revolutionary character of Radical Naturalism vehemently rejected the principles espoused by its literary antithesis: Romantic and Idealistic literature. With his usual biting sarcasm, López Bago becomes a literary critic in "Vosotros y yo," putting forth his strong objections to the ultraconservative novelistic expression represented by his ideological foes: Alarcón, Valera, Selgas and others.

According to López Bago, the rebirth of the Spanish novel during the middle of the nineteenth century made a poor début, inasmuch as style, not substance, was incorrectly deemed the most important characteristic of the new modern novel: "¿El estilo es acaso fundamental en la novela? No lo es; pero precisaba decir y probar de alguna manera la peregrina afirmación del *renacimiento*" (263). Every novelist's style was described as "inimitable;" a judgment an incredulous López Bago viewed as a contradiction in terms:

> ¡Inimitable! Pero ¿qué mayor imitación puede existir que la de ser todos estilistas y no poder

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> elogiar en ellos otra cosa?.... Y aquí, en España, donde el estilo es cosa tan corriente en el escritor como el valor en el soldado, causaba pasmo y maravilla el estilo inimitable de Valera, de Alarcón, de Selgas y de qué sé yo cuántos más. (263-64)

López Bago patronizes "la novela bonita" represented by such works as El escándalo, La Pródiga and El niño de la bola by Alarcón; and Valera's El doctor Faustino, Doña Luz and Pepita Jiménez:

> ... ¡qué hermosos libros de boudoir! ¡qué ejemplares tan preciosos de la literatura para las damas! ¡Juan Valera proclamando en uno de sus estudios críticos las excelencias de *la novela bonita*!.... ¡Alarcón hablando del Niño Jesús y diciendo que tiene mucho talento el padre Manrique! ¡Las duquesas, las generalas, retratadas en miniatura sobre marfil! ¡ya (sic) lo creo! ¡Renacimiento indudable! (265-66)

López Bago then proceeds to enumerate the faults he finds in "la novela bonita" with regard to characterization, setting, plot and moral purpose.

Verisimilar characters are not to be found in "las novelas bonitas," in what López Bago calls a "literatura de frac inaguantable" (266). Lacking humanity, these characters stand out as "atildados figurines," well dressed with perfect

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manners as they display their "aire tan distinguido" (266). Conversations among the "atilados figurines" revolve around such trivialities as "las batatas en dulce que hacen en Granada ... las yemas que hacen en Sevilla las monjas de San Leandro" (267). Even the novelists themselves fail to distinguish their characters, since they are all prototypes; only the names change from one novel to another. While Alarcon "no domina á sus personajes, acaso porque no penetra en ellos, y los personajes, por el contrario, lo dominan y llevan por donde quieren" (269); Valera's characters "son autómatas de ventrílocuo, que dicen de memoria una porción de enredijos filosóficos: no se ve que mueva los labios el ilustre académico, pero se oye su voz; él es el que habla, aunque trate de disimularlo" (270).

These superficial mannequins or puppets dressed "en traje de etiqueta" (266), impersonating counts and dukes, are placed in the setting most suitable for maintaining the picturesque illusion of sunny optimism: Andalucía. In this "región más adecuada para el desarrollo de tantas preciosidades" (266), everything and everyone are natives to the region "desde el autor hasta el editor muchas veces. Montañas de Sierra Morena; personages granadinos ó gaditanos ..." (266-67). Man and Nature live in perfect harmony:

> los árboles son naranjos; los caballos cordobeses; el cielo azul, sin una nube; las noches serenas y estrelladas; óyese de vez en cuando la copla de

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> malagueñas, el rasgueo de la guitarra; esto, ¿quién lo ha de negar?, es el mejor medio ambiente para la novela bonita. (267)

López Bago offers his opinion on the plot in "la novela bonita":

> En cuanto al desarrollo del plan, también obedece á procedimientos no menos peregrinos. El *argumento* lo es todo, como lo es asimismo la retórica y la gramática. El autor se da de calabazadas para ajustarse á las tres divisiones: *exposición, nudo y desenlace*. (267)

The "procedimientos" which resemble "un enredijo de alambres y de hilos" are successful in entertaining "las damas" during their "ratos de ocio," to the point that even "la novela bonita pasa á ser lectura *interesante*" (268).

López Bago underscores the importance of the "novela bonita"'s concept of morality, a concept which is expounded, in part, in order to combat the influence of Naturalism (268). Reminiscent of the serial novel, the "novela bonita"'s "moral romántica" (268) adheres to a rigid formula, constructed around the same two basic components: 1. virtue always triumphs and vice is defeated; 2. as in the theater, "good" characters always marry at the end of the novel. Nothing, says López Bago, could be more simplistic or more comfortable, or more perfectly monotonous (268-69).

López Bago accuses Alarcón of moral hypocrisy. Despite

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his reputation as the so-called "campeón de la moral casera" (270), "nadie como este campeón de la virtud sabe dar con mayor colorido la nota pornográfica" (271). In El escándalo and La Pródiga, Alarcón disguises his literary eroticism:

> No presenta el vicio repugnante, no, sino amable en grado sumo; lo viste de raso, lo rocía de perfumes, lo rodea de riquezas; sus hembras prostituídas, como la generala de El Escándalo y La Pródiga misma, ya he dicho que no son obras de arte, que no tienen la naturaleza humana, que son figurines de La Moda Elegante; pero tienen mucho de parecido con esas fotografías francesas de tanta venta entre la senil lujuria. (271)

López Bago wanted to make a sharp distinction between the quality of Alarcón's and Valera's "novela bonita" and the literary genius of Galdós. In contrast to the "literatura insustancial" (273) of Alarcón and Valera, López Bago cited Galdós' works as the quintessential expression of novelistic art, achievement and maintaining the highest quality of "verdad, bondad y belleza" (274). Unlike Alarcón and Valera, Galdós "no se preocupa de otra cosa que de estudiar la naturaleza, trasladándola á sus libros con toda la intensidad que puede" (274). This faithful reproduction of Nature is one of the characteristics which separate Galdós from Alarcón and Valera, and links the master of Spanish Realism to Naturalism. As Gutiérrez Carbajo has observed: "El translado fiel de la

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naturaleza a la novela es lo que singulariza la escuela naturalista. Ése es el proceder de Pérez Galdós y ése era el objetivo básico de la novelística de Zola" (378).

C. The "Medicalization of Literature"

In the first section of our study on López Bago's Radical Naturalism we observed how the novelist applied many of Zola's tenets to his own novels. We saw how he diagnosed and explained with great clinical depth the physical and psychological aberrations of his characters: nymphomania and satyriasis; as well as normal life-cycle changes in women: puberty and menopause. Clinical description of medical conditions and disorders is one of the fundamental tenets of Naturalism. However, with López Bago, one could justifiably contend that the attention the novelist affords to clinical descriptions of numerous mental and physiological illnesses and disorders surpasses in depth, detail, length and quantity those typically found in most naturalist novels. López Bago's diagnoses and prognoses acquire a character all their own, to such a degree that we are able to apply the neologism coined by Lissorgues which aptly describes this particular feature of the author's novels: "la literatura se 'medicaliza'" ("'El naturalismo radical'" 244). When we recall that López Bago earned a medical degree it is no wonder that he would not pass up the opportunity to share his wealth of medical knowledge

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with his readers. Although Lozano Marco finds the novelist's medical descriptions "tiresome," this scholar acknowledges his descriptive technical skills:

> En estas novelas [La prostituta and La Pálida], López Bago hace un prolijo uso de sus conocimientos de medicina, como pone de manifesto en la descripción de las enfermedades, en el abundante empleo de tecnicismos médicos y en las fórmulas de los preparados, así como en las descripciones de los aspectos fisiológicos que caracterizan a los personajes y que determinan sus actuaciones. (348n22)

In addition to the illnesses previously mentioned or discussed in other sections of this chapter (Gracia's long list of mental and physical ailments or sexual abnormalities such as female hysteria, nymphomania, satyriasis and erotomania), López Bago either makes reference to, or his characters suffer from a multitude of psychic and physical diseases and disorders ranging from the most common nineteenth-century illnesses to the extremely rare or even bizarre psychiatric disorders.

The quality of the lives of several characters is enervated by illnesses prevalent in many naturalist novels: anemia, lymphatic disorders and rickets. As a direct consequence of his father's syphilis, for example, Luis de Villaperdida was born "raquítico y enfermizo, lleno de

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costras" (La prostituta 202). In La buscona, Rosita Pérez' mother, Doña Angustias, was diagnosed with chlorosis—a type of anemia usually manifested in girls at puberty which causes the skin to turn a greenish color. Angustias' health was improving slowly thanks to treatment of "tartrato férrico-potásico y ... extracto de carne" (81). However, in La querida, "una lesión de la médula había determinado, como consecuencia de la anemia, la parálisis de D.ª Angustias" (27).

In El preso, the vain and gluttonous Marquis de Jibosa tries unsuccessfully to treat his dermatological condition, "la ptiriasis herpética" which disfigured his face with "repugnantes manchas rosáceas, que ninguna loción quitó" (214). The marquis' medical problem was trivial in comparison to those found in Spanish jails and penitentiaries. There, the inhumane unsanitary living conditions were a breeding ground for the propagation of a multitude of serious diseases, including the following: "anemia," "escrófulas," "tisis," "disentería," "llagas," "fiebre," "atrofia," "consunción," "septicemia," "gangrena," "raquitismo" (99); in addition to: "pelagra, congestión y apoplegía cerebrales, ictericia, hepatógena, epilepsia ... la hepatitis, la cirrosis hepática ..." (116).

According to López Bago in El cura, the Catholic Church openly admitted into its seminaries and convents all types of religious devotees and fanatics suffering from a wide range of

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psychiatric and physical disorders, including undiagnosable idiopathic diseases, or such disorders as hysteria and erotomania—two conditions which afflicted the famous nun, Santa Teresa de Jesús.[38] The Church canonized "todos esos enfermos" (107); including a documented case of "licantropía" or lycanthropy—a severe and bizarre mental aberration in which the patient images himself to be a wolf. The Church, López Bago adds, applied a euphemism to explain the overt manifestations of these various disorders: "esta palabra extraña: *Santidad*" (107).

López Bago's ambition of bringing modern medical science into the lives of his readers is best observed in his lengthy descriptions of certain diseases such as aneurysm of the heart and tuberculosis. Although his intention to educate and provide readers with advice on preventive medicine were good, sometimes the novelist's explanations are, unfortunately, too complex and technical for the average layman to comprehend.

After the horrific forty-three days of his unjust incarceration, El preso's Juan Ruíz was a destroyed human being—psychologically, morally and physically. The injuries inflicted upon his body were pronounced "incurable"; and resulted in the aggressive development of a heart aneurysm. The creation of a literary device in the form of Juan's dream is used by López Bago as the method for examining the inner workings of the protagonist's moribund organism. Juan looks inside his own body:

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Soñó que con maravillosa percepción y girando los ojos en sus órbitas le hacían verse por dentro en aquellos oscuros y ensangrentados antros del organismo, y acostumbrados á las sombras de los calabozos, ellos todo lo distinguían perfectamente, músculos, entrañas, vasos y venas, fibras y nervios, nada escapaba á su examen. Vió en el estómago la elaboración del jugo gástrico en que se disolvían las sustancias albuminoideas, vió el páncreas y la vejiga de la hiel. Vió en el corazón las transformaciones de la sangre, *venosa en arterial*, y cómo iba por la *cava inferior, superior y coronaria*, y cómo la *aurícula* la enviaba al *ventrículo* y éste le daba salida por la arteria pulmonar para que se airease en los pulmones, pasando luego por las venas pulmonares á la aurícula izquierda, de aquí al ventrículo y de éste por la aorta á todo el organismo. Vió más aun: vió los resultados, los desastrosos efectos que había causado en éste la peregrinación de cárcel en cárcel. Vió cómo había entrado en sus pulmones un aire enrarecido; vió la sangre en las venas falta de glóbulos rojos. Vió el trabajo de secreciones lánguido y pobre, vió los vasos contraidos, pequeño el impulso del corazón, estancamientos de la circulación de la sangre en algunos puntos,

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> elaboración imperfecta de los alimentos en el estómago, en el cerebro un desorden, una confusión espantosa, uno de sus pulmones no funcionaba, el pecho estaba inundado de serosidad, los bronquios de pus; faltaba por todas partes aire, sangre, actividad y calor. Ignoraba los tecnicismos anatómicos y fisiológicos, y sin emplearlos como nosotros, hízose aquel examen autópsico. Comprendió que iba á morir, y ya llevaba células muertas en el organismo. La transformación era completa. (263-65)

In La monja, the untimely demise of Melita serves as the rationale for López Bago's precise, detailed exposition on the causes, symptoms, development and prognosis of pulmonary tuberculosis or consumption. Highly contagious and incurable in López Bago's era, tuberculosis was a leading cause of death by disease in the nineteenth century. Following his prescribed "proceso estrictamente científico" (219), López Bago attributed "las condiciones que desarrollan y producen la diátesis tuberculosa" to three factors:

> en primer lugar, la herencia; en segundo, la *disposición* innata; y en tercero, *las condiciones individuales ó* exteriores que, obrando sobre el individuo después de nacer, modifican y alteran *poco á poco* su constitución primitivamente intacta. (221)

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Melita was predisposed to tuberculosis genetically and environmentally:

> Así, pues, en Melita, la tisis tenía que tener los caracteres de innata y de adquirida.
>
> Innata y después adquirida, porque las causas de esta última, enumeradas en conjunto, son cuantas circunstancias higiénicas ó patológicas existen capaces de determinar á la larga una debilidad constitucional definitiva. Y estas circunstancias son: en los niños, la lactancia insuficiente ó artificial, la aplicación intelectual precoz ó forzada; y en los púberes, la permanencia en habitaciones oscuras y mal ventiladas, los excesos del onanismo y del coito, y, en una palabra, siempre que el gasto orgánico es mayor que el ingreso, puede decirse que está creada la condición generatriz de la tuberculosis. (221)

The principal manifestations of her disease consisted of hectic fever, weight loss, diarrhea, cough, and purulent expectoration. In the following passage, we observe López Bago's meticulous, if not excessive attention to detail:

> Melita fué acometida de la tisis, con su carácter *sofocante*. Sin pródomos, ó con los que pertenecen á todas las enfermedades febriles, adquirió una fiebre subcontinua, cuyo grado térmico no excedía de 39º, 5, y cuya remisión matinal consistía en un

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grado ó grado y medio á lo sumo; á los pocos días, sin dolor de costado, ni tos, ni expectoración, adquirió una disnea violenta, amenazando con la sofocación. Excepto la fiebre, su estado se asemejaba al de una enferma del corazón ó al de una asmática. Podía también creerse en una bronquitis capitular; el pecho, sin embargo, no revelaba más que algunos estertores insignificantes, y á veces tan sólo la disminución general del ruido respiratorio. Luego, esta forma sofocante llegó á presentar también síntomas catarrales: á medida que los estertores se generalizaban, aumentóse la disnea; la tos apareció, se presentó la expectoración. Los accidentes torácicos se complicaron con una diarrea alarmante; todos estos síntomas persistieron, y aparecieron otros peores. Su carácter se tornó espantadizo; veíase acometida de un profundo desaliento y de disgusto de todo lo que la rodeaba; el apetito disminuyó rápidamente; perdió en absoluto las fuerzas; los accesos de fiebre tenían lugar al medio día y á la media noche. Su cara, su hermosa cara, no tenía ya expresión; secábasele la lengua; las ventanas de la nariz estaban pulverulentas, y apareció un delirio tranquilo nocturno.... Sus manos, en las extremidades de los dedos, se habían deformado:

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eran achatadas y cuadradas, terminando por un ensanchamiento en forma de porra ó maza. Dedos hipocráticos. La tos era cada vez más seca; aumentaba por la tarde, y no le dejaba punto de reposo durante la noche. Sudaba copiosamente: en pocas semanas llegó á la consución (sic); el organismo, deteriorado, era incapaz ya de soportar nada. El acceso cotidiano empezaba siempre de cuatro á siete de la tarde, siendo el gasto consumo febril la causa más poderosa de la consución (sic). A la par que se establecía la fiebre héctica, se agravaron todos los demás síntomas: hízose la diarrea más abundante, en ocasiones incoercible; la tos más penosa, más frecuente y provocando vómitos, que se agregaban á las pérdidas y fatigas de la enferma. Presentáronse, además de estos vómitos casi mecánicos, los propios de la tisis, debidos á catarros y ulceraciones gástricas; la expectoración aumentaba de día en día, y su voz empezaba á enronquecerse, á extinguirse. Una disfagia dolorosa, provocada por ulceraciones de la epiglotis, aumentó sus sufrimientos, y una emaciación creciente la llevaba con rapidez al último grado de marasmo. Los sudores cesaron de pronto, y la piel se hizo seca, áspera y callosa,

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por falta de espoliación epidérmica. (222-24)

López Bago's "cuadro clínico" (224) on the status of the progression of tuberculosis in the young woman's body continues for three more pages, pausing only for the novelist to inject his personal expression of pity and sympathy for "¡Pobre Melita!" (225).

As was stated earlier, one of the fundamental purposes of "medicalized literature" was to educate the general public by informing on specific measures to be taken for reducing one's chances of contracting devastating diseases like tuberculosis, as we observe in the following passage concerning Melita. In "medicalized literature," the novelist, in effect, assumes the role of physician; the reader becomes his patient:

> La curación, aunque rara, hubiera sido posible, y sus probabilidades mayores al principio de la enfermedad, porque sabido es que es más fácil precaver la tisis que curarla. Con todo, cuando los desórdenes pulmonares no eran muy extensos, cuando permanecieron estacionarios, pudo esperarse algo, hacer cesar la fiebre, la tos, la expectoración, y restablecer la nutrición; todo esto aprovechando la marcha lenta de los primeros instantes, sacándola del claustro, del convento, para que habitase en el campo, proporcionando al organismo aire libre, amplitud de horizontes, alimentación sustanciosa, carnes asadas, vino puro,

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> ayudado todo ello con una medicación tónica; aguerrir su constitución, en el lugar de confinarla en una habitación herméticamente cerrada; ponerla en estado de tolerar, sin afectarse, las vicisitudes atmosféricas, pero en otro clima; no en Toledo, sino en nuestra (sic) religiones (sic) templadas de Andalucía .... (226-27)

Another interesting feature of "medicalized literature" is López Bago's inclusion of several quotations taken from published medical texts authored by leading authorities from various scientific fields. This form of documentation not only serves to support and validate López Bago's own observations, diagnoses, etc. about certain diseases, but also serves to acknowledge the accomplishments of the pioneers in modern medicine, and to promote greater awareness and interest in the latest advances in medical science.

In El preso, López Bago cites quotations by physicians Mac Cormac, Hammak and Bennet (100) regarding the hygienic causes of tuberculosis to support his continuous efforts to effect drastic reforms in the unsanitary living conditions of Spain's prisons and penitentiaries.

In La prostituta, López Bago pays tribute to the renowned French physician Alexandre Jean Baptiste Parent-Duchâtelet, regarded as the most important of the early pioneers in the scholarly and statistical investigation of prostitution. Parent-Duchâtelet completed extensive field work researching

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the lives of registered Parisian prostitutes, and published his findings in an 1836 ground-breaking two-volume textbook on the subject: De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris. He was one of the first to examine prostitution as a medical and sociological problem, not as a moral one (Bullough, Illustrated: x, 228-29, 296). In La prostituta, Mari-Pepa's rare organic immunity to venereal disease is so amazing to the physician examining her that he exclaims: "...bien pudiera ser aquella prostituta un caso de los que la experiencia habla, y que menciona el mismo Parent-Duchâtelet, calificándolos con el nombre de *idiosincrasias refractarias*" (23).

Although he evidently respected the contributions of physicians like Parent-Duchâtlet and others, "medicalized literature" afforded López Bago with the opportunity to once again acknowledge his debt to an admiration for Claude Bernard, and to reassert his own aggressive advocacy of Positivism. Reference to and praise for the experimentalist becomes part of the narrative in La prostituta. Doctor Pérez announces that he is reading "la *Introducción al estudio de la medicina* experimental, de Claudio Bernard, de un sabio" (78).[39] In La desposada, Arturo Salces, López Bago's exemplary progressive physician, expresses his discontent concerning the backward status of medicine in Spain. Our novelist avails himself of the opportunity to expound on Bernard, his experimental method, Positivism and determinism for an entire

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page and a half (47-48).

Lastly, another fascinating feature of López Bago's proclivity to impart exhaustive medical information is demonstrated in his five-and-a-half page "autopsy" in La prostituta. At the insistence of his patient, Dr. Pérez conducts a verbal "pre-mortem" autopsy on the syphilitic aristocrat's organism, detailing all the parts of his body. Although his audience is comprised only of Don José and the priest Manrique, Dr. Pérez will conduct the "autopsia" as if he were an instructor presenting a lecture before an amphitheater filled with medical students. Realizing that the verbal "autopsia" will be unintelligible to the layman, the intransigent physician, nevertheless, forewarns his listeners. As a man of science, he cannot "disfrazar ninguna palabra," for "es la ciencia la que se expresa por mi boca, y el lenguaje científico siempre es puro, como es puro el alabastro, aunque represente desnuda la estatua" (70). López Bago's medical training is underscored once again as he, like a pathologist, systematically distinguishes the normal parts from those which will be ravaged by the venereal disease. The anatomical analysis is divided into three segments: head and neck, thorax, and abdomen:

> *Cabeza y cuello.*—Las membranas, el cerebro, el cerebelo ofrecerán todos los caracteres del estado normal: no habrá ningún engrosamiento, ninguna induración, ningún reblandecimiento ni serosidad en

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las cavidades.... Las paredes cranianas habrán conservado también su espesor y su cohesión normales.... El velo palatino se hallará enteramente destruído, así como los dos centros posteriores de la bóveda del paladar; la faringe estará destruída también ... las cuatro primeras vértebras cervicales se hallarán denudadas por su cara anterior ... la base del cráneo, en la parte que da inserción á la faringe, ofrecerá un desprendimiento del periostio, sin más alteración perceptible que una especie de sequedad de su superficie ... la base de la lengua, la epiglotis y la laringe no habrán sido atacadas por la ulceración; las amígdalas sólo estarán destruídas en parte....

Torax.—Presentarán los pulmones una hepatización gris, lobular, que ocupará las tres cuartas partes del lado izquierdo y cerca de dos terceras del derecho. Los núcleos de esta hepatización ofrecerán un diámetro que variará desde media á dos líneas; su sección será de un color gris amarillento, seca, granulosa.... Las pleuras no contendrán líquido ni habrán contraído adherencia alguna. El pericardio se hallará sano, así como el corazón ... y sus cavidades contendrán tan sólo una corta cantidad de sangre coagulada.

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> *Abdomen*.—.... Todo el conducto intestinal se hallará retraído sobre sí mismo.... El hígado ofrecerá su volumen y consistencia fisiológicos; su color será muy pálido, de un amarillo claro.... Los uréteres y la vejiga ofrecerán el tipo y carácter del estado sano. En la uretra no existirá ninguna alteración perceptible. Los testículos se hallarán completamente sanos .... (70-73)

D. Ties to Socialism and Literary Anarchism

Throughout our study of López Bago thus far, we have become familiar with the novelist's intense animosity directed toward the existing social, political, economical and religious structure of nineteenth-century Spain; from his disdain for the ruling powers—the aristocracy, the Catholic Church, the bourgeoisie—to his dislike of the world of academia, represented by such prestigious literary and intellectual institutions as the Real Academia Española and the Ateneo Científico y Literario de Madrid. López Bago and Sawa, like so many of their age who sought radical changes in the current social order, were drawn to alternative ideologies and systems which advocated the dramatic restructuring of society. In "Análisis de la novela titulada Crimen legal," López Bago tells Sawa that their place is not to be found in the established order of their present time, but in a new

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system of the future:

> No tenemos amigos entre los poderes de hoy, sino entre el ya preciso é inmiente poder de mañana. No son nuestros ni están á nuestro lado los que tienen una idea política, elíxir de sacamuelas, que están explotando, sino los que tienen trabajo y no tienen pan. (Crimen legal 263-64)

The "inminente poder de mañana," López Bago believed, was to be found in Socialism and/or in its more radical branch, Anarchism.[40] Before we address López Bago's ties to Socialism and literary Anarchism, we shall take a closer look at the principles which define and distinguish the two doctrines.

Socialism is a general term applied to:

> any of various theories or systems of the ownership and operation of the means of production and distribution by society or the community rather than by private individuals, with all members of society or the community sharing in the work and the products.[41]

Socialism:

> challenges sanctity of private property and favors its use for public welfare. In this sense it embraces great variety of economic theories, from those holding that only certain public utilities and natural resources should be owned by the state, to thoroughgoing Marxian socialism, and further, to

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edges of anarchism.[42]

Perhaps more than any other doctrines or ideology, the term "Anarchism" evokes an intensely negative emotional response. Anarchism and anarchists are immediately associated with anarchy—"the complete absence of government," and more often with its second denotation: "political disorder and violence; lawlessness."[43] An anarchistic society has been perceived by many as a world in which chaos and destruction reign supreme, where man is not held accountable for his actions. Moreover, the origin of the terms "anarchism" itself has a negative denotation. Translated from the Greek, it signifies "without authority,"[44] or without a rule."[45] To a certain degree this negative perception has proven to be true. The comparatively small sector of extremist anarchists historically have engaged in acts of terrorism: inciting riots among strikers; constructing and detonating bombs; committing politically motivated murders, including assassinations. The negative stereotype of the crazed antisocial anarchist was fostered by the successive assassinations of several heads of state of Western nations at the turn of the century, allegedly committed by anarchists. The world was shocked and horrified by the coldblooded murders of the following leaders: Tsar Alexander II of Russia in 1881; M.F. Sadi Carnot, President of the French Republic, in 1894; Prime Minister Antonio Cánovas del Castillo of Spain in 1897; Elizabeth, Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary, in

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1898; Humbert I of Italy in 1900; and President William McKinley of the United States in 1901. An assassination attempt was made on the life of King Alfonso XIII of Spain on his wedding day in 1906 ("Anarchism," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1958 ed.).

The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines Anarchism as:

> the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government ... harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being. In a society developed on these lines, the voluntary associations which begin to cover all the fields of human activity would take a still greater extension so as to substitute themselves for the state in all its functions.
>
> They would represent an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees, local, regional, national and international—temporary or more or less permanent—for all possible purposes:

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> production, consumption and exchange, communications, sanitary arrangements, education, mutual protection, defense of the territory, and so on; and, on the other side, for the satisfaction of an ever-increasing number of scientific, artistic, literary and social needs....
>
> The Anarchists consider the wage system and capitalist production altogether as an obstacle to progress. ...the state was and continues to be the chief instrument for permitting the few to monopolize the land, and the capitalists to appropriate for themselves a quite disproportionate share of the yearly accumulated surplus of production. Consequently, while combating monopolization of land, and capitalism altogether, the Anarchists combat with the same energy the state, as the main support of that system ... whether it be a monarchy or even a republic governed by means of the referendum. (1958 ed.)

Author Irving Horowitz, an anarchist sympathizer, distinguishes between Socialism and Anarchism:

> ... the difference between socialism and anarchism is primarily a difference between those who would abolish the forms of social relations as they now exist, and those who would abolish the content of all hitherto existing class society. The socialist

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has ultimate visions of future society through the redistribution of power, property, etc. The anarchist sees any such compromise as stillborn and doomed to perpetuate in new form the same divisions that have riven society historically. For the anarchist, the root of the problem is society; for the socialist, the root of the problem is class.... Their philosophical and ideological premises differ despite the superficial acceptance by both of a communal economy....

Anarchists regard socialists as corrupted by the political structure since they accept the premises of the bourgeois state: order, constitutional limits, parliamentary procedure, etc., in order to wrest power. By failing to destroy power, they are corrupted by it and perpetuate the state they are pledged to overthrow. The anarchist assumption is that to better civilization is a subtle form of corruption, of self-delusion. What is required is abolition, not improvement.... The anarchist notion of abolition is more profoundly radical in its implications because of the distinctions between contamination through the acceptance of the forms of civilization and regeneration through the breaking of such civilized forms. The socialist changes society, leaving inherited civilization

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> intact. He reforms its worst abuses. His arguments are for a higher development of civilization. The anarchist rejects the inherently constricting and corrupting nature of civilization and demands total reconstruction of the human condition. It means to annihilate sociological, economic, and political features of human life that we have come to consider fixed. The practical socialist claims no more than the right to humanize and equalize the power structure. The impractical anarchist claims to do no less than liquidate State power as such.[46]

López Bago's socialist-anarchist sympathies are most evident in Carne de nobles, his novel about the imminent coup d'état of a degenerated monarchy in the allegedly fictitious peninsular nation of Liboria. Here, our novelist gives free rein to his own revolutionary fervor. In the following passage, the populace clamors for the overthrow of the government and the monarchy to be replaced by Socialism:

> Habia (sic) empezado por el deseo de pronunciar este grito: "¡Abajo el Gobierno!" Siguió con el de exclamar: "¡Muera la Monarquía!" é insaciable ya no se contentaba con ménos (sic) que con decir: ¡*Viva el socialismo*! (272)

Based on the principles defined by the cited authorities, we can observe how López Bago demonstrated his advocacy of

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specific socialist tenets:

1. the exchange of recipients of power—the current ruling classes or sectors would be replaced; they would lose their wealth, property, power and influence to the laboring classes:

> La revolucion (sic), ¡bueno! ¡La REVOLUCION SOCIAL (sic)! ¡Eso! Poner lo de arriba abajo, y este último arriba. No dar la vuelta entera á la rueda de la fortuna, sino arrancarla de sus ejes para que no rodara más; tumbarla de un buen puntapié. (258)

2. the equal redistribution of production, resources, services for the benefit of all peoples united in a fraternity of humanity:

> Nadie en los rayos y todos en el cubo. Comer ménos (sic) para que comieran todos, que eso es lo que se hace en las familias, y es lo que deben imitar las sociedades.... Que no hubiese ahitos ni hambrientos, sino que la tierra, *la madre tierra,* echase fuera á diario la urbe exuberante de alimento y se permitiera á los inteligentes y á los que fuesen idiotas, á los fuertes, á los débiles, á todos sin excepcion (sic), unir al generoso pezon (sic) uno tras otro los ávidos lábios (sic), como hijos de una misma madre que no distingue los feos de los hermosos, porque en su regazo caben todos, ¡como hermanos! .... (258) Ó socialismo ó nada.

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Reparto de bienes; eso era lo más positivo. (259)

3. the abolishment of private property:

> La tierra acotada, la tierra limitada, repartida no entre todos, sino entre unos pocos, entre los que creyeron poder adquirir este bien, que es comun (sic), por la compra, por el dinero. ¡Qué absurdo! La tierra es necesaria para la planta de los piés (sic) humanos, para andar, para moverse, como es necesario el aire para los pulmones, para respirar. Sin la tierra y sin el aire, ¿cómo vive el hombre? Ahora bien; ¿qué diríais,—argumentaban ellos, los más inteligentes, hablando en nombre de todos sus compañeros los trabajadores,—qué diríais del legislador que hiciese del aire, de la adquisicion (sic) del aire como propiedad, materia que pueda ser objeto de un contrato de compra y venta? ¿Qué diríais si hubiese propietarios del aire que con poderosas máquinas pneumáticas nos condenasen al vacío á los que no tuviéramos dinero para respirar?
>
> El aire y la tierra son de todos y de ninguno. (264)

Authors José Alvárez Junco and Lily Litvak are two of the most recent contemporary scholars who have contributed noteworthy and comprehensive studies on examining the subject of Anarchism in Spain over a period spanning almost half a century, from 1868 until 1913. The two books—Alvárez

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Junco's, La ideología política del anarquismo español (1868-1910),[47] and Litvak's, Musa libertaria: Arte, literatura y vida cultural del anarquismo español (1880-1913)[48] complement each other. In his book, Alvárez Junco analyzes Anarchism from the ideological standpoint, focusing on the history of the critical first forty years of the movement's development. Litvak concentrates on the aesthetic, cultural and literary manifestations of Spanish Anarchism during a period of tremendous upheaval throughout Europe. Anarchism was responsible for much of this unrest, and Spanish anarchists made their presence felt with their movement's most zealous representatives originating from Cataluña and Andalucía (Litvak xiv).

In contrast to the many studies published on the social, ideological or historical aspects of Spanish Anarchism, very little, Litvak affirms, has been published "sobre la vida cultural y literaria, sobre el arte y la estética libertarios" (xiv). There is a wealth of hitherto undiscovered material produced by anarchists, men who "se enfrentaron a la sociedad en que vivieron, haciendo del arte y la literatura armas revolucionarias para lograr la sociedad perfecta; aquélla basada en la paz, la libertad, el bienestar, la igualdad ..." (Litvak xiv). Access to this material has been difficult, inasmuch as anarchist works were dispersed; published in a multitude of small books, pamphlets and newspaper articles between 1880 and 1913. Of the many heterodox authors and

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artists represented in her book, Litvak is interested above all in "la expresión del escritor y del artista verdaderamente populares, en cuanto a que proviene de la masa del pueblo" (xvi). She emphasizes the fact that her libertarian contributors were not professional artists or writers, but members of the working proletariat or peasantry: professional manual laborers, farmers, etc. The muse of these "solidarios de su clase" "se inspiraba en la realidad de un determinado estrato social: los desposeídos" (xvi).

In addition to their respective contributions to the study of Anarchism in Spain, Alvárez Junco's and Litvak's books add a new dimension to our own study of López Bago and his works. In Litvak's detailed analysis, especially, we are able to see how López Bago's ideology amazingly has much in common with many of the tenets of literary Anarchism. Not only, in fact, does López Bago's Radical Naturalism share with Anarchism many of the same principles, but so does Zola—for his novels, Germinal, and, above all, for Le travail, "una de las obras recibidas con más entusiasmo por los anarquistas" and "la obra de Zola más aclamada por los sociolistas de todas tendencias" (Litvak 388). In Le travail, a capitalist society is transformed into a series of anarchist communes. This, combined with his anarchistic sympathies revealed in his correspondence, led socialists to regard Zola as the "portavoz de su ideología y aspiraciones" (Litvak 388).

Ideals shared with literary Anarchism were not exclusive

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to Naturalism. Litvak praises other renowned European authors for their libertarian works, among them: Tolstoy, Ibsen Mirbeau, Balzac, and Sue for his Le juif errant (262), as well as Hugo and Maupassant (272). The diversity of their respective ideologies or the literary movements to which they belong are not important, Litvak contends; what matters is that they, and other writers like them, have, at certain stages in their careers defended the rights of the oppressed classes (262). López Bago, as we are well aware, is a perfect example of a novelist who championed the rights of the oppressed classes, a fact which was duly recognized by anarchists with the publication of La prostituta. The novel became a popular best seller in anarchist circles (Litvak 345). We shall now turn our attention to examining López Bago's ties to literary Anarchism.

The preeminence of Nature over man's laws stands as a cornerstone of both Naturalism and literary Anarchism: "La base esencial del anarquismo es el hombre natural, anterior y más fundamental históricamente que el hombre político" (Litvak 1). Man's ties to Nature predates and supersedes man as a political being. Political authority is an anathema to the laws of Nature: "Todo el concepto de política es antinatural y encarna en la autoridad y el poder arbitrario" (Litvak 3). Based on the laws of Nature, politics and religious dogma are "unnatural"; these man-made systems are predicated on unrealistic expectations, the rigidity and intransigence of a

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few seeking to control the destinies of the majority. López Bago expresses his disdain for the unnaturalness of Spain's political system: be it the absence of leadership in a morally and sexually degenerate monarchy (Carne de nobles), or the dictatorial regime of Cánovas del Castillo (El periodista), or the corruption and artificiality inherent in the governmentally controlled fixed elections during the "turno pacífico."[49]

López Bago also demonstrated his respect for Nature and its laws in other areas. In "El cura," clerical celibacy was proven to be unnatural; the consequences of defying Nature was devastating to all concerned. We observed the powerful effect that the physiological laws of Nature had on the lives of several characters in the anticlerical trilogy, and in other novels, including: El periodista, La soltera, La desposada and Carne de nobles. In "Al lector," the foreword to El separatista, he stated his intention of looking at "la Naturaleza y la Humanidad cara á cara" ([1]); and in "Vosotros y yo" he wrote that he "no se preocupa de otra cosa que de estudiar la naturaleza, trasladándola á sus libros con toda la intención que puede" (El cura 274). When accused by his critics of being a poor imitation of Zola, López Bago adamantly denied the charge, retorting, in turn, that the so-called imitation was in reality a mutual love of Nature, shared by most human beings in addition to Zola and other European novelists, including the "veristas" in Italy, Eca de

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Queiros in Portugal, and Dickens in England: "¿En qué imitamos á Zola? En una sola cosa, en la cual le imitan todos los seres humanos. En amar la naturaleza" ("Vosotros y yo," El cura 288, 289).

Fundamental to anarchist ideology is the belief that the State should be abolished; it serves no positive function: "El Estado representa un principio inútil, nocivo para la libertad individual y artificial," writes Alvárez Junco (226). The uselessness of the State is described in Carne de nobles. López Bago underscores the degree to which the state of affairs has degenerated in Liboria. In the absence of leadership, energy or productivity of any kind from any sector of society, López Bago characterizes the nation for all that it does not possess:

> No habia (sic) aristocracia, ni burguesía, ni pueblo, ni Monarquía, ni Gobierno. No habia (sic) Representación (sic) nacional, ideas, sentimientos ni caractéres (sic), valor ni nobleza.
>
> ¡Aquel país! ¡Un país degradado!....
>
> No habia (sic) nada de nada. (22)

The State "es el principio del mal," and as such, "la fuente de toda inmoralidad para los súbditos" (Alvárez Junco 229). As López Bago demonstrates in Liboria, the State, instead of serving its citizens, demands that its citizens cater to the personal and political whims of the elite in power. The unnatural system of political parties serves to

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further divide its countrymen, who are forced to choose sides. The precarious position of those who work for the government is contingent not upon ability and service, but determined by favoritism, nepotism and by one's allegiance to the particular party in power at the moment. Thus, the State, "la fuente de toda inmoralidad" breeds hostility, distrust, envy, fear, suspicion, rivalry, and so forth; instead of fostering cooperative, creative energy and productivity among its employees for the betterment of all its citizenry:

> Se practicaba como supremo arte para la gobernacion (sic) de los pueblos, la fórmula de convertir todas las dependencias del Estado en servidumbres de cada partido, y los destinos, los altos destinos, de igual manera que los ínfimos, se daban á los partidarios que gritaban más, para que no hubiera descontentos. Con lo que cada ciudadano resultó afiliado á una bandera que tenia (sic) por único lema: "Dios, patria y presupuesto." La empleomanía cundió; fué toda una política basada en cesantías y nombramientos. El Gobierno era nulo. (8)

The State has always been the enemy of the lower classes; its raison d'être lies in the acquisition and maintenance of enormous wealth, power and influence. As an "instrumento de dominación de clase" (Alvárez Junco 231), the State—be it a monarchy or a republic—has always defended the interests of

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the Catholic Church, the landed aristocracy and, most recently in the nineteenth century, the rising upper bourgeoisie: "'el Estado ha sido siempre patrimonio de un autócrata o de una clase privilegiada cualquiera.'"[50] Literary anarchists were quite disturbed, Litvak contends (34), by the unhealthy alliance between the State and the emerging "clase privilegiada," the epitome of a capitalist society obsessed with money, property, materialism and maintaining appearances. Adding his contribution to the "incontable" (Litvak 34) number of anarchist works published criticizing the bourgeoisie, López Bago chronicles the hypocrisy of its members' private lives. Behind the facade of the loving family and religious propriety, our novelist recounts the bourgeois' many vices, which include spousal abuse, adultery, prostitution, and the sexual exploitation of vulnerable female servants:

> A puerta cerrada habia (sic) maridos que pegaban á sus mujeres, y se contentaban con pegarlas hasta cuando eran adúlteras; otros las acariciaban de tan diversos modos, ilícitos para la castidad de la esposa, que las prostituian (sic), y estaba el lecho nupcial revuelto y desordenado como el del amancebamiento. Cuando el marido encontraba resistencia para cumplir estos gustos, solia (sic) cometer adulterio con la cocinera, y los que huian (sic) del erupto de ajos, los más mirados contábanse entre los parroquianos asíduos de los

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> lupanares. Pero se hacian (sic) novenas, íbase á misa los dias (sic) de precepto, rezábase el rosario todas las noches, y á la confesion (sic) y comunion (sic) iba la familia en grupo, una vez al año, por Páscua (sic) florida. Los hijos no recibian (sic) mal ejemplo. (20)

López Bago's own fierce anticlericalism was matched in intensity and steadfast opposition by anarchist ideology. Like Naturalism in this regard, Anarchism "muestra huellas del pensamiento positivista, pero adoptan un tono mucho más emocional" (Litvak 35).

Religion—embodied in the teachings and rituals of the Catholic Church—was perceived as a great enemy of the lower classes: "Los libertarios llegaron a considerar a la Iglesia como una fuerza maléfica, y tras cada violación a sus libertades, intuían la presencia de un cura" (Litvak 35). The Church, along with the State and Capital, composed "la maligna trilogía de dominadores" (Alvárez Junco 211). In Carne de nobles, López Bago echoes Alvárez Junco's assessment concerning the Church's malevolent but powerful influence: "La religión católica era allí un Estado dentro de otro Estado. Y mucho más poderoso" (19). The Church has fulfilled its political mission against the masses and that of its two partners in the triumvirate of oppression and enslavement. By means of its effective indoctrination techniques, the Church has taught the lower classes to

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valiantly accept, and even embrace, their fate of life: abject poverty, hunger, starvation, injustice, sickness, disease, arduous labor and meager wages. To suffer is noble; one will be rewarded in the next world: "el cristianismo, con su elogio del dolor y la resignación y su confianza en un mundo y una justicia ultraterrenos, ha sido un poderoso instrumento de *conformismo, obediencia e inacción*" (Alvárez Junco 210). A microcosm of this form of indoctrination is observed in La monja where the nuns take vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience. Of the three, obedience stands apart as the only indispensable requirement. We recall that Melita was ordered to obey when she, at first, resisted her seducer's advances; Sor María de la Soledad was entombed alive for having disobeyed the oath of silence and submission. The two other requirements identified by Alvárez Junco—"conformismo" and "inacción"—describe the monotonous robot-like state of affairs inside the convent. All the nuns were required to fulfill the same daily tasks in the same manner. Despite their busy schedule, their lives were, in effect, inactive, vacuous and nonproductive. They served virtually no purpose within their sealed environment, and none in the outside world.

The division of human beings into unequal social classes contradicts Nature, for all men are naturally equal (Litvak 3); is a tenet shared by López Bago and anarchists. "Para los anarquistas estaba claro que la estructura capitalista había

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deformado a los hombres dividiéndolos en amos y esclavos," writes Litvak (3). By eliminating the hierarchy of class and resurrecting "el hombre natural," it is believed, idealistically so, that "se eliminaría la explotación del pobre por el rico, la miseria, los odios, las guerras, y se llegaría a un régimen de felicidad y abundancia para todos" (Litvak 4). Throughout his novels, López Bago underscores the horrible unjust imbalance between those chosen to possess enormous wealth and power and those unfortunates who are barely able to survive. Our author juxtaposes "los amos"—representatives primarily from the aristocracy, as we find in El periodista, La prostituta, La Pálida, Carne de nobles and El preso—against "los esclavos"—members of the petite bourgeoisie, the laboring classes and social outcasts. The emphasis placed on contrasting the untenable disparity which has existed for centuries between "the haves" and "the have-nots" underscores the anarchist's and the naturalist's strong, impassioned criticism against the existing social order. López Bago and anarchist writers contrast the two types of life styles. Litvak writes: "Por un lado, el lujo, las orgías, los despilfarros, el vicio, el parasitismo. Por otro la miseria, la ignorancia, la esclavitud, el hambre, el trabajo agotador y embrutecedor" (56).

In the following passage from Carne de noble, López Bago emphasizes the abominable dichotomy which has prevailed for centuries between the impoverished peasantry and the landed

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aristocracy. The novelist communicates his outrage for the feudal system which forces farmers and their families to till the lands of others so that absentee landlords could profligate the profits of the farmers' toil in order to support their extravagant and self-indulgent life styles away at Court in Madrid. In contrast, the farmers spend their entire lives in abject poverty and squalor. Those who do not die of starvation or from the winter's cold, sometimes elect to commit suicide rather than continue to suffer a slow and tortuous death. López Bago's advocacy for the abolishment of the large, neglected landed estates of the "latifundios"—a feudal system dating back to the Reconquest—was tempered only by his compassion for the wasted lives of the exploited peasantry:

> Daba lástima, verdadera lástima estudiar las pobrezas y degradaciones de caractéres (sic) que iban unidas á grandes miserias sociales, y á males incurables causados por la falta y errónea legislacion (sic) de aquellos gobiernos pervertidos ... la cuestion (sic) social no se relacionaba allí con la industria, sino con la agricultura; unas cuantas poderosas familias de haraganes, que la holgazanería tiene siempre un gran poder, eran las dueñas, en realidad, de regiones enteras en la península liboriense, contaban sus propiedades por miles de leguas, y ocultaban estos miles á la mal

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organizada inspeccion (sic) de la Hacienda, para sacar una merma á lo que debieran pagar como contribucion (sic) al Erario público; estaba en realidad aquello como en los tiempos del feudalismo, y aunque las leyes no reconocieran vasallaje, de hecho existian (sic), si no de derecho, todos los privilegios que en la Edad Media tuvieron aquellos nobles .... vivian (sic) ellos en la córte (sic) gastando lindamente sus rentas y parte de su capital en diversiones y en vicios, y gastando mucho más que en el teatro, en las actrices; mucho más que en el baile, en las bailarinas; y unas veces el importe de la cosecha de un año iba jugando á un naipe en el garito más aristocrático, y otras se quedaba entre las sábanas de los lupanares; allá en el pueblo, los infelices labriegos, y los más que infelices braceros, que no tenian (sic) otros medios de subsistencia sino los que les procuraba el cultivo de las inmensas propiedades del potentado, vivian (sic), por consiguiente, á la merced de éste, y cuando el dueño, al entrar la temporada de invierno, tenia (sic) necesidad para sus lujos de algunos miles de monedas de oro, ordenaba á su administrador un corte de leña en sus montes, daba tambien (sic) órden (sic) para su inmediata venta, y labriegos y

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> braceros con sus ancianos, con sus mujeres y con sus niños, pasaban la época de las nieves y de los hielos sentados tristemente ante los enfriados hogares tiritando de frio (sic).
>
> El año que el potentado no queria (sic) sembrar, quedaban todas las tierras de barbecho y los labradores en la miseria ... en las provincias la miseria daba alaridos y los miserables, cubiertos de harapos, unos morian (sic) de hambre y otros por el hambre su mataban .... (140-42)

The emphasis placed on documenting the lives of traditionally disregarded lower classes and ostracized sectors of society was an enduring theme in anarchist and naturalist literatures. This was in sharp contrast to earlier literary movements whose protagonists belonged to the aristocracy and the clergy, and the bourgeoisie in the case of the recent Realist novel. Various types or groups composed what Litvak refers to as society's "desheredados" (64). The study of these groups by anarchist writers was divided into different categories according to certain themes which were constantly repeated. Certain anarchist writers were devoted to examining the conditions of the defenseless poor—specifically those groups incapable of supporting themselves: the elderly, the sick, children, the disabled. Some anarchist works dealt with delinquency; others with the problems of women. Still another group of anarchists explored the concerns of farmers (65).

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The living conditions of these various groups of "desheredados" are reflected in the broad spectrum of naturalist novels. Moreover, added to the list are other naturalist "desheredados," such as miners, or urban laborers: factory workers, shopkeepers, domestics, masons, etc. While some "desheredados"—such as women, manual laborers, shopkeepers—play a major role in our novelist's protest against societal inequities, López Bago's novels do not overemphasize the problems of children, farmers or the elderly, for example. His novels do, however, include the ostracized prisoner, and, peculiar the Spain, the impoverished bullfighter.

Motivated by the disregarded or negative image that the Establishment has viewed the under classes, López Bago and anarchist writers portrayed their protagonists with compassion, eliciting their readers' sympathy for their characters' undeserved plights. In their portrayal of the "disinherited":

> los anarquistas pintan la miseria, la debilidad, la enfermedad, pero la iluminan con el brillo de la injusticia sufrida y la belleza moral de la víctima. Esos personajes poseen siempre dignidad y una cierta belleza trágica. La miseria y el dolor no son nunca desordenados o violentos; son dulces y enternecedores, o patéticos y resignados, o melancólicos y espiritualizados. (Litvak 68)

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Whether or not López Bago's characters "iluminan" with the same intense "brillo" as their anarchistic counterparts, our author succeeds with his emphatic portrayals, especially those of female characters, including: Estrella Sánchez, Rosita Pérez, Rita López, Francisca Ruíz, and Augusta Cebrian (sic), for example. However, as we look at the last sentence of Litvak's statement, we do see a difference between anarchist characters and López Bago's. The pain and suffering inflicted upon our novelist's characters are, more often than not, quite violent.

Laboring class characters are idealized in anarchist literature (Litvak 86), as well as in López Bago's countercurrent. Libertarians demonstrated a 'fe absoluta" in the protetariat, "considerado como depositario de virtudes naturales" (Litvak 64). In López Bago's works, Luis, the journalist in El periodista; Paco, the young carpenter in La prostituta; and shopkeepers Juan and Francisca Ruíz from El preso, exemplify the concept of hard work as well as embody humanitarian virtues: honesty, loyalty, fairness, respect, faithfulness, responsibility and diligence. López Bago's most fervent expression of respect, admiration and appreciation for laborers is found in the lecture he delivered before an audience of artisans in Venezuela in 1911: El obrero y su importancia. (See Chapter I).

Although, as a general rule, López Bago and "los anarquistas presentan siempre o casi siempre al obrero como

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figura positiva" (Litvak 149), our novelist, for example, was not totally blinded by his exalted view of the "obrero" to the extent that he was unwilling to portray two degenerate specimens from the working class in his tetralogy: Estrella Sánchez' brutally abusive alcoholic father, and Rosita Pérez' bullying, lazy, good-for-nothing brother.

Paralleling their distress over the laborer's sort in life, López Bago and anarchists decried the subordinate position of women in Western society as a whole. For anarchists, in fact, women and farmers constituted "los dos pilares más importantes de la estructura social" (Litvak 82). Women from the "pueblo" however were doubly victimized: first, because of their gender, second, for their social class status. As Alvárez Junco explains: "si el hombre es, hoy, esclavo del hombre, la mujer sufre doble esclavitud, porque es 'esclava del esclavo', y no amiga y compañera de su congénere masculino, llámese éste padre, esposo o patrón" (282). Alvárez Junco's statement aptly describes the familial situation of Estrella Sánchez and her mother who suffer the brutal physical and psychological consequences of their head of household's inability to cope with his own frustrations born of his oppressed status in life. Their situation was typical for the era, as J. Mir explains: "'Bien caro le hacen pagar los hombres el apoyo que de ellos necesita; las reducen a esclavitud perpetua; algunos padres las explotan; algunos maridos las golpean.'"[51]

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Women were not viewed as individuals with identities of their own, but as objects of sexual gratification: "La mujer es, hoy, un objeto sexual para el hombre—único auténtico sujeto sexual" (Alvárez Junco 283). López Bago would have agreed with Alvárez Junco's assessment of the situation; for in almost all of his "novelas sociales" and "médico-sociales," female characters are viewed as sexual objects by their male counterparts.

Spanish anarchists shared López Bago's outrage over the exploitation of women in prostitution. Described as "fervientes feministas," Spanish anarchists were "doblemente sensibles a esa lacra social" (Litvak 84); basing their fierce objection to the perpetuation of this evil primarily on two grounds: 1. the hypocrisy inherent in the fact that prostitution was generally considered a necessary social evil, acting as "'la válvula de escape' imprescindible para que pueda mantenerse en pie el mundo de la familia monogámica y de la reglamentación del amor" (Alvárez Junco 292; also see Litvak 84); and 2. prostitutes were usually "hijas del pueblo"—lower class working women exploited in an especially degrading manner by the bourgeoisie due to economic deprivation (Alvárez Junco 292; Litvak 84). A certain population of prostitutes were of bourgeois origin. However, their reasons for entering into the profession differed greatly from their proletariat counterparts—a disparity which greatly disturbed anarchist reformers. As J. Mir explains: "'las hijas de la burguesía

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pueden ser viciosas hasta por lujo; pero las de los pobres cuando se prostituyen suele ser por causa del hambre y de los malos tratos.'"[52] For anarchists, the message was clear: for the "hijas del pueblo" prostitution was a matter of survival; for certain bourgeois women it was a conscious choice based on a character failing—the selfish, avaricious desire for a luxurious life style acquired through their roles as courtesans or mistresses to men of wealth and power.

López Bago exemplified the anarchists' second major objection (cited above) to prostitution in his tetralogy. His first heroine from "La prostituta" is an "hija del pueblo"; sexually exploited because of destitution and her abusive family situation. Estrella, however, is not a "válvula de escape" for depraved members of the bourgeoisie; but the victim of a lust-filled aristocrat and a low class avaricious procurer.

The exploitation notwithstanding, López Bago and anarchist philosophy viewed ignorance as the primary cause of inequality and oppression (Alvárez Junco 72); and education as the solution for both genders from the "pueblo": "Los anarquistas eran firmes creyentes en la educación. El obrero consciente se ponía inmediatamente a instruirse" (Litvak 255). Not only would education be the solution to the problem of exploiting the lower classes, anarchists viewed education as the means to propagandize their doctrine to the, by large, illiterate masses. The anarchists "creían firmemente que lo

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único que impedía a otros pensar como ellos era la falta de educación. Por ello, atribuían gran importancia a las escuelas y generalmente ponían una en su centro" (Litvak 255). Educating the lower classes was not a novel nineteenth-century anarchist idea, according to Alvárez Junco; rather it is based on centuries of socialist tradition dating back to Ancient Greece:

> La preocupación por la instrucción popular era, por otra parte, una vieja tradición socialista, heredada a su vez del radicalismo democrático-liberal y, en un sentido más amplio, de toda una tradición intelectual de Occidente que, iniciada remotamente en Sócrates, ha identificado la ignorancia con el mal y el saber con la virtud y la liberación. (72)

Like López Bago and other naturalists, anarchists placed their faith and confidence in science, the new "religion" of the nineteenth century:

> Siguiendo los pasos del positivismo decimonónico, trasladaron su esperanza de la fe a la ciencia; se creía que por ella se desvelarían los grandes misterios, se resolverían los más profundos enigmas y se asentaría sobre sólidas bases el porvenir humano. (Litvak 343)

Traditional religion—the embodiment of injustice, hypocrisy, rigidity, intolerance, inequality and cruelty—would be

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forever replaced with a new optimistic, expansive vision of the universe, reflective of the anarchist ideals of progress, liberty, education and faith in man's innate powers to reason. Science and reason would inevitably lead the lower classes out of their oppression toward anarchy, justice and equality (Litvak 343). Science, in fact, would preside over the revolutionary organization and, later after the revolution, over the restructuring of the new order itself. Moving to effect these goals, anarchists organized courses specifically so that employment would be secured in the scientific fields of chemistry, mechanics, physics and geology (Litvak 346). Following the positivistic interest in science, López Bago's character, Dr. Arturo Salces, for example, demonstrates his own vigilance in remaining up-to-date with the latest developments in medical science:

> Aprendió el francés, el alemán y el italiano, sólo con el objeto de conocer cuanto acerca de la ciencia médica se escribia (sic) en estas tres naciones. Le fueron familiares, antes que á nadie, los adelantos de los estudios antropológicos en Italia, los de la embriotomía en Alemania y Francia, y se suscribió á cuantas revistas y boletines publicaban los centros científicos importantes del extranjero. (<u>La desposada</u> 46-47)

Libertarians joined López Bago in vigorously denouncing the nonfunctional unproductive and purposeless artistic and

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literary credo of "el arte por el arte," exemplified in Spanish literature, as we recall, by the aristocratic conservative, Juan Valera; and embraced by many proponents of Romanticism and Idealism. In anarchist ideology, this concept of "art of art's sake" "expresaba la decadencia de la sociedad capitalista" (Litvak 300). Echoing López Bago's sentiments, anarchists believed that "el arte tiene la obligación de ser social y positivo, representación del hombre y sus problemas" (Litvak 300). Art, like naturalist literature, has a moral-social responsibility to reveal "las llagas de la sociedad contemporánea" (Litvak 289). Literary anarchists were not satisfied with just denouncing and seeking solutions for social evils; the purpose of art should also be that of fomenting "el espíritu de rebeldía, incitar al proletariado a liberarse de su condición de explotados" (Litvak 291); art, after all, should be regarded as a "reflejo de la lucha de clases" (Litvak 297). Moreover, art is reflective of the anarchist movement's basic optimistic outlook; in contrast to the more pessimistic flavor found in Naturalism, more so in López Bago's radical countercurrent. For, in addition to its "misión revolucionaria," "el básico optimismo de las teorías ácratas exigía del arte una luminosa misión, el labrar la senda del porvenir humano y ser mensajero del ideal" (Litvak 294).

Another significant purpose of art relates directly to the valuable yet underacknowledged creative contributions made

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by so-called "blue collar" professionals: "El labrador, pastor, molinero, panadero, matarife, el tejedor y el sastre, el curtidor y el zapatero, el albañil, herrero y carpintero, ejecutan artes mecánicas naturales o forzosas sin las cuales los hombres no podrían vivir ..." (Litvak 317). Like López Bago did in his lecture, El obrero y su importancia, the anarchist writer expressed his appreciation for the contributions of these professionals—both creative and utilitarian—to be enjoyed by all members of society: "El artesano como el obrero deben adquirir consciencia del significado social y estético de su producto, pues el arte brota en las más humildes labores" (Litvak 317).

Anarchism's hopes for radical change are based on the complete and total rejection of the present social order (Litvak 373). All of anarchist ideology's humanitarian aspirations for a utopian new world order of harmony, cooperation and productivity can only be achieved through revolution. In literary anarchist works, Revolution:

> brota como irrupción súbita, como un paso lógico e irreversible, en el curso de la historia apuntándose su dimensión colectiva y popular. El pueblo forma sus filas animado por un impulso espontáneo y común: ¡Levántate pueblo leal al grito de Revolución Social! (Litvak 373)

The masses in Carne de nobles likewise rise up against the monarchy with their call for "¡LA REVOLUCION SOCIAL!"

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(sic) (258). However, López Bago did not share the literary anarchist's optimism; that the Revolution would be the first giant step toward building a new utopian classless world where all productive human beings would enjoy liberty, equality and justice. The real reason for the overthrow of the Liborian monarchy, we recall, had nothing to do with realizing the ideals of Socialism and Anarchism; but everything to do with vanity, thirst for power and wealth; reputation, appearances and securing a place in the annals of history.

Referring to our section on "the Power of the Physiological Laws of Nature" in this chapter, we recall that López Bago examined the devastating effects the onset of menopause has on the psychological state of the nymphomaniac Duchess de Benimar. Incapable of facing the inevitable loss of her physical beauty, the duchess envied the older and less attractive Queen of Liboria for her place in history and sought to dethrone the sovereign and take her place. Her power hungry husband, the duke, a highly decorated general, had his own selfish agenda, envisioning himself as King of Liboria. Added to the revolutionary cause was the imperative of needing to save the reputation of their younger unmarried adolescent daughter who was pregnant with her new brother-in-law's child. Using the chaos of the Revolution as an excuse, the dishonored daughter could conceal her disgrace by fleeing the country. Her sudden disappearance and conspicuous absence from Court would be attributed to the necessity of seeking a

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safe haven for her and other members of the family of the rebellious Duke de Benimar.

In Carne de nobles, López Bago points to a very disheartening and depressing interpretation of the outcome of the "Social Revolution," enacted on two entirely antithetical planes: those of facade and reality. On the one hand, there is the very idealized public and popularly supported movement built on the ideals of Socialism and Anarchism. On the other hand, there is the egotistically motivated private campaign to substitute one pair of degenerate monarchs with another, more depraved than the first pair. The Benimars' fraudulent revolution needed the unwitting support of the faithful masses to succeed. Once again, the masses have been cruelly exploited and betrayed. Through his affinity to literary Anarchism, we see that López Bago hoped, but disbelieved in 1887, that the utopian ideals of Socialism and Anarchism would actually prevail in the late nineteenth century.[53]

III. Contemporary Twentieth-Century Scholars Assess the Weaknesses and Fallacies of Radical Naturalism

In this third and final section of our study devoted to Radical Naturalism, our attention turns to a consideration of what may be characterized as the weaknesses or fallacies in López Bago's countercurrent, as expressed in the monographs of several twentieth-century scholars of the author's novels:

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Etreros, Jourdan, Lissorgues ("'El naturalismo radical'"), Lozano Marco and Román Gutiérrez.

A. Failure to Maintain the Naturalist Tenet of Narrative or Authorial Objectivity and Impartiality

In the naturalist novel, as we recall, the omniscient narrator relates his story with scientific objectivity, impartiality and detachment. López Bago, however, frequently deviates from this fundamental tenet in all his novels. In the course of the narration, the narrator often becomes confused with the author (Jourdan 81; Lissorgues 249). López Bago interrupts in order to assert and/or justify his personal opinion concerning whatever is transpiring in the novel at that particular moment, or to digress onto a completely different subject. Lozano Marco writes about the "evidente carácter tendencioso" of López Bago's "relatos" (347); while Jourdan declares that our author "semble faire bon marché de l'objectivité et de l'impartialité qui sont de rigueur dans le roman expérimental.... Il se départ de son objectivité et de son calme, il tourne le dos à ce naturel que l'on trouve chez un auteur comme Galdós, par example ..." (75). Jourdan concludes his article's section on "Le point de vue du narrateur" in El periodista and La prostituta with the following statement: "Dans ses romans, López Bago défend ses convictions politiques et littéraires en enfreignant souvent

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la stricte neutralité qui est de règle dans le roman naturaliste" (84).

According to Román Gutiérrez (2:281), López Bago's lack of impartiality serves as another tool to promote Zola's naturalist theories. Román Gutiérrez cites part of a passage from La Pálida in which López Bago defends the naturalist's responsibility to accurately describe the most repugnant actions and events. In this instance, our novelist attempts to prepare his readers for the coming description: the scene in which Estrella Sánchez, the newly proclaimed queen of "La Botica" (a secret hedonistic society of degenerate aristocrats, capitalists and clergymen), is ceremoniously degraded—undressed before a room full of boisterous and drunken libertines. López Bago informs us that despite his personal distaste for the scene and his difficulty in writing it, he will, nevertheless, fulfill his duty as a naturalist writer. It is quite clear, however, that López Bago becomes carried away with his lofty rhetorical analogy of the duty of the novelist and the exalted responsibilities of physicians and surgeons—the heroes and martyrs of modern medicine:

> Lo que sucedió entonces tres veces y en tres formas distintas he procurado describirlo al llegar á este punto de la novela, y las tres he roto las cuartillas escritas. Preciso es pasar rápidamente por estas repugnancias con la mayor rapidez posible, y considerar al novelista que estudia las

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> miserias sociales como un operador que á veces tiene que remover sustancias corrosivas, aspirar miasmas, arriesgar su vida en los peligros de la intoxicación ó de la asfixia, y arriesgarla para producir una enseñanza ó un beneficio, como esos héroes y mártires de la Medicina moderna, que estudian en los hospitales las llagas, los sudores, las tristezas fétidas de la carne, huelen la pestilencia de la enfermedad y se manchan de sangre las manos durante una operación, como el escritor se mancha los dedos de tinta....
>
> Así, pues es forzoso el relato, lo que sucedió entonces .... (34-35)

In keeping with his campaign against professional prostitution, López Bago uses a narrative technique which Román Gutiérrez labels "intervenciones," in order to "expresar, en intromisiones ideológicas, sus opiniones respecto de la situación social de la prostitución" (2:281). The scholar continues: "La moralización es explícita y obvia. No puede hablarse, pues, de imparcialidad narrativa. El narrador no sólo juzga; también deduce consecuencias morales" (2:281). Román Gutiérrez contributes the comments cited above in reference to the following passage form La prostituta in which a prospective brothel client finds himself surrounded by several prostitutes awaiting his selection:

> Huye entonces del espíritu la tristeza sentida y

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> la vergüenza del rostro; pero llega en cambio el malestar indefinible, la angustia, la repugnancia y la inquietud también, cosas todas que se experimentan al ver aquellas pupilas fijas en nosotros, esperando una sonrisa, y al comprender que el vicio aquel, que descaradamente nos mira, es el vicio nuestro y es nuestra miseria humana encarnándose fuera del propio cuerpo, en el cuerpo de aquellas miserables. Asco sentimos de nosotros mismos, y sospechamos que nuestra náusea contagiosa también ellas la sienten y, como nosotros, la reprimen.
>
> Y ésta es la parodia innoble y mal hecha, no del amor, sino del sensualismo .... (14-15)

Jourdan (83) remarks how López Bago takes advantage of his characters within the narrative to triumphantly defend his own naturalist cause in his ongoing battle against Idealism: "... il arrive que l'auteur délègue à ses personnages le soin de défendre sa cause, en dégageant le narrateur de la responsabilité qui consiste à jouer le rôle d'interprète. D'autres personnages s'interposent dans le débat comme faire-valoir ou repoussoirs." López Bago accomplished this in the final confrontation between Vejarano, the renowned staunch idealist novelist and Luis, the protagonist, who was employed as a ghost writer by the former, assigned with the mission of writing a novel depicting truth and reality. As we recall,

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the novel was a best seller, but, to the disgrace of Vejarano, a bestselling naturalist novel. Jourdan (83) cites the following exchange between the two novelists: " ... V. no sabe que yo soy y he sido siempre defensor acérrimo del idealismo.... ¡Qué asco ¡Qué repugnancia! Emilio Zola podría firmar el libro sin escrúpulo.... Me hunde V., me arruina, me desprestigia para siempre." To this Luis replies: "Yo, señor, no sé si era lo que escribí naturalismo. Yo he procurado escribir con verdad copiando la verdad misma" (El periodista 119-20).

Recalling a statement made by Zola in Le roman expérimental: "Nous autres, romanciers, nous sommes les juges d'instruction des hommes et de leurs passions" (65), López Bago informs Sawa in "Análisis de la novela titulada Crimen legal" that one of the functions of the naturalist novelist is to act as judge with regard to his characters and the human misery documented in his works: "Hacemos procesos y autopsias" (Crimen legal 262). In López Bago's novels the judge intervenes directly in the narrative. As Jourdan observes:

> ... le narrateur intervient aussi pour nous inviter à ne pas nous laisser abuser par les apparences, à ne pas apprécier la conduite des personnages en vertu d'un jugement hâtif ou préconçu. Et il prend soin, de son côté, de réunir le plus d'informations possible afin de dégager les motifs d'un

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> comportement et d'instruire, en quelque sorte, le dossier d'un protagoniste. (82)

After explaining how the "immoral" cohabitation of Luis and María was the inevitable result of their powerful physical attraction for one another, El periodista's narrator interrupts, and asks his readers not to prejudge the two lovers based on their so-called fall from grace:

> No deben estudiarse las acciones humanas como se estudian, á partir de la acción misma, *à posteriori* que dirían los metafísicos.
>
> Hay que juzgar exactamente, y esta exactitud de la opinión, este acierto depende del mayor número de datos que la instruyan. (63)

The narrator then proceeds to explain their situation:

> Dos seres de distinto sexo, de igual juventud; la fuerza y la belleza *frente á frente; nervios y* sangre; la sociedad lejos, la lucha por la existencia á todas horas, y por centro de vida la miseria, que es una soledad favorable como la del desierto. Estos son los datos, estos los antecedentes. (63)

Luis and María need their continued youth, strength, resources and their mutual love and respect for each other in order to have a fighting chance to survive the cruelties of life which they are forced to endure. The narrator hopes that readers, especially conservatives and Catholics, now cognizant of the

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facts, will sympathize with their plight.

Román Gutiérrez, however, is less than sympathetic to López Bago's unnaturalistic technique of inserting "intervenciones para juzgar a los personajes y sus actos" (2:281). She cites the following "intervención" from La querida, which precedes another love-making session between Rosita Pérez and her lover, Miguel:

> ¡Bah! Lo que contestó Rosita Pérez, lo que pasó después, cómo se besaron y lo poquísimo que se dijeron, ¿quién se atreverá á describirlo? ¿Hubo amor sensual? Sí. ¡Pero el alma, el alma fué la que hizo caricias á la carne! Esto sucede muy pocas veces. (75)

Both Etreros y Román Gutiérrez note the lack of clear distinction or separateness between the narrator and the characters' inner thoughts. For Etreros, López Bago's characters "no son dueños de sus pensamientos, es el autor el que piensa por ellos ..." (119). In Román Gutiérrez' estimation:

> Dado que las novelas centran más su atención en el problema social que en el conflicto íntimo de los personajes, la expresión de los pensamientos y sentimientos de éstos no domina el relato; pero cuando se produce,se manifiesta indistintamente a través del narrador omnisciente de modo directo o indirecto. Ambos llegan a confundirse en alguna

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ocasión con el discurso del narrador. (2:282)

According to Jourdan and Román Gutiérrez, the narrator himself recognizes certain characters not as individuals, but as "types," worthy of the reader's attention. In Jourdan's opinion, López Bago "essaie de justifier sa curiosité, qui pourrait sembler malsaine, par un souci d'observation et d'analyse fort instructif" (82), when he wrote about Campuzano's clique in El periodista: "Eran tipos sociales, dignos de estudio, merecedores de análisis" (9); or later in La prostituta when referring to the madam, Mari-Pepa: "¡Caso verdaderamente notable y hecho digno de la observación y [d]el análisis más minuciosos!" (45).

Román Gutiérrez (2:282) and Lissorgues (249) note the connection between López Bago's narrative technique and those found in the Spanish serial novel. Lissorgues uses the term "superomnisciente" to characterize the narrative voice in López Bago's novels, a narrator "movido por absolutas certidumbres, lo que no le impide establecer contacto con el lector (como en el folletín), de manera artificial...." Lissorgues cites as examples typical phrases such as: "'Nuestra imparcialidad de cronista...,'" "'Ahora, hay que explicar como...,'" "'aunque tarea difícil para mí explicar eso....'" According to Lissorgues, the fact that "el narrador se confunde siempre con el autor" combined with López Bago's own "seriedad," in fact, "impide cualquier distancia irónica o humorística con respecto a lo narrado, y son frecuentes los

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comentarios, los juicios, cuando no las imprecaciones" (249).

In addition to the observations made by the scholars cited above on the lack of objectivity and impartiality in López Bago's novels, it is interesting to observe how our author was motivated to disregard this naturalist tenet for another completely different reason: he occasionally interrupts the narration in order to write about himself. In the middle of his diatribe in El preso against "la realidad penal en España" (114), López Bago begins to recount his legal difficulties: the lawsuits brought against him for the publication of three of his novels (La prostituta, La Pálida, El cura). Moreover, in his characteristically combative posture, López Bago creates the opportunity to forewarn his detractors "en las poltronas" (224) of government that he will not be silenced for revealing publicly in El preso "los hechos de que desde hace siglos se viene hablando en voz baja" (114). The audacious novelist goes so far as to challenge his detractors; threatening to follow up his first exposé on the horrors of the Spanish penal system with a second novel:

> Tres causas criminales se han intentado contra mí por haberme atrevido á escribir la verdad de los lupanares y la verdad de la sacristía; ninguna ha prosperado, y si por relatar ahora lo cierto de lo que ocurre en cárceles y presidios se me procesara de nuevo, la sentencia condenatoria sería tan sólo darme aliciente para hacer á este relato una

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> segunda parte. No escribo libros para entretener doncellas, ni por novelista quiero que se me tenga. Emprendí el estudio social desde el primero, y á pesar de las desventajas de mi lucha, la de un hombre solo contra todos, lo continuaré hasta el fin, seguro del triunfo. (114-15)

B. The Fallacy in López Bago's Interpretation and Application of the "Experiment" Hypothesis of Scientific Experimentation

By applying the experimental method to literature, the naturalist novelist will arrive at certain objective conclusions based solely on his diligent comprehensive collection of data, and based on his training and skills in observation and documentation, paralleling the scientist's own clinical approach to conducting a series of experiments and laboratory tests. Neither the scientist nor the naturalist novelist knows the outcome of such clinical tests in advance, nor is he able to, nor should he, predict the results with absolute certainty; as Zola himself explains in Le roman expérimental:

> Tout le raisonnement expérimental est basé sur le doute, car l'expérimentateur doit n'avoir aucune idée preconçue devant la nature et garder toujours sa liberté d'esprit. Il accepte simplement les

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> phénomènes qui se produisent, lorsqu'ils sont prouvés. (3)

In "'El naturalismo radical,'" Lissorgues underscores the fallacy in López Bago's interpretation and application of scientific experimentation. López Bago employs this naturalist principle when he "quiere demostrar algo y arma un experimento a partir de una especie de hipótesis" (245). As a prime example of this fallacy, Lissorgues cites the author's purpose for writing "El cura." As we know, López Bago was adamantly opposed to the unnaturalness of the vow of clerical celibacy, a position which he tirelessly defended throughout the trilogy. In "Vosotros y yo," he wrote: "Con EL CURA (sic) empiezo una nueva serie de estudios dedicados á combatir el celibato eclesiástico en lo que tiene de peligroso bajo el punto de vista médico-social" (El cura 259). For Lissorgues, López Bago's "postulado 'científico' lleva a la hipótesis: ¿puede haber sacerdote casto?" For which "nuestro sabio prepara cuidadosamente una experiencia" (245). The answer to the question posed is, of course, a resounding "no." Contrary to the naturalist concept of experimentation, López Bago, as the novelist, is aware of the results before the experiment is conducted; his readers anticipate the outcome before the conclusion of El cura. In the case of the second and third novels in the trilogy, the reader knows from the outset the results of the hypothesis; the last two novels constitute the continuation and further exemplification of the first.

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Although Lissorgues contends that "puede que tenga razón nuestro autor," concerning the clerical celibacy issue, the scholar underscores the fallacy in that the "'demostración' estriba en una peligrosa confusión entre ficción y experimentación, porque 'experimentando' así se puede demostrar cualquier cosa y lo contrario. En las novelas del naturalismo radical, es lo que pasa a menudo, por no decir casi siempre" (245).

In addition to "El cura," López Bago "estriba en una peligrosa confusión entre ficción y experimentación" again in La desposada and El separatista. In the former, the hypothesis is as follows: "¿Puede llegar a ser feliz una joven honrada y buena, en el fondo, pero que es hija de una buscona de ministros?" (245). As in "El cura," "la experimentación ... muestra que no, que no es posible" (245-46). And, in the case of El separatista, López Bago demonstrates quite well how "el separatismo cubano es una enfermedad del temperamento isleño, producto de una compleja mezcla de razas" (246). Despite López Bago's good intentions, Lissorgues blames the novelist's absolute faith in his science as the reason which "le lleva a esas aberrantes confusiones entre literatura y ciencia" (246).

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C. Resemblance to the Spanish Serial Novel: "Las novelas de folletín"

Several López Bago scholars have noted features in the author's novels which are identified not with Naturalism, but with the Spanish serial or installment novel; specifically: "la novela de folletín" or "los folletines." As we recall from our study in Chapter I, this once very popular and commercially successful genre was judged inferior by literary critics for several reasons, including its superficiality, simplicity and attention-grabbing devices; especially in comparison to the wealth of creativity, originality and social consciousness of the realist and naturalist novel. It has been generally acknowledged in scholarly circles that the inclusion of installment novel techniques decreases the literary value of the work in question.

In her study of López Bago's works, Etreros objects to the "novela folletinesta"'s influence "en escenas que, pretendiendo llegar al máximo en la crudeza, caen en el sentimentalismo y la exageración de gestos" (119); as is the case in the final scene of La querida, which describes the stabbing murder of Miguel Loitia ordered by his lover, Rosita Pérez. Included in this category of violent, untimely deaths of young characters which takes place in the final scenes of some of López Bago's early novels, we can add the stabbing death of Paco in La prostituta, Estrella's murder by a firearm

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in La Pálida, and Luis' messy suicide in El periodista.

Lissorgues discusses the "efectismo folletinesco que hace las veces de argumento" (248); citing La prostituta's antagonist-- the syphilitic, religious hypocrite, the Marquis de Villaperdida and his double life as a noteworthy example. The aristocrat's efforts to maintain the secret of his ownership of some forty brothels results in the disguised marquis' furtive appearances "de noche" when he enters "por falsas puertas, en la mancebía y después regresa a su estrafalario palacio" (249) where his father confessor and his personal physician wonder about his sudden and unexplained disappearances. Lozano Marco (348) cites examples of "lo efectista y desmesurado," features which dominate the plots of the first two novels of López Bago's tetralogy. In La prostituta there is the Marquis de Villaperdida—the story of his sexually promiscuous youth and the dire medical consequences of his dissolute life style, etc. In La Pálida "no son menos espectaculares" the orgies and bacchanals of "La Botica"—"una asociación de viciosos" and their macabre "grito ritual proclamando: '¡Viva la muerte!'"[54]

The eternal conflict between good versus evil is reflected in the creation of stereotypical "good" and "bad" characters, a constant in the serial novel and in López Bago's fiction. After having already remarked that La prostituta and La Pálida "sont proches parents du feuilletoniste ou du romancier populaire" (72), Jourdan contributes the following

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regarding the two 1884 novels:

> Ce qui est commun aux deux romans, c'est la répartition des protagonistes en deux groupes: exploiteurs et exploités (le ministre et ses sbires/Luis et sa compagne d'une part, Le (sic) marquis et ses acolytes/les filles du peuple poussées à la prostitution par la misère d'autre part.) (79).

Although Jourdan refers specifically to El periodista, his following statement may be applied to most of López Bago's novels to one degree or another: "El Periodista présente toutes les particularités d'un roman populaire où les pauvres vertueux sont en butte aux ignobles caprices des riches dépravés détenteurs du pouvoir" (79). As in the serial novel, López Bago's lower class characters are idealized; the clergy, aristocracy, the upper bourgeoisie are vilified.

Jourdan also remarks on El periodista's resemblance to the "folletines" in their mutual lack of depth in character analysis. The characters in this novel "manquent singulièrement d'épaisseur" (100); including the protagonist Luis, who is reduced to an "espèce d'automate blafard" who "n'a pour lui que son honnêteté scrupuleuse et son sens de la vérité" (100). Moreover, there are "peu d'ingrédients naturalistes dans son comportement: sentiment de révolte, jalousie, haine, déchéance morale engendrée par la misère et qui va de pair avec la déchéance physique, tous ces ressorts

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qui auraient pu entrer en jeu sont absents" (100).

Luis' story is analogous to those promoted in serial novels, with one notable difference, contend Lozano Marco and Jourdan. Contrary to the "happily-ever-after" fairy tale endings in the lives of serial novel characters, Luis' fate as a naturalist protagonist is, of course, tragic; reflective of his author's own pessimism. Lozano Marco observes that in López Bago's novels "los seres encanallados triunfan, mientras que los pocos personajes bondadosos son unas víctimas destinadas a perecer" (348). Jourdan writes:

> Aussi l'histoire de Luis n'a-t-elle pas plus de consistance qu'un roman-feuilleton, à cette différence près que si, dans le feuilleton, les mérites des pauvres vertueux sont souvent reconnus lorsqu'arrive le dénouement, dans El Periodista, l'expédient du crime et du suicide, conclusion abrupte du livre, dispense l'auteur d'aller plus avant en lui ménageant une sortie aussi tonitruante que facile. (100)

As we see from the above quotation, Jourdan also objects to the novel's abrupt violent melodramatic end. He criticizes López Bago for not having developed a more cohesive conclusion.

As we previously stated, the inclusion of trademarks of the serial novel—sentimentalism, melodrama, superficiality, stereotypical tendentious characters, etc.—is frowned upon by

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late nineteenth- and twentieth-century critics alike. The serial novel, however, served as a source of constructive inspiration; the genre contributed several significant features which would be embraced by several leading Spanish authors from different literary movements from the late nineteenth century well into the first decades of the twentieth century. As Zavala informs us in Ideología y política en la novela española del siglo XIX, the emphasis on chronicling the lives of the lower classes and the socially ostracized expressed in the "folletines" of the most popular serial novelists—Eugene Sue in France, and Wenceslao Ayguals de Izco in Spain—would become an important integral part of the realist and, especially, the naturalist novel:

> Serán los naturalistas los que vuelvan al mundo marginado, de prostitutas, truhanes, degenerados y criminales, impulsados por los avances científicos, el darwinismo y el afán incontrolable de *epater* el mundo burgués circundante. (175) Las lacrimosas historias de amor le sirvieron para plantear algunos problemas morales y sociales de fondo, que retomarán los escritores realistas y naturalistas. Las enrevesadas y truculentas narraciones anticlericales de Ayguals, el mundo madrileño y andaluz de las clases bajas, las historias de amores vedados, la intolerancia religiosa, serán los grandes temas de Galdós, Valera, Clarín. La

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> aristocracia corrupta y la seducción serán analizadas por Pereda. Habrá que esperar a fin de siglo y a los noventayochistas para ensanchar y profundizar el mundo obrero y del hampa, y las tensiones sociales entre los de abajo y los de arriba: Alejandro Sawa, Felipe Trigo, Jcsé Ortega Munilla, Blasco Ibáñez, Baroja y Valle-Inclán serán los mejores exponentes. (164)

D. The Inflexibility and Fanaticism of the Novelist and His Radical Countercurrent

Perhaps the aspect of López Bago's Radical Naturalism which most disturbs his critics lies in its inherent inflexibility and fanaticism; most distinctly observed in the two most important concerns of the author's career. On the one hand, inflexibility and fanaticism are most prominently exhibited in the novelist's persistent personal and professional obsession with disparaging romantic and idealist literature and their authors; as if the more he ridiculed the two movements, the more readers would turn away from recognizing their literary merit. On the other hand, this obsession was dramatically contrasted with, and surpassed only by his zealous advocacy of Zolaesque principles of Naturalism, exemplified, for example, in statements like the following proclamations from the appendix to El cura: "El naturalismo no

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es una secta, es una verdad. La novela moderna tiene que ser naturalista" ("Vosotros y yo," El cura 288). López Bago equated Naturalism with truth; Naturalism being the only truth to the exclusion of all other viewpoints. This rigidity and closemindedness is as extreme to the left as Catholic dogma is to the right, Lissorgues declares in his concluding remarks on López Bago and his works in "'El naturalismo radical.'" López Bago's and Catholicism's respective fanaticism constitutes the reverse side of the same coin:

> Finalmente, y para abreviar, la obra de López Bago es cifra y compendio de todas las ideas pretendidamente científicas propagadas por un positivismo cerrado y agresivo, tan exclusivo, y por eso tan peligroso, como cualquier fanatismo. (248) ...tan cerrado y tan exclusivo como el otro, el integrismo católico. (250)

Moreover, ironically for López Bago, his extremist ideology shares common traits with this one archenemy: "La verdad es que se parecen en varios puntos: los dos se aferran a una verdad absoluta (y siempre es peligroso), los dos quieren moralizar, pero cortando por lo sano" (250). However, López Bago's "radicalism" is part of what makes him both a fascinating study and an integral part of the history of Naturalism in Spain, a perspective shared by Lissorgues: "Desde tal punto de vista es ejemplar la novelística de López Bago" (248).

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The primary purpose of Chapter II has been to define and characterize López Bago's little known countercurrent coined "Radical Naturalism." In the first part of this chapter, we examined the many historical, scientific, medical, philosophical and literary influences of the nineteenth century which culminated in the naturalistic theories and novels of Emile Zola, the acknowledged leader of Naturalism and López Bago's much admired mentor. The second part of the chapter is dedicated to a comprehensive investigation of Radical Naturalism.

In our introduction to the countercurrent, we traced the development of López Bago's position on the polemic on Naturalism in Spain; from that of a conservative, middle-of-the-road position—not unlike the mitigated Naturalism practiced by many of his Spanish contemporaries—to his full and complete conversion to Zolaesque Naturalism and the development of his own "radical" tenets. The transformation, realized over the course of only a few months in the milestone year of 1884, was, indeed, dramatic for its rapidity and intensity. Unfortunately, it is not known what was the impetus behind the author's spectacular conversion.

Our study on Radical Naturalism is composed of three main divisions:

1. In the largest division, "López Bago's Application of Zola's Doctrine," we learned how the novelist applied thirteen

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major tenets promulgated by the French literary leader; from "Naturalism's Moral, Social and Reformative Mission" to "Linguistic Authenticity: The Use of Candid and Colloquial Language."

2. In "Radical Elements of López Bago's Extremist Ideology," we examined those features which distinguished our novelist from both Zola and mitigated Spanish naturalists. Of the four sections examined here, we see that the first—"Radical Naturalism's Rebellious, Aggressive and Combative Posture"—is uniquely López Bago's; it goes to the essence of defining his extremist ideology, its purposes and its goals. The three remaining sections—"Reaction Against Romantic and Idealistic Literature and Their Authors," "The 'Medicalization' of Literature," and "Ties to Socialism and Literary Anarchism"—do, to a certain extent, share common ground with Zolaesque Naturalism. Zola criticized French romantic and idealist literature and was fascinated with the latest developments in modern medicine. And, as was noted, his two novels, Germinal and Le travail, were enthusiastically received by socialists and anarchists, while Zola himself held longtime sympathies to the two controversial and unconventional doctrines. However, the extent, depth, intensity and complexity of López Bago's development of these three topics, as well as his own ardent emotional response, far surpasses the average or typical presentation or discussion of romantic and idealist literature, medicine in

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literature or sympathies for Socialism and literary Anarchism.

3. In "Contemporary Twentieth-Century Scholars Assess the Weaknesses and Fallacies of Radical Naturalism," we examined the four principal points of contention among critics of López Bago's work; factors which detract from the novelist being classified as a "pure" Zolaesque naturalist. All of the scholars cited here object to the novelist's "Failure to Maintain the Naturalist Tenet of Narrative and Authorial Objectivity and Impartiality." They regard this fallacy as, perhaps, Radical Naturalism's most serious flaw. Second to this fallacy, López Bago's twentieth-century critics take issue with his fiction's "Resemblance to the Spanish Serial Novel: 'las novelas de folletín'" in his early novels (El periodista, La prostituta, La Pálida). They fault the inclusion of such serial novel trademarks as: tendentiousness, sentimentality, melodrama, the "good" versus "evil" theme, the use of sensational attention grabbing devices in plot and characterization, etc. Lissorgues contributes insightful comments concerning the two remaining sections. This scholar brings to light "The Fallacy in the Author's Interpretation and Application of the 'Experiment' Hypothesis of Scientific Experimentation." Although López Bago believed that he was correctly applying the scientific method in his experiment on clerical celibacy, for example, Lissorgues points out how the outcome of the experiment was already predetermined by the author's bias against the issue. Lissorgues finds "The

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Inflexibility and Fanaticism of the Novelist and His Radical Countercurrent" both disturbing and dangerous. López Bago's rigid extremist posture is, in its own way, as unyielding and uncompromising as ultra-conservative Catholicism. Both positions are unhealthy and unbalanced, inasmuch as no doctrine or ideology possesses exclusivity on righteousness.

Our twenty-one sections devoted to López Bago's Radical Naturalism offer fascinating insights into the novelist's way of thinking and his position on several important issues.

As we have observed in this chapter, López Bago greatly respected the power of the physiological laws of nature. For him, these biological laws superseded all man-made cultural, social, political and religious laws or teaching. When serious attempts are made to thwart or suppress the release or expression of natural sexual needs and urges through healthy channels, the human organism rebels violently. Characters in his novels who dare to or are forced to defy these natural urges meet with dire physiological and psychological consequences. "El cura"'s Román Acevedo and the nuns in the convent in Toledo are examples of the monstrous extremes of man's arrogance in the face of his biological nature's superiority, especially in matters of human sexuality. This respect for nature and its laws led López Bago to advocate some "radical" ideas for his era: 1. the abolishment of the laws of clerical celibacy—priests should be permitted to publicly maintain concubines or mistresses; 2. the abolishment

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of the convent system—the novelist offers marriage as an alternative; 3. pubescent females with strong erotic longings should be permitted to engage in sexual relationships with suitable males, with or without the benefit of marriage; 4. unmarried couples should be allowed to cohabit freely without social or religious stigma.

López Bago's keen interest in the inner workings of the human mind and body is, indeed, impressive; as is his fascination for examining matters related to medicine. In our section, "The Power of the Physiological Laws of Nature" and "The 'Medicalization' of Literature," we observed how the novelist-physician offers contrasting descriptions on the inner workings of the human organism; a few normal or healthy conditions as opposed to an incredible assemblage of human pathology: illnesses, diseases, mental disorders and sexual aberrations. López Bago examines the natural physiological changes of puberty and menopause, and the female's biological imperative to reproduce on the one hand; and, on the other, the breakdown of normal functioning resulting in hysteria, erotomania and nymphomania. In his discussion on menopausal women, López Bago gives sound advice on hygiene, diet, exercise and nutrition; the type of medical advice late twentieth-century physicians recommend to their patients to maintain good health. The novelist also warns readers of the health-threatening complications of menopause; as in the development of ulcers, polyps, cancer; the resurgence of

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former illnesses; or even unexpected death.

López Bago contributes some interesting and even curious observations regarding conditions unique to the female gender, observations reflective, no doubt, of the medical opinion of his day. Although he accurately diagnoses some of the symptoms of puberty, and menstruation, in particular—fatigue, lethargy, mood swings, body aches, etc.—some of the author's ideas are far-fetched, comical and even ridiculously inaccurate by late twentieth-century medical standards. For example, in El cura, López Bago opposes the idea of female adolescents taking daily baths, inasmuch as it was believed that the female would become overly sexually stimulated by the ritual; it would render her susceptible to succumbing to the sexual advances of any male who would approach her shortly thereafter. Gracia's unrelenting six hour bout with hysteria seems completely unrealistic, as does the solution presented for bringing an end to the episode: the physical proximity of the object of her sexual frustration. Another ludicrous idea was the common nineteenth-century misconception that hysteria caused by prolonged virginity was the inevitable prelude to the catastrophic consequences of incurable sexual aberrations: nymphomania, homosexuality or prostitution. Gracia's unusually long list of physical, mental and emotional disorders as the result of overwhelming guilt and her subsequent rejection by Román also seems hard to believe.

López Bago's goal to educate his readers about a

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multitude of typical and atypical diseases and disorders is commendable; as is his recommendations for preventing and eliminating many of the diseases bred in enclosed environments, such as the unsanitary conditions prevalent in Spain's prisons, or the unhealthy living conditions inside the convent in Toledo. The cloister was a cold, damp, poorly ventilated and poorly insulated hermetically sealed environment in which the nuns were kept on a meager diet. López Bago blamed Melita's untimely death, in part, on the cloister's environment. Melita, who was genetically predisposed to tuberculosis, never should have been sent to live in a convent. In addition to tuberculosis, López Bago informed on other common nineteenth-century disorders, such as anemia and rickets caused, we know today, by severe vitamin deficiency.

Despite his good intentions, López Bago's detailed and exhaustive clinical descriptions, as we have seen, resemble a physician's medical textbook. They appear to have been written for the benefit of professionals, since they are too complicated and technical for the average reader to comprehend.

López Bago's nineteenth-century contemporaries had a great deal of difficulty coming to terms with the novelist's explicit treatment of human sexual behavior. The most shocking yet fascinating aspect of this theme is the author's treatment of his female characters' sexual lives. López Bago

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breaks with the stereotypical and traditionally passive image of female sexuality. Albeit almost always pathologically so, the novelist's female characters take charge of satisfying their erotic needs, determined to defy the double standard inherent in the social and religious mores of their era. López Bago presents numerous examples of this radical representation of women in his novels: Rosita Pérez, for a time, maintains passionate liaisons concurrently with two lovers, rendezvousing with both on the same days; Gracia expects and welcomes Román into her bed, while the single-minded Sor María de la Soledad responds hungrily to the priest's brutal advances in the hope of fulfilling her maternal longings; Gertrudis, unlike the horrified brothel prostitute Román visits, is not repulsed by her father confessor's carnal brutality, but overjoyed, believing his satyriasis is proof of the intensity of his passion for her; the nuns in Toledo adhere to a warped interpretation of the vow of celibacy, and take matters into their own hands to satisfy their erotic longings. Perhaps the most sexually libidinous female in López Bago's novels, Antonia de Benimar competes and keeps up with her satyric spouse. Her sexual prowess is so great and unique that only she is victorious in the ultimate challenge when she succeeds in satisfying the homosexual consort, and tempting him away from other men.

López Bago concentrated the focus of his anticlericialism in his trilogy, "El cura." Alongside the monstrous creation

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of Román Acevedo, for which the novelist blames the Catholic Church's unrealistic vow of clerical celibacy, the novelist's descriptions of the insidious goings-on inside the convent in La monja is very disquieting with all their underlying ominous implications. López Bago describes a convent which is, in effect, a metaphor for three very specific enclosed establishments symbolizing female enslavement: the brothel, prison and the harem. Behind the deceptive facade of youth and beauty, the nuns, as we observed previously, have created their own non-commercial and private for members only brothel in which the sisters function as both clients and prostitutes. Like the traditional brothel, the convent functions for the sexual gratification of each client; and like the traditional brothel, emotional attachments are not formed, as the nuns circulate lovers as if playing the child's game of musical chairs. The nuns are given room and board as payment for their services. However, the will to survive is the sisters' most compelling underlying motivation for obeying the rules of the establishment.

This convent-brothel is also a prison from which no one escapes alive; the nuns all serve life sentences. Any desire, attempt or threat to leave is, in effect, a death sentence, as we witnessed in the case of Sor María de la Soledad.

Added to its roles as brothel and prison, the convent becomes Román Acevedo's private harem. The egocentric father confessor, believing himself unstoppable and invincible,

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enjoys being tempted once again, this time with the risk of excommunication in exchange for free access to the cloister.

Although López Bago did not need to elaborate, with Román roaming the cloister at night, the inevitable would occur: the rape or seduction of the nuns. The author leaves his readers with the question of the fates of the offspring born of nuns and fathered by a Catholic priest. What would become of the nuns? Would some of them and/or their children meet with the same or a similar fate as Sor María de la Soledad and her unborn child? What drastic measures would have to be taken in order to maintain secrecy, if most, if not all of the nuns were impregnated by the satyric father confessor and future pope, the perpetuation of evil? López Bago leaves his readers with these points to ponder regarding this convent in Toledo; a convent, perhaps, the embodiment of all convents in Spain. Nevertheless, most certainly in La monja, it is depicted as a metaphor for hell on earth.

As we noted earlier, Radical Naturalism's greatest weakness lies in its author's failure to maintain authorial impartiality, objectivity and scientific detachment. López Bago's excessive intervention in the narrative is the very flaw for which the publishers of his first novel, Los amores, criticized him in 1876. It is interesting to note that our novelist failed to correct this trait even as an avowed naturalist.

Moreover, López Bago is guilty of another offense against

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this naturalist tenet by taking poor advantage of his characters as a weapon to continue his campaign against his professional foes; specifically, Juan Valera and Raimundo Fernández y Villaverde, the Civil Governor of Madrid, respectively. In El periodista, Luis, his honorable journalist-novelist protagonist, unwittingly yet publicly exposes Vejarano—the older renowned best selling idealist-novelist—as a pretentious, untalented literary fraud; while in El preso, the likewise honorable Francisca Ruíz exposes the pompous Civil Governor of Madrid's impotence and later laughs about the incident.

One may wonder what Zola himself would have thought about this flaw in his devoted follower's naturalist novels. Although there is no evidence to suggest that Zola was even aware of López Bago's work, we could venture an opinion based on Zola's published comments on Balzac and Flaubert regarding this issue from Les romanciers naturalistes (128-129), examined previously in the first part of this chapter ("Men of Letters: The Realists and Naturalists" [Gustave Flaubert]). As he criticized Balzac, Zola would have greatly disapproved of López Bago's numerous digressions, his "continuelle intervention dans le récit" and his personal "reflexions d'auteur" (129) which run throughout his novels. In fact, as we recall, when citing the three essential requirements for the modern novel, Zola identified the complete and absolute emotional detachment and nonintervention on the part of the

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author in the action of the novel or in the lives and deeds of the characters as indispensable. (See: section on Gustave Flaubert in this chapter; or Zola's statement in Les romanciers naturalistes 128-29.)

In López Bago's defense, it may be said that the novelist's passionate quest for justice and equality contributed to his inability (and possibly, his unwillingness) to remain objective and detached before major moral and social issues which deeply troubled him and to which he was strongly committed: prostitution, the penal system, clerical celibacy and abuse, and the plight of the laboring classes and social outcasts. In this instance, López Bago even rebelled against Zola.

The revolutionary character of Radical Naturalism constitutes a rebellion against the established literary world's perception of Naturalism; it is not a movement like others, perhaps, to be debated for much needed intellectual stimulation for the somnolent literati, but a movement to be lived, felt and experienced by the laboring classes. López Bago takes the decision making power concerning Naturalism's future in Spain away from the academians and give authority and empowerment to the largely uneducated masses where Naturalism's message is most needed and appreciated and, hopefully, heard. Only after the masses validate Naturalism's merit could it then take its rightful place alongside other literary movements accepted by the world of academia. For

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López Bago, this goal represents a radical reversal from the traditional order in which literary movements are judged. For instance, the decision to recognize and accept "la novela bonita" for its contributions to Spanish literature was made by the very sectors of society for whom and about whom it was written: the conservative Catholic clergy and the aristocracy. The populace had no say in determining the success or merit of romantic and idealist literature. The masses or laboring classes were barely portrayed as characters in this type of literature; they remained in the background of the action where they functioned only in an auxiliary capacity as servants or "sidekicks" to aristocratic protagonists.

The serial or installment novel was, perhaps, the first nineteenth-century literary genre developed and cultivated expressly to please its primary readership from the laboring classes. Despite the legitimacy of its reasons, the serial novel was, nevertheless, disreputed by the literary Establishment. López Bago's Radical Naturalism proposed to continue the serial novel's objective to underscore the vital importance of the laboring classes in literature. While the installment novel featured characters from the lower classes in leading roles, it did not, however, accurately portray the realities of the hardships of their lives. López Bago debunked the serial novel's fairy tale ending of virtue always prevailing over vice; this idealization was just as unrealistic and deceitful as "la novela bonita"'s idealization

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of all social classes. Inasmuch as members of the lower social strata had responded favorably to the depiction of characters like themselves, characters with whom they could, to a certain extent, identify, López Bago hoped that these readers would identify with their naturalist counterparts. However, he hoped that their reaction would be quite different. López Bago did not want to entertain his readers, but wanted them to judge and embrace Radical Naturalism for its realistic documentation of their lives. This, López Bago hoped, would spur them to action on two fronts. First, by actively deciding to embrace Radical Naturalism as their authentic literary expression, the laboring classes could organize a successful revolt against the rarefied academic world's established mode of operations for evaluating literary movements; a revolt for which our author stood in readiness to lead. Alongside the literary revolution, López Bago hoped that the horrors perpetuated against the lower classes and social outcasts by the current ruling sectors documented in his (and others') novels would some day spur the former to initiate a social revolution, much in keeping with the socialist and literary anarchist objectives exemplified in this chapter.

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NOTES TO CHAPTER II

[1] Lilian R. Furst, and Peter N. Skrine, Naturalism (1971; London: Methuen, 1978) 2.

[2] Crane Brinton, John B. Christopher, Robert Lee Wolff, A History of Civilization: 1715 to the Present, 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs [NJ]: Prentice-Hall, 1976) 650, 651; Furst 10-11; Carlton J. H. Hayes, Marshall Whithed Baldwin, and Charles Woolsey Cole, History of Western Civilization, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1964) 587-93, 672; "The Industrial Revolution," The Columbia-Viking Desk Encyclopedia, 1963 ed.; "Koch, Robert," Columbia-Viking; "Lister, Joseph," Columbia-Viking; Medina 23; "Pasteur, Louis," Columbia-Viking; L. S. Stravrianos, The World Since 1500: A Global History, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs [NJ]: Prentice-Hall, 1971) 206-08, 211-22.

[3] "Darwin, Charles," Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, 2nd college ed., 1986.

[4] Max Savelle, gen. ed., A History of World Civilization, vol. 2 (New York: Holt, 1957) 195.

[5] Furst 17; Elliott M. Grant, Emile Zola (New York: Twayne, 1966) 44; Joanna Richardson, Zola (New York: St. Martin's P, 1978) 31.

[6] Bettina L. Knapp, Emile Zola, Modern Literature Series Monographs (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1980) 37.

[7] Lawston A. Carter, Zola and the Theater (Westport [CT]: Greenwood, 1977) 68; P. Martino, Le naturalisme français (1870-1895), 7th ed. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1965) 34-35.

[8] Claude Bernard, Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale (Paris: Baillière et fils, 1865; Brussels: Impression Anastaltique, 1965) 103.

[9] Haskell M. Block, Naturalistic Triptych: The Fictive and the Real in Zola, Mann, and Dreiser (New York: Random House, 1970) 5.

[10] Reino Virtanen, Claude Bernard and His Place in the History of Ideas (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1960) 13.

[11] David Baguley, Naturalistic Fiction: The Entropic Vision (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 61.

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[12] Emile Zola, Le roman expérimental (Paris: Charpentier, 1923) 1-2.

[13] W. M. Simon, "Bernard, Claude," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1972 ed.

[14] Nicola Abbagnano, "Positivism," trans. Nino Langiulli, The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1967 ed.

[15] Bess Seltzer Sondel, Zola's Naturalistic Theory with Particular Reference to the Drama (Chicago: U of Chicago Libraries, 1939) 22-23. Sondel's observations are based on the following edition of Taine's introduction to L'Histoire de la littérature anglaise, 8th ed., vol. 1 (Paris: Hachette, 1892): xxiv, xxviii, xxix, xxxii-xxxiv.

[16] Knapp also includes Taine and French Academy member Ernest Renan in this category.

[17] Knapp 34; Brian Wilkie, and James Hurt, Neoclassism Through the Modern Period, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1988) vol. 2 of Literature of the Western World 803.

[18] Emile Zola, Les romanciers naturalistes (Balzac, Stendhal, Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, Alphonse Daudet, les romanciers contemporaines) (Paris: Charpentier, 1893) 58.

[19] "Balzac, Honoré de," Columbia-Viking.

[20] Angus Wilson, Emile Zola: An Introductory Study of His Novels (New York: William Morrow, 1952) 32.

[21] James Q. Swain, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, General Study: Special Emphasis on Realistic Techniques (Knoxville: n.p., 1959) 9; qtd. in Medina 29n27.

[22] The following is a list of the titles and dates of publication of the twenty Rougon-Macquart novels: La Fortune des Rougons (1871), La Curée (1871), Le Ventre de Paris (1873), La Conquête de Plassans (1874), La Faute de l'abbé Mouret (1875), Son Excellence Eugène Rougon (1876), L'Assommoir (1877), Une Page d'amour (1878), Nana (1880), Pot-Bouille (1882), Au Bonheur des dames (1883), La Joie de vivre (1884), Germinal (1885), L'Oeuvre (1886), La Terre (1887), Le Rêve (1888), La Bête humaine (1890), L'Argent (1891), La Débâcle (1892), Le Docteur Pascal (1893). See: Furst 45.

[23] William Rose Benet, "Naturalism," The Reader's Encyclopedia, 2nd ed. (New York: Crowell, 1965); William J. Berg, and Laurey K. Martin, Emile Zola Revisited, Twayne World Author Series 825 (New York: Twayne, 1992) 11-13; Block 6; Bly, "Naturalism"; Carter 69; Esteban Soler 13-15, 24-25;

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Furst 51-52; Medina 32-36; "Naturalismo en España," Diccionario de literatura española e hispanoamericana, ed. Ricardo Gullón (Madrid: Alianza, 1993); Philip Walker, "Emile Zola," Nineteenth-Century French Fiction Writers: Naturalism and Beyond, 1860-1900 (Detroit: Gale Research, 1992) 320, vol. 123 of Dictionary of Literary Biography, ed. Catharine Savage Brosman; Wilkie 1134.

[24] As was noted in Chapter I, the two articles demonstrate the author's new direction toward Naturalism.

[25] Balaguer's article was published in turn in response to a letter written by naturalist detractor, Eduardo Calcaño. See: Clemessy, Emilia Pardo Bazán 1: 101; Pattison, Naturalismo 118-19.

[26] Eduardo López Bago," trans. and ed., "La novela moderna, según Emilio Zola," by Emile Zola, appendix, La prostituta 267-88.

[27] Eduardo López Bago, trans. and ed., "Fragmentos de un estudio crítico acerca de la poesía moderna," by Emile Zola, appendix, La querida 255-80.

[28] Claude Bernard, Introduction; qtd. in Zola, Le roman expérimental 84.

[29] Eduardo López Bago, appendix: "La polémica acerca de las corridas de toros," Luis Martínez 287.

[30] López Bago also pointed out that this moral perversion was not exclusive to Spain, but reflected the degenerate state of all nations which boasted their own "espectáculos cruentes": England had boxing; France, acrobatics. See: 288.

[31] Correa Ramón observes how this statement made by Sawa's fictitious character was probably reflective of the type of slander which was circulating in Madrid at that time against naturalist novelists, especially López Bago. See: 113n165.

[32] The study of female homosexuality in the tetralogy will be addressed in a subsequent chapter.

[33] A slight discrepancy exists in the marquis' and the marquise's title. In El confesonario, it is "el marqués" or "la marquesa de Florida"; in La monja, the marquise is referred to as "la marquesa de la Florida." See: El confesonario 61; La monja 81, for example.

[34] López Bago's critique of the Spanish bourgeoisie will be examined in a subsequent chapter.

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[35] See, for example: G. G. Coulton, Five Centuries of Religion, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1927) 585. Also cited in Vern L. and Bonnie Bullough, Prostitution: An Illustrated Social History (New York: Crown, 1978) 119-20.

[36] Looking back to Chapter I, we may recall several examples of López Bago's militaristic mentality, as evidenced in our study of various events in the author's turbulent career. Regarding the scandal over the authorship of the mysterious letter in the first edition of his translation of Daudet's Sapho, López Bago wrote: "Otra cuestión que demuestra las armas á que apela en España la rivalidad de profesión para combatir al que logra vivir de su trabajo ... ("La moral del naturalismo," La buscona 277-78). In "Vosotros y yo," López Bago calls for the routing out of part-time professional writers from modern literature: "¡Echemos de la literatura á los aficionados! ¡Derrotemos á los pedantes! ¡Paso á los escritores de profesión!" (El cura 291). Ever since he published his first novel, his detractors have declared "una guerra sin cuartel" against the author and his works ("Al ministerio público," La monja 243). López Bago associated the release of La prostituta with the beginning of an all out war with the press: "Empezarla [la impresión de La prostituta] y empezar también la guerra al libro, fué todo uno." See: appendix, La Pálida 264. López Bago viewed his 1885 acquittal on moral charges as a victory for the naturalist cause in Spain, and stated: "El naturalismo no puede ser una literatura prohibida. ¡Qué derrota!" ("Vosotros y yo," El cura 275). Moreover, the fortuitous outcome of his legal difficulties caused him to declare himself "el único defensor de la libertad del libro en España ..." ("Al ministerio público," La monja 202). Finally, another example of López Bago's militaristic posture is observed in this chapter with regard to his position against clerical celibacy. He wrote: "Con EL CURA (sic) empiezo una nueva serie de estudios dedicados á combatir el celibato eclesiástico." See: "Vosotros y yo," El cura 259.

[37] Ernesto Bark, "El naturalismo español," Germinal 1. 19 [10 Sept.] (1897): [5]. Gutiérrez Carbajo also makes reference to Bark's article. See: 376.

[38] In El cura, López Bago alleges that Santa Teresa de Jesús (1515-1582), "fundadora de conventos y canonizada por la Iglesia" (171), was an hysteric and an erotomaniac—the pathological consequence of a lifetime of pent up sexual frustration, the cost of her struggle to maintain her vow of celibacy. Her inner turmoil is revealed in her own autobiography, La vida de Santa Teresa escrita por ella misma (171), deemed by López Bago as "una cosa más apasionada y más tierna que todas las novelas del mundo" (187). Gracia's nightly reading of passages from the mystic's book contributed

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to the teenager's hysteria. See: 171-72, 186-87.

[39] In Le roman expérimental ("Lettre à la jeunesse"), Zola also refers to Bernard as a "savant." See: 78.

[40] Sawa moved in anarchist circles in the 1880s in Madrid. See Chapter II ("España, fin de siglo: bohemia, anarquismo, socialismo") of Zavala's "Estudio Preliminar" to Sawa's Iluminaciones en la sombra.

[41] "Socialism," Webster's New World Dictonary.

[42] "Socialism," Columbia-Viking.

[43] "Anarchy," Webster's New World Dictionary.

[44] "Anarchism," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1958 ed.

[45] "Anarchism," Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia, 1974 ed.

[46] See Horowitz' introduction to his anthology, The Anarchists, 2nd ed. (New York: Dell, 1970) 23-24.

[47] José Alvárez Junco, Ideología política del anarquismo español (1868-1910) (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España, 1970).

[48] This work was previously cited. See the Introduction to this dissertation.

[49] Although the novelist's dissatisfaction with the alternating party regime of Cánovas and Sagasta was not previously noted in this dissertation, in "Naturalismos," the appendix to El separatista, López Bago expressed his disappointment over the lack of progress or improvement in the government and the political arena during the seven year period (1888-1897) he was living in Latin America. See: 279-80.

[50] Anselmo Lorenzo, El Pueblo (Valencia: n. p., 1909) 208; qtd. in Alvárez Junco 231.

[51] J. Mir, "Amor libre," El Porvenir del Obrero 92 (19?): n. pag.; qtd. in Alvárez Junco 282.

[52] J. Mir, "Amor libre," El Porvenir del Obrero 92 (19?): n. pag.; qtd. in Alvárez Junco 292-93. Litvak (84) makes reference to Alvárez Junco's citation of Mir's statement.

[53] Several branches of Anarchism began to flourish in Europe in the late nineteenth century. The most prominent were led by: Frenchman Pierre Joseph Proudhon; Russian

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aristocrats Peter Kropotkin and Mikhail Bakunin; and Karl Marx in Germany. Bakunin is credited with being the father of Spanish Anarchism. For more information on the historical development of the anarchist movement in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spain, see: Gerald Brenan's chapter VII, entitled, "The Anarchists," from his book: The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Civil War, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1967): 130-69. Also see: Murray Bookchin, The Spanish Anarchists. The Heroic Years: 1868-1936 (New York: Free Life, 1977); R. W. Kern, "Anarchism," ed. Robert Kern, Historical Dictionary, 19-23.

[54] Referring to the "evidente carácter tendencioso" (347) of the first two novels of López Bago's tetralogy, Lozano Marco makes reference to Pattison's and Zavala's, observation that "este tipo de naturalismo recoge también la herencia de la novela de folletín, de los relatos de 'misterios.' See 348. Also see 348n20.

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EDUARDO LÓPEZ BAGO: "RADICAL NATURALISM" AND THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN HIS NOVELS

by

SHARON L. REEVES

VOLUME II

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CHAPTER III

"LA PROSTITUTA": THE TETRALOGY AGAINST PROFESSIONAL FEMALE PROSTITUTION— THE FIRST TWO NOVELS: LA PROSTITUTA AND LA PALIDA

No other universal institution has exploited women more than professional prostitution. Recognized as one of the oldest professions in the world, it has a long history, dating back to ancient times when sacred or religious prostitution was commonly practiced in temples.[1] As a phenomenon which has crossed all traditional boundaries—national, cultural, legal, moral, religious, geographic and linguistic—professional female prostitution has endured for centuries primarily because of two physiological and social factors: it responds to man's biological imperative for sexual release and gratification with women, and it liberates man from the obligations and restrictions of marriage. According to Lewinsohn:

> The stricter the provisions of family law, the greater is the urge felt by men for a free zone in which they can satisfy their sexual desires without incurring subsequent obligations. The woman must be paid for her services, but has no further claim on her visitor. If he pleases, he may come again,

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> but even frequent or regular visits create no legal obligation. The complicated man-wife relationship produced by marriage and concubinage is replaced by a simple transaction. The need to worry over moral and material consequences (although not necessarily physiological ones) is eliminated. There remains only the sexual act, the sole and undisguised purpose, without either a long prologue or an epilogue. (26)

Thus, professional female prostitution was instituted by men for their own benefit, or, in Lewinsohn's words: "This extreme convenience, from the man's point of view, is the foundation of prostitution" (26).

In the broadest terms, the professional who fulfills this role is defined as a woman who voluntarily submits, habitually or intermittently, the use of her body for sexual purposes to one or more males, except her legitimate husband, in exchange for pecuniary or material compensation. The prostitute is, in effect, a businesswoman whose steady employment depends on the steady demand for her services.[2] The irony and the tragedy, therefore, lie in the persistent condemnation and punishment of the prostitute for fulfilling this necessary physiological and social function in all cultures. Unjustly, the prostitute traditionally has had to suffer and survive a series of physical, social, moral, religious and economic abuses in her daily life: persecution, ostracism, ridicule, loneliness,

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hunger, poverty; in addition to the life threatening consequences of unwanted pregnancy, venereal disease and corporal violence.

In his tetralogy, "La prostituta," López Bago adamantly condemns the evils of professional female prostitution as it existed in Spain in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. In this final section of our dissertation, we will examine the novelist's representation of women in light of this theme. The novelist documents the sexual and economic exploitation of women, primarily through the experiences of his two protagonists from the socioeconomic strata most adversely affected by the abuses of the profession: Estrella Sánchez, from the "pueblo" or proletariat, is the heroine of the first two novels; Rosita Pérez, from the lower middle class, introduced in La Pálida, is the focus of the last two. The tetralogy documents the progressive moral, physiological and psychological degradation of the two vulnerable young women incapable of defending themselves against the toxic forces of their environment.

Due to the multifaceted nature of the topic, our examination of professional prostitution in late nineteenth-century Spain is divided into two chapters: Chapter III addresses the first two novels: La prostituta and La Pálida; Chapter IV, La Pálida and the last two: La buscona and La querida. Although Rosita Pérez figures prominently in La Pálida, the study of this character will be addressed in

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Chapter IV. A second reason for the division speaks to López Bago's characterization of the two protagonists. Estrella Sánchez is basically a one-dimensional character whose primary role is to exemplify the destructive effects of prostitution, while Rosita Pérez, his second naturalist heroine, is a more developed literary character.

As we observed in Chapters I and II, López Bago was criticized for "La prostituta," based on a variety of reasons presented by his contemporaries and by late twentieth-century scholars of his work. However, despite the debate over its literary merits, the tetralogy's most significant contribution lies in the realm of social history; in the novelist's accurate documentation of the state of prostitution in general, and in Europe and Spain in particular, during the late nineteenth century. Supported by the published studies of literary scholars, and primarily by nineteenth- and twentieth-century specialists in the field of professional prostitution in nineteenth-century Europe—physicians, hygienists, sociologists, psychologists, feminists and social historians—we shall learn how the controversial tetralogy, for the most part, accurately reflects their findings; much in keeping with the socio-medical aims of López Bago's naturalist novels.

A description of the plots of La prostituta and La Pálida would be useful before addressing our topic for this chapter.

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La prostituta

The novel opens with a description of the exterior of the famous *Casa de Mari-Pepa*, an ugly, decrepit and repugnant bordello located between two more modern buildings in a commercial Madrid neighborhood. The madam of the establishment is the very same María Josefa, a fifty-two year old former prostitute who retired from the profession seven years before.

A flashback reveals her past:

Her parents' identity remains a mystery, as well as how she came to be raised in a famous house of ill repute in Seville. Tall, robust and fully developed by the age of ten, the young beauty was vain, selfish, avaricious and seductive. Five years later she was seduced by one of the house's wealthy and elderly patrons. After her official début into the profession, the precocious adolescent soon became very popular with Seville's high society clientele. Patrons would compete among themselves for the privilege of being her only lover, but Mari-Pepa would reject all generous propositions, preferring life inside the bordello instead. At age twenty, she left Seville for Madrid where she was received with all the honors accorded to the "new woman." She moved into the most exclusive house in the capital and achieved rank over her colleagues who envied her privileges and detested the newcomer's arrogance. The women were finally able to exact

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revenge when they learned of their rival's secret: Mari-Pepa was frigid. A sailor nicknamed her "la muñeca de á bordo," since she reminded him of the dolls seamen used to satisfy their needs while away at sea. From then on, Mari-Pepa was known by this humiliating nickname. With her secret divulged, her clientele progressively diminished. Consequently, she lost her privileges and was dismissed from the prestigious house. For fifteen years she passed through all of Madrid's bordellos, always harassed by the notoriety of being labeled a frigid harlot.

When she was forty-five years old, her luck changed when a passer-by saw her sitting at her post on the balcony of a low class brothel. Still very beautiful, the stranger entered and requested her services. He was a young man of twenty-five at the most, extremely handsome, athletic, vigorous, decisive, vain and arrogant. Extremely well dressed in the latest fashion, he seemed totally relaxed in his surroundings. The new client was Arístides, or *El Chulo*, the appropriate nickname by which he was also referred. He was the king of Madrid's world of professional prostitution, the epitome of the successful trafficker in women, popular and admired by both public women as well as wealthy libertines. With Arístides, Mari-Pepa experienced sexual passion for the first time in her life. The procurer retired his new lover from "the life" and put her in charge of a new brothel, the aforementioned House of Mari-Pepa.

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The narration returns to the present.

The success of the House of Mari-Pepa attracts the interest of a mysterious capitalist who wants to enter into a secret business arrangement with Arístides; he wants to establish and finance thirty-nine brothels, plus finance the *Casa de Mari-Pepa*. Arístides will act as administrator and official proprietor.

The identity of the mysterious silent partner is revealed; he is Don José, the Marquis de Villaperdida, a pillar of society: a senator in the *Cortes*, a Grandee of Spain, a member of the Royal Spanish Academy and heir to numerous titles and aristocratic honors. Despite his illustrious lineage, it is quite obvious that the marquis is a very sick man. His face and limbs are emaciated; his skin, abnormally dry and clammy to the touch; his intense eyes shine from hectic fever; and a fetid odor emanates from his body. The marquis lives alone in his family's cold, dark and dilapidated ancestral home, with the exception of a few servants and his two personal companions—Dr. Pérez and Father Manrique—who try to alleviate their employer's physical and spiritual agony, respectively. The marquis was widowed after almost two years of marriage to a beautiful young woman who died from a horrific disease months after the birth of their only son, Luis. The marquis blames himself for her painful and untimely death. He attends Father Manrique's masses every morning in his private chapel, and, on his knees, begs for his

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wife's forgiveness. Consumed by such guilt, he hopes to expiate his sins through prostitution by sending the profits from the forty bordellos to the Vatican for which he receives in return a letter of benediction from the Pope.

A curious Mari-Pepa discovers the identity of the silent partner and how he and Arístides have been able to meet undetected every week: the marquis has free access to Arístides' study through a secret door which connects to a bedroom in the adjacent unoccupied house which the aristocrat rents.

The following morning Estrella Sánchez, the most beautiful young woman Mari-Pepa has ever seen, arrives at the brothel seeking employment. Initially, Mari-Pepa and Arístides reject the nineteen year old's request, but Estrella is desperate. Dressed in old rags, she is pale, hungry, exhausted and on the verge of fainting. She has not eaten in two days. Prostitution, she insists, is the only solution for an illiterate girl from the "pueblo." After listening to Estrella's story about her abusive family situation, Arístides and Mari-Pepa are quite willing to accept her into their house. However, they are required by law to have her father's consent, which the inebriated and greedy mason gives in exchange for money. He enthusiastically signs the letter of authorization prepared by the procurer.

Meanwhile, Mari-Pepa and her residents open their hearts to the newcomer. They give her the nickname, *La Pálida*, for

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the paleness of her complexion. Estrella is happy and feels comfortable in her new surroundings. Mari-Pepa treats her like a daughter, feeds her well and, following Arístides' instructions, exchanges her rags for an expensive new wardrobe.

Immediately recognizing the enormous monetary value of a jewel like "La Pálida," Arístides writes an urgent letter to the marquis informing him of their magnificent "find," and requests permission to organize a private auction for their wealthy patrons at which the privilege of initiating Estrella into the profession would be sold to the highest bidder. The marquis, believing that Arístides is exaggerating the new arrival's potential, insists on seeing her. Hiding behind the secret door of a bedroom of the adjacent house, Don José spies on the unsuspecting young woman in conversation with Mari-Pepa in Arístides' study. After Estrella's departure, Mari-Pepa and Arístides find the marquis so overcome with emotion that they have to carry him into the study. After a long silence, Arístides receives a letter from the marquis emphatically forbidding the auction.

A few days later, Paco, also known as *El Granuja,* Estrella's fiancé, arrives at Mari-Pepa's after searching everywhere for his beloved since her disappearance from the neighborhood. Estrella's father informed him of her whereabouts. Despite his nickname, "scoundrel," Paco is an exemplary young man: valiant, loyal, sincere, responsible,

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friendly, affectionate and honorable. The tall, robust and energetic twenty-two year old is one of Madrid's best carpenters. As an only child, he lives with and takes care of his disabled widowed mother. Paco's love for Estrella is pure and noble. For a long time, he has been setting aside part of his salary of four pesetas a day in order to marry Estrella. He wants to take her out of Mari-Pepa's immediately, but when told of her accumulated debts, he proposes to reimburse the house in installments. Faced with the young man's determination not to be separated from his fiancée, Mari-Pepa and Arístides invite him to visit Estella at the bordello. All the prostitutes look forward to Paco's visits. They are moved by the young couple's innocence and the purity of their love for one another; a demonstration of love which, for them, comes to symbolize a happy respite from the horrors of their own daily existence.

After graduating from an exclusive Parisian preparatory school, Luis, the marquis' son and heir, returns home after a ten year absence. Sickly since birth, the now tall, blond twenty year old is extremely thin, pale and awkward. His character also leaves much to be desired: he is demanding, aloof, arrogant and pretentious. He speaks Spanish as if it were a translation of French; exaggerates Spanish pronunciation in an unsuccessful attempt to mask his peculiar accent.

Although the lugubrious atmosphere of the mansion comes

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alive with Luis' return, father and son act like strangers. Luis is not interested in wasting his free time with his father. He quickly acclimates to the life of leisure befitting a young man of his class. His days are spent alone or in the company of other wealthy heirs. He shops in the most expensive stores, rides his horse in the *Retiro,* gambles, smokes and becomes inebriated with his companions in Madrid's exclusive cafés, clubs, casinos, etc. Every evening he visits the elite Veloz Club to meet with his friends, one of whom is Arístides.

One evening the procurer takes Luis and other libertines to Mari-Pepa's. Luis is reluctant to join them; he fears that they will discover that he has never set foot inside a house of ill repute before. Once inside, Luis feels ashamed of his companions' dissolute behavior and is appalled when Arístides accepts bids for *La Pálida*'s sexual initiation. To put an end to the barbaric spectacle, but without realizing what he was doing, Luis impulsively participates in the auction and succeeds in "buying" Estrella's favors for the large sum of 10,000 *reales* (approximately 2,500 pesetas; one *real* is the equivalent to one quarter of one peseta). Arístides is pleased with the unexpected outcome. Before, he had been angered and confused by the marquis' silence concerning Estrella's future. He decided to take matters into his own hands, believing that the greedy aristocrat could not turn down the unnamed bidder's generous offer. However, Don José

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does reject it. Arístides is bewildered; Luis feels relieved. He does not want to take advantage of *La Pálida*; on the contrary, he pities her.

In another flashback, we learn the intimate details of the marquis' past. Already by the age of twenty-five, the atheist, cynical and quarrelsome Don José was infected with syphilis after years of promiscuous sexual adventures. A descendant of heroic warriors, his aristocratic genealogy dates back to the Middle Ages. In order to perpetuate the distinguished lineage, Don José's father ordered his first born son to marry a healthy well-bred virgin. Don José found himself in a dilemma: confess his secret or remain silent. Cowardice triumphed. They married and the groom's disease was transmitted to his bride. Luis was born sickly; with rickets, and his body was covered with scabs. A few months later the marquise died, cursing her husband. Medical precept put an end to the young widower's sexual activities. The marquis accepted and even embraced his punishment. His remorse increased with the years.

Such was the marquis' life before he saw Estrella Sánchez. The young beauty awakened in the diseased aristocrat all the furious passion he believed had died forever. He refused to accept the offer of 10,000 *reales* because he is determined to possess Estrella himself. When he informs Arístides, the procurer vehemently objects. The marquis threatens him with his powerful enmity; and, as an

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afterthought pays him the 10,000 *reales*. Arístides is faced with a dilemma: save Estrella from a horrific fate or suffer the vengeance of the employer he both detests and fears. Despite his reluctance, he sacrifices the young woman. He blindfolds her as ordered and surrenders her to the marquis in the secret bedroom. Estrella shudders when she hears the unknown voice. Believing *El Chulo* informed her of the purpose of the meeting, the aristocrat is angered when Estrella resists his brutal advances. He brings her up to date; he has purchased her services for 10,000 *reales*. Estrella feels betrayed; Mari-Pepa and Arístides did not have the courage to tell her the truth. She resigns herself to the situation. Afterwards, the marquis coldly dismisses her.

Mari-Pepa is shocked when she sees Estrella in disarray. In reality the madam had no knowledge of the deception. Estrella fears that she has been infected with syphilis. She rebels against her fate, now determined to seek revenge. She blackmails Arístides into handing over 5,000 *reales* and, over the procurer's objections, plans to remain at Mari-Pepa's.

Luis, like his father, cannot forget *La Pálida*. For the first time in his life, he experiences carnal desire and arranges a private visit with the protagonist at Mari-Pepa's.

When he returns home, Luis receives word of the sudden and rapid decline in his father's health. Luis mistakenly believes his father is dying of cancer. The marquis wants to confess his secret to his son, but once again he does not have

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the courage to do so. Don José dies in excruciating agony blaspheming God.

After spending several days locked in her room, Estrella finally consents to see Paco. This final scene between the young couple is the most touching in the entire novel. Estrella informs Paco that she can no longer be his wife, since she has been contaminated. She bids him farewell forever and advises him to take care of his mother. Before leaving the bordello, Paco tells Mari-Pepa that he wants to confront Arístides. Traumatized by Estrella's devastating news, the carpenter falls apart; he stops going to work, loses weight and drinks heavily. His only goal in life now is to avenge his beloved's dishonor.

Arístides is overjoyed with the news of the marquis' demise. His dreams have become reality. He and Mari-Pepa are the sole heirs to forty bordellos. They are rich! Nevertheless, his happiness is not complete. He fears Paco's revenge. He knows that the carpenter will have to kill him. When he returns to the brothel, Paco is waiting. Arístides tries to placate him, explain his position, and even dares to offer him monetary compensation. Paco insists that the two men walk to the corner of the block. There, as the carpenter gives Arístides the chance to defend himself, the latter, suddenly and without provocation, stabs the unarmed Paco in the heart. The murderer runs to the brothel and concocts a story to keep Mari-Pepa's love and to prevent his own

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incarceration. He inflicts a superficial wound in his arm and tells Mari-Pepa and Estrella that Paco attacked him first and he was forced to kill him in self-defense. Estrella faints.

Meanwhile, Luis has become infected with syphilis. The mansion returns to its former gloominess and inactivity; now as before, its rooms are inhabited by a priest, a physician and an infirm Marquis de Villaperdida.

When she regains consciousness, Estrella asks Mari-Pepa to take her to the hospital the following day. She no longer wants to infect men and die, she declares; she wants to live.

La Pálida

In a private dining room in an exclusive Madrid café, all the extravagant arrangements have been completed for the bacchanal prepared for *La Botica*—a heterogeneous social club comprised of aristocrats, *nouveaux riches*, clergymen and renowned artists and writers. All the members are dedicated hedonists, worn out by years of indulging in all the pleasures of the flesh; united now for the purpose of taking licentiousness to its ultimate extreme. In order to be admitted to *La Botica*, the candidate must, without turning pale or trembling, shout the club's motto: "¡Viva la muerte!" The members boast of the nefarious consequences of their sexual excesses. And, if the candidate suffers from a venereal disease, he must vow never to seek medical treatment;

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the only treatments permitted are *La Botica*'s medicines of dissipation.

The host of the bacchanal is a veteran of orgies, Don Arístides—as he is now known—the same Arístides, ex-trafficker in women and, at the death of Don José, the Marquis de Villaperdida, the legitimate heir to forty bordellos. This fascinating character is the talk of the town. Rumors circulate about his immense wealth, officially attributed to wise investments and fortuitous speculations on the stock market. In the year that transpired between the conclusion of La prostituta and the beginning of La Pálida, Arístides realized all his fantasies. He bought a life of respectability and grandiosity for himself: he was elected as a deputy to the *Cortes*; he purchased a cross of nobility; a sumptuous palace on *La Castellana*, in which he currently resides with his wife, the former prostitute and madam, Mari-Pepa. Determined to erase all memory of her former life, she changed her name to María, for its association with the mother of Jesus Christ and the ideal of purity. Arístides also purchased for his wife a title of her own, that of President of the Association of Devoted and Charitable Ladies.

The purpose of the bacchanal is to celebrate the induction into *La Botica* of a new *Boticaria*, the official queen of the club. Don Arístides formally introduces the newly elected *Boticaria*, who is none other than Estrella Sánchez, better known by her professional name, *La Pálida*.

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After Arístides' speech, the impatient and inebriated guests can no longer restrain their crude impulses. They continue chanting "¡Viva *La Pálida*!" and "¡Viva *La Boticaria*!" as they undress the young woman and place her on top of the banquet table. In one voice, they shout: "Let's anoint her!" and grab bottles of champagne. At Arístides' signal, the bottles are uncorked, and foam and champagne pour over and down the beautiful nude body of the now officially installed *Boticaria*.

The narrator brings readers up-to-date on events in the protagonist's life.

Estrella continued to live at the *Casa de Mari-Pepa*, and in the short period of one year was admitted to San Juan de Dios Hospital three times in hopes of alleviating recurrent painful attacks of syphilis. Realizing she could no longer endure the dangers and restrictions of brothel life as well as the humiliating and painful medical treatments, Estrella resolved to change her surroundings. After her third treatment she went to Arístides' mansion and announced her decision. The deputy agreed. He would take charge of her new life. *La Pálida* would no longer be a brothel prostitute; she will become a *buscona*, an available professional in search of an arrangement with one client.

The narrator returns to the events of the present.

Estrella returns home the morning after the bacchanal. She lives well and alone with her maid, Aniceta, in the first floor apartment of a modern and quiet house. The landlord,

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Don Abundio, lives on the second floor. The Pérez family resides on the top floor—Doña Angustias and her two children: the beautiful twenty-one year old Rosita, and Juanito, age nineteen. Doña Angustias is the widow of an infantry captain accidentally killed by a Carlist at the Battle of Monte-Muro during the Second Carlist War (1873-76).

The Pérezes are in the midst of a financial crisis. Don Abundio is threatening to throw them out onto the street if they do not immediately hand over the several months of rent they owe him. Doña Angustias is to blame for having created and aggravated the situation after the death of her husband four years before. Fanatically obsessed with the idea of belonging to the middle class, she was spending beyond her means in order to maintain appearances and her own selfish illusions. It was impossible to convince her to stop wasting her widow's pension on unnecessary expenses: a hired cook, a rented piano for Rosita without the benefit of lessons, and law school for a son who possesses neither the aptitude nor the desire for a legal career, etc. To pay off their mounting debts, they were forced to sell furniture, the late Captain Pérez' sword, turn off heat and lights and limit their dinner to potato stew or a fried egg. Despite everything, Doña Angustias clung to her mania. She conceived a plan to economize and forget about their difficulties at the same time. She and her children would go out every evening and secure a table at the *Café Nuevo del Siglo*, a popular locale

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in the *Calle Mayor*. There, they would be able to dine very inexpensively, stay warm, have light and listen to magnificent violin and piano concerts until midnight. Despite her skimping, Doña Angustias still cannot pay her rent. Now the family is on the verge of being evicted. Informed of the situation by the meddlesome doorkeeper, Estrella rescues the family by paying their rent.

The widow continues to take her children to *Café Nuevo del Siglo*. Besides the cited advantages, the café—frequented by Madrid's young people—now represents fertile ground for finding a husband for her daughter. At twenty-one, Rosita is extremely attractive, lively, petite and well developed. Doña Angustias insists that her daughter marry as soon as possible and with the first gentleman who shows her any interest. The widow does not concern herself about the character of the suitors nor her daughter's wishes. Appearances are what matters. Doña Angustias severely reprimands Rosita for rejecting well-dressed (albeit distasteful) suitors. Rosita is totally disgusted with her mother. She knows that the widow and Juanito want to marry her off in order to improve their own financial situation.

Rosita has many boyfriends, one after the other until she becomes, at one time or another, the girlfriend of all the available patrons. Consequently, she earns the nickname, "the café girlfriend."

Rosita is a very unhappy young woman. During the day,

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she spends long hours alone, locked in her room. When she emerges from her refuge, her physical transformation is obvious: droopiness, lethargy and shadows under her eyes. She is frustrated and tormented by her inability to satiate her volcanic emotions. She dreams of experiencing a superhuman passion. As a result, she suffers fainting spells. All the while, Doña Angustias remains oblivious to her daughter's inner turmoil.

Although Estrella saves them from eviction, the Pérez family's financial situation worsens. First there is the pawning of belongings; then money borrowed from loan sharks; afterwards, sponging off friends and acquaintances; followed by sponging off patrons at the café; and finally accepting pocket money given by a generous neighbor. Doña Angustias' pride does not permit her to request money directly from Estrella. She sends her daughter instead. Rosita, however, is overjoyed at any and every opportunity to visit *La Pálida*. Captain Pérez' daughter admires their beautiful, kind and charitable neighbor. She is fascinated with her elegant wardrobe, the splendid furniture and adornments in her luxurious apartment. During one such visit to request money, Rosita's fascination takes on a new dimension. Already aware by way of the doorkeeper of the details of her benefactress' professional life, Rosita is extremely curious and bewitched by the idea of being a public woman. Rosita is overcome with desire and envy. This woman has known pleasures only dreamt

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of by her, the café girlfriend. Rosita impulsively attempts to seduce the *buscona*. Estrella is not surprised by Rosita's uncontrollable passion, but pleased and accepting of the situation.

Later, Arístides and Luis visit Estrella. At first she does not remember Luis, the syphilitic heir prohibited by medical precept from marrying. Luis wants Estrella to be his mistress. She accepts and both parties agree on the conditions of their formal arrangement. Luis wants Estrella to move into a newly constructed house in the suburbs. Since *La Pálida* is now the mistress of an aristocrat, it is beneath his position to allow her to continue living in a bourgeois neighborhood. Estrella objects; she will not move. Luis reluctantly concedes to her decision, but worries about his reputation. Luis falls deeper and deeper in love with his mistress, but she only tolerates his expressions of desire. Rosita is the recipient of all of Estrella's passion.

While absorbed one day in their caresses and conversation, the two women do not notice the unexpected arrival of the marquis accompanied by fellow *La Botica* member, the priest Lasoga. Estrella is enraged with Luis, but Rosita is embarrassed upon observing the priest's sly look of satisfaction. He recognizes Rosita from the *Café Nuevo del Siglo*. The womanizing priest amuses himself by studying the figures of the young female patrons while sipping his coffee. Seated in full view of the Pérezes, he has had his eye on

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Rosita for a long time now. Based on his observations, he concludes that she will become a prostitute. Each evening the priest patiently awaits Rosita' dishonor. He has observed her strained relationship with Doña Angustias and Juanito, the parade of boyfriends, her failure to find a husband, and the progressive symptoms of hysteria. The priest is determined to possess her.

Luis explains the purpose of their visit. The members of *La Botica* require Estrella's presence at a party that night. Estrella only consents to Luis' pleas when she sees Rosita in a *tête-à-tête* with Lasoga. Although she divines the priest's intentions, she is furious with Rosita who seems receptive to his amorous advances. Jealous, *La Pálida* consents to an encounter with Luis in her bedroom while Rosita and the priest continue their conversation in the study. Estrella wants to take revenge against Rosita through Luis. She decides to give to Luis all the savage passion she reserved only for Rosita. Luis marvels before the transformation of his mistress, now frenetic and insatiable. Later, the lovers are awakened by piercing screams and find Rosita in the study spread out on the floor, disheveled and rocked by nervous convulsions. Luis, Estrella and Lasoga finally succeed in restraining her. When she regains consciousness, Rosita cries in Estrella's arms, but the latter rejects her.

A nude dance competition is the purpose of *La Botica*'s party that evening in which all of Madrid's *busconas* are

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invited to participate for a prize. Luis forbids Estrella from participating but she defies him. When the Duke de Tres Estrellas encourages *La Boticaria*, an enraged Luis slaps the aristocrat. Luis regrets his impulsive act, especially when the duke challenges him to a duel the following day. Estrella abandons Luis and returns home where she and Rosita reconcile.

Luis' life and reputation are saved when the duke announces that he is wounded and incapable of proceeding with the duel. Luis and his mistress reconcile and start anew. Estrella will move into the house purchased for her by Luis. The affair between Rosita and Lasoga no longer bothers Estrella; she even facilitates their encounters by allowing them to use her apartment in Don Abundio's building.

To celebrate her move, Estrella plans a housewarming party and invites all the members of *La Botica*, especially the Duke de Tres Estrellas to whom she is strongly attracted. The aristocrat has reawakened the last vestiges of her romantic heart, of her past when she was still innocent and idealistic. Although Luis loves her madly, his love never satisfies her deepest longings. Despite his long and distinguished lineage, the Duke de Tres Estrellas is an impoverished aristocrat who lives off an income equivalent to a civil servant's salary. The thirty year old duke is handsome, vigorous, elegant, sophisticated, a good gambler, and a connoisseur of women, especially public women. Estrella's admiration and respect for him increased after his gentlemanly behavior during the

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duel with the rickety Luis. The protagonist does not love the duke like she adored Paco. What she feels for the former is a powerful carnal longing, to the extent that the idea of possessing him becomes an obsession.

Meanwhile, Luis has fallen gravely ill. The painful and debilitating symptoms of syphilis have resurfaced. He no longer dares to spend the night away from Dr. Pérez' care. Shortly afterwards, Estrella, too, falls ill again. When Arístides visits her, she blames Luis for her condition. She is totally unprepared when the ex-trafficker reveals the truth: it was the late Don José who infected her. For Estrella the revelation of her seducer's identity nullifies the agreement she has with his son. Knowing Luis is confined to bed, she is determined to enjoy life and do it in the duke's bed.

When Estrella moved from Don Abundio's building, she gave Rosita the contents of her apartment. She asked Rosita and her family to move into her former apartment since the rent had already been paid several months in advance. Doña Angustias was ecstatic, totally dazzled by such luxury. She lied to her friends, attributing her good fortune to winning the lottery. After moving into the new apartment, Rosita has a frank discussion with her mother in which she enumerates Doña Angustias' many faults for which her children have had to suffer the consequences. She confesses the true nature of her relationship with Estrella, as well as her current status as

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Lasoga's lover. Later, during the priest's visit with Rosita and Angustias, it is revealed that Lasoga served as a Carlist captain at the Battle of Monte-Muro. Moreover, it was Lasoga who accidentally killed Captain Pérez. This revelation puts an abrupt end to Rosita's affair with her first lover.

Estrella consults with a specialist in the treatment of venereal diseases who informs her that her condition is terminal. The forlorn woman laments the tragedy of her short life. She is going to die without having known most of life's pleasures. She will be able to die resigned to her fate if she realizes her last yearning: to love and be loved by the Duke de Tres Estrellas. The aristocrat accepts Estrella's invitation to spend the night with her at her apartment. The servants gossip about their mistress' strange behavior. She orders her footmen never to return to Luis' mansion to inquire about his failing health. The servants judge her ungrateful and disloyal. Estrella sends for Rosita.

Luis, now confined to bed, is visited by one of Estrella's female servants, whose loyalty to Luis supersedes her loyalty to her mistress, since it is Luis who pays her salary. Luis learns of Estrella's secret rendezvous with the duke. The betrayal wounds the marquis profoundly; he truly loves Estrella and cannot conceive of life without her. Anger and the thirst for revenge give life and strength to the dying marquis. He dresses and departs.

Meanwhile, Estrella, the duke and Rosita are dining and

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are inebriated together in Estrella's study. The hostess is happy, but impatient. She looks forward to the end of the meal and Rosita's departure. Estrella does not realize that the duke is now attracted to her best friend. Rosita's unexpected presence is a pleasant surprise for the duke. He decides to take advantage of being alone in the company of both professionals: the veteran and the novice. When the duke suggests that they all sleep together, Estrella goes completely crazy; Rosita, paralyzed by shock, turns pale and begins to tremble. The duke carries Rosita into the bedroom. *La Pálida* follows them; hitting the duke, trying to separate the couple. They all tumble together onto the bed in a confused heap. Rosita is crying; Estrella, screaming and hitting the duke who is laughing, enjoying his efforts to subdue both women. Suddenly, the dying marquis appears at the door. Although he is unable to distinguish between the moving forms on the bed, Luis fires his revolver, killing Estrella with one bullet to the brain. He tries to fire again in the direction of Rosita and the duke, but he does not have enough strength. Rosita and the duke flee through a back door seconds before the servants arrive.

In the epilogue, the narrator recounts the events which transpired after the protagonist's death. The murder of Estrella Sánchez was officially declared a suicide. The police found the revolver next to her body. Luis, seized by horrible convulsions, was taken home in a carriage,

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accompanied by the deceased's servant who suggested to Dr. Pérez that he prepare an alibi for the marquis. It does not matter, the doctor replied. Luis will be dead by morning. Meanwhile, that same evening, the members of *La Botica* toast the success of Don Arístides. The deputy to the *Cortes* has just been named Civil Governor of Madrid.

In La prostituta López Bago attributes a combination of both distinctive and stereotypical physical characteristics to describe the tetralogy's first heroine, the epitome of perfect feminine beauty and allure:

> Estrella tenía diez y nueve años; era blanca y rubia, de buena estatura, esbelta y pálida, delgada y poco firme en su andar, lo que le daba ese balanceo que es la gracia lánguida con que las palmeras reciben el viento. Sobre los pómulos veíase acusada la línea curva que separa el párpado inferior, única arruga de la juventud que adorna la mirada, y ponía en sus ojos azules la expresión voluptuosa de un guiño constante. La nariz pequeña y las orejas diminutas; la boca fresca, pero seria, muy seria; y tan abundante el rubio pelo, que el peine no logró nunca poner orden en aquellas ondas, y siempre se rebelaban muchas hebras contra la tirantez y el alisamiento, quedando sueltas y revolteado. Dijérase, para dar algún nombre á su

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cabeza, que iba *peinada de aureola*. (84-85)

Estrella's "conjunto de belleza igual, uniforme, tranquila," yet "misteriosa" (85) is overwhelming to men; they are immediately and irresistibly magnetized by her. Once males begin to recover somewhat from the shock of her beauty, they react not with chaste feelings or expressions of love, adoration or veneration for a living work of perfection, but with the more base "enloquecimiento" (85). This is precisely the effect Estrella has on both physically degenerate Marquises de Villaperdida whom she brings to life, albeit stimulating powerful emotional and physiological reactions evidenced by their obsession and uncontrollable concupiscence.

Estrella's exterior beauty as well as her outstanding character as a sincere, loving, noble, honorable, compassionate, credulous, docile and naive young woman belie her naturalistic background: a dysfunctional family situation within a vicious deterministic environment. Estrella was raised in a home in which the following conditions prevailed: physical and psychological paternal abuse, the threat of incest, alcoholism, illiteracy, the absence of maternal attention and guidance, and perennial economic insecurity. Estrella tells Mari-Pepa and Arístides her life story:

> Su padre era albañil. Iba vestido como los albañiles, porque por lo demás, no trabajaba casi nunca. Era un cobarde que le tenía miedo al andamio, pareciéndole mejor pasar los días en la

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> taberna. Su madre estaba siempre en la cama, es decir, en un jergón tirado por el suelo, porque la cama, los colchones, las sábanas, todo se vendió, y en aquel jergón dormían los tres, el padre, la madre y la hija, metiéndose entre la paja de maíz, por una abertura, para abrigarse. El albañil, *cuando volvía de mal vino*, pegaba á su mujer, y por eso estaba enferma, sin poderse mover, verdaderamente baldada á fuerza de golpes, y en un estado de imbecilidad tan completo, que ni siquiera sabía quejarse, ni siquiera sentía el frío en el invierno.
>
> No vivían en la guardilla; vivían en aquel jergón que estaba en la guardilla.... Cuando la madre se afeó, se puso vieja, tenía el cuerpo lleno de cardenales; y muchas noches Estrella tuvo que defenderse en una lucha terrible contra el borracho, contra su mismo padre, que, ofuscado y bestializado por el alcohol del aguardiente, quería lo que era imposible. (87)

Not only did Estrella and her parents live in one of the worst slums in Madrid, but the only window in the inside room they shared faced what López Bago describes as a "hormiguero humano" (123); in other words, a *casa de vecindad*, a tenement in which acts of prostitution regularly took place. Matilde Cuevas offers the following definition:

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> En los llamados barrios bajos se desarrollará un tipo de habitat característico que ocuparán las clases más populares; son las denominadas *casas de vecindad*. Constan ésas frecuentemente de una sala, una cocina y dos alcobas oscuras "todo menguado a una pequeñez que espanta". Allí viven una familia, a veces numerosa, que para poder pagarla subalquila frecuentemente a uno o más individuos una habitación entera, un rincón de la misma o una parte del lecho.[3]

Estrella's life outside this one room attic was restricted to the patio or the streets, where she would interact with so many other lost and neglected children like herself, subjected to miserable subhuman conditions:

> —¡A la calle, ó al patio!....
>
> La calle, llena de ruidos discordes, vocerío de vendedores ambulantes, gritos de pilluelos desarrapados y sucios como ella...la calle, con sus olores acres, fuertes y malsanos, las dos hileras de casas mirándose frente á frente, dejando poco espacio á la carrera del viento, estrecho cauce á las aguas en los días de lluvia; y el patio, donde á la postre se reunían todos los chiquillos de la vecindad ... la calle y el patio: éste era su mundo. Esto era todo.
>
> Allí creció entre los charcos y las inmundicias,

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> y como ella y con ella crecieron otros y otras, niños y niñas, en montón como la basura .... (124-25)

Among the familial deterministic factors cited in the preceding passages, Estrella's daily exposure to the promiscuous activities of the *casa de vecindad* stands out as an underlying motivation for Estrella's flight to Mari-Pepa's. While indoor, Estrella's only escape from her abusive situation came from looking out of the family's only window. From this limited perspective, the mysterious sounds emanating from the *casa de vecindad* and the visions of "negras figuras de hombres y mujeres" who "iban y venían" (123) must have left an indelible mark on her consciousness; the house (and houses like it) would have come to represent—albeit abnormally so—familiarity, a place of refuge, perhaps. Referring to the environment of *las casas de vecindad*, Cuevas writes: "Estas condiciones del hacinamiento y pobreza en las que se desarrolla la vida de las capas más bajas de la población propiciarán el ejercicio de la prostitución" (169).

Estrella Sánchez' predicament represents a combination of significant factors reflective of a situation shared by millions of women in nineteenth-century Europe. In addition to her particular family situation, we ask: What were the larger socio-historical factors which would lead Estrella directly to a house of ill repute? Before examining the internal world of professional prostitution, we shall now turn

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our attention to some general observations concerning the status, and the prevailing attitudes and perceptions about women in the nineteenth century.

In the nineteenth century, women of all socioeconomic classes were perceived as naturally inferior beings. Females were subjugated to and dependent upon the will (and whims) of the males in their families—primarily the father or husband, and sometimes brothers or sons—in every aspects of their lives; economic, social, legal and sexual. From early childhood, girls of all classes were indoctrinated in the belief that a woman's sole purpose and only career in life was that of a homemaker, wife and mother. The only other option was to become a nun. Only through caring for their husbands and children would women be able to satisfy their docile, sentimental and self-sacrificing nature.[4] Philanthropic work was the only other outlet allowed women of social status (Scanlon 62).

Education in Spain for young females from the aristocracy and bourgeoisie reflected preparation for their domestic role. Needlework was at the top of the list of "trabajos propios del sexo" (Turin 228), including dressmaking and embroidery. Girls were taught to read, write and cook. If their lessons were more painstaking, some geography, history, music and, in some cases, drawing and French would be added to round out their education. Generally, whatever instruction girls received in these subjects was poor; lacking in regularity,

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thoroughness and correction, inasmuch as it was believed that these skills would serve little or no practical use in their later lives. The young lady who did not attend school only ventured outside to attend mass or to take walks, always accompanied by a relative or servant (Turin 228-29).

While marriage and monogamy were hailed as both natural and indispensable to women's economic and social survival, they were also essential to men, especially from the upper classes, but for different economic reasons, inasmuch as the institution of marriage was intimately linked to personal wealth and property: "In effect monogamy went hand in hand with the evolution of private property" (Bullough, Women 3). Men needed assurance that the wealth and property they acquired in life would be transferred to their legitimate sons. A man had to be sure that the offspring born of women with whom he had had sexual relations were of his own flesh and blood; a man did not want to support another man's children. Marriage was instituted first and foremost with the objective of resolving this problem. One woman, the wife, would be held responsible for ensuring the paternity of her legal husband. With the intention of safeguarding against a wife's infidelity, man "became the proprietor of women" (Bullough, Women 3); through marriage he "adquiría derechos exclusivos de propiedad sobre el cuerpo de su mujer, no pudiendo ésta disponer de su cuerpo libremente" (Scanlon 133). A man's honor depended upon the chastity of his wife; her

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"infidelidad era, por consiguiente, una infracción del derecho de propiedad de su marido ... ponía en peligro los derechos de propiedad de los herederos legítimos de su marido" (Scanlon 133). Legally, a wife's adultery was grounds for divorce; she risked losing everything: her home, her children, financial security and social standing. The adulteress was regarded as a "fallen woman," subject to degradation and ostracism (Scanlon 133). Furthermore, the rise of capitalism and the bourgeoisie only served to intensify this attitude.[5]

The same standards did not, of course, apply to married men. It was accepted and expected that men, regardless of marital status, possessed strong libidos, unlike their wives who were "criaturas esencialmente espirituales" (Scanlon 132), asexual and maternal. Men could not be held accountable for the effect the sexually attractive female had on them; men were compelled by their natural urges to express their sexuality outside the confines of marriage with as many women and as frequently as they desired. If blame was assigned for a husband's adultery, it was attributed to women: to the "other woman" who had seduced him, or to the wife who failed to satisfy him (Scanlon 132). The proper response for a wife confronted with her husband's betrayal was tenderness, resignation (Scanlon 132); the wife should adopt the posture of "suffer in silence" or a "look the other way" attitude.

The high moral standards upper class men held for their wives did not apply, in their view, to working class women.

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Men from the laboring classes were deemed their social, moral and economic inferiors; females from these groups were perceived even more so, relegated to almost the bottom rung of the social order. According to Flexner, nineteenth-century men of power and wealth were "inured to the sight of human inequalities, callous as to the value of lower-class life, and distinctly lacking in respect for womanhood, especially that of the working-classes" (44). The status quo fomented the double victimization of working class women, by class and gender. This, as we recall from our study on the issue in Chapter II, was one of the principal objections to the perpetuation of the existing capitalist system expounded by literary anarchists.

The concerns of the propertyless laboring class men were more primitive than their wealthy male counterparts—the unrelenting day-to-day struggle for survival, to provide food, shelter and clothing for their families. Although upper class women were subjugated and remained largely alienated from the affairs of the outside world, they did have creature comforts, unlike their female counterparts from the proletariat who were forced to seek employment outside the home in order to supplement their husbands' income:

> ...el trabajo de las mujeres de clase baja o era aceptado como parte del orden natural de las cosas o se consideraba lamentable, pero inevitable. Las mujeres de clase baja proporcionaban una fuerza

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> laboral barata, y el *status* inferior de su trabajo no suponía una amenaza para el *statu quo* sexual. (Scanlon 64)

While the wages of male laborers were meager, those of females were even more pitiful—only a "mitad o un tercio de los del varón" (Capel Martínez 272). Nevertheless, both salaries were required for the family's survival.[6]

Although the labor of lower class women did not pose a threat to the property obsessed upper classes, according to Nead, middle class English moralists, for example, reflected the general belief that female employment "led to moral degradation and the destruction of family life. Working women transgressed bourgeois definitions of respectability and female dependency; their imagined sexuality and economic autonomy made them objects of threats."[7] The general perception of the "innate moral frailty of the working classes" (Nead 104) coupled with insufficient wages facilitated the rationalization of the availability of an ample supply of the female working population to satisfy men's carnal desires. The demand was always present; patriarchal society perpetuated and justified sex for hire with proletarian females. Men were satisfied while "sewing-girls and working-class women" were doubly rewarded: receiving paultry financial compensation for their "innate licentious inclination" (Nead 103). And when this so-called "innate licentiousness" was not overt, upper class males sought to

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"expose" it. The sexual harassment of working class women was the norm; many were "persuaded" to make "las 'concesiones' de tipo personal que se ven obligadas a hacer ... a capataces, jefes, señores, para mantener el empleo" (Capel Martínez 272). Bullough concurs and makes the following observation:

> It was not economics alone that encouraged lower-class women to view prostitution as a possible livelihood. Upper-class men considered the poorer classes fair game. Women of these groups were subject to all kinds of propositions and overtures, many of them quite vulgar and overt. When respectability was measured by wealth and status, by definition, no woman of the lower classes could be respectable. (Women 200)

Inasmuch as lower class women were both perceived as innately licentious and not deserving of the respect accorded to upper class women, prostitution was just one more small step down the social and moral ladder: "Distant from the respectable classes, she [the prostitute] belonged to the 'residuum', that displaced and disinterested mass at the very bottom of the social hierarchy" (Nead 95).

Alongside their proletarian counterparts, "las muchachas del campo venidas a servir a la capital" were easy marks, "fácilmente seducidas por fantásticos espejuelos."[8] Women employed inside homes as domestic servants did not escape the attentions of the males in the household—the master and his

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sons. Scanlon writes about this abusive situation in Spain, citing statistical data published at the end of the century by Rafael Eslava, the "jefe de la Sección de Higiene de la Policía." According to Scanlon, Eslava "afirma que el 60 por 100 de las muchachas del servicio doméstico son seducidas por el señorito de la casa" (111). Female domestics were oftentimes not even compensated for their sexual favors; such favors were considered part of one's "duties" to the household. Such situations continued usually until the woman became pregnant, at which point she would be summarily dismissed. If the woman were brave enough to seek assistance for her predicament, she had no recourse against her *señorito seductor*. In fact, it was the woman who was treated like a criminal (Nelken 141).

In any event, whether deceived by the "señorito de la casa" or seduced and abandoned—as so many naive young women were—after a promise of marriage given by a smooth talking playboy or one's own fiancé, according to the morality of the era, the unmarried female who lost her virginity was already considered a prostitute. Dishonored daughters were rejected by their families. Alone and desperate, they soon resorted to prostitution in order to survive (Capel Martínez 272).

While society failed to help these young women on the one hand, on the other, it victimized lower class females again by fostering propaganda designed to perpetuate the image, in its extreme, of the prostitute as an abominable subhuman species.

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Although more progressive specialists—physicians, sociologists, etc.—advocated compassionate treatment (Bullough, Women 232, 233; Decker 57), the prostitute was, generally speaking, an object of vilification in the consciousness of nineteenth-century society. In Victorian England, Trudgill maintains, prostitutes were "regarded with such remarkable venom" and "so often inspired active hatred and revulsion." They were, in effect, "treated as some kind of moral monster."[9] Such an attitude was reflected by López Bago in the words of the despicable Don José, the Marquis de Villaperdida, who voices his opinion about prostitutes to Arístides: "—Son unas pecadoras—replicó con severo acento el personaje—unas pecadoras impenitentes, las más infames, las más despreciables. Son la impureza con toda su podredumbre" (La prostituta 50). According to Nead, prostitutes were stereotyped as figures of "contagion, disease and death; a sign of social disorder and ruin to be feared and controlled" (106).

Ironically, prostitutes were imbued with almost mythical, superhuman powers; they "stood as a symbol of the dangerous forces which could bring about anarchy and social disintegration" (Nead 106).[10] Other attitudes, while perhaps not quite so damning, were, nevertheless, extremely negative. For some minds she symbolized "disorder," but also "excess, and improvidence—in other words, a rejection of order and economy;"[11] while in others, the prostitute was ranked

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alongside "criminales" and "mendigos."[12] Bullough cites Lombroso's hypothesis that "the criminal and the prostitute were identical from the physiological point of view." Prostitution for Lombroso, Bullough contends, "was merely the female form of crime" (Women 240). Again, the propaganda held that the upper class clients[13] were innocent victims of these professional *femmes fatales*: "Los hombres que frecuentaban a las prostitutas eran ciudadanos respectables seducidos por las mañas de aquellas mujeres viciosas" (Scanlon 106).

In order to avoid or sidestep the real issues, the mentality of the times resorted to employing smokescreens to explain why women became prostitutes. Only a few of the reasons given might have been representative of only, at most, the small minority of cases; other so-called reasons were completely ludicrous to be cited as primary causes of prostitution. According to several scholars, nineteenth-century society wanted to believe that women chose prostitution because the profession was perfectly suited to their innately perverse and promiscuous character.[14] Prostitutes were seen as essentially lazy creatures by nature;[15] preferring the "easy" or "soft" life of seducing men (Scanlon 106), rather than dedicating themselves to "una vida honrada y laboriosa más propia de su clase social" (Nash 34). Undeservedly, they coveted wealth; desired a luxurious life style far above their station in the world (Capel Martínez 271; Nash 34; Scanlon 106). Their restless nature[16] led them

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to rebel against convention—precluding a stable family life and fidelity to one man (Bernaldo de Quirós 59). It was even thought that vanity and an obsession with fine clothing were strong motivating forces for entering the profession (Bullough, Women 198; Valverde 175, 178).

The most overwhelming and compelling causes of professional prostitution among proletarian women were, categorically, economic: destitution, ignorance, illiteracy, the paucity of employment opportunities; and, even when jobs were found, women received starvation wages, worked long hours in often dangerous working conditions.[17]

López Bago focuses on these primary factors in his depiction of Estrella Sánchez' calamitous situation. Like the vast majority of lower class women, the desperate Estrella enters Mari-Pepa's for one reason only: to stay alive. Society, López Bago maintains, sends a heartless but clear message to these women: sell the use of your bodies—your only asset—or starve to death. Evoking empathy for his protagonist, the narrator of La Pálida laments the injustice of the abuse and the depths to which one must sink in order to survive:

> ¡El lupanar! Recordaba el día en que, desfallecida por el hambre, cubierta de harapos, ella, Estrella Sánchez, la hija del mal obrero, héroe de las tabernas y desertor de las filas del trabajo, llamó á la puerta de la casa de trato,

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> pidiendo como limosna un lecho donde poder entregar la virginidad de su cuerpo á cambio de un traje y una comida....
>
> Ignorancia, miseria y hambre; con cualquiera de estas tres cosas, un valiente es asesino, un hombre honrado llega á ser un ladrón, y una mujer prostituta. Con cualquiera, con una sola, ¡y ella tenía las tres! Comió, tuvo ropas con que vestirse y aprendió mucho, pero ¡á cuánta costa! (39)

The lack of elementary instruction and training in basic manual skills are cited as two of the principal factors which compel Estrella Sánchez to seek shelter and employment in a house of ill repute. The protagonist is totally unequipped to survive in the outside world. As she explains to Mari-Pepa: "...no sé leer, ni escribir, ni coser, ni trabajar, ni nada que se le parezca, porque no me lo enseñaron..." (La prostituta 88). The first part of Estrella's statement addresses the issue of illiteracy, a situation which was widespread in Spain for most of the nineteenth century, especially among the female population. Turin observes how "en 1875, España cuenta con doce millones de analfabetos entre dieciocho millones de habitantes, casi tres cuartas partes de la población" (15). This state of affairs was especially disturbing in light of the fact that the 1857 *Ley Moyano* was "a far-reaching law that made Spain one of the first states to prescribe compulsory primary education."[18] We learn from

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Scanlon that this law, also known as *La Ley de Instrucción Pública*, "ordenó la creación de una escuela para niños y otra para niñas en todos los municipios con una población superior a los 500 habitantes" (17). Estrella, therefore, like so many others, should have received a basic formal and public education. However, as the statistics attest, law and reality were worlds apart. According to Holtby, the application of the law was impeded, in part, due to the religious (the Catholic Church) versus the secular (Krausism) debate over which sector should oversee primary instruction (183-84).

Despite her illiteracy, Estrella should have been instructed in basic domestic skills like sewing, as she herself implied in her statement to Mari-Pepa. The fault here has more to do with her family situation. Many *pueblo* girls were taught domestic skills. Both an abusive family and the existing social order are held culpable for denying Estrella any means, or, the opportunity, at least, to earn a living—albeit meager—through morally and socially acceptable trades. Lower class women needed to be taught technical skills even more than their upper class counterparts; for the latter were never expected to earn a living, the former were obligated to do so by economic imperative.

Estrella's plight brings to the forefront an issue which was a common practice in the nineteenth century: the sale of daughters into a life of professional prostitution. Parents would sell the services of their own daughters in order to

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support other family members; or because, as strange as it may seem, they believed prostitution would offer them a better quality of life (Bullough, History 176). To the contemporary twentieth-century reader the very idea of selling one's children for sexual purposes is abhorrent, but for many of the times this practice was nothing out of the ordinary among the lower classes; it held little or no moral stigma. It was, in fact, a commonplace occurrence in Spain, as Bernaldo de Quirós notes: "Aquí es frecuente la prostitución de las menores por sus familias" (241). This practice was an extension or an application of the law which decreed that women and minor children of both genders were considered male possessions. Unlike their upper class counterparts, lower class men did not own real estate, businesses or companies, etc. Wives and children were the only marketable assets of proletarian men. Capel Martínez cites the basic instinct to survive as the reason which some Spanish parents were forced to quietly sell their daughters' sexual favors: "La fuerza de las necesidades y la imposibilidad de satisfacerlas de 'forma decente' harán incluso que, en determinadas circunstancias, sea la propia familia la que conduzca a sus hijas a prostituirse de forma más o menos encubierta" (272). On the other hand, some parents, like Estrella's father, were motivated by purely selfish reasons; they sought to sell their daughters to houses of ill repute for personal monetary gain.

Despite her naive eagerness to remain at Mari-Pepa's,

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Estrella's particular situation presents Arístides with an obstacle. According to nineteenth-century Spanish law, the protagonist, at age nineteen, is a minor, and, as such, cannot of her own volition legally sell the use of her body. The section entitled, "De la mayoría de edad," article 320 of the Civil Statutes of 1889, for example, states that "la mayoría de edad empieza á los 23 años cumplidos."[19] Estrella, in fact, was breaking the law by running away from home, for even if she had reached her majority, but was not yet twenty-five years old and unmarried, she was obligated to live with her parents, as Article 321 states:

> ...las hijas de familia mayores de edad, pero menores de 25 años, no podrán dejar la casa paterna sin licencia del padre ó de la madre en cuya compañía vivan, como no sea para tomar estado, ó cuando el padre ó la madre hayan contraído ulteriores bodas. (Spain, Statutes, ed. Abella 82)[20]

At first Arístides will not accept Estrella for the "puesto vacante" (82) at Mari-Pepa's; he would be putting himself at great risk, for, as he tells Estrella: "...sus padres de Ud. podrían reclamarla, formarme una causa criminal, enviarme á presidio" (86). The procurer's information is correct, inasmuch as Article 459 of the Penal Code concerning the "Estupro y corrupción de menores" reads as follows:

> El que habitualmente ó con abuso de autoridad ó

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> confianza promoviere ó facilitare la prostitución ó corrupción de menores de edad para satisfacer los deseos de otro, será castigado con la pena de prisión correccional en sus grados mínimos y medio, é inhabitación temporal absoluta si fuera Autoridad. (Spain, Statutes, ed. Abella 163-64)[21]

Since the father—and in his absence, the mother—had full legal authority, he could direct the future of his minor children. As Nelken points out, "la peregrina ley de la patria potestad...conserva a los padres todos sus derechos aun en los casos más repugnantes" (145). A repugnant case is, of course, the sale of one's daughters into prostitution. López Bago, however, reverses the usual order of the practice. In La prostituta it is the daughter, not the father, who initiates the transaction. Estrella herself informs Arístides that her father would be very willing to sell her in exchange for pecuniary compensation. To this the procurer replies: "—Si es como Ud. dice, la cosa varía de aspecto, y hasta podríamos conseguir una autorización, un papel cualquiera, escrito ó firmado por su padre de Ud." (88).

In the following passage, Arístides recounts for Estrella and Mari-Pepa the details of his meeting with the protagonist's father in a tavern, and their agreement: "—Saqué el papel y le expliqué lo que se quería.... Creyendo pedir una gran cosa, me dijo que no firmaba nada menos de veinticinco duros. Y cuando supo que le dábamos el doble, le

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brillaron los ojos, pidió tintero y pluma, y puso este garabato..." (114-15). For a mere pittance, fifty duros (250 pesetas), the greedy "valiente borracho" (115) happily renounces all paternal rights to the House of Mari-Pepa.

Females were passed directly from fathers to husbands, or, in the worst case scenario, to avaricious strangers in houses of ill repute. The inhumanity of the subjugation of women in the nineteenth century is underscored. Estrella's only value to her father is monetary; she herself lacks control over her own body. The irony of this particular situation, of course, lies in the fact that, in reality, Estrella and her father were, without realizing it, both victimized by the transaction. The latter believed that he had successfully negotiated a fantastic business deal for which he did not even have to work; he had never seen so much money in his life. The innocent and submissive Estrella felt "muy contenta por las noticias recibidas, tan contenta como el prisionero que recobra su libertad" (115).

The *Casa de Mari-Pepa*, a deplorable low class house of prostitution is the setting for most of the action in La prostituta and the focus of López Bago's criticism. By definition, a house of prostitution and its synonyms—"bordello," "bordel," "brothel," "bagnio," "lupanar," "stew," "bawdy-house," "house of ill repute," etc.[22]—is: a "licensed" (Flexner 165) and public (Capel Martínez 277) "commercially administered establishment with

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(generally) resident employees...prepared to meet the varied sexual demands of clients on a promiscuous basis" (Simons 2). The bordello is a fixed establishment, "controlled" and "geographically limited" (Harsin 280); a specific location where the customer is able to visit in order to, for a determined fee, satiate his carnal desires—"of whatever sort, however unusual or bizarre" (Simons 76)—with a prostitute of choice in a private room (Decker 51).

As an institution, the bordello is as old as prostitution itself. Throughout history it has been a fixture in all societies of the world (Simons 20). Brothels, Simons informs us, have been established in such diverse and unusual locations as: "temples and tents, mansions and monasteries, trailers and boats, garrisons and palaces" (ix).

As a public, commercial establishment, the bordello "is keen to advertise its presence and its purpose," writes Simons (2); and the *Casa de Mari-Pepa* in all its sordidness adheres to this basic rule of business by using the balcony as a distinct form of advertisement. In many Spanish brothels, prostitutes would take turns occupying the post of "centinela" (7), sitting in a chair on a balcony facing the street in order to solicit male passers-by. The bordello wanted its presence recognized by the general public. According to Bernaldo de Quirós, "el primer signo distintivo es del más crudo realismo. La mercancía misma está á la puerta, como un anuncio en acción.... Desde el quicio de la puerta, la

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prostituta pasa al balcón.... En el balcón continúa el proceso" (134).

López Bago describes this form of advertisement at Mari-Pepa's. When one prostitute "makes a sale," and goes inside to meet her customer, another prostitute takes her place:

> Diferenciábanse y distinguíanse, además, aquellos balcones de los de las casas contiguas en mostrar a uno de sus lados un resguardaviento de madera, pintado del mismo color verde de las persianas; y era también notado por los vecinos curiosos que estas últimas jamás se recogieron durante el día, cayendo desde su arranque sobre los hierros, para formar, entre persianas y resguardaviento, una á manera de garita en cada balcón, dentro de la cual, sentada en silla baja de enea, veíase siempre una mujer...cuyo cuerpo erguía constantemente el corsé, cuyo rostro acicalaban menjurges....
>
> ...en su mirada había una interrogación para cada transeunte, una sonrisa en sus labios que acompañaba la interrogación con un ofrecimiento, y después un ligero ademán de cabeza o de mano; ojos, boca y mano, mirada, sonrisa y seña, resolvían y sintetizaban...las tres frases que estereotipa el comerciante cuando salta el mostrador, y, ansioso de venta, se coloca á la puerta de su

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> establecimiento, y parece decir á los que por allí pasan:
>
> —¿Lleva Ud. dinero? ¿Quiere Ud. comprar lo que yo vendo? Entre Ud.
>
> Y coincidía la entrada del hombre en el portal con el movimiento de la mujer, que, poniéndose en pie, abandonaba su puesto de centinela, donde otra mujer la reemplazaba inmediatamente. La enea de aquella silla no se enfriaba nunca. (6-7)

Like any business enterprise, the brothel's primary goal is financial profit: to make as much money as possible in the least expensive way possible (Corbin 63, 80). In effect, the brothel has been the traditional institution for promoting the exploitation of defenseless women. While the clientele took advantage of the prostitutes' sexual services, the bordello, not unlike society at large, had its own well-defined hierarchy of third party professionals who lived off the women's earnings: proprietors, madams or brothel keepers, procurers, assistants and domestic staff (Decker 259-63, 268; Simons 2). At the top was the brothel proprietor, which was either the State itself or private citizens (Simons 2).

López Bago's description of the organization of the *Casa de Mari-Pepa* is much in keeping with that of the traditional bordello. The Marquis de Villaperdida—the secret proprietor of the forty brothels is representative of the traditional brothel owner, inasmuch as usually only men of enormous

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financial resources and power like himself could afford to run such establishments. Traditional brothel proprietors have included: bankers, businessmen, politicians, popes, bishops, monarchs, magnates, civil and military leaders; and even pirates, gangsters and sometimes the madam herself (Corbin 63, 65; Simons 20).

Arístides, the debonair and well-connected procurer plays two roles concurrently: proprietor and brothel keeper. As the original owner of the *Casa de Mari-Pepa*, he was in charge of all decisions and financial affairs of the house. When he entered into his secret arrangement with the marquis, Arístides acted as the proprietor in name and for appearances only, and then began to take orders from the aristocrat. At the same time he became the "official proprietor," of forty bordellos, including the *Casa de Mari-Pepa*. Arístides is charged with the financial side of managing a brothel, one of the roles traditionally fulfilled by the madam (Bullough, History 289; Decker 263). Like the stereotypical administrator, Arístides conducts the business of the brothels in his study at Mari-Pepa's where he "guardaba los registros y libros de caja" (48). There, he:

> pasaba las mañanas dos ó tres horas sumando grandes columnas de cifras, y donde venían semanalmente á entregar las recaudaciones las mujeres puestas al frente de las sucursales, érale permitido entrar y salir á todas horas y todas los días, excepto los

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domingos por la noche.... (48-49)

Moreover, in his capacity as trafficker, it was Arístides' responsibility to quickly fill the forty brothels. At first, he secured the services of prostitutes from his competitors in Madrid. When the latter soon protested, he proceeded to visit the numerous provincial establishments, paid the debts of the women he selected and brought them to Madrid.

Next in rank to Arístides in descending order is his lover, the madam Mari-Pepa. (Our study of this character will be addressed later in this chapter.) On the lowest rung of the ladder were the madam's assistant(s) and the domestic staff. At Mari-Pepa's an elderly woman serves a dual role as assistant and housekeeper. She "llenaba por la noche los oficios de segunda ama" (80), and in the morning she would make her rounds in "la plazuela para comprar las provisiones abundantes que eran precisas en casa donde hay que dar de comer á veinte mujeres" (81). The large luxurious bordellos employed the professional services of a varied and extensive staff inside and outside the house: cooks, waiters, guards, butlers, maids, seamstresses, secretaries, musicians, bartenders, and even attorneys and physicians.[23]

One of the functions of the bordello is to accommodate a clientele from all socioeconomic levels. Houses of prostitution vary from the most expensive, elegant and luxurious to the most wretched and repulsive imaginable

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(Simons ix, 78). In his 1869 book, English physician William Acton described the opulent interior of a typical first-class Parisian *maison de tolérance*—one of the many "tolerated" houses of prostitution which operated under strict police supervision (Hauser 199; Simons 82):

> ...the visitor discovers on entering...scenes of sensual extravagance, to which his eyes are unaccustomed in England. Here vice finds a retreat of voluptuous splendour.... The visitor is received by the mistress of the house, and ushered into a sumptuous ante-room; on a curtain being drawn aside, a door is revealed to him, containing a circular piece of glass about the size of a crown piece, through which he can reconnoitre at his ease a small, but well-lighted and elegantly-furnished, drawing room, occupied by the women of the establishment. They are usually to be seen seated on sofa chairs, elegantly attired in different-coloured silks, with low bodies (sic), and having their hair dressed in the extreme of fashion; the whole group being arranged artistically, as in a *tableau vivant*...apparently with the object of showing off to the best advantage the peculiar attractions of the different women.[24]

Acton's visitor is welcomed, drawn into the magnificent spectacle before him; the *filles* are inviting, seductive and

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aesthetically pleasing to the eye. In the following passage we note the very polar experience which awaits a prospective customer to Mari-Pepa's: from the old assistant madam impatiently awaiting the bourgeois' decision to the caricaturesque made-up faces of the hardened prostitutes as they once more go through the motions of flaunting their attributes before the anxious and penurious customer in loathsome surroundings:

> ...las paredes manchan el paño negro de la levita, y las telarañas se pegan y enredan en la felpa de seda del sombrero; cuando ya una sorda irritación producida por estos ataques hace volver al ánimo los intentos de fuga ó retirada prudente, la cascada voz de la vieja óyese en el pasillo:
>
> ¡Niñas, á la sala!
>
> Y volviéndose:
>
> —Tome usté asiento, que ahora vienen.
>
> ...una tras otra entran todas, y una tras otra, al entrar, enmudecen y se sientan al rededor del hombre que ocupa el centro del sofá, después de un "¡buenas noches!" dicho con mal contenido enojo, pero con labios tan pintados y retocados como risueños .... (13-14)
>
> ... el burgués aquí eligiendo, entre rameras, una cualquiera, regateando el precio....
>
> —¿No le gusta á usté ninguna?—dice la misma voz

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> de siempre, no ya melosa, sino casi en tono colérico .... (15)
>
> Pero el temor de un escándalo con que aquella voz le amenaza, le obliga á volver la cabeza para mirar y sonreir (sic)...á la mujer que está más cerca. (16)

Traditionally, brothels like the *Casa de Mari-Pepa* tended to serve a clientele from the most deprived economic sectors. However, men from the upper classes often preferred frequenting the most sordid houses, as is the case in La prostituta with the aforementioned penurious bourgeois who haggled over the price, and with the wealthy "madrileños de la vida alegre" (46) Arístides brings to Mari-Pepa's.

The Marquis de Villaperdida owns forty bordellos divided into three categories, ranging from the highest to the medium to the lowest price of admission for services offered: 1. ten deluxe houses at five duros (25 pesetas); 2. ten houses at one duro (5 pesetas); and 3. twenty houses at three pesetas (51, 52, 53). The *Casa de Mari-Pepa* belongs to this last category. It was the equivalent in rank to the 1-franc Parisian bordello which also "catered to the lower classes," and—as we observed in the passage describing a customer's arrival at Mari-Pepa's—"no time was wasted on preliminaries" (Harsin 283).

Although it belonged to the third category, the *Casa de Mari-Pepa* was Arístides' "cuartel general de operaciones" (47), "la oficina central, convirtiendo en sucursales las

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treinta y nueve casas restantes" (47-48). Mari-Pepa's distinguished itself from the other thirty-nine brothels for being the best organized and the most important of all, "ya que no por la calidad, por el número de prostitutas con que contaba" (47). Because it was old, the two story house contained "espaciosas habitaciones en los dos" which made it possible for each woman to have her own bedroom, "sin que, como en otras mancebías, fuera preciso nunca colocar dos camas en un solo cuarto, ni se vieran obligadas á dormir dos mujeres en la misma cama" (47).

Perhaps the only advantage to living at Mari-Pepa's was to have one's own room; a situation which, as López Bago affirms, was, indeed, the exception. According to the contemporary observer's account, documented by Harsin, even in the deluxe Parisian bordellos, the *filles* themselves lived in "'an attic furnished with two or three iron beds...where the *filles* sleep sometimes two by two'" (299). Furthermore, when the *filles* entertained their well-heeled clients they slept in a different set of rooms, in rooms which were luxuriously decorated (299n54).

The admission of women into houses of prostitution is tantamount to slavery. As Scanlon firmly declares: "Estas mujeres son esclavas; no poseen nada, ni siquiera sus cuerpos..." (105). Bernaldo de Quirós expresses the same sentiments: The "pupila," or prostitute, "es una verdadera esclava, la esclava del postríbulo (sic), explotada y

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maltradada..." (247). "The girls are employees or, at worst, slaves," writes Simons: "There are terms on their employment or their slavery. Their condition carries rules, ritual and standards" (9). Whether one uses the noun "employees," or the euphemistic term "girls;" or the more aptly suited appellation "inmates" (Corbin 77, 82, 83; Flexner 166; Harsin 280, 296), all bordello prostitutes belong to the owners and brothel keepers in body and soul.

As soon as a woman is admitted to a house of prostitution, she loses her identity: "Nada más ingresar, las nuevas pupilas pierden todo lo que de alguna manera les pertenece—ropa, equipaje, objetos personales" (Capel Martínez 277). To this Scanlon adds: "Carece de propiedad alguna; los muebles de su habitación, los vestidos que lleva, todo pertenece al ama" (104-05).

To further separate them from their former lives, the women lose their legal names and are given a pseudonym or nickname (Capel Martínez 277; Corbin 77; Scanlon 104) as a symbol of their new identity, "con el cual le confirman sus congéneres, en vista de sus cualidades representativas, á fin de individualizarle del modo más seguro" (Bernaldo de Quirós 74). Many nicknames "proceden de representaciones locales, anecdóticas ó profesionales" while many other were based on moral or physical characteristics (Bernaldo de Quirós 74), as is the case with Estrella Sánchez who is given the pseudonym *La Pálida* because of the paleness of her complexion

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(attributable, primarily, to nutritional deficiencies). In La Pálida, *Minuto, La Pantorrilluda, Mala-Noche* and *La Cariñosa* are a few of the names López Bago assigns to the *busconas* who appear at *La Botica*'s combination dance-bacchanal (158). The same pseudonym was often used by the woman "throughout her career, even when she moved to a different establishment," Corbin writes with regard to the *filles* in the *maisons de tolérance* (77). Likewise, Estrella keeps her professional name when she becomes a *buscona* and later Luis' mistress.

In exchange for shelter, the women were charged for every conceivable provision: food and beverage, clothing, toiletries, furniture (the use of a bed, dresser, mirror, etc.), medication and medical visits, the hairdresser, laundry services and other extras.[25] If this were not enough, many madams would encourage or "tempt" their *filles* with "special foods, wines, and entertainments" (Harsin 293). To the list of "extra services" Corbin adds the items charged for transferring from one brothel to another. Before a woman sets foot into her new *maison*, she was charged for such items as: "the commission paid to the recruiting agent, the traveling expenses, the hiring the 'change,' or clothes worn during the journey, and of the dressing gown ..." (78). Likewise, Estrella is even charged for her "purchase price" (Pearson 50), for the fifty *duros* Arístides gave her father. Thus, in effect, and ironically so, the protagonist pays her own father for the opportunity to sell the use of her body to the *Casa de*

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Mari-Pepa.

The brothel keepers' goal, of course, was to keep the women in a permanent state of debt (Capel Martínez 278; Corbin 78; Flexner 166; Harsin 288; Pearson 50). Within a very short period of time exorbitant debts were accumulated and continued to do so, making it impossible for the women to ever repay. In La prostituta Mari-Pepa charges Estrella three *pesetas* for food and one for her room per day; in addition to twenty-five *duros* (125 pesetas) for footwear.

From the previously cited list of services used to bind the women to the bordello, the issue of clothing presents an interesting case in point. While in some Spanish houses "las internas intercambian sus vestidos" (Scanlon 105) and even "heredan hasta destrozarlos" (Capel Martínez 278), in La prostituta, brand new custom made expensive finery was used, above all others, as the most effective device to ensure Estrella's indebtedness. Within hours of her arrival at the bordello, even before Arístides pays her father, Mari-Pepa, acting on her lover's orders, takes Estrella to a dressmaker. In the following passage, López Bago juxtaposes the seemingly innocent shopping outing of the two women with the deceptive and bitter reality of Estrella's financial predicament. One can sympathize with the protagonist for the shock and terror she experiences when, after returning to Mari-Pepa's, she realizes the cost of her visit to Doña Rita's:

> ...el hecho es que Estrella ... salió del piso

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segundo completamente transformada, vestida de pies á cabeza, como decía Mari-Pepa, y hecha un brazo de mar, como dijeron al verla sus compañeras:

—¡Mira *La Pálida*, que parece una duquesa! En efecto: Mari-Pepa, siguiendo las instrucciones de Arístides, había comprado lo mejor y lo de más lujo .... (100)

Pero al salir de casa de D.ª Rita, al vestir tales galas, Estrella sintió por primera vez un estremecimiento de terror, y llegó descubrir algo del espantoso abismo en que por propia y terca voluntad habíase precipitado.

—Hija, me debes ocho onzas [obsolete coin], que es lo que me cuestan tus arrumacos.

—¡Ocho onzas!

—Ni más ni menos. Y añade todos los días tres pesetas por la comida y una por la habitación.

—¡Pero, señora, yo no tengo dinero! ¿Cómo voy á pagar eso?

—¡Anda, anda! ¿Ahora salimos con esas? Pues lo pagarás poco á poco, como lo pagan las otras. (101)

As Harsin has remarked, the debt system meant that "prostitutes were tied to the life. There was no likely way, if they wished to return to an ordinary working-class existence, for them to pay off such a debt...;" their debt

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"served to repress any inclination to leave" (293).

It was, however, possible to transfer from one bordello to another (Harsin 293). In order to take a woman out of a brothel, the interested party was required to pay the house for all the accumulated charges. Paco, the carpenter, who only earns four pesetas a day would never be able to free his fiancée. After only three days at Mari-Pepa's Estrella's debts have risen to the unattainable sum of 5,000 pesetas. Paco, nevertheless, is determined to free his fiancée. He shocks Mari-Pepa by offering to pay off the debts in installments:

> Él se llevaría á Estrella, firmando un papel ó un documento en regla, un pagaré, lo que Mari-Pepa quisiera, y todos los sábados, al cobrar su jornal, entregaría la mitad. Ganaba ya bastante. Ganaba cuatro pesetas diarias. Todo consistía en esperar, en no cobrarlo todo de una vez, y para esto pagaría los intereses que se quisieran. Á Mari-Pepa, ¿qué más le daba? (135)

Mari-Pepa is enraged by such a logical solution; the plan is an anathema to her and to the capitalist brothel system which lives off the prostitutes' continued indebtedness: "—¡Quite usté alla! ¡Cobrar doce pesetas todos los sábados! ¿Está usté en su juicio?" (135).

In short, the brothel system was designed to prevent members of the working classes from liberating female loved ones. Only the wealthy, be it clientele or powerful procurers

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like Arístides, possess the financial resources to effectuate a woman's release. In any event, the prostitute would not be free; she has only exchanged one master for another. Harsin cites Dr. Julien Jeannel's 1874 observation on the hopelessness of the brothel prostitute's position: "'Sequestered, exploited, brutalized, injured, they always hope to ameliorate their condition by changing their bordello or going to another part of the country. But they find everywhere the same reclusion, the same exploitation, the same disdain....'"[26]

When a woman attempted or was successful in escaping from the brothel, the madam would inform the police immediately (Corbin 78; Harsin 289; Scanlon 105). The runaway was considered a fugitive; a criminal wanted for theft for nonpayment of accumulated debts. Moreover, since she did not rightfully own her own clothing, she was accused of stealing the very clothes she was wearing at the time (Harsin 289; Scanlon 105).

In any event, most escape attempts failed; the women were returned to the bordello. When Estrella leaves San Juan de Dios Hospital for the third time in La Pálida she does not return to Mari-Pepa's. Technically she is a fugitive. She, however, is not forced to return, only inasmuch as Arístides agrees to take charge of her career, guaranteeing the procurer a greater return in profit.

The so-called "salary" bordello women received for their

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sexual services was a mere pittance, a token, or, in some instances, "las mujeres no reciben paga alguna y su uńico dinero de bolsillo es el procedente de las propinas de los clientes" (Scanlon 105). For their services, according to Flexner, women in bordellos in Paris, Brussels and Vienna "in return...receive—or are credited with part of the receipts, usually fifty percent" (166). However, as he reports, "against this sum, theoretically theirs," they are charged for the aforementioned basic provisions and padded extras (166). Similarly, women in the *maisons de tolérance* "split their earnings with the madams," but only "after the deduction of various expenses, for room, board, and clothing..." (Harsin 288). Some prostitutes were not even fortunate enough to keep their tips. As Harsin reports, nineteenth-century

> contemporaries were generally agreed on the fact that madams managed to get their hands on virtually all the money, both in wages and in tips...earned by their regular *pensionnaires*. Arrangements differed from house to house. Apparently some madams took all the money, providing the women only with food and clothing. (287-88)

In reality, therefore, due to the debt system and, in many cases, the theft of their wages by avaricious madams, the women never saw the money they earned at all.

The average wage of the approximately four hundred and ten women in the Marquis de Villaperdida's forty houses is

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inferior to the wages of their colleagues in the above cited European capitals. Women working in the ten medium-priced brothels—those which charged customers one *duro* or five pesetas—earn two fifths of the management's earnings; that is, only two pesetas. The two hundred and ten women who work in the twenty poorest brothels, including the *Casa de Mari-Pepa*, receive the minimum compensation possible. The house takes in three pesetas; the women receive or are credited with one peseta for their labor. Even these paltry wages are not demeaning enough for the cruel and avaricious marquis. Dissatisfied with his profit of "dos mil ciento noventa" (53) pesetas earned in only one day, which for the thirty days of a "mes comercial" (52) totaled "trece mil ciento cuarenta duros" (52), or 65,700 pesetas, the aristocrat orders Arístides to lower what the former euphemistically terms "los honorarios" (53) of all the women. Therefore, women in the twenty three peseta houses would officially earn less than one peseta.

The bordello management dictates the behavior, movements and activities of all the prostitutes: both sexual and non-sexual.[27] With regard to their professional duties, the women must be available and willing to submit to any and all men who pay the house for their services (Capel Martínez 278); the women were given no choice in the matter. Corbin writes: "The keeper, for whom nothing mattered but profit, would force her inmates to receive any client who turned up and to satisfy all

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his needs" (80). Acting on the client's wishes, the madam determined the time, duration and frequency of the encounters as well as the kind of activity undertaken. The women's obligation to cater to all kinds of men—no matter how "repugnante o enfermo que sea" (Scanlon 105) made them vulnerable to violence, and in the case of Estrella, to a sexually transmitted disease. Traditionally, the bordello has been the only social institution which tolerates, accepts and even comforts sexual outcasts for their bizarre proclivities (Simons 3); proclivities for which they have been systematically rejected by society, religion, respectable women and, in many instances, even by free lance prostitutes. Technically speaking, even the repulsive and diseased Marquis de Villaperdida, prohibited by his physician from engaging in sexual activity, could not have been turned away had he decided to visit Mari-Pepa's, for example, as an ordinary customer. Sadly, after her encounter with the marquis, Estrella realizes what is expected of her. In addition to their sexual services, the women were called upon to feign pleasure while in their customers' company. In the following passage Estrella laments the horror of what it means to be a bordello prostitute:

> Á traves de los tabiques se oían suspiros entrecortados, risas extinguidas con un beso, estremecimientos de mujeres que se sienten acariciadas en los lechos, y á veces una tos de

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> hombre, una palabra de amor, dicha en un arrebato con voz demasiado alta: la gigantesca máquina pornográfica guardaba su mayor actividad para las altas horas de la noche. Estrella sintió volver sus ascos y repetirse la náusea. Jamás se acostumbraría, jamás. Ella creyó hacer una cobardía al entrar allí, y resultaba un acto de heroísmo. No son cobardes los suicidas. Todos pueden tener valor para morir, pero no todos lo tienen para matarse. Halagar, besar, como aquellas mujeres; ofrecerse desnudas á cualquier desconocido, ser cuerpo alquilado por horas, pasar de los brazos del joven á los del viejo, estrechar con la misma pasión al valiente y al asesino, ¡con la misma!, que en esto consistía el fingimiento. Pero ¿y si mañana se presentaba el verdugo? "¡Eh! *La Pálida*, que venga y que me bese." Le besaría; besaría al verdugo lo mismo que al rey, lo mismo que al sabio, lo mismo que á cuantos le pidieran el beso y se lo pagaran. (215-16)

López Bago leaves no doubt as to how the women truly feel about their customers. In addition to expressing themselves verbally and visually with insulting gestures, their physiological reactions—retching and/or vomiting—attest to their disgust and revulsion:

> Después de todo, *la* (sic) *Pálida* tenía razón.

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> Ninguna dejaba de sentir lo mismo. ¡Los hombres!.... ¡Valientes cochinos! No piensan más que en porquerías. No hay nada más repugnante. Y en cuanto ven una mujer, son como los perros. Algunos conocían ellas que eran lo último de lo último. Cuando venían á buscarlas hacían tales cosas que luégo (sic) ninguna dejaba de tener arcadas, y muchas veces llegaban á vomitar. ¡Ah qué marranos!
>
> Y hubo tres ó cuatro prostitutas que, no creyendo bastante fuerte el calificativo, lo acentuaron escupiendo, y con un "¡puach!" que era el más alto insulto de los labios. (96-97)

The brothel management's avaricious compulsion to maximize its financial profits through the prostitutes' misery is underscored in all its naturalistic sordidness in the dehumanizing and capitalistic exploitation of La prostituta's protagonist. Estrella is valued by Arístides and desired by the marquis, never as a human being, but only as a piece of important merchandise to be bought, used, reused or discarded. In the letter in which he tries to sell the marquis on the idea of acquiring the legal rights to the young woman's services, the "traficante de mujeres" (229) emphasizes Estrella's assets and her projected financial potential for their business. As a "negocio ... magnífico" (103), Estrella represents a fantastic acquisition on the one hand; on the

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other, because of her vulnerability, she is perceived as an animal, reduced to the dehumanizing status of a mangy dog who roams the streets in search of leftover scraps of food. The letter reads:

> La chica vale el oro que pesa, señor marqués. Y bien vestida, lavada y peinada, dará gloria verla. Luégo (sic), aquí no hay farsa, ni cuento, ni trampantojos, como en otros casos sucede.... La pobrecita es muy dócil y parece muy humilde. Hará todo lo que se le mande, y se contentará con que la demos de comer todos los días. Porque, eso sí, trae hambre atrasada. Se nos ha entrado por las puertas, no como un ser humano, sino como un perro de la calle que viene á lamer las manos para que le den las sobras de la mesa. Lo mismo. De manera que el negocio es magnífico; y si pudiéramos hacer muchos así, giraría Ud. todos los meses veinte ó treinta mil duros. (103)

"La nueva pupila" (117) was in a unique position; her earning potential was unparalleled: "Estrella no podía considerarse al nivel de las demás prostitutas: *la* (sic) *Pálida* era una adquisición preciosa, y podía por sí sola producir en una noche más, mucho más, que todas las otras juntas" (100).

López Bago notes the specific factors which, inside the brothel world, determine the enormous value of a candidate like Estrella:

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1. the desperateness of her situation—as a poor, famished, uneducated, unskilled, homeless and naive young woman on her own;
2. her youth: "Á su edad ... está como la fruta en el árbol" (109);
3. her extraordinary physical beauty: "... es rubia como las candelas, más blanca que la leche ... (109); "tenía abundantes cabellos, hermosos ojos, dientes blancos" (219);
4. personal grooming: "...y ahora que ... se ha lavado ... y vino la peinadora y la puso muy bien los focos ..." (109);
5. her clothing—the value of a prostitute doubles when she is adorned in beautiful and expensive new finery: "*La Pálida* valía mucho por ser hermosa; valía doble por ir bien vestida" (100);
6. her status as a newcomer—a novelty for the clientele, a fresh face and body: "un cuerpo nuevo, una carne intacta" (100). Whenever Madrid's "gente caprichosa y de dinero," including "jóvenes alegres y viejos verdes" would see Arístides they never failed to ask the brothel keeper: "'... ¿hay ganado nuevo?'" (171);
7. her virginity—the defloration of a virgin was worth much more than all the experience of expert professionals. This factor responds to the vanity of the client who can boast about being "the first," "the unforgettable one."

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> In order to take advantage of such a unique opportunity, Arístides informs the marquis: "El primero que la quiera tendrá que pagarla muy cara ..." (103).

Of all the assets cited above, the last factor stands out for being the most prized by both brothel keepers and clientele. Contemporary twentieth-century historians have contributed interesting observations concerning this unusual fascination with the oxymoronic concept of the virginal prostitute, observations which relate to upper class males' obsession with power, property and material possessions. In addition, this fascination had much to do with prevailing upper class attitudes regarding women: the dichotomy of the virtuous and maternal upper class woman in dramatic contrast to the sinful and promiscuous proletarian female. Pearson offers the following assessment:

> The appeal of the extremely young girl as a sexual partner seems both repellant and strange, but it was logical against a background of Victorian culture. By definition, prostitutes were the exact opposite of the "pure" women who were so honoured. Under these circumstances, it was inevitable that virginity—with its unique first time element of possession—should acquire an enormous market premium. In London in 1885, the going price for a virgin could be as high ... as £20 to £25—a fantastic sum against the cost of living levels of

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> the time—and, although the rate dropped off sharply after defloration, young girls who had not long been seduced were much in demand. The pure, or the nearly pure, were often preferred to the expert. (30-31)

In a similar vein, Jess Wells writes:

> Perhaps the most unique aspect of prostitution during the Victorian period and the one that most reflects the view of women of the time, was the popularity of the virgin. The virgin, for the Victorians, was the epitome of everything desirable in woman; she was innocent, pure, ignorant, she was something to be conquered and possessed, she was youthful in a culture that, as never before, worshipped new money, new inventions, ideas and enterprises. In the male ideology a prostitute was the exact opposite of the "pure" woman who was honored, but also offered men power over her body for a price. The virgin prostitute, then, was their best combination: unchartered territory to be conquered and then discarded, and power through money and maleness.[28]

Perhaps the most peculiar and, to some extent, amusing attribute given to the virginal prostitute in the nineteenth century was incredible medicinal powers, the unique ability to cure venereal disease. According to Simons:

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> There was a fashionable obsession amongst rakes and debauchees as to the sexual desirability of *virgins*. Such innocent creatures could, it was held, provide a number of therapeutic benefits: for instance, the cure of venereal disease. One had only to copulate with a virgin and even the direst syphilis would disappear. (53)

Bullough has also observed how:

> There was a demand for young girls because men were afraid of contracting venereal disease; hence to lessen the chances of infection, many rich customers insisted that they be furnished disease-free, that is, pure virginal, prostitutes. This was particularly true of the middle-and-upper-class males, who tended to set themselves apart from the working classes, the class from which most of these girls came.... There was also a popular belief that venereal disease would be cured if the diseased person had intercourse with a young virgin. (Women 266-67)

This "popular belief" brings to mind the situation between the syphilitic Marquis de Villaperdida and the "pure" protagonist. Although López Bago gives no indication of it, it is possible that the immoral aristocrat also believed that Estrella would cure him. However, the reverse proved to be true. The marquis, in disobeying the medical precept to abstain from

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sexual activity, greatly accelerated his own demise. López Bago, in his characteristic sense of irony, debunks this myth and sends an ominous warning to diseased upper class males who exploit innocent women.

The commercial exploitation and the dehumanization of the protagonist as the bordello's most marketable commodity reaches the height of disgust in the barbaric private auction Arístides arranges for some dissolute "madrileños de la vida alegre" (46) in Mari-Pepa's living room. The prize: the privilege of initiating "la nueva pupila" (117) into the profession will belong to the highest bidder. Estrella is a witness to the "repugnante" and "brutal" (181) spectacle. She is now portrayed as even less than an animal; she has become a non-entity, a source of amusement and competition for the wealthy, just another piece of valuable property to be acquired, used and disposed of at will. The scene, López Bago wants his readers to remember, is on a par with "los bazares de esclavas en Oriente, de las ceremonias, ventas y contratos del África central entre los negreros y las tribus salvajes" (182):

> Estrella era joven como ellos, pero mujer, y prostituta. Estrella estaba allí, y todos formaron corro á su alrededor. Estrella sonreía á todas las bromas, á todas las palabras ingeniosas ó groseras que escuchaba. ¡*La Pálida*! ¡*La Pálida* estaba más pálida que nunca, y templando.

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Tres ó cuarto quisieron acercarse y besarla, y la besaron....

—¡La subasta, la subasta!—dijo uno de ellos. Entonces Arístides se levantó. Colocóse de pie al lado de la butaca en que permanecía sentada Estrella, é imitando la voz de los charlatanes de feria, gritó:

—Esta mujer, en cinco mil reales; ¿quién la quiere?....

—¡Cinco mil quinientos!

—¡Seis mil!

—¡Seis mil quinientos!

Y la horrible puja continuaba.

Á cada cifra estallaban nuevas risas.

Luis miró á Estrella.

—¡Yo doy diez mil reales!....

Arístides estaba en sus glorias....

—¡Diez mil reales! ¿No hay quién dé más?—insistió *el* (sic) *Chulo*.

—No, no se da más. ¡Adjudicada! (181-83)

Luis, too, becomes corrupted by the buying and selling of human flesh when he realizes that his horse costs more than Estrella: "¡*La Pálida* era suya, tenía que ser suya! ¡Tener una mujer! ¡Tenerla desnuda entre sus brazos! Nunca, nunca creyó tan fácil conseguir esto. Por diez mil reales. ¡Pero si *Vincitor* le costaba mucho más, y era un caballo!" (229).

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After living at Mari-Pepa's for four months Estrella is finally initiated into the profession when Arístides sacrifices the protagonist to the repulsive marquis. Instead of preparing her for the most traumatic experience of her life, the procurer brings her to his study on a pretext. Obedient and trusting, Estrella has no reason to suspect a betrayal. López Bago evokes the animalistic image of a sheep being led to slaughter: "¡Válgame Dios! No se lleva con más facilidad una oveja al matadero" (210). Estrella's first "comprador" coldly informs her: "Yo te he comprado, ¿entiendes? Tú eres *la* (sic) *Pálida*, y ahora eres mía ..." (211). The seduction of the protagonist represents the definitive turning point in her life; the final fall to the bottom of the downward spiral of environmental determinism which, as we have witnessed, began with her family situation, was fostered by society's exploitive attitudes about lower class women, resulting in Estrella's desperation in having to seek food and shelter from strangers in a bordello. Once Estrella becomes a prostitute, she has crossed over the line; her future is determined: her physical, moral, physiological and spiritual descent irrevocable.

In the first two novels of the tetralogy, López Bago examines the problem of the venereal disease syphilis as the pathological consequence of the sexually promiscuous youth of Don José, the Marquis de Villaperdida.[29] This literary motif paralleled the serious medical crisis which threatened the

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lives of the European population during the nineteenth century.

The appearance of a major outbreak of venereal disease was not new to the European population. Historically, gonorrhea and syphilis have been around for centuries. Recognition of the existence of gonorrhea, for example, dates back to Ancient Greece where references to the disease were found in medical records. New epidemics of gonorrhea and syphilis would break out periodically in Europe throughout the centuries. A particular virulent strain of syphilis struck the troops of King Charles VIII of France at the end of the fifteenth century and quickly spread throughout the continent during the following century. Soldiers were the first victims, then prostitutes, and finally the general population. However, when it was established that the disease was transmitted through copulation, prostitutes were immediately blamed as the source of the contagion (Bullough, Women 146-48). When European nations waged war against Napoleon at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they were alarmed to discover that their armies were seriously infected with syphilis and gonorrhea (Bullough: History 166, Women 190). Although, as in the sixteenth century, it was the masses of soldiers who transmitted these diseases, society focused on prostitutes as the source of the latest epidemic (Bullough, Women 233). As Harsin affirms: "In the peculiar politics of venereal disease, women were always the guilty transmitters,

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men (and the wives and children of these men) their hapless victims" (258).[30] Bullough defines syphilis and describes the various stages of the disease:

> Syphilis is primarily a venereal disease spread from person to person by sexual intercourse although it technically (but rarely) can also be acquired by sharing a drinking vessel or by infection through a wound. The disease does not appear immediately upon infection but only after a ten-to ninety-day period of incubation. The first sign of the disease is a chancre usually on the genitals (hence its early association with intercourse), although chancres can also appear on other areas of the body where mucous tissue is found. As the disease exists today, the chancre is not particularly painful and will eventually disappear of its own accord within three to eight weeks, leaving only a slight scar to indicate where it had been. Soon after it disappears, usually from four to eight weeks later, the second stage of syphilis appears, and this is a more generalized reaction to the infection. Though the symptoms vary from patient to patient, there is likely to be a skin rash, sores in the mouth, a mild sporadic fever and headache, a sore throat, and ulcers or lesions that appear on the legs and other parts of

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> the body. This second phase also eventually disappears, after which the disease enters a latent phase, although occasionally the symptoms of the second phase will reappear again. During the early latent phase the patient is highly infectious for about two years, after which the danger of infection declines. This late latent phase may last for several years, but if the patient does not die of other causes eventually the third stage of syphilis makes its appearance. This can take several forms. Often a lesion called a gumma appears, and it can be anywhere on the skin, in the bones, or in vital organs such as the heart. Blood vessels are weakened, allowing rupture of the supply to the heart or brain. The nervous system can be attacked, causing paralysis and insanity. (Women 147)

There are several curious features in López Bago's treatment of syphilis in La prostituta and La Pálida. The first is the physician-novelist's uncharacteristic reticence, his refusal to employ the word "syphilis" to identify the fatal sexually transmitted disease. Nowhere is the noun "syphilis" or "sífilis" written in the two novels; neither voiced by characters in dialogue, nor expressed in their personal thoughts. Despite its rampancy throughout the population of the times, López Bago, it seems, wanted to

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envelop the disease in an aura of fear and secrecy as if syphilis, for its association with prostitutes, were too pathologically and morally revolting to be mentioned by its correct lexical or medical appellation. The author believed he was protecting his readers' sensibilities by avoiding, in the words of Dr. Pérez, the "crudezas científicas de la frase que hieren á mis oyentes" (La prostituta 68). Instead, the novelist uses periphrastic terms to convey syphilis' fatal, immoral, sexual and repulsive nature. In La Pálida syphilis (or venereal disease, in general) is identified as "esas repugnantes lepras de la carne" (41), "la horrible lepra" (117), "aquella lepra asquerosa" (205), "enfermedades secretas" (234), and Estrella's body becomes accustomed to "este veneo" (211). In La prostituta terms such as the following are used: "la repugnante *caquexia*" (202), "la lepra" (217, 218), "la lepra de Satanás" (219), "el terrible virus" (262), and the euphemistic all inclusive "cáncer." (231). The Marquis de Villaperdida is so ashamed of his medical condition that he convinces Dr. Pérez to borrow the name of another unrelated disease: "Pues llamemos á la enfermedad de Ud., para que no se avergüence nadie, *clorosis*..." (64).

López Bago's decision not to identify syphilis by name may, perhaps, be related to Zola's own decision not to specify the disease in Nana. According to Bernheimer, "Zola never explicitly identifies the virus that Nana carries" (234).

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The second curious feature of López Bago's treatment of syphilis in the novels involves several inaccuracies presented as fact, which contradict both twentieth-and late nineteenth-century medical knowledge of the disease. These inaccuracies are found in two areas: 1. in the susceptibility of the individual to contract the infection at certain stages in the disease's development; and 2. in the time frame between contraction and death.

When he married at age twenty-five, La prostituta's Don José was knowingly infected with syphilis, having already advanced to the second stage of the disease or even to the early latent phase. He was probably in the second stage when symptoms are visible ("Skin rash, sores in the mouth...ulcers or lesions that appear on the legs and other parts of the body;" Bullough, Women 147), as they obviously were to the unsuspecting and horrified marquise on her wedding night: "Y la noche de boda, los amorcillos dorados que se prestaron á servir de molduras en el lecho nupcial, cuando empezó á sollozar la virginidad de la esposa en brazos del esposo, en lugar de sonreir (sic), debieron quedar horrizados y llorando" (201). It is not surprising that the marquise would have contracted syphilis even after the one and only encounter with her husband, since Don José would have been highly contagious during both the second phase[31] and the early latent stage ("During the early latent phase the patient is highly infectious...;" Bullough, Women 147). However, the marquise's

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death from syphilis only one year later defies medical science's knowledge of the disease. The young bride died without having passed through all four phases: the early latent phase last about two years; the late latent phase "may last for several years" (Bullough, Women 147), or even "up to 30 years during which time syphilis continues to spread throughout the body" (Reinisch). Of course, the marquise did not come close to the final phase.

López Bago's contemporaries in the French medical community had identified the three[32] stages of the development of syphilis before the publication of the tetralogy. During the Second Empire (1852-1870), "clinical study had made it possible to assess the development of syphilis and to define the manifestations of its three successive stages. The discovery of the tertiary stage, of its seriousness and of all its effects, stimulated the fear of degeneracy, which was very widespread in the 1870s..." (Corbin 246-47). By the 1860s pioneering French physician Philippe Ricord had "described the three-stage development of syphilis" (Bullough, History 217).[33] Ricord's work was well known outside of France. Walkowitz[34] also discusses Ricord's mid century success in tracing "syphilis through its three stages" (50). Based on Ricord's findings, "mid-Victorian medical authorities were generally able to agree on certain essential features of syphilis" (50), which included knowledge of the symptoms and the time-frame involved in the three stages (50-51).

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Moreover, while referring to the period around the year 1871, Walkowitz affirms that "the three stages of syphilis and its latency periods were well known at the time..." (229).

The second discrepancy in López Bago's treatment of syphilis in the novels concerns the high improbability, if not the impossibility, of the marquis being capable of transmitting his infection to Estrella. Don José is forty-seven years old when the action of La prostituta takes place. Twenty-two years have passed since he infected his bride at which time his disease would have progressed to either the late latency stage which "may last for several years" (Bullough, Women 147), or even "for up to 30 years" (Reinisch); or to the final tertiary stage. Based on expert medical opinion, the chances that the marquis could have infected the protagonist in either stage are slim to none. According to Bullough, "the patient, is highly contagious during the early latent phase "for about two years, after which the danger of infection declines" (Women 147). Reinisch is more precise. The infection "can be transmitted only during the first few years after a person has been infected." Based on Reinisch's statement, it would have, therefore, been impossible for the marquis to infect Estrella some twenty-two years later. The question arises as to whether López Bago was cognizant of this fact. Unfortunately, there is no known way to ascertain this or to determine if knowledge of the preclusion of late stage transmission would

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have altered his plans for the novels. However, it is extremely probable that the physician-novelist knew of the intransmitability of the disease during the late latency and tertiary stages. As historians Bullough, Corbin and Walkowitz have confirmed, Ricord's findings were well documented years before the progressive-minded López Bago began to write his tetralogy. In 1888, just four years after the publication of La prostituta and La Pálida, Dr. Céspedes wrote the following regarding the tertiary period: "...todas sus lesiones han perdido la virulencia y la contagiosidad. Una ulceracion (sic) gomosa del periodo (sic) terciario, no reproduce jamás una sifilis (sic) por contagio" (249).

If López Bago were cognizant of the facts regarding the tertiary stage, he, as both a progressive physician and a fervent naturalist determined to document the facts and expose the truth, committed a serious double injustice by purposely misinforming his readers. Despite his good intentions, he would have sacrificed the truth—one of his much admired ideals—in order to underscore his objective in a dramatic fashion. In this instance, he sought to dispel the popular belief which blamed prostitutes as the source of the epidemic by proving that promiscuous upper class males like the marquis who hid behind false facades of respectability were indeed responsible for the propagation of venereal diseases and their devastating consequences in the lives of innocent members of society.

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López Bago also provides misinformation concerning the onset of the symptoms in the first stage of syphilis. Only the morning after her encounter with the marquis, the protagonist experiences sharp pains and observes the visual manifestations of the disease; symptoms which are attributed to "la lepra de Satanás" (219). Alone in her room she wonders if she has been infected:

> De pronto sintió una punzada, un dolor agudo. ¡Dios mío! ¿Se le habría pegado? Separó bruscamente las sábanas que abrigaban y cubrían su cuerpo. No veía bien, y abrió con presteza el postigo. ¡Ah! ¡qué horror! ¡la lepra! Aquello no podía ser otra cosa. ¡Maldito hombre! Quiso incorporarse; saltó del lecho, y dió algunos pasos por el gabinete.... Andaba separando las piernas, teniendo asco de sí misma. No podía seguir así. Ante todo, lavarse, lavarse muy bien con agua fresca, cuanto más fresca mejor, para aplacar aquel ardor inmenso, aquel escozor de la carne ulcerada y dolorida....
>
> Cuando volvió á la cama, tiritando por el frío del agua y el de la madrugada, se sintió aliviada; pero fué un alivio pasajero. La punzada volvió con más fuerza, irritándose más: decididamente aquello era irremediable.... Es más: el diablo, el mismísimo diablo.... ¡El diablo era aquel hombre que la poseyó en la oscuridad!...."tengo la lepra

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de Satanás." (218-19)

If the marquis had been contagious and therefore capable of transmitting the disease, Estrella would have been immediately infected. However, based on medical data from both centuries, the first symptoms never appear within twenty-four hours following transmission: "The disease does not appear immediately upon infection but only after a ten-to ninety-day period of incubation" (Bullough, Women 147). Reinisch echoes Bullough's time frame, adding: "During the primary stage, 10 to 90 days after exposure, a chancre sore appears. This open sore is usually painless and develops at the site where the bacteria entered the body.... When not treated, this primary chancre heals in a few weeks." In 1888 Céspedes estimated the time frame between fifteen to twenty-five days: "Entre los quince á veinte y cinco dias (sic) después del coito impuro, muy rara vez antes—aparece en el sitio que ha sufrido el contacto con alguna manifestación sifilítica contagiosa..." (240-41).

López Bago also exaggerated the severity of Estrella's pain during the first stage, "aquel ardor inmenso, aquel escozor de la carne ulcerada y dolorida." In the twentieth century, as Bullough and Reinisch respectively have affirmed, the chancre is on average "not particularly painful" or "painless." With regard to the nineteenth century, Yves Guyot, in his 1882 book, quotes expert venereologist Alfred Fournier's response to the question: "Qu'est le chancre à sa

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période initiale?" Fournier replied: "'Si peu de chose...que je puis sans exagération le qualifier de la façon suivante: *la plus petite, la plus superficielle, la plus bénigne, la plus insignifiante de toutes les érosions possibles.... C'est moins que rien.*'"[35] Céspedes contributed the following: "Las primeras escenas de esta enfermedad, apareciendo en el organismo, son modestísimas. Tal parece, por la sencillez y facilidad de curacion (sic) de estas primeras manifestaciones, que la infeccion (sic) sifilítica se presenta tímidamente..." (240).

López Bago also took liberties with medical fact with the issue of congenital syphilis, which occurs when the infected Marquise de Villaperdida also becomes pregnant. The fact the Luis survived birth is indeed extraordinary; a miracle, in fact, which defies statistics, especially in light of the fact that the marquise was in the first stage of the disease at the time of her pregnancy: "Syphilis can also be transmitted from parent to child, and if the disease is in the active stage, the mother will usually abort after the fourth month" (Bullough, Women 147). Céspedes reports on the findings of Dr. Fournier presented in 1885 on the high mortality rate of the unborn offspring of syphilitic pregnant women. According to Céspedes, Fournier "referia (sic) la historia de 44 mujeres sifiliticas (sic) de su clientela privada, en estado de embarazo. El resultado de la sifilis (sic) en estos embarazos fue: 43 niños muertos. 1 superviviente" (252). The chances

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against surviving was also noted by Céspedes. Moreover, in this type of situation, if the mother should give birth, "el niño nacido hereda la sífilis que se presenta con muchos de los caractéres (sic) del adulto, salvo la primitiva lesión: el chancro sifilítico" (251). According to Bullough, "children born to syphilitic parents had congenital syphilis resulting in various congenital deformities, the most common of which was blindness" (History 218). Luis is not afflicted with the most common defect. However, Céspedes presents another pathological scenario, the one adopted by López Bago:

> Es indudable tambien (sic) que el niño procedente de padres sifilíticos, si no hereda la sifilis (sic), nace por lo ménos (sic) *degenerado* en su constitución orgánica.
>
> El mayor número de niños atrepsicos, estrumosos, raquiticos y débiles, proceden de estos padres sifiliticos (sic). (252)

Based on medical evidence, it is more than likely that Luis was already infected with syphilis at birth, long before his involvement with Estrella. In his early twenties, in La Pálida, Luis' disease would have progressed to the late latency or tertiary stage. According to Bullough:

> Those persons who had once become infected had always to count on the possibility that twenty or thirty years later they might be attacked by paralysis, senile dementia, succumb to a disease of

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> the aorta, or in some way suffer the after-effects of syphilis. (History 218)

For López Bago, however, it is Estrella who transmits the disease to Luis, and once again, like his mother and Estrella before him, the symptoms appear immediately and with debilitating intensity:

> La primera víctima de *la (sic) Pálida* fue el heredero del marqués de Villaperdida. Luis se salvó de la muerte; pero el terrible virus inficionó su sangre, demacró su cuerpo, agotó todas sus potencias intelectuales y físicas, todas sus energías juveniles...allí se acaba, se extingue una gran familia, cuyo último descendiente muere poco á poco.... (La prostituta 262)

As we have seen, López Bago, in many instances, failed to adhere to the fundamental rule of accuracy in the documentation of medical fact—a serious fallacy for a physician and a naturalist—in the treatment of syphilis in the two novels. Nevertheless, in addition to succeeding in creating an interesting and symbolic variation on the theme of hereditary determinism (discussed in Chapter II), the novelist accelerated the progression of the disease for dramatic effect; reflecting contemporary society's growing fear of depopulation and the loss of future generations due to the alarming rise in cases of congenital syphilis. If men from the upper classes did not concern themselves at all about the

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welfare of the lower classes, least of all prostitutes, the very real threat of venereal infection forced them to confront the fatal consequences of their own promiscuous behavior. Their sexual escapades now threatened not only themselves, but their wives and children. Venereal disease now jeopardized their life ambition of passing their wealth and property from one generation to the next. The self-extinction of the Villaperdida line serves as a vivid, symbolic reminder of possibly their own ominous fate. Their rampant promiscuity could result in the extinction of their own families as it does for the Villaperdidas. López Bago, in his own way, like the venereologists of the period, expounded the dangers of this threat to the survival of the family. As Corbin informs us:

> The venereal danger was all the more serious, the specialists urged, in that, coming as it did from the social depths, it attacked not only the guilty but also the innocent bourgeois. The "syphilis of the innocents," which had long since been recognized but had been given new immediacy by Fournier, increased the public's horror of the disease. Syphilitic newborn babies, the midwives who delivered them, wet nurses diseased by the babies they were sucking.... And this figure did not include "the syphilis of honest women"—fiancées made victims by the kisses they

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> accorded their betrothed, young brides contaminated by their grooms, faithful wives who paid for their husbands' behavior.... (249)
>
> In the end, as the medical literature on the subject emphasizes, the venereal danger led to a decline in marriages, the breakup of households, an increase in divorce, and therefore to a decrease in population....the risk of depopulation through venereal disease was, in 1885, denounced in fearful terms by Professor Fournier before his colleagues at the Academy of Medicine. (250)

The use of prophylaxis was considered as a possible deterrent against venereal disease in the nineteenth century. According to Harsin, "uncertainty about the effectiveness of syphilis cures had placed most of the attention on prophylaxy..." (251). However, this historian observes how authorities were not enthusiastic about encouraging its use at the individual level. The issue "was interpreted almost exclusively in a social rather than a personal sense" (251). The question of "individual hygienic measures" was either "lost in the flurry of regulations about public prostitution," or, surprisingly, even "explicitly repudiated" by many specialists in the medical community (251-52). According to Harsin: "Barrier methods of birth control were known to provide some protection against the transmission of venereal disease but were not favored by the experts. One doctor spoke

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of 'la dégoûtante capote,' the répugnant condom'" (252n24).

López Bago, however, did not side with the French on this issue. Interestingly enough, the controversial progressive novelist recommended the habitual use of prophlaxis by men as a method of reducing one's chances of contracting venereal disease. In La Pálida its usage was recommended by Dr. Pérez. Luis, however, caught up in the "frenesí amatorio y sensual" (205) he felt for Estrella, failed to heed medical advice:

> El mísero D. Luis de las Lanzas...víose acometido nuevamente y de improviso...de aquella lepra asquerosa, adquirida y heredada, contra la cual eran inútiles las batallas reñidísimas que empeñara desde el primer momento de su aparición el doctor Pérez, porque el trabajo profiláxico, ó para mejor intigencia preservativo que éste adoptaba, anulábase en los abrazos y caricias de Estrella, y como si esto no fuera bastante, quedaba como extirpado con los desórdenes adoptados también de última moda en la existencia de la *alta goma*. (205)

The irony, of course, lies in fact that had he used "la última moda" in the development of "la alta goma," Luis, according to López Bago, might have saved his own life.

With the intention of controlling and combating the propagation of venereal diseases almost all European nations instituted various systems for the reglementation of prostitution.[36] According to Bernheimer: "The fact of

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syphilis is the cornerstone of the entire regulatory edifice. Fear of the spread of syphilis justifies treating prostitution as a public health problem" (25). Governments enacted ordinances which were based on the following three key elements: 1. the official registration or inscription of all prostitutes with the police or other authorities; 2. the habitual compulsory medical inspection of all prostitutes by governmental physicians; 3. prostitutes diagnosed with syphilis or gonorrhea were hospitalized for treatment in medical facilities specializing in venereal diseases.

In the history of prostitution in Europe, the inscription of prostitutes in official records was not new to the nineteenth century. Throughout the centuries government have sought to monitor or control the lives of their public women,[37] as in legalizing brothel prostitution while outlawing, in many cases, clandestine prostitution: the commerce of independent (i.e.: streetwalkers) or part-time prostitutes. However, in the nineteenth century, influenced by the new advances in medical science, governments now joined forces with the medical community in order to deal with the venereal disease epidemic (Bullough, Women 232, 233). In the scientific community there was an "awareness that many of the ills of society were not necessarily inherent but were curable" (Bullough, Women 232).

France led the way in the development and implementation of *Réglementation*, Reglementation or Regulationism, the modern

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nineteenth-century national policy which advocated tolerance and governmental control in the issue of professional prostitution. The first steps toward Reglementation were made in the late eighteenth century. Paris began to register prostitutes in 1785.[38] Later, "Parisian officials began a new Register of Prostitutes in 1796 and employed agents to find and register women" (Bullough, Women 188). In Paris, prostitution fell under the jurisdiction of *Le Bureau des Moeurs,* a special unit of the police department. It was charged with the duty of confining prostitution to licensed brothels, the *maisons de tolérance.* Plans for a system of reglementation which "had been sketched out since the Consulate" of Napoleon I (1799-1804), reached fruition "at the beginning of the July Monarchy" (1830-1848) with Parent-Duchâtelet, who in his famous 1836 text on prostitution (De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris), "brought together into a coherent whole the more or less conscious principles that had guided the administrators of the Empire and Restoration, and he founded the entire system on a masterly study in social anthropology" (Corbin 3).

French prostitutes were divided into two categories: the *filles soumises* were officially registered, while the *filles insoumises* were unregistered (Corbin 128, 129), and since the latter technically practiced their trade illegally, they "ran a constant risk of being arrested and having their names recorded in the registers of official prostitution" (Corbin

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128). Until 1888, the "médecins des moeurs" (Corbin 12),

> the physicians who performed health checks on prostitutes in Paris were chosen by the prefecture of police. They worked under the orders of a physician in chief who specialized in questions relating to the unregistered prostitutes in general and to medical examinations on them in particular. (Corbin 90)

The English Parliament adopted serious reglementation policies in the middle of the century. The Contagious Diseases Prevention Act of 1866—one of several passed by the British government in the 1860s "required regular medical inspections and established a register of prostitutes. Women who passed inspection were given a certificate indicating their freedom from contagious disease..." (Bullough, Women 195; also see Walkowitz 1).

The first program for the reglementation of prostitution in Spain was implemented in Madrid in 1858 by the Governor of Madrid, the Marquis de la Vega de Armijo, who also later reformed it in 1865.[39] The Madrid program would serve as the model for other programs (Cuevas 167), implemented in other cities: Barcelona (1867), Vigo (1867), Gerona (1869), Seville (1870), and San Sebastian (1874) (Nash 36; Scanlon 110). The reglementation policy applied to both types of public women: "'Prostituta libre, que vive en su domicilio, y prostituta pupila, que vive en la casa de tolerancia o lenocinio.'"[40]

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Corbin describes the procedure for registering public women in France's "Enclosed World of Regulationism"(30) at mid century:

> A women entered the enclosed world of officially tolerated prostitution by registration; by that very fact she became a *fille soumise* whether she decided to join a *maison de tolérance* or to practice her profession on her own. In the first case her name would be included in the brothel-keeper's book and she would thus become a *fille à numéro*, a prostitute with a number; in the second case she would be given an identification card and be regarded by the authorities as a fille en carte....
>
> In Paris voluntary registration was a simple procedure: the applicant, armed with a copy of her birth certificate, turned up at...the prefecture of police and asked to be registered.... (30)

In Madrid public women carried cards or *cartillas*: "Las prostitutas están provistas de una cédula de inscripción ó cartilla, en la cual constan, por regla general, el señalamiento o fotografía, la filiación y el número de inscripción" (Franco y Guzmán 241). The *cartilla* served as both proof of identification and inscription, and as a record of the woman's professional medical history, specifically as it concerned venereal diseases: "Al inscribirse la prostituta

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recibe una Cartilla destinada a la indicación de los resultados de las visitas sanitarias" (Rodríguez Solís 245; also see: Befesse 133, 134). In López Bago's two novels, it is Arístides who makes reference to Estrella's *cartilla* at the beginning and end of her inscription. In La prostituta he prepares the statement for Estrella's father to sign: "'Autorizo á mi hija para que tome cartilla'" (110). In La Pálida when Estrella becomes a *buscona* under Arístides' protection, her career as a brothel prostitute ends, and so does her official inscription in the Gobierno Civil's files; she is no longer subject to its ordinances. As the "antiguo tratante de esclavas" (49) informs her: "...mañana se borrará tu nombre en el Gobierno civil, rompe tu cartilla: desde mañana no serás prostituta" (49).

The ordinances mandating the compulsory and habitual medical examinations and treatment of prostitutes were the most innovative and important element of the reglementation policies (Bullough, Women 189-90). As Bullough informs us, medical inspection was initiated as early as 1798 when

> two private physicians were given the task of examining the Parisian prostitutes and were to report any cases of infection. In 1802 a dispensary was established. All public prostitutes were required to submit to semiweekly examinations at the facility.... (Women 188)

Thirty years later:

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> A sanitary department associated with the morals bureau was re-organized in 1828. Prostitutes found diseased were sent first to Saint Lazare Hospital for treatment (later there were others), and when cured, were allowed to resume their occupation. By the middle of the century, inspection took place once a week for prostitutes in licensed brothels and every other week for prostitutes who practiced independently.... Each independent prostitute carried a card with her signed by the medical inspector and stamped with the date, a sort of guarantee of the clean bill of health. Prostitutes had to show these cards to anyone requesting it. (Women 190)

The Madrid counterpart to Paris' *Bureau des Moeurs* was the "Sección de Higiene del Gobierno civil de Madrid" (Rodríguez Solís 244), a special department created "dependiente del Gobierno Provincial de Madrid" (Capel Martínez 284) to enforce the capital's reglementation policy. Capel Martínez quotes the following from the updated 1885 *Reglamento*, noting that the *Sección de Higiene Especial's* mission was to "'...reprimir y evitar, en lo posible, los males del vil tráfico de que se trata....'" Under the *Sección's* direction was "Una Oficina administrativa," which, in addition to its bureaucratic duties consisted of a watchdog team, "'un cuerpo de vigilentes, nombrados por el gobernador,

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a cuyo cargo queda mantener el "'Orden cívico'" inspeccionando las casas inscritas, controlando los hábitos de quienes las ocupan, reprimiendo cuantos actos o dichos atenten contra la moral..." (284). A second division consisted of:

> un Cuerpo de Médicos Higienistas, numerarios y supernumararios, sobre los que recae la responsabilidad de mantener los niveles de salubridad óptimos mediante el reconocimiento dos veces semanales de las mujeres y de sus habitaciones, denunciando, a las autoridades las enfermas o las no inscritas que encuentren. Para facilitar la labor inspectora, Madrid se divide en dos secciones y 10 distritos, cada uno de los cuales contará con un médico, en turno rotatorio, ayudado si lo desea por un vigilante. (284)

López Bago was very critical of the *Sección de Higiene*. One of his complaints centered around an allegation of corruption. The medical inspectors whose duty it was to denounce "a las autoridades las enfermas" accepted bribes from madams to declare obviously sick women as healthy. For the madams it was worth the risk; the house was losing revenue for the duration of a prostitute's hospitalization. In La prostituta one of the residents tells her colleagues about a bribe she witnessed between a medical inspector and the madam in whose house she was working early in her career:

> —Yo fuí una vez tan mala, que estaba deseando la

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> visita del médico para que me mandase al hospital. Tuve que ir en coche. Esto fué á los tres meses de estar en la vida. El ama era una vieja.... Pues bien: ¿qué diréis que me dijo *el de la higiene*? Pues me dijo: "¡Vaya, muchacha, tú te ahogas en muy poca agua! Esto no es nada. Trae la cartilla." Se la di, creyendo que quería consolarme, pero que pondría la baja.
>
> —Y ¿qué puso?
>
> —Sana. Entonces le dije: "¡Pero mire usté que yo estoy enferma!"—"¡Quita allá, aprensiva! Lo que tú tienes es lo que tienen las mujeres todos los meses.... Y al marcharnos vi que la vieja le ponía en la mano una monedilla de oro. (98)

The prostitute's account of bribery was not an isolated incident; quite the contrary. So pervasive was the practice that changes in the procedures for inspecting prostitutes had to be made in an effort to halt the abuse. According to Capel Martínez:

> Aunque el Reglamento para nada alude a ello, por testimonios contemporáneos sabemos que ambas medidas—rotación de puestos y compañía de agente público—iban dirigidas a evitar la posible compra del "placet" médico por parte del ama o de la interesada, bien fuera con dinero, bien de "ciertos favores". Por idéntica razón, se establecera más

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> tarde que la vigilancia sea realizada en parejas. (284)

The frequency of the medical inspections varied from city to city. In Nantes in the 1880s, for example, prostitutes were examined twice a month (Bullough, Women 194; Corbin 88), while "Geneva required an examination every five days" (Bullough, Women 194). Weekly inspections were the rule for many French and German cities, including the following: Bourdeaux, Lyons, Marseilles, Toulouse (Bullough, Women 194; Corbin 88), Cologne, Danzig, Dresden and Leipzig (Bullough, Women 194). Madrid, along with Hamburg, Milan, Rome, Prague and Vienna were among the list of cities which opted for two inspections per week (Bullough, Women 194). However, according to López Bago, the women at Mari-Pepa's are examined only once a week: "Un viaje al Gobierno civil cada ocho días..." (La prostituta 97). Other historians who write about prostitution in Spain agree, not with López Bago, but with Bullough on the frequency of mandated inspections based on Spain's 1865 Reglementation Policy. Scanlon notes how prostitutes in Madrid "eran sometidas a observación dos veces por semana y los resultados se anotaban en sus cartillas..." (110). According to Rodríguez Solís, "[la] inspección médica" consisted of "visitas dos veces semanales, indicando en su Cartilla el estado sanitario..." (245). Befesse echoes the same information: "una al menos, de las dos visitas habdomarias, debe hacerse con el speculum..." (136). It is

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not know why the women at Mari-Pepa's were subject to only one visit per week when the 1865 *Reglamento* mandated biweekly sanitary inspections.

Officially, governments promoted and advertised their compulsory medical inspection policies under a banner of maintaining "la higiene" (La prostituta 98) or achieving "[*le*] *contrôle sanitaire*" (Corbin 88). In reality, medical inspections were anything but hygienic or sanitary. Moreover, prostitutes received what may be characterized as incompetent "assembly-line" treatment. Throughout Europe, the examinations were, in essence, very superficial, careless, as well as "quick, rough and painful" (Wells 69) for the patients. Wells reports on the state of affairs in England:

> The examination was so superficial and the doctors so unconcerned, that mild vaginal infections could send a woman to the prison-like hospitals... (69). Originally, the Admiralty issued instructions on the use of the speculum but as the years went on, just told the doctors to satisfy themselves as to whether the woman had VD or not. The speculums and other instruments, nor the doctor's hands and fingers, were washed, much less sterilized, between women, so that the compulsory inspection was then compulsory infection. Each check took about 30 seconds—half a minute to decide the course and freedom of a woman's life. (70)

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Corbin cites two Parisian physicians of the era who boasted—as if conducting a race—of the high number of women they could inspect within a specified time frame. One physician "boasted that he could examine a woman every thirty seconds," while another "saw four hundred women in twenty-four hours" (90). During the Second Empire one observer noted that "the average number of patients examined in an hour was fifty-two" (90).

Flexner offers, perhaps, the best and most comprehensive and panoramic description of what medical examinations were like. He witnessed first hand the conditions in several European cities, including Hamburg, Cologne, Geneva and Rome. He was particularly appalled by the horrible state of affairs he found in the Parisian facilities:

> All day long a dismal succession of groups of abandoned women file into the rudely-equipped rooms in which two physicians ply their repellent task perfunctorily.... This finished, the same group in quick succession ascends two surgical chairs to permit a cursory vaginal inspection; the physician, stationing himself between them, loses no time, for one woman is assuming the recumbent position while he is engaged in the examination of another; he switches back and forth as rapidly as the women can get up and down.... On one occasion I observed one of the physicians examine 25 or 30 girls without

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> changing, washing, or wiping the rubber fingers he wore; and a number of those examined were adjudged "diseased." The speculum was rarely used. In one instance, pressure by the finger on the urethra discharged an abundant suspicious secretion; the same finger, unwashed, was used in examining the next case; in another instance, the same rubber finger was used on the genitalia and about the mouth. The inspections consumed from 15 to 30 seconds each.... (216-17)

Ironically, as we have just seen, it was the physicians themselves who inadvertently transmitted the infectious diseases they sought to diagnose. As Bullough affirms: "...the medical examination itself was often a way of spreading the disease. Rubber gloves and aseptic techniques appeared only at the end of the century and physicians sometimes spread the disease from one prostitute to another by their very inspection" (Women 194).

The third element of the Reglementation system called for prostitutes diagnosed with venereal disease to be confined to state designated hospitals for treatment. In the nineteenth century infected patients were given mercury, which was considered "the accepted cure for syphilis," even "though there was no accepted standard procedure for its use; it was injected, ingested, and rubbed in." Moreover, "it was also quite dangerous to the patient and had to be administered

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carefully, over a period of years, and with no guarantee of effectiveness" (Harsin 256-57). One of the side effects of the unsuccessful mercury treatments was excessive swelling and bloating, as evidenced in Estrella's "carne herida y mal curada, cuya opulencia es sólo ficticia, siendo lo real la hinchazón producida por los preparados mercuriales" (La Pálida 132-33).

Women fared no better in hospitals than they did in brothels. In facilities across Europe—whose official purpose was to attend to the medical needs of these sick patients—prostitutes were treated not with compassion, but like criminals, pariah or even human cattle, reflective of the prevailing societal attitudes which judged these women as an immoral and diseased subspecies.

In Victorian Britain prostitutes were hospitalized in one of the many Lock Hospitals (Walkowitz 57-63) where they were treated both as criminals and "lost souls" in need of moral redemption:

> Once a woman was diagnosed as suffering from venereal disease she was immediately categorized as deviant, removed from society and placed in a special institution.... Treatment in the Lock Hospitals involved surveillance and regulation and was intended to provide both physical and moral recovery. (Need 144)

Wells offers the following description of conditions inside

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the Lock Hospitals:

> The VD Lock Hospitals were more like prisons than places to care for the sick. To the Victorians, VD was a result of wickedness; the hospitals worked, first, towards making the women (sic) morally 'pure' and only secondarily to cure her illness.... A strict regime of isolation, silence and constant observation was set up to transform the women (sic) by cutting her off from her past life. On entering the hospital, the woman was 'fumigated.' All her belongings were removed and she was locked in until the sores disappeared. (70-71)

Conditions were no better inside hospital infirmaries like Paris' Saint-Lazare. Because public women were judged inferior, so too were the facilities for their care: "It was also true that venereal hospitals made a poor showing against regular hospitals," notes Harsin (258). This historian also quotes a nineteenth-century eyewitness' account of the state of affairs: "'The beds, without curtains, have not the same linens; the wards are not scrubbed, the latrines are horrible; the patients have for their use crude earthenware dishes, a glass, and a tin spoon'" (258).

According to the *Reglamento* of 1865, all prostitutes diagnosed with sexually transmitted diseases were required by law to seek "la curación de la infección contraída (Franco y Guzmán 241). In Madrid public women diagnosed with syphilis

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or gonorrhea were interned at El Hospital de San Juan de Dios (Capel Martínez 282; Rodríguez Solís 245; Scanlon 110), the designated "especialista en el tratamiento de las enfermedades venéreas" (Scanlon 109). According to an article published in La Epoca in April 1889,[41] numerous complaints had been made since 1879 concerning the hospital's structural instability. Erected in 1538 as a hospital "destinado á curar las enfermedades de la piel," the almost three hundred and fifty year old edifice was falling apart; it was in "ruinoso" condition (La Epoca 28 Apr. 1889) when Estrella Sánchez first walked through its doors the morning after Paco's death.

López Bago dedicates almost all of La Pálida's chapter III to describing Estrella's experiences with Reglemented prostitution in her search for medical treatment. In pure naturalistic fashion, López Bago takes his readers into one of the wards at San Juan de Dios, where, through Estrella's eyes readers witness the horrific conditions that awaited the myriad of public women:

> Penetró por la crujía solitaria de San Juan de Dios; fué inscrita en el registro del libro de entrada; pasó por delante de un cura que la miró atentamente, con una mirada más curiosa que compasiva; cruzó largos corredores, oyendo cómo decían á su paso los dependientes: "No la conocemos;" "debe venir por primera vez;" "es muy guapa;" "pues vive en casa de la Mari-Pepa;" y

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> llegó por último á la gran sala-dormitorio, y una vez en ella, á la cama numerada que la destinaron. Había treinta como la suya, y las treinta estaban ocupadas. Entraba la claridad del día y el rayo solar...á colorear...los rostros demacrados, los ojos hundidos de las prostitutas enfermas.... Las que no estaban postradas por la fiebre, se incorporaron para mirar á la recién venida. Y Estrella tuvo que desnudarse en medio de esta curiosidad, seguida en todos sus movimientos por los ojos de aquellas mujeres, y oyendo los comentarios que con cínico descaro hacían en voz alta. Acostada ya, volvióse instinctivamente para ver á quién le deparaba la suerte por vecina en la cama inmediata. El embozo de la sábana tapaba el rostro, y la inmovilidad del bulto que cubrían las ropas acusaba debajo la rigidez de las formas. Sobre el pecho habían colocado un Crucifijo de cobre. Su vecina era un cadáver. (42-43)

In the following passage López Bago documents the pain and humiliation the patients endured before the cold, clinical indifference of physicians, interns and other medical personnel. The women were dehumanized; treated like specimens, useful subjects for scientific observation and educational study:

> Y luégo (sic) las curas, las espantosas curas,

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> aquella procesión de media docena de hombres, médico y practicantes, yendo de una cama á otra, prouunciando (sic) discursos de cátedra delante de las llagas puestas al descubierto, con palabras tan crudas, que la misma ramera tapábase el rostro con las manos avergonzada, no tanto de mostrar su desnudez como de verla sometida al análisis científico; avergonzábase y miraba con ojos asustados a aquellos hombres, en quienes no sorprendía ninguna emoción lasciva, cuando examinaban la redondez de sus formas y tocaban sus carnes con la frialdad de la mano que procede á un examen y no se mueve á impulsos de ninguna caricia. ¡Ah! ¡los médicos! Eran el terror y la admiración de las prostitutas, cuando terminada la explicación científica relucían en sus dedos los instrumentos de acero, y uno de los practicantes, con su blusa negra ribeteada de amarillo, inclinábase sobre el lecho obedeciendo las órdenes del profesor. Entonces era el horror del grito en unas, la convulsión en otras, y en muchas la resistencia, que obligaba á sujetarlas. (44-45)

López Bago describes a case in which a patient was subjected to the daily procedure of having silver nitrate poured directly onto ulcerated sores. The prostitute was

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probably suffering not from syphilis, but from gonorrhea, which "was treated as a 'local infection,' by cauterization or by acid treatment of the sores" (Harsin 257). The woman's reaction to her daily "cura" is quite understandable; readers can only imagine the excruciating agony she and others endured:

> Había una que sufría una cauterización diaria, y á la que temían todos los practicantes. Era una mujer de instintos depravados, de *malas entrañas*, como decían sus compañeras. En cuanto el practicante se inclinaba sobre el cuerpo, agarrábase á su brazo. "No me muerdas, ¿eh?"—la (sic) decía.—La prostituta juraba que no, que no mordería, pero que resistir la punzada de dolor tenía aquella costumbre. Y durante los preparativos de la operación, besaba el brazo con muchos besos repetidos, con todos los mimos de una gata: "No me haga usté daño,"—exclamaba al mismo tiempo, entre suplicante y amenazadora. —Y cuando el nitrato de plata tocaba la llaga viva, los dientes de la ramera se clavaban en el biceps desnudo que antes besaba. Algunas veces el operador, no pudiendo contener el primer arrebato de ira causado por el dolor, volvía la mano, y de una puñada bañaba en sangre la boca que le mordió.... (45-46)

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Interestingly enough, the physician reacts with violence; the other prostitutes, with empathy as they do their best to distract the patient from her torment:

> En las curas más dolorosas, mientras la operadora gemía, gritaba y se retorcía tratando de resistir á los que la tenían sujeta, dos ó tres enfermas incorporadas en sus lechos cantaban una copla de malagueñas, y la *jaleaban* tocando las palmas para distraer y dar ánimos á la paciente. (46)

According to López Bago, neither the civil government nor the medical staff in their employ was sincerely interested in alleviating their patients' agony. Like the brothel management, these two parties also exploited the women financially. While, as we have seen, some physicians accepted bribes from madams, the Spanish government's Reglementation policy added insult to injury by charging prostitutes—in addition to the cost of preparing their—*cartillas*—a fee for medical consultation and treatment (Franco y Guzmán 241; Rodríguez Solís 245; Scanlon 110). First the women paid, then the State would attend to them: "Ella paga al Estado. Y el Estado la atiende por lo que paga, con un médico que la reconoce, un hospital donde se cura, y un ama de casa que la exploita, autorizada también por el Estado" (47-48).

In reality, the program for the inspection and treatment of prostitutes was a farce. Prostitutes were examined and treated for one primary purpose in mind: to return them to

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work as soon as possible. When physicians wanted to get rid of a prostitute, they would declare: "'Está buena, está fresca, todavía sirve para que use de ella el público'" (47).

Perhaps even more than the economic exploitation of public women, López Bago condemns each sector of the Reglementation system—the brothels, the government and the medical community—for the moral crime of stripping these women of their sense of human dignity; for forgetting that these women, despite society's misjudgment of them, are also human beings with feelings, needs, desires, honor and souls like all other human beings:

> ¡El lupanar ¡San Juan de Dios! ¡El Gobierno civil! Tres sitios en que la mujer, es únicamente la hembra, en que se siente excluída de la raza humana, en que se ve tratada con el trato que recibe del hombre la animalidad, atendiendo sólo al cuerpo, suponiendo la no existencia del alma, preocupándole únicamente la conservación de aquel cuerpo en estado de salud, no por atención á su vida, no por interés sentido hacia ella, sino por la vida y la salud de los demás. La carne humana, la carne que vive, siente y palpita y se estremece, considerada, reconocida escrupulosamente como las carnes de las reses muertas que van al mercado.... Ni una sospecha siquiera de que aquellos ojos podían llorar, suspirar aquellos labios, tener

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> sollozos aquella garganta, ni un presentimiento de que ... los hermosos brazos desnudos podían levantarse suplicantes y doblarse las rodillas y sentir alguna vez toda ella arrepentimiento del pasado, repugnancia del presente, fervientes anhelos de castidad para el porvenir. (46-47)

We recall from Chapter I that López Bago was sued for libel by the staff physicians at the *Sección de Higiene del Gobierno Civil de Madrid* for his disparaging portrayal of their treatment of the prostitutes at San Juan de Dios Hospital. Nevertheless, the radical naturalist's documentation of the terrible conditions inside the crumbling facility was supported by the observations of two prominent writers: the nineteenth-century intellectual and feminist Concepción Arenal, and Pío Baroja. Both authors described similar horrors: Arenal in her Obras completas; and Baroja in El árbol de la ciencia when the protagonist, Andrés Hurtado, visits una sala de mujeres" at San Juan de Dios. Like López Bago, Arenal, for example, notes that the primary objective of the civil government's medical inspection program was economic; to return prostitutes to their brothels as soon as possible: "'...le cura para que vuelva a servir ...y ser útil.'"[42]

It is interesting to note the irony in the fact that the sanitary policies of the nineteenth-century Reglementation system on prostitution was instituted first and foremost for

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the purpose of protecting the health of the prostitutes' male clients, not the prostitutes themselves: "El Estado...dicta los reglamentos de la prostitución: 1.º, con un fin *sanitario*, con objeto de que las mujeres prostituídas no propaguen las enfermedades contagiosas...'" (Bernaldo de Quirós 46). Again, the double moral standard exculpated men from any wrongdoing. Society at-large was not interested in men infecting prostitutes. Male clients were never subjected to compulsory medical inspections (Bernheimer 25; Harsin 258, 259; Nelken 139; Scanlon 111; Walkowitz 229). The privacy of male patients was protected; upper class males were treated by their personal physicians, as were both José and Luis de Villaperdida.

In the final analysis, Estrella Sánchez and the myriad of women like her who were subjected to the "curas," whether in Madrid or in other European cities, suffered in vain. Although the cure for syphilis and gonorrhea was sought throughout the century, medical science had not progressed sufficiently enough to reach this goal. Physicians of the period were unable "to recognize anything but the more obvious manifestations of venereal disease. Even when the disease had been diagnosed there was no real cure..." (Bullough, History 216-17).[43]

In La Pálida López Bago describes the horrible year Estrella spent as a common brothel prostitute passing between the two infernal worlds of the Casa de Mari-Pepa and San Juan

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de Dios Hospital, a year which is representative of the entire life of the typical inscribed professional. As Scanlon aptly notes, "la prostituta se pasaba la vida entre el burdel y el hospital" (105). When not working inside the bordello, the average brothel resident was enduring painful "curas" in San Juan de Dios where she was hospitalized usually twice a year.[44] Estrella's infection, according to López Bago, was especially virulent inasmuch as she was interned three times in the space of one year. Estrella suffered humiliation and clinical invasion at the hospital; at Mari-Pepa's she was forced to satisfy the sexual appetites of an endless parade of repugnant customers who gave no thought to striking her across the face when they were inebriated, frustrated or impatient:

> *La Pálida* pasó tres veces por este calvario de la mujer pública. *La Pálida* sufrió en su alma todos los desprecios; acostumbróse su rostro á las bofetadas de los borrachos, su vergüenza á los insultos del parroquiano, hízose insensible, lo mismo á las caricias que á las afrentas, lo mismo á los abrazos del hombre que á las operaciones del médico...llegó también á soportar sin una queja las violaciones del speculum, y los desgarramientos del bisturí. (48)

More fortunate than her colleagues condemned to spend the rest of their lives in the bordello or in a hospital ward slowly dying of a venereal disease, Estrella creates the

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opportunity to improve the conditions of her exploitation thanks to her unusual beauty; but more importantly to her connection to Arístides, "el antiguo tratante de esclavas" (49) turned respectable citizen. Without Arístides' influence and protection Estrella would not have been able to escape "los peligros y tristezas ya experimentados por ella en la prostitución reglamentada y vigilada malamente por los Gobiernos" (38). López Bago is justified in his assessment. Madrid's *Reglamento* made it extremely difficult for non-brothel prostitutes to leave the inscribed system, but virtually impossible for brothel residents like Estrella to have any hope of leading a normal life. The paragraph which addresses the issue of women wanting to leave the system reads as follows: "La que deseaba retirarse y de volver la cartilla, debía probar que llevaba una vida regular desde hacía algún tiempo y contaba con medios de subsistencia, presentando una persona decente que la garantirase" (Rodríguez Solís 245. Also see Franco y Guzmán 241; Scanlon 109). Looking at the last part of the ordinance, we note how Estrella was dependent upon Arístides, the so-called "persona decente," in order to vouch for her ability to support herself. Considering the entire paragraph, we see that only independent or part-time professionals already living in the outside world would be possible candidates for returning their *cartillas*. However, an examination of the paragraph's first requirement reveals a "catch-22" situation for the brothel

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inmate. It stipulates that before she is allowed to return her *cartilla*, the woman must have, over a period of unspecified time, already proven her financial independence. This, of course, would have been impossible to realize for bordello inmates who spent their lives "entre el burdel y el hospital" (Scanlon 105).

Estrella ascends the hierarchy of professional prostitution to the intermediary position of *buscona*, the professional who "vivía de sus propios recursos, sin estar mantenida y pagada por ningún hombre" (64). Above the bordello resident or the streetwalker, yet beneath the mistress or courtesan, the *buscona* is the available professional in between "compromisos" (64). She actively seeks a steady arrangement with one client, known euphemistically as her "lover," or "protector y padrino" (129).[45] Unlike the bordello resident, the *buscona* controls the selection of her lovers. Like the superior mistress or courtesan, the *buscona* seeks to cater to men of wealth, power, prestige and/or fame. Therefore, the environment of the *buscona* must correspond more or less to that of her prospective lovers. Arístides lends Estrella money to set her up in her own luxurious apartment while she searches for a "compromiso."

To maximize Estrella's possibilities for obtaining an arrangement, Arístides displays her before the thirty odd members of *La Botica*—the private male social club López Bago

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characterizes as a:

> sociedad, conjunto ó reunión de viciosos, naturalezas gastadas por todos los placeres, llagadas por todas las armas del sensualismo, cuerpos que empezaron andando fuertes y robustos por el cieno y luégo (sic) al hundirse poco á poco continuaban arrastrándose, acostumbrados ya y como complacidos al sentirse envueltos y rodeados de calor y pestilencia. (7-8)

Estrella is elected to the enviable position of *Boticaria*, the official collective mistress of *La Botica*. To be voted the *Boticaria* was to "obtener la superioridad jerárquica de la busconería madrileña, empuñar el cetro, ceñir la corona y vestir el manto de reina del vicio, y todo esto durante un año entero sin que nadie pudiese alegar mejores títulos..." (122-23).

There is no limit to the depth of degradation of *La Botica*, as we observe in the following passage in which Arístides enumerates Estrella's special qualifications which make her the ideal *Boticaria*. Reminiscent of the auction at Mari-Pepa's in *La prostituta*, Estrella is once again dehumanized, verbally insulted, as she is paraded before an intoxicated group of Madrid's business, political, religious and artistic leaders:

> —Procedamos pues á la ceremonia,—terminó Arístides,—pero antes quiero demostraros que la

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> elegida reúne las condiciones necesarias para desempeñar con acierto su honroso cargo. Es hermosa, estúpida y bien formada; no sabe leer ni escribir, conoce el vicio en todas sus múltiples manifestaciones, su descaro no tiene igual, se viste con suma elegancia, se desnuda si es preciso á las doce del día y en medio de la Puerta del Sol, ha tenido cartilla, ha sido prostituta, y lo que es más importante para nosotros, ha estado, no una, sino tres veces, enferma en el hospital de San Juan de Dios. (32-33)

In exchange for her crown, Estrella is required to remain available to serve the perverse tastes of the members of *La Botica*. The protagonist performs as their leading lady; the primary source and highlight of erotic entertainment at all their functions, which include orgies, bacchanals, and a nude dance competition with the rest of "la busconería madrileña" (123).

Estrella ascends the hierarchy of professional prostitution to its highest rank when she becomes Luis de Villaperdida's *querida*. As Estrella needed a "protector" to support her financially, so too did Luis need to acquire a mistress in order to fulfill his role as the perfect aristocrat. To maintain a mistress was a symbol of status befitting and expected of a man in his position: "...así como le faltaba algo para ser un *sportman* (sic), faltábale también

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para ser un perfecto *gentleman*, tener una querida" (121). But not just any "querida." In addition to her rare beauty, sentimentality and the egotistical need to possess only the best of any desired category are the two reasons behind the young marquis' selection of Estrella Sánchez for the coveted role. The protagonist was "el primer cuerpo desnudo que estrechó en sus brazos;" Luis' "primera posesión de la hembra" (123). As *La Boticaria*, the queen of "la busconería madrileña," Estrella has ascended to the highest position of available superior professionals; there was "ninguna como ella" (123). She has proven herself worthy of the attentions of a nobleman of Luis' wealth and prestige, inasmuch as "la querida de un grande de España no puede ser una mujer cualquiera" (121).

As we see here with Luis' preoccupation with selecting the professional already judged the best by members of a club he respects, society's obsession with class and status extends to the world of professional prostitution. Nead comments upon this peculiarity:

> Prostitution was not perceived as an homogeneous category; there were differences within the group, grades of deviancy which could be regulated and ordered. Nineteenth-century surveys usually classified prostitution according to hierarchy from kept mistresses and courtesans down to soldiers' women and park women; in this way prostitution

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> could be seen as a microcosm of society in general, a hierarchical system organized along lines of social class. At the bottom of the system were the public prostitutes, the female issue of the undeserving poor. (96)

The fact that Estrella Sánchez, a girl from the *pueblo*—and, likewise, Zola's Nana—ascended to the top of the prostitution hierarchy was, indeed, the exception, not the norm. Women from the proletariat and the peasantry usually remained at the bottom of the ladder, with the majority confined to bordellos. Traditionally, only middle class women ascended to the top of the profession: "...la mayoría de las cortesanas más refinadas proviene de las filas de las clases medias," reports Scanlon (120) on Nelken's (140-41) findings.

The term "mistress" and its synonyms, "courtesan" and "paramour," are used to denote a superior, discriminating class of women who sell their sexual favors exclusively to men of wealth, power, fame, nobility and even royalty. The mistress is a woman who is supported by one man with whom she maintains an arrangement over an extended period of time: months, years or even a lifetime. The client may be a bachelor, but is usually married, In order to have a fixed environment in which to meet privately and conveniently with his mistress, the man establishes her in her own residence. He pays all her expenses and regales her with luxuries. In return, sexual fidelity and availability on the part of the

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mistress are mandatory requirements. Contrary to popular myth, mistresses generally do not fall in love with their lovers. Their arrangement is sexual for the man and business for the woman. Like prostitutes in general, mistresses pretend to enjoy their encounters.[46] Estrella does not love Luis, and in the beginning of their arrangement does not even make efforts at pretense. She remains emotionally and sexually detached and indifferent: "La buscona soportaba estos arrebatos de lujuria con la obediencia indiferente de una servidumbre. La pagaban para eso, y era necesario ganarse el jornal" (133).

A formal agreement is made between man and mistress, detailing each party's obligations to the other. López Bago describes the meeting between Luis and Estrella, facilitated by Arístides, acting as intermediary. The probable significance of the unexpected visit of the *diputado* and the "marquesito" (113) is not lost on the *buscona*. She flirts with Luis, prolonging his anxiety and increasing his desire: "*La Pálida* continuaba sus coqueterías. Tenía buen olfato. Aquel pollo era lo que estaba esperando. El *caballo blanco*, el pagano, el *primo*, que diría la señá Petra" [the portera] (114):

> —Mi amigo el marqués viene esta noche aquí para saber sólo una cosa,—insinuó don Arístides.
>
> —¿El qué?—preguntó *La Pálida* volviéndose para mirar al joven cara á cara.

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—Si estás libre.

—¿Esta noche?

—No. Todas las noches y todos los días.

—¡Ah!—dijo la buscona;—se trata de una cosa seria.

—Sí, muy seria y muy formal,—agregó el Grande de España, interviniendo por fin....

Entonces, sin decoro alguno en el lenguaje, sin vergüenza por ninguna de ambas partes contratantes, el aristócrata y la ex-prostituta ajustaron precio y condiciones del amancebamiento. El marquesito suscribió sin regatear el primer punto: "de eso no hay que hablar; gasta cuanto quieras, y gasta mucho." En cuanto al segundo, ó sean las condiciones, no impuso el señor más que una, que demostraba su febril impaciencia: "Esta noche duermo aquí." Una sonrisa de sumisión, una mirada de asentimiento, fueron la respuesta. Y un beso, dado en presencia del diputado á Cortes...cerró el trato definitivamente. (126-27)

As we see from Luis' statement in the passage above—"gasta cuanto quieras, y gasta mucho"—spending enormous amounts of money is an obligation his mistress must fulfill. In fact, for Luis, it is "preciso encontrar, además de la hermosura, una de esas devoradoras de fortunas, que lo tragan todo, lo mismo las onzas mejicanas que los luises de

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oro ó las libras esterlinas" (121). Once again López Bago attacks the Spanish aristocracy for its uselessness and lack of values; its members have nothing better to do with their lives than to squander resources for the sake of appearances. A nobleman's honor has now been reduced to its lowest level. Crash materialism has now become the measure of an upper class man's virility, as it has for Luis. Inasmuch as Estrella is the superficial extension of Luis, she too must play her role in the charade. At the beginning of their arrangement, Luis complained to his mistress about her failure to comply with her duty to spend his money on aristocratic extravagances; he is worried about his reputation:

> Con todo esto creyó *La Pálida* que gastaba un dineral, y fué grande su sorpresa cuando el marqués declaró un día muy formalmente, que las cosas no podían seguir así, y que estaba *haciéndole hacer* un papel ridículo entre todos sus amigos, que le tachaban de tacaño y miserable, cuando era ella la miserable y la tacaña. (130)

Estrella's unwillingness to waste money was tied to the emotional and sexual satisfaction she experienced in her relationship with Rosita. Later, after the two women had resolved the issues between them, and after Estrella had become corrupted by the false values of her environment, she easily began to fulfill her duties to ostentatiousness. In fact, she went to the extreme. López Bago characterizes her

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excesses as "*insultante*" (197):

> Además, *La Pálida* no era ya una querida económica.... Exigió un abono en el teatro Real, y exigió que dicho abono fuese á platea...pidió y obtuvo...carruajes y caballos propios, y tan propios que, como el hotel, se compraron á su nombre. Demás de esto, hizo á Worms ["el célebre modista de París," (25)] un importantísimo pedido de trajes....
>
> Presentóse con este tren en los paseos más frecuentados, siendo su aparición un triunfo sobre las más encopetadas y aristocráticas damas de la corte, y su lujo quedó calificado como *insultante*, porque es lo cierto que ninguna pudo superarlo, y al no poder, se consideraban todas como ofendidas. (196-97)

In this final section of our examination of the traumatic experiences of Estrella Sánchez in the deterministic world of professional prostitution, we shall turn our attention to a consideration of several points concerning the protagonist, her reaction to her environment, and also López Bago's interpretation of his tetralogy's first heroine.

The problem of food and hunger is a leitmotif in the life of the protagonist. A living organism's primitive need to find food is a determining motive for Estrella's flight to the *Casa de Mari-Pepa*. She arrives at the bordello on the verge

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of fainting after two days without food: "—Yo ... yo ... tengo hambre—dijo, llevándose las manos á los ojos; pero acudió tarde, y tomando el vértigo la delantera, desvaneció su vista, y cayó el débil cuerpo en los regordetes brazos de Mari-Pepa, que acudió á sostenerla" (La prostituta 88). The animalistic or instinctive drive to survive blocks out all other ethical or moral considerations such as honor, virtue, etc. "Estrella comía con voracidad" (La prostituta 95), writes López Bago of his protagonist. A voracious appetite characterizes the protagonist's relationship with food, symbolic, of course, of her background of physiological and emotional depravation. This primitive approach to consuming food is not singular to Estrella, but representative of the eating habits of all the prostitutes at Mari-Pepa's who, undoubtedly, were of similar impoverished origins. López Bago evokes sympathy for the women for their deep-seated anxieties regarding food, especially as they must eat while enduring the bullying taunts of their cruel wealthy clients who ridicule their table manners:

> Luis no tenía ningún apetito. *La Pálida* devoraba todos aquellos exquisitos manjares que no había comido nunca. Las demás mujerzuelas comían con igual ansia, y torpemente, con los groseros modales y antiguos hábitos de su educación plebeya. Los aristócratas se reían al ver como rebañaban el plato con una miga de pan cogida entre los dedos,

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> cómo no limpiándose la boca, relucía la grasa en los labios, y bebían los vinos ... que ellos, para emborracharlas, llenaban hasta el borde. (La prostituta 195)

Estrella's "voracidad" prevailed even after leaving Mari-Pepa's when the procurement of food was no longer an issue. At her induction ceremony as *La Boticaria*, Estrella:

> Comía de todo, con ese apetito poco escrupuloso de la mujer del pueblo, y que era un resabio de su voracidad, adquirida al salir de la miseria y entrar en el vicio, como loba que abandona el monte, pierde todo miedo, y hostigada por el hambre, recorre las calles de la aldea. Comía de todo y bebía mucho .... (La Pálida 28)

In her book on women in Victorian society, Helena Mitchie notes the parallel between food and hunger and the loss of honor and sexual purity: "Metaphors of food and hunger," she observes, are "always, of course, related to the larger metaphor of the Fall."[47] This, of course, is representative of the plight of Estrella Sánchez and women like her, forced to prostitute their honor as well as their bodies. Society, not the women, are to blame for their "Fall," López Bago reiterates throughout the tetralogy, as he does, for example, in the following passage in which he underscores Estrella's Darwinian struggle for survival:

> Pero ¿por qué, por qué aquel castigo? ¿Qué pecado

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> estaba purgando? ¿El de haberse hecho prostituta? ¿Iba á morirse de hambre? Bastante había resistido. ¡Veinte años! ¡Lo mejor de su vida! Cuando no pudo más, salió de la pobreza como salen las fieras del desierto, á buscar pan, á robarlo si no se lo daban, á matar si se resistían, á cualquier cosa. (La prostituta 219)

After her traumatic encounter with Don José and believing herself infected by him with syphilis, the generally submissive protagonist rebels. Inasmuch as she has no recourse against her offender, Estrella is determined to strike out against all public women's common enemy: their clients. She informs Mari-Pepa of her decision: "Quiero morir ... pero quiero morir matando.... Tengo el presentimiento de que hoy, hoy mismo, me vengaré de mi mayor enemigo.... Todos son enemigos míos ... no le distingo entre todos" (La prostituta 222). Estrella thirsts for revenge through the only means available to her: to infect as many men as possible. The desire to expressly transmit one's contagion to men—the common enemy—was a theme in the literature of the period. Amy Millstone explains how the prostitute, unlike the adulterous wife,

> did not stain a man's reputation but could potentially punish him in his person through the transmission of venereal disease. Such an option, far from revolutionary, must be interpreted as the

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> only method of reprisal available to women who were bound by their profession to the very instrument of their oppression: men.[48]

Feeding on her unjust victimization, Estrella's quest for revenge expands to include the destruction of not only those specific individuals who exploited her, but society as a whole, even innocent parties:

> Y la víctima se rebeló. Puesto que no era culpable, y en este mundo no se puede ser bueno, ser dócil, ser lo que los demás quieren, sería mala ... se pondría en cura, o no se pondría; pero ¡vengarse! ¡Es tan consoladora la venganza! Vengarse de aquel miserable albañil que la llamaba hija, y que la vendía; vengarse de los hombres y de las mujeres, de los niños y de los viejos, de todos sus verdugos, de la sociedad entera; y puesto que ella estaba enferma, enfermar á cuantos pudiera, extender, propagar el contagio; hacer de Madrid un pueblo maldito de leprosos. (La prostituta 220-21)

Such a destructive agenda as Estrella's and other prostitutes' determination to take as many people down with them as possible goes to the heart of nineteenth-century society's already deep-seated phobias about public women: "Prostitution and syphilis had become firmly intertwined in the late nineteenth century, both of them referred to as the 'new leprosy' or the 'new plague' of Europe" (Harsin 251). Estrella

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is successful in exacting a measure of revenge by unwittingly destroying Don José's centuries old lineage. She will take Luis with her to an untimely death. López Bago even identifies the young heir as Estrella's first casualty: "La primera víctima de *la* (sic) *Pálida* fué el heredero del marqués de Villaperdida" (La prostituta 262).

Estrella's desire for revenge through the transmission of venereal disease is temporary, however, not indicative of cruel nature, but the inevitable and natural emotional reaction to such an immoral and criminal act. López Bago wants readers to sympathize with his protagonist again. At the conclusion of La prostituta, the narrator affirms: "¡*La Pálida*! ¡Pobre niña! Ya no quería vengarse de los hombres ..." (266). In La Pálida, however, López Bago allows his protagonist the satisfaction of realizing that justice has been achieved:

> Cuando ella estaba pensando en que no bastaban mil muertes para castigar al malvado, el malvado moría, y como si esto no saciara la justicia divina, el hijo recogió en el cuerpo de Estrella los gérmenes dañinos dejados allí por el padre. *La Pálida* sonrió con una alegría llena de tristísimas satisfacciones. (211)

Despite attaining the highest level of economic security which exists within her deterministic environment, peace, happiness and good health elude our protagonist. The toxic

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effects of the endemic immorality of all her various surroundings and the sexual exploitation of her body at all levels of the scale are multiple, deep-seated and irreparable. Throughout La Pálida López Bago documents numerous examples of the physical manifestations and psychological effects of her ruination, which include the following. Estrella, for example:

1. has become plump and bloated due to her voracious appetite and the ineffective mercury treatments for syphilis: "Había engruesado." Her "belleza robusta y amplia" is, in reality, "carne herida y mal curada..." (132-33).
2. consumes large quantities of alcohol. She is frequently inebriated, which results in laziness, inactivity, drowsiness and prolonged sleep:

> Cuando Estrella despertó del pesado sueño producido por la borrachera ... miró á su rededor, con la indiferencia peculiar á las que como ella, bohemias ó zíngaras de la humanidad, no extrañan lo ajeno, y no se sorprenden de lo desconocido .... (50)
>
> ...dormitaba sin tener sueño ... entregada por completo á esos ocios terriblemente inactivios de las prostitutas, que semejan, más que el descanso, la parálisis del espíritu y de todos los miembros. (60)

3. exhibits personality changes. Now she is irritable,

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easily bored, nervous, highly critical and verbally abusive. She argues easily and frequently, especially with Luis whom she insults and for whom she demonstrates contempt. Explosions of profanity burst forth, directed at her lover:

> El despecho de la mujerzuela se desbordaba á la postre y salió de sus labios lleno de palabras mal sonantes, increpando al Grande de España, sin miramiento alguno.
>
> Cuantos esfuerzos hizo éste para calmar á su querida fueron inútiles. Estrella, andando con nervioso y fuerte paso ... daba rienda suelta á su lengua y no escuchaba al marqués .... (155-56)

4. lacks all modesty in her complete indifference to her own nudity; as in the use of her body as a public spectacle for the depraved members of *La Botica*: "... se encontró desnuda y tendida sobre la mesa" (50); and before Luis and Arístides in her own bedroom:

> Y el diputado se escandalizó al encontrarla con todo el traje arrugado, desabrochada la chaquetilla de granate, desgreñada y con los ojos hinchados por sueño.
>
> Con todo, estaba hermosísima. Tenía la belleza más dominadora para el hombre sensual. Arístides y el marqués se sintieron excitados ante aquel desorden .... (109)

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—Tápate, hija.

Con aquel movimiento la desabrochada chaquetilla dejó ver la raya de unión de los dos pechos.

La Pálida se echó á reir (sic), miró maliciosamente al más joven de sus dos interlocutores [Luis], mientras obedecía la indicación de Arístides.

—¿Y eso qué?..... Más se me vió anoche. (110)

5. rebels, according to López Bago, against nature in a sexual relationship with her upstairs neighbor: "... entregábase con voluptuosa delicia á lo monstruoso de sus grandes arrebatos con Rosita Pérez" (133).

6. is motivated, out of jealousy over Rosita's involvement with Lasoga, to punish her friend by devouring Luis with a wild, uninhibited sexuality. Her erotic passion for the young marquis is perverted and sadistic, born not of desire, but revenge. Luis becomes the means of obtaining revenge against Rosita, and also the entire male gender for having stolen her innocence. She intends to hurt, corrupt and exploit Luis as she has been damaged: "Quería enloquecer por completo al joven: prostituirlo y pervertirlo tanto como ella estaba: viciar para siempre la naturaleza de aquel hombre que acababa de salir de la adolescencia" (148).

7. plays the role of procuress or go-between by encouraging and facilitating illicit encounters between Rosita and

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Lasoga in her own apartment: "... á *La Pálida* nada le importaba ya de aquellos amores, y hasta los favoreció, facilitando las entrevistas en su misma casa..." (198).

8. breaks her contract with Luis by being unfaithful in her affair with Rosita and her planned seduction of the Duke de Tres Estrellas.
9. becomes an accomplice of the empowered classes in the wastefulness of resources and the ostentation of wealth. By wasting and parading "una de las mayores fortunas" (120) in Spain, the protagonist inspires, consequently, criticism and envy.

Despite the malevolent influences against her, Estrella Sánchez adapts only superficially to the vicious environment of commercial sexuality, in contrast to Zola's courtesan, Nana, for example. Estrella's original nature reemerges when she is confronted with the news that her syphilitic infection is terminal:

> En *La Pálida* hubo siempre, como ya sabemos, una maldita comezón romántica, dejo antiguo quizás, de aquellos amores primeros que tuvo cuando era la hambrienta y miserable hija de un jornalero. Podían calificarla como una infatigable buscadora de amor, más que buscona de amoríos, y todos los desórdenes de su organismo no fueron bastantes á extirpar y arrancar este constante anhelo, que se defendía como resto de virginidad en las últimas

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trincheras del corazón y del alma. (200-01)

Estrella's obsession with the Duke de Tres Estrellas is, in reality, symbolic of the aspirations for which she has yearned all her life: love, peace, a home, physical and economic security, a valiant hero with whom she can share a happy and honorable existence; in short, another Paco. Despite his image as "una especie de héroe novelesco" in the imagination of Estrella and other *busconas* (202), the duke, of course, unfortunately, is not another Paco. He is an aristocrat, after all, a popular member of *La Botica*, totally lacking in the truly noble qualities embued in the honorable carpenter. Nevertheless, López Bago makes his protagonist pay for her "maldita comezoń romańtica" when the duke inflicts the most insulting blow by insisting upon enjoying the favors of both Estrella and Rosita simultaneously.

The death of the tetralogy's first heroine is a tragedy on many levels. Estrella dies at the height of her youth and beauty when she has finally conquered hunger and poverty. She has been the defenseless victim of sadistic representatives from several socioeconomic classes, of: 1. her own father—a laborer from the *pueblo*; 2. Arístides—the capitalist trafficker in public women who first hands her over to the syphilitic Don José, and who later cowardly murders her fiancé, Paco; 3. the Duke de Tres Estrellas—the handsome nobleman who destroys her last illusion. However, the exploitation of the heroine on the part of the wealthy,

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politically connected and landed aristocracy, the most powerful social class—and, according to López Bago, the most rotten—becomes criminal. Symbolically, the aristocracy's legacy is to murder Estrella twice: 1. she is condemned to a slow, painful but early death when Don José infected her with syphilis; 2. she suffers an immediate, violent death when the vengeful Luis kills her in cold blood with a bullet to the brain. Nevertheless, both assassins escape all legal, social and moral retribution. Even though father and son die from syphilis, the two Marquises de Villaperdida leave this world with the "good" name of their family intact. Estrella, on the contrary, is exploited even after her murder when the cause of death is unjustly ruled a suicide.

Mari-Pepa

The second leading female character in La prostituta is the madam Mari-Pepa who is introduced as the female representative of the bordello environment. López Bago offers Mari-Pepa—the stereotypical ex-prostitute turned madam as the professional antithesis to Estrella Sánchez. Whereas the protagonist never adapted to the infernal conditions of the profession, Mari-Pepa was genetically, environmentally and innately predisposed and perfectly suited, not only to prostitution, but specifically to the rigors of brothel life. For Mari-Pepa, in fact, brothel existence represented an ideal

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way of life. She remained steadfast in her refusal of all entreaties and generous propositions to improve her environment, and was not even concerned about the "pronósticos fatales que, de seguir dedicada al trato, habían de ser ciertas é ineludibles consecuencias" (22). She justified her opposition by declaring: "Yo no conozco más vida que ésta, y me parece la mejor. No me sujeto á otra cosa por nada ni por nadie" (22).

López Bago examines this character from two perspectives: 1. the details of her past are presented in flashback to which the novelist devotes all of chapter II; 2. her present life—her role as a developing character and her interaction with the protagonist and the other characters inside the *Casa de Mari-Pepa*.

In chapter II Mari-Pepa fulfills society's stereotypical image of the prostitute as an innately promiscuous, vain, avaricious, amoral, insensitive, unambitious and self-serving delinquent. While Capel Martínez (271) and most twentieth century scholars disagree with the theory of the "natural born" prostitute—"la prostituta no nace, se hace. No existe un tipo nato de ella"—many naturalists, including López Bago and Sawa, explored the popular late nineteenth century theory of the "natural born" delinquent in their novels. Sawa developed the pathological character of Ricardo in Crimen legal, the "natural born criminal;" López Bago—although he did not approach the extent of Sawa's delineation of

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Ricardo—presents in Mari-Pepa a profile of the "natural born" harlot.

Although Mari-Pepa was an orphan of unknown parentage, the fact that she was raised in a house of ill repute gives credence to the theory that her mother was a prostitute and her father one of the mother's customers. Thus, a genetic predisposition to prostitution may be argued, along with the obvious environmental factors. Mari-Pepa, for example, had the run of her brothel-home in Seville, including access to the activities of prostitutes and their clients behind closed doors: "Mari-Pepa era una niña de diez años ... que andaba por los pasillos corriendo y saltando, metiéndose en todas las alcobas cerradas y pidiendo cuartos y besos á los parroquianos" (18-19).

In one of the chapters from his extensive study on Regulationism in nineteenth-century France, Corbin dedicates a section entitled "The 'Born Prostitute' and Genetic Instinct" (300-09). This historian examines the principal theories of criminal anthropology—a popular multinational school of thought which was held in esteem in many scientific circles in the last decades of the century—based on the work of leading criminal anthropologists: Ferrigiani, Lombroso and Ferrero in Italy, and Pauline Tarnowsky in Russia (301). The theory of the "natural born" harlot captured the interest of not only naturalists but regulationists and neoregulationists:

> We know that the primacy of individual temperament

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> in the genesis of prostitution was explicitly recognized by the regulationists and by a large number of the neo-regulationists, even those who accorded a major role to the environment; and for a long time certain specialists ... referred to heredity in explaining prostitutional behavior. But these were merely incidental reflections, unrelated to the coherent undertaking being carried out in the last years of the century by a school of criminal anthropology with the aim of establishing the innateness of the disposition to prostitution. (300-01)

Corbin offers the following definition of the "natural born" harlot:

> The born prostitute was seen as an incomplete creature who had undergone an arrested development, who was a victim of morbid heredity, and who presented signs of physical and psychological degeneration relating to her imperfect development. Prostitution was to women what crime was to men: the result of degeneracy, even of regression. In the psychological domain the born prostitute, and her counterpart in society, the wife who indulged in repeated adulteries, was the victim of a "moral insanity." (301)

Based on Corbin's examination of criminal anthropology, one

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can observe how López Bago extracted several of the tenets of the "natural born" prostitute and applied them to Mari-Pepa. However, it must be remembered that López Bago believed that prostitutes like Mari-Pepa represented the minority; the radical naturalist (as we have seen) attributed the principal causes of prostitution to society, to destructive environmental forces: poverty, illiteracy, etc.

Corbin identifies *"moral insanity"* as a fundamental characteristic of the "born prostitute." Among the many traits which define this type, as noted by Tarnowsky, Mari-Pepa evidences the following: "a tendency to physical violence and to greed" (303). Mari-Pepa, López Bago reports, was already by age twelve adept in the art of using her feminine wiles on men in order to extract money:

> Mari-Pepa miraba con gran codicia la moneda de oro que brillaba en las pálidas y flacas manos del visitante.
>
> —Dame los cinco duros, y jugaré contigo.
>
> —¿Á qué?
>
> —Á lo que tú quieras—terminó resueltemente, dando un salto y poniéndose con él sentada sobre las rodillas del D. Francisco. (20)

Mari-Pepa displays her extremely violent temper when her colleagues joke about the attention that the twelve year old receives from her patron, Don Francisco, and from "otros hombres de iguales gustos" (20):

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> Y comentaban toda la repugnancia del caso, llegando á ocurrir verdaderas y serias colisiones, porque Mari-Pepa tenía poca paciencia para aguantar bromas, y, aunque de menores fuerzas, era temible.
>
> Una noche, durante la cena, cogió un cuchillo; y á no quitárselo á tiempo, hubiera herido con él á la que se burlaba.
>
> —Si llegas á herirme, mocosa, ya hubieras visto....
>
> —Yo no quería herirte, sino matarte. (20-21)

Emotional detachment is another trademark of the "born prostitute"; a "lack of affection" (Corbin 303), noted in the sevillana's interactions with her regular clients: "Jamás pudo notarse que manifestara predilección por ningún hombre..." (25). In addition, "the weakness ... of the feeling of friendship" (Corbin 303) was observed in her dealings with the other brothel prostitutes. Mari-Pepa's arrogance made her a despised outcast among her colleagues, who were infuriated for "las humillaciones recibidas por causa de la *señora del gabinete*, como ellas llamaban á Mari-Pepa" (27).

The "born prostitute," Corbin explains, "was characterized ... by precocity, another sign of degeneracy" (303). This trait was manifested twofold in Mari-Pepa's case. Firstly, as we saw in the previously cited passage in which the avaricious twelve year old enticed Don Francisco into parting with his money, Mari-Pepa displayed the "born

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prostitute"'s "more precocious lasciviousness than the 'honest woman,' a characteristic that again made her closer to the male" (302). Secondly, the "loss of virginity came early" to "primitive women" (302). Mari-Pepa's first sexual encounter took place at age fifteen "cuando el mismísimo D. Francisco, primer protector, después de grandes cabildeos con la celestina, entregó á ésta ... veinte monedas de oro relucientes y nuevecitas, con lo cual Mari-Pepa hizo, bajo los auspicios del libertino, su transformación de niña en mujer..." (21). Mari-Pepa's sexual initiation at age fifteen transpired one year earlier than the statistical average of sixteen for prostitutes in general, informs Walkowitz (17). Mari-Pepa would have had her first sexual experience three years earlier at age twelve. The greedy child was willing, and so was Don Francisco. However, the madam intervened and forbade the still unripened Mari-Pepa's début:

> El vejete acercó sus sumidos labios á las frescas mejillas de Mari-Pepa, y estampó en ellas un beso.
>
> —Dame cuartos—díjole ésta, recibiendo la caricia sin repugnancia alguna.
>
> .... —Pues bien: ya que pide cuartos, que los gane. Aquí tengo yo una moneda de cinco duros.
>
> —Don Francisco, déjese usté de tonterías. La niña podrá ganar eso y mucho más cuando sea de razón. (19)

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Despite her kinship with the brothel life and all that it entails, Mari-Pepa was frigid, constituting for López Bago "el caso más notable de enervación mental, producido tal vez por los esfuerzos titánicos del cerebro..." (26). Nevertheless, not unlike all professionals, the *sevillana:*

> ...sabía copiar todas las dislocaciones y fingir todos los espasmos; aquellos ojos de mirar profundo, y aquella boca en que siempre brotaba y se repetía el besar frenético y el suspirar apasionado, eran no más que instrumento de que se sirvió, como el obrero se sirve de la lima, aplicando al frotamiento toda su destreza .... (26)

The evident incongruity between "sexual precocity" and frigidity in the "natural born" prostitute is explained by Corbin:

> The main characteristic ... was the lack of modesty. This feature represented, par excellence, the psychological symptom of moral degeneracy. It was this phenomenon that resolved the contradiction that had always been detected between sexual precocity, prostitutional activity, and frigidity; the born prostitute practiced her profession driven by a disorder that was more moral than sexual. Furthermore, frigidity was for her an advantage, "a Darwinian adaptation." It is because the sexual act appeared to her to be insignificant, morally as

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> well as physically, that the born prostitute performed it so easily. (303)

Ironically, Mari-Pepa's "advantage" became a weapon to be used against her own arrogance. She was the author of her own "desgracia; porque, envanecida con tan especialísimos dones, no pudo ocultarlos..." (26). She admitted to her colleagues: "Yo no siento nada con ninguna (sic)" (27). Mari-Pepa's "enervación mental" was not a trait exclusive to the born prostitute, but one shared by almost all public women. What is unnatural, therefore, is Mari-Pepa's colleagues' reaction to her admission: "Hubo protestas, carcajadas más insultantes que el mentís" (27). In reality, the women used "el secreto de la hermosa sevillana" to exact revenge: "Había llegado el caso de vengarse, pero con una venganza completa, de las humillaciones recibidas..." (27).

Borrowing the term from Parent-Duchâtelet, López Bago identifies Mari-Pepa as an excellent case study befitting the category of "idiosincrasias refractarias" (23) for her apparent immunity to venereal disease. Here again, López Bago disparages the medical establishment's inspection and treatment policies on public women inasmuch as Mari-Pepa's amazing immunity exists, not because of, but in spite of nineteenth-century Europe's Reglementation system on prostitution. Mari-Pepa's immunity is attributed to two—what López Bago deems—authentic, effective and preventative sanitary practices invaluable to all, but especially so to

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professional prostitutes.

The first measure consisted of the habitual application of her own preparation of a bactericidal douche, which at first even amazed the physician who was examining her. He later conceded:

> —Además—anadió el doctor, que era especialista y pasaba por una eminencia, —estas mujeres saben á veces cosas que desconocemos nosotros mismos, y no me extrañaría que, pues ella nos habló de secreto, el secreto consista en alguna receta de profilaxia, algo parecida al famoso *jabón cáustico* del doctor Luna Calderón, cuyos experimentos tanto ruido hicieron en París allá por los años de 1815. (23-24)

The adoption of the English habit of frequent cold bathing constituted Mari-Pepa's second secret weapon against contracting venereal disease:

> ... mientras que en la alcoba mandó poner su indispensable bano de zinc; porque el verdadero secreto de Mari-Pepa, aparte de su mayor ó menor grado de temperamento refractario, consistía en una limpieza extremada, con la cual conservó la sana frescura necesaria á la carne, viéndose en aquella andaluza reproducida y copiada la costumbre inglesa del baño frío en todo tiempo, hasta en los días de más crudo invierno .... (25)

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As we saw in Chapter II, López Bago imparts to women practical, common sense advice on personal hygiene, advocating that women take control in protecting their own health. Mari-Pepa's two "secretos" were, according to López Bago, more effective as a barrier against venereal disease than the so-called "sanitary" practices of the era. We recall how medical inspectors regularly transferred the infection from unhealthy women to healthy ones through their uncleaned hands and instruments. López Bago's recommendations were ahead of his time in the light of the fact that, as Bullough reminds us, "rubber gloves and aseptic techniques" were not practiced by physicians of the period; hygienic measures "appeared only at the end of the century" (Women 194).

As the madam of her own establishment, Mari-Pepa remains inside her comfortable brothel world, but ascends the bordello hierarchy to the only position available for a woman. Her role is now reversed; once one of the sexually exploited (although she did not believe so), and now an officially retired prostitute, she now actively participates in the system which exploits public women for personal financial gain.

Mari-Pepa symbolized, in many ways, the stereotypical madam. However, López Bago divides the rank and responsibilities of the typical madam between Mari-Pepa and her lover, Arístides. The latter, as we have seen, is in charge of the house's finances, and, with the exception of the

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marquis, has the final word on all major decisions. Unlike the traditional madam who is the ultimate authority in the affairs of the house, Mari-Pepa is subordinate to another party living inside the bordello. Arístides is, in effect, Mari-Pepa's employer and financial backer (before the marquis' involvement). Mari-Pepa is dependent upon the procurer inasmuch as it was he who originally established and financed the house, and is responsible for Mari-Pepa's continued livelihood. However, as the marquis needed Arístides to front the forty brothels, so too does Arístides need Mari-Pepa as his madam for almost all houses of ill repute have been publicly administered by women.

The term "madam" is derived from the French, "ma dame," "my lady." Originally, the title was applied to a woman of high social status. In the eighteenth century, "madam" referred to a woman who sold her sexual favors, including the common prostitute, the mistress and the courtesan. Nevertheless, the term came to be used euphemistically to denote the woman who administers every aspect of a house of prostitution.

Of all those who participate in professional prostitution, the stereotypical madam stands out for being the most fascinating and extraordinary. The stereotypical portrait of the traditional madam consists of a combination of heterogeneous attributes. The prosperous madam is: strong, tough, ambitious, determined, bold, cynical, efficient,

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realistic, avaricious, pragmatic, gregarious and opportunistic—characteristics shared by Mari-Pepa. With the exception of the madam's traditional roles as financial manager and official liaison to the outside bureaucratic world of the police, politicians and other authorities, Mari-Pepa shares the many responsibilities which fall into the following categories. The madam: 1. supervises the domestic staff and the day-to-day running of the household; 2. acts as the official hostess to customers and guests of the house; 3. serves as a surrogate mother to the prostitutes living in her house. In her maternal capacity, the stereotypical madam fulfills the following duties. She: a. assesses the prospective customers; b. pacifies and resolves disputes, and personal and professional problems between prostitutes, and between the latter and customers; c. instructs novices in the "arts" of the trade; d. offers lessons in comportment and personal grooming; e. comforts those prostitutes who have been abused or mistreated by clients (Benjamin 260-63; Bernaldo de Quirós 309; Bullough, History 289; Decker 263-68; Simons 11).

Concomitant with Mari-Pepa's promotion in status within the bordello establishment are the dramatic transformations in her personality. The haughty *sevillana* described by López Bago in chapter II's case history is quite different from the Mari-Pepa readers come to know in subsequent chapters of La prostituta. One could argue that the consequences of having boasted about her "enervación mental"—fifteen years of

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ridicule and loss of prestige for being identified by her "estigma fatal" (30), the degrading nickname, "la muñeca de á bordo" —humbled her vanity and arrogance, and softened her aloofness and insensitivity. Mari-Pepa's improved personality may also be attributed to the appearance of Arístides in her life, the man in whom she found happiness and true love, as well as sexual fulfillment. The procurer symbolizes what may be termed her "prince charming in vice." In effect, Arístides rescued Mari-Pepa from what would have been an unfortunate end, as López Bago affirms: "... seguramente hubiera llegado á conocer la miseria..." (30). Despite the validity of both explanations, Mari-Pepa's dramatic transformation has more to do with López Bago's objective of depicting two diverse stereotypical roles in one female character: the "natural born" harlot and the stereotypical madam.

In keeping with the madam's domestic obligations, López Bago attributes Mari-Pepa with an obsession for household furnishings:

> ... Mari-Pepa tuvo siempre afición extrema, rayana en delirio, por todo lo que constituye y forma el ajuar de ropa blanca de la casa, monomanía muy corriente en mujer andaluza, y así, cifraba todo su orgullo en la calidad de mantelería, sábanas, fundas, toallas, que formaban en sus armarios altas pilas, nevados montones, de los cuales se desprendía el rico oler de la plancha; no

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> escasearon, pues, manteles ni servilletas; pero faltaban, en cambio, la vajilla y cristalería, por lo cual desesperábase la sevillana. (189-90)

In her role as hostess, Mari-Pepa presides over meals and the regular get-togethers which take place in the dining room. In the following passage, she welcomes Paco, invites him to dinner, and reprimands the prostitutes and their customers for their verbal indecencies and improper table manners and behavior in the presence of the young carpenter:

> Siempre había tertulia. Dos ó tres mujeres que estaban solas, eran las que sostenían la conversación. Las demás, cada una de ellas tenía á su lado un hombre que ... hacía gala de su ingenio ó de su memoria, contando cuentos, intercalando chistes groseros e indecentes, que se acogían con grandes carcajadas. Estrella estaba allí, así como también Mari-Pepa.
>
> —¡Calle!—dijo ésta última.—Aquí está el querido de *la* (sic) *Pálida*. Anda, chica, llévatelo á tu lado. Sentarse por ahí en un rinconcito. (139)

Of greater significance, however, is the third stereotypical role that Mari-Pepa fulfills: the maternal relationship she has with the public women of her house. Estrella's new colleagues share their personal stories with her, comparing their unpleasant experiences with the madams in

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other houses with the treatment they receive from Mari-Pepa. The women all agree: "Que Mari-Pepa las trataba como á hijas suyas. Pero en otras casas no era lo mismo" (98). Mari-Pepa's prostitutes were correct about the treatment of inmates in other houses. The image of the stereotypical maternal madam is juxtaposed with a second and negative type: that of a cruel and greedy madam who, because of her obsession with profits, exploits her women unmercifully. Of the two images, the negative one was probably closer to reality. As Harsin explains:

> ...it was the madam who was generally cast in the role of chief villain in the prostitution drama, blamed for her rapaciousness and harshness to the women in her charge. Such sternness may have been due to the fact that most madams had worked their way up through the ranks. (290)

In La prostituta the image of the avaricious, exploitative madam is represented in Arístides. This allows Mari-Pepa to assume her role of the maternal madam.

The "charlatana" (85) Mari-Pepa is especially proud and protective of her "nueva pupila" (117). Praising her attributes before the cynical marquis, the madam "se entusiasmaba haciendo el retrato de su protegida" (110): "... yo no he visto en todos los días de mi vida una cara y un cuerpo como el suyo ..." (109), and even rates the protagonist superior to herself at that age: "Á su edad no estaba yo como

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está ella, que está como la fruta en el árbol.... Mire usté que es preciosa ..." (109).

When the marquis commands Arístides to deliver Estrella to him the secret room, the brothel keeper agonizes over whether or not to inform Mari-Pepa. The realization of the depth of Mari-Pepa's affection for Estrella and her disgust for the marquis convinces him to remain silent. The procurer correctly assumes that Mari-Pepa, in her determination to save Estrella from the repulsive marquis, would even fight him, the most important person in her life, with all her strength:

> Reflexionó *el* (sic) *Chulo* si se lo diría ó no. Reflexionó, haciendo un poderoso esfuerzo de voluntad para coordinar sus ideas. No. Era mejor que Mari-Pepa lo ignorase todo. La conocía muy bien, conocía los arranques generosos de la sevillana. La prostituta aquella valía más que él, más que muchos seres que pasan por humanos. De seguro que al saber el horror que iba á realizarse en aquella casa, se opondría con todas sus energías, con toda su alma. Disputaría el cuerpo de Estrella y lo defendería contra él mismo, como una loba defiende sus cachorros, porque Mari-Pepa había cobrado cariño *á la* (sic) *Pálida* .... (206)

After Estrella's traumatic encounter with Don José, Mari-Pepa is enraged with Arístides, calling him "¡Canalla!" (214).

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However, Estrella is her immediate concern. Alone together in Estrella's room, Mari-Pepa fulfills one of the duties of the maternal madam, that of comforting a prostitute who has been abused or mistreated by a client:

> Mari-Pepa la ayudo á desnudarse.
>
> —¡Adiós, hija, que descanses!—exclamó, dándole un beso con una ternura infinita; y al cerrar la puerta, no pudo contener su declaración, su disculpa:
>
> —Escucha: yo no sabía nada; sabía tanto como tú; á las dos nos ha engañado. (215)

By assuring Estrella of her innocence in the deception, Mari-Pepa wants to clear her name and maintain Estrella's respect—both of which are important to the madam. In addition, the more humane Mari-Pepa is imbued with a moral sense of right and wrong. Despite her strong allegiance to Arístides, the madam would turn against her lover if she knew he murdered Paco in cold blood: "Arístides no quería perder el cariño de la sevillana, y lo perdería si continuaba su querida creyéndole un asesino" (263).

Although Mari-Pepa does not appear as a character in La Pálida, the narrator tells of her new life as a so-called noble, charitable, innocent and respectable *señora* of wealth and social status as the legitimate wife of the *diputado*, Don Arístides. This character undergoes yet a third radical personality transformation. As the haughty and insensitive

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"natural born" harlot in chapter II of La prostituta disappeared and was replaced with the maternal madam with the "arranques generosos," so too does this nurturing and moral figure disappear in La Pálida. In order to play her newly assigned role as an honorable high society matron, she has broken all connections to her former brothel existence, including acknowledging her former favorite, Estrella, now Luis' mistress. López Bago does not intend to leave his readers with a favorable impression of Mari-Pepa. The protagonist tells Arístides how his *señora* publicly snubbed her former "protegida," and lets the ex-trafficker know in no uncertain terms that she will not tolerate such behavior in the future:

> —Anteayer, sin ir más lejos, me la encontré en el paseo de coches del Retiro. Mi victoria se cruzó con su landeau, y volvió la cabeza al lado opuesto para no saludarme. Oye, tú, dila (sic) que mi saludo no la hubiera manchado el traje de terciopelo, pero que si vuelve á hacer eso se lo mancharé, porque la escupo. (208)

The narrator agrees with Estrella, interjecting: "... la Mari-Pepa tenía la culpa. Porque, francamente, por casarse con él no estaba autorizada á tratarla con el desdén que lo hacía" (208).

Mari-Pepa's third character incarnation is also stereotypical, inasmuch as she comes to epitomize for López Bago the

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outrageous hypocrisy found in many of Spain's *nouveaux riches* who mask their innate immorality and their exploitative and criminal past deeds behind the facade of purchased respectability.

In the first two novels of the tetralogy "La prostituta," López Bago inveighs against the evils of professional prostitution in late nineteenth-century Spain, as witnessed through a series of traumatic experiences in the short life of his heroine from the *pueblo*. We have seen how Estrella Sánchez has been defeated and destroyed physically, psychologically and spiritually in a Darwinian struggle for survival against a combination of toxic and invincible familial and societal forces in her environment. Estrella Sánchez serves as the reader's guide into an infernal world; her experiences reflect the larger historical reality of nineteenth-century Europe. Our comparative study of the state of affairs in Spain and other European nations, supported by the findings of many nineteenth- and contemporary twentieth-century social historians and other specialists, has revealed how La prostituta and La Pálida constitute, in large measure, an accurate documentation into the real lives of prostitutes of the era—much in keeping with the social and medical objectives of López Bago's naturalist novels.

The subjugation and perceived inferiority of women of all classes was a primary cause in the involuntary prostitution of

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laboring class females like Estrella Sánchez. The prevailing mindset of nineteenth-century patriarchal society dichotomized and polarized women by class and, consequently, by treatment. Upper class women from the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, traditionally isolated and shielded from the realities of the outside world, were regarded as one-dimensional human beings: maternal, asexual, pure, indoctrinated in the belief that their sole function in life was to be selfless and devoted wives, mothers and homemakers. Women from the lower classes—the proletariat and the peasantry—were likewise perceived as one-dimensional. Forced to seek employment outside the home in order to survive, these women, by the sole virtue of the impoverished economic class and circumstances into which they were born, were prejudged innately licentious, immoral and degenerate. While the chastity of the upper class wife served to ensure the legitimacy of her husband's issue, and the transference of his wealth and property to his legitimate male heirs, a significant sector of the female population was set apart, to be used to cater to the carnal desires and the worst animal instincts of upper class males. While upper class wives and daughters were the legal property of their respective husbands and fathers, lower class women were considered communal property; not only were they the property of their lower class male relatives, they were to be made available as sexual objects for exploitation by upper class men whether by coercion, seduction or for a fee. In the

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mindset of the times, we saw that to be a woman from the lower class was synonymous with being a prostitute. Although historically proletarian males also availed themselves of the sexual services of public women from their own class, López Bago preferred to underscore the sexual exploitation of lower class women by the degenerate dominant classes, citing, for example, Arístides' wealthy friends as patrons of the *Casa de Mari-Pepa*, or the members of *La Botica*.

López Bago and nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars have identified a triumvirate of societal institutions which perpetuated and fostered the continued exploitation of laboring class women as prostitutes: the brothel establishment, the State and the medical community (with regard to the treatment of venereal diseases); or, in López Bago's words: "el lupanar, el Gobierno civil y San Juan de Dios." Each sector exploited prostitutes for its own self-serving purposes, financial profit in varying degrees constituted their common denominator. The bordello management, whose paramount raison d'être was pecuniary profit, was, by far, the worst offender. The bureaucratic machinery of many nations, including Spain, charged the women fees for such services as inscription, medical examinations and treatments. The medical inspectors under governmental control were compensated for their so-called "services," in part from the fees charged to prostitutes. Such "services" were, at best, very unsatisfactory, due to incompetence and

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indifference; at worst, they resulted in the infection of healthy women with syphilis through unsanitary practices. Each sector of the triumvirate had another purpose in fostering the exploitation of prostitutes. For the brothel establishment, it was the continued sexual satisfaction of its clientele; the State sought to control the personal freedom of public women: to restrict their activities, movements, behavior, etc.; the medical community regarded prostitutes as the ideal subjects for scientific experiments in the treatment of venereal diseases.

In every sector, we witnessed the persistent dehumanization of these women. In the brothels, they were cut off from family and friends; stripped of their identities and personal belongings; forced to submit at any and all times to the endless parade of strangers, many of whom were violent; have their services auctioned off to the highest bidder, etc. The debt accumulation system guaranteed their continued enslavement. The brothel management was aided in its purpose by the State in the form of the police who tracked down runaways and returned them to their life of exploitation. Women were obligated to submit to humiliating medical inspections, their bodies subjected to human and mechanical invasion. When diagnosed with venereal disease, they were forced to submit passively to excruciatingly painful but ineffective mercury treatments while the medical staff remained indifferent to their agony. Physicians were never

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interested in curing these women; their purpose was to simply declare the patients "cured" or ready to return to their profession so that they might once again be useful to their clients and their brothels.

Through his depiction of the *Casa de Mari-Pepa*, López Bago takes us inside the enclosed world of tolerated prostitution where a well-defined hierarchy prevailed paralleling that of nineteenth-century society. The brothel establishment was divided into two groups: the exploited prostitutes and the exploiters—proprietors, keepers, madams, assistants; and, to a lesser degree, the domestic staff. These parasitical capitalists lived off the earnings of the prostitutes who did the most arduous labor but received none of the profits, not unlike the labor of the lower classes in the outside world.

The institution of prostitution itself was also a microcosm of real life, subject to a hierarchical social order. López Bago describes the various roles in prostitution; from the lowest rung of the ladder to the highest: from brothel inmate to the intermediary position of *buscona*, to the mistress, the consummate professional who reserves her favors exclusively for the elite.

To the real-life roles cited above, López Bago added his own original creation of *La Boticaria*, queen of *La Botica* and "la busconería madrileña." The passages describing Estrella's interaction with this elite social club serves to underscore

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once again the extent of the depths of depravity, immorality and uselessness of Spain's ruling classes.

La Boticaria is an interesting creation. It may be characterized as a perverse distortion of what may be likened to the twentieth-century concept of a "Miss America" type beauty pageant in which one winner is chosen or elected from a field of many highly qualified contenders to wear the crown of the sponsoring organization for one year. Both *La Boticaria* and the beauty pageant winner are placed on display; both fulfill predetermined specific duties for their respective sponsors. In exchange, the young women receive a great deal of exposure which serves to advance their respective professional ambitions.

López Bago created essentially one-dimensional stereotypical characters, developed first and foremost for the specific purpose of underscoring the tetralogy's major theme of exposing the evils of professional prostitution and its fatal effects on its victims. The characters also respond to the novelist's ongoing vitriolic campaign against the aristocracy, capitalism and the exploitation of the lower classes. Based on the preeminence of theme over character development, one may conclude that prostitution itself is the real protagonist, followed by the *Casa de Mari-Pepa* as the second most important character. The male exploiters include three villainous assassins: Don José—the hypocritical, syphilitic aristocratic brothel proprietor who leads a double

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life; Arístides—the vain, dapper procurer, brothel keeper, trafficker in public women; and Luis de Villaperdida—the typical Spanish *señorito* who leads a vacuous existence squandering his vast inheritance, and requires a mistress to add to his collection of status symbol possessions.

The stereotypical representation of López Bago's two leading female characters offers a more interesting case for study. With the exception of being seduced and abandoned by a male, Estrella Sánchez in La prostituta embodies all the environmental reasons which forced women from the lower classes into prostitution: an abusive family life (alcoholism, laziness, poverty, parental neglect, physical abuse and attempted sexual abuse), homelessness, illiteracy, lack of educational and basic manual skills, paucity of employment opportunities and decent wages, etc. In La Pálida Estrella has absorbed most of the toxic physical, psychological and spiritual effects of her deterministic predicament, including: syphilis, alcoholism, infidelity, vindictiveness, loss of moral values, etc. Estrella's untimely death also lends itself to symbolic interpretation. The protagonist's murder parallels society's persistence in committing murder against a population of defenseless lower class women by fomenting their continued prostitution. Just as Estrella was murdered prematurely on two levels—first by being infected with syphilis, then with a single bullet to the brain—so too were lower class women being murdered on two levels—by the

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continued physical abuse to, and the invasion of their bodies; and spiritually, in being stripped of their sense of human dignity and worth. Moreover, as Estrella was publicly unjustly held responsible for her own demise with the cause of death attributed to suicide, so too did society at large blame women for their own fall and ultimate destruction in the infernal world of prostitution. In both cases, the perpetrators were never held accountable for their crimes. Society, like the Villaperdidas, was never punished for the crime of forced prostitution against public women; in both cases the truth remained hidden, only the lie prevails as the official record or interpretation of the facts.

Mari-Pepa stands out as a fragmented stereotypical figure. Her primary role is that of the maternal madam to the women who live in her house. She is introduced in the persona of the "natural born" harlot, as a demonstration of López Bago's exploration of some of the principles of criminal anthropology. Mari-Pepa undergoes another metamorphosis in La Pálida, shedding her brothel identity for that of the hypocritical and snobbish society matron.

In his characterization of Estrella Sánchez and Mari-Pepa, López Bago distinguished two types of prostitutes: Mari-Pepa represents the minority, the prostitute by choice, naturally suited by temperament to the profession; and Estrella Sánchez, who represents the majority of prostitutes, women who were morally, spiritually and temperamentally

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totally unsuited to the vice, and who never should have been forced to debase themselves to such a level in order to survive. It is conceivable that López Bago, who, as we know, recognized the supremacy of the physiological laws of nature over all others, particularly man's libidinal urges, might have approved of professional prostitution only in the specific case of the "natural born" prostitute. However, it was imperative that society make the distinction between the two types: between the "Mari-Pepas" and the "Estrella Sánchezes" of the world. The prostitute population should only comprise women who were truly temperamentally suited to and actually preferred prostitution over other walks of life, as Mari-Pepa did in La prostituta. In such cases, the decision to enter the profession should be left entirely to the woman—not to society—and never compromised because of external environmental factors.

While López Bago's depiction of the evils of professional prostitution is, by and large, an accurate representation of the status quo in the nineteenth century, the novels contain two major fallacies which merit our attention. In both cases, López Bago sacrificed verisimilitude in order to carry out his plans for the development of the story line.

In the first case, a fallacy is evidenced in the novelist's explanation of Estrella Sánchez' dramatic and voluntary appearance at Mari-Pepa's doorstep. In his presentation of Estrella's deterministic background, López

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Bago intended to demonstrate how illiterate and unskilled naive young women from the *pueblo* would have little or no recourse but to sell the use of their bodies as the only means of survival. However, in Estrella's case, it is totally unrealistic and out of character—since she possesses no innate proclivity toward promiscuity, unlike Mari-Pepa or Zola's Nana—that she should voluntarily choose to put her life in the hands of complete strangers in a house of ill repute when she is presented with the one sure avenue of escape possible: Paco. This honorable young man and his mother would have welcomed the runaway into their home. Paco, in fact, symbolizes the protagonist's very salvation, the course of her life would have naturally taken if not for her appearance at Mari-Pepa's. The couple would have lived a happy and productive life together—albeit with economic difficulties—the stereotypical "happily ever after" fairy tale ending. Thus, as a woman in her predicament, Estrella's actions are unrealistic; for López Bago, this decision was technically necessary in order to describe Estrella's personal descent—and that of the proletarian women whose fate she symbolizes—into the world of prostitution.

The second fallacy concerns the medical misinformation López Bago presented in his interpretation of syphilis in the two novels. Here, the physician-novelist breached the naturalist tenet of accurate documentation of the facts and his own proclaimed code of ethics regarding the depiction of

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truth and reality for literary purposes. There are several possible reasons for this course of action. Although he does not specify the exact number, López Bago wanted his two novels to transpire over a span of only a few years. It may be estimated that approximately five to seven years elapse between Estrella's appearance at Mari-Pepa's in La prostituta and the protagonist's murder at the conclusion of La Pálida. The accelerated timetable not only gives the events in the novels greater dramatic impact, but emphasizes the virulence of syphilis. The Marquise de Villaperdida dies in premature agony without having passed through the four stages of the disease so that her husband, consumed by years of remorse, may be driven to his involvement with the *Casa de Mari-Pepa* for the purpose of sending the profits to the Vatican in exchange for absolution. Don José still needs to be contagious some twenty-two years after his marriage and infect Estrella in order to fulfill the novelist's unique interpretation of genetic determinism, his plan to bring an end to the diseased Villaperdida line. Estrella must realize that she has been infected the day after her encounter with Don José in order to reject Paco. Her knowledge of her infection now precludes any possible sexual expression of their love, and effectively destroys their dreams of marriage and normal life. This, in turn, sets into motion the events leading to Paco's murder. Likewise, the violent murder of a beautiful young heroine is much more dramatic (or melodramatic) and more effective as a

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personal tragedy; for López Bago such a *denouement* was preferable to having Estrella linger for years or even decades from the effects of the disease, as was the inevitable fate (unless they died of other causes) of syphilitics in the nineteenth century.

One of the more intriguing aspects of the two novels concerns the advice López Bago imparted to his readers for reducing the risk of contracting venereal disease. The progressive radical naturalist demonstrated that he was, indeed, very much ahead of his time when, for example, through Dr. Pérez, he recommended the use of prophylactics as a possible barrier to the infection: sound advice which was not heeded by Luis de Villaperdida. López Bago also advocated abstinence for those suffering with venereal disease. Medical precept forbade Don José from engaging in sexual activity after Luis' birth, as it forbade the latter from marrying and perpetuating his diseased line. Both father and son paid for their mistakes. In both cases, the protagonist serves as the instrument to effect the fatal consequences of disregarding Dr. Pérez' warnings. López Bago attributes Mari-Pepa's rare immunity to venereal disease to regular cold baths and the scrupulous application of a special preparation of a bactericide. The sanitary rituals of a prostitute-madam proved, for López Bago, more effective than the so-called "hygienic" measures practiced by the contemporary medical establishment.

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López Bago's objective for writing the tetralogy against professional prostitution was first and foremost didactic and reformative in keeping with one of the fundamental tenets of Naturalism. In these first two novels, the naturalist wanted to bring about a radical change in society's attitudes and perceptions of public women and women from the lower classes, a society which prejudged all prostitutes as lewd, innately promiscuous, immoral, avaricious and deserving of the worst fates life had to offer. Nineteenth-century society saw only what it wanted to believe, the outward facade of what these women had been forced to become: crude, vulgar, vengeful, diseased and alcoholics—the pathetic creatures that a hypocritical society itself had created to fulfill its own agenda of sexual and economic exploitation. Through his portrayal of Estrella Sánchez, López Bago debunks the idea that the upper classes possess exclusive rights on virtues: honor, trust, loyalty, morality, etc. It is Estrella, a young woman form the *pueblo* who incarnates true nobility of spirit and character equal to or far superior to many upper class women. A radical change in attitude hopefully effects radical change in the treatment of forgotten laboring class women. These women should not be forced to choose between starvation and prostitution. López Bago sends his proposals directly to those sectors in society which have the power to effect positive change. His message: teach lower class women to read and write according to law (the *Ley Moyano*), instruct them in

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modern practical trades; provide them with the necessary resources so that they may have the opportunity to defend themselves against the destructive forces of their environment.

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NOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1] Sacred prostitution originated in the advanced civilizations of the east, and by around 3,000 BC, the practice had already spread extensively to the Mediterranean, Asia Minor, Western Africa and the southern part of India. It flourished in Cyprus among the Phoenicians; and, the famous Greek historian, Herodotus, wrote about sacred prostitution in Babylon. See: Harry Benjamin, and R.E.L. Masters, Prostitution and Morality: A Definitive Report on the Causes and Effects of the Suppression of Prostitution (London: Souvenir, 1965) 35, 36; Fernando Henríques, Prostitution and Society: A Survey, vol. 1 (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1962) 21; Richard Lewinsohn, A History of Sexual Customs, trans. Alexander Mayce (New York: Harper, 1958) 26-29. According to Bullough (History 21), it was precisely the emergence of Christianity as a dominant religious force which put an end to religious prostitution. Emperor Constantine I, the first Christian sovereign of the Roman Empire, abolished the practice in Babylonia in the fourth century, AD.

[2] Benjamin 30-31; Decker 8-9 (This work was previously cited. See: Chapter I, note number 106); Abraham Flexner, Prostitution in Europe (1914; Montclair [NJ]: Patterson Smith, 1969) 11.

[3] Matilde Cuevas, "Aproximación a la consideración social de la prostitutción madrileña," Madrid en la sociedad del siglo XIX, ed. Luis Otero Caravajal, and Angel Bahamonde, vol. 2 (Madrid: Comunidad de Madrid; Consejera de Cultura; Revista ALFOZ CIDUR [sic], 1986) 169.

[4] Flexner 44; Mary Nash, Mujer, familia y trabajo en España (1875-1936) (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1983): 13, 19, 41; Geraldine M. Scanlon, La polémica feminista en la España contemporánea (1868-1974), trans. Rafael Mazarrasa (Madrid: Akal, 1986) 58; Ivonne Turin, La educación y la escuela en España, de 1874 a 1902: Liberalismo y tradición, trans. Josefa Hernández Alfonso (Madrid: Aguilar, 1967) 61, 227-28.

[5] Capel Martínez 270. This work was previously cited. See: Chapter I, note number 106.

[6] Jill Harsin, Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Paris (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985) xx.

[7] Lynda Nead, Myths of Sexuality: Representation of Women in Victorian Britain (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) 31.

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[8] Margarita Nelken, La condición social de la mujer en España: Su estado actual, su posible desarrollo (Barcelona: Editorial Minerva, [1919]) 141.

[9] Eric Trudgill, Madonnas and Magdalens: The Origins and Development of Victorian Sexual Attitudes (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1976) 104.

[10] In fiction, of course, Zola's Nana—the consummate *femme fatale*—did accomplish this feat symbolically by destroying the lives of several of her lovers who each represented a sector or sectors of the wealthy and powerful ruling Establishment of the Second Empire.

[11] Alain Corbin, Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France After 1850, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990) 7.

[12] Constancio Bernaldo de Quirós, and J. M. Llanas Aguilaniedo, La mala vida en Madrid: Estudio psico-sociológico con dibujos y fotografías del natural (Madrid: B. Rodríguez-Serra, 1901) 57.

[13] According to Bullough, the majority of regular customers came from wealthy sectors of society. Men from the lower classes, he adds, "could not afford to visit a brothel frequently, and what many in this class did was to live with a woman or a series of women in informal marriage arrangements." See: Women 199.

[14] Charles Bernheimer, Figures of Ill-Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France (Boston: Harvard UP, 1989) 210; Bullough, Women 198; Capel Martínez 271; Corbin 7; Nash 34; Scanlon 106.

[15] Bernaldo de Quirós 57, 59; Capel Martínez 271; Corbin 7; Nash 34; Scanlon 106.

[16] Corbin 6, 7; Mariana Valverde, "The Love of Finery: Fashion and the Fallen Women in Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse," Victorian Studies 32.2 (1989): 178.

[17] Bernaldo de Quirós 239; Bullough, Women 198; Capel Martínez 272, 274; Ph[ilippe] Hauser, Estudios médicos-sociales de Sevilla (acompañados de 90 cuadros estadísticos) (Seville: Tomás Sanz; Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1884) 245; Nead 102; A[lexandre] J.-B. Parent-Duchâtelet, De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris, 2 vols. (Paris: J.-B. Baillière, 1857), 1: 103-04, 107; cited in Harsin 122-23; Scanlon 106.

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[18] David V. Holtby, "Education: Primary and Secondary," Historical Dictionary of Modern Spain, 1700-1988, ed. Robert Kern (New York: Greenwood, 1990) 183.

[19] Spain, Statutes: Civil, Commercial, and Penal Codes, Los códigos españoles vigentes en la Península y Ultramar. Reformado conforme á lo dispuesto en la ley de 26 de mayo y Real Decreto de 24 de julio de 1889, ed. Joaquín Abella, vol. 1 (Madrid: Viuda e Hijos de la Riva, 1890) 82.

[20] Scanlon discusses the aforementioned Article 320 and reproduces Article 321 of the Civil Code. As she aptly observes: "El artículo refleja muy claramente la opinión general de que las chicas no debían abandonar el hogar paterno a no ser para casarse, es decir, pasar de la tutela del padre a la del marido. La ley desalentaba efectivamente cualquier manifestación de independencia por parte de la mujer." See: 124-25.

[21] In her article, Capel Martínez reproduces excerpts of sections from several articles of the Penal Code of 1870 regarding the prostitution of minors and the penalties inflicted upon those parties convicted of this crime. See: 282-83.

[22] Bullough, History 287-89; G. L. Simons, A Place for Pleasure: The History of the Brothel (Lewes [Eng.]: Harwood-Smart, 1975) 4.

[23] Emmett Murphy, Great Bordellos of the World: An Illustrated History (London: Quartet, 1983) 217; Simons 113.

[24] William Acton, Prostitution, ed. Peter Fryer (New York: Praeger, 1969) 102-03.

[25] Corbin 78; Flexner 166; Harsin 288; Michael Pearson, The Age of Consent: Victorian Prostitution and Its Enemies (Newton-Abbott [Eng.]: David and Charles, 1972) 50.

[26] Julien Jeannel, De la prostitution dans les grandes villes au dix-neuvième siècle et de l'extinction des maladies vénériennes (Paris: J.-B. Baillière, 1874) 280; qtd. in Harsin 280.

[27] Although López Bago does not emphasize the non-sexual control Arístides and Mari-Pepa exercise over their prostitutes, this control was a major fact of life inside the bordello. The "vigilencia más constante de Arístides" resulting in "el mayor orden" (47) at Mari-Pepa's parallels the standards adhered to in the most well-run establishments. "The brothel has often been administered with rigorous attention to obedience, routine and proficiency." See: Simons

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9. The routine included arising late in the morning (or early afternoon) and taking meals with the madam and colleagues. At Mari-Pepa's supper was at 7:00 P.M. and the women ate in shifts. Although López Bago does not discuss this aspect, it may be assumed that the day was devoted to one's toilette, clothing, conversation, leisure activities, etc., as was the case in many *maisons de tólerance*. For the women, however, the routine was rigid and tedious, made even more difficult by their depressing surroundings; and by the fact that, other than for medical reasons, outings were rare; and when they did occur, the women were escorted. See: Corbin 82-83; Harsin 297-99.

[28] Jess Wells, A Herstory of Prostitution in Western Europe (Berkeley: Shameless Hussy P, 1982) 58-59.

[29] The depiction of the destructive effects of sexuality through venereal disease was a popular literary theme in France at the time. Inaugurated in 1872 by Barbey d'Aurevilly, the topic was featured in the works of Huysmans and Maupassant. See: Corbin 251-52.

[30] Prostitutes, it seems, were society's traditional scapegoats. They "had been identified as the prime source of contamination in the case of the nineteenth century's earlier cause for biological panic, cholera." See: Bernheimer 234. This vilification is even more unfair in light of the fact that the infectious cholera was not even a sexually transmitted disease.

[31] "Physical contact with others must be avoided," advises Dr. June Reinisch regarding the secondary stage. See: June Reinisch, "Sifting Through Facts on Syphilis," Daily News 26 Apr. 1992, final ed., sec. 2 ["Citysmarts (sic) Island"]: 1. According to Paul Morhardt, "La contagiosité de la syphilis dure pendant toute la période secondaire." See: Paul Emile Morhardt, Les maladies vénériennes et la reglamentation de la prostitituion au point de vue de l'hygiène sociale (Paris: O. Doin, 1906) 37. Dr. Benjamín de Céspedes adds: "Este segundo período de la sífilis se caracteriza principalmente por la erupción generalizada y tumultosa en la piel y en las mucosas de todo el cuerpo. Esta fase secundaria es eminentemente contagiosa y virulenta." See: Benjamín de Céspedes, La prostitución en la Ciudad de la Habana (Havana: Establecimiento Tipográfico O'Reilly, 1888) 245.

[32] Some specialists count four phases of the development of syphilis: primary, secondary, latency and tertiary; while others count three: primary, secondary and tertiary, but acknowledge the latent stage as an unnumbered stage situated between the secondary and tertiary stages.

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[33] Bullough also discusses Ricord's critical discovery in Women and Prostitution: "Ricord also described the characteristic three stages of syphilis, emphasizing the dangers of the third stage." See 190. In his "Notes" to chapter 10, Bullough cites Ricord's work: Letters on Syphilis, trans. W. P. Lattimore (Philadelphia: Blanchard and Lea, 1854). See 352n6. In his bibliography Corbin cites two texts published by Dr. Ricord in the 1860s, one of which is titled: Traité complet des maladies vénériennes. Paris: J. Rouvier, 1862. See 464.

[34] Judith Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980).

[35] Alfred Fournier; qtd. in Yves Guyot, La prostitution.... (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1882) 285.

[36] Bullough: History 166, Women 233; Capel Martínez 283; Bernice Chitnis, Reflecting on Nana (London: Routledge, 1991) 8; Decker 50; Nash 37; Scanlon 109.

[37] The Romans were the first to adopt the Reglementation system in the Western world. The practice of registering prostitutes began in Rome in 180 BC during the Republic, and the practice was adopted into law during the reign of Emperor Augustus (63 BC-AD 14). See: Decker 36-37; Henriques 119.

[38] "Prostitution," Columbia-Viking, 1966 ed.

[39] Gui Befesse, Profesionales del amor; historia de la prostitución á traves del tiempo: reportajes de la prostitución actual en las grandes capitales, Barcelona y su vida alegre (Barcelona: Ed. P. C. P. [1933] 136; Capel Martínez 283-84; Cuevas 146-47; Enrique Rodríguez Solís, Historia de la prostitución en España y América (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, n. d.) 245; Scanlon 109. Plans for the development of an official policy on Reglementation were already in the development stage in 1854 when the Progressive Party was in power: "En 1854 el gobierno liberal creó una comisión de tres médicos con el encargo de que redactase un Reglamento que estipulase medidas de salud pública y visitas sanitarias a las prostitutas; el plan fue relegado, sin embargo, tras la caída de los liberales." See: Scanlon 109. Also see: Befesse 132 and Capel Martínez 283-84.

[40] Ricardo Franco y Guzmán, La prostitución (Mexico [City]: Diana, 1973) 241.

[41] The article criticized the *Ministerio de la Gobernación* for ignoring the severity of the hospital's deterioration and called for much needed construction of a new hospital. See: "El hospital de San Juan de Dios," La Epoca 28

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Apr. 1889: [2]. Two subsequent articles were published regarding the hospital in La Epoca in the 1890s. The article published in 1891 announced plans for the construction of a new and modernized hospital to be located near the Plaza de Toros. See: "Las obras del nuevo hospital de San Juan de Dios," La Epoca 23 Aug. 1891: [3]. The third article announced the completion of the new hospital and reported on the *Ministro de la Gobernación's* inspection of the facility the previous day. Plans were being completed for the hopsital's opening in September. See: "El hospital de San Juan de Dios," La Epoca 24 July 1897: [3].

[42] Concepción Arenal; qtd. in Capel Martínez 279. Both Capel Martínez (279-80) and Scanlon (105-06) discuss Arenal's and Baroja's depiction of conditions inside San Juan de Dios. Also see: Concepción Arenal, Obras completas, vol. IV ["La mujer del porvenir." "La mujer de su casa."] (Madrid: n. p., 1895) 54-55; qtd. in Scanlon 105. See: "Paso por San Juan de Dios," chapter X of the "primera parte" of El árbol de la ciencia, Letras Hispánicas, ed. Pío Caro Baroja, 8th ed. (Madrid: Caro Raggio/Cátedra, 1992) 81-85. It seems that conditions at San Juan de Dios Hospital did not improve much—if at all—in the twenty-seven years which passed between the 1884 publication of La Pálida and the 1911 release of El árbol de la ciencia.

[43] The major breakthroughs which would lead to curing venereal disease were not to occur until the first half of the following century. In 1909 German bacteriologist Paul Ehrlich discovered the arsenic-based drug "Salvarsan" which effectively destroyed the bacteria which caused syphilis. See: Bullough, History 218. "Salvarsan would become the first improvement on mercury in four centuries, though like mercury it was sometimes fatal." See: Harsin 257. With the discovery of penicillin in 1929 by Alexander Fleming, and subsequently with the development of antibiotics as well as sulfanilamides introduced in 1935, medical science finally succeeded in curing both syphilis and gonorrhea. See: Bullough: History 218-19, Women 233; Harsin 257.

[44] Rafael G. Eslava, La prostitución en Madrid: Apuntes para un estudio sociológico (Madrid: Vicente Rico, 1900) 92-93. Also cited in Scanlon 105n76.

[45] There is no single word equivalent in English for "buscona," "she who seeks." Spanish dictionaries do not distinguish between "buscona" and "prostitute." The feminine form of the noun "buscón" (thief, cheat), "buscona" is synonymous with "ramera" in the Real Academia's Diccionario de la Lengua Española, 16th ed., 1941; and synonymous with "prostituta" in María Moliner's Diccionario de uso del español, 2 vols. (Madrid: Gredos, 1975).

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[46] "Mistress," Webster's New World Dictionary, 1986 ed.; George Ryley Scott, A History of Prostitution: From Antiquity to the Present Day (London: London and Norwich, 1936) 109, 113, 115.

[47] Helena Mitchie, The Flesh Made Word: Female Figures of Women's Bodies (New York: Oxford UP, 1987) 26-27.

[48] Amy Millstone, "French Feminist Theater and the Subject of Prostitution, 1870-1914," The Image of the Prostitute in Modern Literature, ed. Pierre L. Horn and Mary Beth Pringle (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1984) 26.

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CHAPTER IV

"LA PROSTITUTA": THE TETRALOGY AGAINST PROFESSIONAL FEMALE PROSTITUTION— LA PÁLIDA, LA BUSCONA AND LA QUERIDA

In this second part of our study concerning the representation of women in López Bago's tetralogy, our focus shifts to Rosita Pérez: the second most important female character in La Pálida, and the protagonist of La buscona and La querida. We shall also examine the role of other female characters in the novels, Rosita Pérez' antagonists. The story of Rosita Pérez begins in La Pálida (see Chapter III) and continues in the last two novels of the tetralogy: La buscona and La querida.

We include now descriptions of the plots of the remaining novels to be examined in this chapter.

La buscona

On a cold January afternoon Rosita Pérez is walking through the streets of Madrid attracting the admiring glances and comments of male passersby. She acknowledges each one with smiles and flirtatious gestures. Despite her coquettish and cheerful demeanor, Rosita is trembling inside, ashamed of

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her present predicament of having to hunt for prospective customers as a common streetwalker.

The narrator relates the events in the protagonist's life after the conclusion of La Pálida. After their narrow escape from death at the hands of the jealous and vengeful Luis de Villaperdida, Rosita and the Duke de Tres Estrellas became lovers. Rosita's tenure as the duke's mistress was short-lived, however, when he abandoned her after a few months. Now in debt, Rosita has no other recourse but to streetwalk in order to support herself, her avaricious mother Doña Angustias, and Juan, her lazy, unemployed brother.

Rosita attracts her first customer: a handsome adolescent who accompanies her home. Rosita refuses the paultry four *duros* he offers for her services, the only money he has. Nevertheless, already strongly attracted to the friendly, innocent young man, she agrees to an encounter in her bedroom, in the apartment she shares with her mother and brother. Rosita's new lover is Miguel Loitia—a twenty-year old university student and aspiring writer; blond, slender, well-built and of average height. Nearsightedness adds a sleepy, dreamlike quality to his extremely pleasant blue eyes. Miguel's most handsome physical attribute is his well-shaped face; his least appealing feature, the enlarged sensual lips.

Miguel is the son of the distinguished Don Pedro Loitia, a high ranking civil administrator and former Provincial Governor until he was forced into retirement by the Revolution

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of 1868. He was respectfully and affectionately known as *el gobernador* by family, friends and former colleagues alike for his long illustrious career in public service, reputed to be the longest on record in Spain. At sixty-six years of age, Don Pedro is still a handsome and stately figure, despite having gained a great deal of weight due to inactivity over the course of his long retirement. The severity he exhibited in fulfilling his professional duties belie the unusual tenderness and affection he expresses freely and unabashedly for his family. Don Pedro is married for the second time, to Julia, a woman much younger than himself. Two children were born of his first marriage: Amparo and Miguel. The *gobernador's* greatest joy in life is being a doting father; watching over his children with a love which seems, at times, more maternal than paternal.

The long hours Miguel had spent in his youth reading the works of Cervantes and Quevedo and other classics of Spanish literature have left an indelible mark on the impressionable young man. Miguel was determined to succeed as a professional writer over the vigorous objections of his father who envisioned a dignified career for his talented son in civil or military service. Despite his father's anger, Miguel remained steadfast, deciding that the best way to learn his craft was to read as much as possible. Don Pedro reluctantly conceded; and eventually even supported the endeavor by purchasing copies of contemporary works of Spanish, French and English

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literature. Like Alonso Quijano, Miguel soon began to confuse reality with fantasy; converting Rosita Pérez into his own modern Dulcinea; or, like Dumas' famous courtesan from Camille, into his own Marguerite Gautier. Miguel is overjoyed about living his own drama; to be experienced with an excitingly dangerous "fallen woman," epitomized in Rosita Pérez.

Rosita is happy that she obeyed her instinct and refused Miguel's four *duros*. In order to replace the sum, she pawns an expensive ring given to her by the Duke de Tres Estrellas and tells her mother that Miguel gave her the money. Doña Angustias is concerned only with extracting money from Rosita to pay the bills. Rosita is consumed with thoughts and fantasies of Miguel, but also worries about the effect the knowledge of her past life as a kept woman will have on the young man. Miguel returns to Rosita's bedroom the following day as promised, and the couple embarks in earnest upon a wild, passionate love affair which overwhelms them both. Almost asphyxiating in its level of intensity, their physical union leaves them mutually satisfied yet exhausted and drained. Despite the growing attraction and love for one another, the affair between the "fallen woman" and the student is founded on a series of lies. Rosita tells Miguel she was forced by her mother into submitting to a man she did not love and that the former's widow's pension is the family's only source of income. Rosita leads her mother to believe that

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Miguel is a wealthy paying customer while at the same time she pawns her jewelry to account for the missing income. Although he detests the idea of deceiving his father, Miguel wants to keep his affair with Rosita a secret. He fabricates excuses to explain his whereabouts and his uncharacteristic tardiness in returning home for meals. Don Pedro, meanwhile, is distraught over Miguel's unexplained absences; imagining that some horrible fate has befallen his only son. Rosita is surprised by Miguel's evident strong emotional attachment to his family, especially to his father; the antithesis of her own toxic relationship with her mother and brother who only want the money she is forced to bring into the house.

Everyone is ecstatic when one of Miguel's articles is published in the "Hoja Literaria" section of El Imparcial's prestigious literary supplement, Los Lunes. Don Pedro bursts with paternal pride, while Rosita starts to imagine that her days as a streetwalker are over since Miguel is now making money. She naively believes that he can write one article each night and see them published soon afterwards. Miguel insists on sharing half of the eight *duros* he receives for the article with Rosita. After celebrating with his lover, Miguel returns home to confront his father's anger and disappointment. The *gobernador* has discovered his son's liaison with a "fallen woman." A tearful Miguel begs his father for forgiveness for the deception, but defends Rosita's honor and social status. As the daughter of a late army

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captain, the Pérezes and the Loitias are social equals. The confrontation between father and son concludes in a truce, but puts a strain on their relationship.

El Imparcial announces the return of the Duke de Tres Estrellas, Deputy Secretary of Spain's legation in London.

Although Miguel has since submitted many articles to Madrid's numerous publications, none are published. Rosita is becoming desperate. The eight *duros* Miguel earned from his first published article only afforded her one night's rest from streetwalking. It is imperative that she see the duke, rekindle his passion, become his mistress once again. The duke is happy to see Rosita when she arrives unannounced at his hotel room, relieved that she is no longer angry with him for having abandoned her. The duke is a changed man: the reckless manner in which he treated women is gone, replaced by gratitude and a new appreciation of women's affection for him, and a new respect for the female sex in general. The duke will visit Rosita in her apartment. She promises him her nights, just as before.

Miguel accepts a position as a writer on the staff of a newly founded political newspaper, but his modest salary will not cover the Pérez family's expenditures. Seeing Rosita's disappointment, Miguel tells her that they will have to be content to survive entirely on Miguel's salary.

Miguel is justified in his suspicions of the presence of another man in Rosita's life. Rosita, in fact, is in love

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with both Miguel and Mariano (the Duke de Tres Estrellas) simultaneously, a fact which astounds her. Although Miguel succeeds in making Rosita swear on her father's soul and on her own salvation that he is the only man she loves, the young writer remains plagued by suspicions of infidelity and enlists the aid of the portress, Petra, to discover the truth. However, Petra's loyalties lie with Rosita, whom she immediately informs of Miguel's plan. Far from being upset by the news, Rosita is happy; interpreting Miguel's jealousy and suspicions as proof of his love for her. Rosita decides to confess; she would rather risk losing Miguel than to continue deceiving him. She tells him about her past as a mistress and a *buscona*, her nights as a streetwalker, the pawning of possessions and her current arrangement with the duke. Rosita succeeds in preventing the enraged and distraught Miguel from leaving, with her entreaties, tears, and suffocating embraces and kisses. Miguel surrenders to desire, but later demands that Rosita give up the duke and all others as proof of her fidelity and the sincerity of her love. Rosita readily agrees and, as a gesture of personal sacrifice, voluntarily promises to give up the expensive items she acquired through prostitution. In return, Miguel offers Rosita his entire paycheck and she agrees to make ends meet only on Miguel's salary. After Rosita ends her affair with the duke, Miguel spends the night with his mistress.

Meanwhile, the shock of finding Miguel's bed empty at

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four o'clock in the morning is unbearable for Don Pedro and he suffers a mild stroke. Returning home the next morning, Miguel is shaken by the news of his father's condition. Don Pedro tries to convince his son to give up Rosita, and expresses his fear of losing his son. He has observed the signs: first, a few hours each day; now an entire night; and soon Miguel will be gone both days and nights. Miguel will be too far away to return home in time for the final farewell. To make matters worse, Amparo openly blames her brother for their father's illness. Miguel is tormented; torn between filial duty and his love and passion for Rosita. They both love him and have sacrificed for his sake.

Meanwhile, after Miguel's departure from Rosita's that morning, a ferocious confrontation ensues in the Pérez household with Rosita's announcement that the family's standard of living will be sharply downscaled; they will live within the means that Angustias' pension and Miguel's salary provide. Rosita will no longer support Juan. Miguel will also be moving into the apartment. All attempts to intimidate Rosita fail. Mother and brother remain astounded by and fearful of Rosita's new found assertiveness.

Three months after his stroke, Don Pedro receives a letter from Miguel, the very first one he has ever received from his son, since they have never been separated before. For Don Pedro, the letter is a cowardly act. Miguel asks for forgiveness, yet his message wounds his father even more.

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Miguel will remain in Madrid, but he cannot be separated from Rosita; they will continue to live together in her apartment. Don Pedro blames Rosita for everything; she has bewitched his son, stealing his company and affections away from his own family. He asks God to forgive Rosita, the "fallen woman," for her sins.

Despite his happiness with Rosita, Miguel deeply misses his father and uses work as an excuse to get away to see Don Pedro at home or at the *Café Suizo*. Enjoying the role of paternal martyr, Don Pedro begins his lecture by reprimanding Miguel for his two day absence from home, accusing him of forgetting about his father and of ruining the Loitia name. He proceeds to instill more guilt by declaring that when he does not see Miguel he imagines that his son has fallen ill. Don Pedro still holds out hope that Miguel will return to his senses. Nevertheless, Don Pedro never sees his son on two consecutive days. There is an undeclared war of the wills taking place between the *gobernador* and Rosita for Miguel's affections. The ex-*buscona* is afraid of Don Pedro; knowing instinctively that during every visit, the father tries to convince Miguel to abandon her. If Miguel returns home to live, she will lose him forever, she fears. Her worries are unfounded, however. Miguel is not like the Duke de Tres Estrellas. For a sensitive man like Miguel, Rosita, his first love, will be his last, a fact not lost on Don Pedro.

The honeymoon period is over. Rosita and Miguel have

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their first dispute over money. Rosita wants Miguel to request an advance on his salary, but he refuses, and is appalled by Rosita's vulgar tone and language. Although Miguel hands over his entire paycheck, it still is not sufficient. Little by little Rosita has been trading in her luxurious furnishings for less expensive pieces, thus gaining a profit from the transactions. Miguel, however, notices how his mistress resists selling the gifts she received from the duke, which he interprets as a sign of a lingering affection for her former lover. Miguel's insecurities and suspicions resurface. The lovers reach an impasse: Miguel will not request an advance unless Rosita sells her gifts from the duke. Miguel relents when Rosita tries to sell their bed to a pawnbroker. After calming his tearful lover, Miguel promises to request the advance from his employer. The lovers reconcile.

An urgent message awaits Miguel when he and Rosita return to their building. Don Pedro has suffered a massive stroke. Miguel immediately runs home and Rosita, stunned by the news, is helped to her apartment by her maid. Don Pedro is unconscious when Miguel arrives at his father's bedside. Miguel is devastated when the *gobernador* dies several hours later. Miguel stays in his father's house during the nine days of official mourning.

The novel concludes with a paler, thinner Miguel returning to a welcoming Rosita. Miguel reaffirms his love

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and promises that he and Rosita will never be separated again.

La querida

The love affair between Rosita Pérez and Miguel Loitia continues to flourish. Despite his happiness with Rosita, Miguel is still grieving over his father's death, tormented with remorse; believing that his affair caused Don Pedro's death, contrary to the physician's explicit assurances that death was the result of a massive stroke. Reading Miguel's thoughts, Rosita is so afraid that his guilt will come between them. Miguel regrets the obvious pain his thoughts inflict upon Rosita and begs her forgiveness.

Miguel still makes his living in the financially unstable world of professional journalism, specializing in literature and politics. Unlike his colleagues of similar rank, Miguel has not advanced in his chosen career as a reporter for a somewhat voguish opposition newspaper. He is not cut out for the turbulent, fast-paced life style of a newspaper reporter. He lacks the initiative, toughness and aggressiveness necessary for the struggle to move up the professional ladder.

Miguel and Rosita live hand-to-mouth, struggling to make ends meet on the former's same salary of forty *duros* a month. They always fall short of money before the next paycheck. Miguel can barely contain his rage when he learns that part of his salary is being withheld to pay off debts incurred by the

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Pérez family. Doña Angustias, now paralyzed—the result of a lesion in the medulla caused by anemia—derives sadistic pleasure as she eavesdrops on another argument over money. Two people can live well on his salary, Miguel tells Rosita; he will not support Doña Angustias and Juan. When Rosita states that she cannot abandon her infirm mother, Miguel issues an ultimatum: choose him or them. Rosita seduces Miguel, his anger abates and the lovers reconcile.

Doña Angustias' paralysis only increased her hatred for Miguel and Rosita. If she could get out of her wheelchair, she would strike Rosita, she angrily tells her daughter. Upon hearing a commotion between the two women, Juan threatens his sister and she takes refuge in her bedroom. The assertiveness Rosita exhibited in La buscona has evaporated; the exploitative situation between Rosita and her family has reverted to its original state.

Miguel is experiencing an internal crisis of the soul, rooted in his father's death and his cohabitation with Rosita. He realizes that his relationship with Rosita is built on lust, and recalls Don Pedro's prophetic words that Rosita would drain him of his life force. The truth deeply pains Miguel, leaving him feeling alienated and orphaned from reality and human connectedness. Rosita's solution is to seduce him. Her frenetic demonstrations of physical love increase his guilty feelings. Miguel does not want to be a martyr for a woman and a family not his own. The idea of

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marriage enters Miguel's consciousness, especially when he recalls the delight his father exhibited in confiding in him about the sanctity and purity of his own wedding night with Miguel's mother, a fifteen year old virgin bride. Miguel tells Rosita of his memories of his mother as a little boy, but Rosita does not want to hear about families. They kiss, each one thinking of death.

Rosita exhibits her insecurities when Miguel receives a letter from his sister requesting he visit her and their stepmother. Although Miguel is also nervous, he soon tires of Rosita's complaints about his family's attempts to separate them. The entire Loitia clan—led by the patriarch of the family, Don Pedro's brother—has charged Amparo with the duty of acting as intermediary to convince Miguel for the sake of the family's good name to end his cohabitation with Rosita. When Miguel objects to the criticism, his sister begs his forgiveness. She only wants to see him married to a daughter from a good family. Amparo also wants to request money from Miguel to help purchase a gravestone for Don Pedro. Almost a year has passed since his death. The cost of the stone is 3,000 *reales* and something. Miguel is to pay the 3,000 *reales*, Amparo will contribute the rest. Miguel gratefully accepts the 3,000 *reales* from Rosita who has just made a significant profit by reselling the luxurious furniture she inherited from Estrella Sánchez at its original value. Rosita is ecstatic about her plans to redecorate the apartment, to

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make it their own, a symbolic renewal of their love. She suggests that Miguel write a novel at home; and hopefully, it will be published by the newspaper where Miguel is employed.

Miguel speaks to the publisher, Don Ramón, who, although initially reluctant because Miguel lacks life's experiences for an in-depth human study, agrees to help him. Miguel is insulted when the worldly Don Ramón suggests that he write a biography based on his life with Rosita Pérez. The publisher is quite familiar with the details of Rosita's past; her affair with the Duke de Tres Estrellas, a close friend, as was Luis de Villaperdida. Don Ramón tells Miguel the story of Estrella Sánchez and her friendship with Rosita. The publisher sympathizes with Miguel; after all, he too maintained a mistress at Miguel's age. The son of Don Pedro and his mistress with the scandalous past have been a major source of gossip all over Madrid. Miguel learns that his own sister has played an active part in fueling the gossip, including spreading the false rumor that Miguel is being supported by Rosita's earnings as a *buscona*.

Later, Miguel goes to the cemetery and by chance meets Rosita at Don Pedro's grave.

Don Ramón presents his own ideas to help Miguel with the creation of the novel's heroine. He has the perfect woman in mind who will serve as the model: Estefanía de Cerdeña, a popular and wealthy twenty-seven year old socialite. The Andalucian native and sophisticated traveler is independent,

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assertive and coquettish; she drives her many suitors to distraction with her vow never to marry. She lives on her own income which she herself manages. Miguel does not believe Estefanía to be the model for his protagonist when he meets her for the first time at *El Retiro* with Don Ramón. The publisher has known Estefanía for many years; he has been maintaining an affair with her older sister, Carlota, married but long separated from her husband. The de Cerdeña sisters share a large luxurious house located in a fashionable neighborhood. Don Ramón warns Miguel not to fall in love with Estefanía. The two men are invited to call on the de Cerdeñas that evening. While Ramón and Carlota slip away, Estefanía converses with Miguel. Slender, with large expressive blue eyes, a forced smile and a pale complexion, the young hostess wants Miguel to define love, inasmuch as she does not believe in altruistic love, only in carnal love. Miguel, however, does not believe Estefanía; in his opinion, she is just bored. Although Estefanía considers Miguel a rare bird, she approves of him and invites him to return the following afternoon. When Don Ramón joins Miguel again, he realizes that the young man has been poisoned by Estefanía's charms and orders him home to Rosita, his antidote. Miguel, however, firmly believes that he has fallen in love with the enigmatic señorita de Cerdeña.

Miguel's feelings for Rosita have changed dramatically. He can no longer bear to be near her. Afraid that Rosita will

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detect the change, he visits Amparo and Julia the next morning. He confronts his sister about spreading false rumors, and later talks about the de Cerdeña sisters. Amparo has reason to be suspicious of her brother's unexpected visit, for he uses it to pass the time until his date with Estefanía.

The young journalist is pleasantly surprised when the socialite receives him alone. Coquettishly, she asks him if he is capable of falling in love; and tries to seduce him, a move Miguel recognizes as her attempt to shatter his illusions, to prove to him that he is like all her other suitors.

Miguel decides to leave Rosita. He is now horrified when he thinks about Rosita's scandalous past, and begins to envision himself married to Estefanía, an idea which was first suggested by Amparo. He wants to restore the sallied Loitia name. The need to be alone to write his novel is the excuse he employs as a shield against his mistress who is certain that something is amiss. Rosita must not know the truth until Estefanía has agreed to marry him. So obsessed with Estefanía is he that two days without seeing her is pure torture for Miguel.

Don Ramón tries in vain to dissuade Miguel from the idea of marrying Estefanía. When the publisher suggests that Miguel marry Rosita, he vehemently objects, adding that he will never marry Doña Angustias' daughter. Although realizing his obsession for Estefanía is madness, he feels compelled to

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pursue it, and asks Estefanía for her hand in marriage. It cannot be, she replies; she is poison. Estefanía will surrender herself to Miguel so that he may forget her. Finally, she admits her love for him, and accepts Miguel's proposal.

Miguel and Don Ramón discuss what to do about Rosita. The publisher exhibits more compassion for Doña Angustias' daughter than Miguel. Two weeks are required to make the necessary wedding preparations, but Miguel refuses to return to Rosita. Don Ramón conceives a plan to keep Miguel away from Rosita without arousing her suspicions. Rosita will be told that Miguel has been sent out of town on assignment. In reality, Miguel will stay in a spare room at the newspaper. When Rosita receives the letter, written by Miguel but dictated by Don Ramón, she realizes that it is a farewell letter. She recalls the dramatic changes in her lover's behavior and concludes that Miguel has fallen in love with another woman. Recovering somewhat from the shock, she is determined to fight for Miguel, for their life together. Rosita discovers Miguel's lie when she spots him still working inside the newspaper. When Don Ramón visits her the following day, Rosita requests and receives the 3,000 *reales* she gave Miguel for his father's tombstone, plus interest. She lets Don Ramón know she is aware of the lie concerning Miguel's whereabouts. Miguel reacts with cold indifference to Don Ramón's account of his visit with Rosita. The publisher is

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appalled by Miguel's attitude. Rosita's emotions are impossible to adequately describe, the narrator informs readers.

At the de Cerdeña residence Miguel learns of his fiancée's decision to cancel the wedding. Estefanía can no longer continue to deceive him. Her vast fortune is attributed to her life as a professional courtesan. Moreover, she does not love Miguel, she never did. She was only toying with him; he was a novel diversion for her. Although she apologizes for her cruel deception, she adds insult to injury by stating that she could not, nor would she renounce her extravagant life style to marry a lowly writer. Miguel is going mad. He compares his fate with his father's: Don Pedro married a virgin. Estefanía is a repetition of his situation with Rosita; he has fallen in love with another professional mistress. When Miguel breaks down and cries, Estefanía plays the piano in an attempt to ease his pain. She will marry Miguel if it is still what he wants. Miguel agrees, even with the certainty that he and Estefanía will destroy each other.

When Don Ramón left her apartment, Rosita followed him to his meeting with Miguel, and later followed her lover to Estefanía's house. Using a pretext to elicit information from the doorman, Rosita learns of Miguel and Estefanía's impending marriage. The shock of this revelation makes Rosita ill yet incapable of tears. She does not deserve such a fate, she wails. However, she realizes that Miguel has been driving

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himself crazy; his leaving has nothing to do with her rival. If only she could convince him to change his mind. Rosita asks Juan to accompany her to Estefanía's house where they await Miguel's departure. Rosita orders Juan to follow behind at a distance. Miguel is surprised, but not happy to see Rosita. They sit down together on a bench in the Botanical Gardens. Rosita still holds out hope of a reconciliation. In a long passionate speech, Rosita pours out her heart to Miguel, but to no avail. Although he recognizes that Rosita speaks the truth, he will persist in his plans to marry Estefanía. When Miguel, in a trance-like state, informs Rosita of his plans to spend the night with Estefanía, Rosita can endure no more. She offers Juan 4,000 *reales* to kill Miguel with a rapier, and assures her brother that she, Rosita, will take the blame for the murder. Miguel Loitia's last words are: "Thank you" as Juan stabs him fatally in the chest. Rosita faints. Juan removes the money from a pocket of his sister's skirt and leaves the scene of the crime. An hour later, the delirious Rosita tells the police that she murdered her lover.

While at the opera that evening, Estefanía learns of Miguel's death from a newspaper headline. Recognizing the photograph of Miguel's body, she turns pale and abruptly exits the opera house, accompanied by Carlota. Ironically, the performance the sisters were to have seen is "Lucrezia," the opera about the notorious Lucretia Borgia, the infamous

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poisoner.

The narrator informs readers of the necessity of relating this story, inasmuch as Miguel Loitia never succeeded in writing his novel.

Like the tetralogy's first heroine, Rosita Pérez is also portrayed as a model of feminine beauty; with the latter's dark beauty serving to complement the blond, blue eyed Estrella Sánchez. When first introduced to readers in La Pálida, the twenty-one year old is described as "una muchacha preciosa. Un poquito baja, eso sí, tal vez demasiado para su edad" (90); although she "seguía siendo tan pizpireta y retaco como á los diecisiete" (91). Her voluptuous body is "muy bien formado" and her black eyes sparkle "con mucho brillo" (100). Rosita blossoms in La buscona, as the narrator explains in somewhat poetic terms:

> ¡Era hermosa! ¡Hermosísima! ¡Irresistible! Estaba en la plenitud de su desarrollo, como una flor completamente abierta; desplegábanse las curvas de su cuerpo en redondeces incitantes; brillaban sus ojos con las pupilas húmedas, negras, fascinadoras, y bajo los ojos la pasión dejaba á su paso una estela azulada que aumentaba la sombra y misterio encantador de la mirada. Los labios de encendido color, la boca empequeñecida por el hábito de fruncirse para el beso, y un tono cálido

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> en la tez, el mismo que tenía toda su carne, igual, uniforme, como si bajo la epidermis hubiera fuego. Hermosa, sí. De manos y pies pequeños.... Hasta su estatura era un encanto, más bien baja que alta, no como la Venus de Milo, sino como la de Médicis. Una diosa que tenía que ponerse de puntillas para abrazar á los hombres. (122-23)

In La querida Miguel admits to Estefanía that Rosita, though "algo gruesa," is, indeed, "bonita" (214); while Don Ramón is so taken with Rosita that "el primer comentario que hizo el hombre político" to Miguel after meeting her for the first time was: "Una mujer joven. Joven y guapa" (199).

Rosita Pérez is a sensitive and sensible young woman, devoted, intuitive, determined, realistic and assertive; affectionate, intensely sensual and passionate, and generous of spirit. Despite her take-charge personality, our second heroine remains a tortured figure; pursued by self-doubt, insecurities, loneliness, nervousness, and pessimism. Rosita does not believe that fate will allow her to find enduring happiness, as her thoughts reveal themselves in La querida: "—¡Dios mío! ¿Por qué estaré yo tan contenta? Algo me va á pasar" (167).

The root of Rosita's profound unhappiness lies in the dynamics of her family situation. The sudden death of her father, Don Tomás Pérez y Pérez, an army captain killed in action during the Second Carlist War, marked the definitive

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turning in the seventeen-year old protagonist's life. The inevitable grief and sense of overwhelming loss at the untimely and violent death of a loved one, especially the head of the family—the symbol of strength, security, protection and stability—constitutes "una página imperecedera en la historia de una familia" (La Pálida 69). Moreover, the protagonist's relationship with her father was a loving one; the young girl held a special place in the career military officer's heart as his "Rosita, su querida, su idolatrada hija" (La buscona 11). For Rosita, Don Tomás' literal demise signaled her own emotional death; the loss of lasting happiness and peace of mind. She expresses her feelings to Miguel: "¡He sufrido mucho, nene, nene mío! Desde que murió el héroe, el capitán, se me acabó la felicidad" (La querida 241).

As a minor, Rosita is totally dependent upon her surviving parent, her mother, Doña Angustias. Abandoned in death by her father, Rosita is not only emotionally orphaned by her mother, but will be exploited and dehumanized by both Angustias and Juan. Vain, selfish, hypocritical, arrogant, insensitive and materialistic, Captain Pérez' widow is ruled by her delusions of grandeur and class superiority. She lives beyond her means in her efforts to maintain the illusion of upper middle class prosperity and social standing. Despite the accumulation of debts, the pawning of possessions; borrowing money from friends, relatives and acquaintances; and

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the very real threat of homelessness, this stubborn spendthrift rejects all practical solutions for living well on her widow's pension. Instead of using common sense and self-restraint to resolve the family's financial difficulties, Doña Angustias looks to Rosita to put an end to their problems by taking advantage of her daughter's youth, attractiveness and availability. She insists that Rosita actively search for a husband among the bachelor patrons at *Café Nuevo del Siglo*, identified as "una gran cátedra de muchachas casaderas," since it is a favorite haunt of "los estudiantes, los cadetes, los horteras, toda la juventud de Madrid y provincias ...." (La Pálida 91). The narrator sympathizes with Rosita, placed on display, and debased as an object of desire and amusement:

> ¡Pobre Rosita! En cuanto se enteraron los concurrentes de "El Siglo" de *la novedad*, fué numerosa la falange de adoradores. Bastaba ver á la joven para adivinar que hacía su *début*. Ofuscada la vista por la fuerte claridad de los mecheros, aturdida con el ensordecedor barullo de conversaciones, tosiendo al respirar aquella atmósfera enrarecida por el humo del tabaco; avergonzándose, porque era más que rubor lo que experimentaba, al ver cómo la miraban insolentemente todos los barbilampiños mientras que otros tosían y sonreían los viejos .... (La Pálida 92-93)

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Doña Angustias' plan is to marry Rosita off to the first patron who asks for her hand. Neither the character of the prospective suitor nor Rosita's opinion interests the coldhearted woman. When Rosita objects, the widow humiliates her:

> Pues no faltaba más. Parecía un hombre muy distinguido ... (sic) y muy fino. ¡Qué mas (sic) podía desear una pobre huérfana! ... [¿] qué más podía desear sino que una persona tan atenta y *tan bien vestida* se enamorase de ella y pidiera su mano?.... Vaya una razón, dar calabazas á un hombre porque no gusta. Con todos la pasaría lo mismo. Todos son iguales; de carne y hueso era aquél como los otros .... mañana por la noche tienes que prometerme que serás más amable. Hija, no hay más remedio, á casarse tocan. (La Pálida 94-95)

Doña Angustias effectively devalues her daughter's worth as a woman and a human being. According to the mother's way of thinking, Rosita should feel eternally grateful if any man should want to marry her at all.

Doña Angustias' mission to find a husband for Rosita based on financial reasons was the most natural course of action for mothers with marriageable daughters in the nineteenth century. We are reminded by the following scholars that, with the exception of becoming a nun, marriage was the

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only respectable life style and career option available for women from all socioeconomic classes, especially "pobres huérfanas" like Rosita. As Nelken affirms: "La mujer sin fortuna y sin medios de ganarse la vida conforme a sus necesidades, ha de considerar fatalmente el matrimonio como una salvación, como un refugio contra la implacable lucha por el sustento" (30). And, according to Nash, "la falta de recursos económicos de la mujer le hace considerar el matrimonio como única opción suya, como única manera de garantizar su futuro bienestar económico" (22). However, for Doña Angustias, husband hunting has nothing to do with the maternal desire to protect a daughter's financial future. In reality, the widow plans to sell her daughter's hand in marriage for her and Juan's own advantage. She hopes to continue her extravagant spending by living off the prospective son-in-law's income, just as she later succeeds in doing with Miguel Loitia's salary. Rosita, in effect, is regarded by her mother as another family possession to be pawned and sold to the highest bidder; a bitter reality not lost on the young woman:

> Lo que supo, lo que no pudo dejar de saber es que la madre y el hermano esperaban algo de ella, y que en ella veían algo más que un sér (sic) querido, algo que rebajaba el cariño hasta las honduras del interés. Era la hija, era la hermana, pero también era la mujer. ¡Lo explotable! La capitana,

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> aquella terrible vendedora de ropa blanca, de armarios y muebles de todas clases, la que empezó por sus alhajas y acabó por la espada del héroe de Monte-Muro, no podía detenerse, no podía contener su frenesí. No había ya nada que pudiera reducirse á moneda, nada se podía vender, y, sin embargo, la viuda quería seguir haciendo dinero.... Pues bien, allí estaba su hija. La mano de Rosita.... ¡Eso es! Se vende una novia. ¿Quién la quiere? ¡A la una, á las dos, á las tres! Al mejor postor. (La Pálida 95-96)

López Bago makes it quite clear that he blames Doña Angustias' own actions for Rosita's subsequent decision to become a professional mistress; for it was the mother who first attempted to prostitute her daughter:

> Pero de que ella [Rosita] supiera estas cosas tenía la culpa su madre. Tenía la culpa aquel ansia de boda, aquel amar como por oficio y obligación al primero que pedía cariño.... No amaba, pero obedecía á su madre. Cariño no. Caricias, cuantas se deseaban. Y se prostituyó por obediencia, *entregó á muchos su blanca mano* .... (La Pálida 98-99)

Although she obeys her mother's advice—"'Sé amable, complácelos en todo, no seas arisca,'" etc. (La Pálida 97)—none of Rosita's many boyfriends want to marry, but they

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all want to seduce her. As a result, Rosita:

> Había perdido, no la virginidad física, pero sí el candor y la feliz ignorancia de que existe en el hombre, en el *caballero bien vestido*, el mismo deseo grosero y brutal que en el salvaje de las tribus bárbaras. Pero en cambio ganó mucho con el trato de estudiantes, horteras y oficiales de la guarnición; porque todos ellos se disputaban la tarea de picardear á aquella niña, y cada cual la enseñaba una porquería de palabra ó de obra. (La Pálida 99)

Although Doña Angustias does not succeed in her primary mission, she succeeds in corrupting her daughter's mind into believing her value rests in selling herself to men in order to provide for all members of the Pérez household. While Rosita suffers in silence, circulating as the "novia de todos los parroquianos" (La Pálida 98), Doña Angustias is reaping the benefits, enjoying having the family's beverages or meals paid for by whomever happens to be Rosita's boyfriend at the moment:

> Doña Angustias, sin embargo, no se quejaba tanto. Ya el café no la costaba un céntimo, porque el novio era siempre el pagano, y muchas noches se arriesgaba á pedir un bisté con patatas ó unos riñones *salteaos*, y con estas raciones iban las pobres de Pérez matando el hambre que empezaban á

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sentir algunos días. (La Pálida 99)

Depressed, frustrated and tired of the family's unrelenting poverty and her mother's refusal to resolve it, Rosita takes matters into her own hands when she agrees to become the mistress of the libertine priest, Lasoga. Moreover, no longer capable of enduring the strained relationship between her mother and herself, Rosita, for the first time in her life, speaks frankly with Doña Angustias, confessing her decision to sell the use of her body to support the family and enumerating her mother's many mistakes. One of the more noteworthy aspects of Rosita's speech is López Bago's suggestion of an alternative respectable life style option to marriage for women like Rosita; an option which requires the collaborative work efforts of all members of a family. Rosita need not be forced into a marriage of convenience nor into prostitution if the surviving members of the Pérez family had pooled their collective resources and lived within their means. To achieve such a goal, López Bago once again emphasizes the critical importance of education for the lower-class youth, especially girls. As Rosita tells her mother in the following passage, she should have been taught a marketable skill, such as sewing by machine while she was young; and Juan should have learned a trade. If these measures had been taken, the three of them could have lived very well; the Pérez children would have been both productive and respectable members of society. By emphasizing the

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importance of living within one's means and by reaffirming the dignity of honest labor, Rosita demonstrates common sense and a maturity beyond her years, the qualities lacking in Doña Angustias as the legal head of the family:

> ... desde el momento en que usted se equivocó, era preciso que pagara alguien la culpa y sufriese las consecuencias de esas equivocaciones. La equivocación grande de usted ha sido la de figurarse que muerto mi padre debíamos á todo trance, y costase lo que costase, seguir sosteniendo nuestra casa en el mismo pie en que estaba cuando vivía su marido.... Nosotros, al morir mi padre, debíamos haber reducido nuestros gastos todo lo posible. Debíamos habernos ido á vivir á una guardilla y dejarnos de abogacías para Juanito y de cintas y arrumacos para mí. Yo, que todavía era muy joven, podía haber aprendido á coser, ya que no á mano, á máquina, y con esto hubiésemos encontrado un recurso más para atender á nuestras necesidades. Juanito, en lugar de asistir á la Universidad, hubiera estado muy bien aprendiendo un oficio, porque el oficio no degrada a nadie, y en lugar de ser lo que es ahora, un vago, un perdido, un sér (sic) completamente inútil .... (La Pálida 223-24)

Rosita concludes her speech with a devastating blow: "Nosotras

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no somos ni hemos sido nunca de la clase media" (La Pálida 228).

Rosita's confrontation with her mother forever changes their relationship. For Doña Angustias, Rosita is responsible for destroying not only her own illusions about belonging to the upper bourgeoisie, but her confession of being a professional mistress places, not only Rosita, but the entire dishonored Pérez family, in nineteenth-century society's eyes, at the very bottom of the social hierarchy—on a par with the lowly masses; and even worse, with social outcasts. As a result, Doña Angustias' general indifference toward her daughter is now replaced by pathological hatred. Her new lifelong obsession is to punish, manipulate and torment her daughter; and then take pleasure in observing Rosita's manifested agony. Eavesdropping on Rosita's quarrels with Miguel, for example, the widow, "sola, en su butaca ... sonreía siniestramente" (La querida 21). Doña Angustias enjoys humiliating Rosita by calling her: "¡Mala hija!, ¡mala hija!, la más mala de todas!" (La querida 30). The narrator sympathizes with "¡pobre Rosita!," who "echaba á correr, tapándose los oídos para no escuchar aquellas dos palabras que se repetían..." (La querida 30). Doña Angustias disowns her daughter while she receives Juan "con una explosión de ternura," shouting: "—¡Hijo mío! ¡Hijo mío! Yo no tengo más hijo que tú" (La querida 31).

Sexual exploitation accompanies the psychological abuse

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inflicted upon the protagonist. Although Doña Angustias believes herself justified in her hatred toward her daughter for having "echado un borrón de infamia sobre aquel apellido tan ilustre de los Pérez y Pérez" (La querida 28), the hypocrite not only denies her own participation in Rosita's dishonor, but fosters and even forces the continued prostitution of her daughter for her own materialistic purposes. If the widow so valued the family's honor, she would have reacted in keeping with such a position: she would have decided to live on her widow's pension and/or forced Rosita to leave home. Doña Angustias does not choose this course of action, but becomes her daughter's avaricious, demanding and menacing pimp. Now she will supplement her pension by living off of Rosita's earnings from lovers and clients. She believes herself justified in knowing the status of the lovers Rosita brings home so that she can calculate her daughter's earnings. Just as before when she judged Rosita's boyfriends from the *Café Nuevo del Siglo* based on their appearance and willingness to pay for the family's supper, Doña Angustias now disdains or respects her daughter's lovers based on their ability to support the family. She openly detests the struggling writer Miguel Loitia, but the Duke de Tres Estrellas is "un ángel" (La buscona 169), since he pays extremely well for Rosita's favors. The following exchange regarding Miguel's visits is typical of the exploitative pimp-prostitute relationship between mother and daughter:

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—Escucha, ¿no decías que *tu pollo* era tan rico?

—Sí.

—Pues mira, debe ser roñoso. Porque este mes no te ha dado más de dos mil reales, según mi cuenta. Procura que se enmiende. Ya sabes que gastamos más.

La buscona no contestó. El tono con que fueron dichas estas palabras y el texto de ellas eran una orden. Tenía que obedecer. (La buscona 82)

The mother-pimp has a vicious accomplice in her good-for-nothing son, Juanito. Doña Angustias uses him as Rosita's bully. When the mother commands, the brother intimidates, threatening his sister with bodily harm:

> Pero á quien más temía Rosita era á su hermano. Su hermano, que no estaba postrado por ninguna enfermedad, que entraba y salía, que registraba los cajones y la (sic) pedía dinero, cuando no saqueaba los bolsillos de los trajes que ella tenía colgados en el ropero. (La buscona 82)

One evening Rosita discovers that she has no money to give Juan. The intense look of intimidation is enough to send Rosita into the streets to search for customers. Reduced to functioning as nothing more than a money-making machine, Rosita reacts automatically, on command. Doña Angustias and Juan dehumanize Rosita; denying her any sense of human dignity. Rosita feels disconnected from the human race,

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trapped in an irremediable situation. The protagonist laments her deterministic and mechanical existence:

> Recordó. No podía volver á su casa con las manos vacías. Allí estaban, en el comedor, esperando, impacientes ya por la tardanza, los verdugos de su vida. Su madre y su hermano. ¡Dios mío! Era preciso llevar dinero á todo trance.... ¡Ah! ¿querían dinero? nada más que eso. La echaron á la calle para buscarlo.... Y se sintió convertida de pronto en algo que no tenía relación alguna con los organismos vivos. En algo que no contaba con lazos en la sociedad de los seres humanos. Ni familia, ni amores, ni amistades. En algo que se movía automáticamente, que era de acero, que se distendía por medio de resortes y no de músculos; una máquina de hacer moncnedas (sic). (La buscona 91-92)

It is in her role as streetwalker—"a common prostitute whose field of operation is the streets" (Bullough, History 290)—that Rosita is most severely sexually and economically exploited by her clandestine pimps, Doña Angustias and Juan.

In nineteenth-century Europe, public women were divided into two large categories: registered or inscribed prostitutes like the residents of *La Casa de Mari-Pepa* who lived in state supervised bordellos; and unregistered or free or independent prostitutes, professionals who escaped police supervision

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(Corbin 161; Harsin: xvii, 6, 241), "prostitutas con domicilio fijo, y casa particular. (Prostitutas libres o aisladas)" (Rodríguez Solís 245). Statistically, the population of independent prostitutes far outnumbered that of registered brothel inmates (Capel Martínez 278), as much as seven times greater, estimates Philippe Hauser;[1] or "7 1/2 veces mayor que la autorizada," according to Bernaldo de Quirós (235). This second category, "la prostitución a nivel individual, por lo común clandestina" (Capel Martínez 278) was comprised of a heterogeneous mixture of full-time "carreristas" such as mistresses and *busconas* (Capel Martínez 278); or part-time or occasional professionals, working women who sold the use of their bodies to supplement their substandard salaries as maids, seamstresses, factory workers, etc. (Capel Martínez 272). While some streetwalkers worked full-time, others like Rosita worked only when financial necessity dictated this course of action (Walkowitz 14).

In La buscona López Bago documents Rosita's experiences as a streetwalker. When the money she earned from the Duke de Tres Estrellas runs out, Rosita, for the first time in her life, joins the ranks of public women who roam streets, parks, cafes, bars, and so forth in specific neighborhoods, at specific hours, in search of a series of brief sexual encounters with unknown customers. The streetwalker is more fortunate than her brothel colleague in the freedom of being able to choose her customers, determine fees for services and

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the type of activities to be undertaken (Capel Martínez 279). Unlike her brothel colleagues, however, the streetwalker publicly exposes her sexual availability before all passersby, making her "the most noticeable" (Decker 98) of all professionals. Ironically, she must play a very active part in her own exploitation. In order to attract prospective clients, the streetwalker must pretend. Rosita flirts with all the male passersby she meets while hiding her shame:

> Rosita sonreía á todas las sonrisas, contestaba con los ojos á todas las miradas y á cada tos volvía la cabeza .... Nadie sabía que Rosita Pérez iba temblando, asustada de sí misma, de sus resoluciones, de lo que estaba haciendo y de lo que se proponía llevar á cabo. Todos, al verla risueña, atribuían sus lágrimas al frío, cuando en ellas llevaba su desesperación la mejor parte, y al frío también la color de sus mejillas que era debida á la vergüenza. (La buscona 8)

López Bago underscores the cold, anonymous nature of the sexual encounter between streetwalker and customer:

> En aquellos encuentros y citas por la calle; en aquella vida aventurera; entre todos los desconocidos que la miraban ó la seguían, ninguno deseaba más que el goce y la posesión de un momento; ninguno era capaz de otra cosa que de satisfacer ambos, estipular el precio, pagar y

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> despedirse de ella, sin preguntar siquiera el nombre de la mujer que acababan de estrechar entre sus brazos. (9-10)

Rosita's current position as a streetwalker is indicative of her fall in professional status from her initial entry as a mistress into the world of commercial sexuality. While streetwalking meets her immediate pecuniary needs, she also hopes it will lead to a *compromiso*: "Y desde aquella tarde empezaba su existencia nueva de buscona, en la que había un descenso, un rebajamiento de clase.... Querida de un hombre, podía volver á serlo" (9). Nevertheless, it was rare that a customer would want to repeat the experience with the same streetwalker. There were so many readily available that this category of public women, perhaps more than any other, was reduced to the level of a disposable object. The pessimistic Rosita doubts that fate would be kind to her:

> Sólo una casualidad, casi un milagro, era preciso para que al calor de aquellas caricias, al estallido de los besos, brotara un deseo más intenso, un capricho de renovar otro día con la misma hembra tales placeres. Rosita no se hacía ilusiones. Iba á la aventura, pero la buena aventura no pensaba encontrarla. No era para ella. (10)

Although the streetwalker has the freedom to accept or reject any prospective client, she is constantly jeopardizing

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her health and physical safety with every new experience. The possibility that a client may hurt her always exists, and she is defenseless against attack and has no legal recourse. In fact, it is not uncommon for streetwalkers to be murdered by their customers, as Capel Martínez points out: "Por ello, no es raro que esta prostituta termine siendo víctima de un homicidio ..." (279).

In the following passage, López Bago describes Rosita's most harrowing experience as a streetwalker while underscoring the tragedy and the irony of her double exploitation. Rosita's ordeal should have never taken place; she is risking her life to provide Juanito, "el parroquiano de todos los cafés" (La querida 31), with spending money. Rosita agrees to an encounter with a customer with "la cara abotargada, estúpidamente maliciosa" (La buscona 86), who agrees to Rosita's fee of five *duros* and takes her to a house of assignation. The Spanish *casa de asignación* or *casa* "de citas ó compromiso" (Bernaldo de Quirós 235) was comparable to the French *maison de rendez-vous*, defined as "an entirely free and voluntary place of prostitution" (Harsin 345), an establishment to which professionals and other would bring partners obtained through "impromptu encounters on the street" (Harsin 307).[2] The house of assignation that Rosita's customer chooses is particularly sordid and even notorious, an establishment where robbery and murder are not uncommon occurrences among the myriad of deviant sexual activity.

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Rosita is terrified throughout her ordeal:

> Una sola casa en toda la calle tenía el portal enladrillado coquetamente ... cuyo portal cerraba una puerta vidriera con cristales de colores. Allí entraron. El hombre se dirigió á un torno, tocó en él con los nudillos, puso diez reales, y recibió una llave con un colgajo de cuerda sucia y mugrienta, á cuyo extremo lucía una chapa de hojalata, en la que á golpe estaba impreso un número. No vieron á nadie. Pero una voz dijo detrás del torno:
>
> —Número 7. Escalera de la derecha. —Una voz tal que no se sabía si era de hombre ó de mujer, enronquecida por el aguardiente.
>
> Siguiendo estas indicaciones, subieron. Era la primera vez que Rosita veía de cerca ... la casa de citas y el Tenorio de la busconería. Aquella casa, según explicó el hombre, era toda igual, construída *ad hoc* para fines aventureros. Tenía tres escaleras, la del centro, la de la izquierda y la de la derecha, todas ellas independientes, y en cada una, de tramo en tramo, una habitación, de la que, por diez reales, era dueño el primero que pasara por la calle, sin más averiguaciones.... Allí entraba el vicio bajo todas sus formas. Parejas de todas clases, sin verse unas á otras,

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> sin molestarse, sin oirse (sic). A veces iban allí un hombre y una mujer, á veces dos hombres, otras dos mujeres, y en ocasiones hasta un hombre solo. Pasaba, recogía su llave. "Número tantos. Escalera del centro", y al poco rato volvía á salir, llamando para recobrar su libertad; porque cerrado el cuarto no se podía abrir por dentro; no se podía salir sin ser inspeccionado.
>
> —Y eso, ¿por qué?
>
> —Porque hay gentes capaces de todo. Porque en esta soledad de calabozo se pueden hacer muchas cosas. Hay quien trae aquí una mujer para robarla, y amantes celosos que las traen y las asesinan. No sería el primer caso. ¿Sabes, chiquiya?
>
> Rosita sintió un escalofrío. ¿Es verdad? Estaba allí á la merced de aquel hombre. Si daba un grito, nadie le oiría. Y miró con terror las colgaduras blancas, el lecho....
>
> Se prestó á todo. Obedeció. Soportó las caricias groseras del desconocido. Tenía miedo. Y cuando aquél dejó saciados sus instintos de bestia, la miró y soltó una feroz carcajada. (87-90)

Rosita faces the ultimate insult when the client refuses to surrender the five *duros* he owes her, laughs hysterically in her face and runs away. The novice made the unprofessional

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error of not obtaining her fee in advance. Rosita is left humiliated, enraged, depressed and frustrated; the most horrific experience of her life has been in vain. Unfortunately, the horror does not end. Since she was not paid, she has to repeat the process all over again.

López Bago also includes Rosita's recollections of other experiences as a streetwalker; again, underscoring the infernal nature of the profession. In the following passage, the novelist juxtaposes Rosita's habitual exhaustion with the parsimony of her bourgeois customers who haggle over her fee for services. As we recall from Chapter III, a likewise miserly bourgeois haggled over the price of the women's services at *La Casa de Mari-Pepa*, one of the most "dirt cheap" bordellos in Madrid. López Bago chooses to emphasize once again what he sees as the bourgeoisie's pervasive cruel pettiness; which is, in his estimation, another prime example of this class' exploitation of the lower classes and societal outcasts. The miserly bourgeois clients sink to their lowest depth by disputing the price of the cheapest of commodities; they ask the most economically deprived of all public women—brothel residents and streetwalkers—to surrender the only commodity they possess and receive virtually nothing in return for their labor:

> ¡Volver á sus correrías! ¡La caza del hombre! El horror constante, el horror repetido de aquellas caricias pagadas, de aquel alquiler de su cuerpo

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> .... Pero, ¿y su madre? ¿Y su hermano? ¡Ellos sí que eran felices! ¡Egoístas! Estaba rendida. No podía más. Todos aquellos burgueses miraban mucho el dinero antes de darlo. Regateaban siempre. Eso sí, regateaban después del hastío, porque antes eran muy amables, muy generosos. Antes, cuando todavía lo tenían en el bolsillo. (119-20)

Bolstered by Miguel's move into their apartment, Rosita realizes her own power as the breadwinner and rebels only once against her exploiters:

> ... hubo en la casa una disputa, una reyerta, casi una riña.... La escena fué repugnante. Creyeron fácil intimidarla, ejercer sobre ella el dominio que durante tantos años la tuvo á su merced como una cosa, como un instrumento dócil. Pero esta vez, Rosita se resistió, sacó á relucir energías que nunca la conocieron....
>
> —¡Descarada!—gritó doña Angustias.
>
> —¡Respeta á tu madre!—secundó Juanito.
>
> —¡Mi madre! Si pudiera dudarse eso, lo dudaría. ¿Qué ha hecho conmigo mi madre? .... ¿por qué me increpa, por qué me riñe? Porque me niego á la explotación asquerosa.... Pienso vivir con lo que tengo y con lo que tiene mi amante.... Y os advierto ... conmigo vivirá.
>
> —En mi casa, no—objetó la madre.

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—¡Ah! cierto.... Puede usted echarme de aquí. Esta casa la pago yo, pero el contrato y los recibos están á nombre de usted. Puede usted hacerlo.

—Y lo haré.

—Usted lo hará, y yo haré otra cosa. Los muebles todos son míos. Tengo las cuentas extendidas á mi nombre. Usted se queda con *su casa* y yo con mis muebles. Veremos quién sale perdiendo.

—Tú no harás eso—exclamó Juanito levantándose de la silla, dando un puñetazo en la mesa para imponerse. —Tú no harás eso, porque estoy aquí yo para oponerme. Para defender á mi madre.

—No des golpes, no grites, que no me asustas. Yo no haré eso si mi madre no hace lo que ha dicho. En cuanto á tí (sic), es distinto .... he pensado que no tengo obligación ninguna de mantenerte. Eres un hombre....

Dió (sic) media vuelta y los dejó solos en el comedor. Madre é hijo quedaron aterrados. Juanito no salió. No recorrió los cafés aquella tarde. Estuvieron hablando largo rato. (La buscona 199-201)

Rosita's new found spirit is admirable; but, unfortunately, precarious and short-lived. Her self-confidence is predicated

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upon the success of her affair with Miguel. When the lovers' relationship begins to deteriorate in La querida after Don Pedro's death, Doña Angustias' and Juan's sadistic mistreatment of Rosita escalates. With regard to her mother and brother, Miguel's abandonment of Rosita represents the definitive psychological destruction of the already emotionally scarred and fragile protagonist. Without Miguel, Rosita is left at the mercy of her sadistic familial "verdugos."

In the pivotal confrontation between mother and daughter in La Pálida, López Bago underscores another critical and deterministic consequence of Doña Angustias' blind and egotistical mania to marry Rosita off to the first willing eligible patron at the *Café Nuevo del Siglo*. Losing her innocence as a result of "aquellos groseros contactos y asquerosas caricias" (226), Rosita, the "novia de todos los parroquianos" (98), judges herself permanently unsuitable for marriage: "Yo estoy viciada, tan viciada en mi salud como en mi inteligencia" (226). Ironically, for Rosita the preclusion of marriage as a life choice is based on emotional and psychological perversion resulting from experiencing her boyfriends' carnal desires while still technically remaining a virgin. Such a position contradicts nineteenth-century bourgeois society's mores which condemned naive but deflowered females as "fallen women." By society's standards, Rosita was still "innocent" technically, and thus, as a member of the lower middle class, a legitimate candidate for an honorable

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marriage. Rosita's determined stance is reflective of López Bago's own unorthodox views on the subject of marriage. For the radical naturalist, society's obsession with technical purity in women is unimportant; it is the purity of spirit, of "intención y de pensamiento" (La Pálida 227) that matters. Miguel voices this opinion to Estefanía in La querida: "No es la virginidad del cuerpo, es la del alma la que debe preferirse. Porque las dos juntas, eso es muy difícil encontrarlo" (211). López Bago later reiterates this position in La soltera's Arturo Salces, whose words reassure his fiancée Rita López, of the unimportance of her technical loss of purity: "'Yo preferiré siempre la virginidad de lo que los espiritualistas llaman *alma*, á la virginidad del cuerpo, que hasta ahora viene siendo la preferida'" (248).

Rosita's declared intention never to marry constitutes another principal area of bitter and irreparable contention between mother and daughter. In addition to dashing Angustias' middle class pretensions, Rosita rejects her mother and society's rigid and prescribed determination that "la única carrera de la mujer es el matrimonio" (La Pálida 92). Angustias' attempts to force Rosita into marriage with the first willing male by belittling her with such condescending statements as: "¡Qué mas (sic) podía desear una pobre huérfana!" (94-95) backfires. Instead of compliance and passivity, Doña Angustias' words and deeds fueled Rosita's rebellious nature. With the hypocritical Doña Angustias as

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her model of the "esposa legítima" (La querida 30), it is only natural that her daughter would reject the institution of marriage. True to her own nature and to what she has been forced to become, Rosita is more "honrada" than the legitimate but false wife, Doña Angustias de Pérez. The latter makes a mockery of the idealized middle class concept of the "mujer honrada"—the loving, devoted, submissive, supportive, selfless wife and mother—a concept whose expectations are as unrealistic as Angustias is false.

In La querida Doña Angustias takes advantage of an opportunity to flaunt her status as the legitimate wife while condemning Rosita's disgraced and immoral position as a mistress and her "illegitimate" cohabitation arrangement with Miguel. As always, the widow Pérez enjoys taunting her daughter:

> Yo he sido toda mi vida una mujer honrada, ¿lo entiendes? Pérez era mi marido, ¡mi marido!, ¿oyes? Yo no sé lo que son otras cosas más que las que se hacen como Dios manda. Yo era *su esposa legítima* (y recalcaba la frase). (30)

Rosita refuses to become what her mother symbolizes only superficially. The protagonist informs Miguel in no uncertain terms that she is not to be taken for a "mujer honrada." Although society and she herself judges her "una perdida" (La buscona 21), no legitimate wife could compete with Rosita in being more perfectly suited to fulfilling Miguel's emotional

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and sexual needs as his *querida*:

> ¡Las mujeres honradas y yo! Eso no se compara nunca. ¿Sabes por qué? Porque yo, yo, tu querida, valgo para ti más que ellas. Te quiero como ninguna sería capaz de quererte. Y, ¿sabes lo que te digo?, que no hay mujer que sirva para un hombre como tú; que yo soy la única, ¿lo entiendes? .... (La querida 51)

There are inevitable physiological effects of Rosita's "viciada" "salud" and "inteligencia," concomitant to López Bago's intention to document in his protagonist a case history of an innately highly sexual female driven by her own biological urges to explore and satisfy her carnal desires.

The first manifested effect of Rosita's private sexual exploration of her own body, an activity which, according to López Bago, is so physically debilitating and exhausting that it incapacitates Rosita, effectively draining the life force out of her body:

> ... pasaba largas horas durante el día encerrada en su alcoba, sin que pudiera averiguarse lo que hacía en tanto tiempo y en tan misteriosa soledad, de la que salió siempre con una gran sombra bajo los ojos, y tal abatimiento en su aspecto, tan suprema laxitud en todos los miembros que, rendida, no acertaba á mover pie ni mano en el resto de la tarde. (La Pálida 100)

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Rosita's behavior is compulsive, consuming both her days and nights. In La buscona, the narrator recalls how Rosita:

> Se entregó á la bacanal solitaria de las vírgines; de noche, en la obscuridad de su dormitorio, lloraba y suspiraba, procurando no hacer ruido, no despertar á su madre; revolcábase en las tibias sábanas, mordía la colcha, abrazaba frenéticamente la mullida almohada, perdíanse sus manos y se olvidaban acariciando las curvas jóvenes de su cuerpo, que se estremecía nervioso al calor de aquellos propios contactos, y caía, por úlitmo, en un sueño que era más bien un desmayo, del que despertaba con las mejillas ardiendo, el cuerpo frío, la cabeza dolorida, disgustada de sí misma, irritada contra todo lo que la rodeaba, entristeciéndose al ver el sol, llena el alma de reproches contra la naturaleza. (12)

Nevertheless, Rosita's compulsive behavior grants no relief from her internal agony; on the contrary, the "podre viciosa" (La Pálida 100) has taken control of her entire body, consuming major organs. The narrator evokes the image of an active volcano as an analogy to describe Rosita's life or death struggle:

> ... sentía correr por sus venas una sangre tan caliente que parecía quemar por donde pasaba. ¡Ah! la frase del cursi romanticismo: "Tengo un volcán

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> en el corazón," frase que ... era gráfica con respecto á Rosita. Su cuerpo, sus órganos, sus entrañas eran ... un terreno conmovido por los más hondos estremecimientos y sacudidas, un terreno volcánico, surcado por infinitas corrientes de lava, unas que subían y ahogaban su garganta, otras que bajaban hasta los pies, y todas partiendo en distintas direcciones de un mismo centro, del corazón, que era el volcán lleno de rojizos resplandores, de llamas que la abrasaban el pecho, calcinaban sus huesos y producían con sus penachos de humo aquellos desvanecimientos y vahidos, aquella axfixia en la bóveda del cráneo.
>
> ¡Eso, eso le pasaba á la joven. Se estaba quemando viva! (La Pálida 101-02)

On a thematic and structural level, the multifaceted relationship between "La prostituta"'s two heroines, Estrella Sánchez and Rosita Pérez, provides the tetralogy with a sense of unity and continuity. For both protagonists their relationship awakens and fulfills very deep-seated and intense emotional, psychological and sexual needs which heretofore remained lacking in their previous associations with others.

It is not surprising that Rosita should be irresistibly drawn to her downstairs neighbor. Estrella simultaneously fulfills many important roles in the younger woman's life: rescuer, hero, idol, friend, lover, companion, mother,

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provider and role model.

Gratitude first attracts Rosita to Estrella when the latter rescues the Pérez family on several occasions from destitution and homelessness. Estrella's "arranques de generosidad" (La buscona 14) are even more remarkable when taken into account that at the time of the first rescue she was not even acquainted with the Pérezes. Estrella, nevertheless, recalling her own homelessness, empathizes with her neighbors' plight and "salvó á las vecinas del tercero" (La buscona 14).[3] Estrella assumes the responsibility of provider, the role abdicated by Angustias. Rosita is, in fact, the only member of the family who truly appreciates and openly acknowledges Estrella's boundless generosity. Rosita is duly impressed by their benefactress' unselfishness, the fact that the *buscona* does not ask for anything in return; does not seek to use Rosita for selfish materialistic advantage, in contrast to Doña Angustias and Juan. For Rosita, Estrella Sánchez is Doña Angustias' antithesis: kind, charitable, loving, friendly, warm, receptive, elegant—"una mujer hermosísima" (La buscona 14).

Estrella and her life style open Rosita's amazed eyes to a whole new world of wondrous possibilities, unlike any other she has encountered in her sheltered life. Rosita sees in her much admired role model the epitome of self-sufficiency; a woman of independent means who lives alone in her own apartment, in charge of her own affairs and activities.

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The trappings of materialism do play an important part in Rosita's attraction to Estrella, as Doña Angustias' daughter remains in awe of her neighbor, draped in expensive finery while splendid furniture and adornments fill and beautify her apartment. Rosita begins to associate prostitution with the acquisition of basic necessities and also luxuries.

In the world of sexual pathology, Rosita's presence in the home of a "prostituta" evokes the same excitement and magical effect that many twentieth-century youths experience in the presence of a favorite movie star or celebrity. Rosita, in effect, is bewitched by the idea of being a prostitute; the very sound of the word excites her. Although only a few years separate the two women chronologically, they are ages apart in worldliness, a fact which intrigues Rosita. After all, Estrella has experienced erotic pleasures still unknown to the sexually frustrated *novia del café*:

> Desde que estaba en aquella casa; desde que respiraba los perfumes que se desprendían de las ropas de la buscona; desde que sus pies hollaban la mullida alfombra; desde que no sentía frío al abrigo de tantas dobles colgaduras y portiers y al calor de la chimenea; desde que se miraba reproducida en los espejos, hablando con aquella mujer cuya vida de prostitución conocía por los cuentos de la portera, y á la que veía instalada con lujo, vestida como una señora y teniendo que

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> tratarla como á tal, Rosita Pérez no era dueña de sí misma. ¡Estaba hablando con una prostituta! ¡Prostituta! Tenía para ella esta palabra sonidos extraños; era infamante, sí, pero sólida, maciza, llena de sílabas y como repleta de carne.... Aquella mujer conocía goces por ella ignorados y que su misma ignorancia abultaba y exageraba. La ola de sangre se agolpó a (sic) su corazón, la erupción volcánica era inminente, y cuando penetró en la penumbra de la alcoba, cuando se acercó adonde Estrella estaba, palpitaban con terrible fuerza todas sus arterias, y creyó ver en la sombra fosforescencias que salían del cuerpo de *La Pálida* haciéndolo resplandeciente. (La Pálida 105-06)

The obsession of young women like Rosita with public women like Estrella Sánchez and all that she represents is not an uncommon phenomenon in the real world, as Helene Deutsch explains:

> Disreputable women are often desired by young girls out of a kind of burning curiosity; in such loves, the girl's own prostitution fantasies are realized by identification with the beloved. Schoolgirls walk by houses of ill repute with anxiously pounding hearts; the attraction of the inmates, known only from a distance, can be very powerful. Naturally, such immature erotic games can become

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stabilized and permanent.[4]

As her "erupción volcánica" approaches, Rosita, a "bestia hambrienta" (La buscona 14), is no longer in control of her actions; she functions purely on sexual instinct. As the narrator of La buscona writes of the young woman's state at the time: "la naturaleza dió (sic) sus órdenes y Rosita obedeció" (14). Estrella intuits Rosita's desire and gives her the signal to proceed. Rosita, relieved, responds accordingly. Estrella:

> ... al poner los cien reales en manos de la joven, rodeó con el brazo libre su cintura, la atrajo hacia sí y quiso besarla en la mejilla.
>
> Pero al mismo tiempo se sintió besada en la boca, en el cuello, en las orejas, en todas partes, abrazada con nerviosa fuerza, y arrastrada casi, perdió el equilibrio y cayó de espaldas en la cama que estaba detrás de ella. "Pero, ¿qué es esto?" No pudo decir más, ni tuvo que preguntar otra cosa. Comprendió con quién tenía que habérselas. Lanzó la franca carcajada del vicio, que no se asusta de nada, y que se presta á todo, hasta á lo más inaudito; devolvió el abrazo, el beso y la caricia, y largo rato estuvo revolcándose en la cama con la hija de doña Angustias. Largo rato se complacieron en confundirse y ponerse al mismo nivel el cuerpo prostituído y el cuerpo virgen. (La Pálida 106-07)

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The passionate sexual relationship between the "cuerpo virgen" and the "cuerpo prostituído" is mutually liberating and satisfying. Rosita "sació por primera vez, con estas monstruosas caricias, sus apetitos inextinguibles de carne humana y viva, palpitante en los brazos" (La buscona 15), while Estrella refused Luis de Villaperdida's entreaties that she move to a more luxurious abode because she insists upon being near her lover:

> Rosita Pérez tenía la culpa de todo. Las dos mujeres se entregaban con creciente afán á sus caricias. Una y otra estaban dominadas con la terrible fuerza y dominio de todo vicio que es contra naturaleza. Sentían una loca pasión, avasalladora, insaciable, frenética. Y este era el único y poderoso motivo que Estrella tenía para negarse á vivir en un hotel, á salir de aquella casa, donde sus entrevistas eran fáciles y frecuentes. (La Pálida 131)

Their affair evolves at significant junctures in their lives, when each woman was moving in opposite directions with regard to their sexual contacts with men. For Rosita, the affair constitutes the second major stage in the pathological progression toward nymphomania; for Estrella, it means distancing herself from men. López Bago explains:

> ... en la viciada virginidad de la huérfana no se habían producido las repugnancias al hombre, que

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> eran cada vez mayores en Estrella; y esto se explica y define fácilmente, en *La Pálida* por el hastío resultante de la prostitución, en Rosita por el histerismo de la doncellez, cuyos dos estados diversos concurrían al mismo fin. (La Pálida 135)

That Estrella should experience "hastío" from her contacts with men thus far and find erotic passion and gratification in a same sex relationship is a common phenomenon among public women. For Estrella, all her encounters with men have been unpleasant experiences at best; sadistic, at worst. She never experienced erotic pleasure with any of them; that is not the purpose of the professional woman's participation in sexual activity with clients. Her duty is to give pleasure, not to receive it. Estrella's relationship with Rosita represents the antithetical ideal situation. For the first time in her life Estrella is able to freely express her sexuality: "entregábase con voluptuosa delicia á lo monstruoso de sus grandes arrebatos con Rosita Pérez" (La Pálida 133).

According to López Bago, the affair between the two protagonists constitutes a brazen revolt against the physiological laws of Nature—a position he makes clear in his description of their affair. We recall his words from a previously cited passage: "Una y otra estaban dominadas con la terrible fuerza y dominio de todo vicio que es contra naturaleza" (La Pálida 131). Moreover, the affair also poses a threat to "the biological model of sexuality, the vital

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basis of the patriarchal social order," comments Bernheimer (226) with regard to Nana's same sex relationship with her friend and colleague, the prostitute, Satin. Female bisexual affairs like those shared by Rosita and Estrella, and Nana and Satin demonstrate the women's capacity to find sexual pleasure as men do, but do not require the male's participation to realize erotic fulfillment—a radical concept for the times when upper class women were taught to be asexual, and professional public women were usually frigid with their customers. In Nana and La Pálida, it is the proletarian or lower class public women, not the bourgeois "mujeres honradas," who are chosen by Zola and López Bago to rebel against male supremacy in this fashion.

In Nana, the protagonist and Satin deliberately flaunt their sexual relationship in the presence of the former's male lovers who are powerless to oppose the insult to their virility (Chitnis 64; Schnepf 34-35), but Estrella keeps her affair with Rosita hidden from Luis de Villaperdida in order to protect her own best interests. She does not want to jeopardize her lucrative *compromiso* with him as his mistress should he discover her infidelity, but neither is she willing to give up Rosita. Rosita's course of action is radically different. Although she could have easily avoided telling the unsuspecting and disinterested Doña Angustias of the intimate nature of her relationship with Estrella, Rosita makes sure that her mother knows the devastating truth: "Y para que

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Estrella, ó sea *La Pálida*, me regalase todo esto, preciso es suponer que entre nosotras, entre esa buscona y yo, ha mediado algo muy repugnante y vergonzoso" (La Pálida 228). One wonders why Rosita would voluntarily choose such a dramatic course of action which seems both sadistic and masochistic. On the one hand, Rosita, perhaps, unconsciously, finds a measure of revenge against the mother who so misguided and mistreated her. By proclaiming her affair with Estrella, Rosita announces that she has effectively replaced Doña Angustias as the primary female influence in her life. Moreover, the announcement of her involvement with Estrella immediately precedes her announcement of having taken "un amante" (Lasoga) (La Pálida 228). Perhaps, Rosita hoped that her first announcement would soften the blow of her second revelation; inasmuch as female bisexuality was considered a far greater taboo than becoming a professional mistress. Undoubtedly, Rosita's relationship with Estrella gives Doña Angustias another powerful motive to detest her daughter. However, at the time of her confrontation with Doña Angustias, Rosita was in a position of control, supported emotionally and financially by the mistress of the Marquis de Villaperdida. At this point in time, Doña Angustias found herself in a defenseless position similar to that of Nana's lovers.

In addition to the satisfaction they derive from their "loca pasión" (La Pálida 131), Rosita and Estrella thoroughly enjoy each other's company. Neither woman had previously

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enjoyed a one-to-one friendship with other females. Estrella was happy in the company of her colleagues at Mari-Pepa's, but their interactions were never far removed from their professional life. Rosita was even less fortunate, having only Angustias for company. The two protagonists relish their time together. Some afternoons are spent riding in Luis' carriage "por las rondas de Madrid" (La Pálida 131), but most of their time together is spend indoors because Angustias refuses to allow her daughter to be seen in public with the "querida de un señorón" (La Pálida 228). The two women spend almost all of Estrella's non-professional hours together: "Rosita se pasaba las horas muertas en el principal, donde ya no se acordaba de novios ..." (La Pálida 135). In addition, the captain's daughter:

> almorzaba con ella las mañanas, y cuando el marqués se retiraba á prima-noche, conseguía algunas veces, á fuerza de instancias y ruegos á su madre, no ir al "Café Neuvo del Siglo," con lo cual las dos amigas pasaban la velada juntas. (La Pálida 133)

Their idyllic affair undergoes a difficult period when Estrella reacts with rage and jealousy at Lasoga's lascivious attentions to Rosita and what appears to Estrella as her lover's favorable response. Emotionally as well as sexually invested in Rosita, Estrella interprets her interest in the priest as a form of betrayal. To diffuse her intense feelings for Rosita, Estrella turns to Luis who benefits emotionally,

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as his "querida se convertía en un camarada" (La Pálida 149), and sexually: "*La Pálida* necesitaba olvidar para siempre, anegar en un sensualismo mayor, el delirio sensual de su cariño á la hija de doña Angustias" (La Pálida 150). Deutsch explains Estrella's violent, revengeful reaction to Rosita's seeming receptiveness to Lasoga: "Homosexual love is usually more passionate and more violently bound to the object than heterosexual love ..." (1:334). Estrella, however, did overreact to Rosita and Lasoga's *tête-à-tête*. Rosita did not wish to be left alone with the lascivious priest and interpreted Estrella's and Luis' abrupt departure from the room as both a betrayal and a rejection. The two women reconciled their differences and resumed their physical relationship while maintaining concurrent arrangements with male lovers: Estrella with Luis and Rosita with Lasoga.

Not unlike aristocratic and bourgeois patriarchs who pass their wealth and property to their legitimate sons, Estrella Sánchez finds in Rosita Pérez her own heiress to the role and title of professional mistress when she moves out of landlord Don Abundio's apartment house and "hizo donación á la huérfana de todo su mobilario" (La Pálida 216). This "espléndido" (216) bequest is followed by Estrella's urging to Rosita that she and her family move into the first floor apartment, inasmuch as the rent "está pagado hasta Mayo (sic), de manera que yo no retiro la fianza ni los meses adelantados, y no tienes que ocuparte de la casa hasta Junio" (sic) (217). Estrella's gifts to Rosita are given out of love, friendship

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and gratitude: "Quería pagar de algún modo las atenciones y cuidados cariñosos de Rosita ..." (216). Estrella provides a home which doubles as a place of assignation for future rendezvous' with lovers. Clandestine sex for hire will continue in the same bedroom with a new *buscona* and *querida*. One mistress departs and her chosen successor takes her place. Estrella's heiress is duly installed: "*La Pálida* se marchó y la familia de Pérez quedó instalada en su lugar" (217).

Estrella Sánchez' murder has profoundly devastating consequences on Rosita's life, evidenced most noticeably in La buscona and La querida in the realm of financial support. Had she lived, Rosita's "protectora" (La buscona 15) would have supplemented the Pérezes' income, especially when Rosita was between *compromisos*. As Rosita informs her mother before Estrella's death: "—Por dinero no se apure usted. Al menos nos queda ese consuelo: cuando éste [Lasoga] no tenga, otro habrá que pague; además, Estrella no nos dejará nunca en la estacada" (La Pálida 229). Rosita never would have needed to resort to debasing herself and endangering her life, seeking "encuentros y citas por la calle" (La buscona 9). With Estrella's emotional and financial support, Rosita would have successfully been able to defy Doña Angustias and Juan, and thus prevent their progressive abuse. Symbolically, Estrella represents Rosita's authentic maternal (emotional, nurturing support) and paternal (protection, financial security) figure, supplanting Doña Angustias totally. The fact that Doña

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Angustias and Juan would have chosen to live off of Estrella's generosity to Rosita reduces Captain Pérez' widow to a position far beneath Rosita, to the level of a spoiled overgrown child, on a par with the good-for-nothing Juanito.

Rosita's third major step in her pathological progression toward nymphomania takes place in Estrella's apartment when she is seduced by her first male lover, the innately licentious priest, Lasoga. The chance encounter between the two constitutes the second phase of their curious acquaintance, an acquaintance which began when both parties acknowledged each other's presence as regular patrons of *El Café Nuevo del Siglo* when Rosita was not quite eighteen years of age. Rosita's nightly appearances at the café with all "la hermosura y el atractivo del capullo de rosa entreabierto" (La Pálida 139) provided "nuestro mujeriego" (139) with the optimal source of perverse entertainment as well as a fascinating case study of a prostitute in the making:

> Día por día el padre Lasoga estudiaba los progresos que iba haciendo en la huérfana la idea de la prostitución, á medida que abandonaba las esperanzas de casamiento. La excitación sensual de aquellos noviazgos, el deseo de remediar la estrechez en que vivían con ella su madre y su hermano, los síntomas cada vez más crecientes del estado histérico, todo ello bastaba y sobraba para segura base de profecía .... (140)

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In addition to, as we have seen, Rosita's manifested fascination and identification with Estrella, her life style and the very idea of becoming a public woman, López Bago chooses the extremely lecherous Lasoga as his expert witness, whose predatory observations confirm the novelist's intent for developing in the tetralogy's second heroine a highly erotic being who far surpasses nineteenth-century society's repressive boundaries on female sexuality. In Lasoga's expert opinion:

> Aquella mujer estaba destinada á ser suya y de otros muchos. Era carne de hombre .... (142)
> Seguro estaba del suceso. Extrañaba únicamente la tardanza, porque á la verdad, jamás podían concurrir más circunstancias favorables para decidir el ánimo de la joven é inclinarlo. (140)

A tacit understanding existed between Rosita and her admirer. Rosita, who was not oblivious to the priest's lustful attentions, instinctively sensed that he was not only attracted to her, but understood her inner turmoil and awaited "la caída, perdición y deshonra de la huérfana" (140). But, instead of reacting with anger or indignation, Rosita responded favorably, with seductive body language:

> Rosita reparó en el espionaje y acecho de que era objeto, y aunque al principio la intimidó la presencia del sacerdote obligándola á más reservas y mayor pulcritud con los novios sucesivos de la

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> interminable serie ... á las pocas noches el instinto de la hembra hízola comprender y como olfatear la lujuria del macho en aquellos ojillos que jamás la miraban severos, sino siempre complacidos y gustosos de su cara y de su cuerpo. Leyó intenciones en estas miradas, llegando á saber positivamente como si se lo hubiera dicho el cura, lo que el desconocido esperaba, y estaba tan cierta de ello, que a la pregunta muda que la dirigía toda la expresión del afeitado rostro, contestaba el suyo: "Todavía no," y estas dos palabras las decían y acentuaban al sonreir (sic) provocativamente sus facciones de doncella picardeada y maliciosa. Durante el resto de la noche se miraban los dos muy serios y palideciendo .... (141)

The lascivious priest could afford to wait patiently for his opportunity with Rosita. His live-in lover, his housekeeper, "un ama muy joven y guapota, mujer extremadamente cuidadosa de su cuerpo," (138) satisfied his carnal needs at home, while his membership to the more recently established *La Botica* afforded him "la existencia más alegre, triunfos más fáciles y rápidos" (142). Although he no longer frequented *El Café Nuevo del Siglo*—inasmuch as he now reserved his evenings for the "comidas y francachelas en *La Botica*" (142)—the priest never forgot Rosita, López Bago informs us, evoking a

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favorite naturalistic image of the mythological pair of the satyr and the nymph:

> Mas no olvidó el sátiro á la ninfa, que no se olvida nunca el hombre de lo deseado y no adquirido ... pensaba á menudo en que allí estaba todas las noches Rosita Pérez, y pensaba también en la probabilidad de gozarla. No sabía cómo ni cuándo, pero ello había de suceder. (142)

When Lasoga observes the intimate interaction between the unsuspecting Rosita and Estrella and divined the significance of their "coloquios y mimos" (136), he realizes that his opportunity to seduce Rosita has finally arrived. López Bago does not describe the seduction of Rosita Pérez, only her physiological reaction to the experience:

> Rosita Pérez tendida en el suelo, desceñidas las ropas, desgreñada, horrible, era presa de una convulsión nerviosa que la producía enérgicas y espantosas contracciones. El velador donde las dos amigas almorzaron, habíase derribado, y con él cayeron los platos y las botellas, manchando de grasa y vino la alfombra. En medio de aquel desorden, el padre Lasoga de rodillas se esforzaba inútilmente en sujetar los brazos de la accidentada.
>
> —¿Qué es esto? ¿qué la ha hecho usté?—preguntó *La Pálida* con terrible acento.

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—¡Valiente pregunta! Ayúdame á sujetarla, porque quiere morderse las manos. (152)

Smelling salts, a glass of water and "un poco de agua y vinagre para mojarla las sienes" (153) were successful in helping Rosita regain her senses.

As a result of her defloration, Rosita suffered an episode of hysteria, the most preferred malady which nineteenth-century writers invariably inflicted upon their female characters in the throes of sexual crisis. Although there were documented cases of male hysteria,[5] both nineteenth-century literary and medical communities were by far more fascinated with examinating "the enigmatic disease of hysteria" (Aldaraca, Angel 211) in woman. Hysteria, Aldaraca confirms, was indeed "considered above all a woman's disease" (Angel 216). Hysteria represented "the perfect female syndrome," observes Baguley, "both reassuring in its predictability but fascinatingly extravagant in its manifestations ..." (109).

In her section entitled "Silence: The Language of Hysteria" (Angel 209-218), Aldaraca examines hysteria and Galdós' own treatment of the theme in Lo prohibido. According to the scholar, "Galdós does associate the symptoms of hysteria with unsatisfied sexual desire" and recommends marriage as the best remedy, inasmuch as his character "María Juana's attacks of the *globus hystericus* subside after her marriage" (210). Like Galdós, López Bago also recommends

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marriage—society's approved solution—as the best cure for hysteria as the consequence of prolonged virginity, especially in pubescent females, as we recall from the novelist's detailed description of Gracia's six hour long paroxysm in El cura (see Chapter II). Unlike the innocent María Juana or Gracia, marriage is no longer an option for "la viciada virginidad de la huérfana" (La Pálida 135).

The timing of the bouts of hysteria in the lives of López Bago's two protagonists presents an interesting case in point. The fact that Gracia's ordeal occurs prior to her sexual initiation with Román serves as a serious warning (though unheeded in Gracia's case) to all concerned parties of the inevitability—in López Bago's opinion—of nymphomania and/or prostitution in the untreated patient's future. Rosita's hysterical attack occurring on the heels of her sexual initiation lends itself to a different interpretation; not as a warning, but the realization of the aforementioned consequences. Moreover, for the intensely passionate Rosita, her attack represents sexual release, and serves as the gateway to sexual liberation and fulfillment with many different lovers. She can live no other way, she informs Angustias: "Pues bien, yo tengo un amante.... Tengo uno, y como éste [Lasoga], tendré muchos, todos los que se presenten. No puedo vivir ya de otro modo" (La Pálida 228).[6]

Rosita becomes Lasoga's mistress, but their relatively brief affair ends as abruptly and traumatically as it began

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when Lasoga himself inadvertently reveals to Rosita and Angustias that it was he who accidentally killed Captain Pérez. Lasoga, we learn, was a captain in the Carlist army who fought "en esa mismísima acción de Monte-Muro" (230). The memory of her first lover and his crime horrifies Rosita, as the narrator of La buscona recalls the revelation:

> En casa de *La Pálida* tuvo luego su primer amante, cuyo recuerdo la horrorizaba. Su primer amante, un cura carlista que, después de poseerla, confesó haber estado en la guerra, y declaró que de su fusil partió la bala que hirió de muerte á don Tomás Pérez y Pérez, capitán de las tropas liberales, ¡á su padre! (15)

With the shocking revelation of the identity of her father's killer, López Bago reserves for his protagonist the cruelest blow; the novelist's sense of tragic irony reaches its climax as he delivers the most devastating example of twist of fate, or "una endemoniada coincidencia" (La Pálida 239), to be found anywhere in his novels. Thus, another dimension is added to López Bago's radical anticlericalism. The novelist clearly blames Lasoga—La Pálida's representative of both the hypocrisy and immorality of the Catholic Church, and the political and social ultraconservatism and anti-progressivism of Carlism—for the loss of an innocent and productive life, the breakup of a family and the seduction of a young woman. Lasoga is culpable for setting into motion the

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chain of events which determine Rosita's unhappiness and her irrevocable fall into the world of commercial sexuality. Whenever representative of Catholicism and ultraconservatism are found, López Bago warns, they destroy lives in a domino effect by their very presence or influence, whether accidentally or intentionally, be it in war or in everyday life.

Rosita's second male lover is Mariano, the Duke de Tres Estrellas, first introduced in La Pálida. Their affair takes place in two stages—separated by time and the duke's dramatic improvement in character and in his treatment of Rosita and women in general.

The narrator of La buscona informs readers that the liaison between the duke and Captain Pérez' daughter was born of violence and the horror of having witnessed the murder of Estrella Sánchez and Luis de Villaperdida's attempt upon their own lives. Their shared experience with a close brush with death moved them to express their relief in having been spared, sexually:

> Tuvo que huir en compañía del mismo duque de Tres Estrellas, y aquella noche durmieron juntos ... abrazados estrechamente, no como dos enamorados, sino como dos seres aterrados ante la horrible escena que acaban de presenciar. El miedo los hizo amar y se amaron. (La buscona 15-16)

With the duke, Rosita fell in love for the first time in

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her life. Her feelings for her "primer amor" (16) developed from their moments of shared affection and tenderness during:

> las noches enteras pasadas en el lecho, al lado de un cuerpo que reclina su cabeza en la misma almohada .... (16)
>
> Cariño de la mujer al primer hombre que comparte su lecho. Cariño no ideal, sino profundamente humano, palpitante, oliendo á vida y á carne. (17)

Unfortunately, however, the duke did not reciprocate Rosita's intensity, optimism and enduring "cariño" of a first time love affair, inasmuch as the aristocrat "llegaba á los brazos de la huérfana cansado ya de anteriores excesos, gastado por caricias pasadas, y era Rosita una más en la lista de aquel Tenorio á la moderna" (27). The duke is accustomed to spending only "una eternidad de dos ó tres meses" (17) with the same woman, and Rosita is no exception. Like the legendary character Don Juan, the aristocrat abandons the protagonist without explanation.

While circumstances brought Rosita and the duke together initially, pecuniary urgency forces the protagonist to play the part of an authenic *buscona*. She must swallow her pride and actively seek out the former lover who rejected her in order to fulfill her mission of renewing their affair: "Necesitaba ver al duque de Tres Estrellas. Verle como ella sabía, como otras veces. Despertar en él los recuerdos del pasado y hacer que en ella siguieran durmiendo" (120). Rosita

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steels herself mentally and emotionally to avoid all attachments to her former lover; she depersonalizes him, equating the man with his monetary value, as public women are dehumanized as sexual commodities: "No amaba al duque, pero el duque volvería á sus brazos. ¡El duque! El duque no era un hombre. ¡Era un rico!" (121). She believes that the memory of the aristocrat's abandonment coupled with her love for Miguel, the new man in her life, will protect her passionate nature: "No le amaba [al duque], no amaba á nadie. A Miguel únicamente" (120). Our protagonist might have been more successful in her goal of remaining emotionally detached if not for two factors. First, she failed to take into account nature's physiological laws, with particular regard to her own powerful libido. Despite her precautions, her body will dictate her thoughts and emotions where the duke is concerned:

> Su traje estaba en desorden, pero mayor era el trastorno de sus pensamientos. Estaba irritada contra las rebeldías de la carne, colérica. "¡Ah! ¡Conque es decir que la naturaleza puede más! ¡Que los sentidos mandan á la voluntad! ¡Que ella amando á Miguel! ..." (sic). (127)

The second factor addresses López Bago's conscious decision to transform the Don Juan Rosita knew before into a different man. The reinvented Duke de Tres Estrellas is now appreciative, solicitous and complimentary, a reality which

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astonishes Rosita: "No era el mismo hombre que conoció ella en otro tiempo. La altivez, el desdén de buen mozo con que entonces trataba á las mujeres, trocábase ahora en suplicantes ruegos" (129). According to López Bago, the duke underwent "una verdadera metamorfosis moral motivada por el crecimiento de hermosura [Rosita's] y algún tanto por los espejismos de aquel amor, experimentados en la separación y la ausencia" (154).

Despite the "official" explanation cited above, the duke's radical transformation, like Mari-Pepa's, is required to comply with the novelist's plans for the introduction of a particular theme. In La prostituta López Bago creates the role of the "natural born" harlot, then transforms Mari-Pepa into the "maternal madam" and later in La Pálida into the hypocritical society matron. In La buscona a kinder, more compassionate duke is required so that Rosita may fall in love with him again; the "verdadera metamorfosis moral" is needed for López Bago's presentation of a love triangle centered around the protagonist, to raise the following question: Is it possible for a woman to love two men simultaneously? For Rosita the answer is affirmative:

> Rosita experimentaba con igual fuerza dos sentimientos que, dentro de la más perfecta igualdad, eran distintos. Rosita amaba á Miguel y á Mariano. Amaba á los dos hombres que la poseían .... Jamás creyó en el reparto equitativo de sus

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> caricias, realizando con el mismo entusiasmo, con identidad de pasión. (146)

The fact that Rosita is capable of finding herself in love with both Mariano and Miguel is a consequence of nymphomania: "¿Qué era aquello? Semejaba, más que nada, uno de los terribles síntomas de la ninfomanía. Sí. No podía ser otra cosa" (147).

The narrator compares Rosita's two suitors:

> Miguel sería siempre para ella el ser protegido; Mariano, el ser protector. Mariano era el varón fuerte, el luchador avezado á los combates de la vida ... y Miguel, en cambio, seguiría siendo constantemente el niño.... Miguel era pobre, y el otro tenía bienes de fortuna. La pobreza del escritor dábale nuevos atractivos. La riqueza de Mariano deslumbraba en cambio como una aureola. Sí. Aquellos dos amores eran distintos, se combatían, luchaban terriblemente.... Uno de los dos, el vencedor, ganaría .... (148-49)

Rosita suffers intensely for the duration of her concurrent liaisons. Her "caso de ninfomanía" (155), already placing her "próxima al desvarío y á la locura" (147), has progressed to the point that she fuses the two men in her imagination and contemplates enjoying the pleasures of both simultaneously. To dramatically underscore the level of Rosita's "vicio orgánico," her "naturaleza enferma" (147), the

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radical naturalist once again shocks his readers by describing the protagonist's fantasy of a threesome between herself and Mariano and Miguel:

> Cuando ninguno de los dos estaba á su lado, procuraba pensar en uno solo. No era posible. Pensaba en los dos. "Mariano y Miguel, ¡cuánto los quiero!" Unía de tal suerte aquellos nombres, confundía en sus recuerdos de modo tan íntimo los extremos de pasión de uno y otro, que á veces quedábase deseando un imposible, mientras su mirada se fijaba en el lecho. Aquel lecho espacioso, mullido, lujoso, pudiera dar cabida á tres cuerpos. (147-48)[7]

Rosita's imagined threesome remains in the realm of fantasy. This type of gender combination—comprising of two men and one woman—with the female as the focus of sexual attention and the primary receptor of carnal pleasure is too threatening a thought to the nineteenth—century male Establishment to be voiced openly, López Bago acknowledged; this, in contrast to the attempted threesome involving the duke, Rosita and Estrella at the end of La Pálida. Rosita's mental fusion of two very disparate male lovers into one ideal mate serves to underscore the impossibility of such sexual freedom for women in the real world. Moreover, unlike men, for whom the dichotomization of the woman in their lives into the prescribed role of wife or public woman has traditionally

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allowed them to enjoy the advantages of both types during their entire adult lives, patriarchal society's double moral standard will not allow Rosita such an option. She is forced to choose between the duke's "fuerza," "gallardía" and "hermosa seriedad varonil," and "las gracias juveniles de Miguel" (155).

In the end Rosita chooses Miguel for several reasons. Don Pedro's son is emotionally and sexually dependent upon Rosita; he needs her more than the sophisticated Duke de Tres Estrellas, the perfect "hombre de mundo" (213). Miguel responds perfectly to Rosita's own deep-seated need to be needed for herself. The sexually experienced *buscona* finds Miguel's innocence both refreshing and a source of ego gratification: "La primera mujer que tuvo en sus brazos fuí yo. (Y sonreía satisfecha.) Yo le enseñé á besar, á sentir, á todo" (La querida 225). The tremendous boost to her feminine pride for being the one who introduces the novice Miguel to the pleasures of the flesh is, perhaps, a feeling akin to the preference of dissolute male clients for the favors of a virgin or virginal prostitutes over the expertise of seasoned professionals. Rosita is well aware that for Mariano, the "gran conocedor de mujeres," she is one more in a succession of lovers, of "mujeres de la vida airada" (La buscona 153). For although the duke was "capaz de amar, no amaba por vez primera" (sic), while "el amor de Miguel era una revolución del sentimiento" (155). Rosita's own masochistic

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tendencies prevail in the selection of the young writer who "con todo su talento, era un pobre diablo" (150) over the duke, "un hombre vigoroso y de gallarda presencia, de imaginación viva y despierta, de natural elegancia ..." (153). For the protagonist:

> Miguel era el sufrimiento.... Rosita amaba á Miguel tiernamente, porque si el duque representaba para ella la risa y el bienestar, representaba en cambio el otro una necesidad mayor y más urgente que el goce de reir (sic): la necesidad de las lágrimas. (156)

Interestingly, Rosita chooses Miguel over the duke's offer of a *compromiso* of undetermined duration. When he first reentered the protagonist's life, the "primer secretario de" Spain's "legación en Londres" (117) had offered to take Rosita away with him when his two month leave was over in Madrid: "Tengo dos meses de licencia.... Lo bastante para que una mujer como tú me vuelva loco. Luégo te (sic) vienes conmigo al extranjero. Al país que te guste más, porque pediré el traslado para donde tú quieras" (128-29).

The affair between Rosita and the Duke de Tres Estrellas concludes with another example of López Bago's penchant for irony. The duke, during the second phase of his liaison with Rosita, became the caring man and devoted lover Estrella Sánchez longed for in <u>La Pálida</u>. Rosita, in effect, realized the affair Estrella had hoped, but failed to enjoy with the

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duke. Moreover, by her icy dismissal, Rosita also exacts a measure of revenge for her late friend and "protectora" whose romantic obsession with the duke precipitated her violent demise. Rosita, perhaps, however, is more strongly motivated by her own personal desire for revenge. Her final words to the astonished duke reveal the depth of her unresolved anger. As he abandoned her the first time she now reciprocates the favor: "'Hago lo que tú hiciste conmigo la otra vez. Donde las dan, las toman'" (185).

The turbulent love affair between Rosita Pérez and Miguel Loitia constitutes the focus of the action of La buscona and La querida. In his characterization of the aspiring young writer, López Bago presents the tetralogy's most in-depth psychological and emotional profile of a male character. In fact, with the characterization of Miguel, and also Rosita and Don Pedro Loitia, "es evidente," observes Lozano Marco, "que el escritor ha querido dotar a sus personajes de una mayor riqueza psicológica que los anteriormente creados ..." (349).

In contrast to her previous lovers, Rosita finds both sexual compatibility and, more importantly, for the first time in her life, true love in her relationship with Miguel Loitia: "Amaba cierto. No sabía á punto fijo cómo y por qué se apoderó de su ser aquella pasión; pero amaba á Miguel como no creyó amar nunca (La buscona 83). For his part, Miguel makes the following vow to Rosita: "Te quiero y te querré siempre con toda mi alma" (La querida 9). Rosita is Miguel's first

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love and, in the heart and mind of such a romantic who believes true love appears but once in a lifetime, Rosita will be his last, a fact his father sadly realizes:

> El amante aquel no era como los otros. No era ni siquiera como el duque de Tres Estrellas ... no era fácil romper los lazos formados por la juventud entusiasta de este hombre que amaba por toda la vida y por una vez sola. Bien lo sabía y lo predijo el Sr. Loitia: "Su corazón es así. Esa ó cualquiera otra. La primera será la última." (La buscona 213)

Despite the tragic conclusion of their relationship, Don Pedro "tenía razón" (La buscona 213).

Though always punctuated by a multitude of serious personal and financial difficulties, the couple does enjoy periods of intense happiness. The lovers are happiest alone together when they succeed in creating a safe haven in which they are able to temporarily escape from the overwhelming pressures of the outside world. During the first stage of the relationship, they experience all the frenzied passionate sexual and emotional intensity of a new love affair:

> En los primeros días hubo regocijo y fiesta, abrazos frenéticos y caricias inextinguibles; estar juntos, era una necesidad; separarse, una tristeza; amarse, un éxtasis y un furor, éxtasis en las miradas y en los pensamientos, furor en los labios

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> que besaban y en los brazos que estrechaban sus cuerpos uno contra otro, apretándolos mucho, todo lo más posible, con tal extremo, que no se satisfacía este alarde de fuerza hasta que uno de ellos exclamaba con voz ronca, no pudiendo resistir más aquella lucha: "Vida mía, que me ahogas. Déjame respirar." Luego, en las treguas, en los descansos concedidos á este abrazo, quedaban mirándose, rendidos, pero satisfechos de su cansancio .... (La buscona 73-74)

Later, when Miguel moves into Rosita's apartment, the couple settles into a routine of comfortable domesticity, living as husband and wife, happy, despite their financial hardships:

> Rosita Pérez, casi, casi ... podía llamarse Pérez de Loitia. Desde aquel día ... iban á vivir como marido y mujer. Eso le dijo ella.
>
> —Ya verás qué buena pareja hacemos....
>
> Al principio todo se convirtió en motivo de fiesta. Era una diversión cada vez que se acababa el dinero y tenían que vender ó que empeñar algo. Había mucho.... Si era venta, se recorrían las tiendas de muebles usados. Si empeño, las casas de préstamo. Salían los dos alegres como si fueran de compras.... Cobrada ya, jamás dejaron de celebrar el negocio de algún modo. Aunque no fuera más que

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> con una caja de dulces. En cuanto á la vida, era fácil, cómoda, y con esta nota de bohemia, tenía grande (sic) encanto. (La buscona 204-05)

The narrator of La buscona describes their daily routine which often includes excursions around Madrid to favorite solitary haunts:

> Noches hubo que el exceso de trabajo hízole regresar á las cuatro de la madrugada. La encontraba despierta esperándole.... A las diez, cuando oían el conocido grito del vendedor de flores, despertaban siempre; pero no se levantaban hasta las doce dadas. No iban al comedor, allí mismo, en el gabinete, tomaban su almuerzo .... (208)
>
> Vestíanse luego; si el día estaba hermoso ... y juntos, muchas veces del brazo, como dos recién casados jóvenes, íbanse á dar un paseo por los sitios en que había poca gente, por el Campo del Moro ... en las umbrosas alamedas del Retiro, en las que están muy lejos del paseo de coches, perdíanse sus pasos ... y sonaban á veces bajo los árboles, en los sitios más escondidos y solitarios, sus carcajadas y sus besos. Estaban allí hasta muy tarde, y entonces Rosita cantaba con su hermosa voz de contralto ... los *couplets* de los sainetes, las arias de las zarzuelas .... (209)

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Despite the depth and sincerity of their feelings for one another, Rosita and Miguel are incapable of defending their love and protecting their happiness against the numerous difficulties and obstacles they are forced to confront on two levels: 1. circumstantial and internal—the circumstances surrounding each partner's particular family situation and each one's own personality and level of emotional maturity; and 2. external—the destructive influence of nineteenth-century bourgeois morality regarding the cohabitation of a young single man from a respectable family and a publicly acknowledged "fallen woman."

Miguel's sheltered existence has failed to prepare him for the vicissitudes of life in the outside world. Miguel's own romantic nature, his idealistic and fictitiously-based vision of life with "una mujer peligrosa" (La buscona 49), his lack of mental toughness required to compete in the challenging field of professional journalism, added to his father's abnormal overprotectiveness are the major contributing factors which preclude the possibility of a sanguine *denouement* to his affair with Rosita.

Of particular noteworthy interest here is López Bago's description of Don Pedro's unusual relationship with his twenty-year old son. The void created by the loss of Miguel's mother in his childhood undoubtedly influenced Don Pedro's conscious or unconscious decision to fulfill the roles of both parents to his motherless children, especially the much

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younger Miguel. The overly protective father watches over his children, López Bago informs us, with "más cariño de madre que de padre" (La buscona 142). In the following passage, this character, deemed "el más conmovedor de los creados por López Bago" by Lozano Marco (349), can not fall asleep at night until he has personally ascertained that Miguel is indeed sleeping peacefully in his own bed:

> Acostábase, pero no dormía. Permanecía despierto hasta las tres ó las cuatro de la madrugada, hora en que Miguel entraba.... Miguel trabajaba de noche.
>
> —¡Miguel! —gritaba el Sr. Loitia desde la alcoba.
>
> —Buenas noches, papá.
>
> —Acuéstate, hijo. No te pongas á leer. Duerme, que vendrás rendido.
>
> Y cuando consideraba transcurrido el tiempo necesario para que el joven hubiese cumplido estas amonestaciones, se levantaba, abrigábase con la bata ... y andando de puntillas, si podía, y si no, arrastrando los pies en el silencio de las altas horas de la noche, se acercaba el padre á la puerta del cuarto del joven, y escuchaba sin moverse hasta oir (sic) la tranquila respiración del sueño....
>
> Volviendo después al lecho, decía á su mujer ...:
>
> —Ya duerme.

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> Con júbilo y con el acento de quien da una buena noticia. (La buscona 141-42)

The tenderness exhibited in Don Pedro's paternal devotion is touching, but, nevertheless, ultimately crippling to the emotional health of his son. The former governor failed in his paternal duty to encourage Miguel's growth and independence toward manhood. Instead, Miguel was treated like a child, required to report on his activities and whereabouts outside the home, like a boy half his age. As Miguel informs Rosita, Don Pedro worries whenever his son is out of sight: "¡Si vieras lo que sufre mi padre cuando no me ve á su lado!" (La buscona 102). The following passage exemplifies Don Pedro's abnormal reaction to Miguel's delay in returning home after visiting Rosita. A tormented and guilt-ridden Miguel recalls the distressing scene which awaited him:

> Su madrastra abrió la puerta, y al verle lanzó un grito de júbilo:
>
> —¡Pedro! ¡aquí está! ¡Ya está aquí tu hijo!—y en voz baja con todos los anhelos:—¿Que (sic) te ha pasado? ¿dónde estuviste? ¿vienes herido?....
>
> Ven ... pronto. ¡Que se calme! ¡que te vea!
>
> ... se agarró á su mano, lo llevaba tras sí, y á medida que se acercaban, adelantando por el largo corredor al cuarto de su padre, iban haciéndose más distintos los sollozos, se oían mejor las quejas,

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los suspiros....

Y al entrar en la habitación ... quedó Miguel inmóvil, sin voz ni aliento. Su padre, más que sentado, postrado en una butaca, ocultaba la venerable cabeza entre las manos. Cerca de él ... su hermana procuraba inútilmente consolarle. Aquellas canas ... abatidas con el abatimiento de la cabeza; aquel dolor del cual se adivinaba sólo la inmensidad por las contracciones convulsivas de los hombros ... aquellas manos puestas desesperadamente sobre los ojos para recibir el llanto; la hija y el padre llorando por el hijo y el hermano ausente, llorándolo muerto, ó tal vez herido y maltrecho. ¡Qué escena!....

Al verle en pie junto á la butaca, silencioso é inmóvil, enjugó sus lágrimas, le miró fijamente.

—¿Dónde has estado?.... ¿Por qué no has venido á almorzar?....

—Pero, papá, no es para tanto. No soy un niño. No podía suceder nada.

—Eso no. En Madrid ocurren muchas desgracias. Los coches atropellan á la gente. Y además, á tu edad salir á las diez de la mañana y no volver.... ¿Qué has hecho tú?

¡Cómo mintió!.... El Sr. Loitia lo creyó todo. Estaba ... rendido de llorar y no tenía alientos

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más que para el descanso. (La buscona 78-80)

From the onset of their relationship, Rosita replaces Don Pedro as the primary maternal figure in Miguel's life. Like Don Pedro before her, Rosita also assumes a dual role, fulfilling Miguel's needs now as both lover and mother. It is not surprising that the protagonist should be cast in the surrogate maternal role. Despite the fact that she is only a few years older than Miguel, the two lovers are ages apart in terms of maturity and life experience. Miguel is still the "hijo de familia menor de edad" (La buscona 65), while Rosita is a breadwinner and a graduate of the proverbial "school of hard knocks." The idea of Rosita's dual representation as mother and "fallen woman," however, was an anathema to the mores of nineteenth-century society which strictly dichotomized women, as we have seen, into the roles of "saints" and "sinners." Nevertheless, according to the research of Helene Deutsch, the concept of the highly erotic yet maternal woman is a common phenomenon based in reality:

> Although I have studied numerous professional prostitutes, I have never met the aggressive type of prostitute who is without a trace of tenderness, a prostitute who is not only unmaternal but amaternal. This completely unmotherly type is possibly a fantasy product in a certain type of men who have in their own imaginations established a sharp division between sexuality (prostitutes) and

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motherliness (unsexual mothers). (2:38)

Instead of employing more age appropriate terms of endearment, such as, for example, "Querido (Amor) mío," "Mi corazón," "Vida mía," and so forth, Rosita constantly refers to Miguel throughout both novels as her "nene." The term is synonymous with "niño muy pequeño,"[8] or "niño pequeñito;" and "suele usarse como expresión de cariño para personas de más edad...."[9] Rosita's persistent reference to "nene" and its many diverse variations[10] serves as a constant reminder of the status of Miguel's unofficial yet very dependent relationship with his mistress. The narrator of La querida agrees with Rosita's choice of such a term of endearment for "aquel muchacho tímido y apocado!" (La querida 17): "¡*Nene*! Era justo el nombre de mimo. Miguel era el nene eterno" (16).

Rosita's initial reaction to Miguel is that of a maternal figure, surprised yet amused by the awkward innocence of youth: "No era la sonrisa suya. Era más bien una expresión de enternecimiento maternal que asomó á sus labios ante aquel adolescente que se enamoraba. Era sonreir (sic) como sonríe todo mundo ante la inocencia" (La buscona 20).

Rosita is pleasantly surprised by Miguel's tentative advances toward her, despite her warning informing him of her status as "una perdida" (La buscona 21): "... y la mano de Rosita no se había retirado de la del niño desde que éste la buscó bajo el abrigo ... con ese infantil anhelo con que se busca un nido en lo espeso de las hojas" (La buscona 24).

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Both parties benefit from their mother-child relationship. Rosita takes special pride in preparing Miguel's meals, inasmuch as "su nene no quería comer nada sin que lo hiciese ó dirigiese la mujer amada" (La querida 227). In La buscona, Rosita's childlike lover's greatest asset lies, undoubtedly, in his ability to accept the unpleasant truth concerning Rosita's tarnished past. The narrator, in "una especie de presentimiento" (170), speaks directly to Rosita, encouraging her to have faith in Miguel. Unlike most men, Miguel will forgive her; it is precisely the dominant child personality in him which is capable of the greatest compassion:

> "¡Ten esperanza! No lo pierdes.... Es tuyo. Te ama. Lo que tú has hecho ha sido sacrificarte al vicio, como otras se sacrifican á la virtud. Tú no eres una buscona. Eres una víctima de la busconería. El lo comprenderá. Ese niño vale más que todos los hombres. Precisamente por eso. Porque es niño. Háblale. Confía. ¡Ten esperanza!" (170)

However, the disadvantages of an affair with an immature man are ever present in both novels; disadvantages ranging from annoyance and, ultimately, to rejection and betrayal. In the following passage, Miguel's apparent helplessness exasperates even Rosita, as is the case when Miguel wants the protagonist to accompany him to a nearby job interview; Don

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Pedro's son is afraid to go alone:

> —Vístete, Rosita. No está lejos.
>
> —Pero ¿por qué no vas tú? ¿Qué falta hago para eso?
>
> —Yo no voy solo.
>
> ¡Siempre el hombre niño! El hijo de familia por quien la querida tiene que sentir algo de mujer, pero mucho más de madre. Acariciar y proteger la que nació para ser acariciada y protegida. Un absurdo. (La querida 20)

Unfortunately, Miguel's immaturity precludes his financial success and advancement in his career as a journalist. He is emotionally unsuited and never adapts to the rigors of the working world:

> Odiaba extender las alas y volar; prefería los abrigos del nido, mirar el mundo asomándose al borde de las entretejidas pajas, mirarlo con miedo y volver á esconder en seguida la cabeza. Seguía careciendo Miguel de las iniciativas que se requieren para la lucha; sus manos de adolescente preferían acariciar las suaves curvas del adorable cuerpo de su querida, á golpear con enérgica decisión las cerradas puertas del porvenir para que se abrieran. La redacción ... el despacho del ministro, todo aquello le resultaba ruido, barullo, confusión .... (La querida 15)

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Instead, Miguel takes advantage of his maternal lover as a form of escape, his refuge from the so-called traditional male bourgeois responsibilities of hard work and aggressiveness. Like the son who runs home after school to tell his mother about the events of his day, Miguel, while covering a breaking story with his colleagues, runs home to Rosita with the news: "... en lugar de acercarse abriendo paso á codazos en el grupo, verdaderamente asustado, tomaba un coche para llegar lo antes posible y contárselo todo á Rosita" (La querida 15-16).

Rosita, in fact, wished that she were a man. A bemused Miguel inquires as to what she would do with her life if she could realize her fantasy:

> —Yo quisiera ser hombre, y no me apuraría por nada.
>
> —¿Qué harías?....
>
> —Haría muchas cosas, nene. Teniendo valor, había de ser soldado; y como no lo estorbase una bala, llegaría á general; si fuera sacerdote, tendría fijos los ojos en lo más alto, en Roma, en la silla del Papa; y si ... tuviera ... lo más noble de las facultades todas, el talento ... entonces .... escritor, si me diera por la política, si tuviera á mi disposición un periódico, para la pluma, el parlamento, la tribuna, para la palabra, sería ministro. (La querida 18)

Through Rosita's fantasy, López Bago once again underscores

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the injustice of society's sexist bias against providing educational and professional opportunities for women of all backgrounds. Ironically, Rosita incarnates the so-called "masculine" qualities required to compete in bourgeois society: ambition, aggressiveness, determination, intelligence, diligence, and so forth—all the qualities Miguel should possess but does not. And, ironically, Miguel, by his gender and social class possesses only the external requirements to gain entry into a chosen field of endeavor. Rosita's fantasy also reflects her, perhaps, unconscious maternal wish to protect the insecure Miguel from reality; she would shoulder his responsibilities, accomplish what he can not, thus allowing him the luxury of remaining sheltered inside "los abrigos del nido" (La querida 15).

In the end, Rosita's maternal devotion to Miguel fails in its ultimate purpose: to create and sustain an unbreakable bond of love, interdependence and filial duty. After learning of Miguel's plans to abandon her, Rosita, in the following passage, emphasizes the importance of their mother-child relationship, noting here for the first time how Miguel fulfilled her own maternal void, since she has not been able to conceive a child of her own body. Rosita's agonizing sense of loss is twofold: she loses her lover as well as her only child, the child-substitute she nurtured and educated:

> Aquel cariño que sintió por él, cariño de mujer, producido por la unión sexual, poco á poco, y sin

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> perder nada de este carácter, fué adquiriendo otro, el de la madre. ¡Ella no había podido tener un hijo! Su amante era su hijo. No por rareza de sentimientos. ¡No! Rosita puede decirse que lo había educado. (La querida 225)

Later, in a desperate attempt to keep him, Rosita tells Miguel of her maternal love for him, equating motherhood with reverence, but also with female selflessness and voluntary servitude:

> Un cariño como el mío, Miguel, es una cosa muy respectable, sagrada.... Deja de pensar en la palabra querida, para pensar en otras muchas, en la de esclava, en la de madre, hasta en ésa. Yo te quiero y te he querido como se quiere á un hijo, gozando en servirte, como una perra fiel á su amo. (La querida 241)

Perhaps the cruelest blow of all to Rosita's maternal identity is Miguel's ingratitude and indifference to Rosita's entreaties not to abandon her. Conveniently forgetting his own desire to escape from the demands of the adult world, Miguel ultimately blames his lack of fortitude on both his father and Rosita for their sacrifices and smothering demonstrations of love and affection:

> Yo no tengo entrañas, no tengo resolución, ni vigor, ni nada. Mi padre y tú, tú también, Rosita, por exceso de cariño, tenéis la culpa. Era preciso

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> tratarme de otro modo. No es la naturaleza humana apta para nada que no sea la ingratitud. Y hace mal el que por algo humano se sacrifica.... Me habéis echado á perder. A fuerza de procurarme bienes y dichas, me habéis hecho insaciable. (La querida 245-46)

Rosita's maternal role in her affair with Miguel is second only to her status as his official *querida*. Initially, despite his poor financial situation, Miguel's basic immaturity and lack of experience with women make him the preferred conquest. Even greater than her need for financial stability is the protagonist's desperate deep-seated need to love and be loved in a long term committed relationship. As she cheerfully tells the worried Miguel, their poverty does not matter as long as they are happy together:

> Y luego, como él se entristeciera, como él se apurase al considerar los pocos recursos con que para vivir contaban:
>
> —No importa, Miguel mío, no importa. Seremos pobres para ser felices. (La buscona 204)

Rosita employs all of her feminine wiles to keep Miguel—including resorting to lies and manipulation. Erroneously believing that Miguel's innocence and insecurities will render him more susceptible to her tactics, she underestimates the destructive effect of her schemes on her lover's psyche. Thus, ironically, she becomes an accomplice

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in effecting her own misery; alienating the one and only indispensable person in her life.

Rosita conceives her first act of deception against Miguel after their first encounter in her apartment and after having secured his promise to return the following morning. Inasmuch as Miguel is aware of her profession and its social and sexual implications, Rosita fears that he will disappear from her life, a definite probability since, as we recall, customers rarely repeated encounters with the same street-walker. Rosita needs time and a plan to allow Miguel to fall in love with her:

> Pensó ... en el porvenir, en los días siguientes, en lo que debía decir y en lo que iba á hacer. "Si Miguel me pregunta, ¿cómo contesto?" ¡Un engaño! Tenía que fingir. Tenía que inventar algo, cualquier cosa, lo mimio ... hasta lo monstruoso; todo, menos lo verdadero. Decirle "yo soy lo que soy", era decirle ¡adiós! Decirle "no soy lo que figuras", era retenerle, conservarle, guardarle, poseerle en cuerpo y alma. Y esto, por el tiempo que pudiera tardar el joven en saber la verdad de todo. (La buscona 60)

Feeding on Miguel's romantic conception of the victimized but virtuous "fallen woman" in the tradition of Marguerite Gautier, Rosita will personify Dumas' tragic heroine, eliciting Miguel's compassion and jealousy, as she appeals to

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his chivalrous desire to assist a wronged woman. Miguel is not to learn of her voluntary decision to become Lasoga's mistress, her affair with Estrella Sánchez, nor the fact that she fell in love with her most recent lover, the handsome Duke de Tres Estrellas. She presents Miguel with her "historia inventada" (La buscona 74) after their second *rendez-vous*, over lunch in a restaurant:

> Rosita mintió ... que era su propósito. No fué una historia, fué un cuento en el que no hubo más que una sinceridad ... un solo dato verdadero. La negación de su virginidad física y la afirmación de que ella no tuvo la culpa de su desgracia....
>
> —Esa [Angustias] es la que tiene la culpa de todo....
>
> —No hablemos más de esto. Me entristecería demasiado. Ya lo sabes.
>
> Miguel la miraba. La quería más, mucho más. Antes, pocas horas antes, en la hermosura de aquella mujer, amaba lo desconocido. Lo desconocido era un dolor, y aquella mujer una víctima suya. Rosita, al descubrir su caída había procurado hacerla interesante. Ahora ya podía aparecer ante el joven como quisiera. Si alguna vez era la bacante desgreñada, la adoración persistiría porque la bacante llevaba puesta una aureola. (La buscona 71-72)

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Later in the novel, Rosita boldly confesses the truth to Miguel: "... aquella tarde empecé á quererte de tal modo, que necesitaba que tú me quisieras.... Conseguí lo que me proponía. Me has querido ..." (174).

Rosita seriously compromises her relationship with Miguel by selfishly expecting that he would support the entire Pérez family. Rosita makes the mistake of allowing her own fears of Doña Angustias and Juan to manipulate Miguel's income. Disappointed upon learning of the meager "sueldo fijo" (La buscona 134) Miguel will earn from his first job, Rosita nervously recalls her mother's remarks about the family's expenditures and reveals a dark side of her personality. Miguel receives his first glimpse of a cold, calculating and avaricious *querida*:

> —¡Oh! no es mucho. Veinticinco duros mensuales.
>
> La buscona no pudo reprimir un movimiento brusco de ira y de desprecio.... Recordó la frase de doña Angustias. "Con dos mil reales no tenemos bastante. Gastamos mucho más."
>
> —Hijo, á ese paso podemos echar coche—exclamó lanzando una carcajada cruel.
>
> El joven la miró. Podemos. Hablaba en plural. Por primera vez dejaba Rosita Pérez adivinar algo de su pensamiento. Luego aquella mujer echaba cuentas y tenía planes con respecto á él. ¿Tendría

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razón su padre? (La buscona 135)

In La querida Miguel takes a stand against Rosita on the issue of the intrusion of Doña Angustias and Juan in their lives. He offers Rosita the opportunity to achieve basic financial stability—two people can live well on his salary, he tells her. However, by reason of her own sense of guilt for having dishonored "el apellido paterno" (229), Rosita refuses to honor Miguel's ultimatum to separate from Doña Angustias and Juan:

> Mi sueldo del periódico me proporcionaría una existencia de príncipe. Y ahora, con mi sueldo y la paga sin retención, un hombre y una mujer pudieran vivir perfectamente....
>
> Yo no puedo abandonar á mi madre.
>
> Entonces era Miguel quien se callaba. Le detenía lo soez de sus pensamientos. Lo brutal de la frase que pugnaba por salir de sus labios.
>
> —No puedo separarme de ella—seguía diciendo Rosita;—está enferma, carece de recursos.
>
> —Tiene su viudedad, tiene á su hijo....
>
> —.... Vas á decirme que eres la víctima de la madre y del hijo, que lo has venido siendo desde mucho antes que yo te conociera.... Pero sabes muy bien que yo me presto á todo, que soy capaz por ti, por ahorrarte un disgusto.... Pero eso es por ti sola. Me considero obligado á ello ... lo injusto

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> es que yo sea también víctima suya. Después de haberte devorado, quieren empezar conmigo.... Yo con ellos no tengo deber ninguno....
>
> —.... Te prometo, te juro poner remedio.... Les diré que se marchen....
>
> —¡Ellos o yo! (22-24)

Rosita succeeds in placating Miguel—only temporarily. Despite her promise to order Doña Angustias and Juan to vacate the apartment, the situation remains unchanged. The protagonist has failed to recognized the significance of her non-action. From Miguel's perspective, Rosita has dismissed his wishes and has sided in favor of her family against him. This reality and the accumulated strain of supporting four people takes a psychological toll on the young journalist. He realizes the ridiculousness of his situation; the abuse and disdain he receives for maintaining the ungrateful relatives of his *querida*, not part of the traditional arrangement between lover and mistress. He will no longer allow himself to be victimized as Rosita has been. In this regard, the eternal "nene" demonstrates greater self-esteem and maturity than his mistress. As a result of Rosita' obsession to maintain Doña Angustias and Juan, Miguel begins to question the depth of his mistress' love:

> Santo no, pero se consideraba como un mártir. Trabajando, escribiendo, pasándole la pluma en la mano como el remo de una galera; y todo, ¿por qué?,

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> ¿por quién? Por Rosita y por la familia de Rosita, por una mujer y una familia que no eran las suyas. Ni agradecido, ni pagado.... ¿Qué le daban en cambio de estos sacrificios? ¡Ah! ¡Sí! Abrazos, besos, caricias, *todas las felicidades del amancebamiento* .... (45)

During the most tense moments of their relationship, Rosita uses sex—her area of expertise—as a weapon of power and persuasion to deflect Miguel's anger, return his thoughts to her, or to prevent him from abandoning her. Throughout La buscona Rosita is successful in her mission. Secure in her physical attractiveness and appeal, Rosita uses her charms on Miguel from the very beginning of their affair. Her first victory is on a minor issue, to convince Miguel to go out one evening to celebrate, in her words, "el primer día de nuestros amores" (65). Miguel is captivated by watching his nude lover dress and prepare her toilette before him:

> No tuvo Miguel fuerzas para oponerse....
>
> —Verás ... qué pronto estoy vestida.
>
> Se sentó delante del tocador recibiendo directa la intensa claridad del día, con esa temeridad, con esa confianza en los propios encantos, en la frescura del cutis, en la fortaleza de la carne joven, que da la seguridad del triunfo, la certeza de salir ganando, en verse contemplada así, á toda luz, examinada de cerca y minuciosamente.

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Olvidó Miguel sus preocupaciones. (65)

In the aforementioned scene from La querida in which Miguel issues his ultimatum to Rosita—either Doña Angustias and Juan vacate the apartment or he will end their affair—Rosita uses sex in order to sidestep this serious area of conflict. As Rosita overwhelms her lover with her ardent demonstrations of passion, Miguel's anger subsides—for the moment:

> —¡Ellos, ó yo!
>
> —Tú, siempre tú, vida mía.
>
> Le abrazaba, le besaba, le vencía otra vez ¡la miseria! Con las únicas armas que eran decisivas en el amancebamiento: con el roce del cuerpo, con el tibio aliento de la boca, echando el peso de su carne sobre aquella masa hombruna para que no se moviera.
>
> Poco á poco la ira ... iba extinguiéndose.... El rostro de Miguel esquivaba al principio las caricias; pero al insistencia de los labios encontraba por fin los suyos, y el beso aquel, prolongado, irresistible, que cada vez con más ansia le bebía el aliento pidiendo el suyo, acababa por ser recíproco, fundiéndose en un solo. (25)

In the final dramatic confrontation between Rosita and Miguel, the *querida* uses every possible argument in her futile attempt to convince her lover to return to her. Miguel,

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realizing that she will not relent, evokes, as his last resort, the image of his enjoying the favors of another woman. He tells Rosita that he will spend the night with Estefanía de Cerdeña: "Esta noche ... esa mujer será mía" (La querida 247). Rosita is devastated by Miguel's assertive words, but the look upon his face confirms the unbelievable. Miguel stands before her fantasizing about her replacement: "¡Pensaba en la primera noche de caricias con la virgen falsa! Era tan claro aquello, que Rosita lo adivinó" (247). It is at this juncture that Rosita realizes that she has lost her sexual hold over Miguel; consequently, she realizes that he is truly lost to her forever. For Rosita, whose very identity has been defined by her physical beauty and passionate sexuality, and their effect on men, Miguel's betrayal is a rejection of her worth, not only as a woman, but as a human being. Sexual power was the only area in her entire life in which she ruled supreme, the only realm in which she succeeded in exerting control over her own life, and, to a certain extent, over the men who passed through her life. Rosita's ego will not permit Miguel to realize his fantasy. The thought of Miguel with another woman is an anathema to the protagonist. It is at this point that she commands Juanito to kill Miguel:

> Miguel no la veía, no la escuchaba....
>
> Ya era tarde para todo....
>
> Volvió á mirarle (sic). Seguía en la misma postura, cerrados los ojos....

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> Se volvió, se dirigió rápida ... hacia ... su hermano....
>
> —Se casa.... Mátale. Yo no soy capaz. (248)

Concomitant to the aforementioned difficulties which beset Rosita and Miguel's affair—an affair described by the narrator of La buscona as "amores empezados en mal hora y seguidos de mala manera" (73)—Don Pedro Loitia presents the most formidable obstacle to their happiness. Although deemed by Lozano Marco as "tierno y sensible en la intimidad de la familia y de los amigos" (349), this honorable "exgobernador de provincia" (La buscona 33), is not above resorting to employing several manipulative tactics in his persistent attempts to break up the personally and socially unacceptable liaison between his son and, in his words, "una perdida y una tunanta" (La buscona 110). Don Pedro is determined to convince his son to abandon Rosita and return to the warmth and protectiveness of his family, "á fuerza de cariño y amonestaciones de todo género" (212). He employs his best weapons—fear and guilt—two powerfully damaging emotions adroitly instilled in Miguel's psyche with devastating consequences for the future.

The following passage offers interesting insight into Don Pedro's *modus operandi*. The father's speech is an exercise in contradiction. In a tactical move to catch Miguel's attention and encourage his receptiveness, Don Pedro recognizes his son's manhood: "Ya eres un hombre...." However, his

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subsequent "admonestaciones" belie such a statement as the father's true sentiments are revealed. The former governor proceeds to instill fear in Miguel concerning his son's own safety, that he is, in fact, in danger of losing his very essence to Rosita. Here, he evokes the underlying image of the protagonist as a vampire—a *femme fatale* who, through the power of her sexuality, will drain the life force out of her lover—one of the many common nineteenth-century misconceptions of "fallen women" as forces of unnatural destruction. Don Pedro, however, offers his paternal wisdom and assistance in aiding and rescuing his son from this life threatening affair, inasmuch as Miguel has been bewitched by Rosita's charms and blinded by his own passion. In effect, Don Pedro resorts to the well-established pattern of reducing Miguel to the level of a child—and that of a child in trouble—reinforcing the young man's dependent and helpless status:

> ¡Hijo, esa mujer te ha vuelto loco[!] Haz lo que quieras. Ya eres un hombre y mi oposición no serviría de nada. Haz ... tu desgracia y la mía .... ¡Un milagro! [,] que Dios te ilumine. Que se te caiga esa venda de los ojos.... De todos modos, hagas lo que hagas, quiero que me lo consultes todo, quiero estar yo á tu lado, quiero vigilarte, porque ... en tu situación me necesitas para que yo te salve del peligro en que estás. No lo dudes.

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> Estás en peligro de perder dos cosas. Las únicas que hoy posees. La inteligencia y la dignidad. (192)

Undoubtedly, Don Pedro's most underhanded manipulative strategen is to take advantage of his recent minor stroke, using his medical crisis as a weapon to separate the lovers. Inasmuch as Miguel refuses to return home to live, Don Pedro wants his son to worry about his ailing father when he is with Rosita. In the following passage, Don Pedro tells Miguel that he is not long for this world, and he hopes that death comes quickly. His only fear: Miguel will be too far away to return home in time for the final farewell:

> Yo viviré poco, pero por de prisa que venga la muerte, más pronto y más rápido va siendo este cambio. Tú no esperarás. Te irás de esta casa, y estarás muy lejos; no podrás llegar á tiempo para verme morir y cerrarme los ojos. (193)

As expected, Don Pedro's speech visibly distresses Miguel. Now satisfied that his words have had the desired effect on Miguel's emotions and consciousness, the father abruptly changes the direction of their conversation.

One of the most striking features of the protagonists' affair—and certainly the most pivotal with regard to the subsequent nefarious consequences—is the ongoing "lucha entablada entre el gobernador y Rosita" (La buscona 212), a veritable war of wills, with each party competing against the

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other for the prize of winning Miguel's company, affections and primary loyalty. Rosita feels competitive toward Don Pedro from the beginning of her liaison with his son. She recognizes the powerful bond that evidently exists between father and son and the threat it will pose for her hopes for the future. During Miguel's second visit to her apartment, Rosita is quick to inform her lover that her all encompassing passion for him will be greater than Don Pedro's paternal devotion: "—¿Tanto te quiere tu padre? .... —Me quiere ... muchísimo. —Yo te querré más" (La buscona 66). As the relationship progresses, however, Rosita grows less confident, becomes "intranquila," exhibiting her "celos del padre; celos y temor" (La buscona 212). These fears are justifiably heightened during Miguel's visits with his father, since instinctively and correctly "adivinaba lo que en aquellas conversaciones era objeto de repetidos ataques" (212).

In addition to Don Pedro's paternal opposition to Miguel's relationship with Rosita, rooted in both his own abnormal overprotectiveness and anxiety over his son's physical and emotional well-being—his fear that the "vampirish" *querida* would eventually consume him—the *gobernador* also anguished over the damaging effect of the liaison on the good reputations of both father and son. As Don Pedro reprovingly informs his son, the situation "'es una locura. Espero que se te pasará muy pronto. No es decente, no es decoroso. Me estás poniendo en ridículo.... Tú pierdes mucho. ¡Vivir con

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querida! .... ¡Qué lástima! Te desprestigias...'" (La buscona 211). The damaging social consequences of Miguel's liaison, first voiced by Don Pedro in La buscona, are brought to bear in La querida. While in La buscona Miguel took no heed of his father's opinion, nor of society's perception of his relationship with the protagonist, in La querida he will assume his father's stand on the issue, as yet another example of the power of the late *gobernador*'s will upon his son.

While Don Pedro is distressed by his son's involvement with a "fallen woman," "un cuerpo mancillado por otras caricias" (La buscona 113), it is fascinating to note that the Madrid Establishment did not frown upon the sexual aspect of Miguel's liaison with a "fallen woman," but disapproved of the fact that Miguel chose to live openly in the same residence with his mistress. Cohabitation between unmarried lovers, or "amancebamiento" was cause for scandal. For a man of any social standing to live openly with his *querida* was regarded as a blatant affront to the standards and sensibilities of polite society obsessed with maintaining appearances. Respectable males officially resided with their parents, or in their own homes, or if married, with their wives; but they never shared the same address with their mistresses. Luis de Villaperdida, for example, spent many nights with Estrella Sánchez in her apartment and later at the house he purchased for her, but they never lived together. To cohabit with one's mistress is simply not done is the message repeated to Miguel

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by several characters in La querida. "Hay que vivir sometiéndose á las leyes sociales," declares the hypocritical Estefanía de Cerdeña, who adds: "En realidad, tu familia debe estar muy disgustada.... ¡Vivir con una querida! Se escandaliza el más despreocupado" (216). Miguel's publisher, the worldly Don Ramón, is shocked by his employee's "tontería": "En la juventud se disculpa todo. Á su edad de usted, yo también tuve una querida. Ahora suelo tenerlas, pero no cometo la tontería de vivir con ellas" (84). Surprisingly, the unconventional Rosita herself, in her attempt to dissuade Miguel from abandoning her, now admits that their *amancebamiento* was a mistake: "Por mí dejaste la casa de tus padres, la familia, todo. Por venirte á vivir conmigo. Esto fué un mal. Lo sé. Éste ha sido el origen de lo que al fin sucede" (240).

A salient feature of the Establishment's stigmatization regarding cohabitation is the fact that it disparaged the reputation of the male involved as well as the female, as evidenced by the statements made by the characters cited above and by Don Pedro's earlier comments from La buscona (211). As we recall from El periodista (Chapter I), the protagonist, Luis, was unfairly mistreated personally and professionally by hypocritical representatives of the political Establishment based on his cohabitation with his lover, María, and their daughter. It seems, at least, in this rare instance, males were required to adhere to certain proprieties; failure to

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comply subjected them to condemnation, loss of status and even ostracism, akin to the mistreatment of the "fallen woman."

The propriety which imposed the maintenance of separate residences for men and their mistresses, might also have been related to the societal preoccupation with maintaining the appearance, if not the illusion of financial status and economic prosperity. Men who maintained separate households for themselves and their *queridas* publicly demonstrated their financial ability to do so. Miguel's *amancebamiento* was, in fact, according to Bullough, reflective of the behavior of many men from the lower classes who could neither support a mistress nor afford to frequent bordellos. Instead, they chose "to live with a woman or a series of women in informal marriage arrangements" (Women 199). Interestingly enough, Bullough continues, this practice "was looked on as prostitution by the authorities of the day" (Women 199). In the strict hierarchical world of professional prostitution, *amancebamiento* was also disparaged by the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy for its association with the sexual practices of the "inferior" lower classes; and as such, was deemed inappropriate behavior for the son of a respected former governor.

In La querida Miguel is indeed the recipient of the Establishment's contempt. Miguel's own extended family has ostracized him for having disgraced the Loitia family name: "... la familia de Miguel, aquella retahila de tíos, primos y

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sobrinos, alejábase del joven como de un apestado" (59). However, disowning Miguel is not the solution to their problem; he must give up Rosita in order to save the family's reputation. Inasmuch as the patriarch of the family will not condescend to speak to the black sheep of the family, Amparo is called upon to persuade Miguel:

> Tienes una hermosa misión que cumplir, sobrina mía, agregaba el patriarca de la familia.... Á toda costa, por el honor de nuestro apellido, por los miramientos sociales, por todo, hasta por lo que manda la religión en que nos hemos criado, es preciso que tu hermano abandone á esa mujer .... (60)

Amparo's lecture, however, fails in its mission to convince her brother. It is the shocking revelation that all of Madrid knows the intimate details of Rosita's scandalous past and falsely believes that Miguel is being maintained by her which finally convinces the young writer that their cohabitation must end:

> —¡Ah! ¡Ya dicen! ¡Ya han dicho!—exclamaba casi en voz alta.—¿Han podido creer que yo, ¡yo!, el hijo de D. Pedro Loitia!, me degradé hasta el punto de vivir á costa de una buscona? Porque Rosita Pérez no era más que eso cuando yo la conocí. ¡D. Ramón lo sabe! ¡Todo el mundo lo sabe! La amiga de *La Pálida*. Esa es mi querida.

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> La que lo fué también de yo no sé qué título. El duque de.... ¡Ah! ¡Ya! El duque de Tres Estrellas. No se me olvidará.
>
> Calló: siguió trabajando su imaginación. Y repetía mentalmente la frase como un estribillo. "¡Estoy deshonrado! ¡Estoy deshonrado!"....
>
> —Es preciso—dijo de pronto,—es preciso. Rosita y yo tenemos que separarnos. (93-94)

Believing that the idea is his own, Miguel adds: "Mi padre me lo aconsejaría también" (94).

Once the decision to separate has been made, Miguel is under no legal, financial or social obligation to Rosita, since she is not his legitimate wife, a fact he happily recognizes: "¡No estar junto á ella! En realidad, éste era su deseo. Obligación no tenía ninguna" (143). Miguel is only partially correct with regard to his "obligación" to Rosita. In the conventional formal arrangement or *compromiso* between the male and his mistress, the dissolution of the affair is usually amicable. After all, it is a business deal for the woman, with little or no lasting emotional attachment. Inasmuch as their *amancebamiento* was perceived as a sexual-financial arrangement by society and by Don Pedro, Miguel now idealistically and erroneously believes that it will be easy to walk away from Rosita, to discard her as simply as clients discard public women after fulfilling their own sexual needs: "... el soñador ... concebía ya como idea fácil el abandono de

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Rosita Pérez" (164-65).

Society's perception and now Miguel's behavior failed to take into consideration the other, more meaningful dimension of their relationship: that of a love story between two young people from very different backgrounds who succeeded, for a time, in building a solid bond of mutual love and affection, strengthened by sacrifice and shared hardships. Miguel and Rosita were more than the stereotypical male and mistress; their affair paralleled the more traditional and balanced boyfriend-girlfriend romance. From this perspective, Miguel does have a moral and ethical responsibility, an obligation of respect and the humane consideration of her feelings, to confront Rosita directly. In the following passage the narrator of La querida describes Rosita's tortured reaction to Miguel's plans to leave her after divining the true purpose of the impersonal letter she receives from her lover. Rosita is devastated by the truth and appalled by Miguel's puerile, cowardly and coldhearted blatant disregard for her feelings and their life together. Rising above the shock and the incipient return of feelings of inferiority and worthlessness, Rosita is determined to fight—for love; her life; and, for Miguel, the man she has won:

> ¡Despedirse de mí.... ¡Pero sin una frase de cariño! ¡Ah! ¡Por siempre! ¡Así no se despide nadie, más que para no volver! ¡No vuelve! ¡No le veré más!

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Luégo (sic), con la voz reconcentrada, sorda, con la ronquera horrible del dolor:

—¡Se acabó! ¡Esto se acabó!

Parecían las últimas palabras de un moribundo .... (194)

Recordó. ¿Qué había pasado entre ella y Miguel Loitia? Según Rosita, mucho. Todo. Según él ... pudiera ser que muy poco. Nada. ¡Ella! ¡Qué fatalidad! ¡Qué empeño el suyo en figurarse siempre que era una mujer nacida para sentir y hacer sentir el amor cuando en realidad era ... ¡nada más que eso! Una buscona. Lo mismo que sucedió con el duque de Tres Estrellas. Miguel, abandonándola, estaba en su derecho. Miguel recobraba su libertad. ¿Cómo oponerse? ¿En virtud de qué?

Al llegar á este punto, la hija del capitán se irguió:

—¡EN VIRTUD DE LA VIRTUD (sic)! *En virtud del amor. Porque le amo, porque me moriré. Porque yo también tengo derecho á la vida.*

Y una convicción se hizo paso, empujando y rechazando todas las vacilaciones, todas las dudas, convirtiendo la humilidad en satánica soberbia.

—Miguel es mío, porque me lo he ganado. (195-96)

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The death of Don Pedro Loitia portends the definitive turning point in the love affair between Rosita and Miguel; it marks the beginning of the relationship's downward spiral to its ultimate fatal conclusion.

In the battle of wills between the *gobernador* and the former *buscona*, Rosita is victorious in La buscona, for, despite her own insecurities and Miguel's anguish over Don Pedro's opposition, her lover continued to live in her apartment, obeying "los mandatos de un amor nuevo" (La querida 226). In La querida, however, the balance of power and influence is reversed. Now, Don Pedro's will triumphs—the "amonestaciones" (La buscona 212) and "los ruegos y quejas paternas" (La buscona 213) for Miguel's liberation from Rosita become invincible after his death. The governor's will, in effect, acquires a life of its own, transferring itself directly into the consciousness of his son. Miguel will actualize his father's wishes for him with regard to his relationship with Rosita in a desperate attempt to finally earn his father's approval and to be worthy of effecting a final father-son reconciliation even in death. The psychological process of assuming his father's will is Miguel's particular coping mechanism, his method for dealing with the tremendous guilt he suffers in his belief of having, if not caused, accelerated his beloved father's demise. Miguel agonizes over the question of whether Don Pedro died of a broken heart caused by his liaison and cohabitation with

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Rosita Pérez:

> ... la inmensa amargura del presente. Un remordimiento para Miguel Loitia. Una duda de este horrible género, clavada siempre en su pensamiento. "¿Será verdad que mi padre murió de pena por mis amores? ¿Habré matado á mi padre?" No. No podía ser. Procuraba tranquilizarse. El Sr. de (sic) Loitia murió de un ataque apoplético. El parte del médico lo expresaba así con toda claridad. (La querida 10)

Although, as we see in the last part of his statement, Miguel wants to believe and accept the physician's finding with all his being, he is never fully convinced. He needs constant reassurance and persistently tries to reinforce the idea in his mind. Shortly afterwards, however, he essentially repeats the physician's judgment: "La certificación del médico era exacta. 'No lo maté yo. Mi padre murió de un ataque apoplético'" (La querida 11). Despite these sincere efforts, Miguel will continue to blame himself for his father's death. In Miguel, López Bago offers a potent example of the power of the mind over verifiable scientific data; medical knowledge fails to convince someone as overwhelmed with guilt and doubt as Miguel.

Another major contributatory factor to Miguel's mindset is the recollection of his own sister's "formidable acusación," verbalized in La buscona (198) shortly after Don

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Pedro's first stoke. "Con ira reconcentrada," Amparo accused Miguel of killing their father: "¡Estás matando á papá!" (194). Miguel can not forget her "acusación." Amparo's condemnatory words impacted upon the consciousness of her sensitive younger brother:

> De todo lo ocurrido, lo que más dañosamente llegó á sus oídos, fué aquella frase, aquellas cuatro palabras: "¡Estás matando á papá!".... Le atormentaba una idea mala, persistía en repetirse: "¡Estás matando á papá!" No pensaba en otra cosa. Y en lugar de ir alegremente á la cita de sus amores, iba reflexivo, tardo el paso, y en el corazón había sentido la amargura y el golpe seco de los presentimientos funestos. (La buscona 197-98)

Rosita's own deep-rooted insecurities and fear of abandonment exacerbate her lover's inner torment. The newly orphaned Miguel needs time and space in order to come to terms with his loss and guilt, to sort through his thoughts—two indispensable elements Rosita denies her lover. Instead, she overwhelms him with her own neediness:

> Y aquella mujer, dotada indudablemente del poder de adivinarle los pensamientos ... mordíase los labios, fruncía el ceño, y esperaba palpitante, angustiada, nerviosa y estremeciéndose.... Temía verle de pronto rechazar bruscamente las ropas de

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> la cama, saltar, ponerse en pie, vestirse y huir. ¡Huir, separarse, dejarla para siempre!
>
> Entonces, Rosita Pérez, no resistiendo con el susto ante la probabilidad de abandono, caía sobre Miguel como sobre una presa que quisieran arrebatar á sus ansias, lo estrechaba frenética para que perdiese con el abrazo aquella fría inmovilidad que la aterraba, besábale los labios: "¡Habla, habla! No estés así." Y como no lograse pronto lo que solicitaba de aquel cuerpo adorado, lo que pedía...lanzaba un grito delirante: "¡... yo no he sido! ¿Qué culpa tengo yo? ...." Iba á darle otro beso. (La querida 10-11)

Although, in this instance, "sobrevenía la compasión del joven, reaccionaba su cariño" (La querida 11), Miguel now has the added burden of feeling responsible for Rosita's very emotional reactions to his private moments, his much needed periods of quiet introspection, or the naturally inevitable periods in which he sinks to the depths of despair. Like Rosita, Miguel's physiological reactions mirror his inner torment:

> También tenía sus horas de desesperación, sus lágrimas, sus terribles crisis, en que la pena atarazaba, oprimía, parecía un peso en los pulmones, una fiebre en el pulso, una congestión en la cabeza, la sobrexcitación de todos los nervios

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.... (La querida 40)

Without realizing it, Rosita herself greatly facilitated the irreparable alienation of Miguel's affections by her failure to respond appropriately to her lover's grief. In his vulnerable mental and emotional state, Miguel needs the compassion of another selfless, caring human being who loves and understands him, the shoulder or arms of an empathetic loved one; not the passionate demonstrations of a sensual mistress seeking to avoid the situation by stimulating carnal longings. The enormity of Rosita's error—the error of a desperate woman compelled by her physiology and deterministic background to relate to most men on a sexual level—can not be understated, López Bago wants his readers to remember, as evidenced by the narrator of La querida's repeated emotional interjections on the "stupidity" of the protagonist's handling of the situation:

> ¡Oh! ¡Qué torpeza tan enorme cometió la hija del capitán ... ¡qué torpeza!.... Fué un resabio de la busconería.
>
> —¡Ay!—suspiraba el huérfano dejando caer, dejando descansar la dolorida cabeza en el hombro de Rosita. —¡Ay vida mía! ¡Qué pena tengo! ¡Qué ganas tengo de quejarme!
>
> Y condoliéndose, compadeciéndole; en lugar de estarse quieta, muy quieta en aquella postura; en lugar de dejarle llorar, desahogarse allí, sobre su

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> hombro ... sin hacer nada, palideciendo mucho, eso sí, teniendo que violentar y dominar todos sus arranques de ternura; ella, ¡torpe!, le cogió la cara con ambas manos, tapándole toda la boca en un beso sensual. Le trató como tratan las prostitutas á los borrachos, excitándoles poderosamente. ¡Torpe! Miguel estaba borracho de dolor; y cuando la lujuria quieta esta borrachera, hace un bien, pero produce á la par una desgracia. Las caricias de aquella noche fueron frenéticas .... pero los labios de Miguel estaban amargos del sudor que besaron durante la agonía de su padre. Antes, viviendo el señor Loitia, se preguntaba el hijo muchas veces: "¿Quién es ésta?" Y le decía el pensamiento: "Esta es la mujer amada." Ahora, por culpa de Rosita la pregunta se contestó de otro modo: "¿Quién es ésta que me abraza en un día así?" Es tu querida." Y sintió después del goce más dolor que nunca, más remordimiento .... (43-44)

Having discounted Miguel's need to express his grief, Rosita leaves her lover feeling devalued as a human being, sentiments akin to the tremendous demoralizing sense of worthlessness habitually experienced by public women in dealings with male clients. To Miguel's bitter disappointment, it is now only too evident that Rosita sees him as an object of sexual gratification as well as a means of financial support for the

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entire Pérez family. Now, having experienced how Rosita "le trató como tratan las prostitutas á los borrachos," Miguel is pained to realize that Rosita is responding automatically to a predetermined and well-used formula for the handling of distressed or difficult lovers and clients; his grief receives no more consideration or respect than the typical inebriated customer. Moreover, inasmuch as Rosita is not willing or incapable of helping him emotionally when he needs her support more than any other time in his life, she can no longer be "la mujer amada," the uniquely exceptional love of his life, but simply a "querida" like any other paid professional and thus, replaceable.

The fact that Miguel now feels not only betrayed and cheated, but lonelier and more alienated than ever after his sexual encounters with Rosita—an affair which was, after all, based on lust, "la primera lujuria del hombre que se le sube al cerebro" (La querida 41)—was predicted by Don Pedro. What was once a joyous and exciting experience now leaves him empty and drained. Miguel sadly recalls his father's prophetic warning: "La realidad le dolía mucho: se veía ensangrentado, y creía estar desangrándose. El señor de (sic) Loitia, pocos días antes de morir, se lo predijo. Él no quiso dar crédito á las palabras y advertencias de su padre" (La querida 42). Although, the ultimate effect of Rosita's influence "le dolía mucho," on a more subconscious level this realization must have terrified Miguel. This is the third prediction foretold

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by Don Pedro to his son which has come to pass. Don Pedro also predicted his own imminent death and that Miguel, by living with Rosita, would be too far away to return home in time for their final farewell. Indeed, Miguel arrived home only after Don Pedro had slipped into a coma. Now, the third prediction, more devastating than the first two, has been realized. The idea to separate from Rosita has been firmly planted in Miguel's psyche. It is imperative for Miguel that he separate from Rosita; it is now a matter of life and death.

A critical factor in Miguel's progressive emotional and sexual detachment from Rosita is his redefinition or new perception of her primary identity as "querida." He no longer regards her as his *querida* , but sees her as a professional mistress in the context of her sexual liaisons with his predecessors. He questions whether Rosita ever truly loved him at all inasmuch as love comes easily to a woman whose sexual favors were freely given to former lovers in exchange for monetary and/or material rewards: "Podía figurarse lo que es la sublimidad de la palabra amor puesta en práctica; podía amar cuanto le diera la gana, estrechando el cuerpo de aquella mujer que otros antes que él habían poseído ... por su dinero" (La querida 45). Miguel's new radical perception of Rosita as a woman who exchanges love or sex for money now mirrors Don Pedro's characterization of the protagonist as "una perdida y una tunanta" (La buscona 110), as well as society's negative stereotypical image of the "fallen woman" as immoral and

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materialistic.

It is Miguel's new detached perception of Rosita as a public woman with past lovers which leads Don Pedro's son to first consider the idea of marriage for himself. Since there were other men in Rosita's life, why should there not be another woman in his own future?: "Pensando en que Rosita Pérez había sido una buscona, hizo una vez esta reflexión: ¡Si yo me casara! ¿Por qué no? ...'" (La querida 46). With his romantic fantasies of Rosita as his very own tragic Marguerite Gautier dashed forever, Miguel finds a replacement in pursuing an idealized vision of marriage and conjugal life:

> La palabra CASAMIENTO (sic) estaba produciendo en su juventud efectos especialísimos. Miguel, cuando la escuchaba, sentía removerse algo en sus entrañas, algo parecido á lo que dicen que sienten las solteras románticas cuando asisten á un bautizo ó ven un niño.... Pero también la penosa impresión de un bien perdido por culpa propia. (La querida 46)

Miguel's romantic vision of marriage includes the conceptualization of Rosita's antithesis, a stereotypical idealization of upper class society's image of the wife—the childlike, innocent and adolescent virginal bride. This image, instilled in Miguel's consciousness by Don Pedro, now rises to the surface as Miguel happily recalls the intimate moments his father shared with him about his parents' wedding

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night:

> Miguel tenía compuesta y dibujada en su imaginación una obra bellísima, el cuadro de la alcoba nupcial, donde la virgen se entrega al amor por primera vez y por siempre, resistiéndose todavía á las brutalidades de la materia .... Recordaba lo encantador de aquella confidencia que le hizo el señor de (sic) Loitia cierto día en que el padre y el hijo, según su costumbre, hablaron como dos amigos:
>
> Tu madre tenía quince años, acababa de cumplirlos, cuando yo me casé con ella. Después de la cena, la acometía el sueño y se quedaba dormida en una butaca.... Luégo (sic) la desnudaba yo mismo, sin que se despertase, y, dormida así, tenía que llevarla en brazos á la cama todas las noches, como á los niños!....
>
> Pensaba mucho en esto, pero como se piensa en un sueño imposible de realizar. (La querida 48)

While Miguel may be seeking a childlike mate like his father's first wife, and compelled by "el imperioso deseo de fundar un hogar como el de su familia y reproducir la vida de sus progenitores tal y como él la vio en su infancia" (Lozano Marco 349), he is also seeking to fulfill the maternal void in his life. Aldaraca has observed how:

> ... in Spain, the iconization of woman as an

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> eternally young and virginal mother has much more to do with a nostalgic longing for home, that is, with a return to the relationship between male child and mother, than it does with the relationship between adult men and women in marriage or outside of marriage. (Angel 19-20)

Based on Aldaraca's statement, it seems that it was Rosita's failure to fulfill her maternal role in Miguel's life while he was in mourning which greatly contributed to Miguel's alienation from his mistress and to his subsequent fantasy about the young, virginal bride. Ironically, Rosita's fears of abandonment precluded the emergence of the selfless, empathetic and altruistic maternal substitute Miguel needed at the most critical stage of their relationship.

Miguel's fantasies about conjugal life is supported by Amparo, who picks up in La querida where Don Pedro left off in trying to convince Miguel to adhere to the "leyes sociales" (La querida 216). Now, it is time for Miguel to marry, "como Dios manda ... con una hija de buena familia. Haciendo la vida que hace todo el mundo" (65). Amparo guarantees her brother family unity: "Tu mujer y yo nos querríamos mucho" (65). And, Miguel and his honorable wife will receive the blessing and support of the entire Loitia clan: "Contarías además con la protección de todos nuestros parientes. El tío me lo ha dicho" (65).

Into Miguel's fantasy image of the ideal wife appears

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Estefanía de Cerdeña. Miguel does not love the new woman in his life, nor does it matter. For Miguel, she represents the perfect triple solution to his problem: she is the woman who will replace Rosita, his fallen idol, in his thoughts and his passion, while providing him with the means to appease the dictates of both family and society:

> Ahora no encontraba rozamientos ni extrañezas el proyecto que estaba meditando. ¡La *señorita* de Cerdeña! Tuvo la visión de su hermana ... simulando escribir una carta.... "SEÑORA (sic) D.ª *Estefanía Cerdeña* DE LOITIA (sic): *Mi queridísima cuñada*...." ¿Y por qué no?.... ¡Dar lo que ella creía imposible! Restituir con un apellido la honra.... ¡Qué empresa más laudable! No era aquella una mujer como cualquier otra. Aquella mujer era la suya. Lo sabía positivamente. ¡La suya! (La querida 165-66)

The extent to which the crises in Miguel's life have impacted upon his psyche are brought to the surface by Estefanía de Cerdeña's entrance into his world. The pressure to marry an honorable *señorita* in order to be worthy of his father's forgiveness and to regain social acceptance takes its toil on Miguel's psyche, resulting in his suffering a mental breakdown: "¡Una gran neurosis!" (La querida 212). Miguel surrenders his will to the prevailing rigid mores of the bourgeois Establishment; realizing, as women do, that marriage

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is his only socially sanctioned life style option. For López Bago, the pressure to marry is as pathological as any physical or mental aberration, a fact Rosita also realizes when she aptly diagnoses Miguel's illness: "Es la monomanía de los menores de edad. La monomanía del casamiento" (La querida 242). Miguel himself acknowledges that his obsession for Estefanía is madness, as he informs Don Ramón: "No es amor, no. Á Ud. puedo decírselo. Me ha vuelto loco. Ó esa mujer es mía ... por siempre, por toda la vida, ó no respondo de mí. Hago ... ¡un disparate!" (La querida 175)

Symptomatic of Miguel's progressive neurosis to marry Estefanía as quickly as possible and at any cost, is his fatalistic determination to destroy and be destroyed through marriage. Miguel himself concluded that his "monomanía, la del casamiento, tenía que concluir desastrosamente" (La querida 245) long after Don Ramón had predicted "lo fatal que es" such a union between "dos temperamentos iguales" (La querida 186), as is the case with Miguel and Estefanía. López Bago adroitly takes advantage of the adjective "fatal"'s various denotations to capture the significance of Miguel's predicament. Inasmuch as the mores of the Establishment have decreed marriage as the only legitimate union between respectable men and women, it is the "inevitable" destiny of all healthy members. However, "fatal" also denotes "resulting in death," "very destructive," and "disastrous."[11] For López Bago, the "inevitability" of marriage imports inevitable death

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and destruction—literally for Miguel and Estefanía, and figuratively for the typical bourgeois couple—trapped in the infernal abyss of a monotonous and loveless union based on obedience to "las leyes sociales."

Estefanía is the ideal mate to fulfill Miguel's pathological longing for self-annihilation, inasmuch as she is identified as a *femme fatale*, a symbolic descendent of Lucrezia Borgia, whose affection is venomous to the men she chooses to infect. In his madness, Miguel happily embraces Estefanía's baneful "cariño," as he informs an astonished Don Ramón:

> Estoy tan contento, que me mataría de buena gana. Estefanía tenía razón .... me ha dicho que su cariño es un veneno. Ya lo supe yo desde el primer día. También yo se lo dije á Ud.
>
> —En efecto, recuerdo hasta las palabras. "Parece que acaban de envenenarme ahí dentro...." Eso es, un veneno. Me alegro de que Ud. lo sepa. (La querida 186-87)

Breaking with the Establishment's traditional interpretation of "the Fall" with female prostitution or adultery, López Bago offers a different view, linking "the Fall" instead to the bourgeois ideal of marriage by evoking a very fatalistic image of Miguel and Estefanía being hurled uncontrollably to their perdiction: "Pero ya nadie podía detenerse. Iban todos por el gran declive, con la

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irresistible fuerza del primer impulso, arrastrados ¡al barranco!, ¡á la caída!" (La querida 204).

The monumental impact of the "irresistible fuerza" compelling Miguel to marry and bring about his destruction is brought to bear when, in yet another timely example of his characteristic sense of cruel irony, López Bago has Estefanía reveal to her fiancé the shocking truth about her secret private life as a professional courtesan. The fact that he has exchanged one "fallen woman" for "una mujer decadente, una especie de refinada prostituta de la alta sociedad" (Lozano Marco 349) does not deter Miguel, even though López Bago succeeds in his purpose of making Miguel, like Estrella Sánchez with the Duke de Tres Estrellas, suffer greatly for his deceptive romantic illusions about the object of his amorous obsession:

> ¡Maldita visión, siempre fija en sus ojos, del cuadro aquel que tenía compuesto y dibujado desde que oyó las confidencias de su padre [!] El cuadro de la alcoba nupcial, donde la virgen se entrega por primera vez y por siempre, resistiéndose todavia á las brutalidades de la materia.... ¡La señorita de Cerdeña! ¡Una virgen falsa!.... Ya es tarde para volverse atrás; lo decidido tiene que cumplirse. Tienes que obedecer. Nos casaremos. ¡Oye bien! Con un hombre como yo, has hecho lo contrario de lo que debías hacer para que no te

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> amara. Y no podía ser otra cosa. Nuestro amor es una neurosis.... Van á fundirse dos temperamentos iguales. Somos de la clase de los que se casan y se mueren tísicos. Casémonos. No podemos resistir á una fuerza mayor que las dos nuestras unidas. (La querida 210-11)

His fantasy of the virginal bride now shattered, Miguel, realizing that he would be incapable of enduring the fatal destiny of the typical bourgeois couple whose vacuous conjugal existence endures a lifetime, believes that marriage to Estefanía will accelerate the inevitable process. By reason of their defective characters, they deserve each other, according to Miguel. Death will arrive sooner and with explosive intensity for both parties in a union of such destructive force:

> Es que yo, como tú, lo mismo que tú, tengo pervertido el gusto. Me han estragado los sentimientos.... Tú y yo estamos en el mismo caso. El amor que sienten todos los humanos no podemos sentirlo nosotros. Nuestra enervación sólo cesa y desaparece merced á la descarga eléctrica que mataría á un caballo. La pasión así, ¡monstruosa! ¡Nuestra noche de bodas! ¡Tal va á ser, que al acostarnos, por previsión, debemos dejar encendidos los cuatro cirios al rededor de la cama nupcial. Podemos morir abrazados. La neurosis.... Un

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estallido, una explosión....

—¡Casémosnos! (La querida 212)

To further exemplify the noxious ramifications of societal mores on Miguel's broken psyche, López Bago juxtaposes the roles of the two *queridas* in the young man's life. While the baneful Estefanía de Cerdeña epitomizes Miguel's fatalistic embrace of death and self-destruction inherent in the upper class marriage of convenience, the anti-traditionalism of Rosita Pérez and her defense of cohabitation as a life style choice represent Miguel's spiritual salvation, personal happiness and the attainment of true love. Only Rosita—to whom López Bago applies the perfect metaphor: "antídoto" (La querida 135)—can counteract the effect of Estefanía's venom.

Interestingly enough, the unconventional López Bago raises the issue of marriage between Miguel and Rosita as a valid solution to Miguel's neurosis, even though the protagonists themselves during their happiest days together never expressed the desire to wed. Rosita, as we have seen, was vehemently opposed to the institution and considered any comparison between herself and the bourgeois wife, "las mujeres honradas" (La querida 51) to be an insult. Rosita never wanted to be like "¡esas señoritas!," marriageable young ladies, who, as she forcefully tells Miguel are "todas iguales. No saben querer. Saben hacer rabiar. No sirven más que para dar disgustos" (La querida 244). In La buscona when

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Miguel first article is published, Rosita fantasized, not about being the wife, but "la querida del gran escritor" (99). In La buscona Miguel allays Don Pedro's worst fears when he categorically informs his distraught father that Rosita is his "querida" and not his "novia" (113), clearly defining the perimeters of the relationship. A man does not intend to marry his "querida," in contrast to his "novia," a role defined as "la que mantiene relaciones amorosas en expectativa de futuro matrimonio."[12]

It is Don Ramón, Miguel's "protector," "nuevo amigo" and "experto consejero" (La querida 98), who advises his marriage obsessed employee to forget about Estefanía and marry Rosita. Miguel and Rosita do not need to wed in order to be happy, but if Miguel insists on marriage, it should be to Rosita. The self-destructive Miguel reacts violently against what López Bago deems to be an auspicious course of action. In an interesting and unusual twist of the novelist's pen, López Bago, in effect, brings Don Pedro back from the grave, first through Don Ramón's unheeded advice to Miguel:

> Si está Ud. cansado de vivir soltero, no me opongo. Yo seré padrino de la boda, cásese Ud. ¡Pero no con Estefanía!....
>
> —¿Con quién entonces?
>
> —Si su padre de Ud. resucitara, él daría la contestación.
>
> Esta vez la conciencia, el alma, todo sirvió en

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> en Miguel para adivinar la respuesta del muerto. Y el ser entero, para desobedecer aquel sagrado mandato.
>
> —¡Con ella! ¡Con Rosita! ¡Nunca! ¡Jamás! (La querida 176)

The very idea that Don Pedro would now approve of his affair with Rosita is an anathema to the tormented Miguel. Nevertheless, the same idea is expressed with greater intensity by Rosita during the couple's final confrontation. Rosita, who accurately perceived Don Pedro as a more formidable adversary in death than in life, has been regularly and secretly visiting the *gobernador*'s grave to beg his forgiveness. According to the protagonist, it has been granted along with Don Pedro's love and blessing for their relationship. Here, López Bago reveals the depth of Rosita's own guilt and torment over Don Pedro's death and its effect on Miguel. The most salient element of Rosita's confession, and certainly one of the most poignant messages in the entire tetralogy, is López Bago's evocation of a superior celestial order, Christian in spirit, which embraces Rosita and women like her simply for being human, and for their truly noble characters. In heaven these women are neither judged nor condemned for what cruel and hypocritical man-made societies have forced them to become. In heaven Don Pedro can love and embrace Rosita—he now knows her soul, the only authentic criteria for eternal judgment:

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> Yo sufría, callaba, y por la tarde, ¿te acuerdas cuando me sorprendiste en el cementerio?.... No era la primera vez. Por la tarde, á escondidas, sin que tú lo supieras, iba á rezar, me arrodillaba delante del nicho y le pedía perdón al muerto. ¡Oh! ¡Cuánto hubiera yo dado, cuánto daría ahora mismo por una resurrección como ésa! ¿Sabes por qué? Me atreveré á decírtelo. Porque ahora ... el alma de aquel hombre honrado, pundonoroso, ha visto la mía desde el cielo, y, mirada desde allí, créeme, Miguel ... yo no parezco una mujer perdida. Sólo aquí, en este mundo, es donde soy lo que soy, lo que me han hecho ser, una buscona. No lo dudes. Tu padre ... me quiere ya, tu padre y yo nos queremos mucho desde que murió. (La querida 240-41)

In the crucial final pages of La querida, Miguel explains his madness—his reasons for rejecting Rosita and his fatalistic determination to marry Estefanía. Two factors are at the core of Miguel's neurosis: 1. the unbearable guilt he has experienced since the death of his father; and 2. a weakness of character—his immature essence as the "nene eterno." Both factors are manifested in sado-masochistic behavior. The tormented young writer believes himself undeserving of receiving love and happiness:

> La felicidad eras tú. Esa otra [Estefanía] es la

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> desgracia .... (244)
>
> Me entristece, me apena verte. Me desespero, y, sin embargo, resisto á la compasión. Yo no merezco ni siquiera besar por donde tú pisas. No serías tú la esclava, si volviéramos á vivir juntos. Lo sería yo. Yo te serviría.... No tienes que decirme cuánto me quieres. Lo sé. ¡Tú eres una santa! Yo, el más miserable de todos los hombres. (245)

Miguel is convinced that he actually killed his father; thus proving himself to be a potent contagion of destruction, a malevolent force which destroys the lives of those he loves the most by his intimate presence in their lives: Don Pedro and Rosita Pérez. He has selected Estefanía de Cerdeña as the agent of his own death, and in doing so, will destroy the reluctant bride-to-be who "iba á la boda como la res al matadero" (La querida 204). After Don Pedro, the two *queridas* in his life will be his next victims. Each woman will be destroyed through the particular sacrifice Miguel compels her to make: Estefanía will give up her independent and wealthy life style in order to have Miguel in her life; Rosita's sacrifice is to live without Miguel's in hers:

> No mató nadie á mi padre más que yo. Yo solo. Si tú mueres, yo soy el que te mata. ¡Un asesino! Tengo todos los instintos del asesino. Me gusta ver morir á la gente. La mato á pesares. Te

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> figuras que me prometo la felicidad con esa otra mujer. No lo creas. Me prometo matarla, como á ti, como á mi padre.... ¿Qué hombre soy yo? Porque á todas mis víctimas las quiero. Á ti te quiero, á Estefanía, y, sin embargo, sé que las dos tenéis que morir. Tú, ella y yo, los tres sufrimos horriblemente por culpa mía. Ella no quería casarse.... Si yo te dijera mañana: "He decidido casarme contigo," te volverías loca de contenta. Resistirías un poco.... Ella, casándose conmigo, se sacrifica. Se morirá. Por eso es mi empeño. Por eso la obligo. Soy un malvado. ¿Lo ves? (246-47)

In the final analysis a combination of factors—Miguel's overprotective upbringing, immaturity, lack of courage and conviction and his inability to confront the vicissitudes of life—render him incapable of standing up to societal mores even in order to save his own life, symbolized in a future with Rosita. In the Darwinian environment of the "survival of the fittest," Miguel Loitia allows himself to become an extinct species:

> No nací yo para vivir contigo. No tengo la grandeza de alma que se necesita para ponerme enfrente de la sociedad, para lanzar mi reto, enarbolando la bandera del amor único, del amor. Sólo de amor. Yo no tengo entrañas, no tengo

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resolución, ni vigor, ni nada. (245-46)

Not unlike the murder of Estrella Sánchez at the end of La Pálida, the murder of Miguel Loitia at the conclusion of La querida lends itself to interesting interpretations.

At its surface level, the scene in which the desperate Rosita orders Juanito to kill Miguel with a mortal stab wound to the chest and, later, after regaining consciousness, confesses to a crime of passion is, indeed, quite melodramatic; or "efectista," in Lozano Marco's opinion (349); or, even dominated by "el sentimentalismo y la exageración de gestos," according to Etreros (119). In this sense, Rosita orders Miguel's murder for purely selfish reasons—to prevent him from abandoning her for another woman, precipitated by his announced intention to spend his first night in his fiancée bed. Here, López Bago presents the not uncommon scenario of the rejected lover who perceives the fleeing party as personal property or a possession, whose actions state, in effect, the following: "If I can not have you, no one else will either." It is this scenario which Rosita purposely has decided to display to the public, a scenario which does not tell the entire story.

On the most sinister level, the alleged crime of passion was an act of premeditated murder. Rosita went to her fateful encounter with Miguel with the intention of having him killed if he refused to return to her. Rosita, the narrator affirms, "necesitaba estar muy segura de lo que hacía. No equivocarse.

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No dejarse llevar de apariencias. Averiguar si era cierto para resolver después" (219). Indeed, after verifying Miguel's plans to marry Estefanía, Rosita hires Juanito as her standby assassin and has him bring the murder weapon to the scene of the crime: "Llevas el estoque. Lo sé. En ese bastón" (248). After deciding that Miguel must die, Rosita offers her brother money: "¡Juan! Cuatro mil reales tengo. Gánalos" (248). The assassin receives payment for services rendered when he removes the 4,000 *reales* from one of the pockets of his unconscious employer. From a legal standpoint, Rosita's punishment would be less severe for a charge related to an impulsive act of passion than the discovery of a coldblooded homicide.

The fact that Rosita Pérez could conceive of planning the death of the only human being she loves in the world underscores the depth of her own mental breakdown. The treacherous Miguel has proven himself to be "más malvado" than all men combined (231). Consequently, Rosita too has crossed over the edge into madness, as she herself realizes: "La pasión es una locura como otra cualquiera. Miguel está loco. ¡Como yo! Yo también estoy loca por él" (231).

The inexorable pressures both familial and external to abandon Rosita Pérez and enter into a loveless bourgeois marriage is daunting to the strongest of personalities, but for the governor's sensitive man-child it is impossible to endure. Don Pedro's opposition to his liaison with Rosita,

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reinforced by Amparo's mission to see him married to a reputable *señorita*, and his public dishonor are the combined primary factors which destroyed Miguel from within. Having lost his identity, his sense of self and his own will, Miguel, already poisoned, has already died spiritually, emotionally and psychologically before his final confrontation with Rosita. The Pérez siblings, in reality, do Miguel a great service by putting him out of his misery sooner and more quickly, as evidenced by Miguel's last word before expiring: "—¡Gracias!—fué la última palabra que pronunció al morir el hijo del gobernador de los moderados" (249). Rosita gives Miguel his last gift and makes her final sacrifice. Once again it is Rosita who assumes the burden of accomplishing what her "nene" is incapable of realizing for himself.

In death Miguel is finally liberated from his torment, but it is Rosita who must now assume the agony of a spiritual, emotional and psychological death, her own living hell. As she has always borne the consequences of her mother's misdeeds, Rosita will cloak the sins of the two murderers of Miguel Loitia: 1. the technical assassin for hire: her cowardly and avaricious brother, an example of the proletariat's most despicable specimens; and 2. the real yet subtle assassin—the uncompromising dictates of a cruel and hypocritical dominant nineteenth-century social order. As was the case with Arístides, and José and Luis de Villaperdida in the tetralogy's first two novels, both murderers of Miguel

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Loitia escape detection and, consequently, all moral and legal retribution. Ironically, by assuming complete culpability for Miguel's murder, Rosita adheres to bourgeois society's mania for maintaining false appearances. Rosita ensures that the truth surrounding the circumstances of the death of Miguel Loitia is never disclosed to the public. To the world, the murder of the ex-governor's only son will be officially recorded as a simple crime of passion between two irreconcilable lovers.

Although the fate of the tetralogy's second heroine remains open-ended at the conclusion of La querida, the reader invariably wonders: What will become of Rosita Pérez after Miguel's death? After having confessed to murder, the protagonist would, undoubtedly, be incarcerated, possibly in the infamous Modelo Prison where Galdós' Isidora Rufete was interned. If convicted of the murder, Rosita would probably spend the rest of her life languishing behind bars. By her confession, Rosita actively chooses literal incarceration over a future in the outside world; in the other, already experienced external and figurative prison—a life of sadistic domination and exploitation inflicted by Juan and Doña Angustias at home, and the exposed perils of her former hopelessly doomed existence as a *callejera* or *buscona* on the streets of Madrid. Rosita herself gives us the answer to the question of her fate when she first realized Miguel's plans to leave her: "Y detrás ... de aquella deducción [that "¡Miguel

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ama á otra!"], esta otra, que era una profesía:—Yo voy a morirme de pena" (195). Later, during their final confrontation, Rosita implores Miguel: "Mírame. Mira cómo estoy. Mala. ¡Muy mala! ¡Muriéndome! ¡Como que esto me va á costar la vida!" (236) Rosita will die of a broken heart over losing Miguel. Don Pedro's son was Rosita's entire life; without him, his love and desire to remain with her, she can not go on living. As she tells her lover during their final moments together: "Es que para mí no hay nada más que tú" (241). Rosita, however, will not be as fortunate as Miguel to have a loved one to release her from her agony. Her death will be a slow and excruciating experience.

Rosita Pérez' Antagonists:

Doña Angustias de Pérez

Although we have already examined Angustias' destructive influence in her daughter's life and her principal role in effecting Rosita' deterministic life style as a "fallen women," the following observations may be added to offer a more complete portrait of this character. López Bago approaches Doña Angustias from two perspectives: 1. her maternal role, and 2. as a woman who symbolizes her era's obsession with materialism and social pretensions.

With Doña Angustias de Pérez, López Bago has succeeded in creating an authentic case of maternal pathology. A mother

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only in the biological sense, Doña Angustias is an aberration of nature; she goes against all natural, moral, social and religious laws of all cultures which revere the mother figure. According to "an expert" quoted by Deutsch, "maternity is a moral, religious, and even artistic ideal of civilization; a pregnant woman is protected by law and custom and should be regarded as a sacred object...."[13] "If we ascribe to motherliness the highest degree—perhaps a unique degree—of altruistic emotion," observes Deutsch (2:167), then Doña Angustias' maternal identity represents the antithesis to this ideal; rooted in the aforementioned multiple character defects: selfishness, pride, vanity, envy, hypocrisy, arrogance, pretentiousness, cruelty, delusions of grandeur, and so forth.

Through his characterization of Doña Angustias, López Bago also sought to debunk another prevailing stereotype of his own era: the "exalted status of motherhood in the nineteenth century."[14] As Thurer informs us, this idealized perception of the mother developed in the eighteenth century and continued to prevail in the nineteenth when "a mother—she who presided over the sacred temple of the hearth—became the repository of all that was decent and good" (182). She was "virtuous, gentle, devoted, asexual, limited in interests to creating a proper refuge for her family and to tenderly guiding her children along appointed ways.... Indeed, she became a secular version of the Virgin" (183). This "exalted"

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image was attributed primarily to the "cataclysmic" impact of the Industrial Revolution which had "shattered the traditional structure of the family by splitting apart what had been an indivisible whole—the home and workplace—never to be reunited" (183).

In a very tragic sense, the physical, moral, sexual, psychological and economic exploitation of Rosita Pérez is even more perfidious than that of Estrella Sánchez, inasmuch as it is rooted in the least likely source: a mother. Hidden and protected behind the stereotypical image of the ideal mother there exist mothers like Doña Angustias de Pérez—López Bago wants readers to remember—a mother who becomes her daughter's earthly hell, assuming all the characteristics of a diabolical anti-maternal figure. The following is a summary of Doña Angustias' sins against motherhood and the biological laws of nature, exemplified in the intimate exploitation of her own daughter. Doña Angustias:

1. failed in her fundamental responsibility to provide a financially stable home life for her children. As a result, Rosita and Juanito lived adrift, fluctuating between unhealthy extremes: from excessive and useless luxuries to the deprivation of basic necessities.

2. demonstrated an extreme inequality in the treatment of her two children. She would always pamper and spoil Juan, but ignored Rosita; and even favored the mistreatment of her daughter by her son.

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3. inverted the natural roles of mother and daughter. Traditionally, it is the mother who sacrifices her own desires for the physical, moral and economic well-being of her children. Doña Angustias does not sacrifice herself for her children; it is the daughter who sacrifices herself for her ungrateful mother and brother. Moreover, Doña Angustias never exhibits the maturity and common sense of an adult; it is Rosita, the teenager who continually demonstrates these qualities. While Rosita always confronts the harsh realities of life, her mother escapes into a fantasy world of her own creation.

4. did not prepare for the practical education of her children. Her desire for Juan to become an attorney had nothing to do with a mother's aspiration for a better quality of life for her children; on the contrary, his becoming a member of the legal profession was an extension of her own obsession with the idea of class superiority. During the late nineteenth century, law was one of the most esteemed professions a young man could hope to enter, the equivalent to the respect accorded to physicians in the late twentieth century. Historian Miguel Martínez Cuadrado has observed how:

> La titulación más perseguida y la que genera mayores posibilidades de poder social y político es, a lo largo de todo el período entre-repúblicas, el título de abogado. Con él quedaban entreabiertas las puertas de la política, de la

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> magistratura, del foro ... de la economía, la diplomacia, la prensa, la alta función pública, en sus cuerpos más prestigiados.[15]

Inasmuch as Juanito never realized such a professional goal, Doña Angustias preferred to see him unemployed. As for Rosita, Doña Angustias never instructed her in the most basic of domestic skills, never encouraged her daughter to earn an honest living by her own means, but prepared her to survive on her physical attributes and attractiveness to men. Instead of Rosita, it should have been Juanito, as a strong and healthy male, who took charge of providing for the family.

5. converted her home into a private house of prostitution—a place where she could stay posted on Rosita and her lovers' comings and goings.

6. failed at the most important responsibility of all by depriving Rosita of the benefits of the innate qualities of a truly maternal woman: guidance and unconditional love, affection, support and acceptance. For Doña Angustias, Rosita was never a beloved child. Consequently, Rosita's affective life was determined; the protagonist was destined or programmed to search for love in all her sexual relationships.

While Doña Angustias' diabolical anti-maternal identity represent the anathema to nineteenth-century attitudes on motherhood, and the truth regarding her maternal identity remains largely hidden from all but the most perceptive of outside observers (Lasoga, for example), López Bago's

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representation of her second identity—that of the vacuous female obsessed with social status and the maintenance of appearances at all costs—is reflective of a very prevalent nineteenth-century societal ill.

Doña Angustias is enamored of the very idea of "la clase media," the emergent "in" social class of the century. She aligns herself with such a powerful, successful and respected group in order to give herself a sense of self-worth and importance, qualities she does not naturally possess. In La Pálida, López Bago describes her fantasy-based mania:

> Doña Angustias estaba muy convencida de pertenecer á la clase media, y jamás pudo saberse, porque ella misma lo ignoraba, qué especie de mágico encanto producían en su ánimo estas dos palabras *clase media*, por las cuales estaba haciendo sacrificios constantes, y por muchos que hiciera siempre le parecían pocos. La *clase media* era el *sancta sanctorum* para la viuda del capitán, como lo son para los aristócratas sus títulos de nobleza. (La Pálida 75)

Members of the bourgeoisie are expected to fulfill certain obligations is the rationale behind all the "monomanías de doña Angustias" (75). She justifies her extravagant and purposeless expenditures by employing her tiresome and snobbish "consoladora explicación" (78): "'Las personas de nuestra clase tienen muchas deudas'" (77, 78).

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Interestingly enough, Doña Angustias' statement is in keeping with the mentality of the period; the "justification for the consumption of luxury goods," Aldaraca affirms, "was the familiar argument that one's station in life demanded conformity to a set standard of expenditure" (Angel 91).

The moral and sexual fall from grace of female characters with pretensions of social status and obsessed with the materialistic values of the upper strata of society was a dominant theme in the literature of the late nineteenth century, most notably in the novels of Zola and Galdós. In citing the similarities between the two novelists, Brian Dendle notes how Zola, in La Curée, "acentúa la importancia de las apariencias en una sociedad corrompida; una mujer se ve obligada a sacrificarse sexualmente para pagar deudas contraídas en su afán del lujo."[16]

Dendle's statement applies perfectly to the predicament of Galdós' two titled heroines: Isidora Rufete from La desheredada and Rosalía in La de Bringas—two women whose false sense of values are shared by their counterpart, Doña Angustias. Like Captain Pérez' widow, Galdós' protagonists are vain, materialistic, self-indulgent and emotionally unbalanced. The three women can not accept the reality of their selves—for who, what and where they are in life. Each in her own way seeks to escape from herself by pursing individual obsessions. Doña Angustias' obsession, as we have seen, is to be accepted and respected as a valued member of

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the middle class. Isidora's obsession is to be recognized and rewarded as the long lost illegitimate daughter of an aristocratic mother. Isidora comes to symbolize, according to Guadalupe Gómez-Ferrer Morant, "el arquetipo de mujer que consume su vida soñando con una ascensión social."[17] Rosalía's obsession is with clothing and jewelry, to dress like and be perceived as a lady in the court of Isabel II. Of this protagonist, Akiko Tsuchiya writes:

> Rosalía's desire to *aparentar* takes the specific form of an obsession with clothes, an obsession that leads her to pawn the family's possessions, to resort to loan sharks and, ultimately, to prostitute herself....
>
> Rosalía de Bringas is a stereotypical product of her culture, a "mujer cursi" who pretends to be something that she is not. She is driven by the desire to put on appearances, to transform herself into an *image*, or a *sign* of "honradez."[18]

Instead of striving for their goals through traditionally accepted means—economy, planning and personal self-restraint, Galdós' "archetypical" and "stereotypical" protagonists would rather allow their obsessions to lead them to the lowest depths of moral and sexual degradation. Since she is not of noble birth, Isidora would prefer to sacrifice her virtue and become a prostitute; Rosalía would rather commit adultery and sell the use of her body to pay for her finery and pay off

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other debts, only to repeat the process. Doña Angustias, however, is more selfish than Galdós' heroines. Instead of sacrificing her own honor, she sacrifices her daughter's. Rosita's victimization is, therefore, all the more tragic, inasmuch as her fall from grace is not—as it is in the case of Isidora and Rosita—the result of a predicament of her own making.

López Bago, however, does not allow Doña Angustias to escape retribution for her misdeeds. While Rosita's fall is moral, sexual and psychological, Doña Angustias is punished physically. In La buscona she is afflicted with chlorosis—an unsightly condition which causes "the skin to turn a greenish color;"[19] in La querida Doña Angustias' health deteriorates even more, into paralysis. López Bago's choice of afflictions for Doña Angustias was not a casual decision. For a woman obsessed with external appearances, both conditions are especially severe punishments. Both chlorosis and paralysis go to the root of destroying any desire to appear in public, and the latter handicap precludes the facile or comfortable possibility of such an act. The definition of to "paralyze" is "to bring into a condition of helpless inactivity; make ineffective or powerless;"[20] and symbolically, Doña Angustias' permanent confinement to a wheelchair mirrors her authentic self, her life-long inability to serve any productive purpose in society or to her children. In one final twist of irony, this character, who possesses no

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redeeming qualities, will no longer, after Miguel's death and Rosita's incarceration, have her daughter at home to exploit and torment. Moreover, Doña Angustias will now be forced to support herself and Juanito only on her widow's pension and will also be forced to depend upon her useless son to care for her.

Estefanía de Cerdeña

Although the two women never meet, the most fascinating aspect of an examination of Estefanía de Cerdeña is her relationship to Rosita Pérez. In the tetralogy's last novel, Estefanía is represented on two levels: first, as Rosita's professional antithesis and as her antithesis in personality; and second, as the protagonist's complement in the role of professional mistress. Rosita and Estefanía represent the two sides of the same role; through their diverse backgrounds, personalities and individual situations, together they both fulfill and encompass the multifaceted aspects of the term, "la querida."

Don Ramón serves as La querida's official reporter and historian on the background and personality of the somewhat mysterious Estefanía de Cerdeña, whom he introduces to Miguel as the real life model for the heroine of the novel Rosita's lover plans to write.

The worldly twenty-seven year old popular socialite is a

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wealthy woman of independent means who moves effortlessly among the social elite, participating fully in the interminable rounds of social diversions and obligations of Madrid's aristocracy and upper bourgeoisie, attired in an extensive and expensive wardrobe to match:

> ¿Quién es Estefanía? ¿De dónde viene? Unas veces de París, otras de Londres; ha recorrido muchas leguas por tierra y por mar. Ella es andaluza. Da comidas, se abona á los teatros, alterna con lo más distinguido, con la sociedad selecta. La respetan, la consideran .... (104)
>
> Es una señorita que tiene fortuna propia, vive de sus rentas, que administra ella misma; le gusta divertirse .... (111)
>
> En su armario tiene los sombreros á montones, los abrigos más costosos, los trajes más ricos. Ropa, mucha ropa, en que se ahogaría la respiración de un gigante. (10)

Don Ramón offers two physical descriptions of Estefanía de Cerdeña. Included in the first description, the publisher offers an explanation, perhaps, for Estefanía's phenomenal success with men: her expertise in pretense; her ability to adhere to society's dictum of maintaining appearances and hiding one's true feelings behind a well-developed facade. Forever conscious of the role she is playing, the seductively tempting "malicia en los ojos" is irresistible to men with

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lascivious intentions. Estefanía:

> ... tiene las facciones muy pronunciadas. Una edad, veintisiete años, sexo, temperamento, nervios, entrañas, toda la malicia en los ojos, el mayor disimulo en el pensamiento, propósitos siniestros de enamorar hasta la locura á todos cuantos la saludan. Bien formada, porque es esbelta; pero sin más carne que la necesaria para que se produzca como un apunte delicado la redondez de líneas propia del cuerpo femenino. Tiene el alma grande, y la esconde; el pie pequeño, y lo enseña. (112)

Don Ramón adds the following details to his physical portrait of the novel's second *querida*. Estefanía:

> Tenía los ojos garzos, no muy grandes, expresivos; la boca, de labios finísimos, descoloridos, se plegaba con una sonrisa constantemente forzada. Los dientes menudos, apretados y blancos. La tez pálida, mate; las manos transparentando las venas; largos y afilados los dedos; muy esbelta, pero indolente al andar. Adivinándose en su cuerpo la costumbre del baño diario .... (122)

In contrast to Rosita who was forced by financial necessity to actively search for lovers and who experienced periods without men in her life, the innately coquettish and frivolous Estefanía never lacks for lovers; she is constantly

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pursued. And, like the stereotypical high class courtesan, she, unlike the emotionally vulnerable Rosita, never falls in love with her suitors:

> Estefanía es una señorita que tiene mucho partido entre los hombres. El conde es un pretendiente; hay un comerciante muy rico rival suyo, y un extranjero rival de los dos.
>
> —¿Un extranjero?
>
> —Un inglés. Lo que puede Ud. asegurar es que ella no quiere á ninguno. (110)

Although she is more successful with men, Estefanía, unlike Rosita or Estrella Sánchez, is not beautiful; a fact indicative, perhaps, of society's judgment of a mistress' greater expertise in seductive dissimulation and an air of mystery as more valued assets than physical beauty, and a Rubenesque figure, the preferred body type of the era. Miguel, for instance, is bewitched by Estefanía, despite her less than perfect physical and character attributes: "Estefanía no era bonita, no estaba gruesa, ni siquiera estaba sana. Y él sentía el amor intenso, profundo, irresistible. ¡Él amaba á la señorita de Cerdena!" (137). Estefanía herself acknowledges that she is not beautiful when she insists on eliciting information about Rosita in order to make physical comparisons between herself and Miguel's first *querida*:

> —Dime, ¿es bonita?
>
> —Algo gruesa, morena. Sí. Lo es.

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—¡Ah! De manera que no nos parecemos en nada?

—En el pelo. También es negro. (214-15)

Interestingly enough, it is the knowledge of Rosita's presence in Miguel's life as "the other woman" which piques Estefanía's vanity and the natural competitive instincts of the seasoned professional mistress: "¡Otra mujer! ¿Había otra mujer en todo aquello? ¡Viviendo con él hasta el día anterior! ¡Con él!" (214). Suddenly, Miguel has become more intriguing; and, for the first time, Estefanía begins to take his attentions seriously. Knowing that Miguel has abandoned Rosita, Estefanía takes obvious delight in citing the two women's physical differences. Such differences will facilitate the transference of Miguel's allegiance:

> ¡Con qué alegría se vanalaglorió ella de lo que ocultaba y procuraba disimular hasta entonces para que no lo viera nadie, para que nadie lo supiera!
>
> ¡Oh! El mío ya no es negro. Mira. Míralo bien. Tengo canas. ¡Ella no las tendrá!
>
> —No. No las tiene.
>
> —Además, yo soy trigueña. Ella, morena, tendrá los ojos negros. Lo natural.
>
> Sí.
>
> Yo los tengo garzos. Míramelos bien—y se incorporaba, abriendo los párpados todo cuanto pudo.—¿Lo ves? ¡Garzos!
>
> —Cierto.

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—Bien. Sigue ahora. Te escucho.

Se reclinó de nuevo.... Más satisfecha. Casi sonriendo. (215)

As Miguel recounts the salient events in his life with Rosita, Estefanía, in reality, sympathizes with Captain Pérez' daughter. Nevertheless, she resorts to form, hiding her feelings behind a hardened mask of cruel condemnation. In the height of hypocrisy, Estefanía disparages Rosita's sacrifices for Miguel; resorting to echoing her era's traditional condescending attitude regarding women from the lower classes, particularly, fallen women:

Cuando contó la escena del cementerio, la señorita de Cerdeña no pudo contener su emoción.

—¡Pobrecilla! ¡Mira que pedirte perdón encima!

Pero instantáneamente, con acento que revelaba cólera contra lo que había dicho sin querer, de un modo casi instintivo:

—¡Yo hubiera hecho más que eso! .... (215)

Por fin, al saber lo que Rosita hizo y dijo á don Ramón, la petición de los cuatro mil reales "más los intereses", la despedida brutal de que fué víctima el amante de Carlota, soltó una carcajada.

—¡Ya decía yo! ¡Tenía que ser una mujer como todas las de su clase!

Y añadió este grosero insulto:

—¿Y á ti te ha sorprendido? ¡Pero, hombre, qué

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> tonto eres! No desmiente la casta ninguna de esas (sic). ¡Ninguna! (216)

But even the veneer of the expert in dissimulation breaks temporarily when Estefanía's emotional outburst belie the cruel words she has just uttered:

> El escritor no contestó. Entonces, furiosa con aquel silencio, insistió más enérgica:
>
> —¡Te digo que no! ¡Lo digo y lo repito!
>
> En seguida, con las dos manos, se tapó la cara, y así no se vió si es que se avergonzaba de sí misma, ó si lloraba. Tal vez hubo entre los dedos tantas lágrimas como vergüenza. (216-17)

It is not love for Miguel which convinces her to quickly agree to Miguel's marriage proposal; it is her selfish desire to keep him away from her rival: "Ahora soy yo, ¿me entiendes?, yo la que lo decide. Serás mi marido. ¡Quiero que lo seas! La fortuna mía volverá á las cajas de la casa de banca. Viviremos con lo tuyo. Soy pobre desde ahora" (217).

Behind the facade of her public life as the flirtatious socialite, Don Ramón reveals Estefanía's private misery, that of a woman who is so desperately unhappy that she is slowly committing suicide. López Bago makes the point of directly linking Estefanía's venomous identity to the self-indulgent, hypocritical, vacuous life style of luxury she leads: " ... creo sencillamente que es una desesperada. Una mujer que se está matando con un suicidio lento y original. Tomando la

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vida social como un veneneo, propinándosela en fuertes dosis" (101). Estefanía, whose "cariño" (181) symbolizes death for Miguel, is herself in the process of effecting her own destruction.

At the core of Estefanía's profound unhappiness is her failure to be true to herself, Don Ramón theorizes, to her authentic nature as, perhaps, an ordinary Andalusian woman contented with the basic necessities for a happy, productive yet simple life. By rejecting this path, Estefanía is killing herself from within at an accelerated pace, attempting, in effect, to burn herself out or to exhaust herself to the point of collapse through her whirlwind of endless upper class social activities:

> ... supongamos que Estefanía ... ha nacido para vivir de otra suerte, poniéndose, por ejemplo, un vestido de percal en verano, como las andaluzas, de lana en el invierno, porque con dos vestidos y un hombre, un solo amor, son dichosas algunas mujeres. Si ella es así, y hace lo contrario, hay en esto algo de suicidio, no le quepa á Ud. duda. Tengo otros datos para creer que desea morir por un procedimiento que consiste en vivir demasiado, es decir, vivir mucho en poco tiempo.... Estefanía está oxigenándose de una manera que aterra, que asusta. El teatro es una diversión, el baile es un placer, la amistad un afecto, la comida una

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> necesidad ... el juego se inventó para entretenimiento ... pero todas estas cosas, excediéndose en ellas ... enloquecen, matan.... En cuanto á las causas que determinan ese suicidio, nadie las presume, son un misterio. (102-03)

Through the words of Don Ramón, López Bago takes advantage of the opportunity to refute another false romantic notion: that misery seeks solitude. On the contrary, the novelist warns his readers: do not be deceived by the external gaiety and contentment of those who live in wealth; they are merely displaying their well-worn masks. For, according to López Bago, "la mentira es una base imprescindible, el fundamento de la sociedad" (110). Don Ramón sets Miguel straight:

> ¿Qué tendrá usted en los ojos para no ver ese disimulo?.... Para Ud. es una señorita que va en carruaje á paseo con su hermana. Usted ha dicho: los que sufren no se pasean, ó se van á los sitios desiertos. Es Ud. un chiquillo.... Ese convencionalismo del dolor que busca la soledad es romántico y falso. Los que sufren se pasean y bailan, y comen y beben, y cantan y se mueren de ... risa. (107)

Both Rosita and Estefanía defy their era's societal dictum that the only respectable occupation for women of all backgrounds is that of the devoted wife and mother. Neither

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querida wants to marry: Rosita abhors the idea of becoming one of "esas mujeres honradas;" while Estefanía "odia el matrimonio" (111), a conviction reinforced throughout the novel by her pronouncement: "'Yo no me casaré nunca'" (105, 111, 170, 204). At first glance, Estefanía's situation seems ideal, certainly in comparison to Rosita's life of relentless familial and financial strife. Estefanía enjoys freedom of movement and of will. She comes and goes as she pleases and answers to no one; has no financial worries and is in control of her own wealth; is a popular and well-respected member of her elite social circle; has numerous suitors vying for her attentions; and maintains a luxurious life style—in short, Estefanía de Cerdeña is the recipient of the very best that life has to offer a young woman of means and status. All the comforts and trappings of materialism can not disguise Estefanía's loveless existence. Ironically, Estefanía seeks but never finds the type of authentic bond of love which existed between Rosita and Miguel, the type of bond which is not built on acquiring riches, but built on shared experiences coping with life's hardships. As Rosita affirms in the following statement: "Lo que ata más ... lo que funde las almas, es la amargura, el pesar, la tristeza. Las contrariedades de la vida" (228). Estefanía, Don Ramón contends, would gladly renounce her life style for the opportunity to experience, if only once in her life, a night of passion with a man who truly loves her:

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> Pero esa mujer lo daría todo por una buena noche de amor, créame Ud. Yo la he visto bajo la araña del salón de baile, rodeada de hombres de frac, volver de repente la cabeza como buscando algo que de ella se hubiera desprendido.... Pasaba junto a mí, diciéndome con los ojos, sin querer decírmelo: "Es la dicha la que se me ha perdido." (104-05)[21]

In addition to his contribution of yet another master example of his cruel sense of irony with Estefanía's shocking revelation about her secret life as a professional courtesan, López Bago chooses this character as the means of delivering the ultimate *coup* of ironic humor against the hypocrisy and falseness of Madrid's social elite. It is Estefanía, the consummate dissimulator, who succeeds in deceiving the very Establishment she epitomizes. Only as a last resort, to put an end to Miguel's obsession to marry her, does Estefanía cruelly reveal the truth: her suitors are her clients; her wealth is attributed to earnings received in exchange for professional services given to a succession of wealthy and powerful men of rank; she is not a *señorita*, but an authentic *querida*, concerned first and foremost with the material possessions she receives from her lovers:

> Mi fortuna la debo á mis vicios. Yo no soy una víctima de nada ni de nadie. ¿Me entiendes? Soy una mujer viciosa. No hubo seducción. Al entregarme, supe lo que hacía. Fue voluntariamente

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> ... calculando las ganancias.... Yo no puedo vivir sin esta atmósfera. ¿Ves este lujo? Lo necesito. Tú no me lo darás .... (205)
>
> A mí me persiguen los ricos.... Sucedió ... lo que puede Ud. figurarse.... No lo supo nadie .... En cuanto á sospecharlo ... ¿á mí qué me importa? Todo el mundo puede sospechar y figurarse lo que se le antoje.... De mis cosas no hay ninguna evidencia ... ninguna prueba .... (207-208)

Estefanía has always been very discreet in her liaisons. She does not concern herself (or pretends not to) with possible suspicions about her double life, only the public revelation of verifiable proof. López Bago offers Amparo—Miguel's false and scandalmonger sister as proof that Estefanía's reputation is, indeed, intact. The unsuspecting Amparo, who prides herself on her knowledge of Madrid society: "Yo conozco á todo Madrid—exclamó, herida en su amor propio de pindonga" (145), favored a marriage between her brother and the wealthy *señorita* de Cerdeña.

Although Miguel's primary objective for marrying Estefanía is to effect their mutual destruction, he, after learning the truth about his fiancée, becomes a consenting accomplice to society's premium on maintaining false appearances. The following question is raised: Since Rosita Pérez and Estefanía de Cerdeña are both kept women, why does Miguel still want to marry Estefanía when he rejected Rosita

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for the same reason? The answer lies in the primary difference which separates the two women: while Estefanía's secret is known only to a select few, all of Madrid society is aware of the details of Rosita's scandalous past as a "fallen woman." Although they share the same profession, Rosita Pérez and Estefanía de Cerdeña are judged by different standards, based on public awareness of the details of their sexual lives. Rosita receives the full brunt of society's disdain; Estefanía basks in its approval and respect.

A closer look at the symbiotic relationship between Rosita Pérez and Estefanía de Cerdeña reveals many salient points of comparison and contrast between the two courtesans.

López Bago clearly wanted his readers' sympathies to remain with Rosita, as we witnessed her continuous struggle to confront the numerous trials endured over the course of three novels. Estefanía's background remains in many ways "un misterio" (103). It is not known what forces originally led her into prostitution; nor if the profession is at the root of her desire to terminate her life. We witness moments of inner truth in which she realizes the vacuity of her existence; however, these moments are fleeting and her mask of hypocrisy and false appearances, years in the making, ultimately, triumphs over self-revelation and honest introspection.

The two women differ significantly in their motivation for remaining in the profession. For Rosita, it was a matter of survival; she detested her experiences as a *buscona*. She

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was suited to the role of mistress when it encompassed a steady physical relationship and an emotional commitment with one man. Estefanía, who had already attained a superior level of financial security and independence from the substantial revenue she received from her prosperous clients, could have—but did not—retired comfortably. Her mania for luxuries and social status was her primary reason for remaining in the profession. Unlike Rosita, the restless Estefanía preferred a succession of lovers in and out of her life, since she was constantly on the lookout for more profitable liaisons. This love of materialism was, as we recall, cited by literary anarchists (see Chapter II) as the foremost reason why middle or upper class women chose the role of professional courtesan.

For both women, love is the cornerstone of their existence. Rosita experienced true love only once; Estefanía never has. However, both women suffer greatly because of men's betrayal: Rosita by Lasoga, the Duke de Tres Estrellas, and, most painfully, by Miguel; Estefanía never believed in true love, only in "EL AMOR ... CARNAL" (sic) (126), since she never found it in any of her affairs, nor among the men of her acquaintance.

On the spectrum of their love triangle with Miguel, Rosita, the prototype of the benevolent working class woman, symbolizes Miguel's salvation and life itself; Estefanía, the poisoner and representative of the profligate upper classes,

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symbolizes death. Here again, López Bago contradicts nineteenth-century society's attitude regarding lower class women, particularly "fallen women," as contagions of disease, death and destruction.

Interestingly enough, our radical novelist himself warns against the unhealthiness of extremes, exemplified in the life styles of the two mistresses. While Rosita gave and received love from Miguel, their union was plagued by financial instability—the regular pawning of belongings, the requests for advances on Miguel's salary, the Pérez family's failure to live within means, etc. Estefaniá's life, on the other hand, was emotionally empty in its absence of true love, but oversaturated with wasteful extravagances and self-indulgent, purposeless amusements. The lives of both women were severely harmed by their failure to achieve the ideal "happy medium," the necessary balance of love and financial stability.

At the conclusion of La querida, Estefanía's fate remains open-ended. With her hopes for a night of passion with Miguel and their wedding plans destroyed forever, one may assume that she would continue to maintain her vacuous life style, but, after having been touched by the only man she ever admired—"Pero lo admiro. No me ha inspirado admiración ningún hombre. Sólo ... Ud." (157)—emotionally it would be more difficult for her to maintain the facade. Estefanía, who was already committing suicide before her involvement with Miguel, would, more than likely, continue on this path until

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she reached her lethal level of toxicity. While death came quickly to Miguel, neither Rosita nor Estefanía, in their respective terminal conditions—Rosita, from a broken heart and Estefanía, poisoning—will escape the interminable agony of a lingering demise.

In his continuous vitriolic campaign to expose and denounce the inherent evils of professional female prostitution in the late nineteenth century, López Bago, beginning with La Pálida and continuing in La buscona and La querida, shifts the focus of his objective to the tetralogy's second young heroine, Rosita Pérez, the protagonist from the lower middle class. In contrast to his more global and historical approach to examining the causes and effects of female prostitution expounded through the traumatic experiences of the archetypical Estrella Sánchez, our *pueblo* heroine from La prostituta and La Pálida, López Bago, in Rosita Pérez, presents an intimate psychological portrait of a complex and multifaceted protagonist in her own right. In Rosita Pérez we have observed a vast spectrum of emotions, inner as well as external conflict and turmoil as she struggled to cope with overwhelming familiar and societal obstacles. While in La Pálida, López Bago details the causes which propelled Rosita Pérez into professional prostitution; in La buscona and La querida, the novelist examines the devastating effect the protagonist's status as an acknowledged

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"fallen woman" has on her lifelong quest to find happiness, true love and acceptance in an intimate and committed relationship.

In La Pálida López Bago makes it perfectly clear that Doña Angustias, a character who represents an aberration of maternal nature, is responsible for Rosita's irrevocable sexual, moral, psychological and spiritual descent into professional prostitution—a fall which was initiated by the self-centered and avaricious mother's cold determination to marry her daughter off to the first available male who requested her hand, regardless of the man's character or her daughter's feelings on the most consequential decision of her life. The nineteenth-century practice of forcing marriageable daughters to parade before prospective suitors was, to López Bago, as abhorrent as the inhumane and morally degrading auctioning of the services of prostitutes in brothels or the trafficking of human flesh in slave auctions for pecuniary profit.

In a master stroke of cruel symbolic irony, the ardent anticlerical novelist condemns the Catholic Church's representative, the lascivious priest, Lasoga, for the protagonist's fall into prostitution on two levels. By accidentally killing Captain Pérez, Lasoga set into motion the chain of events which would place his desired prey into his grasp. Lasoga robbed Rosita of her natural male authoritative figure and her legal protector, effecting the unnatural

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situation in which the minor Rosita belonged to no man. Left physically and legally undefended, and emotionally and sexually vulnerable, her precarious predicament was exacerbated when the dysfunctional Doña Angustias took over as the legal head of the Pérez household. Lasoga took cruel advantage of Rosita's vulnerability when he seduced her. However, the memory of the traumatic experience turned into a macabre nightmare when the priest's crime was revealed.

In his goal of creating in his second protagonist an intensely erotic and passionate woman who follows the physiological dictates of her own body, our radical naturalist confronts several traditional taboos and boldly deals with such controversial sexual issues as Rosita's masturbation, bisexuality and nymphomania. In addition, he presents an episode of hysteria—deemed by medical authorities as the pathological consequence of pent up sexual frustration, and also by López Bago as the pathological consequence of prolonged virginity.

Rosita's nymphomania presents an interesting case in point. In his documentation of this female sexual aberration, López Bago debunks the romantic image of a woman being physically and emotionally incapable of loving more than one man over any given period of time. Rosita fell in love with both the Duke de Tres Estrellas and Miguel Loitia simultaneously, maintaining concurrent sexual liaisons with both men, habitually engaging in intense sexual encounters

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with her two lovers on the same days.

In Rosita, López Bago also rejects his era's general perception which automatically equated nymphomania with promiscuity and prostitution. Although as a nymphomaniac, Rosita possesses a strong libido, she was neither indiscriminate in her choice of partners nor willingly engaged in pleasurable sexual activity with a succession of lovers. The protagonist found sexual pleasure in her affairs with only two men: the Duke de Tres Estrellas and Miguel Loitia. (López Bago does not discuss the intimate details of her affair with Lasoga.) Moreover, after dismissing the duke from her life, Rosita was perfectly content in her sexually active but monogamous relationship with Miguel. Again, rejecting the false perception of the era that most women entered prostitution primarily to satiate their carnal desires, López Bago demonstrates how the intensely erotic and passionate Rosita loathed her professional encounters as a *callejera*.

Through Rosita's traumatic experiences as a streetwalker in La buscona, López Bago introduces readers to the statistically larger category of commercial sexuality practiced in the nineteenth century known as "clandestine prostitution." This category of the profession was considered illegal in many European nations, since governments failed to adequately identify and police the activities of those involved; and, consequently, were unable to profit financially, in sharp contrast to state supervised bordello

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prostitution. In this large heterogeneous category which ranged from high class *queridas* to part-time proletarian women forced to sell their services in order to supplement their families' wages, López Bago underscores Rosita's humiliation as a common streetwalker forced to publicly advertise her sexual availability and actively seek to exploit her body before a parade of male passersby. While the independent or free-lance prostitute had the liberty to accept or reject any prospective customer, she was always in great danger of being assaulted or even murdered—not uncommon occurrences at the time. López Bago brings this violent reality to the forefront when Rosita, all alone and totally at the mercy of a stranger, is terrified for her life, trapped inside an abominable house of assignation, one of many in Madrid.

Paralleling the psychological profile of Rosita Pérez, Miguel Loitia stands out as the tetralogy's most developed male character, a testament to the novelist's greater range of novelistic skill and talent heretofore not exhibited in "La prostituta"'s first two novels. In La buscona and La querida we observed how the novelist succeeds in capturing the varied emotional complexities and internal crises of his male protagonist. Over the course of the two novels we witness the psychological dismantling of Miguel's personality as he is progressively destroyed by a host of powerful internal and external factors: sexual awakening, unrealistic romantic illusions, basic immaturity, jealously, suspicion, financial

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problems, deception, manipulation, grief, guilt, alienation, hopelessness, madness, fatalism; sadistic and masochistic behavior and suicidal tendencies; and stigmatization and ostracism for daring to challenge the Establishment's uncompromising dictates on acceptable bourgeois behavior and life style options. Miguel's failed battle to successfully integrate his own physiological needs with societal dictates is symbolic of the larger contest between the power of the benign physiological laws of nature, incarnated in Rosita Pérez, versus the destructive laws of nineteenth-century society, personified in Don Pedro Loitia. While we witness Rosita's victory in La buscona, the anti-Establishment heroine who dares to entice a young bourgeois to defy society's laws is destroyed in La querida through Miguel, the son of a pre-revolutionary conservative politician and the longest serving bureaucrat in Spain's history. Rosita does not seek society's approval, only Miguel's. She is willing and quite prepared to continue to live outside of society's boundaries as long as she has Miguel. However, Don Pedro's moral condemnatory campaign against Rosita contaminates his weak willed son. Although Don Pedro's legacy of fear and guilt, like Spain's rigid, hypocritical, conservative prerevolutionary mentality, continued to exert their power and influence on the next generation, López Bago, through Don Pedro, sends an ominous warning to the ruling Establishment. While Don Pedro in death is ultimately successful in separating Miguel and Rosita, his

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campaign against the protagonist backfires; ironically, it greatly contributes to the very destruction of the son he so adored. Bourgeois society, López Bago contends, by resorting to manipulative tactics (stigmatization, ostracism) to exert its will by pressuring successive enervated generations to adhere to its predetermined mores end up destroying many of its own heirs, extinguishing their genealogical lines, as is the fate of the Loitia's; a fate reminiscent of the extinguished diseased Villaperdida lineage in La Pálida.

López Bago clearly expresses his views on marriage. In keeping with his anti-Establishment sentiments, our novelist condemns the obligatory bourgeois marriage of convenience. The pressure to enter into a loveless union for financial security or to satisfy familial demands was as fatally pathological to López Bago as any incurable mental or physiological disease, as evidenced by Miguel's realization of this reality. His inability to pretend, to go along with the prescribed facade of domestic harmony, propelled him to seek his own self-destruction as the only solution to his no-win situation. The enormity of societal pressure is all the more ominous when we recall that Miguel sought death despite the fact that Rosita offered him love, happiness and personal fulfillment. López Bago denounces a society which would have Miguel marry the poisonous Estefanía when he loved Rosita. The novelist does, however, approve of marriage based on love, mutual respect, compatibility, and so forth—as he would have

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for Rosita and Miguel. Although marriage, in López Bago's estimation, was not necessary for the couple's happiness, it would have attenuated society's condemnation.

While López Bago disapproves of Rosita and Miguel's particularly abnormal arrangement of living together in the same apartment with Angustias and Juan, the novelist condones the cohabitation of unmarried lovers regardless of social class—a radical concept for his era, and one which constituted such an anathema to bourgeois sensibilities that any male who dared to live openly with his mistress was stigmatized and ostracized alongside his female companion. Such an attitude was a curious, if not rare, phenomenon for the patriarchal society of the times in which men traditionally were rarely even held responsible for a host of authentic misdeeds: adultery, the transmission of venereal disease, failure to acknowledge illegitimate offspring, physical violence against children and women: wives in private and prostitutes in public, etc. López Bago warns, however, that those couples who adopt cohabitation as a life style choice must both be exceptionally strong in character and resolve in order to withstand society's condemnation of their relationship. While Rosita possesses this strength and determination, Miguel does not. Tragically and ironically, the stronger Rosita needs the weak willed Miguel to accomplish this goal.

Our naturalist novelist strikes more blows against his

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ideological archenemy, Idealism, when he effectively destroys two of Miguel's romantic illusions concerning "fallen women" and conjugal life. Part of Miguel's attraction to Rosita is the opportunity she affords him to act out the role of a romantic Dumas hero who rescues his own real life version of Marguerite Gautier. When the real life strain of the internal and external pressures of their affair overwhelms him, Miguel is sadly disillusioned; but instead of coming to terms with reality, he exchanges one romantic illusion for another: that of the idealized image of conjugal love, envisioning himself as a husband like his father, blissfully married to an adolescent virginal bride. The price López Bago exacts on Miguel's psyche for his second illusion is, indeed, brutally devastating, as we observe when he learns the truth about his fiancée private life as a seasoned *querida*. Ironically, Estefanía was only supposed to be Miguel's real life inspiration for the heroine of the novel he was to write. Miguel should have left Estefanía there in his mind as the core of his fictitious story line. On the other hand, Miguel fails to realize that Rosita proved to be in reality, infinitely more real and human than her literary model, Marguerite Gautier.

López Bago also ruins Rosita's romantic illusion of what it means to be a prostitute or a mistress. A significant factor in Rosita's attraction to Estrella is rooted in materialism, in the latter's luxurious life style, along with

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Rosita's longing for financial independence and a passionate sexual life. Although Rosita's illusions are likewise destroyed when she chooses to become the mistress of an impoverished writer, Rosita is redeemed in López Bago's opinion; for she, unlike Estefanía or Doña Angustias, chooses love over materialism.

Second only to his exposé on the evils of professional prostitution, the issues of reality versus illusion and the hypocrisy of false appearances are the dominant themes underscored by López Bago throughout La buscona and La querida, novels in which very little is as it appears to be.

Rosita distinguishes herself as the backbone—albeit unacknowledged, unappreciated and unsupported—in the critical positive roles she plays in the lives of those closest to her. While publicly identified as Miguel's *querida*, no one is aware of her nurturing maternal influence in his life. In contrast, the diabolical Doña Angustias, who is her daughter's sadistic exploiter, tormenter and pimp in private, is legally and socially recognized as another legitimate stereotypical representative of nineteenth-century Spain's exalted mother figure. Moreover, while Doña Angustias acts the part of the lady of the household, in actuality, Rosita is the family's breadwinner. Rosita, who fulfills the role of loving and devoted wife as Miguel's *querida*, is truly honorable, antithetical to Angustias who makes a mockery of the idealized concept of wife-widow as well as mother.

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In the depiction of Rosita and Miguel's affair, López Bago defies the general attitude of the era, of a society in which it was understood that the male was always deemed superior and the more dominant partner in any relationship with a female. While Miguel possesses the superficial and obvious external requirements of gender and class needed to have every opportunity to fulfill his professional aspirations, Miguel is, internally, a scared little boy, incapable of assuming the responsibilities or enjoying the advantages of a man of his status. On the other hand, it is Rosita, a woman and, moreover, a "fallen woman," who possesses the strength of character that is expected but lacking in Miguel; it is Rosita who incarnates the stereotypical masculine traits of will, determination, ambition, aggressiveness, intelligence and toughness required to rise to the summit of a chosen field—opportunities denied to her because of gender and social status.

With regard to the issue of reality versus the illusion of false appearances, several symbolic parallels exist between the murders of Estrella Sánchez and Miguel Loitia. The truth surrounding the death of Miguel is never publically disclosed; only, as before with Estrella's demise, the lie will stand as fact. Rosita intentionally assumes all blame for her lover's death, allowing herself to fall to the lowest rung of the hierarchical scale, to be labeled and condemned as a confessed murderess. Society, the real perpetrator of Miguel's death,

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once again escapes detection and retribution.

It is the pressure to conform to the dictates of bourgeois society which makes Miguel believe he is a force of evil which needs to be destroyed. In reality, Miguel, in his death wish, longs to commit suicide, but as a Catholic he can not in actuality take his own life. Suicide, a mortal sin according to Catholic doctrine, would preclude any possibility of a heavenly reunion with Don Pedro. Symbolically and ironically, it is Rosita—the "fallen woman" from the lower middle class and a non-entity in the eyes of society who unfairly cloaks the sins of the Establishment that condemns her, yet suffers the fatal consequences alone and alienated. As López Bago underscores once again, it is the working class, embodied in Rosita Pérez, who takes care of morally and psychologically enervated middle class males like Miguel Loitia.

Undoubtedly, López Bago delivers his most powerful statement against false appearances, hypocrisy and the vacuousness masked behind wealth and social status with his character, Estefanía de Cerdeña. The truth about her clandestine professional life is all the more shocking, inasmuch as La querida's readers, as well as Miguel, are also deceived throughout much of the novel by Don Ramón's presentation of the socialite as a mysterious *señorita*. The reader, caught off guard as Miguel is, experiences when he does, the truth's devastating impact.

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López Bago is successful in sustaining a high level of reader empathy for the tetralogy' second female protagonist. Rosita Pérez is truly a tragic heroine. Benevolent, responsible, loving, generous of spirit, nurturing, and intensely passionate—these are the qualities she exemplifies throughout the three novels despite overwhelming adversity in her young life, the accumulated effect of which ultimately destroys her. Rosita's love starved existence is defined by loss, betrayal and abandonment.

Through their violent, untimely deaths, Rosita bears the loss of the love, affection, attention, emotional and financial support and protection of the two people who loved her unconditionally: her father and Estrella Sánchez. The trauma of their loss was compounded by the manner of their deaths. Rosita not only witnessed the coldblooded shooting murder of Estrella before her eyes, but also has to live with the knowledge that she surrendered her virginity to the very man who had killed her father.

Rosita's formative years with Doña Angustias and Juan were characterized by the combination of the three types of traumas cited above. Rosita, mistreated as the "pobre huérfana," is constantly reminded by Doña Angustias (and the narrator) that she is truly orphaned: of her father in death; of her mother in life, an aberration of nature who lacks the capacity to love and bond with her only daughter. As she is by society, Rosita is betrayed, rejected and abandoned as an

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outsider within her own family unit, a family in which maternal and fraternal bonding are denied to her, even prior to her fall from grace.

The protagonist is also betrayed, rejected and abandoned in her amorous relationships with men. Rosita's boyfriends at the *Café Nuevo del Siglo* drop her after their unsuccessful attempts to seduce her; Lasoga betrays her by killing her father; and the Duke de Tres Estrellas abandons her without warning after the impressionable young woman has fallen in love for the first time.

The *buscona* and, especially, the *callejera* faced abandonment and rejection on a larger scale with the departure of each successive client. Moreover, loss and the potential for loss were ever present in each encounter. The *callejera* lost portions of her soul and self-respect with each client, paralleling the very real possibility of losing her life at the hands of a murderous customer.

Although Rosita learns to cope with the above cited losses, acts of betrayal and abandonment, she is destroyed by the agony inflicted upon her by the actions of Miguel Loitia; a treachery which even surpasses Doña Angustias' and Juan's familial exploitation. Miguel ultimately rejects every thing that Rosita has to give and everything that she could have continued to offer him in the future: unconditional love, devotion, fidelity, passion, nurturing, support, sacrifice, happiness and even her very life. When Miguel discards her,

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Rosita no longer possesses an identity, nor a purpose to continue living. Although Rosita mourns Miguel's death, this loss is easier to accept than his possible happiness with another woman. Moreover, if Miguel had lived, Rosita's shame would have become public knowledge with his marriage to Estefanía. Miguel's abandonment also signifies Rosita's loss of livelihood. Consequently, she would be forced to return to prostitution.

Once again, López Bago decries the tragedy inherent in the vulnerability of almost all women in nineteenth-century society, dramatically underscored in Rosita's predicament, that of a woman who invested her entire life in one man, only to lose everything in the end. Although the wife, through the financial security that marriage brings, avoided a similar fate, the honorable wife was more than likely silently unhappy in her marriage, inasmuch as the need to be financially secure, not love, was the determining factor in selecting a mate. Marriage, however, was not the best solution for all women, according to López Bago. As he does in La prostituta and La Pálida with regards to Estrella Sánchez, the novelist blames Rosita's desperation and feelings of utter hopelessness for the future on society, for its continued failure to educate young females of all classes and to provide them with the vocational skills necessary to be financially independent of any man or abusive family situation. Though heartbroken by Miguel's betrayal of love and trust, Rosita, had she been

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skilled in a trade or successful in an honorable profession as she expressed in her fantasy to Miguel, would not have lost the ability to survive independently, without prostitution. Society's disregard for women's education not only perpetuated a vicious cycle of abuses and exploitation on the individual level, but was also detrimental to the advancement of entire nations by their failure to tap into an invaluable source of economic and intellectual productivity educated and trained women could contribute to the betterment of society as a whole.

The last two chapters of the present dissertation have been devoted to a detailed analysis of Eduardo López Bago's only published tetralogy, "La prostituta." We have observed how the novelist's first and foremost objective has been to expose and denounce the immoral and inhumane sexual and economic exploitation of a significant population of defenseless working class women in professional prostitution, with the concomitant mission of curtailing the abuses of this vice as it flourished in late 19th century Spain. Exemplified in the traumatic experiences of the two protagonists, Estrella Sánchez and Rosita Pérez, López Bago led a vigorous and vitriolic campaign against the parties responsible for promoting and supporting the continued victimization of women from the lowest social and economic strata. The worst offenders were several sectors of the Spanish Establishment:

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the aristocracy, the capitalist bourgeoisie, the Catholic Church, the civil government and the medical community.

Second only to these very powerful societal forces, López Bago blamed abusive family conditions for the heroines' forced entry into prostitution. Estrella and Rosita have to defend themselves against the brutal instincts and character defects of their parents. Both heroines come from what late twentieth-century psychologists label "dysfunctional families." Each lacks the influence or presence of a normal parent: Estrella's mother was physically and mentally destroyed after years of abuse; and Captain Pérez was killed when Rosita was young. As a result, both women spend their formative years at the mercy of the remaining parent: each a case of paternal and maternal pathology, respectively. Both Doña Angustias and Estrella's father are directly responsible for leaving their daughters no alternative but to sell the use of their bodies for economic reasons—the principal reason lower class women entered the profession. In both cases, however, the protagonists' loss of virtue and respectability would not have occurred if not for the alcoholic induced brutality on the part of Estrella's father in his attempt to violate his daughter, his avarice in consenting to sell her favors to *La Casa de Mari-Pepa;* or, in Rosita's case, Doña Angustias' blind obsession with class status, materialism and her refusal to live within her means. However, instead of rescuing working class women from familial abusive situations,

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the Establishment acerbated the misdeed by adding its own sadistic forms of exploitation. Unfortunately and tragically, the misdeeds of both parents—Mr. Sánchez' public actions and Doña Angustias' clandestine abuse—constituted the pathological extension of nineteenth-century law which decreed minor children as the property of their parents. We recall how the sale of young proletarian daughters into prostitution was a commonplace reality accepted by parents and sanctioned by law.

Holding society ultimately responsible for fomenting the vicious cycle, López Bago bitterly condemns the status quo for its inhumane mistreatment and condescending misperceptions about women, especially working class women. Once an unmarried female had been seduced for whatever reason, her fall from grace, or loss of respectability, was irrevocable according to the double moral standard mindset of the nineteenth century. Throughout the tetralogy López Bago documents the fatal physical, moral and psychological consequences of the protagonists' involuntary prostitution. Both feel dehumanized and alienated from the human race, inasmuch as their environmental and familial exploiters have robbed them of their sense of dignity and value as human beings.

In the four novels, López Bago approaches his examination of professional prostitution from two distinct perspectives, reflected in his exposition of the two heroines. As was

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mentioned previously, in La prostituta and La Pálida, López Bago applies a global approach to studying the problem as a universal phenomenon for which these two novels serve as a historical and sociological document of a European reality during the last decades of the nineteenth century. The novelist's literary development of Estrella Sánchez (and other characters) is essentially one-dimensional or stereotypical, inasmuch as the heroine and her personal story serve first and foremost to illustrate the myriad of causes and the physiological, emotional and moral effects of the institution on women as a result of having survived the infernal enclosed world of tolerated brothel prostitution. In La buscona and La querida we witness a dramatic shift in focus, most noticeably in the novelist's development of a complex protagonist. In Rosita Pérez, López Bago demonstrates greater psychological range and depth in presenting an intimate portrait of the emotions and internal conflicts experienced in a publicly acknowledged "fallen woman" locked in a Darwinian struggle against the prejudice and condemnation of a hypocritical bourgeois society obsessed with maintaining appearances at all costs.

Concomitant to López Bago's dramatic shift from an essentially one-dimensional protagonist in the first two novels to a complex heroine in the last two, is his depiction of each woman's primary love relationship. Despite his vociferous objection to Idealism, our novelist extolls the

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exemplary virtues of a romantic hero in Paco, the idealized *obrero* who valiantly sought to avenge his beloved's dishonor at the cost of his own life. Estrella and Paco's is an authentic tragic love story in the romantic tradition—pure, chaste and noble physically and spiritually. And, if not for the intervention of malignant forces, the couple would have shared an idyllic life together. As we witness throughout La buscona and La querida, Rosita and Miguel's love affair is much more complicated; experienced by the reader from within, from the perspective of each conflicted partner. In addition to familial and societal opposition, both Rosita and Miguel are, in part, responsible for its disastrous conclusion.

Together, the four novels constitute a unified whole; a thorough and balanced examination of the novelist's interpretation of late nineteenth-century reality. The protagonists themselves reflect the tetralogy's thematic unity as their lives intersect in La Pálida on many levels. In their bisexual affair the women find sexual passion and satisfaction absent from their contacts with men. A symbiotic relationship develops between the two women who instinctively understand each other and are able to fulfill each other's emotional needs. They are each other's only friend and confidant. With the exception of Paco and Captain Pérez, each woman is the only person who does not disappoint or betray the other. For Rosita, Estrella is the only person who expresses gratitude and appreciation for her friendship. Their

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relationship is also based on a variety of complimentary roles; with Estrella, slightly older and more sophisticated, leading the way: mother-daughter, mentor-protégée, legator-legatée.

Throughout the tetralogy, López Bago examines the various hierarchical roles of the two categories of professional prostitution in the nineteenth century: public and clandestine. In La prostituta, López Bago diligently explores the enclosed world of bordello prostitution, in which homeless women who sold their favors with governmental approval and encouragement were placed at the very bottom rung of the hierarchical order, surviving as slaves to all intents and purposes. In La Pálida Estrella ascends the ladder, from *buscona* to mistress in the world of clandestine or independent prostitution. In the last two novels López Bago examines the titled roles of *buscona* and *querida*, and contributes Rosita's experiences as a common streetwalker—the position superior to the brothel inmate but deemed the lowest within the heterogeneous category of clandestine prostitution.

López Bago describes his female characters' very distinct experiences as *busconas* and *queridas*. We recall that the primary objective of the professional mistress was, above all, financial. When she decided to accept or reject a prospective lover, the astute professional considered the following question: Which suitor is able and willing to offer her the maximum financial security for the longest duration possible?

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In this regard, Luis de Villaperdida is the ideal candidate. The wealthy aristocrat was totally smitten with his mistress. He sought a permanent arrangement and offered Estrella a certain measure of financial independence, including purchasing an expensive house in her own name. Ironically, if not for her own murder, Estrella, through Luis' legacy, would have, possibly, been able to retire from the profession after Luis' death. While Estrella is environmentally predisposed to prostitution, Estefanía de Cerdeña has acquired a taste for the profession, moving quickly from one wealthy lover to the next, inasmuch as the profession feeds her materialistic obsessions.

Rosita, unlike Estrella or Estefanía, never attains their comfortable economic level of security, nor is she in a position to achieve financial independence—for a dearth of opportunities and for her decision to choose the impoverished Miguel over a *compromiso* of undetermined duration with the Duke de Tres Estrellas.

López Bago also offers two different perspectives on the role of *buscona*. For Estrella Sánchez, to become a *buscona* is to ascend the professional hierarchy; it represents a stepping stone, from bordello inmate to *Boticaria*, to the mistress of a grandee of Spain. Rosita, abandoned by her second lover, the duke, and without another one to replace him, descends the ladder from her entry position as mistress to buscona to common streetwalker. Estrella has a powerful ally in

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Arístides who, upon talking charge of her career, gives her entry into the world of an elite clientele. Rosita, on the contrary, is totally on her own and had to resort to her own devises to find a steady lover. Without the benefit of the expert services of a go-between like Arístides, Rosita does not have access to prospective lovers of wealth and rank; she is, instead exposed to unknown clients of all kinds, typically, those from the lowest social and economic stratum. Estrella is in no hurry to secure an arrangement. She lives comfortably in luxurious surroundings in her own apartment while she awaits her eventual *compromiso* with Luis. Rosita, however, has the enormous disadvantage of having to reside with her clandestine pimps, Doña Angustias and Juan, while she searches for her third lover with increasing desperation.

López Bago also includes studies on Mari-Pepa and Estefanía who serve as professional antitheses to Estrella and Rosita, respectively. Mari-Pepa, the natural born bordello resident, is juxtaposed with the innately virginal and pure Estrella who is forced by her environment into the profession. López Bago juxtaposes Estefanía's materialistic propensity toward prostitution with Rosita developed abhorrence for the profession; and although very erotic by nature, Rosita ultimately seeks sexual fulfillment with one lover.

Whether they were streetwalker, *busconas*, mistresses or brothel inmates, the existence of almost all women who sold the use of their bodies was fatal. López Bago makes the point

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of demonstrating how even though Estrella and Estefanía enjoyed the external comforts of material wealth, internally both were essentially miserable. The following quote from La buscona which refers specifically to Rosita Pérez may also be applied to Estrella Sánchez and to all women condemned to the same hopeless fate: "... todos sus proyectos para el porvenir no podían tener más que una base: ¡El hombre! ¡La explotación de su cuerpo!" (83-84).

Another underlying but salient theme of the tetralogy concerning public women and sexuality is conspicuous by reason of its absence from the lives of the protagonists: the incompatibility of prostitution and motherhood. It is a curious phenomenon that despite all their countless sexual encounters neither Estrella, Rosita, Mari-Pepa nor Estefanía ever become pregnant. This literary reality contradicts the natural law of probability; for, statistically speaking, the prostitute, more than any other woman, has the greatest chances of being impregnated.

If we look at other literary public women we see that this incompatibility is manifested in a different manner. Zola's Nana, for example, gives birth to an illegitimate son, but he dies of smallpox at age three. In La desheredada, Isidora gives birth to Pez' deformed son, Riquín, who suffers from macrocephaly. It is interesting to compare these two cases to Galdós' Fortunata y Jacinta. Fortunata gives birth twice to two illegitimate sons of Juanito Santa Cruz. The

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first son dies and Fortunata becomes a prostitute. Her second son survives, but she no longer is a public woman.

In contrast to Galdós' sanguine resolution in Fortunata y Jacinta, in the naturalist novel, the laws of reproduction do not function, and when they do, they result in defective progeny. In the naturalist novel, sexually promiscuous women can not be mothers; abuse of the sexual organs is equated with abuse of the reproductive organs as well. However, the prostitute's inability to reproduce is, tragically, Nature's mechanism for protecting the unborn from life itself. Nature will not allow unborn babies to survive the trauma of birth only to be raised in a noxious environment and stigmatized throughout their lives when their conception is deemed immoral and their very existence labelled "illegitimate" by society. Nature is more humane than society by providing the mechanism which thwarts the conception of innocent children infinitely more vulnerable than their defenseless and exploited mothers. The larger, more ominous issue, however, is the deprivation of these women of their fundamental biological purpose as females. The tetralogy cites another devastating consequence of society's fostering of the conditions in which an entire sector of the female population may not reproduce, thus, bringing an end to their own genealogical lines, or forced to give birth to a new but defective generation which will extinguish itself. Taken in this light, López Bago, though indirectly, once again condemns society for offering little or

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no hope for the survival and productiveness of its working class citizens.

In conclusion, it is essential to reiterate López Bago's didactic and reformative mission for writing the tetralogy against professional female prostitution. Indefatigable in his campaign to champion the rights of one of the largest most vulnerable sectors of society, López Bago was determined to expose the pitiful living conditions of exploited working class females in order to effect radical change. Our novelist exculpates his heroines for their unjust stigmatization as "fallen women;" they have become what society had forced them to become against their will and against Nature in order to survive. Heaven, the ultimate authority, will embrace Rosita and Estrella, and others like them for the purity and goodness of their souls. Estrella and Rosita fight courageously against their toxic environments, but they possess no weapons to defend themselves. There is no terrestrial salvation for the tetralogy's literary heroines, but there can be, the novelist emphatically informs the powers that be, for the countless anonymous women exploited in real life. A solid formal education and updated vocational training for young girls as mandated by the *Ley Moyano* must be systematically and effectively enforced throughout Spain, for these are the keys to bringing an end to the immoral and inhumane forced exploitation of innocent working class women trapped in the infernal world of professional prostitution.

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NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1] Ph[ilippe] Hauser, Madrid bajo el punto de vista médico-social: Su policia sanitaria, su climatología, su suelo y sus aguas, sus condiciones sanitarias, su demografía, su morbicidad y su mortalidad, vol. 2 (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadenayra, 1902) 143.

[2] Hauser distinguished between the two types of officially sanctioned houses of prostitution in Spain: "En cuanto á las casas de prostitución, el reglamento reconoce también dos categorías: una donde muchas jóvenes viven en compañía (casas de lenocinio); otras llamadas *de paso ó de compromiso,* donde vive sola la dueña, siendo ella la única persona responsable para la Sección de Higiene, pues las mujeres que allí concurren viven en sus casas, con ó sin oficio, siendo la mayor parte desconocida de la policía por pertenecer, en su gran mayoría, á la prostitución clandestina." See: Madrid 139.

[3] It is interesting to note that López Bago refers to "neighbors" in the feminine ("vecinas") and not in the masculine form ("vecinos") of the noun which would be the correct variation to use for referring to both the female and male (Juan) members of the Pérez household. Clearly, López Bago wished to indicate that Estrella's concern was to rescue the two females, whose safety and survival on the streets would be at greater risk than Juan's. The probability of Rosita and Angustias being forced to enter a bordello would be ever present. Estrella wished to spare them her own fate.

[4] Helene Deutsch, The Psychology of Women: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation, 2 vols. (New York: Grune, 1944-45) 1: 340.

[5] Bridget A. Aldaraca, El ángel del hogar: Galdós and the Ideology of Domesticity in Spain, North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures 239 (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1991) 214; Baguley 109.

[6] "In the enormous literature devoted to hysteria" (Corbin 299), the disease has been linked to organic, mental and psychological illnesses, primarily in women, including prostitution. See Corbin's section entitled, "Prostitution, Madness and Degeneracy" (298-300). According to Aldaraca, "hysteria (and the hysteric) had the ability to imitate other diseases: epilepsy, blindness, certain kinds of muscular weaknesses...." See: Angel 211. In fact, Rosita's

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"convulsión nerviosa," the compulsion to bite her hands, her unconsciousness and her inability to recall the experience, mimic some of the symptoms of an epileptic seizure. For more information on hysteria in the nineteenth century, see Bridget Aldaraca's insightful article: "The Medical Construction of the Feminine Subject," Cultural and Historical Groundings for Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Feminist Literary Criticism ed. Hernán Vidal (Minneapolis: Institute for the Study of Ideologies and Literature, 1989) 395-413.

[7] Rosita, it seems, is destined to be one third of a love triangle: in La Pálida with Estrella and the duke; in La buscona she takes center place between the duke and Miguel; and in La querida with Miguel and Estefanía de Cerdeña.

[8] Moliner, "Nene."

[9] "Nene," Real Academia Española, Diccionario de la Lengua Española, 16th ed., 1941.

[10] The following list of quotations employed by Rosita or cited by the narrator in the two novels demonstrate the extent to which Miguel is perceived, and his identity reinforced as the protagonist's puerile lover. See La buscona: "... un niño tan ignorante como ella ..." (22); "¡Nene!" (28); "¡Adiós, nene!" (32); "¡Ay!, nene, nene mío ..." (66); "¡No seas niño!" (71); "¡Pobre niño!" (74); "¡Ay, nene, nene mío! .... ¡No me dejes!" (93); "Miguel ... seguiría siendo constantemente el niño ...", "'Nene, nene mío'" (148); "¡Nene, nene mío!" (160); "¡Pobre nene, cuánto la quería!" (166); "Pero es preciso que sufras más, nene mío ..." (170); "¡Oh, vida mía, nene mío, cariño mío!" (178); "¡Ah, niño, niño!" (183); "¡Ay, mi nene!" (239). La querida: "nene" (9, 12); "¡Ay, nene! ¡Qué gusto!" (16); "el niño mimado" (21, 25); "*su nene*" (33); "¡Mi nene no me quiere!" (39); "¡Tú eres un chiquillo!" (50); "¡Dios mío, nene, qué contenta estoy!", "Lo sabrás, nene, descuida ..." (71); "¡Ay nene, qué gusto!" (141); "¡Ay nene! .... No seas nino!" (166); "¡Mi nene!", "*¡Su nene!*" (224); "'¡Ay, nene, no te apures!'" (228); "*¡Su nene!*" (229); "*Su nene* no sabía el daño que había causado. ¡Si era un chiquillo!" (233); "Miguel, *¡su nene!*" (237); "¡He sufrido mucho, nene, nene mío!" (241); "¿Sufres? ¡Qué niño eres!" (244); [Rosita] "siguió delirando. '¡Nene! ¡Mi nene!'" (250).

[11] "Fatal," Webster's New World Dictionary, 2nd college ed., 1986.

[12] "Novia," Real Academia Española, Diccionario de la Lengua Española, 6th ed., 1941.

[13] B. Malinowski, Sex and Repression in Savage Society (New York: Harcourt, 1927) 19-22; qtd. in Deutsch 2:10.

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[14] Shari L. Thurer, The Myths of Motherhood: How Culture Reinvents the Good Mother (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1994) 215.

[15] Miguel Martínez Cuadrado, La burguesía conservadora (1874-1931) (Madrid: Alianza, 1976) 265, vol. 6 of Historia de España Alfaguara, 3rd ed., 7 vols.

[16] Brian J. Dendle, "Galdós, Zola y el naturalismo de La desheredada," ed. Lissorgues, Realismo y naturalismo 450.

[17] Guadalupe Gómez-Ferrer Morant, "La imagen de la mujer en la novela de la Restauración: Hacia el mundo del trabajo II," ed. Durán, 197.

[18] Akiko Tsuchiya, "The Construction of the Female Body in Galdós's La de Bringas," Romance Quarterly 40. 1 (1993): 36.

[19] "Chlorosis," Webster's New World Dictionary, 2nd college ed., 1986.

[20] "Paralyze," Webster's New World Dictionary, 2nd college ed., 1986.

[21] Ironically, Estefanía was on the verge of realizing this much anticipated night of passion the very evening Miguel was murdered. While attending the opera, she could no longer await the conclusion of the performance in order to rush home and await Miguel's arrival: "... la señorita de Cerdeña estaba en el teatro Real, en una platea, rodeada de admiradores, riéndose, disimulando su impaciencia por regresar á la calle del Sordo.—¡Antes del último acto! ¡Nos iremos antes!—le decía a su hermana. Miguel iría á las doce." See: 250.

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CONCLUSIONS

The present dissertation has sought to acknowledge and examine the literary, social and ideological contributions of Eduardo López Bago, a Spanish naturalist novelist largely unknown today, but who distinguished himself as one of the most prolific, popular, controversial and fascinating writers of the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

López Bago is one of many secondary Restoration novelists, authors who, because of their status as "secondary" or "minor," have—in contrast to the principal figures of the era—received only cursory scholarly attention for their achievements for most of the twentieth century. While, fortunately, a significant body of bibliographical material is available on López Bago, to date, no book has been published on his life and work.

López Bago was Emile Zola's most avowed follower in Spain, a nation whose literary Establishment was ambivalent, when not bitterly divided, over the validity of the latest trend from France. López Bago distinguished himself for being, perhaps, the first, if not the most fervent Spaniard to purposely endeavor to denounce the eclectic interpretation of Naturalism adopted by many of his illustrious contemporaries in favor of the complete acceptance of the very polemic doctrine of foreign origin.

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To separate himself (and his followers) from traditional Spanish Naturalism, López Bago adopted the term "Radical Naturalism," and expounded in his appendices and demonstrated in his naturalist novels a countercurrent which is essentially aggressive, rebellious, combative and inflexible in its proclamation that Zola-inspired Naturalism is the only authentic expression of the movement and that Radical Naturalism possesses exclusive rights on the truth to the exclusion of other doctrines.

For López Bago, Radical Naturalism is revolutionary in its raison d'être. It exists, not as a source of intellectual stimulation for the bored members of the rarefied world of Academia, but for the benefit of the populace, the lower classes, traditionally disregarded as readers and leading characters, in direct contrast to its literary antitheses and foes: Romanticism and Idealism, which advocate style over substance; illusion over reality. In his novels, López Bago demonstrates how such deceptive and unrealistic romantic illusions ultimately aid in destroying the lives of those naive enough to believe in the "fairy tale" depiction of life: Estrella Sánchez falls victim to the oxymoronic idea of the aristocratic hero in the Duke de Tres Estrellas; Rosita Pérez, to the superficial perception of a life of material luxuries and sexual liberation as a professional courtesan; and Miguel Loitia, to the fantasy image of the romantic "fallen woman" in the tradition of Marguerite Gautier, and to the idealized

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image of the "virginal bride." In addition to the inherent aggressiveness, fanaticism and inflexibility at the core of Radical Naturalism and its creator's unrelenting attacks against Romanticism, Idealism and their proponents, the countercurrent demonstrates how the novelist brought the concept of "medicalized" literature to a new extreme, and displays his close ties to the unorthodox ideologies of Socialism and literary Anarchism.

While López Bago's advocacy of Zolaesque Naturalism was "pure" in spirit, it was not in practice. Although he extracted and zealously applied most of Zola's tenets, our novelist employed techniques which constitute a direct contradiction of French Naturalism, the most serious of which is his failure to maintain strict authorial objectivity and impartiality. Moreover, in our study on syphilis, for example, we also observed how López Bago sacrifices medical accuracy and the documentation of facts in order to fulfill his literary agenda in La prostituta and La Pálida. López Bago was not above taking advantage of his characters as weapons of satire to pursue his campaign against foes such as Juan Valera, in the character of Augusto Vejarano, exposed as a literary fraud to public ridicule in El periodista; and Raimundo Fernández y Villaverde, Civil Governor of Madrid, caricaturized as the effeminate and emasculated aristocrat, the Marquis de Jibosa in El preso.

Despite its creator's efforts to diffuse Radical

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Naturalism in Spain, it is doubtful, based on the information available to date, that the countercurrent extended beyond three novelists: López Bago, Sawa and Zahonero. López Bago was the "máximo representante"; Sawa, its most enthusiastic though short-lived supporter; and Zahonero, who practiced, according to Ruben Darío, a form of the countercurrent which was "menos osado."

Paralleling his countercurrent, López Bago exhibited his "radicalness" in the social, medical and clerical beliefs and proposals he set forth and exemplified through his characters in his many novels, ideas which conflicted with many of the established mores of the nineteenth century. For his era, López Bago was, indeed, radical, progressive and, in some instances, he anticipated trends decades ahead of his time.

López Bago favored the abolishment of the centuries-old aristocracy. In the novelist's estimation, this institution had outlived its usefulness in modern society; its immoral, degenerate and decadent members had nothing better to do with their vacuous lives than to squander precious resources for the sake of appearances. Inherently diseased for generations, this class unjustly contaminated healthy and productive working class citizens.

The passionately anticlerical novelist attacked several doctrines of the Catholic Church. He called for the abolishment of the vow of clerical celibacy for priests and nuns and for the abolishment of the convent system, by reason

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of man's unnatural and unrealistic defiance of the supremacy of the biological laws of Nature over all others, especially where human libidinal needs are concerned. Seminaries, monasteries and convents are breeding grounds for the proliferation of all kinds of abherrent sexual practices and criminal acts, the consequence of pent-up sexual frustration. López Bago recommended that priests be allowed to cohabit publicly and without stigmatization with suitable mistresses. Our radical naturalist condemned the unhealthy enclosed convent environment for the threat it posed to the emotional and physical well-being of its occupants. Convent life was responsible for the propagation of many preventable infectious diseases and deaths.

López Bago was, indeed, ahead of his time with his recommendations for protecting oneself against syphilis. He demonstrated how the sanitary rituals of Mari-Pepa proved more effective for decreasing one's chances of contracting the disease, most noticeably in contrast to the unhygienic measures practiced by the medical Establishment at that time. Moreover, the novelist-physician promoted the habitual use of prophylaxis on the individual level as a method for reducing one's chances of contracting and transmitting the fatal disease once infected. Better still, he advocated abstinence for those infected with syphilis.

López Bago called for major reforms in Spain's penal institutions. He spotlighted and condemned the acts of

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violence habitually perpetrated against inmates at the hands of other inmates and prison guards, and the system's officially illegal but still practiced barbaric method for transporting prisoners over long distances. He was appalled by the unsanitary living conditions and the resulting proliferation of diseases, many of which were preventable with the implementation of basic sanitary measures. The need to effectively diagnose and distinguish between authentic criminals and the mentally and emotionally ill was underscored by López Bago. He advocated the construction of more mental hospitals and asylums and the compassionate treatment and rehabilitation of such patients.

Anticipating the American Sexual Revolution of the 1960s, our unconventional novelist condoned the cohabitation of unmarried lovers of all classes as a valid life style option without religious or societal stigmatization. On the other side of the issue, he believed that the societal, religious, familial or political pressures to enter into a loveless marriage of convenience was as pathological as any physical or mental illness, and he considered such unions to represent living deaths for their long-suffering spouses.

With his creation of specific pathological characters, López Bago vigorously sought to debunk the hypocrisy behind the traditionally exalted status accorded to several sectors of society: aristocrats (the Villaperdidas, the Duke and Duchess de Benimar); monarchs (the Queens of Liboria and her

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consort); priests (Román Acevedo, Lasoga); nuns (the sisters in La monja); and mothers (Doña Angustias de Pérez).

Women play a primary role in the fiction of López Bago. A glance at the titles of his novels reveals the fact that nine of them refer specifically to women and their roles in society: La prostituta, La Pálida, La buscona, La querida, La señora de López, La soltera, La desposada, La monja and Carne importada. In his naturalist novels, López Bago presented readers with a gallery of fascinating female characters and types which he examined in light of their relationship to society, men, to other characters, and the physiological functioning of their own bodies.

López Bago defied nineteenth-century patriarchal society's attitudes on and the treatment of the female gender: the subjugation and perceived inferiority of women as property, not human beings; their vulnerability and dependence upon the men in their lives for their very survival. Contrary to the belief of the times, men are not innately superior to women by virtue of gender is the message López Bago sends in his description of the relationship between Rosita Pérez and Miguel Loitia. Rejecting society's perception of women as one-dimensional beings whose only respectable roles in life were those of the submissive, self-sacrificing and devoted daughter, wife and mother, López Bago created characters who were strong individuals in their own right; Rosita Pérez, Francisca Ruíz, and even the abherrent Antonia de Benimar.

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Marriage, López Bago believed, should not be the only acceptable life style option for women; they should not be forced into marriage solely to ensure their financial future. Like upper-class men, women of all socioeconomic backgrounds (especially working-class females) are entitled to a solid, formal education and up-to-date vocational training. The same (or similar) career and professional opportunities should be made available to them with comparable wages. Only when women are financially secure and independent should they choose a marriage partner based on mutual love, respect and compatibility.

Although deeply concerned with the quality of life of all women, López Bago—who was, above all, a relentless champion of the rights of the lower classes and societal outcasts—concentrated his efforts, first and foremost, to exposing societal injustices committed against proletarian females, doubly exploited by the Establishment by gender and by class, inasmuch as all members of the working classes were judged inferior as human beings by the dominant upper classes. The dichotomization of all women by class into polar extremes further exacerbated the lot of proletarian females. Upper-class women were believed to possess a monopoly on feminine virtue, as if moral character were predicated upon social class. The aristocratic or bourgeois daughter, wife and mother were "saints"—honorable, benevolent, noble and chaste, etcetera; while proletarian females, by the sole virtue of the

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class into which they were born and raised, were perceived as "sinners"—innately immoral, licentious, promiscuous and degenerate. López Bago called for a radical change in the mentality of the times which equated laboring-class women with professional prostitutes; and, as such, available objects for sexual exploitation for men of all socioeconomic levels, especially the upper classes. Through his characterization of women like Estrella Sánchez and Rosita Pérez, López Bago confronted society's deep-seated phobias and fought to change the extremely negative stereotypical image of public women as avaricious, lazy, vulgar, promiscuous, criminal, alcoholics, *femmes fatales*, psychic vampires; and contagions of disease, death and destruction. In order to counteract the outward facade of what society had forced these women to become, López Bago examined public women from within; exposing their souls, capturing their essential humanity.

As a physician, López Bago was concerned with women's health issues. He examined in great depth the two most critical stages in a female's biological life cycle—puberty and menopause—and he imparted sound, common sense advice on personal hygiene, diet, exercise; advising women to take an active role in protecting their own health. Relying on his medical background and his mission as a naturalist, López Bago examined common diseases of his era (syphilis, tuberculosis) and psychological aberrations (hysteria, nymphomania) associated with women.

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Our novelist set forth his "radical" ideas regarding society's double moral standard on sexuality. He opposed the tradition which condemned naive but deflowered females as "fallen women" and deplored the premium society placed on virginity. For López Bago, technical virginity is unimportant; it is only the purity of the spirit, mind and soul which matters. One of the naturalist's more shocking recommendations was his advocacy of premarital sexual relations with suitable male partners for pubescent females on the verge of sexual awakening as the best remedy for hysteria, the inevitable precursor to prostitution or nymphomania.

Perhaps no other aspect of López Bago's naturalist novels shocked and enraged his contemporaries more than his radical representation of late nineteenth-century Spanish women as highly erotic and sexually active human beings. Characters like Rosita Pérez, Estrella Sánchez, Estefanía de Cerdeña, Gertrudis de (la) Florida, Antonia de Benimar, and the nuns in La monja, who boldly and freely express their sexuality and demonstrate their ability to find and enjoy carnal pleasure as men do, transgress the double moral standard and far surpass the repressive societal and religious boundaries placed on women of their era. In their socially-deemed "deviant" manifestations of erotic self-expression, they revolt against the male Establishment in the most shocking and threatening fashion imaginable.

The author's naturalistic examination of female sexual

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behavior may well have broken down the barrier of a well-established taboo in the mainstream Spanish realist and naturalist novel of the period. López Bago's "radical" representation of the sexually-active woman serves as a dramatic contrast to, for example, Galdós' treatment of his two famous "fallen women" characters: Fortunata, and his naturalist heroine, Isidora Rufete. There are no scenes in Fortunata y Jacinta or in La desheredada depicting these two women's obvious sexual activity. Galdós adheres to his own philosophy on this matter. To paraphrase, he believes that what can not be displayed openly in public, should not be described by a writer on paper. Clarín, too, shies away from describing Ana de Ozores' long awaited seduction in La Regenta.

Nevertheless, the treatment of the sexual experiences of the so-called "fallen woman" was a fecund theme in late nineteenth-century mainstream French literature. The most outstanding contributions include, for example, J.K. Huysmans' Marthe, Histoire d'une Fille (1876), Edmond de Goncourt's La Fille Elisa (1877), Maupassant's Boule de Suif (1880); and, of course, Zola's Nana (1880). López Bago's naturalist novels' explicit treatment of female sexuality represents, I feel, perhaps, the most audacious attempt by a Spanish novelist of the period to import parallel representation into Spanish prose fiction. Despite all the criticism López Bago received at the time, it should be noted that the erotic nature of

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López Bago's and Sawa's naturalist novels anticipates the explicit sexuality portrayed in "la novela erótica" of the early twentieth century. According to Etreros, our radical naturalists "marcarán la pauta a una serie de novelistas que producen dentro de esta línea y que enlazan con la novela erótica del siglo XX" (112). The erotic novel was cultivated and popularized by such figures as Felipe Trigo, Eduardo Zamacois, Pedro Mata, Alberto Insúa, Antonio de Hoyos y Vinent and others (Pedraza Jiménez 9: 45-46).

Through his novels, appendices and the comments and opinions of his detractors and defenders, a portrait emerges of Eduardo López Bago as a personality who was as captivating as the works he has contributed to Spanish literature. He was, indeed, strong willed, passionate, obstinate, argumentative, defensive and vindictive; biting in his sarcasm, cruel in his sense of irony, and a man of many contradictions. He was biased against, not only proponents of Romanticism and Idealism, but also part-time authors with separate careers. He railed against his detractors while he himself launched acerbic, and sometimes personal attacks against his contemporaries: the Uruguayan Carlos María Ramírez, for Los amores de Marta (c. 1883); Palacio Valdés, for La Espuma (1891); and Luis Coloma, for Pequeñeces (1891), his novel against the Madrid aristocracy. Most significant in his failure to remain open-minded and sensitive to the opinions and contributions of others was the deterioration of

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his relationship with Alejandro Sawa; from camaraderie to volatility, to finally estrangement from his once most enthusiastic ally. Characteristically aggressive and blunt in his criticism, he, nevertheless, denied attacking the government of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo in El periodista, and shied away from possible repercussions for satirizing Isabel II and Francisco de Asís with the creation of the thinly disguised Queen of Liboria and her king consort in Carne de nobles. His vitriolic denunciations against professional foes and the Establishment at-large was tempered only by his sometimes biased deference and by his compassionate treatment of the largely voiceless unchampioned sectors of society: the laboring classes and societal outcasts. Such a combative, controversial and radical personality was, indeed perhaps, best suited to confront the moral and societal issues to which he was so strongly and totally committed in order to effect radical changes in the status quo, inasmuch as radical change is not achieved without great controversy.

It is hoped that the present dissertation will effectuate a new appreciation for and an interest in Eduardo López Bago and his many contributions to his era and to Spanish literature, and will inspire future scholarly research on this intriguing figure and the many other still neglected secondary Restoration novelists of late nineteenth-century Spain.

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APPENDIX A

Artist Nicolás Megía's Sketch of
Eduardo López Bago
Circa 1885
Source: La querida

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APPENDIX B:

A CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF

EDUARDO LÓPEZ BAGO'S KNOWN PUBLISHED WORKS

YEAR OF PUBLICATION	TITLE	GENRE
1. 1876	Los amores (obra entretenida)	Novel
2. 1876 (Reprinted in 1878)	"Cristo"	Poem Epilogue: Los amores (in Revista Contemporánea)
3. 1876 (Reprinted in 1879)	"La confesión de un escéptico"	Poem Epilogue: Los amores (in Revista Contemporánea)
4. 1878	"Una visita al Real Museo"	Article
5. 1882	"Las nubes (historia de los bastidores)"	Article
6. 1883	"Fotografías instantáneas: Una sesión importante"	Article
7. 1884	"Naturalistas e idealistas"	Article Letter addressed to José Ortega Munilla
8. 1884	El periodista: Novela política	Novel
9. 1884	"Postdata"	Essay Appendix: El periodista

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YEAR OF PUBLICATION	TITLE	GENRE
10. 1884	Title unknown of article on the debate over Naturalism *La Ilustración Militar* (20 July 1884)	Article
11. 1884	*La prostituta: Novela médico-social*	Novel
12. 1884	"La novela moderna, según Emilio Zola"	Translation and edition Appendix: *La prostituta*
13. 1884	*Safó (costumbres de París)*	Translation of the novel *Sapho* by A. Daudet
14. 1885	*La Pálida: Novela médico-social*	Novel
15. 1885	Untitled appendix	Essay Appendix: *La Pálida*
16. 1885	*La buscona: Novela médico-social*	Novel
17. 1885	"La moral del naturalismo"	Essay Appendix: *La buscona*
18. 1885	"El hombre mono"	Short story
19. 1885?	"Carambola conyugal"	Short story
20. 1885	*El cura (caso de incesto): Novela médico-social*	Novel

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YEAR OF PUBLICATION	TITLE	GENRE
21. 1885	"Vosotros y yo"	Essay Appendix: El cura
22. End of 1885 or beginning of 1886	El confesonario (satiriasis): Novela médico-social	Novel
23. 1885 or 1886	"La crítica de El cura"	Essay Appendix: El confesonario
24. 1886	La querida: Novela social	Novel
25. 1886	"Fragmentos de un estudio crítico acerca de la poesía moderna." By Emile Zola	Translation and edition Appendix: La querida
26. 1886	La monja: Novela médico-social	Novel
27. 1886	"Al Ministerio público, á la Autoridad gubernativa, á la acción privada"	Essay Appendix: La monja
28. 1886	"Análisis de la novela titulada Crimen legal"	Book review Appendix: Crimen legal
29. 1886	La señora de López: Novela social	Novel
30. 1886	"La crítica y el público." By Paul Alexis	Translation and edition Appendix: La señora de López
31. 1886	La soltera: Novela social	Novel

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YEAR OF PUBLICATION	TITLE	GENRE
32. 1886	Luis Martínez, El Espada (en la plaza): Novela social	Novel
33. 1886	"La polémica acerca de las corridas de toros"	Essay Appendix: Luis Martínez
34. 1887	La desposada (amor y miseria) Novela médico-social	Novel
35. 1887	Carne de nobles: Novela médico-social	Novel
36. 1887-88	Los asesinos: Novela social, 2 vols.	Novel
37. 1888	El preso: Novela médico-social	Novel
38. 1888	¡Esto no es un hombre! or: ¡¡Usted no es hombre!!	Novelette
39. 1888	Campaña crítica: Don Carlos María Ramírez como autor de Los amores de Marta	Book review
40. 1891	Carne importada (costumbres de Buenos Aires): Novela médico-social	Novel
41. 1891	"Advertencia"	Afterword: Carne importada
42. 1895	"Al lector"	Foreword: El separatista

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YEAR OF PUBLICATION	TITLE	GENRE
43. 1895	El separatista: Novela médico-social	Novel
44. 1895	"Naturalismos: A la crítica"	Essay Appendix: El separatista
45. 1911	El obrero y su importancia	Lecture

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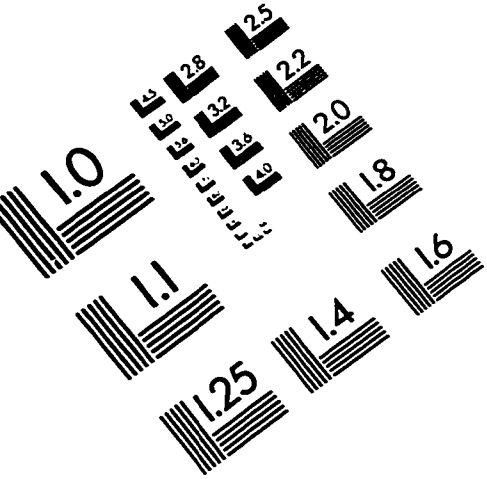

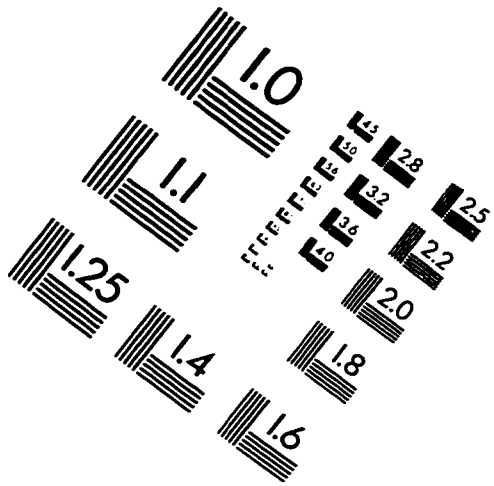

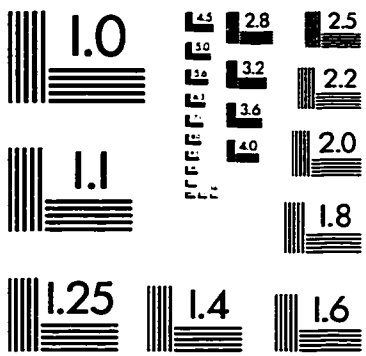

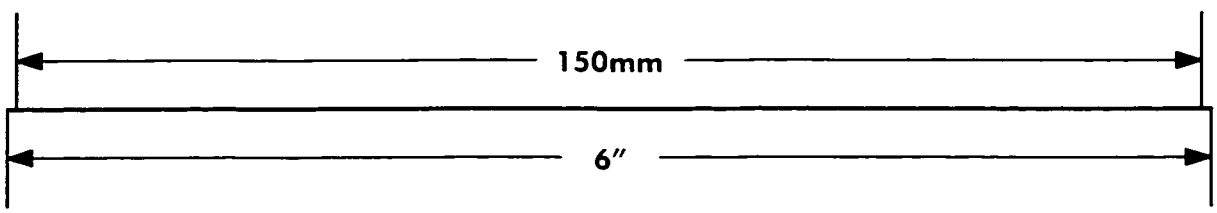

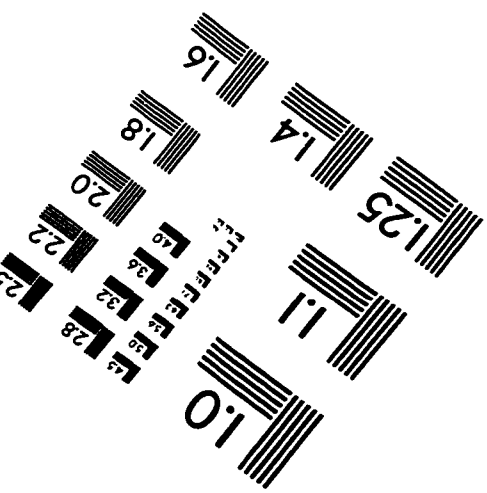

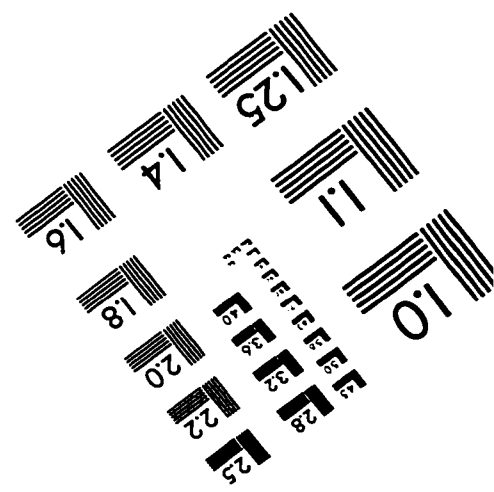

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