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THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY
OF MANUEL GÁLVEZ
AS INDICATED BY HIS
FEMALE CHARACTERS

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

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THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF MANUEL GÁLVEZ
AS INDICATED BY HIS FEMALE CHARACTERS

By

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FOREWARD

Manuel Gálvez, born in Argentina in 1882, became one of that country's greatest authors. In his youth he received an extensive education and was graduated from the University of Buenos Aires with a degree in law. Early in life, Gálvez felt a great sympathy for the poverty-stricken members of his society and chose for his doctoral dissertation the problem of white slavery. The research and study which he made at that time have been a source of material for many of his novels.

Gálvez traveled to Europe, and while there, met many authors who influenced his thinking and style of writing. Other influences upon him have been the associations he had with youthful, liberal thinking authors of the early twentieth century Argentina, and his own readings of the works of men such as Ibsen and Tolstoy.

Since 1911, following his return from his last trip to Europe, the life of Gálvez has been quite uneventful. His literary creations are the only means by which one can follow the course of his life. He has held an inspectorship of secondary schools for many years and thereby gained material for the phase of his literature which deals with education. His scholarly interests have prompted him to write on subjects dealing with science, history, religion, art, and biographies of prominent men.

The sincere interest which Manuel Gálvez has in the plight of the financially oppressed ranks of society and the valuable contributions he has made to the field of literature mark him as being a person of noble and intelligent mind. It will be the purpose of this thesis to investigate the moral philosophy of Manuel Gálvez as it is developed in the treatment of the most interesting women characters in his novels.

INTRODUCTION

Toward the close of the nineteenth century in Argentina writers were producing a literature which described in a realistic manner the social ills which were afflicting the country. Of these writers, Manuel Gálvez ranks among the foremost.

Born in 1882, Manuel Gálvez came from one of Paraná's most distinguished families. He received a good education studying under the Jesuits in the primary and secondary schools. At the age of sixteen he decided to study law and entered the University of Buenos Aires. He graduated six years later in 1904.

During these six years, law by no means absorbed his entire attention; he devoted himself seriously to music; besides learning English and French, he read widely in the Golden Age literature of Spain; he wrote a few articles which were published in a newspaper of Santa Fe; and most noteworthy of all, he established in 1903 a monthly literary review, Ideas, which was published regularly until 1905. Associated with him were several young men who have since made their mark in Argentine letters. During this period, Galvez took an active part in the Bohemian life of the struggling literati of Buenos Aires. Among the wide and varied influences which left their impressions on his spiritual development were modernistic poetry, the plays of Ibsen, and the

idealistic views of Tolstoy.¹

The year following his graduation, Gálvez traveled to Europe where he was occupied for the most part by a study of art. During this one year stay abroad, he met Valle-Inclán, Rubén Darío, and many other men noted in the field of literature. These acquaintances and his continental experiences were among the first influences which helped to create Gálvez' many interests in life. According to Torres-Rioseco, Gálvez is a novelist of ideas that treat of social, artistic, religious, educational, and scientific problems:

Gálvez es un novelista de ideas que se mete a fondo en problemas^s sociales, artísticos, religiosos, educacionales o científicos.²

In 1910, Gálvez married the authoress, Delfina Bunge. Shortly after their marriage, the two traveled to Spain where Gálvez found material for and began writing El Solar de la Raza, a work in which he tells of the Argentine inheritance from Spain. It is interesting to note that in 1943 Gálvez still retained his passionate love for that part of his nation which is of Spanish temperament:

...creo que los argentinos debemos luchar heroicamente, contra el mundo entero, si es necesario, por conservar lo que de españoles nos queda.³

Upon his return from his first journey to Europe, Galvez

¹ Jefferson Rea Spell, Contemporary Spanish American Fiction, (University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 167.

² Arturo Torres-Rioseco, Grandes Novelistas de la América Hispana, (University of California Press, 1943), 140.

³ Manuel Gálvez, El Solar de la Raza, (Buenos Aires, 1943), 6.

obtained a position which gave him a deep insight into another phase of Argentine life. He held this position, inspectorship of secondary schools, for many years and in that capacity gained much of the material which he used in writing La Maestra Normal.⁴

Gálvez has not limited himself to describing the deplorable conditions of society. His first literary work of importance was his doctoral thesis to which he gave the title, La Trata de Blancas. Although the theme of this work, prostitution, is common in many of the novels which he wrote later, following graduation from the University, his first literary achievements were in verse. He has now written poetry, short stories, and naturalistic, historical, and biographical novels. An example of the great range of subjects which he treats can be seen in a comparison of Historia de Arrabal⁵ with El Santito de la Toldería.⁶ The former deals with prostitution, white slavery, robbery, in short, the most vile forms of human decadency. The latter is a biographical novel of the life of Ceferino Namuncurá, an Indian lad who, born under the adverse conditions of the pampa, before his nineteenth birthday had risen from the life of bloody deeds, violence, corruption, absolute paganism, and barbarism which characterized his environment to a very high level in the

4 Manuel Gálvez, La Maestra Normal, (Buenos Aires, 1914)

5 Manuel Gálvez, Historia de Arrabal (Buenos Aires, 1922).

6 Manuel Gálvez, El Santito de la Toldería, (Buenos Aires, 1947).

ranks of Christian philosophy and practice. The following quotation gives some idea of the almost mystic tone of the latter book:

¿No es un milagro eso de haber pasado desde los ranchos junto al Collón-Curá hasta la capilla Sixtina, decorada por Buonarrotti, en el palacio de los Papas, junto al clásico Tiber? En una isleta dentro de este río que fué cantado por los poetas latinos, murió él que había nacido en los míseros y sucios ranchos de Chimpay.⁷

Gálvez is an unknown author to the rank and file of people in the United States. This is not due to any failing on his part, but rather to the lack of English translations of his works. In Latin America he is relatively unpopular because those people who could make him popular are too often the object of his denunciations. Torres-Rioseco says that the readers of Gálvez are found in that group about midway between those who read serials and a so-called "elite" who are always seeking the nueva sensibilidad especially in foreign writers such as Huxley, Romaine, and Gide:

La popularidad de Gálvez está relativamente limitada por varias razones. Tiene un público medio equidistante de esa masa insubstancial de lectores y lectoras de folletines y de la "elite" intelectual, que anda eternamente en pos de lo que ella llama la "nueva sensibilidad" y que lee a Huxley, Romaine, o Gide, a veces sin entenderlos. Esta "elite" niega a Leopoldo Lugones, a Ricardo Rojas, a E. Rodríguez Larreta, a Manuel Gálvez y a otros escritores que han adquirido prestigio de maestros en nuestro continente.⁸

7 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 7.

8 Arturo Torres-Rioseco, op. cit., 139.

I. THE PROSTITUTE

Prostitution, a problem of morality, is a prominent subject in several of Gálvez' most notable novels. His attention is directed solely to the society of Argentina, presumably that of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He creates situations which are true to the life of that society, and then projects his own beliefs regarding the causes of social ills and their effect on the individual.

The prostitute, as portrayed by Gálvez, is a person to be pitied. Circumstances beyond her control, such as⁵ environment and poverty, often prevent a girl from earning her livelihood in any manner other than prostitution. Gálvez' feelings were expressed in the novel Nacha Regules.⁹ He said that the unhappy creatures were simple victims. In the stores, in the factories, and in the offices where Nacha was employed, everywhere she went she was followed by men whose only interest in her was her body. The fact may well be that all men, even those who seem to be decent, are nothing more than vulgar beasts. How can a woman who earns hardly enough to eat, who lives a wretched life, be able to resist the temptation of a likeable man, a man who perhaps has a kind heart, when he offers to remove her from the hell in which she lives? No, the prostitute is not to be blamed. These

⁹ Manuel Gálvez, Nacha Regules, (Buenos Aires, 1919).

words were spoken by Amílcar Torres, a prominent character in the novel Nacha Regules:

----Son simples víctimas estas infelices---agregó Torres---Nacha me contó una vez que en la tienda, en las fábricas donde trabajó, en las oficinas donde pedía empleo, en todas partes, los hombres la perseguían. Y es que nosotros los hombres... ¿eh?...somos todos, hasta los que parecemos decentes, unos vulgares canallas. ¿No le parece, che? Y dígame si una mujer que apenas gana para comer, que vive miserablemente, puede resistir a la tentación de un individuo amable, tal vez buen mozo, que le ofrece sacarle del infierno en que vive...No, ellas no tienen la culpa...10

A girl of unsympathetic parents can live in an environment which will inevitably lead to a life of material destitution and moral degradation. Rosalinda Corrales of the novel Historia de Arrabal was a good example of such a case.

Rosalinda was treated brutally and actually raped in her own home by her foster brother. This was done with the full knowledge and consent of her foster mother. Gálvez made it clear that she would have left home early in life and possibly have avoided her ensuing disastrous career had it not been for the admirable quality of devotion to her father:

Más de una vez pensó en irse de allí. No podía tolerar que su padre continuase bebiendo, y menos que aquella mujer le asesinara lentamente y le tratara sin piedad. Pero...!cómo había de abandonar a su padre cuando era la única persona que le quería, la única que tenía para él palabras de cariño!11

Her foster brother, El Chino, eventually carried Rosalinda to a slum district of the city, and, there, having vir-

10 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 25.

11 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 23-24.

tually imprisoned her, forced her to sell her body to earn money for him. It is interesting to note that even after she had conditioned herself to the rigors of La vida, when her life was no longer the terrible nightmare that it was at the first, Rosalinda still retained hopes of marriage and a respectable home. As she continued in that life, however, Gálvez injected into her spirit a supernatural or psychological element which gradually caused her to offer less resistance to the bestial demands made upon her by the man who dictated her very existence. She explained her feelings by saying that at times she felt that she had the same thoughts as El Chino, that he made these thoughts pass from his mind into hers against her will:

En ocasiones, me parecía que pensaba cosas que no quería pensar y hasta creía que eran los pensamientos de él, que los hacía pasar a mi cabeza... Y no sé...A veces se me ocurre que estuve enferma...¹²

In the portrayal of the life of this girl, Gálvez created two incidents that show conclusively that he believes that in a prostitute such as Rosalinda Corrales there exists a lasting, if sometimes inactive, desire to do that which is morally correct. One of these incidents was her attempt to murder El Chino and thus free herself from her enslavement. In order to show his strong faith in the enduring good of the girl's soul, Gálvez first let a transformation be wrought in the surface of her character. In her work as a prostitute she

¹² Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 54.

gradually began to feel a certain pride if she had earned more money than the other girls. She did not aspire to any other pleasure nor did she hope to better herself. To meet someone, to be well-paid, to spend some time with an amusing young man who knew how to awake her sleeping emotions, these were happy moments of her life. She could not imagine ever leaving this type of life. It was the only thing possible for her. The idea of fleeing no longer presented itself to her. She even thought she felt at times a certain love for El Chino. At the same time, however, she wanted to be far away from his horrible presence:

Rosalinda sentía un íntimo orgullo si llevaba más dinero que la otra. No aspiró a ningún placer ni a ningún mejoramiento. Encontrar un conocido, ser bien pagada, pasar un rato con un muchacho alegre que sabía despertar su sensibilidad adormecida, eran sucesos felices y extraordinarios. No concebía que pudiese dejar semejante vida. Aquello era lo definitivo, lo único posible para ella. La idea de huir ya no se presentaba a su imaginación. Hasta creyó sentir, en alguna ocasión, cierto cariño por el malevo, si bien, al mismo tiempo, deseaba hallarse lejos de su presencia terrible.¹³

The second incident which demonstrated Gálvez' belief in the goodness in this prostitute came late in the novel following her apparent complete surrender to vice. Rosalinda attempted to unite herself in marriage to a man of high moral standards. Her love for this man was completely unselfish and showed that the force of good still worked within her. The novel, however, ends in tragedy when her foster brother,

13 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 110.

El Chino, kills the man she loves and carries her back to the life of corruption and evil. The development of this character is done in a very realistic manner. The mental and physical situation in which the unfortunate girl finds herself leads to inevitable tragedy.

Gálvez believed firmly that the majority of girls in prostitution were helpless to change their situation. No matter what their aspirations might be, the carnal lust in men and the lack of sympathy on the part of those who might alleviate their condition left them only one way to earn their living: the exploitation of their womanliness. In the novel Nacha Regules we find an example of a girl who had lived as a prostitute and then married with the belief that she had left the life for good. After her marriage, her husband who had been working in a dry-goods store quit his job fully expecting her to continue selling herself for their mutual support. With prostitution as her only recourse, she left her husband and rejoined her old companions at Madame Annette's house.

Te prevengo que me casé dispuesta a ser honrada...
No te exagero. El diablo harto de carne dirás....!
Pero si vieras qué nene era mi marido! Un horror!
Siendo soltero, trabajaba. En un bazar. Pero
después de casarse dejó el empleo y pretendió vi-
vir a mi costa. Quería que yo fuese la de antes.
Y entonces, volví a la vida.¹⁴

14 Manuel Gálvez, Nacha Regules, (Buenos Aires, 1919), 148.

II. THE ADULTERESS

Gálvez, as he wrote of the prostitute, intended to provoke sympathy for the girls in that life, but on the other hand, when he wrote of women who were plainly of weak moral restraint he denounced them unmercifully. He showed that he has no respect for people who, while enjoying the benefits of both material security and a satisfactory home environment, still maintain a philosophy of life that permits them to practice illicit sexual relations. He has shown in his treatment of the problem of free love that he believes that man and wife are obligated to accord each other an unfaltering allegiance. His approach to this subject is done mainly through the character of Marilén of the novel, Cautiverio.¹⁵ Having been born in the Catholic faith, Marilén outwardly professed to be a member of that church during her entire life, but after she reached the age where the emotions of her sex began to create new desires and goals, she put aside her religious beliefs as best she could in order to go about achieving physical satisfaction without having her conscience bother her. Gálvez believes that even though a person may have certain religious concepts if he lacks a strong, living faith, sin daily separates him more and more from religious practice. Marilén wanted to be a true believer and a faith-

15 Manuel Gálvez, Cautiverio, (Buenos Aires, 1935), 16.

ful wife, but lacking a faith that was truly alive, her curiosities, her desires lead her into sin and sin separated her from religious practice:

Deseaba ser verdadera creyente y esposa fiel; pero su temperamento, su afición a lo turbio, sus curiosidades, le tironeaban hacia el pecado. Creía en todo, más or menos; pero sin fuerza ni continuidad, sin una fe verdaderamente viva. El pecado la apartaba de la práctica religiosa.¹⁶

Gálvez insists that a person must have a strong, enduring faith and not merely engage in hypocritical demonstrations of religious fervor. Marilén's infrequent confessions were at times prompted by a sincere belief in their spiritual value, but too often they were only a means to please her husband or to prevent him from suspecting her conduct. She admired the serene peace of her religious husband, and while fearing that her actions in this life would condemn her in the next, her failure to be strong in will and conviction denied her the power to change:

Confesábase algunas veces al año, entre una aventura y otra. A veces lo hacía por un sincero deseo de transformación o de ser perdonada; otras, sólo por contentar a su marido, para que él no sospechase de su conducta....De tiempo, la atormentaban ansias de fe y de virtud: cuando había bajado un escalón más en el vicio; o cuando pensaba con fuerza en la serenidad feliz de su marido; o cuando atribuíbala el temor de la muerte.¹⁷

Gálvez made it quite obvious that Marilén was a type rather than an individual, for he explained that she searched for justification of her errors in the same way that many

¹⁶ Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 16.
¹⁷ Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 17.

other people do. He said that women more often than men feel very sharply the necessity of justifying themselves, and with the ability to forget, which is characteristic of them, they convince themselves that others are to be blamed for their faults. Marilén tried to justify herself by accusing her mother of having failed to educate her properly, by accusing her friends who had perverted her, and by accusing her lovers previous to Delos (the most prominent of her lovers), and Delos himself:

Las mujeres, más que los hombres, sienten agudamente la necesidad de justificarse, y, con el poder de olvido que es característico en ellas, se convencen de que otros son los culpables de sus faltas. Marilén se aliviaba de su responsabilidad acusando a su madre, por la educación que le diera; a sus amigas, que la habían pervertido; a sus amantes anteriores a Delos, y a Delos mismo.¹⁸

While blaming others for her errors, Marilén sought to prove to herself that it would be impossible for her to change her moral conduct. She appreciated the fact that her husband lived according to the highest code of moral practice, but did not try to follow his example. On the contrary, to defend herself, she criticized him for being backward and out of harmony with the spirit of their times:

Pero hay que adaptarse a los tiempos, Juan. No podemos tener ahora las ideas de hace cien años. Y desde que andamos en el mundo...¹⁹

Gálvez attributes supernatural powers to chastity, and consequently if chastity does have supernatural powers, it

¹⁸ Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 59.

¹⁹ Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 14.

must be at least part of an eternal truth. Believing that chastity is an eternal good, he could not share with Marilén the belief that one has to adapt himself to the times. Gálvez said that continence had endowed Juan (Marilén's husband) with an extraordinary moral and intellectual force. His practice of abstinence had been for him a gruelling school of character. To the element of chastity Marilén's husband owed the purity of his spirit and the clarity of his intellect. Chastity and the fight to maintain it had taught him to be his own guard, had given him prudence in actions and words, and had provided him with the quality of constancy:

La abstención habíale insuflado una extraordinaria fuerza moral e intelectual, y había sido para él una formidable escuela del carácter. A la castidad debía la pureza de su espíritu, la claridad de su inteligencia. La castidad y la lucha por mantenerla le enseñaron la vigilancia de sí mismo, la prudencia en actos, y en palabras, la constancia.²⁰

In his criticism of the group of people whom Marilén represents, Gálvez showed that he believes in the real existence of a place of punishment after death for those who have overly transgressed the moral law. He condemns the romantic people who, weak and without true principles, love a God for a false goodness. By this false goodness he means the belief in a God that tolerates and excuses every sin. Such a belief, he says, is allied with the Devil. He proposes the thought that the lack of a punishment for evil

20 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 48.

would be an injustice on God's part against Himself and against the virtuous members of humanity:

Marilén, como todas las personas románticas, débiles, y sin verdaderos principios, amaba cierta falsa bondad que es aliada del Demonio: la bondad que tolera y excusa todos los pecados; que, por consiguiente, es inmoral e injusta; y que niega el Infierno, incapaz de comprender que la no existencia de un castigo para el mal sería una injusticia de Dios hacia sí mismo y hacia los hombres virtuosos.²¹

21. Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 155.

III. THE MADAME

While in the University of Buenos Aires, Gálvez made an intensive study of the business and the people engaged in the business of "white slavery". One can feel confident, therefore, that in analysing the characters of a novel, such as Nacha Regules, the persons dealt with are true types and not mere products of imagination.

Of the characters portrayed by Gálvez in his novels, the Madame or operator of a house of prostitution plays an important part. He tries to explain why a person will sell the honor, virtue, and lives of other women in return for pieces of silver.

In the book Nacha Regules the leading male protagonist, Fernando Monsalvat, made countless visits to houses of prostitution in an effort to find Nacha, a prostitute with whom he had fallen madly in love. Gálvez often gives us some idea of the thoughts of the operators of these houses which Monsalvat entered, as well as those of the women with whom Nacha dealt when she was trying to eke out an existence by selling her body. One of these was Madame Annette who catered to the most influential politicians and millionaires of Buenos Aires. In her subconscious mind, this woman had little respect for her profession. Her greatest desire in life was to make it possible for her daughter to have a good marriage, happiness, and respectability. At the same time she knew that no girl

working in prostitution could possibly achieve that goal. She was proud, however, for having accumulated a fortune and blithely ignored the means used to obtain it:

Madame dejó a Nacha bajo la augusta protección de uno de los más venerables padres de la patria, y se asomó el balcón de uno de los tantos cuartos que daban sobre la calle. Miró con gran interés hacia el fondo de la plaza, a través de los árboles magníficos, como si esperase algo importante. Esperaba, en efecto, la llegada de su hija, una niña de diez años, medio pupila en un colegio de monjas. ¿Por qué no vendría? Madame se enterneecía pensando en el fruto de sus canallescas entrañas. Soñaba a su hija como un modelo de perfecciones, un ser puro y cándido, bien casada, feliz, respetada. Y todo se lo debería a ella, madre admirable, que tuvo el arte de instalar un negocio como no había otro en Buenos Aires, una casa de verdadera distinción, de alegría; una casa donde sólo en champaña se ganaban cien pesos diarios. Madame se preciaba de conocer la fuerza y solidez de las instituciones, y con su talento administrativo, su "savoir faire", su arte de francesa, había logrado realizar una fortuna, con el apoyo y la bendición de la Política, de la Alta Banca y de la Aristocracia.²²

It is later conclusively proved that she had no pangs of remorse or any sort of guilty conscience. Nacha had reprimanded Madame Annette for having accepted into her business a girl of not more than seventeen years, and she, Madame, answered that it was the fault of the girls and not hers when and if they fell by the wayside. According to Madame Annette, the girls had a liking for vice:

Yo no he perdido a ninguna mujer; ustedes se pierden solas. Se pierden solas porque las gusta el vicio, porque son unas...²³

154. ²² Manuel Gálvez, Nacha Regules, (Buenos Aires, 1919)

²³ Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 155.

Another parallel is found in the character of Madame Juanita who operated her house in order to give material benefits to her daughter. Monsalvat with his friend, Amílcar Torres, found himself in her house one evening during his search for Nacha. Appalled by the sight of a very young girl running about the corridors, he asked Torres how such a child happened to be in that awful place. Torres answered by explaining that it was the daughter of the proprietress of the house. The mother's plan was to retire from the business, selling it after she had accumulated a fortune. She exploited the vice in others so that her own daughter might be virtuous:

---Es la hija. Curioso, ¿eh? Juanita se sacrifica por ella. Espera retirarse del negocio, venderlo en buenas condiciones, cuando haya amontonado una fortunita ¿sabe? Para que su hija pueda ser virtuosa, ¿eh?, explota ella el vicio de los demás.²⁴

Farther on in the search for Nacha, Monsalvat and Torres came into contact with another Madame, a woman very gracious in forms of courtesy and social protocol. This Madame Florinda professed an admiration for people of high moral standards, but did not believe that one could learn to be good. The quality of goodness or virtue, according to her, had to be instilled at birth. These were her words:

Porque yo sé estimar a las personas que valen, a las de condición elevada. No me gusta la mala educación. Y yo me permito creer que la buena educación no se aprende. ¿Verdad, caballeros? No, no se aprende. Se la adquiere desde la cuna.

24 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 191.

El buen nacimiento es el mejor pergamino...²⁵

This woman, Florinda, apparently sincere in her belief that it was hopeless to attempt to learn to be good, sold her own daughter's body, according to Torres:

---Ahí tiene una mujer que se cree honrada---dijo Torres---Y ha vendido a su propia hija. Curioso, ¿eh?²⁶

Gálvez offered an intellectual's opinion of the cause of this hideous crime. His indignation may be taken from words spoken by Fernando Monsalvat:

Todos somos culpables---exclamó Monsalvat, como si continuase su pensamiento.---En esa venta de la hija fué criminal él que la compró, y fueron criminales los padres de la madre, y los padres y los amigos del que la compró y los profesores que tuvo y los autores de los libros que leyó. ¿Quién queda sin culpa? ¿Quién hizo algo para que la venta no sucediese? Y los que legislan, ¿qué ley dictaron para evitar estos males? Y los que vigilan, ¿no fueron cómplices?²⁷

Gálvez' approach to the problem of fixing guilt is very broadminded. In the above scene, the reader hears the voice of the author speaking to the society as a whole. In the sale of one's own daughter the parent is irrefutably guilty of a hideous crime, and it would be the natural tendency for the human mind to merely condemn that parent and ignore the remaining multitude of contributing factors. Someone had to buy before the sale could be made possible. If it were wrong for this girl to be sold, the person purchasing bore as much

25 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 194.

26 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 194.

27 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 194.

guilt as the person selling. The thought then proceeds to the question of why the purchaser would permit himself to participate in this crime. Gálvez answers this question by saying that the buyer's parents were guilty of the crime of not properly training their child. The teachers that this person had and the authors of the books which influenced his concepts of right and wrong were strong contributors to the fulfillment of the crime. Finally, the fact that the sale could take place brings to mind the truth that it should have been prevented by those who legislate and those whose duty it is to watch over the people who are not able to practice restraint or to perceive the two qualities of right and wrong.

IV. SOCIETY'S CONTRIBUTION TO VICE

The people upon whom Gálvez places the guilt for the evil in the society of Buenos Aires of his day seem to be characterized by an egoism which precludes their having respect for the inalienable rights of other human beings. A self-edification seems to be the rule of their lives.

The men who inhabit the slum district of Buenos Aires are portrayed as ill-bred seekers of pleasure who treat women merely as beasts of pleasure. Gálvez feels that these men believe that women are completely void of delicacy, tenderness, and human feeling:

La "patota" protagonista usual de estas escenas, es un grupo de jóvenes malcriados.---A las mujeres las tratan como a bestias de placer sin delicadeza, ni ternura, ni simpatía humana.²⁸

Although the above quotation was taken from the novel Nacha Regules, El Chino of the novel Historia de Arrabal is a fine representative of this group. Not only did he force Rosalinda into prostitution, but also used her as an accomplice in his robberies and other crimes. He so completely dominated her body and mind that she did not consider her crimes as being anything more than daily routine:

El Chino llegó a complicarla en sus hazañas. Ella hizo cuanto él le indicara, sin pensar ni por un instante que aquello fuera un delito.²⁹

²⁸ Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 13.

²⁹ Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 112.

One of the reasons why Gálvez believed that prostitution was not done away with by legislation was very aptly expressed by Julieta, a girl who, like Nacha, detested the life she led. It was her opinion, and obviously that of Gálvez, that many people do not want the girls to be good. We can put in this group the men who feel that their sexual desires must be satisfied and the madames and solicitors who gain their living at the expense of these unfortunate girls. These people and the police and politicians who are paid by the owners of houses of prostitution would never support legislation or encourage instruction that might put an end to the pitiful condition:

---Sería posible si dependiese sólo de nosotras.
!Pero la gente nos pone tantas dificultades! !La gente no quiere que nos volvamos buenas, Nacha!³⁰

Gálvez points out a great error in the attitude of society when he describes the life which Fernando Monsalvat could lead merely because he was a male. Monsalvat was of illegitimate birth, as was his sister, Eugenia. His father, however, gave him money with which he educated himself and then used to lead an epicurean existence. He traveled, he conquered beautiful women, he attended fiestas and wrote articles while his sister daily slipped lower and lower by having to sell herself to the passersby. While he lived his life of luxury, millions of girls suffered the same fate as that of his sister. The people of high financial standing, insensible

30 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 176.

to the eternal torture of the poverty-stricken multitude, continue in beastly ignorance of the companions of poverty; hunger, misery, and prostitution. The wealthy exploit the poor, who, even though they live a different life, are human beings endowed as well as the rich with a soul:

---se veía a sí mismo (Monsalvat) feliz, viajando, conquistando bellas mujeres, escribiendo artículos, o en el Club o en una fiesta, mientras Eugenia Monsalvat caía cada vez más abajo, se vendía al primer pasante, mientras millones de mujeres padecían idéntica miseria; y veía al mundo de los bienhabidos, insensibles a la tortura eterna de los de abajo, orgullosos de su dinero, de su fácil virtud, robando a los pobres sus mujeres, comprándoselas, pervirtiéndoselas, y gozando egoístamente de sus placeres, al mismo tiempo que sus hermanos los pobres, hombres como ellos, seres con una alma como la de ellos, sufren tormentos espantosos, bajo los tentáculos de aquellos monstruos apocalípticos que se llaman el Hambre, la Miseria, la Prostitución.³¹

In the novel Nacha Regules, Fernando Monsalvat represented the voice of the new generation of authors of which Gálvez was a leader in an attempt to correct what they believed to be a situation desperately in need of correction: the plight of women in the lower financial brackets. One evening at a dinner given by one of his former schoolmates, Fernando Monsalvat engaged in a discussion with one of the feminine leaders of Buenos Aires' society. The topic turned to the theatrical productions of the day which were to a great extent the works of French realists. This elegant, distinguished woman, steeped in her own material security and lack of human understanding, was vehemently against the portrayal of scenes that

31 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 39.

were unpleasant to the eyes, ears, and mind. She was highly indignant when Monsalvat stated that such pieces were presented for the benefit of the class of people whom she represented so that they would have knowledge of the great human sufferings. Her belief was that a knowledge of such things was of no value to her or anyone else. As for those suffering in poverty, if there were hungry people, let them work for a living. Let everyone get along as well as he can, and if troubles and cares do fall upon someone let him keep them to himself as she claimed was her own practice:

---?Y para qué quiere que nos enteremos, Monsalvat? Yo no necesito enterarme. Que cada cual se arregle como pueda. Cuando yo tengo mis pesares, y creo que todos los tenemos alguna vez, no voy a contarlos a nadie; de modo que tampoco es justo que me obliguen a mí a sufrir con las penas de los otros. Además no se trata de penas morales, sino de odios, crímenes, insultos a la sociedad. Si hay gentes que tienen hambre, que trabajen; pero yo no quiero ir al teatro para enterarme de cosas que no me interesan y no puedo remediar. Menos quiero ir para que me echen la culpa.---?Qué tenemos que ver nosotros con esas mujeres?³²

In the above quotation Gálvez is extending a message to society that cannot be mistaken. The people who let their lives be ruled by such a philosophy should know that it is man's duty to correct abuses and to alleviate the suffering of the rest of humanity. An attitude of complacency on the part of the rich, and their lack of interest in the poorer ranks of society are two inexcusable moral crimes. In the novel Nacha Regules an owner of a house of prostitution tells

32 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 82.

how the rich are as guilty as anyone or possibly most guilty in the creation of the conditions that foster prostitution. It was her argument that the owners of the factories who pay so little that the girls are obliged to sell their bodies are more to be condemned than the actual operators of the houses of prostitution. She maintained that the men of the world, principally the rich men, were the greatest contributors to the cause of prostitution:

Pero es lícito ser dueño de la gran tienda La Ciudad de Paris, donde es tan poco lo que pagan a las empleadas que las obligan a perderse....Yo no soy cómplice de crímenes, como los asionistas de esas grandes empresas. Mire: las mujeres no perdemos a otras mujeres. Son los hombres, los ricos principalmente, los que pierden a las mujeres. Son los dueños de conventillos, los dueños y gerentes de fábricas....Más casa de prostitución que la mía es cualquiera fábrica donde pagan a las mujeres treinta pesos.³³

³³ Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 268.

V. THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN LIFE

Juan Larrandy, the husband of Marilén in the novel Cautiverio, had all the characteristics of a person with a strong, living faith in a religion. No matter how difficult the circumstances were at times, he practiced the teachings of his religion and truly let his conscience be his guide. His steadfast adherence to what he believed to be right and Gálvez' obvious admiration of his character proves that in the person of Juan, Gálvez was portraying his own conception of the moral law. From words spoken by Juan Larrandy we can see how positively Gálvez disagrees with Freud. He angrily stated that the very name of Freud exasperated him. He goes on to say that he realizes that some of Freud's opinions show the truths of Catholicism. One can find in Freud arguments to prove the reality of original sin and the therapeutic truth of confession. His mania to explain everything by certain base instincts, however, is very irritating. Because of this, Freud seems to be a great corrupter of humanity. To Freud, the best things which man produces, art, science, the religious life, are nothing more than sublimations of the most depraved instinct. To think that even to maternal or paternal love, and even to the purest of friendships he attributes the same filthy origin! For that man there exists nothing that is noble. Humanity, according to his books, remains as nothing more than so much foul matter. In

his degraded interpretations the children desire the death of their brothers. The life of any saint is a destructive argument against Freud:

Por favor, no me hable de Freud. Hasta su nombre me exaspera. Reconozco que algunas de sus comprobaciones, las que merecen este nombre, demuestran las verdades católicas. Podría encontrarse en Freud argumentos para probar la realidad del pecado original y la verdad terapéutica de la confesión. Pero me irrita su manía de explicarlo todo por cierto instinto inferior que no puedo nombrar delante de las señoras. A causa de esto, Freud me parece un corruptor de la humanidad. Para él lo mejor que produce el hombre, el arte, la ciencia, la vida religiosa, no son sino sublimaciones del más bajo de los instintos. ¡Pensar que aun al amor maternal o paternal y aun a la más pura amistad les atribuye el mismo sucio origen! No existe nada noble para ese hombre. La humanidad, a través de sus libros, resulta una inmundicia. En sus interpretaciones canallescas los hijos desean la muerte de sus padres; los hermanos, la muerte de los hermanos. Y esto lo ve, precisamente, en el mismo dolor....No, no me hable de Freud....La vida de cualquier santo es un destructor argumento contra Freud.³⁴

In the novel La Noche Toca a Su Fin Cálvez conclusively proved his belief in the efficacy of his religion.³⁵ He wrote this novel as if it were the autobiography of a man who after years of an irreligious life turned to religion with an unusual fervor. This man, Claudio Vidamor, spent the early years of his life under the influence of his father, a Mason, who was vehemently against the Catholic Church and anything that it might stand for. Due to the patriarchal domination in the home, his mother, a devout Catholic was un-

³⁴ Manuel Cálvez, op. cit., 160-161.

³⁵ Manuel Cálvez, La Noche Toca a Su Fin, (Buenos Aires, 1935)

successful in every attempt to educate Claudio in her religion or to direct his thoughts in any way. As a result, Claudio went through many years of his life without any religion and with a very active hatred for the Catholic Church. Early in life he began to find a beastly, selfish amusement in the satisfaction of his animal instincts. Later, he directed his profession, that of a writer, toward ridicule and satire of the clergy and the concepts of the church. When he at last came to the belief that the Catholic Church was the true answer to the problems of humanity, he sat down and wrote his autobiography in intimate detail. In this way, Gálvez tells society what he believes to be true of a person who lives without belief and participation in a religion.

Even though Gálvez criticises a person that leads a life that is immoral and without religious direction, he attempts to be objective in his approach to the subject. The child, he says, is first of all amoral by nature. The immature mind functions outside the sphere in which moral distinctions or judgments can be properly conceived. The child, therefore, must be patiently, yet rigorously, instructed in the principles of Christian doctrine. If this is not done, the child will not know of the basic rules of moral behavior. In the education of children, according to Gálvez, every means must be utilized. The element of fear, encouragement by promise of reward, tenderness, these means and any other means which may aid in the effort to educate a child are more than legitimate, they are to be sought after. Through the person of

Claudio Vidamor, Gálvez expressed these sentiments and others concerning religious education and its value. In the confessions which he made in his autobiography, Claudio offers a complete lack of religious instruction as an excuse for his early years of sinful life:

Algo me excusaba: yo no tenía principios religiosos ni morales de ninguna especie. El niño es por naturaleza amoral. Si no se le dirige severamente, *sé* no se le inculcan, a fuerza de paciencia y de habilidad, conductoras ideas morales, se perderá para el bien. En la educación de los niños hay que utilizarlo todo: el temor, las recompensas, la ternura. El niño es maleable y responde casi siempre a una dirección enérgica.³⁶

In the realm of the sacraments baptism is the first one encountered in life, and, according to Gálvez, without this sacrament one cannot expect to be able to distinguish right from wrong. He attributes great power to baptism and explains both the anti-Christian and Christian opinions concerning it by telling of the early conceptions of Claudio Vidamor. In the immature years of his life, Claudio had not the slightest idea of God. To him, religion was an invention of the priests. He believed that they promoted this abstract idea only to extort money from any and all fools that might believe in them and their patrons. As Claudio meditated upon this anti-Christian attitude of his preceding years, he came to the conclusion that it was the lack of baptism which thus paganized and deteriorated his spirit. His words were as follows:

36 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 23-24.

No tenía ni siquiera una idea de Dios. La religión era un invento de los curas, para vivir a costa de los tontos que creían en ellos y en sus patrañas. Yo estoy ahora cierto de que la falta del bautismo me paganizaba y empeoraba.³⁷

By the time that Gálvez wrote the novel La Noche Toca a Su Fin, he was a confirmed believer in the Catholic Church and its doctrines. In his efforts to explain what happens in the mind of a man such as Claudio Vidamor who is converted from paganism to Christianity, he interjects a lesson for the members of society who may believe as he does. He showed that Claudio was a person who once violently objected to Catholic principles, but yet during the years of his resistance to that religion, he quite probably was influenced by the statements and counseling of Catholics with whom he associated. In referring to his associates Claudio said that he may subconsciously have been indoctrinated with religion:

Uno de ellos, Lorenzo Braila, pretendió convertirme. Me hizo leer, a León Bloy, a Paul Claudel y a otros grandes espíritus católicos: me interesaron enormemente pero pertenecían a otro mundo que el mío, casi a otro planeta. Ahora me pregunto si esas lecturas no habrán obrado dentro de mí, subterráneamente. Tal vez la esencia de ellas quedó en mi subconciencia y allí fue trabajando durante años, sin que yo lo advirtiese.³⁸

On the basis of this passage we can assume that Gálvez advises the Catholics of the world to talk to the opponents of their religion in an effort to convert them to their way of thought.

Gálvez believes that a person, even someone who conducts

³⁷ Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 24.

³⁸ Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 89.

himself in as beastly a fashion as Claudio did, can be brought to an appreciation of the beauty of social refinement. Justina, a well-bred and socially sensitive girl whom Claudio had seduced in his earlier years, gradually brought him to the realization that he should follow high cultural patterns in such daily and common acts as eating and engaging in conversation. She showed that the habit of being aggressive with everyone was boorish and crude, and steadfast as Claudio was in his mannerisms and convictions, he gave in to her superior arguments. Also, by gentle yet untiring argument she created within him the opinion that religion was at least something useful and worthy of respect:

Me enseñó a comer como una persona culta. Me inculcó la necesidad, siquiera como propia defensa, de no ser agresivo con todos. Y hasta me hizo ver que la religión era, por lo menos, una cosa muy útil y digna de respeto.³⁹

An important subject to the mind of Manuel Gálvez was the institution of motherhood, or the need of mankind for that indefinable quality which a conscientious mother gives a child. He explained that he believed in the early instruction of the child, and the early instruction almost always comes from the mother. From that point of view, the mother plays a most important role in the training of the child's mind. He goes on to show that the love which a mother has for her child satisfies a basic need in every man. Even Claudio, independent, self-satisfied as he was, supported

³⁹ Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 95.

Justina after he realized that she no longer loved him as a mistress normally would. He kept her because she gave him a love which was maternal in nature. It was a love that he needed, a love that could not be replaced:

Porque si al principio Justina fué me amante, en los últimos años ya no quedaba en ella de su viejo amor hacía mí sino un profundo instinto materno. Y por eso no la he dejado. A una amante se la deja con facilidad, pues puede ser reemplazada. Pero ¿Quién reemplaza a una madre, a una madre como ella?⁴⁰

40 Manuel Gálvez, op. cit., 96.

VI. CONCLUSION

It has been the objective of this thesis to arrive at a just conclusion concerning the moral philosophy of Manuel Gálvez as developed in his treatment of the women in his novels. Many of his literary works and the female characters portrayed in them were of no value to me in obtaining that objective. I have, therefore, carefully selected passages in which it seemed that the author was expressing his own views. The characters discussed are those around whom Gálvez has created a thought picture in which his philosophy is portrayed.

The atheist will believe that the philosophy of Manuel Gálvez is born of ignorance and a mental weakness which renders him unable to obtain knowledge through his own senses. This is true because Gálvez believes in a spiritual force which is superior to man and from which guidance must be received. Man must unite himself with this power or suffer an eternity of agony after death. The thought that an eternity of agony awaits the sinful man is the result of Gálvez' conception of the justice which must characterize the source of right counsels and just works, the Supreme Being. The nature of this justice is such that there must be reward for those people who have sacrificed and inconvenienced themselves in the interest of good, and there must be punishment for those people who have lived without respect for their fellow

men and for those who have devoted their lives to a glorification of their animal instincts and carnal desires. Gálvez believes, therefore, that there exists a life after death in which some people will enjoy an eternity of indescribable happiness, and for others there exists an eternal life of the most terrifying agony.

Life is begun in a helpless condition, for at birth the child faces the world without physical or mental strength. The first step to be taken with a child to prevent him from falling into a life of error is to have the sacrament of baptism administered. With the strength derived from this sacrament the human being will be able to practice restraint and do that which is proper.

Gálvez has a strong faith in the possibility of man attaining great spiritual heights; however he feels that man alone is helpless to arrive at the proper conclusions regarding the eternal truths, right and wrong. He believes that the child is amoral by nature, and for the child to come to a perfect union with the originator of all truths he must first be given truth through instruction. Due to evil environmental factors and the inadequacy of the human mind, even after man has been armed with baptism, the erring part of his spirit will be the force which makes his decisions and adjustments to life, unless he is guided into the proper channels of reason. The basis of this instruction must be well founded in wisdom and experience. It cannot be an untried and, as Gálvez says, illogical philosophy such as that of

Freud.

A child should be taught to have sympathy and compassion for the other members of society who are suffering distress and misfortune. A person suffering the physical torments of hunger or the lack of shelter is driven to actions which he would never commit if he could alleviate his material destitution in any other way. According to Cálvez, the people who have the power to aid those who are in need must do so in partial fulfillment of their obligations to Providence. If people did follow this rule, it would obviously help immensely toward wiping out the breeding places of evil, the slums and the dens of vice and corruption. Those of us who are able but do not lend support to the correction of existing malevolent conditions are guilty of a moral transgression. It is evident, therefore, that Cálvez believes that faith alone is not a sufficient means to earn a reward of eternal happiness. To follow the proper course in life one must both avoid evil and do good. It is possible that Cálvez as a novelist hopes to earn his reward by bringing to the mind of each person who reads his works the purpose of the individual's existence, his reason for being on this earth, and his duty while here.

The conclusion which I have drawn is that Manuel Cálvez is very definitely Roman Catholic in his conception of right and wrong. Early in his literary career, even though he has always been a member of the Catholic Church, he did not believe that the Church offered a solution to the problems of

the society in his country. By the year 1935, however, with the appearance of his novel La Noche Toca a Su Fin, he greatly emphasized the value of his religion as a remedy for the evil part of man's nature. His latest biography, El Santito de la Toldería, seems to indicate that he now firmly believes that by practicing the principles of Roman Catholicism society and the individual can do much toward removing the ills that afflict them.

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