7-1-2001

Society, Culture, and Heroes: Depictions of Cuban Heroine Mariana Grajales Cuello, 1893 - 2000

Rachel Elaine Archer

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalrepository.unm.edu/laii_research

Recommended Citation

This Working Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin American and Iberian Institute at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.
The Latin American and Iberian Institute (LAI) at the University of New Mexico (UNM) is one of the nation's leading foreign language and area studies centers. The LAI is a federally designated Comprehensive National Resource Center for Latin American Language and Area Studies, and UNM is believed to offer more Latin American degree programs and courses than any other university in the country. More than 150 UNM faculty specializing in Latin American research and teaching are members of the Faculty Concilium on Latin America and are the primary constituency of the LAI.

The LAI's Research Paper Series, Occasional Paper Series, and NAFTA/Mercosur Working Paper Series provide refereed forums for the timely dissemination of research on Latin American topics. Authors also gain the benefits of comment and criticism from the larger research community if they intend to later submit their work to other publications.
Society, Culture, and Heroes: Depictions of Cuban Heroine
Mariana Grajales Cuello, 1893 - 2000

by

Rachel Elaine Archer
Latin American Studies
University of New Mexico
CONTENTS

Introduction: Society, Culture, and Heroes ................................................................. 1

An Introductory Sketch: Mariana Grajales Cuello ......................................................... 4

Pre-Independence Accounts: Zealous Patriot .............................................................. 5

Post-Independence to Revolution Accounts: From Mambisa to Matron ..................... 10

Revolutionary Accounts: Something Old, Something New .......................................... 17

The "Special Period:" Full Circle? .............................................................................. 31

Conclusion: An Enduring Representation .................................................................. 39

Bibliography .............................................................................................................. 42
Introduction: Society, Culture and Heroes

Mention the name Mariana Grajales anywhere in Cuba, and people's faces will light up instantly with pride and recognition of their country's Madre de la Patria. But attempt to define in one sentence what she represents within Cuban society, and you will find that is not a simple task. Mariana Grajales has meant different things to Cubans at different times throughout her one hundred-plus years of renown. These various meanings have remained associated with her name to one degree or another, forming a complex cultural concept of who she was. Perhaps the best way to express such complexity in one sentence is with a broad exclamation such as one made in a speech given in her honor: "How much Mariana symbolizes for the Cuban people!" (Espín 51).

This paper examines the relationship between a society, its culture, and its heroes, using the Cuban heroine Mariana Grajales as a case study. From less than a month after her death in 1893 until the present day, Mariana Grajales has been an important heroic figure in Cuban society, famous for her legendary contribution to the Cuban struggle for independence from Spain. She has been the subject of glowing eulogies, legends and biographical accounts. Battalions, hospitals, and medals of honor are named after her. Cubans and Cuban Americans alike speak of her as a role model and symbol of their own respective, and often opposing, struggles over the future of Cuba. This paper will show that for more than a century, depictions of Mariana Grajales have very effectively manifested the values, ideals and goals of Cuban society, even though these have changed and evolved over time.

Depictions of a society's heroes often reveal much more about that society at that particular time in history than about the hero's actual life. In fact, the Greek word heros, from which the English "hero" derives, refers not only to "a perfect man," but also to "the perfect expression of the ideal of a group in whom all human virtues unite" (Salomon 336). A historical figure becomes a hero, then, due to the ability of that person's life to express effectively that ideal.

When that figure is an officially sanctioned hero, "[. . .] the heroizing is done mostly by public authorities [. . .]" (Salomon 336), and therefore it is the ideal of those authorities which are

---

1Mother of the Fatherland. All Spanish-to-English translations are the author's.

2"¡Cuanto simboliza Mariana para el pueblo cubano!"
being expressed. The officially endorsed heroes are held up to public view in order to more firmly establish current traditions, or to bring about a desired change, and their stories are then disseminated throughout the society. This relationship is not one-way, however. The leaders of any given society cannot successfully use any heroic figure for any length of time unless something about that figure resonates with the people in the society. Without this resonance, the people would not respond and the figure would fall into oblivion. In this way, the stories of heroes themselves act as a sort of dynamic common ground, an ever-changing agreement between a people and its leaders.

Because of this on-going exchange between a society and its leadership, biographical accounts of a given hero's life can often be less historically accurate than culturally expressive. Perhaps these accounts could be more accurately described as cultural products, produced within this relationship, and as such, they "express social relations; in identifying and studying them we discover not universal meanings, but socially and historically specific representations of given societies at given moments" (Mahan 2). When a hero's life is celebrated over time, then, it is to be expected that those representations will change somewhat, depending upon the specific social and historical circumstances of the celebrating society within that period of time. Various aspects of that figure's life and accomplishments will gain or lose importance as cultural values and goals of the society and its leadership shift.

A critical examination of the accounts of Mariana Grajales' life over the decades illustrates these changes in representation, and shows that historical accuracy has, indeed, not always been the primary goal of the respective authors. While there is a move toward more accuracy in contemporary research, and it is not an insignificant one, the accounts of Mariana Grajales' life continue to be a strong reflection of the celebrating society at the particular time in history in which each account is produced.

---

3 Salomon refers to those public authorities officially in power, but this concept can also be applied in cases where the "authorities" are leaders of a group opposed to the established officials, as in the case of the nineteenth-century Cuban independence movement.

4 The more recent accounts do show an increasing emphasis on historical accuracy than earlier ones, as will be seen later in this paper.
Because of the enduring ability of Mariana Grajales' life to express the ideals of the Cuban people over decades of great change in that society, the accounts of her life deserve a close examination. In this paper, a number of accounts of Mariana's life will be examined in the order in which they were written or spoken. What is the historical context in which each one was produced? How is Mariana portrayed in the account, and how does that particular portrayal reflect its historical and cultural context? What are some factors that made using Mariana as a heroic figure useful to the authors at the time? How were the accounts used? These are some of the questions that will be addressed. 5

A very brief overview of Mariana Grajales' life story will first be presented in order to familiarize the reader with the subject. Many of the details of her life will forever remain unknown, as they were never recorded by herself or by those who knew her personally. However, the few documents and eye-witness accounts which do exist allow for a rudimentary sketch of Mariana to emerge.

An analysis of the various accounts of Mariana Grajales' life will follow this sketch, and will be broken down into four sections. The first section will examine accounts written by her contemporaries in the years when Cuba was still a colony of Spain. The second section will cover accounts produced from the time of Cuba's independence from Spain in 1898 until the Cuban Revolution of 1959. The third section will examine how Mariana has been portrayed in the years following the revolution, and the fourth will look at representations made during the present "Special Period in Times of Peace." Each analysis will highlight those ways in which the portrayals express the specific historical and social context of the day, and as a result, will demonstrate that Mariana Grajales indeed has been a hero, a "perfect expression of the ideal" of the Cuban people for over a century.

5The issues raised by this study are by no means limited to these questions. Rather, these questions are located within a much broader theoretical debate concerning the social construction and employment of national identities which will not be discussed at this time. Hopefully, however, this preliminary examination of one woman's story as a cultural product will spark further study and discussion of the deeper issues implied herein.
An Introductory Sketch: Mariana Grajales Cuello

Mariana Grajales Cuello (or Coello, as it is sometimes spelled) was a parda libre born in Cuba in 1808. She spent the majority of her life there, living through a very tumultuous time in the island's history. Cuba was still under Spanish rule at a time when the other colonies had won their independence. Many forces were at work in Cuba, however, which would propel the colony inexorably toward an extracted and bloody struggle for its own independence.

In 1868 the Ten Years War broke out, the first of several wars for Cuban independence. Mariana, living in the eastern part of the island, was literally in the middle of it. Her husband and sons joined the insurrection as soldiers, and the family fled their home in fear, it is said, of Spanish reprisal (Sarabia 80). Mariana was one of many mambisas who went into the manigua and "served behind the lines as nurses, correspondents, spies, contraband arms traders, manufacturers of provisions, writers, and examples to men of the sacrifice that all would make for independence" (Stoner 1991; 19).

In Mariana's case, those sacrifices would be numerous. In the course of the bloody struggle for Cuba's independence, Mariana would lose her husband and nine of her thirteen children (Stubbs 297). In addition, two of her grandchildren would die in the manigua, due at least in part to the difficult conditions found there. She would lose her property, confiscated and destroyed by the Spaniards. Forced into exile at the end of the Ten Years War, Mariana would also lose her homeland, for she died before seeing Cuba liberated from Spanish rule.

---

6Parda libre refers to a free woman of color. Pardo, literally "brown," is a broad term used to categorize persons whose skin color generally indicates mixed race, usually including black (see Stephens 197 for this and other more specific usages of this designation).

7This is the commonly accepted year of her birth; however, some now question if perhaps it was 1815 (Cupull and González 11).

8Mambisas are those women who fought in the Cuban wars of independence (males who fought are referred to as mambises).

9Manigua refers to "[...] the untamed [Cuban] countryside [...]. To be in the manigua meant to live in the wild under the most crude conditions with only hammocks and provisions gotten from peasant communities for subsistence" (Stoner 1991; 201). For a firsthand observation of mambi life in the manigua, see James O'Kelly, The Mambi-Land or Adventures of a Herald Correspondant in Cuba, 181-191.

10There is some confusion as to the number of children Mariana actually lost in the war; for example, Rodríguez claims son Manuel died in combat (43) while Hernández states he died before the war began (33).
Two of Mariana's sons, Antonio and José Maceo, became famous commanding officers of the insurgent forces. Antonio became one of Cuba's greatest national heroes for his rejection of a formal peace accord to end the war, the Pact of Zanjón. This 1878 treaty, signed by most of the insurgent leadership, "accepted the continuation of both Spanish rule and racial slavery" (Ferrer 16), the two original pillars of the rebellion. In his famous Protesta de Baraguá,11 Antonio Maceo made it clear to the Spanish army commander that he and his forces would not accept peace without the abolition of slavery.

For a few more months his rebel forces fought, but ultimately Antonio was forced into exile, along with Mariana and other members of the family. Mariana died in exile in Kingston, Jamaica in 1893. Antonio returned to Cuba in 1896 to once again take up arms against Spain, and shortly thereafter was ambushed and killed. A famous and important figure in his own lifetime, Antonio Maceo remains one of Cuba's greatest heroes, and Mariana Grajales is one of its greatest heroines.

Pre-Independence Accounts: Zealous Patriot

One might wonder if Mariana Grajales would have become such a legendary figure had it not been for the fame of her son Antonio. It will never be known if she would have become as celebrated as she is without the advocacy of another Cuban hero, perhaps the most revered of them all, José Martí.

José Martí, Cuba's esteemed "Apostle," writer, hero and martyr, memorialized Mariana Grajales in a number of published articles. Perhaps without these "letters of introduction" from such a beloved source, Mariana would not have remained an important heroine for so many years. While she certainly merits admiration in her own right, it is of no small significance that she received an enthusiastic recommendation from Martí.

José Martí was a very important figure in Cuban exile communities in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Deported from Cuba in 1871 for his anti-Spanish stand, he traveled throughout Europe, Latin America, and the United States until he moved to New York in 1880. From that point on, he was very involved with other exiles in the continuing fight for Cuban independence.

11Protest of Baraguá. Baraguá was the location where Maceo met with Spanish commander Arsenio Martínez Campos.
As a prolific writer, Martí was "[i]rresistible in his rhetoric, compelling in his prose," and "quickly distinguished himself as the outstanding propagandist of 'la Guerra Chiquita'"¹² (italics added; Pérez 1995; 1-2).

In 1892 the Partido Revolucionario Cubano,¹³ or PRC, was formed and its guiding principles, the "Bases of the Cuban Revolutionary Party," were written by Martí. Among the Bases' stated goals was the intent to "assemble the revolutionary elements in existence today, and [to] unite [...] all additional elements possible, resolving to establish in Cuba, by means of a war waged with republican methods and spirit, a nation capable of assuring a durable happiness to its children" (quoted in Pérez 1995; 4). Martí was elected the PRC's Chief Delegate, and held that position until he returned to Cuba in 1895, where he was killed by Spanish troops.

One of the means by which Martí attempted to assemble and unite those desired elements was through the publication Patria. He founded it in 1892 as "an instrument of control and discipline, a place to debate and to prefigure a new civilian order in the midst of military preparation" (Lugo-Ortiz 10), and it became the official voice of the PRC. Until his death, Martí published numerous biographical sketches in Patria "through which he aimed to formulate the archetype of the Cuban national subject or being: to define the civilian subject for the war, as well as the citizen for the republican independent state" (Lugo-Ortiz 10).

Included in Martí's view of this model of the "Cuban national being" was the concept of sociabilidad.¹⁴ "[H]e advocated continually that all Cuban citizens should work together conscientiously and selflessly in order to undertake the many responsibilities that would result after independence had been won. This exhortation for all Cubans to cooperate, at all times placing the best interest of the state before their own, he termed sociabilidad" (Kirk 92). Martí considered Mariana Grajales a very worthy example of this quality.

He introduced Mariana in a sketch of her son Antonio, published in Patria on October 6, 1893. The year before, Martí had met Mariana in Jamaica during a trip to that island as well as Central America and the Caribbean, in which he met with the various exile communities living in

---

¹²The Little War. This war, also for Cuba's independence, was fought unsuccessfully from 1879-1880.
¹³Cuban Revolutionary Party
¹⁴sociability
these areas (Cupull and González 43). In the sketch, Mariana is portrayed as the zealous patriot, always ready to serve the cause of independence.

Martí describes her as "the glorious old woman"15 who, dying in "the indifferent, foreign corner"16 of the world (Jamaica), nevertheless still lovingly caresses all those who speak to her of her homeland (Martí 587).17 Perhaps more important to Martí than the fact that Mariana was an exile like so many other Cubans at that time was the fact that she had experienced firsthand the horrors of war and loss of loved ones, and yet was still selflessly committed to the cause:

Huddled in a hole in the ground she passed mortal hours, while all around her sabers and machetes were clashing. She saw her son lift himself up, his whole body bleeding, and with ten men disband two hundred. And those who even now come to see her in the name of Cuba she serves with her hands and sees them to the door. (587-88)18

Two months later Martí wrote a eulogy to Mariana, who had died in Kingston a few weeks earlier, and published it in Patria. He continued the theme of her courageous, selfless service to the cause of Cuban liberty. In the heat of combat, Martí reported, she was at her husband's side. Surrounded by her children, Mariana encouraged her compatriots to fight. After the battle, she nursed the wounds of both Cuban and Spanish soldiers. In addition, "she loved as the best of her life, those times of hunger and thirst, when every man who came to her palm-fiber door might bring her the news of the death of one of her sons" (617).19

That Mariana could speak in retrospect with such affection about the terrible years of the war must have served as quite an encouragement to many exile families who were looking at the prospect of themselves and/or their own family members joining the fight. Here was a woman who

15"la vieja gloriosa"
16"el indiferente rincón extranjero"
17These sketches, originally published in Patria, have been included in a collection of all of Martí's writings entitled Obras completas. All of the quotations of Martí's writings cited here have been taken from this collection.
18"Acurricada en un agujero de la tierra pasó horas mortales, mientras que a su alrededor se cruzaban por el pomo sables y machetes. Vio erguirse a su hijo, sangrando del cuerpo entero, y con diez hombres desbandar a doscientos. Y a los que en nombre de Cuba la van aún a ver, les sirve con sus manos y los acompaña hasta la puerta."
19"... jamaba, como los mejores de su vida, los tiempos de hambre y sed, en que cada hombre que llegaba a su puerta de yaguas, podía traerle la noticia de la muerte de uno de sus hijos."
had not only survived the horrors of close combat, but the loss of her husband and sons as well, and still she did all she could to promote the independence of Cuba.

In his third biographical sketch related to Mariana Grajales, published in *Patria* on January 6, 1894, Martí related a now-famous anecdote. According to Martí, this was an eyewitness account. He did not reveal the name of the witness, only that the man was in the war and that he was wise and loyal (618). The story reveals unequivocally a figure of pure selflessness in the face of sacrifice, the ultimate archetype that Martí hoped to formulate. He likens Mariana to the very root of the soul (618), and then proceeds with the account:

It was a day in which they brought Antonio Maceo in wounded: he had been shot in the chest: they brought him in on a stretcher, without sight and the color of death. All the women, and there were many, threw themselves into crying, one against the wall, one on her knees by the wounded man, another in a corner, sinking her face in her arms. And the mother, with her head scarf on her head, like one who chases chickens out of the cabin, said to those mourners: "Get out, get out of here! I do not tolerate tears! [. . .]" And to Marcos, the son, who was still a boy, who she encountered in one of the corners, "And you, get up, because now it is time for you to go to the camp!" (618)

Sixteen months later José Martí would make his own ultimate sacrifice for the goal of a free Cuba; he was killed in combat in May of 1895. But his words would continue to inspire people, and the name of Mariana Grajales and the tales of her exploits for her homeland would not be forgotten.

Mariana Grajales' daughter-in-law Maria Cabrales, wife of Antonio, wrote of Mariana in a letter dated May 1897. In this letter, Mariana is also portrayed as the zealous patriot, the enthusiastic *mambisa*. In the early days of the war, writes María, a Captain Rondón came with his

---

20"raiz del alma." Reference is made to this simile over 100 years later in the title of Cupull and González's book, *Mariana: Raíz del alma cubana*.

21"Fue un día en que traían a Antonio Maceo herido: le habían pasado de un balazo el pecho: lo traían en andas, sin mirada, y con el color de la muerte. Las mujeres todas, que eran muchas, se echaron a llorar, una contra la pared, otra de rodillas junto al moribundo, otra en un rincón, hundido el rostro en los brazos. Y la madre, con el pañuelo a la cabeza, como quien espanta pollos echaba del bohío a aquella gente llorona: '¡Fuera, fuera faldas de aquí! ¡no aguanto lágrimas! [. . .]’ Y a Marcos, el hijo, que era rapaz aún, se lo encontró en una de las vueltas: '¡Y tú, empienate, porque ya es hora de que te vayas al campamento!'"

22This letter was written to Francisco de Paula Coronado. The author was unable to find any information about this person. Perhaps he was also involved in the struggle for Cuba's independence.
band of insurgents to the home of Mariana and her husband Marcos Maceo. He was an old family
friend, and had come to ask for their cooperation in the war effort.

Maria reports that, being convinced that Rondon and his men were not the dangerous
highwaymen the Spaniards made them out to be, but were "men determined to defend the
fatherland" (quoted in Sarabia 78), the family felt "great satisfaction, and the old Mariana,
overflowing with joy, entered her room, got a crucifix that she had [there], and said, "On your
knees, everyone, parents or children, before Christ who was the first liberal man which came to the
world, we vow to liberate the fatherland or die for her" (quoted in Sarabia 78).

Just as in Marti's account, Mariana is portrayed here as an enthusiastic patriot, willing to
make whatever sacrifice necessary for the liberation of her homeland. Again, she is not only right
in the middle of the action; it is Mariana who encourages and inspires those around her to fight, to
the death if need be, for the beloved patria. She is portrayed as one who will tolerate no slackers
from her household in this noble cause, this holy war. She will lead them all in pledging their lives
to see their homeland freed.

It can be seen then, from the pre-independence accounts of Mariana Grajales, that the
incidents of her life which were deemed most important to the society and its leaders at the time
were those which showed her whole-hearted, selfless dedication to the fight for independence. She
is shown to be a woman for whom nothing is more important than Cuba's freedom, not even the
lives of those she holds most dear. No signs of weakness can be manifested in those who would
fight with her, no tears, no holding back - all must be poured out for the freedom from colonial
rule, down to the last drop of blood. Mariana is therefore that "perfect expression of the ideal"
(Salomon, 336) of that group for which independence was the primary goal.

23"hombres decididos para defender la patria"

24[...] gran satisfacción y la vieja Mariana, rebosando de alegría, entra en su cuarto, coge un crucifijo que
tenía y dice: 'De rodillas todos, padres o hijos, delante de Cristo, que fue el primer hombre liberal que vino al
mundo, juremos libertar la Patria o morir por ella.'"
Post-Independence to Revolution Accounts: From Mambisa to Matron

By 1927, Cuba had gained its independence from Spain and had been a republic for almost three decades. In those years, the portrayal of Mariana had shifted from the zealous and self-sacrificing mambi patriot to a paragon of matronly virtues. Her notable exploits were not those accomplished in the manigua as a mambisa, in the face of combat and death, but rather those performed as socially responsible housewife and mother.

The 1920s had been a decade of great social and political unrest in Cuba. Government was notoriously corrupt and violence reigned. The years from 1927 to 1933 have been termed "an undeclared but pervasive civil war" (Stoner 1991; 109). Many of the prominent writers and activists of the day were challenging Cubans to "think about fundamental values" in an attempt to bring this "generation of Cubans to effective and honest self-rule" (Stoner 1991; 88). Self-discipline and social order were imperative if Cuba was to pull itself out of its current state of chaos.

In this political and social climate, a statue was raised in Havana in Mariana's honor. The year was 1927, and the location of the statue was a park in the upscale Vedado neighborhood. The statue portrays the artist's interpretation of Mariana's famous instruction to her youngest son Marcos to "get up" and "go to the [insurgents'] camp" (Marti 618).

There is a significant difference, however, between Marti's description of Mariana and the statue. Marti's Mariana wears a head scarf, most likely of African style (Stubbs 312). The statue wears none. This is strange, given the fact that Marti mentions the scarf at least twice (587, 618), and in one of the accounts, writes that Mariana "lifts her wrinkled head, with its head scarf that looks like a crown" (587).25 The image is one of a regal woman, with head lifted high. Indeed, Marti's Mariana is looking around her, her still-sparkling eyes "rang[ing] the world as if searching for another" (587).26

The Mariana of the statue, however, has a bowed head, with eyelids almost shut. She is leaning over the standing figure of her son, Marcos. While with her right hand, she is pointing

---

25"Levanta la cabeza arrugada, con un pañuelo que parece corona."
26"[..] se le van los ojos por el mundo, como buscando otro [..]"
ahead of her, directing Marcos toward the insurgents' camp, she also has her left arm around him from behind, embracing him, her lips kissing his forehead.

This interpretation of Martí's account is much more the image of a loving mother, torn between patriotic duty and a mother's love, than the valiant patriot who, with flaming zeal for her fatherland, lets nothing and no one get in her way. As the next account further illustrates, however, the budding nation was no longer in need of revolutionary *mambisas*, fighting from the margins against the established but unpopular government. What it needed from its women now, in the view of those attempting to construct an orderly society, was the civilizing social influence of dutiful mothers. Such women would be focusing the majority of their energies upon their children, and the statue of Mariana, with her head bowed toward her son, serves well as a role model.

Three years later, in 1930, medical doctor, historian, political activist and former military leader Eusebio Hernández, a close associate of Antonio Maceo for many years, gave a lecture on Maceo's personality. In this lecture, given at the National Academy of Arts and Letters and later recorded in a book, Hernández spoke of Maceo's childhood, and in doing so, made some interesting references to Maceo's mother Mariana.

Although Hernández had been involved in the wars for independence and surely knew of Mariana's contributions to the struggle, his references to her consistently emphasized her role as mother and left out that of *mambisa*. In Hernández's portrayal of Maceo's home life, the sexual division of labor is praised as the ideal. Mariana was a very traditional wife and mother according to Hernández; her place was in the home. He says that hers was the model household: "The finca Marcos Maceo personally supervised; the home Mariana managed" (33).

The presumption of the day, even among feminists, was that women were the "guardians and models of morality" (Stoner 1991; 107). Motherhood was of utmost importance: "The mother in the home is the one who forges the character and spiritual models for her children" (Mariblanca

---

27finca

28"La finca la dirigía personalmente Marcos Maceo; la casa la manejaba Mariana."
Sabas Alomá, quoted in Stoner 1991; 92). Among the qualities most needed in Cuban society at this time were personal orderliness and civic responsibility.

Mariana excelled in forging these qualities in her children, according to Hernández, by the way she managed her household. She made certain hers was a respectable, responsible, and law-abiding household:

Concerning the environment that surrounded him [Maceo] in the home and in the street, it is enough to know that the mother would not allow anyone of the family to enter the house after 10 o'clock at night. She did not tolerate friendships of dubious behavior; it was necessary to adjust oneself to the excellent habits of the household, to live within the law and fulfill all its obligations. (34)

Adherence to religious principles was also important if a society were to be orderly, and Mariana had been successful in instilling into her offspring a strong respect for religion. Hernández related that in his adulthood, Maceo "retained the religious ideas tenderly learned by his soul in his saintly home, and although he was a free-thinker, he would caress with delight those remembrances of his infancy and youth, and conserved them like a treasure of the spirit" (35).

Hernández makes an effort to tie Mariana and her family to what was considered to be civilized society. To live in a rural area implied lack of civilization, whereas urban areas were considered the very heart of culture. This was a legacy of colonial society, in which every family of significant social standing would undoubtedly maintain a city home in addition to whatever farms or plantations they might own. Money was made in the countryside for the family, but the city was where the social, political and economic ties were cultivated.

Hernández therefore points out that in addition to owning three fincas (note, 33), the Maceos owned a house in Santiago de Cuba. Mariana is portrayed as a woman who made certain

---

29 Sabas Alomá was one of Cuba's most prominent feminist writers of the day. She was president of the Suffragist Democrat Party (Partido Demócrata Sufragista) and editor of its official publication, La Mujer (Stoner 1991; 89).

30 At this time there was a curfew of 10 p.m. for all people of color (Stubbs 301).

31 "Cuanto al medio que le rodeó en el hogar y en la calle, basta saber que la madre no consentía a ninguno de la familia que entrase en la casa después de la diez de la noche; no toleraba amistades de dudosa conducta; era preciso ajustarse a las excelentes costumbres de la casa, vivir dentro de la legalidad y cumplir todos sus compromisos."

32 "[. . .] conservó las ideas religiosas tiernamente prendidas de su alma en su santa hogar, y aunque era libre pensador, acariciaba con fruición esos recuerdos de la infancia y de la juventud, y los conservaba a guisa de un tesoro de su espíritu."
that all her children were properly integrated into "civilized" society. Hernández tells his audience that she would go to the city for the birth of every new child, and that she would make certain that they received a city education. Although Mariana had not been able to receive an education, when each one of her *hijos* was of school age, she would travel to Santiago de Cuba and stay there with them the necessary amount of time, returning only when their education was complete (33).

Hernández then describes to his audience the family's response to the outbreak of the Ten Years War. There is no trace of the Mariana who ordered her family to their knees to vow before Christ to fight to the death for liberty. Instead, Hernández recounts only that Mariana was asked by Captain Rondón to prepare dinner for himself and his men. It is assumed that she complied, and Hernández continues on with the story about how the husband and sons joined the rebel forces, and the family was forced to flee their home (33).

There is no reference either, to Mariana's presence in the midst of the struggle. The most that Hernández says about these ten years of her life is that "[t]he entire family went to Piloto" (35). A few weeks later, Mariana's son Justo by her first husband was killed by the Spaniards. Of Justo, Hernández says, "He was the first dead man of the legion of lions suckled by Mariana Grajales for Cuba" (36). Once again Mariana's motherhood is emphasized by this most maternal image. With this final comment on Mariana's exploits, Hernández moves on to the main body of his lecture, the personality of her son Antonio who, thanks in large part to his mother's influence, excels in discipline and order (37).

By the late 1950s, Cuba was once again in social and political turmoil. Former president Fulgencio Batista had returned to power through a military coup in 1952, and had been re-elected president in 1954 in an election so corrupt that even the major political parties refused to participate in it (Pérez 1988; 290). The decade had been one of increasing instability and uncertainty and "Cuba was again in the grip of political violence and personal insecurity" (Pérez

---

33 "Hijos" literally means sons, but can also include daughters; it is not clear whether Hernández was solely referring to Mariana's sons, or to both her sons and daughters.

34 "La familia toda se fue a Piloto [. . .]." Piloto was a short distance from the Maceos' *finca* and near to the insurgents' position (Sarabia 80).

35 "Fue el primer muerto de la legión de leones amamantados por Mariana Grajales para Cuba [. . .]."
1988; 296). Once again, many people in prominent positions in the society were opposed to the corrupt government of the day and were calling for change.

That change was desperately needed; unemployment was skyrocketing, the economy was crashing and, in Havana, urban slums proliferated. Neighborhoods "were crowded with tens of thousands of poor [...] living in destitution" (Pérez 1988; 304), many of them women and children.

Thus, it comes as no surprise that the figure of Mariana Grajales would be revived again as a role model for the women of Cuba, with features related to the 1930 portrayal as well as updated ones. In 1957, Justo Luis Pozo del Puerto, mayor of Havana, declared Mariana Grajales Madre de la Patria "as a symbol of self-sacrifice and patriotism" (Rodríguez 5).

In addition, Pozo instituted an annual celebration of Semana Maceista in order that "the doctrine and examples of the life of this exceptional woman and of the offspring that she gave to the liberty of Cuba are renewed periodically, and so that the fatherland might not lose the exemplary lessons that they represent" (Rodríguez 5). As a commemoration of this declaration, Dr. Aída Rodríguez Sarabia was commissioned to write a biographical study of Mariana.

A prologue to this study was written by politician Dr. José Manuel Cortina who had given a speech to Congress in 1927 concerning educational reform, part of which is reprinted in the front of Rodríguez's book. In it, he stated,

No one who has studied educational psychology fails to recognize that the influence of the home over the character and the sentiment of the child is so powerful, that some physiologists consider that the influence of the mother is like a second physiological heredity. They estimate it to be so fundamental that they equate it to the action of the blood and to the ancestral influence of the ancestors. (8)

36 "como símbolo de abnegación y patriotismo"
37 Maceo Week
38 "[...] la doctrina y ejemplos de la vida de esta excepcional mujer y de los próceres que ella dio a la libertad de Cuba vayan renovándose periódicamente, y la Patria no pierda la enseñanza ejemplar que ellos representan."
39 "Nadie que haya estudiado psicología pedagógica desconoce que la influencia del hogar sobre el carácter y el sentimiento del niño es tan poderosa, que algunos fisiólogos consideran que la influencia de la madre es como una segunda herencia fisiológica y la estiman tan fundamental que la equiparan a la acción de la sangre y a la influencia ancestral de los antepasados."
The ideal image of woman and mother as guardian and shaper of an orderly and moral society had endured the decades. Through her correct behavior, a woman was still thought to have extensive positive influence over the society as a whole. Cortina had said in his 1927 speech, and the idea was still in vogue, that Cuban society could be transformed by targeting the mothers. For this purpose, Cortina had established Escuelas del Hogar in order to

[... ] prepare a considerable number of Cuban women so that they can be [... ] living centers of education that irradiate influence in the entire social zone in which they are found [... ]. These Home Economics Schools will form the mother-type: and in this way, each one of them, through the action they exert over their children, will multiply the effects of their influence, producing true centers of social transformation.

(Cortina in Rodríguez 8)

Mariana Grajales already had a reputation of being able to transform society by instilling moral and patriotic values in her sons, and therefore she could be a powerful tool in the hands of those who wanted to form this proper mother-type. Rodríguez's account portrays a Mariana who takes very seriously her household responsibilities: She helps her mother with household chores, and in later years, "at the cost of her own health, undertakes continuous harsh tasks in order to give with her own arms to the sustenance of the home" (20).

Mariana's poverty and lack of education did not prevent her from receiving "from God a clarity of prudence, a penetrating intuition and a sense of moral orientation so grand that they produce amazement" (Rodríguez 20), nor did it prevent her from developing a "great economic capacity that is the story of her poverty, so well-administered that it gives the sensation of splendor to her poor, clean dress" (22). Mariana is a shining example, then, that lack of money or

---

40 Home Economics Schools

41 "[... ] preparar un número considerable de cubanas para que ellas sean [... ] focos vivientes de educación, que irradiien influencia en toda la zona social en que se encuentren [... ].Estas Escuelas del Hogar formarán la madre-tipo: y así, cada una de ellas, por la acción que ejercerán sobre sus hijos, multiplicarán los efectos de su influencia, produciendo verdaderos centros de transformación social."

42 "[... ] a costa de su propia salud, acomete trabajos rudos continuados para ayudar con sus brazos al sostenimiento del hogar."

43 "[... ] de Dios una claridad de juicio, una intuición penetrante y un sentido de orientación moral tan grandes que producen asombro [... ]"

44 "[... ] gran capacidad económica que es la historia de su pobreza, tan bien administrada que da sensación de esplendor a su miseria vestida de limpio [... ]"
education should not be a hindrance to any Cuban woman in her "urgent task of reforming the character of the Cuban" (Cortina in Rodríguez 8).

Religious overtones were used more profusely in this version of Mariana's life than any other. Jean Stubbs has noted in her study that Mariana may well have held to an Afro-Cuban belief system such as Santería, which accepted and even required symbols of Catholicism such as the crucifix, though they were "not necessarily imbued with Catholic meaning" (311). However, Rodríguez gives no acknowledgement of this possibility in her numerous biblical references.

Mariana is portrayed as an extremely religious woman, highly endorsed by God. As the family prepares to flee to the manigua, "Mariana, looking to the sky, gives thanks to God for having brought them all together. In that moment, three stars fall from the sky and alight on the white collar of Mariana's smock. God has invested her with the rank of general!" (33). She then orders her family to their knees in front of the crucifix. Rodríguez expands upon María Cabrales' 1897 account of what follows: Mariana "speaks to them of the calvary of Jesus in this immortal aspect of the struggle for equality on earth, of the glorious maternity of the Virgin Mary, exalted by the manger and by the fruit of the Son of God" (33).

Shortly thereafter, Mariana's mother-love is "crucified forever on the dark Golgotha of Cuban Independence" (Rodríguez 34). Mariana, with her "female brigade" (36) of daughters and daughter-in-law goes to the "redemptive manigua," (36) where "[s]he, like the mother of Christ, accompanies her children in the Calvary of purification that the fatherland demands of them"(36).

---

45"la urgente obra de reformar el carácter del cubano"

46"Mariana, mirando al firmamento, da gracias a Dios al verlos a todos reunidos. En ese momento caen del cielo tres estrellas que se van a posar en el cuello blanco de la bata criolla de Mariana. ¡Dios la ha investido con el grado de general! [. . .]."

47"[. . .] le hablaba del calvario de Jesús en esa estampa inmortal de la lucha por la igualdad en la tierra, de la maternidad gloriosa de la Virgen María, sublimada por el pesebre y por el fruto del Hijo de Dios."

48"[. . .] crucificado para siempre en el Gólgota obscuro de la Independencia Cubana"

49"brigada femenina"

50"la manigua redentora"

51"[e]lla, como la madre de Cristo, acompaña a sus hijos en el Calvario de purificación que la Patria les exige."
Rodríguez goes on to describe Mariana's life in exile in Kingston, how her home is the center of revolutionary activity, and how Mariana continues to inspire and encourage those around her. Martí's visit is mentioned, as well as a quote from *Patria*. A short account of her death is followed by an exuberant eulogy, virtually equating Mariana with the Virgin Mary in the last sentences:

> From that day in which she ascended to the heavens, she is shining in the Cuban firmament, together with the stars that came forth from her glorious womb, like a new constellation that will forever illuminate the path of our liberty. God save you, Mariana! Blessed be the fruit of your immortal womb! (42).52

All of these portrayals emphasize Mariana's motherhood, her virtue, even her holiness. While her love for the *patria* is still present, the part that Mariana played in the Ten Years War takes a back seat to her distinguished place of moral influence in the home.

**Revolutionary Accounts: Something Old, Something New...**

It is possible that rebel leader Fidel Castro came across Rodriguez's book shortly after its 1957 publication, noting her comment about Mariana and her female brigade (36). On September 4, 1958, in the heart of the Sierra Maestra mountains where he was fighting a guerrilla war against the Batista regime, Castro helped form the first official all-female platoon of the rebel army.53 He named it the "Pelotón Mariana Grajales" (Espín 80).

With Castro's triumph over Batista in 1959, Cuban society was drastically altered. Most elite Cubans, predominantly white, fled the country, followed by hundreds of thousands from the middle class over the next few years. Previously marginalized groups were integrated into the new revolutionary society. Discrimination based on color was prohibited and a new pride in Cuba's

52"Desde ese día en que subió al cielo, está brillando en el firmamento cubano, junto con las estrellas que surgieron de su vientre glorioso, como una nueva constelación que alumbrará por siempre la senda de nuestra libertad. ¡Dios te salve, Mariana! ¡Bendito los frutos de tu vientre inmortal!" Roman Catholicism's most important prayer to the Virgin Mary, the "Ave Maria," begins with "God save you, Mary! [. . .] Blessed be the fruit of your immortal womb, Jesus!"

53While many accounts give credit for the platoon's creation to Castro, Tiffany Thomas, in her biographical study of Celia Sánchez Manduley, states that Castro, "inspired by Celia's vision, helped her organize the [. . .] Mariana Grajales brigade" (63). Sánchez not only was a key member of the Rebel Army; from 1959 to her death in 1980, she held numerous official positions in the revolutionary government.
African roots surfaced. Education and healthcare for all was provided by the government free of charge. Political, military and economic ties were forged with the Soviet Union.

By the 1970s, the economy had stabilized after much upheaval following the triumph of the revolution. Women's integration into the wage labor force had more than doubled from the 1950s level (Smith and Padula 96, 101); at the same time women remained the primary caretakers of children and home. In order to relieve women of some of the burden of this double shift, the government, which desperately needed women's participation in the work force, in 1975 enacted a Family Code which mandated shared housework and childcare between married couples.

Cuba became involved in expanding military missions in Africa and the Middle East as well as socio-economic programs. In the decade of the seventies, "an estimated 20,000 civilian internationalists [...] served in nearly forty countries on three continents" (Pérez 1988; 379). Professions in the homeland formerly only occupied by men were now open to women. Women also entered new fields such as medical research, biotechnology and computers, none of which existed prior to the revolution.

In spite of the increased integration of women into public life, pre-revolutionary ideas of women persisted. Articles about women laborers in non-traditional jobs invariably mentioned their looks and supposedly female traits. For example, a mining engineer in 1977 was described as "soft and feminine but firm as nickel when concerned with . . . her work" (quoted in Smith and Padula 107). A male director of a chicken farm was quoted as saying that the care of chickens "requires special qualities of patience and care on the part of the worker. This is why women, with their innate faculties for lavishing care, represent the highest percentage of workers in poultry farms" (Smith and Padula 121).

Fidel Castro himself, in spite of having spoken out for the equality of women with men throughout the revolution, also declared in 1975 that "[w]omen are nature's workshop where life is forged. [...] They are the preeminent creators of human beings. [...] [W]omen merit special considerations from society" (quoted in Lutjens 105). This echoes the pre-revolutionary concept of

---

54 Or, as Nissa Torrents says, "women's triple, or even quadruple shift: work, home, politics, and education" (par. 5).

55 It is questionable as to whether the Code actually brought relief to women, for it "remained more a statement of goals than a reality" (Pérez, 1988; 372).
motherhood being paramount and sacred, mothers being the primary forgers of their children's character. It is not surprising then, that the portrayals of Mariana in this time period continue to venerate her as a mother as well as a patriot.

In 1975, Nydia Sarabia wrote a new biographical study of Mariana Grajales. The account was full-length, well-researched, and its portrayal of Mariana much more down-to-earth than the 1957 version. It even included new information which in a previous era could have been very damaging to Mariana's status as hero.

This book exhibited a definite emphasis on historical accuracy, more so than any previous account had. Citations and an extensive bibliography are included, as well as copies of photos and pertinent documents such as baptismal records. Sarabia includes oral histories from "a broad range of contemporary informants, including [Mariana's] related female descendants" (Stubbs 298).

The new study also reflected a new pride in Cuba's African roots. On the front cover of the book is a woman with distinctly African features, as opposed to the lighter, more Anglicized Mariana on the cover of Rodriguez's book. In the introductory pages, Sarabia proudly attributes to Mariana's side of the family Antonio Maceo's dark coloring (20), a feature not emphasized at all in previous accounts.

Much emphasis is placed upon Mariana's education or lack thereof. As a female child of pardos libres, living in an era of gender restrictions, racial discrimination and slavery, she would have been prohibited from receiving a formal education. Sarabia does not make the comparison, but this would certainly resonate in a society whose very recent past had been permeated with racial discrimination and a severe lack of universal access to education. It is suggested that perhaps Mariana received a minimal education from her parents, since "in that epoch [...] this type of instruction] was customary [...] in one's own home without resources and of different social condition than the white" (25).

A discussion follows as to whether or not Mariana was literate. Her literacy or lack thereof would certainly be of interest to a society which had recently implemented a highly successful

---

56The head scarf of Marti's accounts remains absent, however.

57"[...] en esa época era costumbre [...] en el propio hogar sin recursos y de distinta condición social que el blanco."
national literacy campaign. 58 Sarabia therefore refers to testimony from Mariana's niece's daughter, Maria Teresa Isaac Grajales, who said that as a child she would read letters from Mariana to her mother.

As an example of the new emphasis on historical accuracy, Sarabia reveals that there is some controversy over Mariana's literacy. She points out that Mariana's widowed daughter-in-law Emilia Núñez swore in a 1927 affidavit that Mariana could not write. Sarabia also refers to a recently discovered letter from Mariana to Antonio, but acknowledges that this is not proof that she could write, as it could have been written for her (28).

Mariana's work in her home, while acknowledged, is not referred to in the same dramatic tone as it is in the accounts from the previous period. Sarabia simply mentions that Mariana "attended to household tasks" (33). 59 However, there is still somewhat of an emphasis on Mariana as the guardian and instiller of moral values to her children. Upon being widowed with four small children (her first marriage), Mariana knew how to rise above her circumstances with her stoic character. She began to teach [her children] the respect and the love for family and fatherland. She was fairly young for signaling the straight path to her sons, the discipline in work and to have dignity, although they were mulattos and of different social condition than the Spaniard" (34). 60

Sarabia's version reveals new information, information that might have caused quite a stir if included in the 1930 and 1957 accounts. In those pre-revolutionary days, there was "extreme ambivalence over issues such as divorce, adultery and the rights of illegitimate children" (Stubbs 313). Now, however, it is disclosed that Mariana was not married to Marcos Maceo, her second husband, when she gave birth to their first four children, two of whom were war heroes Antonio and José. 61

58 In 1961, "The Year of Education," an estimated 271,000 Cubans were mobilized to eradicate illiteracy on the island. It was highly successful and "a triumph of considerable magnitude for the revolution" (Pérez, 1988; 359).

59 "[ . . ] atendía los quehaceres hogareños [. . .]"

60 "[ . . .] supo sobreponerse con su carácter estoico. Comenzó a enseñarles el respeto y el amor a la familia y a la patria. Era bastante joven para señalar el camino recto a los hijos, la disciplina en el trabajo y tener dignidad, aunque fuesen mulatos y de distinta condición social que el español."

61 Antonio's original baptismal certificate listed him as hijo natural [illegitimate son] de Mariana Grajales; a new certificate was later created to read hijo legítimo [legitimate son] de D. Marcos Maceo y de Da. Mariana Grajales
Marcos, Sarabia states, "had been married previously to Amparo Téllez" (38) and had children with her also. The date of their breakup is not known, but Amparo, "upon separating from Marcos, went to reside at Bayamo with their children" (Sarabia 38). Mariana and Marcos did marry after Amparo's death, although Sarabia claims that Amparo's death was not the impetus; rather, that the marriage was for the purpose of legitimizing their union. Marcos and Amparo, she asserts, were not still married when the latter died (46).

Another new revelation is made concerning Mariana and Marcos. Sarabia refers to a 1973 biography of José Maceo by Abelardo Padrón, in which it is revealed that the Maceos owned at least one slave (64). This is not surprising, given that the Maceos owned three fincas. In a slave economy, it would have been virtually impossible to compete economically without slave labor. However, this was never acknowledged in any of the previous accounts.

Hernández had made a possible allusion to slaves in his 1930 lecture when he stated that the Maceos were deserving of the respect owed them by their "workers" (34), who were "eager to serve them well in exchange for their good treatment" (34). But Sarabia goes much further, quoting a document found in the historical archives in Santiago de Cuba in which Marcos gives power of attorney to don José Planas y Camps to sell his slave Juan Francisco for him (65).

Sarabia does not go so far, however, as to associate Mariana too closely with slavery. She acknowledges this one slave, then reassures the reader that because of having owned a fellow human being,

"... it was not strange that Marcos and Mariana felt in their consciences the necessity to oppose slavery and make the cause of the slaves their own. Mariana cannot forget..."
[the horrors of slavery] which she saw in her childhood and youth. As woman and mother she insists with Marcos that they deprive themselves of the ownership of a man. Through her veins runs African blood and this she will never forget" (65).

Sarabia quotes word-for-word María Cabrales' description of Mariana's response to the call to war, the crucifix scene. However, the emphasis is no longer religious but revolutionary. A portrait of a sacrificial revolutionary woman follows:

Did she not expose her own companion, her children to a sure death? There was no doubt that her mother's heart trembled before the idea of the death by heroism that would be the fate of those she so loved, but in Mariana Grajales, the patriotic conscience, the revolutionary attitude, the ferocious will for the fight for liberty came before these sentiments [...]. [S]he knew perfectly that in order to gain the independence of Cuba it was necessary to overturn sentimentalisms. (78-79).

For a short time, the account shows Mariana taking the lead in the fight for independence. Previously, she had received information of the impending war from Marcos and her son Antonio, and had aligned herself with the men's determination to dedicate themselves to the cause (63, 66). Now, however, it is Mariana taking the lead, giving instructions to her husband to get their things together (79).

When Marcos is captured by the Spaniards, it is Mariana who initiates his rescue. "Mariana has two Spanish merchant friends" (Sarabia 81) who she appeals to, and they obtain his release. It is Mariana who, knowing by experience that the Spaniards would return and capture them, makes the decision to take herself and her family to Piloto (81).

Mariana does not remain in this position of leadership, however. After these brief references, Mariana is shown to have returned to a more traditional role of a wife following her husband's lead. Sarabia states that Mariana's daughters Baldomera and Dominga go to Piloto with

---

68"[. . ] no era de extrañar que Marcos y Mariana sintieran en sus conciencias la necesidad de oponerse a la esclavitud e hicieran suya la causa de los esclavos. Mariana no puede olvidar lo que había visto en su niñez y juventud. Como mujer y madre insiste con Marcos en desprenderse de la propiedad de un hombre. Por sus venas corre sangre africana y eso ella no lo olvidará jamás."

69"¿No exponía a su propio compañero, a sus hijos a una muerte segura? Era indudable que su corazón de madre temblase ante la idea de la muerte por heroica que fuese en seres tan queridos, pero en Mariana Grajales se anteponían a esos sentimientos, la conciencia patriótica, la actitud revolucionaria, la voluntad férrea por la lucha de la libertad [...]. [S]taba perfectamente que para conquistar la independencia de Cuba era preciso volcar los sentimentalismos." 

70"Mariana tiene dos amigos comerciantes españoles [...]."

22
her (82). Mariana and her daughters "are not the only women who find themselves in this difficult and dangerous situation," adds Sarabia, "[t]here are other wives of peasant men and insurgent slaves who also had chosen the same destiny" (82),\(^71\) to follow their men into the manigua.

In spite of many references to Mariana's close proximity to combat, she is primarily portrayed as tending to traditionally female duties. She gives constant encouragement to the men in their fighting (82, 97), acts as midwife to her daughter-in-law María (83), and glories in the military accomplishments of her son Antonio (84, 105). Her main role in the war seems to have been in the capacity of encouraging nurse.

Sarabia writes that Mariana and María would follow the troops in order to "lend aid to the wounded, attend to the dying, to treat [. . .]" (86)\(^72\) any who were in need of medical care. "They were nurses of the manigua," Sarabia states, "perhaps some of the first women that in Cuba had that mission" (86),\(^73\) an allusion to revolutionary women of her own day, like Haydée Santamaria, who had served as a nurse for Castro and his men during the now-famous Moncada attack (Smith and Padula 24).\(^74\)

From her exile in Jamaica, Mariana continues to serve the cause of independence in an auxiliary role. While her sons Antonio and José, along with José Martí and others, are planning their military moves, Mariana is present, giving encouragement. Other exiles come to her modest home in order to "kiss her hands and receive the blessing of the venerable old woman" (118).\(^75\)

Sarabia includes yet another piece of information which may have been too sensitive for earlier accounts, or perhaps was not known previously. Doña\(^76\) Mariana, as she is now called by Sarabia, became a new grandmother. Her son Antonio had a mistress in Kingston, Amelia Marryat, with whom he had a son.

\(^71\)"[. . .] no son las únicas mujeres que se hallan en esa situación difícil y peligrosa. Hay otras mujeres de campesinos y esclavos insurreccionados que también han tomado el mismo destino."

\(^72\)"[. . .] prestar auxilio a los heridos, atender a los moribundos, curar [. . .]"

\(^73\)"Eran enfermeras de la manigua, quizás unas de las primeras mujeres que en Cuba tuvieron esa misión."

\(^74\)In 1953, Castro led a "near suicidal attack on the second largest army installation of Moncada in Santiago" (Pérez 1988; 290).

\(^75\)"[. . .] besar las manos y recibir la bendición de la venerable anciana [. . .]"

\(^76\)Doña is the feminine equivalent of don.
that this must have brought to Antonio's wife María, who Mariana "loves like a daughter" (125). It is doña Mariana who requests of Antonio that he not abandon the child" (125). No more mention is made of this son by Sarabia, but it is significant that she includes this story, humanizing not only Mariana but Antonio as well.

Mariana's death in Kingston is then addressed, with much emphasis placed on José Martí's relationship with her. Sarabia includes quotes from Martí's writings about Mariana after her death, those from Patria as well as short references to her in a few of his personal letters. For example, Martí asks rhetorically in a letter to Antonio, "Did your mother not caress me like a son? Had she not called me publicly her son?" (144-45). In another letter, he calls her "one of the women who have most moved my heart" (137). In this way, Sarabia ties Mariana very closely to the revolution, for José Martí remains Cuba's most prominent hero.

A short reference is made to the return to her homeland of the remains of Mariana Grajales in 1923. Sarabia closes her study by stating that in the tomb where Mariana's remains were reinterred, in the cemetery which is the "heart of heroes and martyrs of the fatherland, is raised a symbol that marks the irreversible road of liberty to all generations of Cuban people" (148).

Another account of Mariana Grajales' life appeared in 1977, this one compiled from earlier material by Matilde Danger and Delfina Rodríguez and entitled simply "Mariana Grajales." It is not nearly as detailed as Sarabia's book and contains no new information, but like Sarabia's, this book also manifests the current interest in historical accuracy. In spite of its short length (only 25 pages), it contains footnotes, a bibliography and a photo collection. At the same time, because its content

---

77"[...] quiere como a una hija [...]."
78"Es doña Mariana la que pide a Antonio que no abandone al niño."
79"¿No me acarició su madre como a hijo? ¿No me ha llamado públicamente su hijo?"
80"[...] una de las mujeres que más han movido mi corazón [...]."
81A good example of the way Martí is tied to the revolution is found in Caballero (5). The author states that January 1, 1959, the date of Castro's triumph over Batista, was the "date in which was made definitive reality the absolute liberty to which our great independentist national hero, José Martí aspired" ("[...] fecha en que se hiciera realidad definitiva la libertad absoluta a la que aspiraba nuestro gran héroe nacional independentista José Martí").
82"[...] regazo de héroes y mártires de la Patria, se levanta un símbolo que señala el camino irreversible de libertad a todas las generaciones del pueblo cubano."
is taken solely from earlier accounts, it does not manifest the new revolutionary ideals as much as it reiterates the old.

Mariana's race and lack of formal education are mentioned briefly, as is her opposition to the oppression of slavery and colonialism. Her moral character, an important ingredient in all of the accounts, is established right away. On the first page, the reader is assured that in spite of her humble origins, Mariana possesses "solid moral principles."83

In what may be a slight reflection of the concerns of the Family Code, Danger and Rodriguez depict a very sharing relationship between Mariana and both Fructuoso and Marcos. They write that Mariana and Fructuoso's marriage was a loving one, based on their "mutual political and social relationship" (2).84 Mariana and Marcos' relationship is portrayed in much the same tone. Marcos accepts Mariana's sons as his own, and together they instill in their children their own shared qualities of virtue and moral rectitude (3). They also share a common rebellion against colonial rule (5).

What they don't share, however, are their roles within the relationship. The traditional sexual division of labor remains firmly in place in this account. Marcos works outside the home in agriculture and commerce, although with Mariana's support (4). Mariana, on the other hand, is responsible for the home, creating an atmosphere of "respect and mutual consideration, where the seed of liberty and ideas of solidarity [can] germinate" (4).85 No mention is made of Marcos being a support to her endeavors.

In writing about Mariana's involvement in the war, Danger and Rodriguez portray her consistently in a supportive role. They write that Mariana shares the difficulties and triumphs of the insurgent forces, encouraging the troops and tending to their wounds (8). As an example of Mariana's tireless energy, a quality desperately needed by Cuban women during the seventies, the authors refer to the incident made famous by Martí in which she rebukes the crying women and sends her young son into the fray (9).

---

83"sólidos principios morales"
84"afinidad política y social"
85"[...] respeto y consideración, donde pudo germinar la semilla de la libertad y de las ideas solidarias."
Mariana apparently does not lose that energy in spite of her exile. In Jamaica, her home is "the center of the revolutionary operations" (10).\textsuperscript{86} There she receives not only Martí, but also other well-known men involved in the independence movement; Danger and Rodriguez name the most famous ones. These men come to visit Mariana, and she is always ready to impart to them an encouraging word, "inspir[ing] them to continue fighting" (11).\textsuperscript{87}

This short account of Mariana's life is summed up with the following eulogy:

The memory of Mariana continues to live in us as a symbol of the woman who knew how to maintain an honorable attitude, precursor of the present-day women who, inspired by her example, offer their cooperation to whatever task the Revolution presents to them.\textsuperscript{88}

In 1978, a book by Armando Caballero was published memorializing various women who had contributed to the struggle for Cuban independence during the Ten Years War. It was titled "La mujer en el '68."\textsuperscript{89} In the prologue, the Ten Years War is tied to the revolution by the author, who states that the fight for liberty, "which extended across ninety-one years [. . .] [was] begun the 10th of October, 1868 [and] achieved total success the first day of January, 1959" (5),\textsuperscript{90} the day Castro came to power.

The "women of '68" are associated with the women of 1978 by Caballero, for in the book he also celebrates women's current contributions to the revolution. Not only have men been responsible for the struggle toward independence, he says, "but also [. . .] our energetic women, who since '68, and even before, knew how to uphold on high the standard of the revolutionary

\textsuperscript{86}"el centro de las operaciones revolucionarias"

\textsuperscript{87}" [. . .] los alentaba a seguir luchando."

\textsuperscript{88}"El recuerdo de Mariana pervive en nosotros como simbolo de la mujer que supo mantener una actitud digna, precursora de las mujeres actuales, que, inspiradas en su ejemplo, brindan su cooperación a cualquier tarea que le plantea la Revolución."

\textsuperscript{89}"The Woman in '68"

\textsuperscript{90}" [. . .] que se extendió a través de noventa y un años [. . .] comenzada el 10 de octubre de 1868, alcanzó el éxito total el primero de enero de 1959 [. . .]."
woman and bequeath it to the future generations for the attainment of the just aspiration of liberty" (8).91

The first woman honored in the book is Mariana Grajales, symbol of "our mambisa woman" (11).92 Facing the first page of the chapter on Mariana is a drawing which is suggestive of her African heritage, although the actual face in the drawing is white. A very short overview of her life is included; primary is the sacrifice for their homeland that her sons and husband made. The credit for this is given to Mariana, however, for it was "[f]rom this exceptional woman [which] came only men and women disposed to the greatest sacrifices for the fatherland" (Caballero 11).93

Within Mariana are joined "all the virtues of patriotism without indifference, unshakeable strength of character, and honorable example" (Caballero 11).94 A loving mother, she nevertheless put the well-being of her homeland first, and as evidence of this, Caballero refers to the incident where Mariana tells her youngest son to get up and join the fight (12).

The sexual division of labor is emphasized in Caballero's account; he states that the entire Maceo-Grajales family went to "the redemptive manigua" (12),95 "the men to fight and die for the liberation of Cuba; the women to the camp hospitals to treat the wounded, care for the sick, and give courage to all" (13).96

In his epilogue, Caballero praises all Cuban women who "knew how to love their fatherland above everything [. . .] [, w]ho knew how to respond to the call of war for the liberty of their beloved land" (76).97 Women such as Mariana were, according to Caballero, "the spark that ignited the hearts of all our women through those glorious One Hundred Years of Struggle, until

---

91"[. . .] sino también [. . .] nuestras energéticas mujeres, que, desde el 68, y aun antes, supieron mantener en alto el estandarte de la mujer revolucionaria y legarlo a las generaciones futuras para el logro de la justa aspiración de libertad."

92"nuestra mujer mambisa"

93"De esta excepcional mujer sólo salieron hombres y mujeres dispuestos a los mayores sacrificios por la patria."

94"[. . .] todas las virtudes de patriotismo sin tibiezas, decisión inquebrantable y ejemplo digno."

95"la manigua redentora"

96"[. . .] los hombres a combatir y morir por la liberación de Cuba; las mujeres a los hospitales de campaña a curar los heridos, a cuidar los enfermos, y a darles aliento a todos."

97"[. . .] supieron amar a su patria por encima de todas las cosas [. . .] [, q]ue supieron responder al llamado de guerra por la libertad de su amada tierra."
achieving our true liberty and political and economic independence, our unquestionable social equality" (77).\textsuperscript{98}

Also in 1978, on the 170th anniversary of Mariana Grajales' birthdate, president of the \textit{Federación de Mujeres Cubanas}\textsuperscript{99} (FMC) Vilma Espín gave a speech in her honor. Espín, then wife of Fidel Castro's brother and Defense Minister Raúl Castro, had been involved in the revolutionary movement from the beginning of the struggle against Batista, and there is no doubt that she identifies Mariana's life with her own experiences.\textsuperscript{100}

"Mariana Grajales," Espín says, "represents the rebel character and the patriotism of the Cuban woman in all epochs" (43).\textsuperscript{101} In this account as well as most others, Mariana continues to be a "forger of heroes" (43).\textsuperscript{102} It is Mariana who sets the tone in the home by establishing the family upon her incorruptible principles (Espín 45).

Espin reminds her audience of the episode described in María Cabrales' letter, but she makes no mention whatsoever of the crucifix or Christ. It is likely that this part was omitted or overlooked as a result of the strictly secular position the Cuban government had taken at this time. In this account, Mariana enters the living room (\textit{la sala}) rather than her room (\textit{su cuarto}) and sends her family to their knees saying, "--...we swear to liberate the fatherland or die for it" (46).\textsuperscript{103}

Mariana does not hesitate to join the insurgent forces, according to Espín; she is one of the first of many \textit{mambisas} to serve "as messenger, nurse, collecting clothes and food for the

\textsuperscript{98}[...\] la chispa que encendió los pechos de todas nuestras mujeres a través de esos gloriosos Cien Años de Lucha, hasta lograr nuestra verdadera libertad e independencia política y económica, nuestra indiscutible igualdad social."

\textsuperscript{99}Federation of Cuban Women. The FMC was created in 1960 by Castro to "organize the participation of women in the revolution's pursuit of sovereignty, economic development, and social justice" (Lutjens 102-03). Espín has been its president since its founding.

\textsuperscript{100}Espín, as one of the leaders of clandestine activities, may well have participated in combat with the Mariana Grajales Platoon also, although there is no verification of this.

\textsuperscript{101}"Mariana Grajales representa la rebeldía y el patriotismo de la mujer cubana en todas las épocas [...]."

\textsuperscript{102}"forjadora de héroes"

\textsuperscript{103}"[...] --...juramos libertar a la Patria o morir por ella."
insurgents, and integrated into the very ranks of the mambi army" (48).104 Later in the speech Espin lists the immediate tasks of the mambisas: "to treat the wounded, to get food supplies, to look after the camps, transport messages or carry arms" (49).105

These are the first references to women being integrated into military ranks or taking up arms in any of the accounts of Mariana's life. Up to this point, Mariana has not even been said to have raised a machete. However, the participation of a number of women in combat during the revolutionary struggle was undoubtedly still fresh on Espín's mind. The creation of the Mariana Grajales Platoon had been very controversial among the guerrillas, for most of the men could not imagine that "the women would be capable of fighting with as much boldness as they [(the men) were]" (Espin 81).106 Espín, if not one of the brigadistas herself, must have been at least a very interested observer of that process and its outcome.

Espín, like so many others, emphasizes Martí's endorsement of and admiration for Mariana Grajales; her speech consists in great part of entire quotes from his writings concerning Mariana. By associating the revolution with Mariana, and then Mariana with Martí, Espín affirms the legitimacy of the revolutionary government.

"How much Mariana symbolizes for the Cuban people!" she exclaims (51).107 The exploits of her sons Antonio and José "form part of her work" (51).108 Espín then ties these two sons of Mariana to the present by comparing them with Santiagueros,109 Frank and Jossué País, brothers who lost their lives in the fight against Batista. The País brothers, together with "thousands of youth, of men, of women, responding to the call of the fatherland" (52),110 were involved in the same type of struggle as Mariana and her contemporaries were.

---

104"[como mensajera, enfermera, recolectando ropas y alimentos para los insurrectos, e integradas a las propias filas del ejército mambi [...]."

105"[... ] curar a los heridos, buscar los alimentos, atender los campamentos, llevar los mensajes o empuñar las armas [...]."

106"[... ] las mujeres serían capaces de combatir con tanto arrojo como ellos."

107"¿Cuanto simboliza Mariana para el pueblo cubano!"

108"[... ] forman parte de su obra"

109Santiagueros are people from the city of Santiago de Cuba.

110"[... ] miles de jóvenes, de hombres, de mujeres, respondiendo al llamado de la Patria [...]."
After making specific references to various guerrilla activities in Santiago de Cuba, Espín declares that "in every stage of the fight in which the will of the woman has been made present, turning over her self-sacrifice and her courage to the redemptive wealth of the popular fight, the evocation of Mariana has appeared" (52). Mariana was evoked in this manner by the creation of the Mariana Grajales brigade, she declares, which demonstrated Fidel Castro's support of and confidence in the women who would give themselves to the revolutionary cause. Such women, says Espín, "knew how to be worthy daughters of Mariana" (52).

Espín closes her speech by reminding her audience that "Mariana is a symbol and an example, she is image, encouragement and stimulus for the revolutionary mothers who have their children fighting in other lands, for our internationalist combatants, for every Cuban woman who is disposed to perform at whatever cost the missions that Fidel, the [Communist] Party, the Revolution puts in her hands" (53).

In these accounts of Mariana's life since the Revolution, old ideas and new can be seen. Goals of the revolution such as education are reflected; a new emphasis on historical accuracy is evident. An appreciation of the African heritage of many Cubans has emerged, and Mariana's African roots are emphasized. However, reflections of the revolutionary government’s new efforts to incorporate women into almost all areas of public life appear side by side with traditional notions of women's place in society.

These notions are reflected in accounts of Mariana's life by the continued emphasis placed upon her sacrificial motherhood, her vicarious work through her sons, her supportive role in the war, and her endorsement by male figures. As mother, Mariana remains the one who instills in her offspring the necessary moral qualities that enable them to be heroes, and then she receives honor based on the exploits of those offspring.

111[....latín...]
112[...latín...]
113[...latín...]

Only one of the accounts of Mariana's life (Espín's) suggests that Mariana took part in combat, and the author of that account was openly equating the distant past with the near past. And still, combat or not, Mariana and the other women in this version continue to be led and directed by men. This is a clear reflection of the patriarchal relationship between women in Cuban society and the highest levels of the revolutionary government, which remain almost entirely composed of men.

Martí's recommendation of Mariana is of paramount importance. Extensive quotes from his writings are used to emphasize her importance as heroic symbol. Together with Antonio Maceo, Martí and Mariana are used to add legitimacy to the revolutionary government. Espín states this well at the close of her speech: "Today, as Maceo and Martí wanted, Mariana rests next to them in Free Cuba, lives in the socialist fatherland that makes a reality the ideals of its beloved martyrs and pays them the most beautiful homage with its daily work" (53).114

The "Special Period:" Full Circle?

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Cuba lost its most important trading partner, as well as a great deal of subsidies. Beginning in 1989, the former Soviet Union had begun to drastically reduce its importing from and exporting to Cuba, as well as its generous financing of much of Cuba's development. In the years leading up to 1989, Cuba had depended upon the former Soviet Union and other eastern European countries for providing approximately eighty-five percent of its imports, and for buying almost the same percentage of its exports (Perez-Lopez 4). Between 1989 and 1993, Cuba saw both its import and export bills fall over seventy percent. As a result, production on the island fell by more than half (Pastor and Zimbalist 8).

In the face of such a severe economic crisis, the Cuban government declared a "Special Period in Times of Peace," calling upon the people of Cuba to adjust themselves to a wartime-like economy of shortage and sacrifice. Food and fuel became extremely scarce, and basic items such as soap and shampoo became luxury items, often available only on the black market, if at all.

114"Hoy, como querían Maceo y Martí, Mariana junto a ellos descansa en Cuba Libre, vive en la patria socialista que hace realidad los ideales de sus mártires queridos y les rinde el más hermoso homenaje con su obra cotidiana."
Cuba's healthcare system, the pride of the revolution, was unable to provide former levels of care due to a lack of medicines and supplies. No area of life was unaffected by the economic crisis.

As the Cuban government was struggling to adjust itself to its new patron-less situation and to make policy changes that would improve the economy, the United States stepped up its policy of isolating Cuba in an attempt to undermine and destroy the revolutionary government. Since 1963, the US had an economic embargo in place, but with Soviet aid and trading, Cuba had been relatively unscathed by it. Now, however, Cuba was much more vulnerable to the economic difficulties brought about by the embargo.  

Therefore, in 1992, US president George H. W. Bush signed into law the so-called "Cuban Democracy Act." This act provided for a loosening of communications between the American and Cuban people, while at the same time tightening the economic embargo by prohibiting US subsidiaries abroad from trading with Cuba. In addition, it banned ships which had docked in Cuba within the past six months from docking in US ports.

Cuba continued to make substantial policy changes, such as decriminalizing the use of the dollar, allowing a limited amount of self-employment, and permitting agricultural products to be sold at unregulated prices. Cubans everywhere were encouraged to grow subsistence gardens to help provide them with food that the government could no longer supply through imports. In 1994, the economy bottomed out, and by 1996 Cuba had begun to see some modest economic growth. Still, the economic and social damage brought about by the crisis had been "profound" (Pastor and Zimbalist 11).

In spite of the Cuban government's very cautious and selective moves toward liberalization of the economy, in 1996, US president Bill Clinton signed into law what has been described as "the most punitive legislation against Cuba since the early 1960's" (LeoGrande 80), the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996, more commonly known as "Helms-Burton." This act intended to further economically isolate Cuba, not only from the United States but also from the international business community. In addition, it codified the embargo, effectively

---

115 In the United States, this measure is called an embargo; in Cuba it is referred to as "el bloqueo" (the blockade).
116 These subsidiaries "accounted for about 18% of Cuba's 1992 hard-currency imports" (Pastor and Zimbalist 9).
117 Named for its sponsors Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Representative Dan Burton (R-IN).
preventing any president from lifting it without Congress' approval and determination that Cuba is transitioning to a democratic government.\textsuperscript{118} Cuba, of course, has viewed this law as an act of aggression, and it was in this atmosphere that the next biographical study of Mariana Grajales was written.

"Mariana: Raíz del alma cubana"\textsuperscript{119} begins with a note from authors Adys Cupull and Froilán González telling the reader that "[o]ne day in these years of heroic resistance against the blockade imposed by the United States of North America" (1),\textsuperscript{120} they and other Cubans met together on the anniversary of Mariana's birth to commemorate her and her family. Songs were sung and poems read in her honor, and Cupull and González wrote that Mariana's presence could be felt among them.

The authors had recently been working on a biographical study of revolutionary hero Ernesto "Che" Guevara's mother, Celia de la Serna.\textsuperscript{121} During their research, the authors discovered that both Che and Mariana's son Antonio had been born on June fourteenth, eighty-three years apart. They also found that Che had referred to Mariana in a letter to his mother written prior to his joining Castro in the fight against Batista.

In this letter, Che wrote, "The mother of the Maceos lamented that she had no more sons to offer to Cuba" (quoted in Cupull and González 2). He asked for Celia's understanding of the decision he had made, saying that he was not asking of her to give as much as Mariana had, only that he hoped she would be at peace with the course he had taken. Given the exalted status that Che Guevara holds in Cuban society, it is not surprising that his mention of Mariana and his link by birthdate to her most famous son would spark a renewed interest in Mariana's life.

\textsuperscript{118}For a more indepth explanation of the Helms-Burton law, see Michelle Arendt, "The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996: Isolationist Obstacle to Policy of Engagement."

\textsuperscript{119}"Mariana: Root of the Cuban Soul"

\textsuperscript{120}"Un día de estos años de heroica resistencia contra el bloqueo impuesto por Estados Unidos de Norteamérica [...]."

\textsuperscript{121}Guevara, an Argentinian doctor, had met Castro in Mexico, and joined him in the 1956 invasion of Cuba which ultimately led to Batista's defeat. Guevara was instrumental in the triumph of the revolution, and became one of Cuba's greatest heroes upon his death. He was killed in Bolivia by US trained Bolivian soldiers while attempting to bring a Cuban-type revolution to all of Latin America. Guevara was given the nickname "Che" because of his habit of ending his sentences with this Argentinian slang word, similar to the English "buddy" or "bro."
Mariana is not only endorsed by "el Che;" full quotes of Martí’s writings about her are also included. Other male patriots are listed as having referred to Mariana: Ten Years War doctor Félix Figueredo, general in the war Enrique Loynaz del Castillo, Doctor Eusebio Hernández, and even the famous war hero Máximo Gómez (Cupull and González 42-43).

This new biographical account retains many of the same features as earlier ones. In addition to emphasizing Mariana’s endorsement by male figures, it also maintains the consistently present view of women as creator of the moral and spiritual values of society. Mariana is described by Cupull and González as the "forger of the revolutionary morality of the Cuban family" (3). Revolutionary virtues, such as honesty, patriotism and hatred of injustice, that she is said to have forged "were multiplied in the men, women, young people and children, who today confront with dignity the present-day and new challenges" (Cupull and González 4-5).

One of those present-day challenges was that of growing food in small subsistence plots. Mariana and her family served as role models in this area. The Maceos' land "was worked with great care [. . .]" (Cupull and González 25), thereby producing crops in abundance. Every child in the family, according to the authors, contributed to working in the fields, although these tasks they learned to do from their father Marcos (25).

From her own parents (presumably mainly her mother), Mariana learned not only inward virtues, but also to dress sensibly yet elegantly, to do housework, read, write and sew (Cupull and González 14). She imparted her values to her children: Mariana demanded from them order, obedience and respect, decency and honor (27). She was very concerned with their education and their cleanliness (15).

Mariana's own cleanliness is emphasized. In spite of her poverty, Cupull and González explain, contemporary accounts say that "everything that she would wear was extremely clean" (44). Not only outwardly clean, Mariana had also learned "the cleanliness of soul and of thought."

---

122"[...f] forjadora de la moral revolucionaria de la familia cubana [...]."

123"[...f] fueron multiplicadas en los hombres, mujeres, jóvenes y niños, que hoy enfrentamos dignamente los actuales y nuevos desafíos."

124"[...f] era trabajada con esmero [...]."

125"[...f] todo lo que usaba estaba extremadamente limpio [...]."
This fact is testified to by Mariana's great-granddaughter, Francisca "Panchita" Ulloa Romero, in the oral history section of the book: "Of my great-grandmother the only thing I know is that she was very valiant, very brave, that she would say that one had to be very clean, clean inside and clean outside, and that although she might have to wear humble clothes, she should be clean" (quoted in Cupull and González 83).

Along with being the "exalted symbol of the Cuban mother" (Cupull and González 4) as well as the ever-present encourager and nurse of the manigua, Mariana is the head of her household in this account, at least in those things which pertain to the children and her house itself. While Cupull and González claim that Mariana and Marcos made household decisions together, they portray Mariana as the leader. She was the one who successfully organized and directed the family, and "[a] decision of Mariana was not disputed by Marcos, who supported her" (Cupull and González 26).

Mariana leads her family in the pledge to fight for Cuba's liberty or die, and when Captain Rondón arrives at her home, Mariana is right there with Marcos, lending aid by giving Rondón weapons, money, and manpower in the form of three sons (Cupull and González 33). Another great-grandchild of Mariana, José Antonio Maceo Fonts, is quoted as stating that Rondón asked Mariana rather than Marcos which of her sons she would give to the cause, and that Marcos remained silent at the request (97).

Cupull and González's version also demonstrates a continued emphasis on historical accuracy. Oral histories are included wherever possible, such as the testimonies given above. New written historical evidence is presented; for example, a published work by historian Joel Mourlot Mercaderes is quoted which brings into question Mariana's birthdate. Was it the commonly believed 1808, or 1815, as a newly offered birth certificate states (Cupull and González 12)? No definitive answer is given by the authors.

---

126"[... ] la limpieza del alma y del pensamiento [... ]"

127"De mi bisabuela lo único que sé es que era muy valiente, muy brava, que decía que había que ser muy limpio, limpio por dentro y limpio por afuera y que aunque hubiera que estar con las ropas humildes debía de estar limpia."

128"símbolo enaltecedor de la madre cubana"

129"Una decisión de Mariana no era discutida por Marcos, quien la apoyaba."
A large section (Cupull and González 53-75) covers the repatriation of Mariana's remains. It is very detailed, giving practically an hour-by-hour narrative of the reinterment, as well as its planning stage. Transcripts of telephone calls and cablegrams made during this stage are included, and many newspaper accounts of the ceremony are quoted. The authors stress that the remains brought from Jamaica were indeed Mariana's; not only did her daughter Dominga identify the teeth (62), but a group of doctors were present to ascertain the remains' authenticity as well (64-65).

One section of the account is not quite so dedicated to complete historical accuracy, however. Cupull and González state that from childhood, "Mariana suffered with the pain of the exploitation and the discrimination of the black race, and in her was born the rebellion and the love for mankind and liberty" (Cupull and González 13). While this was probably very true, it is not balanced by the mention that she and Marcos had actually been slaveholders, a fact the authors would have known since they refer to Sarabia's book in their "Note to the Reader." Rather, the authors simply state that "all [historians] agree that Marcos Maceo abhorred" the colonial system of slavery (21).

Many Cubans today see the colonial system that the Maceos fought against as menacing their homeland even today in the form of the threat of US domination. By supporting the revolution even in the most difficult of times, they can fight to maintain Cuba's sovereignty. In this sense, Mariana serves as an excellent role model. Her great-grandson speaks a great deal about this in the oral history section. Maceo Fonts, Secretary General of his local nucleus of the Cuban Communist Party, says of "the politics of North American imperialism [ . . . ] [:] It is the same, the same style of our enemies of yesterday. They try to undermine our unity, to buy our conscience, to enslave us anew. That is what North American imperialism is doing. The politics are the same and what Fidel said is important, that Cuba was an eternal Baraguá" (quoted in Cupull and González 100)."
Mariana, Maceo Fonts says, is a good role model in the current situation, for she was not one to rest when the situation demanded struggle (Cupull and Gonzalez 98). Because she was fully involved in the fight, he proposes, Mariana deserves a military rank. He says that she deserves this not only because of having forged heroes, but also because she herself "fought like one more [soldier]" (quote, 99).133

The biographical study ends with a review of the adversarial history that the US has had with Cuba during the past century. The present-day embargo, or blockade, is described as a continuation of annexationist desires of the US government toward Cuba. "To revitalize Mariana," conclude the authors, "and the family that she forged, is a form of fighting against those pretensions to Americanize the minds of the people of Martí, Maceo and Fidel. Mariana is [the] root of the patriotic soul of the people, of the consistent and intransigent sentiment of the Cuban family" (Cupull and González 106).134

Not all Cubans see the Cuban-US relationship in this way, however, although they too may evoke Mariana's name. Many Cubans and Cuban Americans in exile view the enemy not as US imperialistic designs, but rather as Fidel Castro. For them, a free Cuba means one without Castro or a revolutionary government.

One group of exiles with this point of view is Brothers to the Rescue.135 This group of pilots took on the task of combing the ocean waters between Cuba and Florida, looking for balseros.136 Many balseros had been drowning in the dangerous journey across the ocean, and Brothers to the Rescue were committed to saving their lives.

refuses to compromise her sovereignty by surrendering to domination by the US. Maceo Fonts put it this way: "The Protest of Baraguá was a symbol, was to demonstrate the disposition of the Cubans to be free" (quoted in Cupull and González 100). ["La Protesta de Baraguá, fue un símbolo, fue demostrar la disposición de los cubanos a ser libres."]

133"[...] luchó como uno más."

134"Revitalizar a Mariana y a la familia que forjó, es una forma de luchar contra esas pretensiones de americanizar la mente del pueblo de Martí, Maceo y Fidel. Mariana es raíz del alma patriótica del pueblo, del sentimiento consecuente e intransigente de la familia cubana."

135Hermanos al rescate

136Balseros was the name given to Cubans who were making their way to US shores on homemade rafts (balsas).
However, Brothers to the Rescue began to expand their mission from rescuing *balseros* found in international or US waters to flying over Cuban airspace. In spite of numerous complaints by Cuban authorities to Washington, the flights continued unhindered. In January 1996, the Brothers flew over Havana and dropped anti-Castro leaflets. The Cuban Air Force was ready for them the next time they flew into Cuban airspace. Cuban MiG planes chased the Brothers' two planes out into international waters where they shot them down, killing the four men on board.

In an online periodical, *Diario de las Américas*, Ena Curnow wrote an article in memorial to the men who died. One of the mothers of the dead, Eva Barba, who was living in Havana at the time of her son's death, was likened to Mariana Grajales. "For her age [74], her attitude, and her manner of being, Eva Barba reminds one of Mariana Grajales" (par. 20). "I know," says Eva, "that I am not the only mother who has lost a son, but all [mothers] hope to find the guilty party and make him pay for his crime. But in my case, I know that Castro killed my son and nothing happens. The only thing that I ask of God is that He judge him, that the truth opens the way" (par. 20).

---

When *balsero* Elián González arrived in Miami in November 1999, and was taken to live with his great-uncle against his father's wishes, the Cuban government began a campaign for Elián's return. One facet of this campaign was a call for the Cuban people to form large, public demonstrations. In January 2000, a demonstration composed of Cuban mothers made the front page of the Cuban state newspaper, *Granma*. The caption underneath a photo of the procession reads "LIKE ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND MARIANAS, Cuban mothers marched this Friday to

---

137 *Diary of the Americas*

138 "Por su edad, su actitud y su forma de ser, Eva Barba recuerda a Mariana Grajales."

139 "Yo sé que no soy la única madre que ha perdido un hijo, pero todas esperan encontrar al culpable y hacerlo pagar por su crimen. Pero en mi caso, sé que Castro mató a mi hijo y no pasa nada. Yo lo único que le pido a Dios es que lo juzguen, que la verdad se abra paso."

140 "Granma" is the name of the small boat that Castro and his followers used to invade Cuba from Mexico in 1956. The state newspaper is named after this boat.
demand the return of Elián González, in a march that broke all the predictions and was inscribed in the history of the revolutionary era" (Lopez). 141

The main feature of all of these portrayals of Mariana during the "Special Period" is her strength and resistance against the enemy. Her "exalted motherhood," while it plays an important part, is not in the forefront. It is her strength of character and the justness of her cause that enables her to confront her enemy with confidence. By evoking the name of Mariana Grajales in this aspect, one's struggle can be legitimized, made just, no matter what the ideological position.

In a way, the evocation of Mariana has come full circle. Once again, she is a woman for whom nothing is more important than Cuba's freedom, with varying interpretations of what that freedom means. She is willing to endure the loss of her loved ones, if need be. Mariana remains that perfect expression of the ideal of the Cuban people, the ideal of a homeland, free, proud and uniquely Cuban, one which they have created through their own strength and character.

Conclusion: An Enduring Representation

For more than an entire century, Mariana Grajales has served Cuba well as an expression of the ideal. The fact that she has remained a heroic figure throughout decades of change speaks to the ability of her life to be adapted, to be throughout time the current expression of the ideal of the Cuban people, both among the ruling authorities and the general population.

One reason that Mariana's life has been so adaptable over time is that there is so much about her life that is unknown. It was stated by those who knew Mariana that she attended to the wounded during the war, and it can be presumed that she performed the typically female tasks of cooking and laundering behind the insurgent lines. It is also a known fact that she opened her home in Jamaica to members of the independence movement. However, the lack of specific information about her duties and service allows later narrators of her story to embellish or omit as necessary, according to the circumstances and motives of the day.

Another reason Mariana's life has been able to be used throughout such diverse eras, such as those of Batista and Castro, is that her known activities never overstepped any normative

141"COMO CIEN MIL MARIANAS desfilaron este viernes las madres cubanas para exigir la devolución de Elián González, en una march que rompió los pronósticos y se inscribió en la historia de la era revolucionaria."
boundaries. In spite of the progress for women's equality which has been made in Cuba over the years, Cuba has been and remains a very machista\textsuperscript{142} country. "A distinctly Cuban machismo still describes women's experiences in the \textit{casa} [house] and the \textit{calle} [street]" (italics added; Lutjens 105).

Mariana's story fits comfortably within this model. In the \textit{casa}, as mother and wife, she seems to have an impeccable record as instiller and guardian of moral values. All of her children supported, most to the death, the war against Spain, which was and continues to be seen by Cubans as a just cause.\textsuperscript{143} The few episodes in which Mariana reportedly took the lead over her husband Marcos are not threatening in any way, for it is seen as a moral lead. He is at times portrayed as having followed Mariana's moral direction when he joined the insurrection.\textsuperscript{144}

In the \textit{calle}, Mariana remains within a traditionally accepted space also. Women in Cuba have a long history of activity in the public arena, but it remains a male-dominated arena at its highest levels. Mariana was certainly active in public life, but there is no record of her ever having overstepped the traditional boundaries of her era. All of her public activities supported the male-led insurrection or \textit{independentista} movement, and therefore her example has not been a threat to any of the various Cuban governments over the century, all of which have been male-dominated.

Mariana's example has been acceptable from a feminist point of view as well. As mentioned before, Cuban feminists in the early twentieth century believed in the importance of the mother in the home, forging the moral and spiritual character of her children. This has not changed much over the years. To this day, feminism in Cuba, and Latin American feminism in general, places great importance on woman's role as mother. Unlike its North American counterpart, Latin

\textsuperscript{142}\textit{Machista} is the adjective form of machismo. Machismo in this context can be described as "an expression [...] of the patriarchal system. It consists in establishing a certain superiority of men over women [...]. This serves to consolidate a certain 'specialization', a division of functions, attitudes, capacities and qualities which are then attributed to one sex or another" (Latin American and Caribbean Women's Collective 7).

\textsuperscript{143}While there were very diverse motives among Cubans for desiring independence from Spain, most were couched in terms of morality. For the creole elite, Spanish rule was seen as illegitimate and detrimental to the proper economic development of the island; at the more popular level, it was seen as being inextricably linked to the immoral system of slavery. An independent Cuba, it was commonly viewed, "shorn of its economic debilities and social inequalities, would bring forth a new society" (Pérez 1997; 81). The war itself was spoken of as "a method of redemption and a means of social revolution" (Pérez 1997; 80).

\textsuperscript{144}See, for example, Rodríguez 25 and Maceo Fonts in Cupull 96.
American feminism "emphasizes the importance and dignity of bearing children and caring for the home [and rejects . . . ] hatred of the patriarchy [...]" (Stoner 1987; 109).

That Mariana Grajales has remained a heroic figure throughout a century of great changes in Cuban society reflects, then, the endurance of certain cultural values such as the sacredness of motherhood and the acceptance of a patriarchal system. However, another enduring value of the Cuban people, and perhaps the most salient one where Mariana's example is concerned, is a fervent patriotic love which cannot be separated from a fierce desire for a homeland free of outside domination.

From the beginning of Cuba's history, "the notion of a separate and independent nationality, in full possession of its own destiny, early took hold of the Cuban imagination" (Pérez 1997; xvi). This notion of *Cuba libre*145 has retained its significance to the present day, and has perhaps even been strengthened by the United States' historic and continuous "resolve to control Cuba" (Pérez 1997; xviii).

Because Mariana Grajales spent many years of her own life in unswerving, fervent dedication to the goal of *Cuba libre*, at tremendous personal sacrifice, she is well qualified to express this ideal of the patriotic Cuban. As long as *Cuba libre* continues to fire the Cuban imagination, Mariana Grajales will continue to be a relevant heroic figure, and a versatile expression of the ideal of the people of Cuba.

---

145free Cuba; This slogan originally referred ambiguously to a Cuba separate from Spain. In the 1880s, José Martí developed an ideological substance for the words. They came to "represent a movement of enormous vigor, possessed of elements of nationalism, social justice, and popular democracy all having to do with the notion of a Cuba free and for Cubans" (Pérez 1997; xvi). That notion entailed, according to Martí, a Cuba free not only from Spain but also from economic and political dependence upon the United States. In the ensuing decades the slogan has been employed in various ways and by various groups, from expressing continued Cuban resistance to US hegemony to naming an alcoholic drink to denoting a Cuba free from Fidel Castro.
Bibliography


Lutjens, Sheryl L. "Reading Between the Lines: Women, the State, and Rectification in Cuba." Latin American Perspectives 22.2 (1995) : 100-124.


**NAFTA/MERCOSUR WORKING PAPER SERIES**


**OCCASIONAL PAPER SERIES**

2. Davidson, Russ "A Description of Rare and Important Medina Imprints in the University of New Mexico Library." May 1988.


SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS


All research and occasional papers and special publications are available from the Latin American and Iberian Institute; University of New Mexico; 801 Yale NE; Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131; 505 277-2961. Some papers are also available on the Latin American and Iberian Institute Website: www.unm.edu/laiinfo. To comply with the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, these publications are also available in alternative formats.