

## 1.1. Résumé

The objective of this thesis is to show how female's protagonists had changed from Romanticism by Modernism. On that purpose we decided to choose and compare four different novels: *María* (by Jorge Isaacs), *Lucía Jerez* (by José Martí) and *Broken Idols* (*Ídolos rotos* by Manuel Díaz Rodríguez) and *The iron man* (*El hombre de hierro* by Rufino Blanco Fombona).

The thesis begins with an introduction to Romanticism and Modernism and then it is divided into three main parts; each of them is focused on one of the novels.

As for three parts, first, we mention a story line of each novel and then we focus on four main female heroines: María, Lucía, Teresa and María Luz. We start with María.

*María* is considered to be a romantic novel. It is a story about unfortunate love between Efraín and María. María is young, beautiful, innocent and pure. We do not know much about her feelings or thoughts because it is Efraín (her love and narrator of the story), who describes everything. It seems like María has no will, she let other people to decide for her. At the end of the story María dies, but she will always be in Efraín's heart; pure and beautiful as she was during her short life.

The novel *Lucía Jerez* stays between Romanticism and Modernism. It is also a love story, but this kind of love is different from the idyllic one we have seen in *María*. Lucía is engaged to her cousin, Juan. Another young lady, Sol del Valle, disturbs her ordinary life. Sol represents romantic heroine, she is very beautiful, kind and innocent. She is always associated with nature. On the other hand, Lucía is already a modernist heroine. She loves everything artificial and she is associated with town. Lucía is the real protagonist of the novel. During the novel her love for Juan is deformed and changed into an obsession. She is jealous of Sol and, in the end, she is not able to control her feelings. That is when Lucía kills Sol.

The third novel is *Broken Idols*. It tells us about Alberto Soria, a young sculptor who returns from Paris to Caracas. His life and his creation are affected by three women: Jullieta (his lover in Paris), María and Teresa. The most important is Teresa, femme fatale. She is also associated with urban ambient and she is as active as Lucía was. Alberto has affair with Teresa, even though she is married. She inspires him to make a new sculpture but in the same time he is not able to finish it because of her.

In this novel we can see influence of the new aesthetics of the end of the century: psychological profiles, dynamic characterization of persons, uncomprehended protagonist.

The fourth novel is *The Iron Man (El hombre de hierro)* from Rufino Blanco Fombona is also considered to be modernist. It is a story about unavailing marriage of Crispín Luz and María. At the same time the author intends to criticize the society of Venezuela. The two main protagonists, Crispín and María, are different from those we have seen before. Crispín is not a perfect man, he is not handsome and he is not artist (he is financial). But he also has good qualities: he is sincere, honest and he really loves his wife. He is not ready to live in the twentieth century. María is also interesting. At the beginning she does not have any will and she lets the others to decide for her. She marries because she does not want to be alone. But the marriage is not happy and she suffers. The suffering changes her and in the end of the novel she will realise that she must determinate her destiny.

As we can see, the picture of female heroine has changed a lot. At the beginning, there was María, a young and innocent lady with no will. Then we can see a big change in the next novel *Lucía Jerez*, where she is the real protagonist of the story. Her psychological portrait is brilliant. In *Broken Idols* there is Teresa, who is not only active, but she is also very sensuous. We can describe her as a femme fatale. Although she does not destroy her lover or herself, she enables Alberto to finish his work. The last heroine is María. At the beginnig, she does not have any will (this reminds María from the first novel *María*) but in the end, after a lot of suffering, she becomes her own mistress.

We conclude that the major change of female heroine is the shift from passivity to action. Anyway, it was an incentive to observe the different perspective of each author on the female figure. It reflects not only the social conventions of those times, but also personal and literary experience of the individual writer.

