

THE WOMAN IN THE GALICIAN NOVELS OF
EMILIA PARDO BAZAN

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Emilia Pardo Bazán, the countess of Pardo Bazán, wrote at a time when Spanish women were receiving little or no formal schooling and most Spaniards felt that a lady, especially an aristocratic one, should limit herself to writing charming little poems. Emilia's novels shocked the public because they treated the more fundamental aspects of life, such as love, sex, hate and passion. The tone of her writings was so vigorous and outspoken that many critics found it difficult to believe that they could have been written by a woman. The protagonist in her novels is usually a male who tells the story in the first person. Hence, it is said that Pardo Bazán usually appears to be writing from the standpoint of a man.

Many critics feel that Emilia wanted to give a masculine character to her novels in an attempt to hide or compensate for the fact that she was a woman. However, if she attempted to hide her femininity, a close examination of her novels reveals that she was unable to accomplish this goal. In general, her feminine characters have more profundity, carry the action, are more abundant and are better conceived than the male ones. Emilia has a clear grasp of feminine psychology and the feminine soul. She

describes women, their clothing, hair styles, manners, ideas, and actions, as only another woman could describe them. The description of Carmiña Aldao's wedding gifts in Una cristiana; a mother's love for her deformed child in El cisne de Vilamorta; the working of the feminine mind in Insolación; the doting mother bringing her son his morning chocolate in Morriña; a mother playing with her newborn child in Los pazos de Ulloa; these, and many more, could only have been written by a woman.

It is only in her novels of the country, Los pazos de Ulloa and La madre naturaleza, that the male is studied with greater depth than the female. In general her masculine characters do not possess strong personalities. Usually, they are carried by the action rather than determine it. They are often weak, sickly, effeminate, inept or dominated by women.

The countess of Pardo Bazán is considered the founder of the Galician novel. She was born and raised in Galicia and her novels display a keen love of and concern for her native province. She carefully analyzes both the good and bad aspects of the character, customs and beliefs of the Galician. Her distinctly regional novels are considered the best of her literary production. Some authorities feel that of her novels these are the only ones worth reading.

Her Galician novels can be divided into two categories. In the first category are those actually

written about Galicia--its countryside, its inhabitants, and its customs. Considered among the best of this group are: La tribuna (1883); El cisne de Vilamorta (1885); Los pazos de Ulloa (1886); La madre naturaleza (1887); Una cristiana (1890); Doña Milagros (1894); and Memorias de un solterón (1896).

In the second category are novels written about Galicians who are living outside the province of Galicia. Two of the novels in this group are Insolación (1889) and Morriña (1889). Both of them deal with the psychology of the Galician woman.

Between these two categories are nine novels. This study will analyze these regional novels focusing on their main feminine characters. The Galician women contained in them belong to all levels of society. They can be basically divided into four groups: aristocratic class, middle class, working class and peasant class. In this study the novels of Pardo Bazán will be used to obtain a clear picture of the characteristics, thought and social position of the four social levels of Galician women. Altogether, fifteen women will be studied. They are Asís Taboada in Insolación; Nucha Pardo, Sabel Suárez, the Amazon, and María the "Sabia" in Los pazos de Ulloa and La madre naturaleza; Ilduara, Gertrudis, Clara, María Rosa, María Ramona and Fe Neira in Doña Milagros and Memorias de un solterón; Carmiña Aldao in Una cristiana; Leocadia

Otero in El cisne de Vilamorta; Amparo Rosendo in La tribuna; and Esclavitud Lamas in Morriña.

Throughout her long life the countess of Pardo Bazán was a militant feminist. She consistently spoke out against the inferior position that women held in Spain, and worked energetically to improve their educational opportunities and raise their cultural level. Her ardent feminism is clearly evident in many of her literary works. Therefore, this study pays particular attention to her feminist views as expressed through the feminine characters of the novels studied.

Chapter 2

THE ARISTOCRATIC-CLASS WOMAN

The countess of Pardo Bazán, an aristocrat by birth, knew and enjoyed the pleasures and privileges of the world of the Spanish aristocrat. Perhaps it is because she knew the aristocrats of her time so well that her novels contain so little about them. It is usually easier to deal objectively with other classes of society than the one to which one belongs. "No hay duda de que conoció el mundo aristocrático, pero probablemente temió que este exceso de conocimiento no le permitiría escribir novelas para el gusto de cada español."¹ Only three of her novels deal with the world of the aristocrat in any depth. They are Insolación, La quimera (1905) and El saludo de las brujas (1898). Of these, Insolación contains the best study of the ideas and attitudes of the Galician aristocratic woman.

It is through Asís Taboado, the marquise of Andrade, that Pardo Bazán describes the life style of the aristocratic woman of the 1880's. Asís was educated in the best Roman Catholic schools for girls. She was married at twenty to

¹Philip Edward Smith, "La técnica novelística de Emilia Pardo Bazán" (unpublished Master's thesis, Florida State University, Tallahassee, 1951), p. 42.

her rich uncle, the marquis of Andrade, who was then past fifty and no longer handsome. This was clearly a marriage based on convenience and not on love. However, she described the bald marquis as having been generous, pleasant and amiable. He soon left her a rich young widow and a young child to raise.

Asís thoroughly enjoys her carefree and pleasant life. She lives in an elegant house in Madrid, has plenty of servants, keeps a carriage, spends her summers in Galicia, sends her daughter to a French school and is respected by all. Although she is gay and vivacious by nature, she has just completed a two-year mourning period for her husband and has confined her social activities to attending church, visiting intimate friends, and attending an occasional bullfight in the company of the duchess of Sahagún.

Her high social standing is indicated by the fact that she belongs to the fashionable "tertulia" of the duchess of Sahagún. Here, the select few come to chat or play "tresillo":

La duquesa no admite presentados. . . . En cambio, a las relaciones ya antiguas las agasaja muchísimo, y es tan consecuente y cariñosa en el trato, que todos se hacen lenguas alabando su perseverancia, virtud que, según he notado, abunda en el corte más de lo que se cree.²

²Emilia Pardo Bazán, Insolación y Morriña (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1948), p. 21.

The custom of paying calls is described in detail. It is one social obligation that Asís detests. She considers it a farce and describes it as a "tarea maquina y enfadosa, deber de los más irritantes que el acto social impone."³ The homes of her friends of high nobility are not an unpleasant task to visit. However, Asís has many friends in modest circumstances and paying a call at their homes usually entails various inconveniences. Describing them, she says:

Y allí era el entrar en portales angostos, el parlamentar con porteras gruñonas. . . .

Y la ascensión interminable, el sobreamiento, el tedio de subir por aquel caracol oscuro, con olores a cocina y a todas las oficinas caseras; y la cerril alcarreña que abre; y la acogida embarazosa, las empalagosas preguntitas, los chiquillos sucios y desgredados, los relatos de enfermedades. . . . Vamos, que era para renegar; y Asís renegaba en su interior. . . .⁴

This custom is made doubly unbearable because many of the people that Asís feels obligated to visit cannot sustain an interesting or intelligent conversation. Their topics of discussion are usually limited to the weather, illnesses, deaths, and the latest gossip, ". . . conversaciones capaces de aburrir a una estatua de yeso. . . ."⁵

Asís dresses fashionably and well and grooms her person with care. She carefully selects the correct

³Ibid., p. 105.

⁴Ibid., p. 106.

⁵Ibid.

accessories--shoes, hat, fan, gloves, handkerchiefs--for the occasion and place. The use of the corset is also commented upon. "¡Es interesante notar el gran número de veces que Doña Emilia menciona el corsé en sus novelas; y siempre con ira o amargura!"⁶ The fashion then was the hour-glass silhouette.⁷ A tightly laced corset extended from just under the arm pits to well below the hips. The dress was fitted closely over the corset from the neck to below the waist. The skirt was flat and straight in front and held by a bustle in the back. The tightness of the corset restricted breathing and when Asís became ill at the festival of San Isidro her corset was loosened to allow her to breathe more easily. Afterwards, her male companion solicitously helped her to refasten it.

Among the relatives of Asís are two old maid aunts. The aristocratic Cardenosa sisters are kind and gentle women who never speak harshly of anyone. There is no social stigma attached to their never having married, and they enjoy the most cordial relationships with all the distinguished families of Madrid.

⁶Robert E. Osborne, Emilia Pardo Bazán su vida y sus obras (Colección Studium, No. 42. Mexico City: Ediciones de Andrea, 1964), p. 61.

⁷Donald Fowler Brown, The Catholic Naturalism of Pardo Bazán (The University of North Carolina Studies, No. 28, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), p. 107.

Thus, wealthy aristocratic women were not under great social pressure to marry. However, if they choose to marry it was often for social prestige and wealth rather than love. As widows, these well-to-do women led a life of considerable freedom and had no real need to remarry. Asís stated, that being a widow she ". . . al fin y al cabo era libre y no tenía que dar a nadie cuenta de sus actos."⁸

The feminist spirit of Pardo Bazán is clearly evident in Insolación. Here she criticized Spanish society for the unfairness and hypocrisy of the double standard in amorous dealings. This standard not only allowed the male complete freedom but encouraged him to engage in all manner of affairs ". . . es vergonzoso para el hombre no tener aventuras, y que hasta queda humillado si las rehuye . . ." ⁹

While on the other hand, society demanded that a woman's conduct must not only be above reproach but it also must appear above reproach. A woman is considered tainted if she has engaged in only light flirtation or had an unsuccessful courtship of the most moderate nature, ". . . una mujer de instintos nobles se juzga manchada, vilipendiada, infamada por toda su vida a consecuencia de un minuto de extravío. . . ." ¹⁰ This social code of honor

⁸Pardo Bazán, op. cit., p. 107.

⁹Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 100.

which deals so harshly with women dictated that a woman must either marry her "seducer" or forever after be considered a lost woman. As Pardo Bazán goes on to state:

Ya puede, después de su falta, llevar vida más ejemplar que la de una monja: la hemos fallado . . . , no nos la pega más. O bodas, o es usted una corrida, una pérdida de profesión . . . ¡Bonita lógica!¹¹

Thus, the life of the rich aristocratic Galician woman of the 1880's was one of ease, enjoyment and pleasure. As the countess stated, "la educación que se da en España a las niñas distinguidas es el arte de perder el tiempo."¹² Although she often married for convenience, it was not absolutely essential that she marry. She was bound by a strict code of honor and enjoyed the respect and esteem of society only as long as she maintained it. She must always conduct her life with order and decorum and never allow even the slightest shadow to be cast on her honor.

Pardo Bazán's novel Insolación revealed with clarity the frivolity of the life of the aristocratic woman. She was nothing more than a pretty ornament. She spent her time at idle pleasures; consumed much and produced nothing.

¹¹Ibid., p. 99.

¹²Carmen Bravo-Villasante, Vida y obra de Emilia Pardo Bazán (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1952), p. 183.

Chapter 3

THE MIDDLE-CLASS WOMAN

One of the most vital qualities of Emilia Pardo Bazán was her ability to see beyond the limits of her aristocratic surroundings. She had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge which led her to probe into all areas and levels of society. Her deep examination of and interest in the middle class is evidenced by the overwhelming number of characters from this class which her novels contain. Among these are a large number of Galician women.

Because this number is so large, they have been divided into three groups so as to make a careful study of them more practical. These groups, in the order in which they will be examined are: (1) the married woman; (2) the unmarried woman; and (3) the self-supporting unmarried woman.

I. The Married Woman

In the Galician society of the late nineteenth century the proper role of a woman was that of wife and mother. ". . . Dios hizo a la mujer para la familia, para la maternidad, para la sumisión, para las labores propias

de su sexo. . . ."13 The scant education and training that middle-class women received was aimed at preparing her to perform these functions.

From marriage a woman gained financial security and social standing. In return, society deemed that she owed her husband obedience, respect and fidelity. In Doña Milagros, Benicio Neira stated that the duties of a wife were those of "¡Mucho coser . . . , mucho rezar . . . en casita . . . , y querer a su marido y a sus hijos!"14 Nucha Pardo, the wife of Pedro Moscoso, the marquis of Ulloa, in Los pazos de Ulloa is an example of what was considered the perfect wife.

Known for her modesty and virtue, Nucha's character is unblemished in every respect. She is mystically inclined with a kind and gentle manner. She concerns herself only with her husband, her home, and her child. Obedient and submissive, she continually tries to please and serve her husband.

Unfortunately, although society would consider her the perfect mate, she is not the wife that Pedro Moscoso needs nor can she satisfy him or make him happy. Her nervous temperament and delicate health make her unsuited for life at the rustic palace of Ulloa. Her timid and

13Emilia Pardo Bazán, Novelas y cuentos, Fourth edition (Vol. II of Obras completas de Emilia Pardo Bazán; Madrid: Aguilar, 1964), p. 429.

14Ibid., p. 412.

sensitive nature displeases the robust and rugged marquis who is primarily interested in a healthy wife who can give him heirs.

Pedro Moscoso's life style and mentality is more that of a peasant than of an aristocrat. He has spent his entire life in the country; he is strong and physically vigorous; and he is accustomed to outdoor life. The descendant of a once illustrious family, he:

. . . is permitting his Galician estate to fall into decay and ruin and to be sapped and wasted through his own slothfulness and neglect; and he is besmirching the honor of his name with ignoble vices.¹⁵

Here again Pardo Bazán is commenting on the unreasonableness of the Spanish code of honor. It is a code which allows a man to live in concubinage with a servant but demands that he must choose a wife of impeccable character and has nothing to do with love or inclination. Pedro chose to marry Nucha not because he found her attractive or exciting but because she was the most innocent, virtuous and reserved of his cousins. As he reasoned to himself:

Además, no es lo mismo distraerse con una muchacha cualquiera que tomar esposa. La hembra destinada a llevar el nombre esclarecido de Moscoso y a perpetuarlo legítimamente había de ser limpia como un espejo . . . Y don Pedro figuraba entre los que no juzgan limpia ya a la que tuvo amorosos tratos, aun en la más honesta y lícita forma con otro que con

¹⁵Clyde Chew Glascock, Two Modern Spanish Novelists: Emilia Pardo Bazán and Amando Palacios Valdés (University of Texas Bulletin No. 2325. Austin: University of Texas, 1926), p. 23.

su marido. Aún los ojeados en calles y paseos eran pecados gordos. Entendía don Pedro el honor conyugal a la manera calderoniana española neta, indulgentísima para el esposo e impecable para la esposa.¹⁶

Thus, although Nucha is what society considers the perfect wife, she is actually more suited for life in a convent than for the rigors of life in the country and for marriage with the primitive marquis. She is unable to give the marquis what he most wanted from marriage, a male heir.

Ilduara Niera, the wife of Benicio in Doña Milagros, matches the Galician notion of the perfect married woman in her fidelity to her husband. Benicio is not only certain that his wife is faithful, but he is also certain that no male would consider making an improper advance toward her. As he remarks:

¿Y quién había de de atrevérsete, ¡ich Ilduara mía!, con aquel gesto tuyo y aquel entrecejo y aquella austeridad de líneas que alejaba todo pensamiento profano?¹⁷

Furthermore, she excels in "las labores propias de su sexo." She is very thrifty and spends Benicio's money with care and prudence. She is a tireless worker and runs the household smoothly and efficiently. She bore her husband eighteen children of which twelve survive.

Despite her many excellent qualities, Ilduara is a woman of iron will who runs Benicio's life mercilessly.

¹⁶Emilia Pardo Bazán, Los nazos de Ulloa (Vol. III of Obras completas de Emilia Pardo Bazán; Madrid: Administración, 1965), p. 110.

¹⁷Pardo Bazán, Novelas y cuentos, p. 371.

She, with her energetic and masculine nature, easily dominates her kind-hearted and peace-loving husband. She neither shows him respect nor obedience. Ilduara has become the real male in the household; it is she that commands and he and the twelve children who meekly obey. As Benicio comments sadly:

Comprendí entonces por primera vez que el esposo, cuando no establece desde un principio su autoridad doméstica y su legítimo ascendiente, queda anulado, sometido a la que, de súbito, se trueca en tirana fiera. Ilduara desoyó mis ruegos, se mofó de mis consejos y hasta volvió contra mí las faltas de los míos.¹⁸

She alone manages their financial affairs and, as she possesses the only key to their money box, he has to satisfy himself with the small personal allowance that she gives him.

Obviously, Ilduara is not the obedient self-sacrificing wife of the Galician middle class. But curiously, her usurpation of the traditional male role in marriage does not appear to have brought her happiness. For some unexplainable reason, she is subject to irrational and unreasonable fits of jealousy. That Benicio is not handsome and that he is, and has always been, the most faithful of husbands does not prevent Ilduara from continually changing maids, cooks and nurses and employing only the ugliest of domestic help. She humiliates him by her continual spying, absurd accusations and senseless suspicions.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 358.

Perhaps, what Pardo Bazán was saying with these two radically different types of wives, is that a woman is not happy when she is held or assumes a position of inferiority or superiority to that of the male. It is clear that Pardo Bazán felt that the Galician code of honor in regard to the woman and marriage was completely out of date. Her feminist spirit rebelled against this double standard which is so unfair to the woman. As the countess herself said "Yo soy una radical feminista. Creo que todos los derechos que tiene el hombre debe tenerlos la mujer. . . ."19

II. The Unmarried Woman

The middle-class Galician single girl of the 1880's did not usually possess the financial resources nor the educational background necessary to support herself. Living in a society that had no use for old maids, she needed a husband to support her and give her social standing. Thus, perhaps the most difficult problem facing the Galician single girl was that of finding a suitable husband. Pardo Bazán reveals the seriousness of this problem in Doña Milagros and Memorias de un solterón.

Benicio Neira is from a noble old aristocratic family. Unfortunately, the expense of eighteen children, twelve of which are still living, has caused such a financial

¹⁹Bravo-Villasante, op. cit., p. 287.

drain on his inheritance that the family socially and economically has been reduced to the middle class. Eleven of his children are girls. Each one of them is a liability that is causing him to sink deeper and deeper into debt. Contemplating his grave financial situation, Benicio thinks to himself:

Empecé a ver que lo que complicaba la situación de mi familia era la fatalidad de que la Naturaleza se empeñase en regalarme hembras y no varones. Son las hembras, desde tiempo inmemorial, la plaga, la aflicción y el castigo de la fecundidad humana. He oído que en algunos países se acostumbra darles muerte al nacer, y, aunque se me haga duro creer tan horrible crueldad, lo cierto es que aquí, si no las matamos, renegamos de ellas.²⁰

The only socially acceptable solutions to his problem are for his daughters either to marry or to become nuns. Unfortunately, no suitable husbands for his five marriageable daughters have yet appeared.

When confronted with the serious problem of contracting matrimony, each of the following single girls handled it in a distinct manner. They are Carmiña Aldao from Una cristiana and Clara, Gertrudis (Tula), María Rosa (Rosa), and María Ramona (Argos) Neira from Doña Milagros and Memorias de un solterón.

Carmiña Aldao is a pleasant-looking Galician girl with a deep sense of Christian duty. Her mother died when Carmiña was very young. Shortly thereafter her father began cohabiting with a servant, Andrea. He discontinued

²⁰Pardo Bazán, Novelas y cuentos, p. 375.

this relationship when Andrea became old and repulsive. Then Andrea, who continued on as a servant, brought her sixteen year old niece, Cándida, to live with her. Carmiña's father has fallen in love with Cándida and pursues her ardently and relentlessly. Cándida encourages him but will not let him have his own way. Carmiña has asked her father to either marry Cándida or send her away. Her father's sharp reply was "no me caso porque es un desatino; pero si Cándida sale por una puerta, saldrás tú por la otra."²¹

This situation has made life at home intolerable for Carmiña making it therefore necessary that she marry and marry quickly. Thus, in marriage she is looking for a method of escaping a distasteful situation over which she has no control. She has received a proposal of marriage from a man whom she finds physically repulsive. Although she neither loves nor cares for this man, who is old enough to be her father, she is so resolved to leave home that she has agreed to this loveless marriage. However, she is determined to do her Christian duty by him and be a good wife. Carmiña is ". . . una verdadera cristiana . . . una mujer que hace del sacrificio cristiano la ley de su vida."²²

²¹Emilia Pardo Bazán, Novelas y cuentos, Fourth edition (Vol. I of Obras completas de Emilia Pardo Bazán), p. 583.

²²César Barja, Libros y autores modernos siglos XVIII y XIX, Second edition (New York: Las Americas Publishing Company, 1954), p. 316.

Clara is the next to the oldest daughter of Ilduara and Benicio Neira. She is tall, blond, serious and pretty. She has never been mystically inclined, but religion has always been a great source of comfort to her. Clara has an extremely practical mind and sees the world as it actually is. After a long period of careful consideration, she has decided to become a nun.

She realizes that she will not inherit a great deal of money from her parents, and that if marriage brings many joys it also brings many sorrows. She is unwilling to marry just any man. Time is passing and no suitable males have presented themselves. Furthermore, the suffering and pain of the incessant pregnancies of her mother have frightened her. Clara is a tranquil person who enjoys a regular, methodical and peaceful life. Thus, for Clara, the peace and calm of a convent is far more inviting than a marriage without love or life as a poverty-stricken old maid. As her father stated, ". . . ella comprendió que una señorita, o se casa con arreglo a su clase . . . o no se casa, y decidió tomar el velo, conservando su dignidad, su posición, su señorío . . ."23

Three of the other marriageable daughters of Ilduara and Benicio are Gertrudis, María Rosa and María Ramona. Although Tula, Rosa and Argos have divergent personalities, they have several traits in common. They all fall in love

²³Pardo Bazán, Novelas y cuentos, Vol. II, p. 461.

easily, usually with the first male who presents himself, and are vain flirts. These three women:

Están siempre dispuestas a amar al primero que se presente; en su amor no hay nada de idealismo, sino que es una combinación de grosero sensualismo y de un cierto egoísmo crematístico, que a algunas de ellas las lleva a la comisión de las más bajas y deshonestas acciones; es un amor activo y perseverante que opera sobre cuantos hombres conocen . . . más que amor es irrefenable inclinación por el sexo masculino.²⁴

Tula is the oldest of the sisters and the one most similar in character and appearance to her mother. She is almost thirty, thoroughly unhappy being single and desperately trying to get married. These three things have caused her to become cross and bitter. She spends her time quarreling and bickering with her sisters. Her desire and need for marriage is far stronger than her pride in her social position and her fear of ridicule. Her sole wish is to find a husband, any husband, ". . . a cualquier precio y de cualquier clase o género que fuese. . . ." ²⁵

She eagerly accepts the first male who proposes to her. The fact that Redondo is uneducated and unprincipled, a house painter and the son of a barber and that she will have to live in much poorer circumstances has no significance to her. As her father sadly stated:

Tula no encontraba su media naranja, y se moría por dar con ella, hasta que se la brindó la embadurnada

²⁴Emilio González López, Emilia Pardo Bazán novelista de Galicia (New York: Hispanic Institute, 1944), p. 167.

²⁵Pardo Bazán, Novelas y cuentos, Vol. II, p. 463.

mano del vástago del rapabarbas. Y verla y asirla fue todo uno. . . . Casada con Redondo, mi hija encendería la lumbre, la soplaría, arrimaría el puchero, barrería ella misma su cuarto, y tal vez, ¡perspectiva afrentosa!, tendría que bajar al lavadero para retorcer los pañales de mis nietecillos.²⁶

Rosa is perhaps the most beautiful of the sisters. She enjoys all the things that money buys and is motivated more by materialistic desires than by sexual ones. She is very style conscious and spends a great amount of time and money on her clothing and person. She is a trend setter and her clothing is widely imitated and criticized. "Su vida no tenía más clave ni más norma que el tocado y el vestido."²⁷ She is a genius at reproducing the latest styles by making over old clothing:

Podría afirmarse de ella que ni existía ni respiraba sino para emperejilarse. . . . Ingeniábase para variar de adornos sin comprar ninguno nuevo; volvía del revés los trajes; les añadía perendengues, volantes aprovechados; la pasamanería que guarnecía la falda subía al cuerpo, y a la falda bajaba el fleco de las hombreras, repartido en golpes . . . Veía en un escaparate algo nuevo y caro; suspiraba, daba cien vueltas en rededor del vidrio . . . , y en casa, con vejece, imitaba al punto la novedad.²⁸

Despite this talent, she spends far too much money on clothing and is ruining her father financially.

Rosa's desire for clothing, jewels and money causes her to sell herself to Baltasar Sobrado, a rich old usurer whom she does not love. She foolishly believes that he is

²⁶Ibid., p. 444.

²⁷Ibid., p. 463.

²⁸Ibid., p. 394.

madly in love with her and will marry her. Unfortunately, Sobrado is merely taking advantage of her foolishness and has no intention of marrying anyone. Rosa's nature is so completely materialistic that she was:

. . . predestinada a este desenlace, si no encontraba inmediatamente un marido muy rico. Y si encontraba ese marido, estaba predestinada a arruinarle y a cubrirle de vergüenza. Por un retazo de terciopelo, vende Rosa la hostia consagrada. ¡Muñeca sin alma y sin decoro!²⁹

The beauty of Argos has a strange and dramatic quality about it. Her palid face and large, expressive eyes add to her mystical appearance. She possesses a beautiful mezzo-soprano voice, a tendency to dramatize life and a neurotic temperament. The sensual and passionate nature of Argos first appears as religious fanaticism. During this period, she prays and does penance continually, wears a habit made of thick coarse cloth and neglects her personal appearance. This mysticism is not caused by a religious inclination, but rather by the strong sexual attraction she feels for her confessor, the eloquent and austere Father Incienso. This female "tenorio" pursues him so ardently and publicly that he is forced to leave the city in order to avoid a scandal.

With the departure of Father Incienso, her mystical tendencies suffer a radical change to romantic ones. Her passionate but capricious nature is now excited by the

²⁹Ibid., p. 505.

married libertine Luis Mejía. Most men do not interest her, "Argos . . . quiere leones; se muere por los audaces, por los insolentes, por los perdidos."³⁰ She allows herself to be seduced by him not because she is in love, but ". . . por capricho, por curiosidad malsana, por novelería, por falta de sentido moral . . . ¡Ah!, y por enfermedad."³¹

Thus, the typical middle-class Galician woman of the late nineteenth century was under great social and economic pressure to marry. Society had conditioned her to believe that this was her true role in life and had educated her to do nothing else. Because they were such a financial burden, middle-class families were often pleased and relieved when their daughters married. The only socially acceptable alternative to marriage was to become a nun; therefore, women who were not religiously inclined were especially eager to find a mate.

According to Pardo Bazán, the limited education that the middle-class woman received "limita a la mujer, la estrecha y reduce, haciéndola más pequeña aún que el tamaño natural y manteniéndola en perpetua infancia."³² This lack of education and the belief that she should not earn her own living often caused her to live an aimless life of frivolity. This was a frivolity, as Pardo Bazán stated, ". . . que si

³⁰Ibid., p. 489.

³¹Ibid., p. 504.

³²Bravo-Villasante, op. cit., p. 169.

no lleva a la corrupción, las mantiene en un limbo de estupidez."³³

Two of the single women studied, Carmiña Aldao and Clara Neira, possessed a noble character, deep Christian convictions and the ability to reason clearly. They both felt a need to leave home, but they resolved this problem only after careful consideration of their needs, aspirations, preferences and ideals. Carmiña decided to marry a man that she did not love, but she did not make this decision lightly. She was thoroughly aware of what being a good wife and mother meant, and she was ready and willing to do her utmost to make her husband happy. Clara decided to become a nun. She realized the problems and sorrows that marriage can bring, and, because of her tranquil personality, she felt that she would be much happier in a convent.

Tula, Rosa and Argos were for the most part silly, frivolous and empty-headed coquettes. They felt obsessed with the desire to have a suitor and, even more important, to trap a husband. In their eagerness to get married they paid little attention to the appearance, age, and moral shortcomings of their suitors. Their love is active rather than passive--they are actually the seducer, and the male is the seduced.

Emilia Pardo Bazán has used these five women to demonstrate how many middle-class Galician women have

³³Ibid.

reacted to the intense social pressure to marry. Some women, like Carmiña and Tula, have decided to marry without love; others, like Clara, have become nuns; and a third group, like Rosa and Argos, have prostituted themselves in the hope of getting a husband. Perhaps what Pardo Bazán was attempting to say with these women was that it is far more honorable to break the social code and support yourself than it is to contract a loveless marriage, become a nun without a true vocation or prostitute yourself.

III. The Self-Supporting Unmarried Woman

In the 1880's there were few Galician women of the middle class who dared to work outside their home. The few that did, usually did so, because their financial situation required it. Perhaps the only job a woman could hold and still be considered middle class was that of tutoring students or being a schoolmistress.

Leocadia Otero in El cisne de Vilamorta is the schoolmistress in the village of Vilamorta. She is thirty-six, physically unattractive and pitted with smallpox. She is an orphan and was raised by her uncle. By him she had a frail child, Minguitos, who in time became hunchbacked. Upon his death, Leocadia's uncle left her some land and a house in Vilamorta. Despite this inheritance, Leocadia realized that she would have to work in order to be able to care properly for her sickly child. She took and passed the exam for schoolmistress and obtained a teaching

position in Vilamorta. For the last thirteen years, she has lead an exemplary life teaching school, caring for her son night and day and economizing to repair and rebuild her home. Through her industry she has even managed to save a small amount of money. She has gained the respect and admiration of the townspeople. She has had several suitors but rejected them, preferring to maintain her independence and continue working so that she can provide for herself and her child. Through her own labor, Leocadia can support herself and has created her own social position; therefore, she does not need to marry as do other middle-class women who are unwilling or unable to work.

Fe (Feíta) Neira of Doña Milagros and Memorias de un solterón was pleasant looking, but not pretty, and had an energetic, masculine and independent nature. She liked to read and felt that there had to be more to life than cooking, sewing, sweeping and raising children. She realized the poor financial position that her family was in and did not want to have to depend on marriage to save her from starvation. Feíta ". . . aspira a abrirse paso en esta vida ganando con su esfuerzo el pan de cada día; en lugar de cifrar sus esperanzas en un matrimonio de redención o de esclavitud."³⁴

She asked her father if he would let her study at the local institute so that she could eventually work and

³⁴González López, op. cit., p. 42.

support herself. She explained it to him this way:

Quiero estudiar, aprender, saber y valerme el día de mañana sin necesitar a nadie. Yo no he de estar dependiendo de un hombre. Me lo ganaré y me burlaré de todos ellos.³⁵

As Benicio felt that her proper role was as a wife and mother and that it was beneath her dignity to study or work, Feíta was forced to continue educating herself with her brother's books and those that friends were willing to loan or give her. Feíta was an apt student and read everything that came into her hands.

The family doctor, Moragas, felt that the idleness and frivolity of the typical middle-class woman was spiritually and mentally harmful to her. He had always encouraged Feíta's studies and finally succeeded in helping her secure employment. He found among his clientele two families who needed a tutor and secured both of these positions for Feíta. She was elated; the tutoring jobs provided her with a great amount of freedom and enough money to buy her books and clothing. Later, she was able to secure a third position.

At first, she was criticized heavily by her sisters, Argos and Rosa, for "disgracing" the family by working. It is only after they have both been disgraced in their amorous dealing and Benicio has died leaving them almost penniless that they recognized their need to work and were willing to do so.

³⁵Pardo Bazán, Novelas y cuentos, Vol. II, p. 429.

In the character of Feíta Neira, the feminism of Emilia Pardo Bazán was clearly displayed. Feíta was not entirely a fictitious character, she in many ways represented the early rebellion of Pardo Bazán against the narrow confines of Galician society.³⁶ In Feíta, Pardo Bazán presented the modern woman ". . . Feíta es la futura mujer española de 1980."³⁷ A woman who has a broad education, able to support herself and only willing to marry a man whom she truly loves. Pardo Bazán uses Feíta to demonstrate that women need not and should not depend entirely on marriage for their future livelihood. As she has Feíta say, "Dios nos manda, en el primer término, que nos salvemos a nosotros mismos. . . ."38

³⁶González López, loc. cit.

³⁷Bravo-Villasante, op. cit., pp. 199-200.

³⁸Pardo Bazán, Novelas y cuentos, Vol. II, p. 487.

Chapter 4

THE WORKING-CLASS WOMAN

Emilia Pardo Bazán was born and raised in the old aristocratic district of La Coruña. She disliked this deserted and melancholy area where ". . . la mujer no es nada más que una sombra escondida en la obscuridad de sus casonas o pasando fugaz por las callejuelas envueltas en el lúgubre manto de la beata."³⁹ Pardo Bazán was enchanted by the life, movement and activity in the new section of the city called "La Pescadería." This part of La Coruña had a very feminine atmosphere and character. There was a predominance of women evident everywhere--in the cafes, in the shops, on the streets, and in the factories. In the working class there were far more women than men:

En La Coruña hay más obreras que obreros: cigarreras, tejedoras, modistillas, costureras, obreras de las fábricas de conservas y de otras muchas más, forman la parte principal del censo obrero de la población. La cigarrera y la modistilla, sobre todo, son los dos tipos representativos de la coruñesa.⁴⁰

The young Emilia, living in the rigidly conservative atmosphere of the aristocratic district and surrounded by all manner of social conventions and traditional customs, admired the freedom, independence, and self-sufficiency of

³⁹González López, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 157.

the Galician women of the working class. Her respect for these women was evident in the sympathetic manner in which she wrote about them and their lives.

Esclavitud Lamas, the servant girl in Morriña, has an extremely sad history. Her father was an uneducated village priest in Galicia. He had taken in a ragged and hungry ten year old orphan girl and had raised her and trained her to become his housekeeper. She developed into a beautiful woman and the priest fell in love with her. With the birth of Esclavitud, the priest was forced to send his mistress to Montevideo. He was allowed to keep Esclavitud and raised her lovingly as his niece. She developed into a beautiful, honest, devout and industrious young woman. Because she could inherit nothing from her father, he hoarded money and gave it to her. When he died, Esclavitud, who was ". . . capaz de irse a cualquier parte en peregrinación, descalza, para sacar del purgatorio el alma del cura,"⁴¹ gave all of this money to the church so that masses could be said for the soul of her father. Having no money, family or friends, Esclavitud went to Madrid to become a servant ". . . por no estar donde la gente 'sepa' y 'recuerde' y 'diga.'"⁴²

⁴¹Pardo Bazán, Insolación y Morriña, op. cit., p. 202.

⁴²Ibid.

In Madrid she found employment in the home of a widow, Aurora Nogueira de Pardiñas, and her son, Rogelio. Galician servant girls are sought after because of their decent and humble manner and their ability to perform their duties with skill and rapidity. Esclavitud is no exception to this general rule. She has a modest and gentle personality and is a diligent and able worker; she is a perfect servant in every respect:

Levantábase muy temprano, casi con estrellas, y antes que la cocinera hubiese soñado en encender la lumbre, ya estaba ella arreglando todas las menudencias concernientes al desayuno de los amos. Desde el primer día se reservó la preparación de chocolates, y los hacía con esmero clerical. El secreto, que ya va perdiéndose, del tiempo, hervores y batiduras indispensables para que una solución de cacao salga aromática, ligada y sustanciosa, lo poseía tan a fondo Esclavitud, que doña Aurora juraba no haber probado en su vida chocolate por el estilo. En barrer tampoco se quedaba atrás. Con el pañuelo atado a la curra y las sayas recogidas, pero sin gran alboroto ni mucho trasteo de muebles, barriendo manso, por decirlo así, nadie sería capaz de descubrir un átomo de polvo en los lugares por donde había pasado aquella inteligente escoba. El no sacudir con exceso, ni aporrear demasiado con los zorros, molestando a todo bicho viviente, so pretexto de limpiar, era un mérito más a los ojos de doña Aurora, enemiga de la gente arrebatada y brusca. Pero donde la fámula nueva descollaba era en el repaso. Veíase que estaba menos acostumbrada a trabajos de fogón y a trajines caseros que a la labor sedentaria, en silla baja, junto a una ventanita. En dos horas despabilaba el canasto de ropa, y eran de admirar sus invisibles zurcidos, sus mañosas piezas, sus indestructibles presillas y sus firmes botones.⁴³

But if Esclavitud possesses the good qualities of the Galician servant girl she also possesses the defects. She has a tendency toward melancholy and keeps her feelings

⁴³Ibid., pp. 209-210.

and thoughts to herself. She does not possess a frank and open character. As Aurora Pardiñas states:

La muchacha tiene las buenas cualidades de nuestro país; pero no le faltan los defectos. Es humilde, modosa y callada; pero también es algo zorrita, y no hay modo de saber lo que piensa ni lo que le pasa. . . .⁴⁴

Esclavitud has another defect of the typical Galician, she is highly superstitious and has a blind faith in the world of the supernatural. Through her superstitious beliefs, she has a premonition of her own death. As she explains to Rogelio:

. . . hay cosas que avisan los difuntos a los vivos; no le quepa duda. Tres días antes de morir mi padre, vi un pájaro grande, negro, al pie de mi cama. Ayer vi otra vez el pájaro: iba tan de prisa que no se por dónde se escapó; pero lo vi, tan cierto como que aquí estamos. Yo no vuelvo más a la tierra, nunca más. Ya se verá; y entonces ha de convencerse y dirá: "Esclavitud bien me lo avisaba." Esta noche . . . Un perro, en una casa de ahí al lado, estuvo hasta que amaneció "venteando" la muerte.⁴⁵

Clearly the Galician servant girl of the 1880's was not afraid to work long and hard to support herself and to maintain her integrity. She was honorable, dependable, virtuous and honest and was therefore in great demand. However, despite her many fine qualities, she also had a tendency to be an introvert and to be superstitious.

Amparo Rosendo of La tribuna is the only child of a "cigarrera," who has been forced by illness to retire from her job at the tobacco factory, and a "barquillero."

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 212.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 299.

Until the illness of her mother, both of her parents worked; thus, they have left Amparo alone most of the day since she was a baby. She enjoyed the animation and activity in the street and spent most of her time there. As she grew older, she helped her father make "barquillos" in the morning but spent the rest of the day in the street. It was her paradise, she:

Pasábase horas y horas correteando sin objeto al través de la ciudad, y volvía a casa con los pies descalzos y manchados de lodo, la saya en jirones, hecha una sopa, mocosa, despeinada, perdida y rebosante de dicha y salud por todos los poros de su cuerpo.⁴⁶

Her home was a typical working-class dwelling. It was small, dark and cheerless. In it Amparo could see:

. . . la historia de la pobreza y de la incuria narrada en prosa por una multitud de objetos feos; historia que la chiquilla comprendía intuitivamente, pues hay quien, sin haber nacido entre sábanas y holandas, presume y adivina las comodidades y deleites que jamás gozo.⁴⁷

Amparo had some formal schooling when she was young. She learned to read well and to write. She has improved her reading ability by reading the newspaper to a local barber each day. This ability causes her to be chosen to read the newspapers to her fellow workers after she manages to obtain a position in the tobacco factory.

Although she misses her former street life, Amparo comes to feel pride in her work and a fraternal interest in the other "cigarreras." Furthermore, her earnings have

⁴⁶Pardo Bazán, Novelas y cuentos, Vol. II, p. 107.

⁴⁷Ibid.

given her a financial independence which she had never known. She gives her parents part of her earnings and spends the rest of them on herself in any manner she likes.

Before she became a "cigarrera," Amparo wore the same ragged and torn clothing all year around:

Como para los pobres suele no haber estaciones, Amparo tenía el mismo traje de tartán, pero muy deteriorado, y una toquilla de estambre rojo era la única prenda que indicaba el tránsito de la primavera al invierno.⁴⁸

She often had no shoes or had badly torn shoes to wear. Now that she works in the tobacco factory, she dresses in a neat and clean manner in the classical dress of the "cigarreras." She wears ". . . el mantón, el pañuelo de seda para las solemnidades, la falda de percal planchada y de cola."⁴⁹

As time passes Amparo develops into a beautiful woman and is ardently pursued by a member of the upper class, Baltasar Sobrado. She is warned repeatedly by her friends that a "señorito", "a las chicas pobres no las buscan ellos para cosa buena, no y no . . . Y a las que son pobres y formales no se arriman porque ven que no sacan raja. . . ." ⁵⁰

Amparo has a high set of moral standards, and she believes in social equality and in Baltasar's promises of marriage. We can see these qualities in Amparo in the

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 114.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 119.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 167.

conversation which takes place between her and Baltasar just before the seduction:

--Mi honor, don Baltasar, es como de cualquiera, ¿sabe usted? Soy una hija del pueblo; pero tengo mi altivez . . . por lo mismo. . . . Conque . . . ya puede usted comprenderme. La sociedad se opone a que usted me de la mano de esposo.

--Y ¿por qué? -- preguntó con soberano desparpajo el oficial.

--Y ¿por qué? -- repitió la vanidad en el fondo del alma de "la Tribuna."

--No sería yo el primero, ni el segundo, que se casase con. . . . Hoy no hay clases. . . .

--Y su familia . . . , su familia . . . ¿Piensa usted que no se desdenarían de una hija del pueblo?

--¡Bah! . . . ¿Qué nos importa eso? Mi familia es una cosa, yo soy otro -- repuso Baltasar, impaciente.

¿Me promete usted casarse conmigo? -- Murmuró la inocentona de la oradora política.

--¡Sí, vida mía! -- exclamó él, sin fijarse casi en lo que le preguntaban pues estaba resuelto a decir amén a todo.

Pero Amparo retrocedió.

--¡No, no! -- balbució, trémula y espantada -- No basta el jarabe de pico. . . . ¿Me lo jura usted . . . ?

Baltasar era joven aún y no tenía temple de seductor de oficio. Vaciló, pero fue obra de un instante; carraspeó para afianzar la voz y exclamó:

--Lo juro.

Hubo un momento de silencio en que solo se escuchó el delgado silbido del aire cruzando las copas de los olmos del camino y el lejano quejar del mar.

--¿Por el alma de su madre? ¿Por su condenación eterna?

Baltasar con ahogada voz, articuló el perjurio.

--¿Delante de la cara de Dios? -- prosiguió Amparo ansiosa.

De nuevo vaciló Baltasar un minuto. No era creyente macizo y fervoroso como Amparo, pero tampoco ateo persuadido; sacudió sus labios ligero temblor al proferir la horrible blasfemia. . . .⁵¹

Unfortunately, Baltasar Sobrado has no intention of marrying the beautiful Amparo, and she soon realizes that she has committed a serious mistake by yielding to him. Amparo becomes pregnant, but her pride will not allow her to revenge her seduction or to attempt to coerce Baltasar into marrying her. She resigns herself to her fate and raises her son alone.

In Amparo, Emilia Pardo Bazán presented the woman of the Galician working class as completely hardy and self-sufficient. She has little formal schooling and the street is her real home. She has only her pride in her work and her virtue to recommend her.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 175.

Chapter 5

THE PEASANT-CLASS WOMAN

Having lived for many years in the rural areas of Galicia, Emilia Pardo Bazán knew that the life of the Galician peasant was not idyllic or romantic. As Manuel Pardo de la Laga says in Los pazos de Ulloa: "La aldea, cuando se cría uno en ella y no sale de allí jamás, envilece, empobrece y embrutece."⁵² It is in Los pazos de Ulloa and La madre naturaleza that Pardo Bazán describes the harsh and coarse existence of the Galician peasant woman.

The "gallega" is expected to perform a great deal of heavy farm labor as well as all the domestic chores. She is equal to the man and works like one, "en la Galicia campesina la mujer es tanto como el hombre con el que comparte los más duros trabajos. . . ."⁵³ As a child she is practically left to raise herself. Peasant children ". . . los guarda el diablo. . . . Esa clase de hierba nunca muere."⁵⁴ Often, by the age of five she has been put to work caring for cows and younger brothers and sisters.

⁵²Pardo Bazán, Los pazos de Ulloa, p. 24.

⁵³González López, op. cit., p. 156.

⁵⁴Emilia Pardo Bazán, La madre naturaleza (Vol. IV of Obras completas de Emilia Pardo Bazán; Madrid: Editorial Pueyo, 1887), p. 189.

Therefore, although she is often very beautiful while a young woman, her beauty is often gone by the time she reaches twenty-five or thirty. Generally, if she remains single, her beauty will last longer. But if she marries, her beauty is usually gone within a year. As Pardo Bazán explains:

Campeſinas mozas vemos que tienen la balsámica, frescura de las hierbas puestas a serenar la víspera de San Juan, y al año de consorcio no es posible conocerlas ni creer que son las mismas, y su tez lleva ya arrugas, las arrugas aldeanas, que parecen grietas del terruño. Todo el peso del hogar les cae encima, y adiós risa alegre y labios colorados. Las coplas populares gallegas no celebran jamás la belleza en la mujer después de casada y madre; sus requiebros y ternezas son siempre para "rapazas," las "nenas bunitas."⁵⁵

Sabel Suárez the beautiful and sensual servant in Los pazos de Ulloa is full of health and animal vitality as a young woman. She is considered the beauty of the region and is extremely graceful with clear skin and sparkling blue eyes. She is described thusly:

Sabel es la moza galana que gusta de las fiestas y de los halagos de todos los varones que encuentra en su camino, sin excluir al bendito Julián, que se vió solicitado por esta pecadora.⁵⁶

However, by the time Sabel is in her forties, the once beautiful servant girl can hardly be recognized. Her spirit has been broken, her skin is withered and her eyes are listless. The rapid decline of her physical attractiveness,

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 144-145.

⁵⁶González López, op. cit., p. 141.

and that of the Galician peasant woman in general, is pictured in La madre naturaleza:

A la escalera salieron a hacerle los honores el Gallo y su esposa, la ex bella fregatriz Sabel, causa de tantos disturbios, pecados y tristezas. Quien la hubiera visto cosa de diez y ocho años antes, cuando quería hacer prevaricar a los capellanes de la casa, no la conocería ahora. Las aldeanas, aunque no se dediquen a labrar la tierra, no conservan, pasado los treinta, atractivo alguno, y en general se ajan y marchitan desde los veinticinco. Sus extremidades se deforman, su piel se curte, la osatura se les marca, el pelo se les vuelve áspero como cola de buey, el seno se esparce y abulta feamente, los labios se secan, en los ojos se descubre, en vez de la chispa de juguetona travesura propia de la mocedad, la codicia y el servilismo juntos, sello de la máscara labriega. . . .

Sabel no desmentía la regla. A los cuarenta y tantos años, era lastimosa andrajo de lo que algún día fue la mejor moza diez leguas en contorno. El azul de sus pupilas, antes tan claro y puro, amarilleaba; su tez de alberchigo era piel de manzana que en el madurero se va secando y los pomulos sobresalientes y la frente baja y la forma achatada del cráneo se marcaban ahora con energía, completando una de esas cabezas de aldeana de las cuales dice cualquiera: "Más fácil sería convencer a una mula que a esta mujer, cuando se empeñe en algo."⁵⁷

The "gallega," as an old woman, becomes extremely ugly. By the age of sixty these women have the appearance of toothless and bony hags. In La madre naturaleza the typical peasant woman of sixty is described:

. . . el sol había curtido su piel, que en los sitios donde sobresalen los huesos tenía el buñido y la lisura de la piel de los arneses cuando el uso la avellana. Sus ojos grises, incoloros, hacían un guiño entre malicioso y humilde; su pescuezo colgaba en pellejos negruzcos, confundiendo su color y la sombra del arranque del pelo . . . y el cruce de otro pañuelo sobre su pecho dejaba adivinar senos flojos

⁵⁷ Pardo Bazán, La madre naturaleza, p. 144-145.

de hembra cansada de criar numerosa prole. Remangadas las mangas de la camisa, se ostentaba su brazo-- un poema de laboriosidad, un brazo en que las finas venas azules, que al escotarse las damas atraen la vista como el jaspeado de un rico mármol, eran gruesos troncos negruzcos, cuyas raíces se destacaban en relieve sobre la carne terrosa, parecida a barro groseramente cocido.⁵⁸

The Galician peasant woman of the 1880's was often subject to the will of a despotic landowner. Pedro Moscoso, the marquis of Ulloa, in Los pazos de Ulloa, was both despotic and barbarian. He was certain that Sabel Suárez would not complain to the authorities about the beating he gave her. He forced the daughter of one of his caretakers to come to his palace to serve as a wet-nurse. With the help of Primitivo, he forced Sabel to cohabit with him. She did not care for the marquis and was in love with the "Gallo." "El único deseo de ella es el de casarse con el 'Gallo,' lo cual hace después de la muerte de Primitivo.

. . ."⁵⁹ As the marquis said in a fit of jealous rage:

¿Soy estúpido acaso, para no ver que esa desvergonzada huye de mí, y cada día tengo que cazarla como a una liebre? ¡Sólo está contenta entre los demás labriegos, con la hechicera que le trae y lleva chismes y recados a los mozos! A mí me detesta. A la hora menos pensada me envenenará.⁶⁰

The Galician peasants of the late nineteenth century were as a rule uneducated and extremely superstitious.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 185-186.

⁵⁹ Osborne, op. cit., p. 70.

⁶⁰ Pardo Bazán, Los pazos de Ulloa, p. 77.

For them the earth was populated by spirits, the soul by beliefs and superstitions, and material things, such as rivers, lakes, trees, and mountains, by invisible but active beings.⁶¹ Thus, the respected and feared witch was a common figure of the region. Pardo Bazán represents such a sorceress in María the "Sabia." María is not only ugly and old, but also deformed and malicious. Her sheer repulsiveness inspires fear and makes her charms, spells and curses doubly effective. Also with her deck of dirty cards, she is a skilled fortuneteller. For years the sinister and sly "Sabia" has been looting and living from what she could get from the palace of Ulloa.

Era su figura realmente espantable. Habíale crecido el bocio enorme, hasta el punto de que no se le viese apenas el verdadero rostro, abultando más la lustrosa y horrible segunda cara sin facciones, que le caía sobre el pecho, le subía hasta las orejas y por lo hichada y estirada, contrastaba del modo más repulsivo con el resto del cuerpo de la vieja, que parecía hecho de raíces de árboles y tenía de los árboles añosos la rugosidad y oscuridad de la corteza, los nudos, las verrugas.⁶²

Another peasant type peculiar to the province of Galicia is that of the Amazon. These women live in a Galician valley by the name of Castrodorna near the Portuguese border. Because of the tremendous quantity of milk they can produce, they are considered human cows and are highly valued as wet-nurses. "El ama, decía ella; era

⁶¹González López, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁶²Pardo Bazán, La madre naturaleza, p. 19.

un tonel lleno de leche que estaban allí para aplicarle la espita cuando fuese necesario y soltar el chorro."⁶³

These women have great size, strength, and stamina. They work like men, plowing, digging, planting, harvesting and carrying great weight, and can live without the help of men. The men in this valley usually immigrate to Lisbon at a very early age to look for employment. They return to Castrodorna for only a few months a year to marry or propagate the species. These women although rude and rugged are generally virtuous.

The rustic wet-nurse in Los pazos de Ulloa is typical of this Amazon type. In appearance she resembles a gigantic brown statue. She dislikes having to wear shoes daily and devours huge quantities of food. She must be taught the names and uses of the most common items and that Nucha's new-born infant:

. . . no se podía traer mal envuelto en los retales de bayeta grana, dentro de una barasta mullida de helechos, y dejarse a la sombra de un roble, a merced del viento, del sol y de la lluvia, como los recién nacidos del valle de Castrodorna . . .⁶⁴

In the rustic homes of the Galician countryside, the peasant lives surrounded by all kinds of domestic animals. Pardo Bazán describes it as a type of Noah's ark. The house itself is usually little more than a hovel and contains a few crude pieces of furniture, a dirt

⁶³Pardo Bazán, Los pazos de Ulloa, p. 194.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 195-196.

floor, an oven and little else. In La madre naturaleza the house of the "Sabia" is described:

Tenía la casa piso de tierra; una escalera de madera conducía al sobrado o cuarto alto; y en el bajo se notaba una pintoresca mezcla de racionales e irracionales. El "lar" y la chimenea con asientos de madera bajo su campana; la artesa de guardar el pan; el horno de cocerlo; algunos taburetes con cuatro patas muy esparrancadas; la cuna de mimbres de una criatura, y el "leito" o camarote de tablas en que dormía el matrimonio que la había engendrado, eran los muebles que pertenecían a la humanidad en aquel recinto. La animalidad invadía el resto. Al través de una división de tablones mal juntos pasaba el hálito caliente, el lento rumiar y los quejumbrosos mugidos del ganado; gallinas y pollos escarbaban el suelo y huían con señales de ridículo terror, renqueando, al acercárseles la gente; dos o tres palomas se paseaban, muy sacadas de buche y muy columpiadoras de cuello, esperando que cayese alguna migaja; un marrano sin cebar, magro y peludo aún como un jabalí, sopeteaba con el hocico, gruñendo sordamente, en una tartera de barro donde nadaban berzas en aguachirle; un perro . . . dormía Por un ventanillo, abierto en el testero, entraban las avispas a comerse los gajos de cerezas maduras que andaban rodando sobre la artesa; y si fuese posible prestar oído a unas trotadas menudas que allá arriba resonaban, se comprendía que los ratones no andaban remisos en dar cuenta del poco maíz restante de la cosecha anterior.
 . . . 65

Thus, in no sense did the Galician peasant woman of the 1880's live an idyllic existence. She had a marginal existence at best which was so coarse and rough that it caused her to become old before her time. She received no formal education and often had low moral values or no moral values. She does not have a complicated personality and her actions appear to be more a result of emotion rather than

⁶⁵Pardo Bazán, La madre naturaleza, pp. 18-19.

reason. She is more likely to be highly superstitious than highly religious.

Pardo Bazán has pictured the life of the peasant woman as one of endless toil. She has little chance of improving her situation and little hope for the future. Thus the Galician peasant woman is a mere work horse.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The regional novels of Emilia Pardo Bazán clearly mirrored the Galician woman of the late nineteenth century. Her characteristics, thought and social position varied markedly from one level of society to another. Pardo Bazán's feministic views, on the need for the equality of women and for improving their education, were apparent everywhere.

The life of the aristocratic Galician woman was characterized by its ease, luxury and aimlessness. Although her education was usually the best a woman of her time could aspire to, it was not a particularly thorough or complete one. She was often taught to read and write in both Spanish and French. The art of looking pretty, dressing correctly and saying the "right" things was heavily stressed, while the ability to think or reason was often neglected. She was expected to live by a strict and artificial code of honor which would not allow her to engage in even a mild flirtation for fear of damaging her honor.

Because of her high social position and wealth, she usually did not lack for suitors. In marriage, she was often more interested in wealth or prestige than love or inclination. She often appeared to have merely sold herself

to the highest bidder. She was usually not under financial pressure to marry or remarry if she was widowed. Old maids were not uncommon and were socially acceptable.

The most salient characteristic of the Galician woman of the middle class was her need to marry. Her education was domestic and maternal in nature. Old maids were an economic liability and had little social position or prestige. Women were encouraged to become nuns if they could not find a suitable husband. The middle-class woman was taught that her true vocation and purpose in life was that of a wife and mother. Working outside the home was looked upon as "disgraceful" and beneath her dignity.

Her thoughts for the most part were focused on marriage and finding a husband. This need became an obsession with many women and caused them to marry without love or to prostitute themselves in the hope of trapping a husband. Society had carefully indoctrinated the middle-class woman to think that the duties of a good wife were those of respect, loyalty and obedience to her husband. She often felt that if she complied with these three duties alone, it would be enough to satisfy her husband and make him happy.

The social position of a middle-class woman was secured through marriage. However, a few of the unmarried women who dared support themselves honorably by tutoring or being a school-mistress could occasionally earn their own social prestige.

The Galician woman of the working class was characterized by her hardiness and self-sufficiency. As a general rule, she felt a need to work and to support herself; thus, she was not under any particular pressure to marry. She was more likely to pick a husband because of love or inclination than merely for the sake of marrying someone. Because of her self-sufficiency, she had no need to prostitute herself to anyone and often possessed a high sense of morals. Her formal education was scant; her true school was often the street.

The thought of the working-class woman was often centered around her pride in being able to support herself. She was known for her industrious nature and for her conscientiousness in performing her duties. If she left her native Galicia to work, she was occasionally afflicted by the "morriña" which is so typical of the Galician. Many women in this class had superstitious natures.

The working-class woman enjoyed a social position that was almost superior to the men of her class. She was able to support herself and had no need to marry unless she chose to do so by inclination. Thus, she rarely contracted a loveless marriage or felt obligated to go to a convent because she had become an old maid. She was free to spurn any suitor which did not please her and becoming an old maid was not a social handicap.

The character of the life of the woman of the peasant class was one of harshness. She rarely received

any formal education or any great amount of care as a child. At an early age she was put to work and continued to work at hard and lowly tasks all of her life. She was often strikingly beautiful as a young woman but this beauty quickly faded. She usually lived in a rustic hovel along side of the domestic animals and was subject to the despotic treatment of the local landowner.

The thought of the Galician peasant was highly superficial and superstitious in nature. The witch was a common figure and her powers were respected and feared. The peasant woman had few or no moral values and was seldom deeply religious.

In social position the peasant woman was equal to the man. She worked along side of him and was expected to work as hard and as long as he did. She was actually little more than a beast of burden.

The nine novels of Emilia Pardo Bazán that were studied were extremely feminine in nature. In them, the countess of Pardo Bazán usually stressed the plight of women, and studied their character, life style and psychology in depth, while treating the men as secondary figures. Of the fifteen women studied thirteen of them can be said to have determined the action and to have possessed stronger character than the males that surrounded them.

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