

1-1-2012

## A Community of Women in Clorinda Matto De Turner's Indole

Cordelea Ann Haecker

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/td>

---

### Recommended Citation

Haecker, Cordelea Ann, "A Community of Women in Clorinda Matto De Turner's Indole" (2012). *Theses and Dissertations*. 46.

<https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/td/46>

This Graduate Thesis - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Scholars Junction. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholars Junction. For more information, please contact [scholcomm@msstate.libanswers.com](mailto:scholcomm@msstate.libanswers.com).

A community of women in Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Índole*

By

Cordelea Ann Haecker

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of  
Mississippi State University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts  
in Foreign Language  
in the Department of Classical & Modern Languages & Literatures

Mississippi State, Mississippi

August 2012

Copyright 2012

By

Cordelea Ann Haecker

A community of women in Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Índole*

By

Cordelea Ann Haecker

Approved:

---

Sol Peláez  
Assistant Professor of Classical &  
Modern Languages & Literatures  
(Major Professor)

---

Carlos Espinosa  
Assistant Professor of Classical &  
Modern Languages & Literatures  
(Committee Member)

---

Mary Jane Dunn  
Visiting Assistant Professor of Classical &  
Modern Languages & Literatures  
(Committee Member)

---

Edward Potter  
Associate Professor of Classical &  
Modern Languages & Literatures  
(Graduate Coordinator)

---

Gary L. Myers  
Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences

Name: Cordelea Ann Haecker

Date of Degree: August 11, 2012

Institution: Mississippi State University

Major Field: Foreign Language

Major Professor: Sol Peláez

Title of Study: A community of women in Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Índole*

Pages in Study: 120

Candidate for Degree of Master of Arts

The focus of this study is Clorinda Matto de Turner's novel, *Índole*. After an introduction to the topic in Chapter I, Chapter II will explore the feminist ideas that Matto de Turner described in her essays and other short writings. It will specifically deal with the idea of a community of women, gender and androgyny, Matto de Turner's appeal for women's rights, the concept of "la mujer peruana", and the duties of women workers. In Chapter III, I will analyze *Índole* and examine the domestic community that the novel presents. I will discuss female morality and responsibility for the morality of the family. Lastly, I will conclude this work with an examination of the three distinct classes of women presented in Matto de Turner's works, reflect on the characteristics of each class, and explain how Matto de Turner's role as an author relates to this class system.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank everyone who has made this study possible, particularly the members of my committee.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
CHAPTER	
I.    INTRODUCTION .....	1
II.   CLORINDA MATTO DE TURNER AND HER ROLE IN THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT .....	15
2.1    A community of intellectual women.....	15
2.2    Gender roles and androgyny .....	19
2.3    Appealing for rights and fair treatment.....	30
2.4    The “mujer peruana” and the “republican mother” .....	33
2.5    Women workers and the stability of social class .....	44
2.6    Conclusion .....	50
III.  WOMEN IN MATTO DE TURNER’S <i>ÍNDOLE</i> .....	52
3.1    Female responsibility within the family .....	55
3.2    A community of women in <i>Índole</i> .....	68
3.3    Conclusion .....	93
IV.  CONCLUSIONS.....	95
REFERENCES .....	117

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the writing of 19<sup>th</sup> century Peruvian author, Clorinda Matto de Turner (1852-1909) who is most well known for her novel, *Aves sin nido* (1889). This study's focus is predominantly on Matto de Turner's second and less well known novel, *Índole* (1891), though other examples of Matto de Turner's writing –essays, biographies, and other short writings– are explored.<sup>1</sup> Since it is a major theme in some of her works, many studies emphasize Matto de Turner's indigenism and her views on indigenous people in general; however, in this study I will be predominantly dealing with her feminism, a topic that has in recent decades been explored by analysts such as Mary Berg, Francesca Denegri, Ana Peluffo, and Maritza Villavicencio. As a result, I read her writings from a gender studies point of view, based on the premise that gender is a social construction and an important factor in power relations. One of this study's central arguments is that Matto de Turner defined three distinct types of women: intellectuals, domestic wives and mothers, and women workers. Each of these groups had different obligations, responsibilities, and limitations. In addition, this classification was hierarchical. Female intellectuals had the most freedom and were allowed to have a profession and an identity outside of the domestic domain. As a result, they were at the

---

<sup>1</sup> Matto de Turner's writing does not conform to current spelling and grammar conventions. In this study, I reproduce the spelling and grammar as presented in the original text.



top of the hierarchy. In the case of the domestic class of women, Matto de Turner actively sought to reinforce and shape the normative female gender role, assigning women the task of motherhood within the domestic sphere and restricting their interaction in more public spaces. Lastly, lower-class women workers, like the female intellectual, were permitted to pursue activities outside the home, specifically the task of industrial labor. Since this task is notably more difficult than the ones given to other women, women workers seem to be at the bottom of the hierarchy. Other feminist interpretations of Matto de Turner's writings such as those of Berg, Denegri, and Peluffo sometimes dismiss or downplay the characteristics of the wife and mother, resulting in a view of Matto de Turner's feminism that is overly contemporized. For Peluffo in particular, this overly radical view of Matto de Turner's feminism is a direct result of not operating under the assumption that Matto de Turner attributed different roles and responsibilities to different types of women. While these authors recognize the more traditional ideas about womanhood present in Matto de Turner's writing, some still tend to emphasize the traits associated with the female intellectual rather than those of the wife and mother. For this reason, *Índole* is an ideal book to examine. The majority of the articles written about Matto de Turner that were encountered during this study focus on her novel *Aves sin nido* or on general biographical information. In some cases, information about *Índole* is paired with an analysis of *Aves sin nido* or a general overview of Matto de Turner's life and literary works, such as the articles by Lucía Fox-Lockert and John Miller. Both Denegri and Efraín Kristal discuss *Índole* with a fair amount of detail, but it is not the focus of either analysis. Of the critics I have examined, Antonio Cornejo Polar and Berg are the only ones who give *Índole* a significant amount of attention. I believe that part of the reason that arguments attributing overly contemporary feminist attitudes to Matto de

Turner have been sustained for so long is because *Aves sin nido*, a work that can be used to hold up these types of arguments if not examined carefully, has received so much more attention than *Índole* which does not support such interpretations. My position on both of these novels will be explained in more detail in Chapter III where I will examine the logic behind some of the existing arguments and try to recognize how the complexity of Matto de Turner's feminism complicates interpretations of her novels.

In order to gain a better understanding of Matto de Turner's idea of womanhood, I have examined essays and other selections from her books *Boreales, miniaturas y porcelanas, Leyendas y recortes, Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas*, and *Cuatro Conferencias sobre América del sur*, as well as her novel *Aves sin nido* and particularly her second novel, *Índole*. I have encountered 3 examples of communities of women in Matto de Turner's works: a community of intellectual women, a domestic community, and a class of working women. In her essays, which I will discuss in Chapter II, Matto de Turner tried to establish *a community of intellectual women*. This community consists of those women who had not only the education, but also the time to pursue intellectual activities. This real life group is the most subversive of those proposed by Matto de Turner as it encouraged allowing women to step outside of the domestic sphere, thus defying the patriarchal order. Her aim in creating this group was to create a tradition of women intellectuals, linking the writers of the present and the future to those of the past as Virginia Woolf does in *A Room of One's Own*. However, I argue that Matto de Turner did not intend for most women to be a part of this group. Conversely, her novels describe more "normal" women who are not particularly interested in academia or academic pursuits. *Aves sin nido* and *Índole* portray two examples of *domestic communities of women*. Unlike Matto de Turner's intellectual community, these groups do not have any

connections to the past and are unable to have lasting impact on the future. Both of the domestic communities depicted in her novels behave in a manner that involves them stepping outside of the bounds of appropriate female behavior, and as a result both communities end in failure. This study will address all three of these communities and the underlying feminist ideals behind their formation and destruction. In addition, though it does not appear in *Índole* or *Aves sin nido*, Matto de Turner did distinguish *a class of working women*. There is not as much information about this type of women in the works I examined, and as a result, I emphasize this group less. However, their responsibilities and characteristics will be described in Chapter II.

In general, Matto de Turner's ideas were different from those of a modern feminist, but they were certainly quite progressive at the time and place in which she lived. Maxine Molyneux explains that the fight for women's rights in nineteenth century Latin America was firmly rooted in the traditional female gender role which was used as a base for arguments that attempted to expand women's rights (168-169). She points out that "[e]ven the most sympathetic reformers and champions of female equality did not aim to de-couple women from the family" (169). Instead of equalizing men and women, they claimed that each gender had its own unique qualities and argued that woman's inherent goodness could be used to the benefit of society if she were allowed to have an influence on the world beyond the domestic domain (168-169). While this strategy brought about change in the lives of women, it did not challenge most traditional ideas about womanhood. The Peruvian feminist movement, of which Matto de Turner was a part, had much in common with the Latin American movement as described by Molyneux. As a colony, the area now known as Peru was a patriarchal society in which a woman's role was restricted (Villavicencio, 21). In the early nineteenth century there was

an effort to improve the condition of women, particularly their education (35-36). While schools for women were built, there were still more male students and the instruction they received was also better (36). Furthermore, female education was linked to the idea that children would be able to benefit from the instruction their mothers had received (37). This means that it was ultimately intended to better the lives of their offspring rather than the women themselves, a theme that will be explored in Chapter II. Overall, it seems that the dramatic change from colonial to post colonial government did not result in a dramatic change in the situation of women. Villavicencio explains: “La posición social ocupada por la mujer durante la Colonia no fue puesta en tela de juicio. La nueva educación tampoco cuestionó su confinamiento al ámbito privado ni su función dentro de él” (37). It was precisely the restricting nature of society that pushed “mujeres ilustradas” such as Matto de Turner to embark on what Villavicencio refers to as “la búsqueda de un *modelo alternativo de ser mujer*” (76). Matto de Turner was certainly not the only Peruvian interested in this topic. Villavicencio explains that women’s rights and a woman’s place in society were topics in which the opinions of Peruvian authors differed, and as a result, they were divided into three groups (76). Matto de Turner pertained to the one that was “[en el] medio” and “el grupo femenino más contestario” (76). The other two groups consisted of “las conservadoras clericales” and “los intelectuales liberales” which was composed of men (76). Villavicencio discusses each group’s view of women in politics, pointing out similarities and differences. Carolina Freire de Jaimes, a representative of the conservative group, thought that, regardless of any special circumstances, the political arena should be forbidden to women (88). While writing was acceptable, it served as “la frontera que no podía pasarse” (88). Matto de Turner, representing “el grupo femenino más contestario”, viewed the male political system as

corrupt and as a result felt that women should not enter into the political arena (94-95). Lastly, César Codero, one of the “*intelectuales liberales*”, did not feel that men were inherently better at politics, but he believed that women would have to wait to be granted full political access because their restricted role had not prepared them for the political world (93-94). It is important to note that opinions may not have been completely homogenous within each group –in particular, Villavicencio indicates that there was some difference of opinion among the conservatives (89). However, one can use the opinions on this topic to help get a better understanding about the ideas that motivated each group since, as Villavicencio explains, when they made these arguments “*mostraron diferencias en el sustento teórico*” (87).

In general, Matto de Turner very strongly believed in the ability of women to excel in academic pursuits that had been historically restricted to men. Her own life is an excellent example of this. In fact, her own experiences perhaps offer a more extreme example of feminine independence than what she calls for in her writings. She married, as she believed women should, in 1871 when she was nineteen years old. However, she only lived as a married woman for ten years, becoming a widow in her late 20s. In an introduction to *Leyendas y recortes* Dr. Joaquin Lemoine described the woes of Matto de Turner, making reference to “*el sagrado mármol que encierra su alma, junto con los cuerpos de su esposo y su hijo*” indicating that she lost a child sometime during this period in addition to losing her husband (xxxv). Despite the unfavorable position widowhood put her in, she did not give in to grief but managed to do what needed to be done in order to survive without a husband. In a brief biography of Matto de Turner which appeared in *Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas*, Julio F. Sandoval described Matto de Turner’s reaction to this unfortunate series of events. He said, “*Privada de todo recurso,*

llegando un día á la redacción de un diario, pidió trabajo para conseguir sustento. En otra época habría causado hilaridad aquella demanda, pero al presente, no” (xiii). This act demonstrates two admirable traits. First, it is significant that she chose to take on an intellectual pursuit, writing, challenging the intellectual limits patriarchal society imposed on women. During the course of her life, she wrote for newspapers and was able to publish various books, asserting herself as an intelligent woman who had important things to say that even adult men should listen to. Second, her willingness to work shows that she was not dependant on masculine authority to survive. She struggled to find her own solution to the problems she inherited upon her husband’s death rather than waiting for a male to solve them for her. Though she did not completely reject male society – *Boreales Miniatures y Porcelanas* indicated that she was living with one of her male relatives when political trouble broke out in 1895 (27-28) – she asserted her ability to provide for herself, defying cultural norms dictating that women must be reliant on patriarchal authority to survive.<sup>2</sup>

Despite her many triumphs, Matto de Turner’s intellectual career was not ideal. Berg explains that her opinions as expressed in her writings, particularly her most famous novel, *Aves sin nido*, as well as scandal surrounding her time as editor of the literary journal *El Perú Ilustrado* earned Matto de Turner a very negative reputation in certain circles (“Writing for her life” 83). This outrage was so strong that it culminated in events in both Cusco and Arequipa in which an image of Matto de Turner was burned as a manifestation of the public outrage against her (“Writing for her life” 83). Later, Matto de Turner explained that the downfall of liberal General Andrés A. Cáceres, a political

---

<sup>2</sup> Biographical information in this paragraph comes from Berg (“Clorinda Matto”) and Julio F. Sandoval unless otherwise noted.

figure she strongly favored, resulted in her having to abandon Peru (*Boreales* 23-24, 41). Peru had been in a turbulent state since 1879 when it joined with Bolivia in a fight against Chile that was fueled by economic factors (Dawson, 117-131). Peru ultimately lost with Lima being captured by Chile in 1881 (126). In 1883 the Peruvians regained power over the city through diplomatic means (126-127). Cáceres took power in 1886, held it until 1890, then took up the presidency again a few years later despite the fact that it should have passed to someone else (127-130). Displeased with his return to the presidency, a revolutionary movement led in part by Nicolás de Piérola attacked Lima, and Cáceres was ousted from power (Dawson, 130-131). Matto de Turner was in Lima during this political transition and witnessed the bloody events firsthand. She described this experience in *Boreales miniaturas y porcelanas* and explains the negative impact it had on her personally. She explained the situation lamenting: "...las consecuencias de nuestra inmiscuición las hemos arrostrado con serenidad presenciando la destrucción de nuestro hogar, primero, después, la de nuestro taller de trabajo y por último aceptando el camino de extranjero para buscar el pan que no podíamos hallar en aquel suelo cargado de venganzas..." (24). The events she described in this passage occurred in 1895. The incredible difficulties she faced were not enough to stop her from writing or continuing to express her ideas as evident by the fact that she published *Boreales miniaturas y porcelanas*, the work containing this story, in the first place. What these life experiences show is that being a woman who was active in the public sphere was not something without price; however it was a price that she was apparently willing to pay.

In her writing, Matto de Turner very clearly and explicitly upheld normative female gender roles. The biggest exception to this rule would be her endorsement of female education and of woman's role in academia or the workforce in the case of

women workers. Berg (“Clorinda Matto” 306; “Writing for her life” 86), Peluffo (128), and Portugal (326-327) are some who have discussed Matto de Turner’s support of the professional woman, women’s education, and/or the presence of women in the workforce. However, despite this major exception, her views were quite traditional.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, motherhood was something she praised and very much encouraged, a feature of her ideas about womanhood noted by authors such as Berg (“Feminism and Feminist” 13) and Villavicencio (94). Berg further acknowledges the traditional aspects of Matto de Turner’s views, describing them as “feminismo casi estridente al conformismo con estereotipos el ángel del hogar” (“Presencia y Ausencia” 213). However, some have posited that the traditional views Matto de Turner expounded seem to clash with her ideas about women in the academic or professional world and her own life experiences. Peluffo (125-126) and Denegri (191-193) both note that the conservative elements of Matto de Turner’s view of womanhood differ greatly from the idea of the more professional or public woman. For Peluffo, it is difficult to reconcile Matto de Turner’s presence in “la esfera pública” with her support of the limiting normative female gender role (125-126). Similarly, Denegri sees *Aves sin nido* as a challenge to the idea that women should not directly participate in politics, claiming that the novel promotes this type of participation in women; however, she notes that the novel’s praise of certain aspects of the traditional female gender role is inconsistent with this objective (191-193). In both cases, Peluffo and Denegri seem to decide that the comments praising the more restricted female role are less representative of Matto de Turner’s feminism than

---

<sup>3</sup> Both Portugal (327) and Susana Zanetti (264, 267) have commented on the fact that *Búcaro Americano*, a periodical that Matto de Turner oversaw, upheld some of the more traditional ideas about womanhood while also challenging some of the limitations placed on women.



interpretations of her work that involve a more public or political woman. Denegri discredits the statements limiting women's role explicitly, describing them as "una adhesión de boca para afuera" (191). Similarly, in order to resolve what she perceives as inconsistency, Peluffo points to the elements of Matto de Turner's life as a key in understanding her meaning (129). Both analysts decide that the presence of women in politics is reinforced (Peluffo, 130; Denegri 191-193).

Similarly, Berg seems to indicate in her article "Presencia y ausencia de Clorinda Matto de Turner en el panorama literario y editorial peruano" that Matto de Turner's traditional views were expressed in order to cover up her more subversive messages. She describes her writings saying, "Es una obra... que nunca decide hasta qué punto es necesario adoptar apariencias convencionales para lograr reformas" (213). In this particular passage, she is not specifically addressing Matto de Turner's feminism; however she is implying that some of Matto de Turner's positions were perhaps feigned in order to have the opportunity to articulate a more important message. Later, this theme seems to return when she describes a textbook, *Elementos*, composed by Matto de Turner, that was designed for women. She mentions that the book presents "reconocimiento de la situación de la mujer frente a las instituciones del poder" referring to this as "[e]l desmayo del brío" and "las tretas del débil" (216). Here "tretas del débil" refers to a concept Josefina Ludmer explains in relationship to Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and her *Respuesta a Sor Filotea*. Ludmer explains that in this letter Sor Juana feigns ignorance, as a way to bow to patriarchal authority, while also demonstrating her lack of ignorance (48-49). One of her "tretas" lies in this deception or in what Ludmer describes as "no decir pero saber, o decir que no sabe y saber, o decir lo contrario de lo que sabe" (51). In some ways, Matto de Turner's approach to feminism seems to be similar to that

of Sor Juana, since both women claimed to accept certain female limitations but challenged others; however as a whole, Matto de Turner's arguments do not seem to be examples of Sor Juana's "tretas del débil." Ludmer explains that Sor Juana directly contradicts herself, describing herself as ignorant and weak in some places and asserting her knowledge in others (49). It is this direct contradiction that allows one to read Sor Juana's confessions of weakness as ironic rather than a form of submission. However, Matto de Turner does not contradict herself in the same manner. In my understanding, interpretations of her work that focus on contradictions misunderstand her views on womanhood, failing to acknowledge the different types of women she described as having distinct privileges, obligations, and responsibilities. Essentially, identifying the traditional roles and limitations that Matto de Turner sometimes stressed as simply "tretas del débil" involves completely ignoring the existence of the domestic wife and mother, the kind of woman that Matto de Turner defined as "la regla general" (*Leyendas y recortes* 76).

Berg continues the same line of thought, commenting: "Este es un manual de una feminista revolucionaria, camuflada como la perfecta casada de Fray Luis" ("Presencia y ausencia" 218). Clearly, Berg is claiming that the text, *Elementos*, has a hidden, subversive message that is not immediately apparent if not examined closely. The book is a representation of the fact that Matto de Turner has been "camuflada" or disguised, opening up the possibility that some of the content only exists to help hide her true message. However, the message that Berg claims the book conveys does not live up to her description of it as an example of "feminism[o] revolucionari[o]." For example, in the same paragraph in which she refers to the book's revolutionary nature, Berg discusses how Matto de Turner's novel calls for women to work to shape the men of the future. She

explains that women “tienen el deber de educarse en cómo...persuadir a los hombres...Son las mujeres que tienen que crear a los héroes de acción...” (“Presencia y Ausencia” 218). In both cases, women are acting indirectly through men. It is not women who are heroes. Women do not have the power to put their ideas into action unless a man can be convinced to implement them on their behalf. While having even indirect power did grant women some control over society, I argue that referring to these ideas as those of “una feminista revolucionaria” is exaggeration, since Matto de Turner clearly was not calling for anything close to the complete restructuring of patriarchal society.

Furthermore, Matto de Turner explicitly expressed similar ideas in some of her essays, indicating that women have the ability to shape their families and prevent their husbands from acting inappropriately. This indicates that she did not feel like idea had to be hidden. Regardless of the validity of the claim, suggesting that Matto de Turner had tried to hide her true revolutionary nature, allows one to dismiss her more traditional views in favor of those that were more radical.

Rather than relying on the idea of Matto de Turner as the model of the ideal woman, my interpretation of Matto de Turner’s novels is based on the explicitly stated feminist ideals that she describes in *Boreales, miniaturas y porcelanas, Leyendas y recortes, Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* and *Cuatro Conferencias sobre América del sur*. I have used my understanding of the ideas found in these works to form my analysis. What I have found is that different types of women appear in her novels and essays. Most of her comments about womanhood seem to be addressed to the upper to middle-class wife and mother. Since during the majority of her life Matto de Turner was neither a wife nor a mother, but instead a female author and intellectual, it does not make sense to use her actions as a basis for understanding what she demanded of ordinary upper to middle class

wives and mothers. As I will explain in Chapter II, Matto de Turner believed that motherhood was “la regla general” but sometimes “excepciones” occur in which a woman may be granted additional freedoms (*Leyendas y recortes* 76).<sup>4</sup> It seems that Matto de Turner viewed herself as one of the “excepciones.” It was this idea of exceptionality that allowed her to take up the public role of an author and similarly allowed women workers to work outside the home. However, it seems that the women to whom she addressed her novels –and as a result the women portrayed in her novels– were not exceptional, meaning that they were not permitted extra freedoms. Understanding Matto de Turner’s role as one of the “excepciones” serves to make her views clearer. Analysts such as Peluffo, Denegri, and Berg seem to recognize the complexity of Matto de Turner’s feminist beliefs; however they fail to take these complexities into account when they analyze her works. One cannot privilege some aspects of her feminism –such as her support of the professional woman and her own life experiences– over the more traditional characteristics. This study offers an interpretation that bears in mind the more liberal aspects of Matto de Turner’s feminism while also relying on an understanding of her conception of the traditional female role. Chapter II will explore the feminist ideas that Matto de Turner described in her essays and other short writings. It will specifically deal with the idea of a community of women, gender and androgyny, Matto de Turner’s appeal for women’s rights, the concept of “la mujer peruana”, and the duties of women workers. In Chapter III, I will analyze *Índole* and examine the domestic community that the novel presents. I will discuss female morality and responsibility for the morality of the family. Lastly, I will conclude this work with an examination of the three distinct

---

<sup>4</sup> The idea of exceptional women was not unique to Matto de Turner. Villavicencio explains the views of Peruvian, Felisa Moscoso de Carbajal, “cuya renuncia a la participación política de las mujeres se atemperó, al considerer a mujeres ubicadas en posiciones excepcionales” (89).

classes of women presented in Matto de Turner's works, reflect on the characteristics of each class, and explain how Matto de Turner's role as an author relates to this system.

## CHAPTER II

### COLORINDA MATTO DE TURNER AND HER ROLE IN THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

Clorinda Matto de Turner was an outspoken woman. One of the topics which she took a particular interest was the status of women and women's rights. In this chapter I examine Matto de Turner's ideas about feminism and the role of women in society as presented in *Boreales, miniaturas y porcelanas, Leyendas y recortes, Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* and *Cuatro Conferencias sobre América del sur*. These collections contain biographies, essays, printed copies of speeches Matto de Turner presented, traditions, and short stories, but for the purposes of this chapter, I will be limiting my analysis to the essays, speeches, and biographies as they are the most direct way in which she expressed her ideas. I will discuss five different areas or issues related to women that she addressed: her establishment of a community of Latin American women writers, her views about gender roles and appropriate activities for males and females, her ideas about religion and the importance of a woman's role in the family to appeal for women's rights, her parameters for the ideal domestic woman, and her thoughts on the obligation women laborers had in the work force.

#### **2.1 A community of intellectual women**

Matto de Turner considered being a wife and mother as a necessity for most women but not because she believed women were incapable of admirably performing the same jobs as men. On the contrary, in *Boreales, Miniaturas y Porcelanas* Matto de

Turner included a long list of those she considered to be successful women (250-264). She mentioned women authors, journalists, translators, teachers and scientists and praised their various and numerous accomplishments. Some examples of women she mentioned are Peruvian author Carolina Freyre Jaimes, Peruvian novelist Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera, Peruvian author and scientist Margarita Práxedes Muñoz, Uruguayan author Dorila Castell de Orozco, Mexican poet Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Argentinan novelist Carlota Garrido de la Peña, and Bolivian author and translator Mercedes Belzu de Dorado, just to name a few. Clearly, she believed that women have a very great intellectual potential. In fact, the sheer bulk of her list demonstrates that she was very interested in the achievements of her other women and particularly fellow women writers.

Virginia Woolf, in *A Room of One's Own*, talked about the feminine literary tradition. As she examined a book entitled *Life's Adventure* by Mary Carmichael, she pondered issues related to women and writing. About this author Woolf said:

It seems to be her first book, I said to myself, but one must read it as if it were the last volume in a fairly long series, continuing all those other books that I have been glancing at—Lady Winchilsea's poems and Aphra Behn's plays and the novels of the four great novelists. And I must also consider her—this unknown woman—as the descendant of all those other women whose circumstances I have been glancing at and see what she inherits of their characteristics and restrictions. (79)

In this quote, Woolf very clearly established a community of women writers and asserted that all women writers are part of this tradition. Returning to Carmichael and her book, Woolf concluded that “[s]he will be a poet ... in another hundred years' time” (93). The general idea seems to be that women writers build on each other, learning from the ones who have come before and improving over time. Matto de Turner's long list of women seems to be her own attempt at establishing a female community. Others have noticed

this trend in some aspects of her writing. For example, Peluffo explains, “Matto tenía muy presente la existencia de una comunidad de escritoras, a juzgar por las numerosas veces que cita elogiosamente a algunas de ellas, por las biografías que de ellas escribe y por los esfuerzos que hace para conocer a escritoras y periodistas mujeres en sus viajes por Europa” (Peluffo, 122). Similarly, Zanetti, whose article focuses on *Búcaro Americano*, a periodical that Matto de Turner oversaw, indicates that forming connections with other female intellectuals was one of Matto de Turner’s goals (264). Similarly, she explains that short biographies describing the lives of women or “miniaturas” published in *Búcaro Americano* “[c]ontribuyen además a diseñar un linaje, una tradición femenina” (271). It is also interesting to note that Matto de Turner did not restrict her community of women to just writers but instead included women from several other academic or professional pursuits. Perhaps she felt it necessary to include other intellectual fields in order to provide more examples of female academics and strengthen her claim that women could succeed in academia in general. One can also interpret this establishing of a female community as a form of rebellion. Woolf pointed out that men traditionally have not allowed for female friendships in their perceptions of women. She explained: “They are confidantes, of course, in Racine and the Greek tragedies. They are now and then mothers and daughters. But almost without exception they are shown in their relations to men. It was strange to think that all the great women of fiction were, until Jane Austin’s day, not only seen by the other sex, but seen only in relation to the other sex” (81). Establishing a group of women to admire and aspire to breaks with male perceptions of femininity.

It seems important to Matto de Turner not just to establish a community of women intellectuals and writers but to establish such a community firmly based in Latin



America. She explained, “No buscaremos en la patria de Washington el lago plácido para beber las noticias sobre el progreso intelectual de la mujer americana” (*Boreales* 250). Instead, she said, “Concentremos nuestra mirada hacia las repúblicas de sur y centro de América: son las que más de cerca interesan á nuestra raza y á nuestro idioma” (251). In these statements, Matto de Turner seemed to be trying to establish the legitimacy of a Latin American female tradition in relationship to other influential parts of the world, in this case, the United States. She, apparently, had respect for the United States’ women’s movement, citing some of the freedoms enjoyed by U.S. women and referring to it as “grandioso” (250).<sup>5</sup> However, she did not want Latin American achievements to be overlooked or overshadowed. This is a sentiment that applied not only to the progress of the women’s movement but also to Latin American achievements in general. There is further evidence of this in a description she wrote about Juana Manuela Gorriti in a chapter of *Leyendas y Recortes* entitled “Ofrenda.” About Gorriti she observed, “Ninguna otra escritora americana y aun europea, puede ofrecer al mundo de las letras un legado más rico. Y quien parte dejando en pos aureola tan luminosa, es claro que se acuesta en la tumba para seguir viviendo la vida de la inmortalidad concedida al Génio” (187-188). This claim was an overt challenge to the suggestion that Latin America was intellectually inferior to Europe, an idea that Matto de Turner claimed to be quite common. She wrote about this in a short biography of José B. Zubiaur. In this “miniatura” Matto de Turner referred to, “La creencia que tenemos en América de que solamente la Europa suministra conocimientos capaces de innovar, con provecho, la sociedad, y dar buenos rumbos á la instrucción...” (*Boreales* 235). One of Zubiaur’s

---

<sup>5</sup> Berg notes that Matto de Turner had a positive opinion of the United States (“Writing for her life” 85).

merits was his apparent rejection of this idea. It is interesting to note that here she praised a male writer. This indicates that her pride in Latin America was not limited to solely the female community, and while she was interested in promoting women's issues, she was also interested in promoting the success of Latin America in general. Similarly, in her "miniatura" of Martiniano Leguizamón, Matto de Turner described, "...esta verdadera esfera de acción que de los escritores reclama la literatura americana, tan distinta de la que va á Europa en busca de tipos y modelos, sólo porque es aplaudido el escribir *en europeo* y hacer literatura extranjera dentro de la literatura propia" (154). This passage indicates that the cultural independence of Latin America was a very important issue for Matto de Turner and that those who sought merely to copy European traditions were viewed by her with contempt<sup>6</sup>. Her desire to maintain the separateness of the Latin American's women's rights movement seems to be an extension of the same sentiment.

## 2.2 Gender roles and androgyny

Despite the severe limitations imposed on women, Matto de Turner did not call for a wholesale rejection of female gender roles. In her essays, Matto de Turner called for clear and distinct separation of appropriate gender roles. Other Latin American women authors have sometimes blurred the line between masculine and feminine. For example, Federico Chalupa describes this phenomenon as manifest in one of Gorriti's short stories. About this he elaborates:

En "Quien escucha su mal oye," la narradora propone que todas aquellas condiciones atribuidas a lo femenino —exceso, misterio, pecado, frustración— evidentemente usadas para negar la intelectualidad de la

---

<sup>6</sup> Several analysts have noted a similar sentiment in relationship to Peru. Berg ("Clorinda Matto" 306) and Kristal (132) note Matto de Turner's desire for Peruvian themes to be present in literature while Peluffo (121) and Cornejo Polar (76) note the presence of these Peruvian themes in Matto de Turner's writing.

mujer y su acción en el espacio público, también pueden ser atribuibles a lo masculino. A mi entender este androgenismo ideológico de Gorriti problematiza la legitimidad de la ideología de la separación y diferenciación genérico-sexual, su aplicación social y, por último, aquel tratamiento de doble estándar hacia las mujeres propuestos por el discurso liberal masculino. (n.p.)

In this particular quote, Chalupa implies that androgynism has to do with the process of men adopting feminine characteristics, but he points out that the reverse also takes place in “Quién escucha su mal oye.” Chalupa describes one such incidence: “...la narradora describe una habitación en la que el ornato no le permite distinguir ... si pertenece a un hombre o a una mujer ... es una habitación difusa, en cuanto que en ella se realizan tanto actividades científicas (masculinas) como domésticas (femeninas)” (n.p.). In this case, the female character’s interest in scientific pursuits demonstrated by the objects present in her room, is an example of a woman taking on masculine traits. As a result, “androgenismo ideológico” seems to imply not a simple reversion of gender roles –which would involve males becoming more feminine or females becoming more masculine– but rather the fusion of gender-based characteristics in both males and females, resulting in, as Chalupa indicates in the above quote, the elimination of the idea of gender-based roles altogether. Chalupa describes this androgyny as a way to struggle against the bonds that have kept women from experiencing intellectual life. As I have already mentioned, Matto de Turner certainly believed that women have an important role to play in academia; however, she did not think that allowing women to be intellectuals necessitated a complete transformation of woman’s societal roles. In fact, she opposed the masculinization of women declaring, “No simpatizo con la mujer que, despojándose de los encantos propios de su sexo, quiere hacerse varón...” (*Leyendas y Recortes* 75). She continued this line of thought adding:

Soy, también, enemiga de negar los atributos de la naturaleza.

El fuego siempre será quemante y la nieve fría. (75-76)

Obviously, in this case the “atributos de la naturaleza” are male and female gender roles. She used the primal images of fire and ice in order to emphasize how basic and natural she considered these gender roles to be. Fire, by its very nature, can never be snow just as, according to this line of thinking, a woman can never be a man. Similarly, the contrasting nature of these two elements was also used to demonstrate the contrasting nature of the male and female identities. Women were identified with fire, because of the warmth and burning passion of their sentiments. Like a flame, a woman’s emotions are all consuming. A woman is “toda ternura y sentimiento” (*Leyendas y Recortes* 76). When they cry, “sus lágrimas casi siempre [son] de fuego quemador” (*Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* 241). Men were represented by snow because, in comparison, they are devoid of this emotional depth.

She went on to explain the role of women, claiming that women had an obligation to the men in their lives to behave in a manner that facilitates “el cumplimiento de nuestros deberes” (*Leyendas y Recortes* 77). She described the “deberes” of women: “La mujer ha nacido para madre y debe ser toda ternura y sentimiento, porque el código que la rige es el corazón” (*Leyendas y Recortes* 76). She went on to explain her ideas about the kinds of tasks that both men and women were best suited for. She seemed to believe that women have a delicate nature that makes them ill-suited for the sort of brutish (but notably more socially respected) tasks that were usually reserved only for men, and relegated them mainly to the tasks that have traditionally been imposed on them by patriarchal society. Despite this strict adherence to tradition, she did provide a sort of loophole for a small group of women. She explained:

Esto no quiere decir que yo desconozca que, la esfera de acción de la mujer tiene que ensanchar á medida de las condiciones de cada una y

según las costumbres locales... ¿qué ha de ser de la que, por desdicha, no es madre ni esposa? Pero éstas son excepciones, y la regla general tiene que ir basada en la misión que Dios le ha señalado, eligiéndola para la maternidad. (*Leyendas y Recortes* 76)

This quote is interesting because, on one hand, she mentioned the idea that there are exceptions. Women workers and female intellectuals –two groups whose activities Matto de Turner approved of despite the fact that these roles were not inherently feminine – are ideal candidates for exceptionality since both groups of women had to venture outside of the feminine, domestic space in order to fulfill their duties. Allowing the existence of exceptional women widens the definition of womanhood and suggests that there is a life for women outside of motherhood.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Matto de Turner claimed that a woman’s familial duties are divine rather than something that has been imposed on her by men. If, as Matto de Turner suggested here, a woman’s role is determined by God, Gorriti’s androgynism could never be acceptable. Why should a woman adopt male traits if God demands that she remain feminine? According to this line of thinking, gender roles are rigid and unchangeable and any attempt to defy them is not only a defiance of cultural and social norms but a defiance of God and the divine order.

In order to better understand Matto de Turner’s ideas about acceptable female behavior, it is perhaps useful to examine the ideas expressed by Abel Delgado in his article, “La educacion social de la mujer.” This article, which Delgado originally presented aloud, was included in the book *Veladas literarias de Lima* which was edited by Juana Manuela Gorriti and published in 1892.<sup>8</sup> Beatriz Urraca describes this book as a

---

<sup>7</sup> Portugal discusses one of Matto de Turner’s articles in *Búcaro Americano*, “La mujer y la ciencia”, in which Matto de Turner expressed a similar sentiment regarding the right of women without husbands or children to pursue activities that were not encompassed by the domestic sphere (327).

<sup>8</sup> The texts included in this work were presented prior to publication.

collection of some of the works presented during Gorriti's Peruvian tertulias (154). Matto de Turner was no stranger to these tertulias as her writing was honored at one (Gamarra, 187). In addition, Matto de Turner was apparently familiar with the work of Delgado who she described as "uno de los literatos más delicados que tiene el Perú" (*Boreales* 81). In this article, Delgado examines women and roles that were considered appropriate for their sex. Urraca notes that the concept of "social spheres" appears in this work (154). Delgado referred to these "social spheres" as "sociedad doméstica, sociedad civil y sociedad política" (34). Urraca explains that, "the domestic was indisputably a female domain" (154). Delgado's comments about "sociedad política" are the most relevant to this study as he indicates that a woman actively involved in politics by necessity becomes masculinized (37). According to Delgado:

Al hablar, últimamente, de la participación que la mujer debe tener en la sociedad política, no seguiré la opinión de las que pretenden envolverla en las grandes luchas y agitaciones de los partidos, llevarlas á los parlamentos, á los colegios electorales y á las turbulencias del *meeting*. Confieso sinceramente que esa clase de política femenina, dista mucho de serme simpática, por más que haya quien se empeñe en exhibirla como muestra del progreso de este siglo; por más que haya quien pretenda convencerme de que una mujer es un hombre. La cuestión, para mí, no es más que la influencia de la mujer en la política; é influir en la política no significa hacerla de una manera directa. (37)<sup>9</sup>

The idea of female politicians was something Delgado did not want to accept. His chief criticism of the "política femenina" seems to be the public attention such a woman would receive. Urraca, on the other hand describes this work as one that "justified the participation of women in law and politics" (154). One can see this justification in that Delgado did leave some room in his last comment for women to have a more indirect

---

<sup>9</sup> Like those of Matto de Turner, this text follows the spelling conventions of its time.

political role, which he went on to advocate in the subsequent paragraphs. Additionally, his comments in the article seem supportive of the expansion of women's rights in general. However, his desire to limit female participation in certain aspects of society seems to stem from a fear of a reversal of gender roles. He made a statement similar to the one cited above which sheds more light on his views. He explained:

Confieso que me halagaria muy poco ver á la mujer convertida en una notabilidad financiera ó en una celebridad tribunicia. Poco simpática sería, la que debe ser toda sensibilidad y ternura, dirigiendo una batalla, luchando con una fiera ó elevándose en un globo á las regiones etéreas; pero sí me atrevo á asegurar que, estando su existencia íntimamente relacionada con la existencia del hombre y vinculados fuertemente los derechos y los deberes de ambos, la influencia que la mujer ejercería al interesarse en persona, en todas las cuestiones de la vida, sería una prenda eficazísima de civilizacion y progreso. (32)

Delgado seemed to believe that professions that required a lot of physical or intellectual prowess threaten a woman's femininity. He also was quite critical of jobs that required a woman to receive a lot of individual attention or acclaim. This fact, coupled with his recommendation that women remain dependent on men, indicates that for him independence is an inherently unfeminine trait. His chief worry seems to be that if women experienced the independence or physical demands of these sorts of tasks, they would no longer be able –or willing– to carry on their feminine duties.

At first, some of Matto de Turner's ideas seem similar to those of Delgado. For example, she very clearly stated that women should not be politicians. She said, "...pido para el varón el bullicio de la política, donde todos se engañan unos á otros, en medio de las sérias genuflexiones de la *diplomacia*; y para la mujer el altar de la familia, donde ella atiza el fuego sagrado, á cuya lumbre fructifican el Amor y la Verdad" (*Leyendas y Recortes* 76). While this statement clearly discourages women from being actively involved in politics, the problem seems to lie in the nature of politics rather than in the

supposed weak nature of women. Maritza Villavicencio analyzes this same statement and comes to similar conclusions. She explains:

Clorinda Matto criticó la política por considerarla opuesta a la maternidad... La incompatibilidad entre política y maternidad no se agotaba en las diferentes funciones o el tiempo de dedicación: era intrínseca. La maternidad era la esfera del “Amor y la Verdad”; la política, la de la falsía y la hipocresía. La primera era femenina; la segunda, masculina. El concepto que se tenía de la maternidad le permitió, por oposición, iniciar una crítica al quehacer político peruano. (95)

More than being just “una crítica al quehacer político peruano”, Matto de Turner’s statements seem to be a critique of masculinity in general. Matto de Turner attributes only positive traits to the feminine concept of motherhood while attributing only negativity to masculine politics. Masculinity was as corrupt as femininity was pure, meaning that “la mujer que ... quiere hacerse varón” is synonymous with a woman becoming corrupted and dishonest which is why Matto de Turner described this process as a woman “despojándose de los encantos propios de su sexo” (*Leyendas y Recortes* 75). The fact that becoming more masculine by necessity involved an abandonment of femininity instead of a fusion of both gender roles indicates that masculinity and femininity were mutually exclusive concepts and as intrinsically opposite in nature as politics and motherhood. Masculinity and femininity could not coexist within the same being for the same reason that one cannot be both pure and impure, corrupt and incorruptible.

As a result, it becomes clear that Matto de Turner did not feel that women were unworthy of participating in politics but rather than their inherent goodness should be shielded from the masculine perversion it personified. This did not mean, though, that women could not have, in Matto de Turner’s view, relevant and useful opinions about the politics of the day. After all, Berg notes Matto de Turner’s extensive political activities



(“Clorinda Matto” 306) However, in *Boreales, miniaturas y porcelanas* she does express some doubt as to the appropriateness of some of her political activities. She explained, “...si cometimos el pecado de mezclarnos en política, fué por el derecho que existe de pensar y de expresar el pensamiento” (23).<sup>10</sup> Even in this statement which seems to condemn her intervention in the political arena, Matto de Turner still managed to defend the right of women, as beings capable of logic, to be interested in politics, if not active participants. It seems that she had no problem with women expressing their opinions as long as they could do so at a distance, keeping themselves apart from the formal political system which she viewed as unsavory. Similarly, Delgado believed that women embodied the same positive traits described by Matto de Turner. However, he offered no critique of the political process and instead seemed to feel that women should not be involved in politics because it put them in too public of a position, causing them to become masculinized.

Despite the clear distinction that Matto de Turner made between masculinity and femininity in her writings, her acceptance of the idea of a professional or intellectual woman and also the woman worker who could pursue work outside the home causes this distinction to become more difficult to discern. In general, Matto de Turner upheld normative gender roles and the idea that women were dependent on men. For example, in *Boreales, miniaturas y porcelanas*, she explained, “La mujer necesitaba el concurso del cerebro masculino para que, sirviéndole de guía, la condujera á la meta anhelada” (248-249). In this quote, Matto de Turner gave women the more passive gender role, affirming the traditional idea that women are the more demure sex. Allowing women to have a role

---

<sup>10</sup> In *Boreales* Matto de Turner commonly referred to herself in the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural form of verbs.

in the world of literature and other pursuits outside the home was a break with traditional gender roles and gave women an independence that contrasts with the passivity she extolled in the above quote. Mariselle Meléndez notes in her article examining the essays of several Latin American women authors, including Clorinda Matto de Turner, the seemingly contrasting roles that authors like Matto de Turner expounded on. She explains:

En suma, los ensayos citados demuestran la manera en que las escritoras intentaron definir el rol de la mujer a partir de los que muchos pueden concebir como ideas contradictorias, las cuales fluctuaban entre la imagen de éstas como esposas y madres, y por otro lado, como ciudadanas e integrantes de la nación. Tal contradicción no parecía existir para las escritoras, sino que era parte de sus negociaciones entre el centro y la periferia, el pasado y el presente... Las ilusiones a la madre siempre estarán ligadas a la acción, al trabajo que las mujeres deben ejercer dentro y fuera del ámbito doméstico. La reconfiguración de la mujer en el plan nacional va ligada a un abogar por el acceso al estudio. La defensa de la educación de la mujer es caracterizada por una lucha o actitud lidiadora contra la ideología dominante de la época. Sobresale la figura de la mujer que invade por medio del conocimiento intelectual pero que entiende que éste no necesariamente se debe concebir únicamente en función del plano maternal sino que debe extenderse a un plano más universal: la humanidad. (584)

One of the implications of Meléndez's statement is that since maternal life and intellectual life were not viewed as mutually exclusive by feminists such as Matto de Turner, there was no contradiction in the idea of an intellectual mother. Indeed, Meléndez explains that Matto de Turner in particular stressed that a women had to "balancear su rol" in this kind of situation (574). I would argue, however, that there *is* a contradiction in this idea and for this reason Matto de Turner separated the intellectual woman from her standard of the ideal mother, considering her as one of the "excepciones" rather than "la regla general." It seems that one of the reasons she did this was because it was not

actually feasible to fulfill both of these roles well in real life.<sup>11</sup> Maritza Villavicencio talks about what life was like for some of the early women intellectuals in Peru.

According to Villavicencio:

Estas mujeres pertenecían a las clases altas y tenían la privilegiada alternativa de descargar gran parte de las tareas domésticas en su numerosa servidumbre, tal como lo atestigua la arquitectura de sus casas. Considerando esta situación, es probable que ellas tuvieran muchas dificultades para hallar congruencia entre las actividades propias de una dama de su rango social y las de escritora. Por eso, no es casual que la mayor parte de estas escritoras alcanzara su más alta connotación tras enviudar, como fueron los casos de Clorinda Matto y Mercedes Cabello. (59-60)

Villavicencio makes two interesting points. The first is that the life of a middle-class woman does not very well match the life of an intellectual. Her second point is that Matto de Turner's life as a woman intellectual was made possible, not only by her talent and ambition, but also by the tragic death of her husband in her late twenties. His death left her essentially free of the spousal obligations that she proclaimed that women were obliged to attend to. This meant that balance was not an issue since she was free from most traditional, female obligations. Essentially, this means that Matto de Turner was asking women to live up to a set of obligations that, as a widow, did not apply to her. In fact, one can even view the fact that she did not choose to marry again as her own personal rejection of normative gender roles. Villavicencio explains that as a widow, women like Matto de Turner enjoyed much more freedom than married women (60). This freedom would likely have been lost if she had married a second time and could have potentially made the continuance of her academic life very difficult, if not impossible.

---

<sup>11</sup> Matto de Turner also seems to indicate that this is the case in *Leyendas y recortes*, but this is a topic that will be reviewed more extensively in the conclusion.

In addition, Matto de Turner overtly contradicted her statements expounding on the importance of women maintaining feminine characteristics in an essay in *Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* that dealt with the importance of the education of women and the problem that a lack of education posed for them later in life. About this unfortunate class of women, she explained, “Qué antídoto encontraremos para mejorarla? Instruimos y en la juventud aprender á envejecer. La mujer ilustrada deja los encantos de su sexo, para adquirir una segunda naturaleza moral y aquella superioridad que la esperiencia le dá sobre los que principian el camino de la vida...” (247-248). The implication of this statement is that academia, and the professional work force as an extension, were inherently male spaces. Becoming educated involved casting off femininity and implied a certain amount of androgynism. Though she describes this process as becoming less feminine, I think it perhaps makes sense to think of it instead as the contamination of a woman’s pure femininity. A real woman is purely feminine and would be sullied by the traits associated with masculinity. It seems that becoming less pure was synonymous with becoming less feminine. Similarly, if moving into masculine spaces implied androgyny, it would seem that the female “excepciones” – women workers and female intellectuals– were the most androgynous group since they focused less on feminine motherhood and more on activities in the public, masculine space. The idea that it is acceptable for a women to become androgynous clashes with the previously mentioned passage in *Leyendas y Recortes* in which Matto de Turner condemned “la mujer que, despojándose de los encantos propios de su sexo, quiere hacerse varón” (75). In this work she instead referred to “deja[ndo] los encantos de su sexo” as a necessity for women in order to obtain a proper education. What this shows is that, even in Matto de Turner’s own view, her desire to educate women did in some manner contradict her steadfast loyalty to

normative female gender roles and that her desire to avoid androgyny was not altogether consistent, especially in the case of exceptional women. However, this contradiction becomes more manageable and easier to understand when one bears in mind that the bulk of her contradictory ideas centered on exceptional women. It seems that being exceptional by definition involved some degree of androgyny.

### **2.3 Appealing for rights and fair treatment**

June Hahner notes that both religion as well as the important role mothers occupied in the lives of their male offspring were tools that were used to justify the expansion of women's rights in 19<sup>th</sup> century Brazil ("The nineteenth-century" 259). For example, women were attributed with many of the laudable characteristics of the Virgin Mary (259; 261). In addition, some feminists cited passages in which Jesus encouraged the fair treatment of women (Hahner, 259, 261). Matto de Turner employed a similar tactic, using Christianity to justify the pursuit of women's rights. For example, in *Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* she said, "La voz del hijo de la azucena de Galilea, de María la Virgen nazarena, debía alzarse para decir al varón dominador del Universo- 'la mujer es tu compañera no tu esclava' ..." (234). Matto de Turner takes the religious argument a bit farther, granting women a sort of spiritual advantage over men. She continues saying, "...y desde entonces, la mujer es reconocida igual al varón en inteligencia superior que él en la fé y en la ternura de su corazón" (*Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueña s* 234). This sort of statement not only serves to grant Christian legitimacy to the women's rights movement, but she also carves out an essential role for women in religious life despite the fact that it had long been denied to women by the Catholic church. She referred to this spiritual role women play in some of her other works, such as the above quote from *Leyendas y*

*Recortes* in which she refers to woman as “la sacerdotisa del hogar” (78). This not only serves to paint women as deeply spiritual beings, but it also grants them yet another important role to play in a society in which women must struggle to find a sense of importance. In addition, establishing the superior spirituality of women is a clear challenge to the patriarchal order imposed by the Catholic Church. This claim seems to indicate that, since their spirituality is indeed superior, women should perhaps have been allowed to take on a more active spiritual role, while also suggesting that perhaps men are not equipped to properly carry out this spiritual task, completely reversing men’s and women’s roles in spiritual life. However, this challenge of patriarchy does not seem to extend to the highest levels of the Christian faith. Matto de Turner did not challenge the idea of a male god, and in fact utilized Jesus’s divine, male authority to call for women’s rights.

Religion is not the only tactic that both Clorinda Matto de Turner and Brazilian feminists employed. Hahner points out that people such as Joana Paula Manso de Noronha had to “appeal to male self-interest as a means of ameliorating the position of women” (“The nineteenth-century feminist press” 259). When these particular pleas were made, the intellectual needs of the woman herself were ignored. Instead, women tried to show that they could use a superior education to raise a generation of children who would later be better able to handle the social and political matters of the day (259). It is important to note that in this sort of argument, the education of women was presented as a means to an end, and the intellectual improvement of women was not seen as a priority in and of itself. Hahner explains: “This noble task of educating children gave women value” (259). The implication is that without a “noble task” women had no inherent worth and thus an education wasted on a childless woman would be worthless. According

to this line of thinking, the creation of an educated generation of women would be seen as a side effect, rather than a goal in and of itself. Portugal notes that in her own writings Clorinda Matto de Turner used this same tactic to appeal for women's rights (327). For example, in *Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* she declared, "Imploramos para la mujer una educación completa y sólida que, poniéndola á cubierto del engaño, la acerque al cumplimiento de sus deberes como hija, como esposa y digámoslo mas alto, como madre. No olvidemos que es la llamada á poner el cimiento del grande edificio moral en el corazón de los hijos, cuya primera educación le está confiada" (246). Here, similar to other Brazilian feminists, Matto de Turner claimed that the aid that educated women could provide to their children would more than justify the extension of education to women. Despite the fact that these sorts of appeals occurred, some did assert "the necessity of educating women for their own benefit" (Hahner, "The early feminist press" 43). According to Hahner, Francisca Senhorinha da Motta Diniz argued this point of view ("The early feminist press" 43). Motta Diniz thought of education as a tool women could use to protect themselves in a world where men were not always honest and frequently mistreated women (45). About this, she says, "Girls must be prepared for *reverses of fortune*. They must receive *education and instruction*, so that whether married, single, or widowed, they will know their rights and will be able to judge the *intentions and heart* of men requesting their hand in marriage" (45).<sup>12</sup> However, that did not stop her from also arguing that well educated women were a useful asset for the family unit in general (Motta Diniz, 45). Meléndez claims that Matto de Turner made some of the same types of arguments made by women like Motta Diniz. She says, "La importancia de ser educada

---

<sup>12</sup> The emphases in this quote came from the original text.

en los campos del conocimiento no funciona únicamente para el servicio de la patria, sino para la mujer misma cuando una vez llegada a la vejez y ... al menos le quedará un bagaje de conocimiento que no se podrá borrar que compartirá en reuniones públicas, sintiéndose un ser útil en la sociedad” (580). While Matto de Turner did advocate that women be educated in order to give them some dignity in their old age, I would point out that in order to make this point she argued that old, uneducated, unattractive women were depressing for others to be around. She said, “Todos temen la compañía de la vieja ignorante, y en las tertulias forma una sola personalidad con los mudos divanes del salón” (*Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* 247). In addition, she claimed, “...ella se fastidia, y todos se fastidian con ella” (247) Of course, Matto de Turner was interested in the wellbeing of these ladies, but, though different from some of the other attempts I have mentioned, this is another example of presenting woman’s education simply as a means to an end that would ultimately be seen as useful for men.

#### **2.4 The “mujer peruana” and the “republican mother”**

In her works, Matto de Turner attempts to establish the standard for the ideal wife and mother, which Matto de Turner described as the “mujer peruana”. It is in Matto de Turner’s conception of the “mujer peruana” where one can find many of her traditional views about womanhood. As a result, the ideas Matto de Turner declared about the “mujer peruana” seemed directed at the domestic woman rather than the female intellectual or the woman worker. While the woman worker and the female intellectual were not the embodiment of motherhood, in Matto de Turner’s view all three groups – women workers, female intellectuals, and domestic wives and mothers – still strived toward the same goal: the betterment of Peru. Matto de Turner believed that Peru was in



a state of decline. In order to get the nation back on track, she believed that women would have to help save Peru and build it up to the nation that it should be. She described the state of Peru:

...hoy, en fin, que la indiferencia de los unos, la turbulencia de los otros y el egoismo de los más amenazan la completa destrucción de nuestro mutilado Perú, las responsabilidades de las madres de familia se multiplican, porque las calamidades de la Patria son la consecuencia inmediata de la desorganización moral del hogar, pues nadie desconoce que el grupo primordial de la Patria es la familia... (*Leyendas y Recortes* 78)

The “mujer peruana” is the mother who would rise to meet this challenge, and raise a generation of children who would set Peru on the proper course. Berg also analyzes the same work, “Luz entre sombras: estudio filosófico-moral para las madres de familia.” The subtitle of this study explains that Matto de Turner originally presented it aloud for the “el Ateneo” in Lima in 1889 (*Leyendas y Recortes* 75).<sup>13</sup> Berg comes to similar conclusions about the study explaining, “Her speech is a call to all the women of Peru to unite and insist upon high moral standards in everyone and thus reform society, since all men have mothers” (“Feminism and Feminist” 13). In this passage, Berg makes it very clear that the mother holds a very influential role. Analysts of Matto de Turner’s writing have commented on the social power she attributed to the domestic woman. Berg (“Feminism and feminist” 12-13), Peluffo (127), and Portugal (326-327) explain that Matto de Turner believed that by shaping their families, women ultimately shaped the nation either through their influence with their husbands and children or through their

---

<sup>13</sup> This work is included in *Leyendas y recortes*. I claim it identifies Matto de Turner’s ideal wife and mother. Similarly, Berg posits that it presents “the ideal Peruvian woman” (“Feminism and feminist” 15). According to Berg, this ideal is embodied by Teodora, a minor character from *Aves sin nido* (15).

moral influence.<sup>14</sup> As a result, it becomes clear that the “mujer peruana” was given a very important task, and for this reason, she had to possess special abilities. Matto de Turner discusses the traits of “la mujer peruana” explaining:

Entiendo que en todo orden, para sentar un principio social hay que estudiar las utilidades de la mayoría; y, acatando esta regla, me dirijó á la mujer en general, á quien le concedo los mejores atributos de una alma nutrida en la fe, dirigiendo las pulsaciones de un corazón exquisito en sensibilidad, tierno y generoso, corazón de mujer peruana; cuya imaginación perspicaz adivina los peligros y presiente la dicha; cuya mirada clara y chispeante vé al través de los nubarrones que rodean á los séres queridos, y cuya palabra cariñosa de consejo, casi siempre ha sido la providencia de los suyos; palabra que, en momento oportuno, ha de escucharse con la reverencia exigida por la sacerdotisa del hogar. (77-78)

What is striking about the description of this type of woman is that she seems to possess absolutely every gentle and empathetic quality. Additionally, Matto de Turner attributed to the “mujer peruana” a perhaps unnaturally keen intuition and sense of perception, making women more capable of being the ultimate family protectors. In fact, women, according to this description, seem quite incapable of any sort of flaw whether it is an emotional shortcoming or simple shortsightedness. Both June Hahner and Donna Guy discuss the influence the Virgin Mary had on concepts of womanhood in Brazil and Argentina respectively. (Guy, 159; Hahner 259, 261). Indeed, the “mujer peruana” seems to have much in common with the Virgin Mary. Most importantly, she is a deeply spiritual being. In addition, the main goal of the “mujer peruana” seems to be the protection of “los séres queridos.” In fact, one might even say that she lives only for the good of her nation since the improvement of Peru is the ultimate goal that she wishes to

---

<sup>14</sup> Portugal refers to Matto de Turner’s feminism as an example of “feminismo maternal”, a concept expounded on by Michelle Perrot in “La mujer en el discursos europeo del siglo XIX” (326). While this article is not specific to Matto de Turner, for a general discussion on motherhood and the role of the mother in society, see Perrot.

achieve. This corresponds with the “traditional view of the self-sacrificing mother” which Guy links with the Virgin Mary (159).

From a contemporary perspective, it seems strange that women like Clorinda Matto de Turner and other 19<sup>th</sup> century feminists would paint such an idealistic portrait of women since, in practice, it could be quite difficult to live up to the standards they extol. After all, women have some flaws, a fact that never seems to be acknowledged by Matto de Turner in her essays –but it is something that appears in *Índole* which will be discussed in the next chapter. Hahner sheds some light on this issue: “While some later women would find a position on a pedestal uncomfortable, it evidently would have been a marked improvement for many women of the mid-nineteent[h]-century Brazilian elite. If they could mount the pedestal, they would elevate their position and would no longer be treated brutally or as possessions...” (“The nineteenth-century feminist press” 258-259). Matto de Turner also feared the objectification of women. She despised the fact that the value of women was measured by their dowries rather than their personal merits. She explained, “De este modo la mujer háse convertido en *letra* de cambio. La que lleva firma abonada es de colocación inmediata, y la angelical criatura que solo ofrece un tesoro de virtudes guardado, por dos negros ojos, queda despreciada como el billete fiscal...” (*Leyendas y Recortes* 85). If, when selecting a wife, men were thoroughly convinced of the value of a good woman – the “mujer peruana” – and the importance of the role she would play in his family, he would likely take more care in considering the merits of the woman herself, thus making her more than a mere object to be obtained for financial gain.

Indeed, ideas about women’s role in society in Latin America could be very harsh. In her article, “Mothers Alive and Dead: Multiple Concepts of Mothering in

Buenos Aires,” Guy explains the changes that Argentinean motherhood underwent during the same period in which Clorinda Matto de Turner was writing many of her works. To illustrate the older ideas of motherhood against which many were struggling, Guy uses the story of La Difunta Correa:

According to popular Argentine religious lore, between 1820 and 1860 in San Juan province, Dalinda Antonia Correa died of thirst on a dusty road with an infant by her side. Miraculously, her breast milk continued after her death, and the suckling and the mother were found by mule-team drivers. No one seems to know what happened to the infant, but many accounts say that he died shortly thereafter.

The fate of the infant seems to be unrelated to that of the mother, who became a popular, uncanonized saint. Except for the last episode, her life was unknown, but as a saint, she was later assigned other good works. La Difunta Correa... was then praised as a woman who had patriotically spoken out against tyrants before her death, as a wife who followed her husband after he was impressed into service by a dictatorial political leader, and as a mother who sustained her infant even in death. (155)

According to this way of thinking, the mother herself is not important. What is more important is that a woman be prepared to give whatever is necessary, no matter the cost, in order for her children to survive. What this essentially meant was that a woman herself had no value apart from her ability to reproduce. A woman’s value was determined solely by what she could offer to society which would explain why so many feminists, including Matto de Turner, tried to establish the societal benefit of improving the situation of women. According to Guy, this way of thinking is a result of the influence of Catholicism. She explains, “Thus as Clarissa Atkinson observed, notions of Catholic motherhood developed late and often focused on idealizing the suffering and self-abnegation of the Virgin Mary. La Difunta Correa, even though not recognized by the official church, represented a very traditional view of the self-sacrificing mother” (159). However, this “traditional view” is not what was needed from the coming generations of

Argentine mothers (156). For example, Guy notes that the public was plagued by an inundation of children whose parents would not or could not support them (159-161). In order to solve this of problem, government and health authorities began to promote the concept that motherhood was a long-term commitment (156-157). Mothers were to serve as caregivers who had the responsibility that their children grew up physically fit (157). In addition, this task was assigned a special importance and identified as a “patriotic duty” (156). Guy describes what these changes meant for mothers explaining, “But the republican mother no longer had to sacrifice her own life because she now had to raise her child herself. She would care and nurture her offspring and would be aided in this process by the state” (169). This phenomenon was not limited to Argentina. Jean Franco describes a similar process taking place in Mexico where, “Women were now to be persuaded to ‘mother’ their children by breast-feeding and educating them in early childhood in order to guarantee the future well-being of the nation” (81-82).

Matto de Turner described the new ideal of motherhood in her works. In general, the “mujer peruana,” like the “republican mother” of Argentina, was considered more valuable than the women of the past and, as the mother of the future generations, had an essential role to play in society. Of course, there were still some elements of sacrifice inherent in Matto de Turner’s idea of motherhood. Denegri notes the same idea in Matto de Turner’s works explaining that “la maternidad es el epítome de la ética del auto-sacrificio” (188). One can see this in the fact that Matto de Turner tended to paint a very lonely picture of women. She explained, “La mujer virtuosa calla y sufre en silencio: solo en la soledad de la noche enjuga sus lágrimas casi siempre de fuego quemador, y dirige sus quejas al solo testigo de sus dolores: ¡á Dios!” (*Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* 241). Matto de Turner’s reference to woman’s “lágrimas casi siempre de fuego quemador” is

an acknowledgement of the sacrifices and pains that women must endure in order to live up to their maternal and spousal responsibilities and to tolerate their restricted role in society. This quote is more than an acknowledgement of the difficulties of the lives of women; it also presented an alternative to the strong relationship some women had with their religious confessor. Because priests were closely linked to God, she emphasized “¡á Dios!” with exclamation points in order to draw attention to the fact that anyone less than God Himself was an inappropriate entity in which women should confide. In Matto de Turner’s zeal to prohibit this relationship, she did not leave much space for a woman to have a confidante or someone –not necessarily a priest or religious advisor– in whom to confide. Her ideas on this topic seem reminiscent of those of an earlier Peruvian, Francisco de Paula González Vigil.<sup>15</sup> Vigil, despite being a man of the church himself, did not believe that women should be so close to their priests and thought that the relationship between a woman and her priest had the potential to cause familial harm (Villavicencio, 38-40). Describing Vigil’s views, Villavicencio said, “...la mujer es...alguien sin discernimiento propio...que debe ser moldeada por otros. Por tanto, la preocupación de Vigil no es tanto sacudir la dependencia de la mujer, sino más bien a quienes les corresponde la dirección de su conciencia” (40). He did not want priests to have a more important position in the lives of women than their fathers and husbands (40). Villavicencio explains the problem:

El sometimiento absoluto de la mujer frente a ‘su’ hombre propugnado por Vigil, y que estaba acorde con la mentalidad de la época, sólo era mermado por el clero. Al parecer, a través del sacramento de la confesión los curas se hacían partícipes de la intimidad de la vida familiar y

---

<sup>15</sup> Villavicencio describes both Matto de Turner and Vigil as “intelectuales ... que desarrollaron posturas anticlericales” (37).

conyugal. Lo que estaba en juego era el temor de que las mujeres pudieran revelar las correrías políticas de sus esposos y hermanos, pero sobre todo sus incursiones donjuanescas, sus juergas; en resumen, el descuido económico, moral y afectivo en que tenían a sus familias. Para las mujeres el sacerdote llegó a ser el confidente, el paño de lágrimas en el cual podían desahogar sus penas y sus frustraciones; además es probable que en ellos encontraran el respaldo para rebelarse, aunque tímidamente, contra la autoridad y requerimientos conyugales de sus maridos. (41)

This fear of a woman's confessor knowing too much is one that was shared by Matto de Turner and is an important theme that will later be discussed in regards to *Índole*. It is in order to prevent this imprudent sharing of personal information that Matto de Turner required women to "sufr[ir] en silencio". The fact that this was supposed to take place "en la soledad de la noche", a time when much is hidden, is a further admonishment to maintain the secrecy of family matters. It is because Matto de Turner is denying women this comfort, or form of rebellion as Villavicencio describes it, that this "silencio" is associated with suffering. A woman had to sacrifice her own personal need to share her troubles in order to maintain the well-being of her husband and avoid "el descuido económico, moral y afectivo" that would come as a result of a lack of silence. This sacrifice in the end can be seen as a sacrifice on behalf of the nation since "el grupo primordial de la Patria es la familia" (*Leyendas y Recortes* 78). Ultimately, it is the goal of the "mujer peruana" to do what is best for her nation, and if a sacrifice is required, she should not hesitate to give up what is asked of her.

However, it is strange that Matto de Turner called for making God the "solo testigo de sus dolores". This implies that a woman must not share her troubles with even a "compañero." After all, as I will analyze more deeply in the next chapter, *Índole* stresses the idea that between spouses there is "nadie entre los dos" –implying that a third party should not be privy to what happens between a man and a wife– instead of "nada entre los dos" –which would imply that a couple should keep no secrets from each other.

I believe that Matto de Turner's emphasis on God as the only one a woman should confide in was proposed in order to make clear that priests, despite their status as the servants of God on Earth, were not an acceptable alternative, and that the implication that it was inappropriate to confide in one's husband was unintentional.

In "Luz entre sombras: estudio filosófico-moral para las madres de familia," which appears in *Leyendas y recortes*, she specifically stated that it was appropriate for a woman to confide in her husband. According to Matto de Turner:

Algunas mujeres creen que la suma de sus virtudes debe consistir en frecuentar el templo y consultar para todo al confesor. Error! Lamentable error, que la ilustración de la madre cristiana está llamada á rectificar, mostrándole que, si bien es un deber el ir á la casa de la oración á rendir el culto externo á Dios, las horas deben ser determinadas, porque, á todo momento, ha de tener presente, que el altar del sacrificio diario está en su casa, donde ella ha de ser como el sol: brillar siempre para dar luz, calor y vida á todo lo que le rodea: ha de saber distinguir que existen consultas que solo debe hacerlas á su esposo ó á su padre. (*Leyendas y Recortes* 82-83)

This passage serves to confirm the fact that Matto de Turner had a problem with excessive reliance on a priest. Also, here the theme of sacrifice appears again. Matto de Turner asserted that women were called upon to serve their families on a daily basis. This "sacrificio diario" is what distinguishes the "mujer peruana" from women like La Difunta Correa. Guy elaborates on the difference between La Difunta and the "republican mother" explaining, "Children now needed their mothers' laps, their emotional nurturing, and their knowledge of scientific mothering. And although the male-dominated popular religious cult continued to idealize La Difunta Correa, the state-approved modern mother wouldn't have been caught dead in La Difunta's situation" (170). Here, Guy indicates that La Difunta gave up her life and afterwards could no longer be useful to her children. The new "republican mother" had to be around to provide for her children, sacrificing her



time and energy to give them what they needed. Thus, the difference between La Difunta Correa and the ideas of “mujer peruana” and the “republican mother” was not that the latter two lived free of sacrifice, but rather that because of their superior mothering skills, the “mujer peruana” and the “republican mother” were required to live and continually sacrifice their own desires for the sake of their families and ultimately their nations.

Despite the sacrifice inherent in the role of the “mujer peruana,” it is obvious that Matto de Turner made an effort to show that the importance of women was not restricted to having children and doing house work.<sup>16</sup> For example, in *Boreales, Miniaturas y Porcelanas*, she pointed out another important social duty that women fill. Matto de Turner indicates that women serve as the moral compass of the family. She says:

Si queréis reinar sobre cuerpos de esclavos y sobre conciencias embrutecidas- dice el autor que cité antes- hay un medio de sencillez...degradad á la mujer, pervertid su sentido moral y pronto habréis hecho del hombre un ser envilecido, sin fuerzas para luchar contra los más sombríos despotismos, porque la mujer es el alma de la humanidad! (249)

The quote Matto de Turner referred to in this passage is by Louis Jacolliot in his book *Bible Dan l'Inde*. Ultimately, Matto de Turner tried to use this quote to show that women are the force that gives men their moral strength. She believed that morality resided primarily in women. Berg describes the same phenomenon, explaining that in Matto de Turner’s view men were inherently inferior to women in terms of morality (“Feminism and feminist” 13). She elaborates, “The chaotic state of Peru, with its institutions in crisis, can only be improved if women take upon themselves the responsibility for imposing moral organization upon society, beginning with the family unit” (“Feminism and

---

<sup>16</sup> This has also been noted by Meléndez (581).

feminist” 13). It seems that, left to their own devices, men would become “esclavos” to their own desires, putting their needs above social order. Women, then, were responsible, though indirectly since they could not be politicians, for any semblance of equality, justice, or order. In an article about European conceptions of womanhood in the 1800’s, Perrot explains that a mother’s responsibility meant that in some cases women would be praised, but “a la inversa, la madre tenía la culpa de cualquier desorden que se produjera” (123). Furthermore, she indicates that mothers were believed to have the power to influence society explaining that “la madre no quedaba limitada exclusivamente al círculo íntimo, ni siquiera privado. La madre era un valor social...”(123). One can see evidence of this idea in the cited passage from Jacolliot since “la mujer es la alma de la humanidad” instead of “la alma de la familia.” As a result, if one applies Perrot’s statements about maternal responsibility to Jacolliot’s/Matto de Turner’s comments on morality, the mother can be blamed for problems on the national or even international level. This means that if, for example, there is war, “sombrios despotismos” or other social problems, one can attribute this to the fact that women have not adequately performed their duty as the guiding moral body of society. Likely, Matto de Turner saw her own efforts to expose social abuses, such as her effort to denounce mistreatment of indigenous people in her novel *Aves sin nido*, as an extension of one of her womanly roles, and in fact, according to this way of thinking, as a woman who had seen these abuses, she would be largely responsible for them if she had not spoken out so vehemently. Similarly, especially successful and peaceful societies can be attributed to the efforts of women to preserve proper moral character in their husbands and children. This particular idea grants tremendous power to women, making them a factor that could not be ignored by society

## 2.5 Women workers and the stability of social class

Matto de Turner believed that women workers had a very important role to play in society. She portrayed them as the protectors of class stability. For example, in “La obrera y la mujer,” a speech appearing in *Cuatro conferencias sobre América del sur*, she claimed that a woman’s desire to maintain familial stability causes them to oppose strikes.<sup>17</sup> About this issue she explained, “Evitará, asimismo, la participación de su marido ó de sus hijos, porque sabe lo que significa para la familia una semana sin trabajo y ha palpado lo que son las promesas colectivas. Sabe que las huelgas que conmueven al mundo industrial á nadie perjudican más que al obrero...” (54). Matto de Turner claims that, “como la más cercana al hogar” (53), a woman will choose what is best for her family. However, she ignores the fact that there are multiple ways to view the situation and that it is quite possible for a woman to feel that a strike is indeed what is best for her family since there is the possibility that going on strike would improve the family’s wages or working conditions. In fact, in her article about Spanish feminism in the 1800s, Mary Nash explains that, in real life, instead of opposing these sorts of activities, many Spanish mothers embraced them. Nash says, “Many riots took place in central Spain; shops, factories, and houses were burnt in social disturbances. Rallying to the cries of “Freedom!” and “Bread!” women were significant actors in these protests. Their nurturing role in the family led to public involvement in social action centering on such issues as food supplies and fair prices” (248). Here Nash is indicating that it is *because* women are mothers that they would engage in strikes or similar subversive activities. Matto de Turner may not have been aware of this particular event, but it is likely that she

---

<sup>17</sup> A subtitle explains that this speech was given “en el salón de sesiones del Consejo Nacional de Mujeres de la República Argentina el 8 de diciembre de 1904” (*Cuatro conferencias* 49). The original text is written in all capital letters.

had heard of similar phenomena especially since *Cuatro conferencias sobre América del Sur*, was originally presented in Spain.

While her statements were certainly an attempt to show the strong moral character of women, her opinion on women and strikes is a better reflection of her views on a class system. In this article, Matto de Turner shed light on her views on class saying:

La igualdad de clases, el trabajo compartido por todos, la propiedad colectiva y otras utopías que de realizarse conducirían al caos común, seducen á muchos obreros. Estos, sin detenerse á pensar en que las diferencias de clase siempre existirán, sin fijarse en que la desigualdad social es como las leyes físicas, algo impuesto por Dios á la Humanidad, y por tanto inmutable, sin advertir que somos desiguales en el talento, en la virtud, y en la belleza, y que no todos tenemos los mismos sentimientos, que unos somos rubio y otros morenos, se rinden á promesas irrealizables y se entregan en manos de los agitadores que buscan un fin político ó de notoriedad, ajando algunas veces la dignidad ciudadana. Para nosotras el obrero es lo más respetable que hay en la sociedad porque representa el factor del progreso y es el sacerdote de la sublime religión del trabajo en cuyo templo nace la alegría de la vida. (52)

Here it seems very interesting to note that class distinctions are just as divinely mandated as motherhood. For a woman, this means that she must accept motherhood and do the best she can to raise her children. Similarly, it seems that lower-class workers –both male and female– are obligated to fulfill their roles as laborers without complaint. The only difference between the responsibilities of male and female laborers seems to be that women had the added responsibility of encouraging men to continue working. Just as a mother is “la sacerdotisa del hogar” (*Leyendas y recortes*, 78), a laborer is “el sacerdote de la sublime religión del trabajo.” While Matto de Turner called for women to create strong children and families for the benefit of society, she believed that laborers “...mueven la gigantesca rueda del progreso humano...” (*Cuatro conferencias* 51) when they carried on with their work. She believed that the importance of the task performed by laborers was at least comparable to that of women. Indeed, there are several

similarities. A mother's work was done not to benefit herself, but to benefit her children. Similarly, it seems that laborers were to continue their work, not for their own benefit, but to maintain social peace. Protests created social upheaval, and ultimately, without the labor of lower-class workers, the upper classes could not have continued living in the same manner. In this way, lower-class workers preserved the privileged status of the middle and upper classes while sacrificing their own standard of living. They were called upon to sacrifice for the greater good of Peru –or whatever nation they came from– just as the “mujer peruana” had to be prepared to give up her own personal happiness in the name of her children in order to build up a strong and healthy Peruvian nation.

Matto de Turner's attitude takes for granted that workers could never improve their social situation. While she claimed to feel sympathy for the plights of workers, her number one priority was to maintain social stability. This is very noticeable in a passage she wrote describing women workers. She explained:

...es urgente que nosotras nos acerquemos más á ellas para ponerlas en posesión del convencimiento de que saber y poder trabajar, es ser feliz. Que nuestra propaganda converja, pues, á que la obrera ame el trabajo, el orden y la economía, sin desconocer que todos los vivientes arrastramos la misma cadena de dolor y vamos al mismo desconocido de la muerte. (54)

In this quote, “ellas” refers to women workers who on the same page she also describes as “nuestras hermanas”. “Nosotras” seems to refer to her fellow middle-class women. It is interesting that she mentioned that there is equality in suffering and death because rather than being a comfort, it serves as a reminder of the fact that there was no equality in life. It is obvious that the two groups she discussed here –“ellas” and “nosotras”– are not socially equal since one group has the responsibility of working, while the middle-class women are called upon to serve as gentle and encouraging overseer –if such a thing is possible. Peluffo describes a similar phenomenon that occurs in two of Matto de

Turner's novels. She explains: "...el modelo de hermandad propuesto en *Aves sin nido* y en *Herencia*, no es un modelo igualitario sino jerárquico, desigual y plagado de tensiones" (132). Portugal also comments on social class, mentioning that some of Matto de Turner's statements about motherhood are addressed specifically to the upper-class women rather than lower-class women (326-327). This reinforces the idea that women of different classes had distinct roles. It seems that middle-class women were meant to take on the role of "la mujer peruana", or the ideal wife and mother, while lower-class women had to perform industrial labor. The lack of equality between the middle-class women and lower-class women workers is particularly apparent when one considers that happiness for lower-class women was supposed to stem from their work, but the same idea did not seem to apply to middle-class women. The fact that she instead called for women laborers to be persuaded to continue working rather than for charitable efforts to improve their lives shows very clearly that the work is more important than the well-being of the workers. Similarly, when she eventually did demand rights for women workers she called for education. She explained the rationale for this advising, "Cuidemos, pues, de la educación y dirección de la mujer obrera como del precioso antídoto que hemos de ofrecer al varón contra el veneno de las perturbaciones sociales, como gloriosa conquista de la civilización dentro de la industria" (57). Similarly, she called for "centros de instrucción recreativa y sociedades protectoras de los derechos de la obrera" but she specified that they would exist "sin los tumultos de las huelgas" (57). In the end, Matto de Turner's claims about women and their dislike of strikes and social upheaval were simply a projection of her middle-class desire to avoid social conflict.

Matto de Turners views were wildly different from those of the anarchist feminists who claimed to represent the working-class. Molyneux describes one such

group. Specifically, she describes the short-lived periodical, *La Voz de la Mujer*, which served as an outlet for anarchist feminists to publish their ideas which are notably more radical than those of Matto de Turner or the Brazilian feminists described by Hahner. Molyneux explains the reason for this, saying, “As one of the first recorded instances in Latin America of the fusion of feminist ideas with a revolutionary and working-class orientation, it differs from the feminism found elsewhere in Latin America during the initial phases of industrialization, which centered on educated middle-class women and to some extent reflected their specific concerns” (13). Matto de Turner, who can indeed be described as an educated middle-class woman, obviously led a life that was quite different from that of a working-class woman, so it should be no surprise to find that her feminist views have little in common with those expressed in *La Voz de la Mujer*. For example, Matto de Turner explicitly opposed anarchy. In *Boreales* she warned, “...¡UNIÓN! ¡UNIÓN! Ó LA ANARQUÍA OS DEVORA...” (59). Her opposition to strikes as well as milder forms of worker protests is another example of this. She explained, “Por lo demás, ya la mujer obrera comprende que no debe ir á la huelga funesta, ni saber de *boycotts* ni de *black liisters*...” (*Cuatro conferencias* 56). Anarchist feminists, on the other hand supported more extreme forms of protest. Molyneux says about *La Voz de la Mujer*, “... its politics were of the militant anarchist variety that defended acts of violence ...” (26). Obviously Matto de Turner and the anarchist feminists shared little common ground on this issue. Similarly, Matto de Turner painted a rather ideal picture of South American workers. While she recognized that there were some cases of worker abuse in Spain, she steadfastly refused to admit that such a thing existed in South America. She described how Spanish officials, “...aportan cuadros verdaderamente desoladores por la tirantez de intereses entre patronos y obreros

recrudeciéndose la lucha entre el capital y el trabajo; pero tales cuadros son exóticos entre nosotros, así como lo son muchos de los vicios sociales que los hogares de nuestros obreros jóvenes y puros no los conocen” (51). For her, lower-class life involved hard work but abuses were rare and minimal. The anarchist feminists, on the other hand, would have known a world very different from the one described by Matto de Turner. For example, according to Molyneux, “The little information available on women’s wages and working hours shows that they suffered from systematic discrimination, low pay, and long hours” (19). This information shows that Matto de Turner’s life was so different from those of anarchist feminists, that she was not even aware of the realities of their day to day lives.

The writers and editors of *La Voz de la mujer* did not believe the family to be a sacred unit but instead wished to explore “free love” practices, which they believed would put women and men on more even footing (Molyneux, 26-27). Matto de Turner’s views on this issue were quite the opposite (Portugal, 328). Some of their religious concerns were, however, similar to those of Matto de Turner. For example, one writer described an incident that took place between her and her confessor that in some respects is quite similar to Ziska and Peñas’s disturbing exchange in *Índole*. In the newspaper Luisa recounts a confession in which she was prompted to explain the intimate details of her sexual life and ends up having to fight off a sexual assault (Molyneux, 30). These similar accounts, though Matto de Turner’s version is milder, show that both the Argentine anarchist feminists and Matto de Turner shared some common concerns. Both believed that the clergy was capable of corruption, however Matto de Turner’s works were meant to shed light on what she believed was a problem specific to corrupt priests and some of the practices of Catholicism. She was a devout Christian and her comments



were not intended to create disillusionment with Christianity as a whole. On the other hand, the anarchist feminists had a grievance with religion in general (Molyneux, 30) that Matto de Turner would have found completely unacceptable. In fact, Matto de Turner was not alone in this sentiment. Molyneux says about *La Voz de la Mujer*, “The problem was ... that its message was expressed in terms too outrageous for the cultural context and for the times....most women, whether native or immigrant, would have been scandalised by attacks on the Church and family and by the explicit discussion of sexuality” (Molyneux, 37). This inability to represent the interests of its audience would be the fatal flaw of *La voz de la mujer*. (37).

## **2.6 Conclusion**

In Matto de Turner’s representation of women in the examined works, she had two overall goals. Her first goal was to establish and improve upon the dignity of women. This compelled her to establish the history of the literary tradition of Latin American women. It was also for this reason that she attempted to preserve the separateness of femininity, hoping to keep women safe from the dangers of masculine corruption. The well-being of women also pushed her to argue for the expansion of women’s rights using religion and a woman’s role in the family as tools to accomplish this goal. The second, and probably most important of Matto de Turner’s goals, was to maintain social stability. It was in the maintenance of this order that most sacrifices had to be made. For the “mujer peruana” this meant that a mother must sacrifice her own personal happiness for the greater good. For the lower-class laborer, this meant that the work must go on, despite the state of working conditions, in order to maintain the established social order. With an

understanding of these two goals, it becomes much easier to understand why Matto de Tuner chose to make the stands that she did.

## CHAPTER III

### WOMEN IN MATTO DE TURNER'S *ÍNDOLE*

In this chapter, I will focus on *Índole* and how the female characters in the novel are portrayed and how they navigate the various spaces of public and private life. Since there are so many prominent female protagonists, many of the feminist ideas Matto de Turner discusses in her essays come into play. As a result, without a good understanding of Matto de Turner's feminism, it is harder to see some of the messages that the novel conveys. Perhaps the most important thing that *Índole* demonstrates is how moral decay can affect the family. The novel explores first the moral downfall of the Lopez family and later their return to acceptable ethical behavior. Other authors discuss this issue, explaining the cause of this downfall or assigning blame. My reading of the novel explores the role of women and the idea of female accountability for the moral state of the family. Matto de Turner's essays indicate that women ultimately can be held accountable for the ethical shortcomings of those in their households since they have the responsibility to maintain morality in the home. The implication of this idea in *Índole* is that Antonio and Valentín's misconduct can ultimately be attributed to Eulalia and Asunción's lack of ethical diligence. Furthermore, I explore whether or not the novel portrays a domestic community of women that can sustain itself without the influence of men –husbands, priests, etc. While a domestic community of women does exist to an extent in *Índole*, and even more so in *Aves sin nido*, both fail because, in forming these

communities, the women in some way step outside of the bounds restricting female behavior.

The plot of *Índole* centers around three couples, Antonio López and his wife Eulalia, Valentín Cienfuegos and his wife Asunción, and an indigenous couple, Ildefonso and Ziska. At the beginning of the novel, don Antonio is suffering through an emotional crisis that has been triggered by financial difficulties. His struggle has begun to create a rift in his once strong relationship with his wife, Eulalia. Their marriage continues to deteriorate throughout the novel as Eulalia resumes her relationship with her former confessor Isidoro Peñas, despite the promise she made with her husband, agreeing to have no other confidante during their marriage. Don Antonio, unbeknownst to his wife, becomes involved in the illegal production of currency in an effort to alleviate financial stress. Unlike don Antonio and Eulalia, Cienfuegos and his wife, Asunción, have had a bad relationship for quite some time, a situation which the novel largely blames on Asunción's excessive religious devotion. However, don Valentín, is no model husband, and it is he who initiates the counterfeiting plot in the first place and pressures don Antonio to become involved with it.

On the other hand, both Berg ("Prólogo" xviii) and Cornejo Polar (80) have noted the optimistic tone surrounding Ildefonso and Ziska –or in the case of Cornejo Polar, the mestizo characters in general. Ildefonso is a mestizo who works for doña Asunción. He and Mononga, an indigenous woman also employed by Asunción, gather information for her in order to satiate her jealousy. Ildefonso's planned marriage to Ziska is an event all three couples are involved in, since both Antonio and Asunción have agreed to help the young couple throw their wedding. In addition, Ildefonso and Ziska play an essential ideological role in the novel. Cornejo Polar describes how the characters of indigenous

descent are represented in *Índole* explaining: “El mundo de los mestizos es un mundo realmente feliz y puede desarrollarse sin la interferencia, y más bien con el patrocinio, de las familias más encumbradas” (80). Similarly, in her prologue to *Índole*, Berg describes Ildefonso as “para Matto el ciudadano ideal de la nación” (“Prólogo” xviii). She goes on to explain their superiority in comparison to the other couples in the novel. She says:

Y a los *notables* del pueblo, que nacen con todas las ventajas, se los describe como débiles, en general de ‘buena índole’ pero incapaces de construir una nueva nación sana. En relación a esto, Matto señala su falta de hijos. Ziska y Foncito, en cambio, cuyo casamiento ocupa el centro del libro, esperan montones de hijos, nuevos ciudadanos mestizos y sanos.  
(xviii)

Here Berg claims that Ziska and Ildefonso are the optimistic future that Matto de Turner hopes for and that ultimately they are the characters that most embody her will. While I agree that Ildefonso and Ziska are one ideal couple, I posit that Antonio and Eulalia are not as unredeemable as Berg argues here, since they are eventually able to return to the proper moral path. This argument will be explored later in this chapter and also in the conclusions.

In the end, Berg posits that the couples in the novel have an interesting relationship to each other (Berg, “Clorinda Matto” 308-309). She elaborates on this idea, explaining:

To some extent each subplot offers a mirror image of an option open to Antonio and Eulalia: Antonio might (and does for a time) believe Eulalia guilty of sexual involvement with the priest; Eulalia might become excessively dependent on the Church like Asunción; they might squabble and hide things from each other like Valentín and Asunción; and they might manage to recapture a happy innocence like that of Foncito and Ziska. (“Clorinda Matto” 308-309)

I would argue that at different points throughout the novel, Antonio and Eulalia experiment with each of these possibilities; however it would seem that ultimately they

choose to follow the example of Ildefonso and Ziska. By the end of the novel, Matto de Turner ties up each of these storylines with a just (in the case of Valentín), if not happy, ending. Ildefonso and Ziska are happily married. Don Antonio is able to untangle himself from the counterfeiting plot. Eulalia ends her excessively close relationship with her priest, and she and don Antonio are able to repair their fractured relationship. Lastly, the corrupt and traitorous don Valentín is justly imprisoned for his misdeeds.

### **3.1 Female responsibility within the family**

My interpretation of *Índole* hinges around the idea that women were thought by Matto de Turner to have a special moral role. One can see this in her essays where she indicated that women were responsible for the moral state of those in their household including their adult husbands. In Chapter II, I mentioned a passage Matto de Turner cited from Louis Jacolliot's *Bible Dan l'Inde* that expanded on this idea. She cited, "...degradad á la mujer, pervertid su sentido moral y pronto habréis hecho del hombre un ser envilecido, sin fuerzas para luchar contra los más sombríos despotismos, porque la mujer es el alma de la humanidad!" (*Boreales* 249). As I indicated in Chapter II, this quote was utilized by Matto de Turner in order to show that women are the ones who provide moral fortitude in society. She also stressed that women have this same role within the family unit. For example in *Leyendas y recortes* she explained about the role of the mother, "...debe ella invocar de su esposo la práctica de las buenas costumbres, por amor á sus hijos..." (82). The idea seems to be that if a man is not behaving appropriately, a woman can somehow compel him to change if her own will is strong enough. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Berg has also noted the moral role of women ("Feminism and feminist" 13). This idea has interesting implications in *Índole*.

Since women are ultimately supposed to guide men to the right path, both Eulalia and Asunción shoulder the blame for the indiscretions of their husbands despite the fact that the women have no knowledge of their husbands' illegal activities. This idea corresponds to Perrot's description of 19<sup>th</sup> century European motherhood mentioned in the previous chapter. Perrot's claim is that within the family "la madre tenía la culpa de cualquier desorden que se produjera" (123). This is precisely what occurs in *Índole*. Eulalia struggles spiritually throughout the novel, and as she struggles, her husband does as well. Only once she resolves her problems is her husband able to sort out his legal and moral troubles. Similarly, one can ultimately blame Asunción for the problems in her own home, including the fact that she is being mistreated by her husband. In fact, Matto de Turner speaks specifically about the mistreatment of women saying:

La mujer es responsable de no conservar su dignidad personal, no ilustrándose lo suficiente y no enseñando al varon, desde su infancia, que el corazón no es mercancía sino el arca donde se deposita el caudal de las virtudes y el amor al trabajo; la mujer que no obliga al varón al cumplimiento de sus deberes cualquiera que será la gerarquía de éste en la sociedad. <sup>18</sup> (*Leyendas y Recortes* 85).

This passage, in combination with the ones I have previously mentioned, indicates that if women like Asunción were morally strong enough themselves they could use their own strength to keep the men in their lives in line. Because Asunción has not been able to sort out her own spiritual and moral shortcomings, she bears responsibility for the faults of her husband. In *Índole*, Matto de Turner describes her personality saying, "La señora Asunción Vila era una mujer de carácter impetuoso, pero modificado por la educación, y dominado por esa fuerza de voluntad rara en su sexo" (16). This strong "fuerza de

---

<sup>18</sup> This sentence is a fragment in the original text.

voluntad” she describes does not match very well Matto de Turner’s description of the ideal woman who understands that “[l]a mujer necesitaba el concurso del cerebro masculino” (*Boreales* 248-249). Similarly, the fact that this characteristic is described as “rara en su sexo” seems to be at least a mild rebuke for her headstrong attitude. In general, Matto de Turner requires a woman to be more gentle and submissive to her husband, unlike Asunción who distrusts her husband rather than relying on his wisdom. This trait alone would be enough to cause problems for Asunción, but she possesses other negative traits as well. For example, she is an extremely jealous woman and even goes as far as to hire people to spy on Eulalia. She also relies very heavily on the village priest, something Matto de Turner explicitly denounces both in the novel and in her essays. In the end, Asunción is never able to overcome these shortcomings and as a result the story does not turn out as well for her as it does for Eulalia.

While Matto de Turner’s essays specifically deal with the importance of female morality, the novel does not address the topic explicitly; however I believe female accountability for the moral state of the family is strongly implied in some of the criticisms of Asunción. The novel says:

La carencia de descendientes estableció la mayor libertad para Cienfuegos, rendido devoto de las hembras.

Pero dos eran las principales fuentes de las desventuras de este matrimonio. Los celos desmedidos y una devoción llevada al colmo del fanatismo que dominaba á dona Asunción, acibarándole la vida, bien que con la tentadora promesa de la salvación eterna. (17)

It is interesting that both of the “fuentes de las desventuras” are caused by Asunción despite the fact that the preceding paragraph had explicitly confirmed don Valentín’s infidelity, something many would suppose to be a significant problem in their relationship. Similarly, Manonga and Ildefonso later discuss the marital problems of



Asunción and Valentín, again referring to Asunción's faults as the catalyst of their troubles. Manonga says, "Catay que me hace gracia la buena de la señora Asunción con estos celos del tamaño del campanario, cuando ella es la que dá lugar á todo." (43). Manonga goes on to criticize Asunción's religious devotion, indicating that it causes her to neglect the needs of her husband. The general idea is not that Asunción is the only person with any real shortcomings. Indeed, the novel does not attribute Valentín Cienfuegos with any shortage of flaws, referring at one point to his "sonrisa verdaderamente satánica" (81). In general, he is portrayed as a dishonest, violent man who at one point threatens his wife with physical violence saying, "...soy capaz...de matarte, mujer" (212). Since he is in fact a flawed individual, it is significant that both the narrator and Manonga point instead to the woman's flaws as "las principales fuentes de las desventuras" rather than Cienfuego's adultery or cruelty. This seems to indicate that a woman's moral state rather than a man's is what is most important in determining the success of a marriage. Similarly, Manonga's assertion that Asunción "dá lugar á todo" would seem to indicate that Asunción's flaws are actually the cause of Valentín's misconduct.

It is perhaps more difficult to see Eulalia's moral shortcomings than those of Asunción. In his article about *Índole*, Cornejo Polar points out the flawed nature of almost the entire cast of characters –Valentín, Asunción, Antonio, and Eulalia– a view with which I tend to agree (79). Although Antonio's weakness is the first to manifest itself in the novel, if one reads the novel bearing in mind Matto de Turner's view of women's moral responsibility in the home, one is likely to conclude that Eulalia's weakness –of which the readers see evidence when she agrees to resume her relationship with Peñas the very first time he speaks with her in the novel– predates the events of the

novel. If she had indeed been morally strong –and thus blameless– her own strength would have lifted Antonio out of his weakness and onto the proper moral path, preventing Antonio’s secretiveness and involvement in counterfeiting and leaving her no cause to turn to Peñas for comfort. The novel explains that before her marriage, Eulalia had a close relationship with Peñas who was already consumed with sexual desire for her. In fact, she had committed to sharing all the details of her pending marriage with Peñas and only was prevented from doing so by Antonio’s plea for “nadie entre los dos” on their wedding night (30). Thus, rather than causing Peñas’s sexual advance as Berg indicates (“Feminism and feminist” 15), it appears that Antonio had prevented it for quite some time by encouraging her to sever the relationship with Peñas. Similarly, the intimate relationship Eulalia had maintained with Peñas before her wedding, is a flaw. Matto de Turner condemns in no uncertain terms her relationship with Peñas. At the end of the novel Eulalia reflects saying: “Sí, yo, yo he traído la desgracia á esta casa. Desconocerlo sería blasfemia! Dios perdone á esos malos curas como Peñas, Dios me perdone á mi! Y esa Asunción, ella con todos sus resabios de beata!” (206). The fact that her actions are a source of “desgracia” indicates that her relationship with him has indeed been a sin and that she bears fault. Furthermore, the fact that she had already formed a strong relationship before her wedding is proof that she brought her own set of moral shortcomings into the marriage and was already on a bad path.

Because both Asunción and Eulalia have failed in their moral obligations, they seem to fall short of Matto de Turner’s ideal wife and mother, “la mujer peruana”, whose ultimate goal is to build up a better Peru through the family. Instead of improving their families, it would seem that Asunción and Eulalia have dragged them into a state of decline with Asunción’s family being completely destroyed in the end. As previously

noted, Berg explains that the fact that these two couples have not yet been able to reproduce is an indicator of their inferior state, claiming that the novel “se los describe como débiles, en general de ‘buena índole’ pero incapaces de construir una nueva nación sana” (Prólogo, xviii). Berg points instead to Ziska and Ildefonso as the future parents of Peru. Indeed, it seems that Ziska is the only female character who can be clearly identified as an incarnation of the “mujer peruana.” She is the only one of these three characters who not only resisted Peñas’s influence but was in fact repulsed by him. Despite this, I believe that Eulalia’s return to morality can also be seen as her also taking up the role of the “mujer peruana.” If childlessness is truly an indicator of a lack of moral fitness, it seems that there is little or no hope for Asunción who is significantly older than Ziska and Eulalia and has been married for 10 years. Either she or her husband, Valentín, is most likely sterile. Eulalia, on the other hand, is only 22 and still has many child bearing years in front of her. In addition, she has not been married as long as Asunción, so there has been less opportunity for her to become pregnant. It seems that the possibility of children is still open for Eulalia despite the fact that she had not yet become pregnant in the novel. In addition, the novel describes Eulalia in some of the same terms used to describe the “mujer peruana” even during her time of weakness. For example, during one of her exchanges with Antonio the narrator describes that “su sensibilidad de mujer triunfó sobre sus dudas íntimas” (94). The triumph of “su sensibilidad de mujer” is reminiscent of Matto de Turner’s description of “la mujer peruana” who has “un corazón exquisito en sensibilidad” (*Leyendas y Recortes* 77). With her return to the proper path, it seems quite likely that Eulalia will go on to embody Matto de Turner’s concept of the “mujer peruana” and work to improve the Peru of the future.

This interpretation of the novel also has implications in the way that Eulalia's husband, Antonio is viewed. Antonio, rather than being one of the principal villains of the novel, is portrayed as a man with "el espíritu enfermo" (*Índole* 36). Cornejo Polar describes the moral state of both Eulalia and Antonio saying: "...Antonio y Eulalia son personajes débiles, pero poseedoras de 'buena índole'..." (79). As Berg aptly points out, Antonio's actions throughout the novel are fraught with misconduct ("Feminism and feminist" 15). However, what Cornejo Polar seems to indicate is that he is still a good man at heart and his crimes and deceptions mark a particularly low point in his otherwise respectable life. In addition, in the above statement Cornejo Polar seems to place Antonio and Eulalia on equal moral footing. In my reading of the novel, I find no reason to assume that Eulalia is ethically or morally superior to Antonio or vice versa. While he is described as "dotado de buena índole" (36) Eulalia has an "índole [que] estaba amasada en el bien (59). It is apparently this "buena índole" that distinguishes Antonio from don Valentín, who Cornejo Polar describes as someone who "tien[e] una caracterización uniformemente negativa" (79). This ultimately saves Antonio from punishment at the end of the novel. After all, both men were guilty of attempting to produce fake currency, but only don Valentín was made to atone for his crimes. Antonio is rewarded for his goodness by being allowed to move on and try to build a better life in Lima. In addition, don Antonio is not portrayed as a particularly harsh or unfeeling husband. He reveals at the end of the novel that his involvement in don Valentín's counterfeiting was partially motivated by a desire to keep from having to spend Eulalia's dowry (190). Despite the compromising situation in which he finds Eulalia, he rather quickly accepts her explanation of what happened between her and señor Peñas.<sup>19</sup> He responds to her pleas of

---

<sup>19</sup> It is interesting that Matto de Turner refers to Peñas with the more general title "señor" rather than

innocence saying, “Quedo satisfecho de tus palabras. A costa de tan amarga lección, te persuadirás que los que van al sacerdocio sin las virtudes de la vocación y la educación necesaria, son los mercaderes del templo á quienes arrojó nuestro Señor con el látigo infamante...” (162). This statement not only shows that he accepts her explanation of what happened with señor Peñas but that he largely blames the priest for how far the relationship had developed. In addition, it is important to note that he says this the very night he had discovered Eulalia and Peñas together, demonstrating that his understanding did not take a long time to manifest itself.

Other scholars have read *Índole* and have come to different conclusions about the role of women in the novel and accountability. For example, Berg has addressed this novel in a number of her articles. She specifically focuses on feminist issues in her article, “Feminism and Feminist Perspectives in the Novels of Clorinda Matto de Turner.” In this article Berg takes a rather critical view of Eulalia’s husband, don Antonio, indicating that he is ultimately the one who is accountable for his family’s difficulties. Berg explains:

The central question considered in *Índole* is whether marital happiness and ethical behavior are possible within a society which sanctions –and even rewards– corruption, duplicity and superficiality. These issues are not really resolved, either in *Aves sin nido* or in *Índole*. Eulalia is expected to forgive her weak husband for the series of deceptions which have caused her distress and made her vulnerable to the persuasive disguised sexuality of the village priest. Even in the resolutions of the book’s end, Antonio evades responsibility for his actions: he lies to the forces of public justice, he allows his friend to be arrested without a hearing, and only grudgingly accepts Eulalia’s account of her innocence and naivete in her relationship with the priest. (15)

---

“padre,” denying him the more religious title. This is perhaps a reflection of the fact that Peñas is a character whose spirituality has been corrupted.

In this particular interpretation, Berg presents Antonio as an immensely flawed character who should be held accountable for both his own moral shortcomings as well as those of Eulalia. Antonio's moral shortcomings –his involvement in printing illegal currency– are fairly obvious to a contemporary reader. Eulalia's, on the other hand, –her devotion to her confessor– can seem less obvious; however the novel quite explicitly critiques this practice among women, making it clear that it is indeed a spiritual shortcoming.

Manonga's discussion of Asunción's religious devotion with Ildefonso is one example of this. Berg's argument seems to be that by creating a hostile domestic environment with his secrecy, Antonio upset the equilibrium of their relationship, pushing Eulalia to señor Peñas himself. Eulalia is presented in a more positive light as merely a victim of her husband's illegal escapades. In another article that deals with *Índole* Berg describes her as well as Lucía, as “the heroines...[who] combat the evil that constitutes the major social theme: exploitation of the Indians, corruption within the Church” (“Clorinda Matto” 310). This statement presents Eulalia as both a strong and assertive character and probably refers mainly to Eulalia's final refusal of Peñas's sexual advances. However, Berg's interpretation of Eulalia's relationship with Antonio as presented in the above passage has quite a different connotation. It infantilizes her, making Eulalia a force that is simply acted upon by others throughout the majority of the novel. While Berg does not say so explicitly, it would seem that in her interpretation of the novel it is male authority that drives the plot. I would argue that even when Eulalia resists Peñas's authority, which one can view as her great assertive moment, she does so to defend her husband's sexual rights. Furthermore, I would point out that her stand against corruption took place, not in the political arena, but within the confines of the domestic sphere. As Berg herself notes, “[r]ather than portraying the incursion of private morality into public terrain... the action

of Indole occurs within the domain of Eulalia's private life" ("Feminism and feminist" 15). This illustrates that her struggle with Peñas was very personal and probably very few people ever knew that it had happened at all. As a result, I would argue that while her refusal to enter into a sexual relationship with Peñas should be seen as a stand against "corruption within the Church", it does inflict any significant damage on Peñas or corruption in general. Indeed, Peñas not only avoids punishment but, as Cornejo Polar explains, "termin[a] triunphante" (84). The most lasting effect of this personal victory would be that it results in Eulalia's conversion to "la mujer peruana", and, as a result, she is better able to raise good children who will inherit the leadership of Peru. Bearing these considerations in mind, I agree with Berg's description of Eulalia as a "heroine" but it seems necessary to qualify that she is a heroine of the domestic domain rather than one of the political.

In addition, Berg posits that the dramatic events in *Indole*, such as Eulalia's confrontation with Peñas, serve as an eye-opening experience for Eulalia, changing her trusting nature. She explains, "What Eulalia learns is that life is complex and that men cannot be trusted, whether they are priests, husbands or apparent friends" (Berg, "Feminism and feminist" 15). She qualifies this message a bit saying that it "may not be at all what Matto intended to convey" (15). Ultimately, it seems that for Berg, *Indole* is a novel that charts Eulalia's development into a stronger, more assertive woman who will no longer follow her husband blindly. However, Berg claims that Eulalia never meets Matto de Turner's standard of the ideal woman. Summarizing the traits of the characters appearing in Matto de Turner's novels, Berg explains:

There is a great deal of discussion of the ideal woman's role as that of wife and mother, but there is no consistent depiction of this role personified ... Although good wives are praised in theory, most of the

women she depicts are unhappy as wives, and are married to weak, deceitful or cruel men. Matto's most admirable women are independent thinkers and social activists. (16)

I find that I agree with some aspects of this analysis but not all. As I previously argued, having a husband who is "weak, deceitful or cruel" is the mark of a woman who has not adequately guided her husband in the ways of morality. Berg clearly intends for Eulalia to fall into this category because in a different article she specifically uses the term "weak" to describe Antonio ("Matto de Turner" 309). However, this interpretation ignores the possibility of redemption. As I previously noted, Berg describes Eulalia and her husband as "incapaces de construir una nueva nación sana" ("Prólogo" xviii). While this may be true throughout the majority of the novel, at the end both Antonio and Eulalia seem to live up to Matto de Turner's standard of the ideal couple. Similarly, I have some problems with Berg's assertion that "Matto's most admirable women are independent thinkers and social activists." While Matto de Turner certainly encouraged women to think, she did not believe that they should do so independently of their husbands in particular. While in her novels there are situations where women made decisions and acted on them independently of their husbands, I argue that doing so usually ended badly, particularly in *Aves sin nido*. I will further address this argument as well as the issue of women and social advocacy later in this chapter.

Fox-Lockert's interpretation of *Índole* has some elements in common with that of Berg but differs severely in other ways. Like Berg, Fox-Lockert has a negative opinion of Eulalia's husband, Antonio. About this situation she explains:

This woman is under the influence of two men with personal interests at stake in her. While the priest wants to take advantage of his position as confessor, her husband uses his authoritarian influence to make her break her devout religious ties. So that he might forgive her for an error she has not committed, he asks that she give him her dowry so that he might pay



his debts. Abused by two domineering men, she lacks the critical ability to choose for herself. (137)

Here Fox-Lockert paints Antonio as a forceful, dominating figure in the life of Eulalia, compelling her to look out for his own best interest without consideration for her thoughts and desires. While Berg refers to Eulalia as a “heroine” and indicates that she ultimately finds her own strength, Fox-Lockert clearly has a less positive impression of Eulalia. Eulalia is represented as a hopelessly passive character. She describes Eulalia as “the type of woman who is a slave to her husband”, an example of a phenomenon described by Matto de Turner in *Boreales, miniaturas y porcelanas* (137). In this passage, Matto de Turner explained: “Bajo el yugo opresor la mujer era, casi una cosa. Apenas si se le permitía aprender á leer para aliviarse en la tarea de sus devociones. Esclava del padre, del hermano, del marido que se le daba, esclava de las preocupaciones que encadenan el espíritu, esclava siempre. Hoy la mujer es persona” (311-312). Here Matto de Turner defines personhood and slavery as opposites. If one accepts that the two concepts are complete opposites, then it is easy to come to the conclusion that a person is someone who is completely free since a slave is allowed no freedom at all. However, Matto de Turner’s feminism does not propose a life devoid of marital, maternal, or spousal obligations. Her concept of female liberty would have been quite different than that of a contemporary feminist. It seems that Fox-Lockert, seeing Eulalia’s devotion to her husband, interprets this as enslavement. However, I would point out that, despite Eulalia’s deep reliance on her husband or other male authority figures, she was given enough freedom to make her own choices. For example, the enslaved woman described in *Boreales* would not have been allowed to visit her confessor against her husband’s will. However, if one accepts as Fox-Lockert asserts that Eulalia is truly a slave, instead of being a female character to aspire to, she is a pitiable, tragic figure. This interpretation

of the novel defines *Índole* as a sobering glimpse at the reality of female repression that serves as a warning to fellow women about the negative consequences of allowing oneself to be too closely watched or controlled by men instead of an account of Eulalia's personal progression.

Cornejo Polar also has an interesting interpretation of *Índole*. For him, Antonio and Eulalia's moral shortcomings stem from their relationship with the morally inferior couple, Valentín and Asunción. He explains:

La oposición que la novela construye entre las familias de Antonio y Valentín es básicamente moral: Antonio y Eulalia son personajes débiles, pero poseedoras de 'buena índole', mientras que Valentín y Asunción tienen una caracterización uniformemente negativa. La novela relata los distintos momentos del conflicto entre ambas familias, desde la caracterización estática de lo que los personajes han sido antes del tiempo novelado y la progresiva contaminación de los seres de "buena índole" por los vicios y defectos de los otros, hasta el triunfo final del virtud. Este proceso se desdobra simétricamente: la honradez de Antonio...se contrapone a la deshonestidad y villanía de Valentín...de la misma manera que la religiosidad auténtica y la dulzura de Eulalia...se enfrenta a la beatería y acrimonia de Asunción... (79)<sup>20</sup>

This reading of *Índole* places blame for the moral downfall of Antonio and Eulalia on all four characters. Eulalia and Antonio are to blame for their weakness, and the older pair, Valentín and Asunción, shoulder some blame for their negative influence on the young couple. This interpretation strikes me as particularly equalizing. It seems to place equal blame on Eulalia and Antonio. Neither one is presented as more responsible than the other for the declining state of their marriage. The implication of this is that

---

<sup>20</sup> Unlike Cornejo Polar, Berg talks about the "buena índole" of all of "los notables" – including not just Antonio and Eulalia but also Asunción and Valentín ("Prólogo" xviii)

Cornejo Polar does not seem to believe that the novel intends for either the husband or the wife to have more responsibility for the moral state of the family unit.

Each of the readings of *Índole* that I have discussed in this section attempt to discern who is to blame for the moral downfall of Eulalia and Antonio. The significant difference between the interpretations of these other authors and my own is that my reading of *Índole*, while it is justified in the novel, it also relies very heavily on the ideas about women and moral accountability as expressed by Matto de Turner in her essays. For example, Cornejo Polar's reading can be justified very easily in the novel, but Matto de Turner's feminism does not seem to be a significant consideration in this interpretation. Similarly, Berg and Fox Lockert place a good deal of blame on Eulalia's husband Antonio, but in both cases they ignore Eulalia's responsibilities, failures, and limitations. While it may seem counterintuitive by contemporary standards, I believe that by giving women responsibility for the actions of those in their households, Matto de Turner was attempting to create a stronger, more assertive female protagonist. In the readings that present Antonio as the primary source of marital problems, Eulalia is woefully powerless, something Fox Lockert says specifically. In my reading, Eulalia shoulders a larger share of the blame, but her actions actually have the power to drive the plot. This serves as a way to reinforce the idea that the wife and mother could have a significant impact on society despite the limitations of that role.

### **3.2 A community of women in *Índole***

Matto de Turner's strong distrust of priests and the influence they could have over women led her to define the level of intimacy she believed was appropriate for women to have in their relationships. Her exhortation that a woman "ha de saber distinguir que existen

consultas que solo debe hacerlas á su esposo ó á su padre” is one example of this (*Leyendas y Recortes* 83). Similarly, she said, “La mujer virtuosa calla y sufre en silencio: solo en la soledad de la noche enjuga sus lágrimas casi siempre de fuego quemador, y dirige sus quejas al solo testigo de sus dolores: ¡á Dios!” (*Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* 241). In the previous chapter, I claimed that the main purpose of these two statements was to restrict a woman’s relationship with her confessor but noted that they leave very little room for a woman to have an earthly confidante. Neither one of these quotes deal specifically with the idea of sharing one’s thoughts with fellow women, but they both seem to forbid it in general. This seems odd when one considers Matto de Turner’s strong relationship with Gorriti and also in light of Matto de Turner’s effort to establish a Latin American community of intellectual women. However, Matto de Turner’s views on female companionship and intimacy become clearer when one considers female relationships in terms of spheres or spaces. In Chapter II, I discussed Delgado’s three “sociedades” –sociedad doméstica, sociedad civil y sociedad política– and how they related to appropriate female behavior. To better understand *Índole* I have devised two subsets of the domestic space: the intimate domain and spiritual intimacy. Overall, the domestic domain encompasses the affairs of the home. This includes day-to-day activities related to cooking cleaning, and childrearing but also the more private information and activities such as family secrets, a family’s financial situation, or a couple’s emotional and sexual health. This private class of information and activities related to the domestic domain, along with any feelings, thoughts, or opinions associated with these aspects of domestic life, falls into a subcategory I refer to as the intimate sphere or intimate domain. When Matto de Turner referred to “consultas que solo debe hacerlas á su esposo ó á su padre”, she established an intimate sphere and explicitly

limited who should be allowed into this intimate space. In the case of an unmarried woman, only her father should be privy to some of her more private thoughts and problems. For a married woman, this role was filled by her husband. In Chapter II, I mentioned that Matto de Turner's ideas about women and priests were very similar to those of fellow Peruvian, Francisco de Paula González Vigil. According to Villavicencio, Vigil worried that priests would usurp a husband's influence over his wife and that a man's affairs would not be private if his wife practiced confession (40-41). Matto de Turner's intimate domain reflects these concerns and serves two functions as a result. One implication of the intimate domain is the idea that a woman must at all times be dependent on a male authority figure—specifically her husband or father—to advise her. In fact, Matto de Turner explicitly dealt with this in *Boreales* claiming that “[l]a mujer necesitaba el concurso del cerebro masculino para que, sirviéndole de guía, la condujera á la meta anhelada” (248-249). This created a sort of mutual dependency between a man and a woman. As I explained earlier in this chapter, a man had to be led in the ways of morality by his wife, but a woman still apparently needed her husband's advice, possibly because the worldlier male—who was allowed access to the public sphere while women were not—would be better able to give a woman advice on issues that her experiences within the home had not prepared her for. In addition, the intimate domain should also protect a husband's privacy. This function of the intimate domain is apparent in *Índole* when Eulalia explains that she quit confessing at her husband's request. According to Eulalia: “...me pidió, en nombre de nuestro amor, que nuestros secretos fuesen para los dos” (68).

In addition to the intimate domain of a husband, Matto de Turner seemed to describe a spiritual intimacy. Spiritual intimacy is very much related to the intimate

domain and for the most part pertains to the same domestic activities and information. If a woman had thoughts or feelings that she did not wish to share with a husband, she could share them with God. Matto de Turner made it very clear that there is only room in a woman's heart for one man and allowing any other man into the intimate domain displaces a husband. What spiritual intimacy implies is that God does not serve as competition for a woman's affections and loyalty despite the fact that she may confide in Him. Matto de Turner refers to this domain when she says that "[l]a mujer virtuosa... dirige sus quejas al solo testigo de sus dolores: ¡á Dios!" (*Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* 241). Like the intimate domain, maintaining spiritual intimacy protected a man's reputation, preventing a woman from talking about the marital burdens that she dares not discuss with her spouse –whether these burdens include something like the effects of financial difficulties or even problems as serious as domestic abuse. However, while Matto de Turner restricted the information women were allowed to share, it would seem that relationships with other women were allowed in some capacity. The fact that a woman "ha de saber distinguir" between what can and cannot be shared with people who are not in this intimate sphere means that not all information was restricted. A woman was permitted warm relationships with other women and community members provided that their relationship did not cross into the intimate domain where only a man can reside or involve sharing marital information that only God should be party to.

At the beginning of *Índole*, it would seem that a community of women, or a group of women united by some common purpose or goal, is not possible. The two principal female characters are separated by ideological differences and jealousy. Eulalia does not share Asunción's devotion to the village priest. This causes Asunción to suspect the worst of her, leading her to examine the possibility of an adulterous relationship existing

between Eulalia and her husband. When this ideological difference ceases to exist, the impediment to their relationship is apparently removed. The novel describes Asunción's reaction to Eulalia's renewed interest in confession: "Jesús! Una persona que se confiesa, que tiene su director, nada malo puede hacer. Te repito, Manonga, que me devuelves la paz, y Dios te lo pague..." (104). It is only at this point that Eulalia and Asunción begin to strengthen their relationship. This passage is interesting because it indicates that trust between the two women is only possible through Peñas, a male figure. It demonstrates that a mutual devotion to their confessor is one of the essential tenants of their relationship. In fact, their relationship seems to be united by two bonds: the first—as the quoted passage indicates—would be señor Peñas. The second is their mutual distrust of their husbands. Neither of these bonds would be considered healthy by Matto de Turner and both would be seen by her as threats to the stability of each woman's marriage. This first bond, señor Peñas, is very easy to recognize throughout the novel. The only time that Eulalia seems to form any kind of relationship with another woman is when she is under the influence of señor Peñas. In the novel Peñas says to Eulalia, "Asunción es mi confesada, es tu hermanita, quédate unos días con ella, yo iré á hacerles una visita..." (*Índole* 111). It is interesting to note that Peñas, one of the novel's antagonists, is a great promoter of a friendship between Eulalia and Asunción. This may lead one to suspect that this relationship is perhaps as flawed as Peñas himself. Also, this passage sheds light on the nature of the relationship of Eulalia and Asunción. Various times in the novel, Peñas refers to Eulalia and Asunción as his daughters. Thus when he identifies them as sisters, one can see they are only connected to each other through him. Furthermore, even when the two women do share some connection, they are still in an inferior position to men. Eulalia and Asunción are infantilized because, while Peñas is the authoritative

paternal figure, they are but children. The hierarchy of their relationship is triangular. As women, Eulalia and Asunción exist on fairly equal, horizontal terms, but Peñas clearly stands above them in a vertical position of authority. Cornejo Polar discusses the same concept, explaining that by placing himself in this vertical position Peñas achieves “el total vasallaje de la mujer” (82). For a short period in the novel, it is obvious that both Eulalia and Asunción feel bound together, but they are merely connected as the servants of señor Peñas. It seems more like a mutual captivity than a true bond of trust and friendship that the two women share. Previously, I argued against Fox-Lockert’s assertion that Eulalia is the “type of woman who is a slave to her husband” (137). However, I would argue that the relationship that exists between Peñas and his followers, Asunción and Eulalia, is a form of slavery. When Fox-Lockert discusses slavery, she cites a passage from *Boreales*. This passage refers to “la mujer [que] era... una cosa” contrasting this image with the fact that “[h]oy la mujer es persona” (311-312). In her analysis of *Índole*, Berg expands on the idea of Matto de Turner’s “mujer-cosa” and “mujer-persona” explaining that “[t]he mujer-cosa is man’s plaything, trapped by social (or religious) conditioning into passivity” (“Feminism and feminist” 16). Her reference to “religious conditioning” along with the fact that the explanation of the “mujer-cosa” is a continuation of her discussion of “Eulalia’s personal struggle to come to terms with her sexuality”, indicates that she views Eulalia’s relationship with Peñas as a form of slavery as well (15-16).

The second bond I mentioned existing between the two women, their mutual distrust of their husbands, also has negative implications as it results in a violation of the intimate sphere. The reader first begins to see manifestations of this phenomenon when the pair meets at Asunción’s home. The narrator describes their meeting:



En el caserío de Palomares todo se hallaba cambiado con sorprendente rapidez.

Eulalia y doña Asunta, como llamaban en familia á la señora de Cienfuegos, se vieron, se abrazaron cordialmente y se comunicaron sus secretos, con las reservas que cada cual conceptuaba necesarias. (114)

In this passage, the narrator seems a bit taken aback by the sudden formation of this relationship. The fact that it came about so quickly and unexpectedly is perhaps meant to serve as an indicator of its unnatural and unsavory origins in señor Peñas. Furthermore, the reference to Asunción as doña Asunta, an affectionate nickname that the narrator notes is only used by those close to her rather than the general public, also serves as a sign that this pair has become more than just casual acquaintances united only by their husbands' friendship. However, one of the fatal flaws in their relationship immediately becomes apparent when they "se comunicaron sus secretos." Though they do this "con las reservas que cada cual conceptuaba necesarias", it seems that their sense of discernment has been warped, most likely by the effects of their unhealthy relationship with Peñas. The two begin to share their suspicions about their husbands' recent, strange behavior. They express their distrust in a brief exchange:

–Sí, algo hay entre los dos, Eulalita, usted no sabe lo que son éstos hombres de reveseros y *tramoinos*.

–Por mi parte, mi sea Asuntita, yo no estoy ya tan ciega como ántes con Antonio. Ya me ha puesto en guardia, y si no fuese por mi confesor estaría pasando la pena negra. (115)

It would seem that if, as Matto de Turner posits, "existen consultas qu ce solo debe hacerlas á su esposo ó á su padre" (*Leyendas y Recortes* 83), complaints, doubts, or worries regarding one's husband, like the ones expressed in this passage by Asunción or Eulalia, would be the kind of information that one should not share with others. By voicing these doubts, they breach the sanctity of the intimate sphere, sharing information

about their own feelings and about their households that never should leave the intimate space of their marriage. One might argue that by betraying their wives, keeping secrets, and entering into illegal ventures Antonio and Valentín have violated their own moral obligations, justifying the breach of the intimate sphere as demonstrated in the cited passage. After all, Asunción and Eulalia's comments are justified, and for the most part their suspicions on this matter are correct. However, it would seem that a husband's misdeeds are not sufficient reason to violate the intimate sphere. In a passage I cited earlier from *Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas*, Matto de Turner described this very situation explaining, "La mujer virtuosa calla y sufre en silencio: solo en la soledad de la noche enjuga sus lágrimas casi siempre de fuego quemador, y dirige sus quejas al solo testigo de sus dolores: ¡á Dios!" (241). "La mujer virtuosa" like Asunción and Eulalia, has in some way been mistreated; however Matto de Turner does not call her to investigate the source of her suffering, ask her to seek out revenge, or even require her to do anything to remedy the situation that has caused her such pain. Furthermore, it seems that this passage is referring specifically to what one should do if one's husband is the one who is causing this pain. If it is a woman's husband who is hurting her in some way, it makes sense that she would not want to confide in him about the way his mistreatment makes her feel. It is at this point that a woman must maintain spiritual intimacy, sharing these secrets only with God. Matto de Turner's solution to this problem is to seek spiritual solace rather than any kind of earthly comfort. It would seem that Asunción and Eulalia reject this path, choosing instead to look for comfort in each other and thus breaching their wifely duty to tolerate their own unhappiness without sharing information about their husbands.

Eventually, the budding relationship between Eulalia and Asunción comes to a close. After an unsuccessful rape attempt that took place during Ildefonso and Ziska's

wedding festivities, Eulalia, of course, sees the error of her ways and realizes that it was a mistake to have held the priest, señor Peñas, closer to her heart than her husband. At this time, her close relationship with Asunción is abruptly terminated. There isn't a moment in which the two discuss this issue, and in fact, after Ildefonso and Ziska's wedding, the novel never portrays the pair speaking again. Though Eulalia and Antonio decide to leave town at the end of the novel, if her bond with Asunción were still strong it would seem that Eulalia would try to get some sort of closure for her relationship with Asunción or at least try to comfort her after the arrest of her husband. Instead, it is taken as a matter of course that now that she has abandoned the priest and her loyalty has returned to her husband, her close bond with Asunción would dissolve as quickly as it was formed. The novel makes it very clear that in the end Eulalia has finally returned to the correct path. In the last pages, Eulalia and Antonio admit to their shortcomings. Eulalia exclaims, "Perdóname otra vez, Antonio mio, para que tus palabras refresquen mi espíritu. Yo vuelvo al hogar con la planta llegada en el camino que hice sólo sin ti!..." (225). When she says "vuelvo al hogar" she admits that her actions have taken her from her wifely obligations. Similarly, the reference to "el camino que hice sólo sin ti" seems to refer to her abandonment of him and the intimate domain. However, her words show that she is sorry for these breaches of conduct and does not wish to repeat them in the future. Indeed, in the last line of the book, the narrator affirms that all is now indeed well for the pair. "Y los ángeles tutelares del hogar, al són de sus liras de marfil, dijeron: -dichosos los que vuelven al reino del amor y de la virtud llevados por su buena INDOLE" (225). The fact that they "vuelven al reino del amor y de la virtud" only after Eulalia abandoned the closeness she shared with Asunción means that this relationship, in addition to the one she shared with señor Peñas, was inappropriate in a married woman who owes all of

her loyalty and confidence to her husband. The nature of these relationships caused her to violate the trust and loyalty of the intimate domain, and for this reason, they were destined to fail when she returned to a healthy moral state.

There are two other female characters presented in the novel, but not much can be gleaned from examining the relationships that exist between them. Manuela/Manonga has a cordial relationship with Asunción, but it is never described as particularly close. The novel portrays Manuela and Ziska as friends; however it is harder to analyze their relationship since it is not described in as much detail as that of Asunción and Eulalia. One also cannot determine whether or not said relationship interfered with Ziska's marriage as Ildefonso and Ziska largely disappear from the story after their wedding. However, the fact that there is no more information about this couple after their marriage can be viewed as a reinforcement of the intimate domain. Matto de Turner asserted that a man and woman's affairs were meant to be kept private, and since both Ildefonso and Ziska are described as happy in their marriage and faithful to each other, it follows that they will respect the intimacy of their relationship. Therefore, the fact that there is no more information about them can be seen as a reflection of their intimacy and respectful silence.

Similarly, an examination of the domestic community of women in *Aves sin nido* helps to reinforce the idea that Matto de Turner sought to demonstrate appropriate female spaces and activities in her novels. The circumstances surrounding the domestic community of women in *Aves sin nido* are quite different from those of *Índole*; however the fate of these communities is similar. It seems very clear that a community of women does in fact exist in the *Aves sin nido*. The protagonist, Lucía, acquires a network of female friends and acquaintances, all of whom are unhappy with some aspect of the

injustice in which the small town of Killac is steeped. At the beginning, Lucía and Marcela in particular come together in order to help improve the condition of the indigenous people who are being abused by the powerful members of the local town. Scholars such as Peluffo (125) and Brushwood (157) have commented how close Marcela and Lucía become during the novel. Their relationship culminates in Lucía speaking to town officials directly about the possibility of reform. It is important to note that, as several scholars point out, in most situations men have very little involvement in the women's plans. Denegri notes this in the cases of Lucía and Marcela saying, "Así, a través de Lucía y de Marcela, el proyecto de redención humana es...colocado firmemente en manos de las mujeres" (190). Similarly, Berg explains that "...Marcela and Martina, are far more effective at speaking out for Indian rights than are their hardworking, passive husbands" ("Clorinda Matto" 307). Even the main character, Lucía, as Catherine Davies points out, acts independently of her husband when she offers money to Marcela in order to help her family escape oppression (35). Since women, such as Lucía, Marcela, and Petronila –an acquaintance of Lucía who Denegri describes as "una mujer que lucha por proteger a su familia de la corrupción del gobernador del pueblo" (191)– are united in their opposition to corruption in Killac and sometimes even work together to oppose it, this could legitimately be considered not only a community of women but an active one. Denegri comes to a similar conclusion explaining:

...las [heroínas] de Matto de Turner renuncian a sí mismas a favor, ya no del esposo, de la familia, o del amante pecador, sino a favor de la comunidad. De esta forma Matto transforma la tradicional noción decimonónica de la feminidad –según la cual la contribución social de las mujeres quedaba limitada a su capacidad de <influnciar> a los varones de su familia (idea condensada en aquello de <detrás de cada mujer hay un gran hombre>)- para proponer ya no una <influncia>, sino una intervención de tipo colectiva en la que las mujeres erigen como agentes de la transformación moral de la comunidad total. (191)

As Denegri explains, this community of women has indeed gone beyond the bounds that are traditionally assigned to women. However, I would argue that instead of this being representative of a “transforma[ci3n de] la tradicional noci3n decimon3nica de la feminidad” it serves to demonstrate the inherent problem with women overstepping their bounds and actually reinforces the idea that women are “limitada a su capacidad de <influir> a los varones de su familia.” Ultimately, this active community was unsuccessful. Marcela is killed in a vicious attack as direct result of her and Lucía’s efforts to alleviate the suffering of the indigenous people at the hands of corrupt officials. Berg points out that, as a result of this attack and “her inability to bring about effective change,” Lucía “retreats into her role as wife and mother” (“Feminism and Feminist” 12). She further explains this in terms of public and private spaces, stating, “Lucia’s public voice is silenced but her private role as wise advisor is strengthened” (“Feminism and feminist” 12). I argue that Marcela’s death serves as a punishment to Lucía for overstepping her bounds as a woman and attempting to interfere in the public, political space. In *Plotting Women*, Jean Franco notes that in his novel *La Quijotita y su prima* José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi doles out punishment to female characters for overstepping their bounds (89). According to Franco, Pomposa, a young woman who fails to live up to patriarchal society’s demands on proper female behavior, meets with utter failure, eventually dying but only after first becoming a prostitute. Franco explains, “Such severe fictional punishment was certainly intended to serve as a warning against female mobility and individuality...” (89). Similarly, in *Aves sin nido* Lucía acted in a way that was not appropriate for her sex when she directly interfered in politics, stepping out of the domestic space and into the political sphere. As I noted in Chapter II, Matto de Turner forbade women to become directly involved in the political sphere, indicating that

the masculine world of politics was too corrupt for women. The death of Marcela was Matto de Turner's way of demonstrating just how badly a woman's presence in politics can go. As a result, Lucía's "retreat" from the political sphere can be seen as a return to her proper path as a woman and as a step in giving up on the idea of a community of women actively working together in the political sphere to change society.

Berg further explains that Lucía "learns that hers is a facilitating rather than an implementing role...and her function becomes that of advisor and future wise mother" (14). She expresses a similar idea in a different article explaining: "These women do not hold powerful positions in society, so they can only advocate reform by trying to influence the men around them. Lucía does not initially realize how little power she has, but she learns that confrontation is not a successful way to oppose corruption" ("Clorinda Matto" 307). I would argue though that rather than learning "how little power she has" Lucía discovers that because she is a woman she should only seek to change society indirectly, through the domestic sphere. This idea of exerting indirect power seems quite similar to Delgado's exhortation that women can influence politics but never as active politicians, as discussed in Chapter II. It seems that Lucía can influence society but only through an indirect route, something more appropriate for a woman. This essentially eliminates any possibility of women working together since instead of being allowed to influence society together, each woman must instead act through her husband. At the end of the novel the Marín family flees Killac, essentially running away from the fight for the rights of indigenous people. This flight represents the death blow to the female community Lucía had begun to foster since Petronila, another woman Lucía had grown close to, is left behind. In "The Political dimension of Clorinda Matto de Turner's *indigenismo*" Efraín Kristal mentions an interesting feature of *Aves sin nido*: Petronila's

plan to escape Killc and join the rest of the characters in Lima (146). One of the purposes of this trip would be “to abandon her husband Killac’s corrupt governor” (146). If this abandonment did indeed take place, it would be an overt challenge to a husband’s authority and would allow Lucía and Petronila to foster a relationship in Lima. However, in the sequel to *Aves sin nido*, *Herencia*, it seems that this plan never came to fruition. When Petronila’s husband, don Sebastián, meets up with the Marin family he says, “La Petronila está como usted la dejó, francamente compadre; ni un pelo más ni un pelo menos” (206). It seems that nothing has changed for Petronila, indicating that she did not follow through with her plan to abandon her husband. Apparently, she could not abandon her wifely duties despite his flawed nature. In the end, *Aves sin nido* demonstrates that a domestic community of women cannot last, since Lucía is separated from the women she had grown close to, ending up with only her husband and her two adopted daughters. Unlike *Índole*, one cannot argue that the protagonist is separated from her female friends because they are not good women since both Marcela and Petronila are portrayed in a fairly positive light. Instead, these separations demonstrate a woman’s proper role in society. Marcela’s death shows that a woman should act indirectly through her husband. Lucía’s separation from Petronila is a result of Petronila’s wifely devotion to her husband and her unwillingness to abandon him despite his flaws. In both cases, a woman’s dependency on her husband is reinforced.<sup>21</sup>

It is precisely because of this dependency on a husband that the figure of the priest is so opposed in *Índole*. This opposition is something that many of the authors examining this work have noted. For example, Berg comments that “anticlericalismo” is

---

<sup>21</sup> Kristal makes a similar observation about *Aves sin nido*, explaining that “women require enlightened men to develop as individuals” (Kristal 147).



“un tema importante de la novela” (“Prólogo” x). In addition, *Índole*’s critical attitude toward priests and/or Catholicism has been noted by Berg (“Clorinda Matto” 309 and “Feminism and feminist” 16), Cornejo Polar (82), Kristal (138), and Miller (27). Similarly, as Cornejo Polar notes in his article, “Lo religioso y lo social en *Índole*”, the novel explores the inappropriateness of an intimate relationship between a woman and her confessor at length (83). As discussed in Chapter II, Matto de Turner very strongly disapproved of a strong relationship between a woman and her priest. The opinions expressed in *Índole* on this topic mirror those expressed in many of her essays. For example, her previously discussed exhortation that women confide only in their fathers or husbands was meant to prevent women from sharing private thoughts and information with priests. This indicates that when a priest hears a woman’s confession he usurps the role of a father or a husband and thus interferes with these relationships. Similarly, Cornejo Polar notes “los peligros que encierra para la mujer y para la felicidad de la familia” (83). The implication is that forming an intimate relationship with another man, a priest, through confession poses some significant threat to marriage and the family. It seems that for Matto de Turner, the danger of confession is that the priests are allowed access to the intimate sphere where private thoughts and feelings are shared. In Matto de Turner’s view, there is only room in a woman’s heart for one person. There can be only one authority figure –who is by necessity male– who is privy to the intimate details of a woman’s life. Thus, when a woman begins to allow a priest access to this intimate space, the husband or father is gradually forced out, causing a disruption in the family unit.

The three female main characters in *Índole* represent three distinct experiences related to the clergy and their incursion into the intimate domain. Asunción is the character fondest of her confessor, señor Peñas, to whom she has been attached for quite

some time. The novel describes her as, “una persona cegada por el fanatismo...que iría al martirio, antes que comprometer al señor Peñas...” (212-213). As one might expect given Matto de Turner’s opinions on this topic, Asunción’s relationship with her husband is particularly weak. Describing Asunción’s feelings regarding her marriage, the narrator says, “Al casarse con don Valentín, hizo mal matrimonio, según ella, y solo el orgullo de familia y los miramientos sociales á que rendía estricta obediencia, la hacían desistir de un total rompimiento, cien veces intentado en su pensamiento y evaporado otras tantas” (17). Here it is interesting to note the extreme contrast that exists between Asunción’s devotion to Peñas versus the indifference to the point of disdain that she feels for her husband. It would seem that since her opinion of Peñas is very high, her opinion of her husband must by necessity be low. This supports the idea that as one male authority figure is adopted (the priest in this case) another male authority is displaced. Indeed, the novel makes no secret of the fact that Asunción’s extreme religiosity is the cause of her marital difficulties. Through Mononga, Matto de Turner explicitly blames Asunción’s religious devotion for the rift that exists between her and her husband (43). Despite the toll Asunción’s devotion to her confessor has had on their marriage, Valentín has not been able to stop Peñas’ influence even though the novel indicates that he has attempted to use physical force to do so. According to the narrator, “...en cuanto á las escenas del drama principiado en el altar, ya han llegado á la parte más prosáica, y las malas lenguas hasta dicen, á media voz, que las costillas de doña Asunción perdieron su virginidad á los tres meses de casada, una aciaga noche en que las discusiones matrimoniales subieron de punto” (7-8). Later, Valentín confirms that this rumored physical abuse did take place, attributing his own actions to his frustration at being neglected as a result of Asunción’s religious devotion (48). He does express shame calling himself “un bárbaro” (48).

Perhaps it is because of this shame that he rejects Antonio's advice on how to curb Asunción's attachment to Peñas, claiming "ya es tarde" (49).

As the plot continues to unfold, the novel indicates that an invasion of the intimate sphere can have more serious consequences than the emotional alienation that has been explored thus far. Perhaps the moment that best demonstrates the destructive force that her trust in the priest has unleashed on her marriage is when Asunción agrees to place a paper given to her by señor Peñas in her husband's desk. Peñas does not explain how he obtained the document, the contents of said paper and forbids her to read it herself. This is a rather invasive request and quite strange coming from a priest who supposedly is not involved in worldly affairs. As a result, the novel indicates that she feels a bit of hesitation, but after a verbal disagreement with her husband –which ironically had to do with her being too attached to Señor Peñas–, Asunción follows the priest's instructions. This is the first time that trusting the priest over her husband has resulted in her betraying her husband's trust directly. As Asunción must be aware, especially since she has no idea what the papers say, she could very well be leading don Valentín to his destruction. Though she is not aware of it, señor Peñas's intentions are anything but innocent, and by complying with his wishes, she has helped him cover up the fact that he stole the paper –a document outlining the terms of the counterfeiting plot– in the first place. What Asunción's capitulation to Peñas's request indicates is that not only has the wifely affection she should feel for Valentín been transferred to Peñas, but that her wifely obedience and loyalty have also been given to her confessor. Peñas now possesses the masculine authority of a husband, leaving Valentín with no power or influence over his wife whatsoever.

Matto de Turner clearly wanted to show what a catastrophic disaster the loss of masculine authority was for a husband. As a result, Asunción's betrayal ultimately leads to don Valentín's downfall. In an effort to withdraw from the counterfeiting plot, don Antonio tells Valentín that Peñas knows everything and even has the paper. Thinking that his wife must have somehow been involved in Peñas's acquisition of the document, Valentín returns home only to find it in its rightful place. In his anger at Antonio's perceived deception, he writes a letter to the subprefect, implicating don Antonio in the counterfeiting plot. When the subprefect decides that the accusations are false, don Valentín is imprisoned for writing the letter. Though Valentín deserved punishment for his role in the counterfeiting, his imprisonment could have been avoided if, loyal to her husband, Asunción had immediately presented the document to don Valentín and explained how she came to acquire it. In the end, one of the things that Valentín's utter destruction shows is that Asunción has ultimately failed as a wife, leading her husband to ruin in the process. As the moral compass of the family, she neglected her obligation to lead him by example in the ways of right and morality. As a wife, she made no effort to keep his activities confidential. As one who should have bowed to the masculine authority that their marriage granted him, she rejected his power and instead turned to an authority that existed outside of their marriage. It is the sum of these transgressions that corrupted Valentín, leaving him imprisoned and Asunción presumably alone without Valentín, Eulalia, or even Peñas to comfort her.

On the other hand, while Eulalia's experience with Peñas is in some ways similar to Asunción's it is very different in others. Like Asunción, the rise of Eulalia's trust in señor Peñas coincides with the fall of her trust in her husband, don Antonio, a further testament to the danger a priest poses to a husband's role. Before reuniting with Peñas,

Eulalia was beginning to grow discontented, fearing that her husband was hiding things from her. However, her love for Antonio was still strong, as evident by her declarations of loyalty to him despite any potential financial difficulties they might encounter (12). After hearing of her sadness from the López family's cook, Peñas begins vying for her attention and very quickly begins to try to alienate her from her husband. This incident in which he trespasses into the López family's domestic space, serves to show that even branching into the more open domestic domain can be dangerous as he uses this information to begin his attempted seduction of Eulalia. He begins this process in the first conversation the novel depicts between him and Eulalia. Peñas asks her to resume attending confession despite her husband's desire that she refrain from this practice. When asked how this new situation should be explained to her husband, Peñas responds: "Tontonaza! Es precisamente porque algo grave pasa cerca de ti, que vengo, y, para las cosas de conciencia no tiene porque consultarle, diga lo que diga..." (29). As the novel continues, Peñas grows more bold in his criticisms of don Antonio. On her first visit to the church, Peñas says: "Tú no eres ya feliz Eulalia. La felicidad que creiste hallar en brazos de don Antonio ha tenido la pasajera consistencia de las flores de estación, está marchita tu flor, él es indiferente contigo; tú derramas lágrimas, silenciosa y sola, y no sabes que la indiferencia del marido significa la presencia de otro ser entre los dos" (67-68). His criticisms and accusations of infidelity eventually have the desired effect on Eulalia. After meeting with señor Peñas she confronts her husband about his secretiveness (79). As in the case of Asunción, there is a direct correlation between her good opinion and Peñas and the deterioration of her opinion of her husband, further illustrating that there is no possibility of being loyal to her husband while also being devoted to her priest. Similarly, it is interesting that while Eulalia seems to be becoming

more and more aware of her husband's flaws and asserting a bit of independence from him, she immediately sacrifices this freedom to Peñas. During one of her meetings with Peñas the narrator observes "Ay! el espíritu de Eulalia estaba preparado en aquellos momentos como la cera blanda; el artista podría modelarlo á su capricho; mejor aún, parecía un vaso de agua cristalina" (112). This passage demonstrates that Peñas has her completely within his control. The implication of this is that one cannot think of Eulalia's sudden realization of her husband's flaws as a personal growth experience since she now seems just as oblivious to those of Peñas. Instead of becoming less "ciega" she is simply changing masters.

In addition, the novel indicates that Peñas wants to usurp the sexual role that Antonio plays in Eulalia's life. His desire for Eulalia builds throughout the novel as she grows closer and closer to her confessor. His lust culminates in a rape attempt after Ildefonso and Ziska's wedding. Though Eulalia forcefully rebuffs this final sexual advance, there is reason to think that Peñas's attempt to woo Eulalia was not entirely unsuccessful. While this has not been said explicitly in the articles I have read about *Índole*, some authors seem to hint at this idea. For example Berg refers to "Eulalia's personal struggle to come to terms with her own sexuality" ("Feminism and Feminist" 15-16). Refusing Peñas would not have been a struggle if there had not been some attraction on her end. Similarly, Miller asserts that Matto de Turner "base[d] the plot on the theory that spiritual intimacy produces a rapid and strong physical attraction" (27). This physical attraction manifests itself a number of times throughout the novel. For example, on a visit to Asunción and Eulalia, Peñas decides to dress in finer clothing than he usually wears. The novel describes Eulalia's reaction to his appearance: "-Si, deveras que parece un San Antonio- repuso Eulalia cuyo corazón hacía cabriolas dentro del

pecho” (117). The fact that her “corazón hacía cabriolas” indicates her excitement. This involuntary physical reaction is an indication that she too is attracted to Peñas. A little later, the novel deals with this topic in a bit more depth. Before going in to speak privately to señor Peñas the narrator reflects on Eulalia’s behavior thus far:

Si el entusiasmo de las palabras de su marido, si sus caricias vehementes, habían tranquilizado su corazón; si ella lo amaba ¿por qué acudía á la llamada del cura cuyos lábios posados sobre su mano la hicieron estremecer de un modo pasional? ¿por qué no evitaba verse, cara á cara, con el que le arrancó repetidos juramentos de sigilo para decirla *yo te amo?* Tupida y fuertemente atada es la benda del fanatismo en cualquier orden que se le considere. (142)

In this passage, the narrator attributes her continued involvement with Peñas to “fanatismo” or religious devotion rather than sexual attraction on her part. However, the fact that she “[se] estremec[ió] de un modo pasional” when kissed by Peñas indicates that she desires him as well. Perhaps if Peñas had bided his time or made his sexual advance in a gentler manner, he would not have met with rejection. Perhaps one of the most interesting scenes involving Eulalia and Peñas is when she allows him to touch her hand and lets him keep her glove as a reminder of their moment together. During this scene, the narrator describes Eulalia’s sensation of “la corriente magnética de que estaba impregnada la naturaleza vigorosa, apasionada del amable cura Isidoro Peñas” (113). Later, when Eulalia has gone on to regret allowing herself to become so close and attracted to Peñas, her husband tries to recover her glove but is unsuccessful. He explains to Eulalia “...no podré lavar la injuria del cura.....” (191). He goes on to lament: “Yo debía arrancarle el guante y la vida; pero ha huido el muy canalla” (191). Here he seems to indicate that the glove holds a special significance. By giving it to Peñas, she has given him an important part of herself and without it returned to her, it seems that she is not whole. Antonio recognizes his failure to restore her to her former innocence and it is for

that reason that “la injuria del cura” will remain permanent. Peñas too recognizes the significance of this item. The narrator explains that after he left, “aún guardaba el fino guantecillo de seda de la señora de López” (201). It seems to serve as a reminder of this victory in his sexual conquest of Eulalia. As a result, it seems logical to conclude then that since Peñas not only posed a threat to don Antonio’s exclusive sexual rights to Eulalia but actually succeeding in taking part of her with him, that the priest does indeed endanger a husband’s marital autonomy.

The fact that Eulalia ultimately refuses Peñas’s sexual advances and returns her loyalty to Antonio may partly be a result of the way that Antonio handled this difficult situation. The last lines of the novel attribute the story’s happy ending to their “buena INDOLE” (235). As Cornejo Polar points out, both “Antonio y Eulalia son ... poseedoras de ‘buena índole’” (79). As a result, it seems that both characters are given credit for managing to correct their various problems throughout the novel. Of course, Antonio’s decision to back out of his corrupt dealings with Valentín certainly played a big role in the story’s happy ending, but his “buena indole” also seems to have affected the way he dealt with Eulalia’s growing attachment to Peñas. As Antonio begins to realize that his relationship with his wife is changing for the worse, he reacts in a manner that is quite different from that of Valentín –who Cornejo Polar does not attribute with a “buena indole” (79). While Valentín tried to correct his wife with force, Antonio pleads for her affection. He says, “Yo necesito de tus caricias, Eulalia, yo quiero que siempre me ames, por eso no te contradigo: tú sabes cuán débil soy, hija mia.....tú lo comprendes mejor que nadie, tú fascinas mis sentidos, tu aliento es mi vida!” (93). This gentle and even submissive attitude seems to have been more effective than Valentín’s brute force. While his approach is certainly less forceful, it seems to be more assertive. By referring to her as



“hija mia” he retains his position of male authority and sets himself up as her direct superior in a manner similar to the way that Peñas tries to make himself her father. The difference between these two situations is that as her husband, Antonio had the right to assert male authority over Eulalia while Peñas did not. It is important to remember that Matto de Turner had no problem with male authority as long as it stemmed from a father or was granted legitimacy through marriage. One should also note the perseverance Antonio demonstrates in this passage. On one hand, after harming his wife, Valentín gave up on trying to change the situation. Antonio, on the other hand, seems to maintain hope that he can convince her in time to return to their previous state of emotional intimacy.

Though her encounter with señor Peñas is much shorter and less complicated, Ziska also helps to demonstrate the author’s opinion about priests and confession. As her marriage approaches, she confesses to the priest (señor Peñas) that she and Ildefonso shared a kiss; however she finds the experience unsettling when the priest asks to hear about the event in detail and accuses her of further sexual indiscretion, despite her protests. The narrator relates this exchange:

–Imposible! Tú callas, tú escondes tu feo pecado, y la vergüenza te llevará á tu condenación.

–Nada más, señor– insistió ella confundida. (109)

Immediately after her confession, Eulalia comes to talk with Peñas and she is much more accepting of his inappropriate advances. At this point the novel stresses the influence that the priest can have. The narrator comments in a passage that I have already analyzed but which needs further attention, “Ay! el espíritu de Eulalia estaba preparado en aquellos momentos como la cera blanda; el artista podría modelarlo á su capricho; mejor aún, parecía un vaso de agua cristalina” (112). It is important to note that despite the power

that Peñas apparently has over other women, Ziska refused to bow to his will. Though he tries to “moldearl[a]” and force a story of a sexual encounter out of her, she resists and does not allow his intimidation or angry questioning to distort her memories nor does she fabricate a story just to appease him. Despite this resistance, it does seem that his questioning in some manner shapes her actions and attitudes. She later refers to this experience saying to her future husband, “¡Ay! déjame, Ildefonso, no seas atrevido. Jesús! Y lo que me ha *costao* con el cura tu cariño del otro día!” (128). This reaction demonstrates that while she accepted Ildefonso’s kiss before, after her confession, she is unwilling to do so again, presumably until after they get married. While her avoidance of any kind of physical intimacy will shortly be overcome by their marriage, this incident illustrates how a priest can separate a couple even when he seems to be a source of unease. Despite the fact that she is in some way influenced by Peñas, this passage indicates that Ziska felt the experience to be unpleasant, something Matto de Turner would see as positive. There is reason to believe that the actions of Ziska and her fiancé and later husband Ildefonso are particularly indicative of Matto de Turner’s own views; in her prologue to *Índole* Berg describes them as Matto de Turner’s hope for a brighter future. As a result, they should embody the characteristics that Matto de Turner deems to be good for the future of Peru (xviii). Therefore, when Ziska, the future mother of Peru, rejects the invasion of señor Peñas into her personal life, she serves as an example of how the ideal mother, the “mujer peruana”, should react in a similar situation.

While Matto de Turner’s critique of the Church is quite strong, it is important to note that her distrust of Catholic priests does not extend to a distrust of Christianity in general. She felt that individual priests rivaled the male authority of a woman’s husband and intruded into the intimate sphere of the marriage. This danger did not extend to God

and Christianity in general. This can be seen in some of her essays. For example, she praised Christianity in *Boreales miniaturas y Porcelanas* explaining: “El cristianismo, con su antorcha novadora, despidió las tinieblas, y en las róseas claridades de la nueva era, apareció Jesús.....” (247). In addition, she felt that religion had a special role in the lives of women in particular. She claimed, “Si la religión es necesaria al hombre, porque no hay virtud posible sin convicciones religiosas, á la mujer le es indispensable. Qué sería de la mujer, pobre flor expuesta á los rigores del vendaval, qué sería de ella débil, desgraciada, tímida, indecisa sin ese faro, sin ese sostén y refugio que se llama religión?...” (*Perú- Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* 241). It seems that rather than being a vice in women, she thought of religiosity in general as a positive trait. One can see similar sentiments within *Índole* itself. As Cornejo Polar points out, despite the fact that Matto de Turner uses her novel to point out flaws in the Catholic Church, Christianity in general is not her enemy (82). One can see this in the “reflexiones religiosas y morales que ... fij[an] la posición del narrador” (82). In addition, some of the actions of the main characters show Matto de Turner’s general support of Christianity. For example, even when Eulalia was doing the right thing and not visiting the village priest, she was still concerned enough with her spirituality to pray (*Índole* 23-24). This shows that despite abandoning the priest, she has not abandoned the Christian god and does maintain a spiritual intimacy. Similarly, one can see another example of this near the end of the novel when Antonio describes to Eulalia the problem with señor Peñas: “A costa de tan amarga lección, te persuadirás que los que van al sacerdocio sin las virtudes de la vocación y la educación necesaria, son los mercaderes del templo á quienes arrojó nuestro Señor con el látigo infamante...” (162). While this passage critiques Peñas quite fiercely, Matto de Turner is careful to point out that he is merely a bad example of the

priesthood. He does not have “las virtudes de la vocación.” Similarly, Kristal (138) and Berg (“Matto de Turner” 309) observe that there are problems with the priests presented in Matto de Turner’s works which makes them inept. This indicates that others might not lack this virtue and do an admirable job where some have failed.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

In many ways, *Índole* seems to be a more drawn out illustration of the feminine themes that appear in Matto de Turner’s essays. The novel shows both how women should and should not behave. Eulalia, far from being a perfect character, does precisely some of the things that Matto de Turner condemns. Through her and Asunción, the readers get to see the negative future Matto de Turner envisions for those who neglect her advice regarding wifely duties, specifically their duty to tend to the moral upkeep of their households. However, Eulalia’s happy ending shows that rehabilitation is possible for those who are truly repentant. Though she has stumbled, it seems that she can pull herself up enough to take up the role of the “mujer peruana.” Similarly, the success of a domestic community of women depends on whether or not forming such a community causes a woman to take up behaviors that are not appropriate in females. In the case of Asunción and Eulalia, their relationship infringed on the intimate domain since one of its founding tenants was a mutual reliance on the priest Peñas and because one of the things that brought them together was the prospect of discussing their distrust of their husbands. However, this does not seem to imply that female relationships are inherently bad nor does it indicate that a community of women is never possible under more healthy circumstances. If a community of women were to last, it would have to be firmly founded within the domestic domain without any encroachment into the more private aspects of

domestic life that make up the intimate domain. Similarly, women have to refrain from discussing marital grievances that only God should hear. Perhaps if their discussions had been limited to sharing recipes, Eulalia and Asunción's relationship would have been able to survive. However, the fact that the communities of women in both *Índole* and *Aves sin nido* were formed in situations in which women were acting outside of their proper place does seem to indicate that there is no need for such a community if women are behaving in a manner that is appropriate in their sex.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter II and Chapter III, this study has analyzed various aspects of Matto de Turner's feminism. While Chapter II has focused on Matto de Turner's explicitly stated views on women and feminism presented in her essays, biographies, and other short writings, Chapter III has predominantly dealt with her novel *Índole*. Despite the different contexts of these works, several common themes have emerged. Perhaps the most important and most recurring theme is the role of women in society. What I have found during the course of this study is that for Matto de Turner, there were multiple paths that a woman could follow. The most common path was that of a wife and mother, or the "mujer peruana." This traditional female role was what Matto de Turner envisioned for most women. She also envisioned exceptional women who, while they may have also been wives and mothers, had a focus outside of the home such as women workers and intellectuals. However, these "excepciones" went against "la regla general" (*Leyendas y recortes* 76). As I described in Chapter II, Matto de Turner generally rejected androgyny, but made an exception by allowing women to be educated, something she apparently considered to be a male activity. However, allowing exceptional women to take up some sort of public role can also be seen as androgynous, since public space was generally forbidden to women. As a result, it seems that it was in exceptional women that Matto de Turner allowed for the greatest degree of androgynism. Since her novels are not about exceptional women, the domestic communities of women present in these novels are not

able to overstep the bounds that traditionally confined women. In *Aves sin nido* in particular, the community of women stepped in the political space, an act that had androgynous implications; this move into the political arena was quickly rebuffed by Matto de Turner in order to show how the “mujer peruana” or women pertaining to “la regla general” should behave. As an exceptional woman, Matto de Turner had more freedom than those pertaining to “la regla general” and the protagonists she portrayed in her novels. This freedom is what allowed her to take up her role as an author. As one can see, Matto de Turner had a complex view of women that relied heavily on ideas about social class and also a woman’s status as either one of the “excepciones” or “la regla general.” The last section of this study will focus on how Matto de Turner conceptualized the different types of women ranging from the more traditional “mujer peruana” to the woman author that she personified.

In Chapter II, I have examined *Boreales, miniaturas y porcelanas, Leyendas y recortes, Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas* and *Cuatro Conferencias sobre América del sur*. From this examination, I have concluded that Matto de Turner’s feminist ideas manifested themselves in five different areas. The most subversive of these topics was the establishment of a community of Latin American intellectual women; however she also addressed more conservative topics. Specifically, she established the importance of normative female gender roles, used religion and woman’s role as a mother in order to appeal for women’s rights, defined the ideal wife and mother, and discussed the role women workers played in their families and the work force in general. In most situations, she called for women to maintain normative female gender roles; however the largest exception was for the education of women and their role in the intellectual world. Allowing lower-class women to pursue work outside of the home can also be seen as an

exception. This is significant because she allowed women this role despite the fact that it traditionally had been forbidden. These exceptions, however, did not mean that women in general were free from their traditional responsibilities and limits in the home and family. Matto de Turner called on women to sacrifice their own needs at times for the good of the family, and ultimately, of society. Social stability was, in her mind, more important than the needs of the individual. It was for this same reason that she called for women workers to encourage their families to continue working and refused to acknowledge poor working conditions.

In Chapter III, I discussed women in Matto de Turner's novel *Índole*. My understanding of *Índole* is based on Matto de Turner's feminist ideas explored in the Chapter II. In the novel, Antonio and Eulalia undergo a moral crisis that they are eventually able to overcome. While some critics (such as Fox-Lockert and Berg ("Feminism and feminist")) place a large amount of blame for this moral downfall on Antonio, this study examines the idea of female accountability for the moral state of the family. This interpretation places the responsibility for the state of their marital relationships on Eulalia and Asunción. If women have an obligation to maintain morality in the family as Matto de Turner posits (an idea explored in Chapter II) these two women have clearly failed. While this places an extra burden on women, and in the case of *Índole* makes them responsible for their husbands' indiscretions, it grants them dignity and importance. In Chapter II, I explored some of the limitations Matto de Turner placed on women. One of these limitations was that she did not believe that women should be involved in politics, preventing them from directly influencing the nation's decision making process. By attributing them with the important responsibility of shaping the morality of their husbands and children, she allowed them to have an indirect way to



influence society as a whole. Though they are not the only two to address this topic, Berg and Peluffo note this phenomenon. Berg explains saying that for women “[e]s esencial aprender todas las técnicas y estrategias del manejo de palabras para emplearlas a favor de lo que hay que cambiar (y redefinir) en la sociedad. Son las mujeres las que tienen que crear a los héroes de acción” (“Presencia y ausencia” 218). Peluffo also describes this process, specifically in the case of a woman influencing her child, as an “inserción política vicaria en la comunidad nacional” (127). What this means is that despite the fact that they were delegated to an indirect role and cannot themselves be “los héroes de acción”, in Matto de Turner’s view women still had a great deal of social influence.

The idea of a community of women was another prominent topic featured in Chapter III. This study found that a domestic female community is present in *Índole* as well as Matto de Turner’s most famous novel *Aves sin nido*. Kristal describes how Matto de Turner’s novels relate to each other, pointing out that “the plot lines of the three novels are interconnected, the central theme is shared and the characters come out of the same conceptual matrix” (135). One can see evidence of this in *Aves sin nido* and *Índole* when examining the communities of women. What is interesting about these two domestic communities is that they seem to be inverses of each other. In both cases, the community of women failed because it invaded spaces that were not appropriate. In *Aves sin nido* the community ventured outside of the domestic sphere and into the political domain, a masculine space forbidden to women. In this study, I posit that the fatal error of the community in *Índole* was that, rather than heading outward into the political world, it retracted inward into intimate domain, a private area of domestic life that a woman should not discuss with anyone other than her husband, or her father if she is unmarried. Berg observed a similar inverted relationship existing between the two novels explaining,

“Rather than portraying the incursion of private morality into public terrain, as in *Aves sin nido*, the action of *Indole* occurs within the domain of Eulalia’s private life, although in both novels, the relationship between public and private behavior is commented on extensively” (“Feminism and Feminist” 15). Furthermore, the social criticisms in the two novels also seem to have an inverted relationship. *Aves sin nido* criticizes interclass corruption, with the upper classes of Killac repressing the lower class. Conversely, *Indole* describes corruption that is predominantly intraclass. Counterfeiting wreaks havoc during the best of circumstances, but the events at the end of the novel in particular make it clear that *Indole* takes place during a time of war, magnifying the negative effect this would have had on the government and the upper-class, whose savings would have been devalued by inflation.

These two domestic communities are quite different than the one that Matto de Turner outlined in *Boreales, miniaturas y porcelanas*. The intellectual community examined in Chapter II is made up of educated women who manage to have the time necessary to pursue intellectual activities. The female characters in *Aves sin nido* and *Indole* are not academics and all are either married or are still children who will eventually be married. Another key difference is the fate of the female communities in Matto de Turner’s novels. The domestic communities in *Aves sin nido* and *Indole* do not last, but the academic community Matto de Turner describes seems to be meant to endure, linking the intellectual and professional women of the past, present and future. As I noted in Chapter II, allowing a female community of intellectual or professional women to exist was one of Matto de Turner’s most radical feminist beliefs. I mentioned in the introduction that Matto de Turner was involved in what Villavicencio refers to as “la búsqueda de un *modelo alternativo de ser mujer*” (76). Similarly, Meléndez states that

Matto de Turner was one of “las escritoras [que] intentaron definir el rol de la mujer a partir de lo que muchos pueden concebir como ideas contradictorias” (584). Ultimately, it seems that the female role was in need of reform, and allowing for the existence of women intellectuals was Matto de Turner’s chief revision to the concept of female identity. While Meléndez argues that the attitudes of Matto de Turner and women like her were not contradictory, explaining that “[t]al contradicción no parecía existir par las escritoras” (584), what Meléndez’s comments indicate is that at the very least, the process of revision was complicated and not always clear-cut. While Matto de Turner granted women greater freedom and influence in some cases, she still wished to maintain distinct male and female gender roles as well as the image of the loving, devoted, deeply religious wife and mother. It is a mistake to think that her radical acceptance of the professional woman is a rejection of all traditional ideas about womanhood. However, it would also be remiss to ignore her defense of the intellectual woman and the importance she assigned to this cause.

My reading has revealed two different ways that Matto de Turner thought about women. One way had to do with class, a topic that will be addressed later. In addition, she seemed to think of women in terms of “excepciones” and “la regla general.” As I noted in Chapter II, in *Leyendas y recortes* Matto de Turner talks about the spaces and activities appropriate for women, banishing them from the political arena and assigning them to “el altar de la familia” (76). She goes on to expand this line of thought saying:

Esto no quiere decir que yo desconozca que, la esfera de acción de la mujer tiene que ensanchar á medida de las condiciones de cada una y según las costumbres locales... ¿qué ha de ser de la que, por desdicha, no es madre ni esposa? Pero éstas son excepciones, y la regla general tiene que ir basada en la misión que Dios le ha señalado, eligiéndola para la maternidad. (76)

This passage, as I observed in Chapter II, indicates that motherhood is divinely mandated; however it does appear that under certain circumstances, it was permissible for a woman not to be a mother. It is important to note that her use of the word “desdicha” indicates that living in a childless state is a sad situation that a woman should avoid if possible. It seems very clear that as a widowed, childless woman, Matto de Turner counted herself among the “excepciones” who, “por desdicha, no [fue] madre ni esposa.” The ramifications of this idea would be that she could be granted an “esfera de acción” that was less restricted than that of a normal woman. Similarly, unlike a normal woman, the duties of maternity would not be her life’s focus. Though most women were assigned to “el altar de la familia” instead of “el bullicio de la política” it seems that for an exceptional woman, these distinctions were more blurred (76). It was precisely this exceptional status that allowed Matto de Turner to take up the more public role as an author which, when examined closely, is actually a blend of the domestic and political roles. While the cited passage presents the spouseless, childless woman as a specific case in which a woman is granted exceptionality and the privileges that comes with this state, it leaves room for other exceptions referring to “las condiciones de cada una y ... las costumbres locales.” It is difficult to say what exactly these “condiciones” consisted of since Matto de Turner did not elaborate, but it would seem that women authors like her friend Gorriti, who was indeed a mother and a wife, could claim one of these exceptional “condiciones”, allowing her to influence the public world rather than focusing solely on her role as a mother. However, this passage makes it very clear that this more liberal “esfera de acción” was not granted to all women.

Matto de Turner expounded on the idea of exceptionality, explaining: “¿Para qué, pues, hemos de cambiar nuestras riquísimas joyas de brillantes y rubí, por el oro falso que

importan aquellas doctrinas ilusorias que, en la práctica, nos alejan de la felicidad doméstica, tomando la excepción como regla general?” (*Leyendas y recortes* 77). Here, Matto de Turner indicated that it was actually derogatory to assume that all women are “excepciones.” This means that for her there was real value in the traditional role as a wife and mother that should not be overlooked. I posit that in this passage and others where she referred to the idea of “excepciones” she was describing women who for some reason –possibly, but not necessarily, the lack of a husband or children – had cause to allow the primary focus of their lives to diverge from the duties associated with motherhood. These exceptional women were granted more liberties than regular women, meaning that the duties of motherhood would not be this type of woman’s central concern. If one accepts this definition of Matto de Turner’s “excepciones”, this passage acknowledges that the liberties granted to women who were “excepciones” and their focus on issues not associated with motherhood were not conducive to domestic life and “la felicidad doméstica.” It is possible, however, to come to the conclusion that “excepciones” is simply referring to those who are childless and unmarried. In which case, rather than a potential critique of activities not directly associated with the home and motherhood, this passage is a call for all women to bear children with few exceptions. However, read within the context of the rest of this work, it seems fairly clear that she was warning of the dangers of women neglecting their families rather than refusing to start a family in the first place. For example, she explained that “las responsabilidades de las madres de familia se multiplican” and during difficult times complained against “la desorganización moral del hogar” (78). Clearly, she was warning women not to turn their focus away from the home rather than calling for the production of more children. As a result, it seems that Matto de Turner believed that being an

exceptional woman did involve neglecting one's female duties. This neglect of the domestic sphere seems to be acceptable in few cases since Matto de Turner did not challenge the idea of exceptions; however she cautioned that this would result in chaos if all women thought themselves to be exceptional. In the end, though a few women may diverge from "la misión que Dios le ha señalado", for the good of society most needed to put all of their focus into the home.

As I previously mentioned, Peluffo notes that the traditional, conservative view of womanhood that Matto de Turner extolled in *Aves sin nido* was much more restrictive than Matto de Turner's own lifestyle as an intellectual (125-126). While Matto de Turner required women to reject a public role, she had adopted a public role herself (125-126). She refers to this as "una contradicción del discurso bipolar de las esferas" (126). Similar issues that appear in *Aves sin nido* raise an interesting question for her. She asks, "¿Puede el ángel del hogar tener un efecto en la construcción de la nación sin violar su lugar asignado?" (129). For Peluffo, *Aves sin nido* serves as a way for woman to escape "su lugar asignado." She emphasizes the importance of using Matto de Turner's life as a guide for understanding her message, explaining that "[l]a obra de Matto debe leerse en relación a su rol como figura pública" (129). If one considers Matto de Turner the ideal model that all women should follow, perhaps the only possible reading of her works is that women should indeed be allowed to step outside of the domestic sphere. Peluffo ultimately comes to this conclusion explaining that "el discurso sentimental y religioso sobre la subalternidad de los indios le sirve al sujeto femenino para adquirir una identidad política pública y para desafiar las estrictas definiciones republicanas sobre la naturaleza supuestamente doméstica y privada del sujeto femenino" (130). This passage does not seem to indicate that there is any limit to the political freedom that she claims that Matto

de Turner proposed. However, I argue that Matto de Turner did not enjoy complete political freedom nor did she think of herself as someone that all women should emulate. She was one of the “excepciones” instead of “la regla general” (*Leyendas y Recortes* 76). While she did claim the privilege of an “esfera de acción” that had been “ensancha[da]”, *Leyendas y Recortes* makes it very clear that not all women could or should do such a thing. Her novels were presented to a more general, middle to upper class, female audience. For this more general audience, Matto de Turner presented not herself but the “mujer peruana”, the ideal wife and mother discussed in Chapter II, as the example that women should follow. Rather than being a reflection of her own lifestyle, both *Aves sin nido* and *Índole* serve to demonstrate the proper behavior of the wife and mother or the “mujer peruana” within society. As discussed in Chapter II, the wife and mother sometimes had to sacrifice her needs or desires for the good of her children and ultimately of Peru. Their duties demanded that these women be firmly rooted in the home, as evident by Matto de Turner’s statements in *Leyendas y Recortes* in which she claims that “á todo momento, ha de tener presente, que el altar del sacrificio diario está en su casa” (83). Failure to recognize the difference between Matto de Turner’s “regla general” and her “excepciones” is what has led to interpretations of her writings that attribute to her a more extreme feminism than what she actually described in her essays. When one reads her novels looking for praise of active, political women, one can easily find it in *Aves sin nido* by ignoring the fact that the women in the novel are ultimately separated and unable to achieve lasting change; however *Índole* must serve as a bitter disappointment since it does not present a strong, political woman. As a result, it does not lend itself very well to this kind of interpretation, and it is perhaps for this reason, among

others, that it has not received as much attention as has *Aves sin nido* by those who seek to analyze Matto de Turner's feminism.

Ultimately, Matto de Turner's views on women are both very practical and self-serving. In the end, her ultimate goal was to preserve the social order, in which she had a comfortable position as a middle-class intellectual. However, in order to maintain order, everyone had to serve their proper function. She expressed this opinion specifically in relationship to women in *Leyendas y recortes* saying: "Entiendo que en todo orden, para sentar un principio social hay que estudiar las utilidades de la mayoría; y, acatando esta regla, me dirijo á la mujer en general, á quien le concedo los mejores atributos de una alma nutrida en la fe..." (77). Here, Matto de Turner argued that women have to fulfill the role they are best suited for in order to maintain social order. While in this particular passage, Matto de Turner was encouraging women to embrace their domestic role as mothers, I have identified 3 distinct classes of women that Matto de Turner identified and on whose roles she expounded: the dutiful, middle-class wife and mother, the lower-class woman worker, and the intellectual woman. All three classes were called on to better Peruvian society, but the nature of their contributions was very different. As noted in Chapter II, the wife and mother, as well as the woman worker, were called to the lowly path of sacrifice. Both of these types of women were called on to act through their husbands and children. The wife and mother, or the "mujer peruana", helped better society by maintaining the moral character of her husband and children, and the woman worker tried to encourage her male family members to continue working without protest. A key difference between the two groups is that the woman worker was allowed, and even encouraged, to continue her work outside the home while, as I previously mentioned, Matto de Turner explained that for the middle-class wife and mother "el altar



del sacrificio diario está en su casa” (*Leyendas y Recortes* 83). Allowing women workers to pursue work outside of the home meant that the important family duties that Matto de Turner attributed to the middle-class wife and mother would remain unfulfilled, leaving their children and husbands without the essential nurturing that the middle-class women offered their families. The reason that women workers could shirk these domestic duties in favor of a job was very practical. Some analysts, including Kristal (154), Berg (“Prólogo” xxi) and Portugal (323-324) note that Matto de Turner attributed great importance to the promotion of industry and/or modernization. She allowed women to work in these types of jobs in order to encourage industry and “m[over] la gigantesca rueda del progreso humano” (*Cuatro conferencias* 51). It seems that the need to continue industrial progress granted women workers an exceptional status that allowed them to neglect some of the duties of motherhood in favor of working. In the case of being a female intellectual, exceptionality granted women freedom, but while being an exception did allow lower-class women to pursue work outside of the home, it entailed much harder work and more sacrifice for the woman worker. If their families suffered as a result of their absence, as Matto de Turner surely believed they did, it was worth it since ultimately their work provided more for the public good than their nurturing would. As a result, the working woman was assigned the harder and less desirable task of industrial labor. While Matto de Turner did not acknowledge the harshness of this task, denying the poor working conditions with which such workers were confronted, she surely must have been aware that it was more demanding than the role she had assigned to middle-class wives and mothers or intellectuals. As I noted in chapter II, Matto de Turner did not believe in social equality. She explained: “...la desigualdad social es como las leyes físicas, algo impuesto por Dios á la Humanidad, y por tanto inmutable” (*Cuatro*

*conferencias* 52). Peluffo explains that a similar differentiation occurs among the women in *Aves sin nido* and *Herencia*, resulting in “un modelo... jerárquico, desigual y plagado de tensiones” (132). It would seem that in this vertical hierarchy, working-class women were placed at the bottom of the scale.

Conversely, the intellectual woman enjoyed the most privileged status according to Matto de Turner’s point of view. These were the “excepciones” who, because of the “condiciones” of their lives or “las costumbres locales”, had a different role to play (*Leyendas y recortes* 76). For Matto de Turner, this role was that of a writer and author. It is through this role that she attempted to make her political views heard. It is not hard to see that Matto de Turner’s works were designed to share particular political ideas with her readers. Authors such as Berg (“Clorinda Matto” 309-310) Brushwood (154), Cornejo Polar (88-89) Kristal (133), and Peluffo (121), are some, but by no means all, who have noted the social mission –or what Berg might call a “social message” (309) – inherent in her works. Despite how unusual such a task was for a woman, Matto de Turner’s view of authorship did not diverge so very much from her view of womanhood. In *Índole* she outlined the role of the author. Referring to the immoral behavior of Peñas she explained:

Quién podía señalar á tipos como el que nos ocupa?

Nadie sino el novelista observador que, llevando el correctivo en los puntos de su pluma, penetra los misterios de la vida, y descubre ante la multitud ese denso velo que cubre los ojos de los moradores ciegos y fanatizados á un mismo tiempo.

El novelista de sana intención, llevado en alas de la moral social, en nombre de las mismas instituciones que deben depurarse á medida que el progreso se extiende. (201)

Apart from its public nature, it appears that authorship did not directly contradict the female role. The fact that Matto de Turner indicated in this passage that the novelist must “señalar” the areas of society that need to be addressed means that this is inherently an indirect role. Similarly, by defining the novelist as the one who “descorre...ese denso velo que cubre los ojos de los moradores”, she indicated that waking the people from their ignorance will cause them, rather than the novelist, to bring about change. Kristal notes something similar in the case of *Aves sin nido*. He explains, “The function of her novel is not to resolve a social problem, but to bring it to the national consciousness” (133). It would seem that once the people are aware of the problem the novelist seeks to reveal, the responsibility falls on them to directly intervene in society in order to improve social conditions. As a result, it is clear that despite the political views her works expounded, Matto de Turner did not view her role as a writer as equivalent to the work of a politician. The cited passage indicates that Matto de Turner viewed the author’s role as purely pedagogical. This is similar to a mother’s role in society. A mother teaches her husband and children the proper moral path and hopes that they will use these moral principles to shape politics and the public world. In the same manner, the author may wish to instruct the nation in the way of good –much like a mother instructs her children– but despite any political goal the author wished to achieve with his or her writing, he/she would not directly intervene in the political arena. As discussed in Chapter II, Matto de Turner viewed masculine politics as deceitful and unsavory. It seems that for her, authorship provided a more direct and honest forum in which to discuss and reflect on important social issues. However, Matto de Turner’s view of social criticism is quite different from what Angel Rama describes in *La ciudad letrada*. He describes the emergence of social criticism during the same period in which Matto de Turner lived;

however he links these critics with a desire to attain political power for themselves (75-81). He explains, "...será en este cause que comenzará a desarrollarse un espíritu crítico que buscará abarcar las demandas de los estratos bajos, fundamentalmente urbanos, de la sociedad, aunque ambicionando, obsesivamente, infiltrarse en el poder central pues en definitiva se lo siguió viendo como el dispensador de derechos, jerarquías y bienes" (75). Here Rama paints a very male centric view of the social critic, affirming that social commentators acted within a desire to attain masculine, political power. This contrasts with Matto de Turner's feminized view of authorship which encompasses the role of the social critic but is divorced from the idea of taking an active political role. As a result, Matto de Turner's view of authorship is quite consistent with her conception of womanhood. As I noted in Chapter II, in a single statement Matto de Turner both condones and condemns political involvement in women proclaiming: "...si cometimos el pecado de mezclarnos en política, fué por el derecho que existe de pensar y de expresar el pensamiento" (*Boreales, miniaturas y porcelanas* 23). It seems that as long as she could avoid political entanglements –something Matto de Turner suggests she may have done but will not outright admit– it was acceptable for a woman to have opinions about politics. The inherent difference between this role as an author and the political role adopted by Lucía, the protagonist of *Aves sin nido*, is that Lucía got directly involved in political negotiations, speaking to the political and religious authorities in person. The author's role was more aloof and did not involve being corrupted or masculinized by what Matto de Turner referred to as "el bullicio de la política" (*Leyendas y recortes* 76). Furthermore, Matto de Turner recognized that she did not live up to her own standards when –or if– her activities crossed over into a more direct political role. However, in and of itself, authorship was an indirect role and an extension of "el derecho...de pensar y

expresar el pensamiento” which involved her influencing politics rather than having any political power for herself.

In addition, Matto de Turner’s conception of the author’s role was conducive with the fulfillment of woman’s role as the moral compass of society. The relationship between the novelist and the nation is very similar to that of a wife and her husband. For Matto de Turner, it was a woman’s responsibility to put her husband on the right moral path. At that point, he had the power to effect political change in the community and the nation. Being an author allowed a woman to serve her maternal function as the moral compass of society on a large scale. Berg discusses a similar concept, noting that when Matto de Turner discussed a woman’s moral responsibility in the family “[s]he often extends the term family to include all Peruvians” (“Feminism and feminist” 12-13). Peluffo also notes this trend explaining that “Matto consigue educar sentimentalmente no ya a hijos sino a ciudadanos-lectores” (128). As a result of this link between motherhood, family, and nation, it seems that Matto de Turner’s conception of authorship binds together aspects of the public and the private. Doris Sommer talks about the link between the public and the private inherent in 19<sup>th</sup> century Latin American romances. She explains, “Romantic novels go hand in hand with patriotic history in Latin America. The books fueled a desire for domestic happiness that runs over into dreams of national prosperity; and nation-building projects invested private passions with public purpose...” (7). Here Sommer posits that private relationships within 19<sup>th</sup> century texts reflect public goals. She indicates that the interconnectedness of the public and private blurs the distinction between the two concepts (7). While the romantic relationships in Matto de Turner’s *Índole* serve a similar purpose, her understanding of the author’s role also connects the public with the private. Through her writings, Matto de Turner sought to

mother the nation as a whole, moving motherhood, a private role, into the public domain. Furthermore, this transforms the nation from a public entity into a family, blurring the distinction between public and private affairs. This distinction is also blurred in Matto de Turner's conception of the role of the wife and mother, since the actions of the mother, particularly her moral influence, can have national implications. In the absence of a husband and children, it would seem that authorship would be the only manner a middle or upper class woman would have to fulfill her moral duty to society. In Chapter III, I mentioned that according to Matto de Turner a mother "debe... invocar de su esposo la práctica de las buenas costumbres" (*Leyendas y recortes* 82). Similarly, as an author, Matto de Turner had the responsibility to try and convince the nation, rather than a husband, to put immorality aside and return to the proper moral path. This also means that, like the wife and mother, if she was not able to do so, she would bear the responsibility for the continued sins of the nation. Ultimately, it would seem that for Matto de Turner, the author is the mother of the nation. In the passage from *Índole* where she discussed the author's role, it is significant to note that she referred to "el novelista" rather than "la novelista", indicating that this moral role which she primarily assigned to mothers, can be extended to the male novelist as well. This essentially means that all novelists, both male and female, serve as the mothers of Peru, guiding the nation toward its proper course. As a result, it appears that in Matto de Turner's view that the male author was an androgynous figure.

If one accepts Matto de Turner's explanation that the novelist helps guide society, it is clear that *Índole* helps reveal Matto de Turner's plan for Peru. As discussed in Chapter III, *Índole* had a very clear religious message. Similarly, it also was meant to serve as a guide for women, describing proper female behavior. However, the nature of

the romantic relationships in *Índole* also serves to reveal a more subtle message. As I mentioned previously, Sommer notes the relationship between public and private in 19<sup>th</sup> century Latin American romances, asserting that the romances within the text were a way to impart public, political ideas (7). As discussed previously, Matto de Turner's view of women and of authorship complicated the separation between public and private; however the romances in her text, *Índole* also serve as a model for the behavior of the nation as Sommer describes.<sup>22</sup> The romantic relationships in *Índole*, particularly those of Ildefonso and Ziska as well as Antonio and Eulalia help illustrate Matto de Turner's vision for Peru. It is relevant that the novel features not one but two happy couples. Ildefonso and Ziska are undeniably happy during the entirety of the novel. As I mentioned in Chapter III, Berg identifies them as the couple that most embodies Matto de Turner's hope for the future of Peru, specifically identifying Ildefonso as "simboliza[ndo] para Matto el ciudadano ideal de la nación en construcción" ("Prólogo" xviii). However, I claim that Antonio and Eulalia also have the potential to contribute to Matto de Turner's vision of Peru. Antonio and Eulalia seem happy together in the beginning of their marriage. Their relationship suffers for a time but seems to be on the right track again at the end of the novel. At that point, they seem quite capable of raising children who would be able to contribute to the betterment of Peruvian society.

The reason that *Índole* contains two couples has to do with social class. Ildefonso and Ziska are lower-class mestizos while Eulalia and Antonio are members of Rosalia's upper class and seem to be of European descent. (The novel describes Eulalia's "cuello blanco" as well as her "blonda cabellera" (4-5)). Berg's describes the reproductive

---

<sup>22</sup> Berg discusses the relationship between public and private in *Aves sin nido*, referring to how the novel "portray[s] the incursion of private morality into public terrain" ("Feminism and Feminist" 15).

potential of Ildefonso and Ziska claiming that “esperan montones de hijos, nuevos ciudadanos mestizos y sanos” (xviii). Though she does not say so explicitly, her comments seem to indicate that Matto de Turner is calling for a generation of mestizo children in particular to lead Peru into the future, meaning that the reason other couples such as Antonio and Eulalia are “incapaces de construir una nueva nación sana” is at least partly related to their status as members of the mid to upper class or what Berg refers to as “los *notables*” (xviii). To explain their inadequacy, Berg points to the fact that as individuals they are “débiles” (xviii); however, since both couples representing this class are not allowed to contribute to the future generation, one can easily attribute this weakness not just to the two couples in question but to the entire class they represent. The new class of Peruvians that Berg proposes is still connected through blood to the European conquerors since it is not purely indigenous, but as a mestizo class it still remains separated from the corruption, repression, and violence that the dominant group has so often personified. However, if one questions Berg’s assertion that Antonio and Eulalia are ultimately portrayed as an inadequate couple, it would seem that Matto de Turner selected two potential couples to raise the children of the future, one of the lower-class and one of the upper-class. These couples are not set up as rivals, competing with each other in an attempt to determine who is most fit. Both are capable of producing the good citizens that Matto de Turner desired. However, as members of two different social classes these citizens would have two different sets of obligations. In Chapter II, I expounded on the fact that Matto de Turner not only had no problem acknowledging class distinctions and differences but defended them. Since she acknowledged the value of the labor produced by the lower classes, it seems logical that she would wish for them,



as well as those of the upper class, to procreate and continue raising children who would do their duty.

The presence of two model couples of different class, rather than one model couple, was designed to reinforce the importance of the maintenance of the class system. Two model couples exist so that two distinct classes would endure. She encouraged the system of separate classes most likely to maintain the distinct nature of each class and to ensure that both continued to serve their proper function within the nation. In the case of Antonio and Eulalia versus Ildefonso and Ziska there is a racial difference in addition to the class difference I mentioned. One can argue that instead of reinforcing class distinctions Matto de Turner sought to reinforce racial separation; however I do not think this is the case. *Aves sin nido* features a budding romance between Manuel and the mestizo girl, Margarita who had been adopted by the Marín family. While ultimately this relationship fails, Matto de Turner did not voice an objection to the interracial nature of their courtship and in fact seemed to support it up until the final lines of the novel. Furthermore, I argue that this relationship would not have involved the joining of two different classes. Both Peluffo (124) and Kristal (149-150) note that the Marín family's way of life is something that Margarita accepts after her adoption. Peluffo refers to this as her "blanqueamiento" which indicates that she became very much like her white, adopted family and less like her indigenous parents (124). This acceptance of her new life can be viewed as her integration into the same class as her adopted family. Therefore, aside from the fact that these two characters turned out to be siblings, there was no other impediment to their union.

In the end, Matto de Turner believed that all people, men and women, lower-class or upper-class had a role to play in society. Her ideas seem quite similar to "la ciudad

ordenada” that Angel Rama describes. He explains this concept saying, “Dentro de ese cauce del saber, gracias a él, surgirán esas ciudades ideales de la inmensa extensión americana. Las regirá una razón ordenadora que se revela en un orden social jerárquico transpuesto a un orden distributivo geométrico” (4). Like those who organized the cities of America, Matto de Turner had a strong sense of order and hierarchy. Peluffo notices this as well explaining that “En la nación soñada por Matto de Turner ... no deja de ser jerárquica...” (131). For Matto de Turner, in order for the nation to run in a smooth, orderly fashion, each person had to know his or her place and faithfully fulfill his or her role. Failure to recognize one’s place or limitations would result in disorderly chaos, and the less desirable roles would be neglected. She called on women and the lower-class in particular to continue their tasks despite the difficulties, in the name of the greater good. Her role as a female author allowed her more freedoms than other women. Despite the fact that she allowed certain women more freedom than others, it is clear that the well-being of all women was important. Her desire to educate women did not seem to be limited to intellectuals. She opened up the field of education to all women, and as a result, it is unclear where she began to start imposing limitations again. For example, Matto de Turner indicates that the “mujer peruana” should be firmly rooted in the home. It seems fairly clear that, because of her obligations to her family and to society, the wife and mother did not have the freedom to pursue an intellectual career comparable to that of Matto de Turner. Did this mean that she could not occasionally publish short articles in the local paper? Would this activity be acceptable as long as it did not interfere with her familial obligations, or was this an activity reserved for the “excepciones”? Similarly, it is not clear exactly what the criteria were for being considered an exceptional woman. Matto de Turner indicated that those without a husband or children were “excepciones”

but she left room for other women to fall into this category. These are questions that still could be answered in future studies. However, what is clear is that Matto de Turner cared very much about the role of women in society. She wished to open up possibilities that had not been available to women in the past, and to do so, she established a female hierarchy, defining different types of women and the various tasks it was appropriate for them to do. Though she did not think about women the same way that we do today, it is obvious that her reimagination of womanhood was meant to improve their lives.

## REFERENCES

- Berg, Mary G. "Clorinda Matto de Turner (1852-1909) Peru" *Spanish American Women: A Bio-Bibliographical Source Book*. Ed. Diane Marting. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1990. Google Book Search. Web. 15 Nov. 2011.
- . "Feminism and Feminist Perspectives in the Novels of Clorinda Matto de Turner (Peru 1852-1909)" *Phoebe: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Feminist Scholarship, Theory and Aesthetics*. 2.1 (Spring 1990): 10-17. Print.
- . "Presencia y ausencia de Clorinda Matto de Turner en el panorama literario y editorial peruano." *Edición e interpretación de texto andinos*. Eds Ignacio Arellano and José Antonio Mazzotti. Navarra: Universidad de Navarra/Ververt, 2000. 211-229. Print.
- . Prólogo. *Índole*. By Clorinda Matto de Turner. Buenos Aires: Stockero, 2006. ix-xxi. Google Book Search. Web. 29 Jan. 2012.
- . "Writing for her life: The essays of Clorinda Matto de Turner." *Reinterpreting the Spanish American Essay: Women Writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Ed. Doris Meyer. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. 80-89. Print
- Brushwood, John S. "The Popular-Ethnic Sensitivity: *Clorinda Matto de Turner's Aves sin nido*." *Genteel Barbarism: Experiments in Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Spanish-American Novels*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981. 139-157. Print.
- Chalupa, Federico A. "Nación y erotismo en 'Quién escucha su mal oye' de Juana Manuela Gorriti." *Espéculo: Revista de Estudios Literarios* 39 (July-Oct. 2008): n. pag. Web. 15 Oct. 2011.
- Cornejo Polar, Antonio. "Lo social y lo religioso en *Índole*." *Clorinda Matto de Turner, novelista: Estudios sobre Aves sin nido, Índole y Herencia*. Lima: Lluvia Editoriales, 1992. 75-89. Print.
- Davies, Catherine. "Spanish-American Interiors: Spatial Metaphors, Gender, and Modernity." *Romance Studies*. 22.1 (March 2004): 27-39. Print.

- Dawson, Thomas Cleland. *The South American Republics*. Vol. 2. 1904. New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1909. Google Book Search. Web. 26 March 2012.
- Delgado, Abel de la E. "La educacion social de la mujer." *Veladas literarias de Lima, 1876-1877*. Ed. Juana M. Gorriti. Vol. 1. Buenos Aires: Imprenta Europea, Moreno Esquina Defensa, 1892. 27-39. Google Book Search. Web. 14 Sept. 2011.
- Denegri, Francesca. "Una Intelectual Serrana en Lima." *El Abanico y la Cigarrera: La primera generaci3n de mujeres ilustradas en el Per3*. Lima: Flora Trist3n, 1996. 159-193. Print
- Fox-Lockert, Luc3a. "Clorinda Matto de Turner." *Women Novelists in Spain and Spanish America*. Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1979. 137-146. Print.
- Franco, Jean. "Sense and Sensuality: Notes on the National Period, 1812-1910." *Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989. 79-101. Print.
- Gamarra, Abelardo M. "Apuntes de viaje: Clorinda Matto de Turner." *Per3- Tradiciones cuzque3as: Leyendas, biograf3as y hojas sueltas*. Clorinda Matto de Turner. Arequipa: Imp. de "La Bolsa", 1884. 187-191. Print.
- Guy, Donna J. "Mothers Alive and Dead: Multiple Concepts of Mothering in Buenos Aires." *Sex and Sexuality in Latin America*. Eds. Daniel Balderston and Donna J. Guy. New York: New York University Press, 1997. 155-173. Print.
- Hahner, June E. "The Early Feminist Press in Brazil." *Women in Latin American History: Their Lives and Views*. 1976. Ed. June E. Hahner. Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1978. 43-44. Print.
- . "The Nineteenth Century Feminist Press and Women's Rights in Brazil." *Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives*. Ed. Asunci3n Lavrin. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978. 254-285. Print.
- Kristal, Efra3n. "The Political dimension of Clorinda Matto de Turner's *indigenismo*." *The Andes Viewed From the City: Literary and Political Discourse on the Indian in Peru 1848-1930*. New York: Peter Lang, 1987. 127-161. Print.
- Lemoine, Joaquin. "No title" (preface material). *Leyendas y recortes*. Clorinda Matto de Turner. Lima: Imp. "La Equitativa", 1893. ix-xxxix. Google Book Search. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.
- Ludmer, Josefina. "Las tretas del d3bil." *La sart3n por el mango*. Eds. Patricia E. Gonz3lez and Eliana Ortega. Puerto Rico: Ediciones El Hurac3n, 1984. 47-54. Print.

- Matto de Turner, Clorinda. *Aves sin nido*. Buenos Aires: Stockero, 2004. Print.
- . *Boreales, miniaturas y porcelanas*. Buenos Aires: Imp. de Juan A. Alsina, 1902. Google Book Search. Web. 22 Aug. 2011.
- . *Cuatro conferencias sobre América del Sur*. Buenos Aires: Imp. De J.A. Alsina, 1909. Collection Development Department, Widener Library, HCl. Web. 23 Aug. 2011.
- . *Herencia*. Lima: Imp. Masias, 1895. Google Book Search. Web. 28 May 2011.
- . *Índole*. Lima: Tipo-Litografía Bacigalupi, 1891. Google Book Search. Web. 28 May 2011.
- . *Leyendas y Recortes*. Lima: Imp. "La Equitativa", 1893. Google Book Search. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.
- . *Perú-Tradiciones Cuzqueñas: Leyendas, biografías y hojas sueltas*. Arequipa: Imp. de "La Bolsa", 1884. Print.
- Meléndez, Mariselle. "Obreras del pensamiento y educadoras de la nación: El sujeto femenino en la ensayística femenina decimonónica de transición." *Revista Iberoamericana* LXIV.184-185 (Julio-Diciembre 1998): 573-586. Print.
- Miller, John C. "Clorinda Matto de Turner and Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera: Societal Criticism and Morality." *Latin American Women Writers: Yesterday and Today*. Eds. Yvette E. Miller and Charles M. Tatum. Pittsburg: Latin American Literary Review, 1977. 25-32. Print.
- Molyneux, Maxine. *Women's Movements in International Perspective*. Houndmills, England: Palgrave, 2001. Print.
- Motta Diniz, Francisca Senhorinha da. "What Do We Want?" *Women in Latin American History: Their Lives and Views*. 1976. Ed. June E. Hahner. Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1978. 44-45. Print.
- Nash, Mary. "The Rise of the Women's Movement in Nineteenth-Century Spain." *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective*. Eds. Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004. 243-262. Print.
- Peluffo, Ana. "El poder de las lágrimas: sentimentalismo, género y nación en *Aves sin nido* de Clorinda Matto de Turner." *Indigenismo hacia el final del milenio: Homenaje a Antonio-Cornejo Polar*. Ed. Mabel Moraña. Pittsburgh: Biblioteca de América. 1998. 119-138. Print.

- Portugal, Ana María. "El periodismo militante de Clorinda Matto de Turner." *Mujeres y género en la historia del Perú*. Ed. Margarita F. Zegarra. Lima: CENDOC-Mujer, 1999. 319-330. Print.
- Perrot, Michelle. "La mujer en el discurso europeo del siglo XIX." *Mujeres y hombres en la formación del Pensamiento Occidental*. Ed. Virginia Maquieira D'angelo. Vol. II. Madrid: Instituto Universitario de Estudios de la Mujer, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1989. 115-127. Print.
- Rama, Angel. *La ciudad letrada*. Hanover, N.H.: Ediciones del Norte, 1984. Print.
- Sandoval, Julio. F. "La señora Clorinda Matto de Turner: Apuntes para su biografía." *Perú- Tradiciones cuzqueñas: Leyendas, biografías y hojas sueltas*. Clorinda Matto de Turner. Arequipa: Imp. de "La Bolsa", 1884. vii-xiv. Print.
- Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. 1991. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. Print.
- Urraca, Beatriz. "Juana Manuela Gorriti and the Persistence of Memory." *Latin American Research Review* 34.1 (1999): 151-173. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 Sept. 2011.
- Villavicencio, Maritza. *Del silencio a la palabra: Mujeres peruanas en los siglos XIX y XX*. Ed. Margarita Zegarra. Lima: Flora Tristán, 1992. Print.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. Ed. Mark Hussey. Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2005. Print.
- Zanetti, Susana E. "Búcaro Americano: Clorinda Matto de Turner en la escena femenina porteña." *Mujeres y cultura en la Argentina del siglo XIX*. Ed. Lea Fletcher. Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora. 1994. 264-275. Print.