The Representation of Domestic Servants in Eighteenth-Century Spanish Theatre

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Domestic servants comprised a major sector of the working population in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Madrid, assisting in the completion of daily responsibilities and acting as symbols of status for their superiors. Despite their significant presence and important roles in everyday life in the court city, domestics have generally been overlooked by scholarship that has focused on the rapid expansion of the middle class and top-down social reforms of that time. Recognizing the complexity of domestic service and the lack of primary information on servants themselves, my dissertation examines the representation of domestics in Spanish theatre, using Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s La petimetra, Leandro Fernández de Moratín’s El sí de las niñas, and the sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz to gain valuable insight into the profession. The connection between dramatic representation and domestic service solidifies itself during the eighteenth-century, as both areas enter periods of substantial growth and reform. Similarly, domestic service is in many regards a performance, with servants often acting against their will to carry out daily responsibilities and function as status symbols for their superiors. Masters, in turn, act out other roles in these relationships to reinforce their social position, power, and prestige. Studying depictions of the characters of domestic servants, and the world in which they operate, in selected theatrical works, therefore sheds light on the entire profession and helps recreate a major part of Spanish
society. Drama, while it cannot completely objectify domestic service, can reveal certain aspects of the profession, namely that servants were vastly present in eighteenth-century Madrid, domestic service was a complex profession in both its make-up and the variety of people who completed service-based tasks, domestic service involved a wide range of tasks both inside the home and in public spaces, and generated fascinating master-servant and servant-servant relationships. Additionally, the expansion of servant responsibilities is paralleled by the increase of theatrical functions of the characters of domestic servants in the selected works, another true testament to their expansion and growing significance. These features, present in the selected theatrical works, help navigate the paradoxical situation of studying representations of a profession that is to a great extent difficult to represent or approximate. My dissertation therefore paints a picture of the service profession in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Madrid, while evaluating what may have been believable to the general public and audiences of that time. It also suggests that theatrical works can be used as a valid source of information on social, historical and economic issues.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents.
Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the overwhelming support I’ve had over the years in my education at University School, College of William and Mary, University of Michigan and The Ohio State University. In particular, I would like to recognize Rebecca Haidt, Donald Larson, Stephen Summerhill and Vicente Cantarino for their wonderful suggestions and guidance throughout the entire process, and for sharing their passion for literature and culture with me during class and discussions. I would also like to thank George Greenia for sparking my interest in Spanish literature, and for believing in me. The support from my colleagues along the way has also been extremely helpful, and I would like to extend a special thanks to Samuel Amell, Elizabeth Davis, Heather Nelson, Joaquín Soldevilla, Jan Macián, Rob Robison, Jenny Fourman, Scott Schwenter, Terrell Morgan, Melissa Logue and Eugenia Romero.
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Chapter 1: Why Servants?

Daily life in eighteenth-century Madrid merits a thorough examination of domestic service during that time. A landlocked capital\(^1\) and the largest city in Spain, Madrid specialized in certain areas of industry, most notably textiles, but followed a different trajectory from many of its European counterparts.\(^2\) Madrid stood out as a political center and court city that housed many of the country’s elite, as historian José Nieto writes in *Artesanos y mercaderes: Una historia social y economía de Madrid (1450-1850)*: "Con estas carencias (economía diversificada, puerto internacional, asiento de importantes manufacturas)-del comienzo y de después-Madrid destacaba por ser la residencia del rey, la sede del gobierno, la capital del imperio" (293-294). In fact, Nieto argues that this transformation into a court city had already started to take shape a century earlier: "Estos rasgos convertirían al Madrid del XVII en la ciudad cortesana por excelencia, la urbe parásita diseñada por Braudel. En definitiva, la ciudad en la que se asienta la corte explicaría por sí misma la desindustrialización, la ‘desurbanización industrial’ o el atraso económico del reino, como propone Ringrose" (181). Families across all social classes relied on hired help to complete daily tasks, but with the growing presence of upper and upper-middle class citizens in Madrid\(^3\) domestic servants and workers of all types became even more coveted for their skills, labor and social value, as they were needed to carry out the “lesser,” everyday tasks and also act as status symbols for their superiors.\(^4\) These roles were filled by local families, artisans, apprentices, journeymen, students, and immigrants from other countries or rural Spain, who offered
their services in exchange for some form of compensation, ranging from simple room and
board, to a stable income, career advancement, and possible upward social mobility.

When households couldn’t find adequate help or tried to economize, families and their
limited staff of servants took on many of the responsibilities, such as cooking and
cleaning, internally. Other options included hiring part-time assistants, or assigning
multiple tasks to each servant. Carmen Sarasúa writes that many middle class families
employed women domestics, who demanded less of a salary, and then divided
responsibilities amongst them: “En este caso, una de ellas se ocupaba de la cocina
(compra, comida, fregado) y la otra de la casa y ropa” (Criados 106). The wide range of
people completing service-related tasks across multiple economic and social spheres
therefore led to the expansion of an extremely complex service sector in the capital,
where the environment varied with each household, tasks were often carried out without
documentation or extended into other types of work, and workers frequently became
“master-less” men who were not always accounted for in censuses or other official
records. Clearly, domestic service in eighteenth-century Madrid was, “Una organización
de la producción que se resiste a la cuantificación, difícil de medir con las categorías con
las que se abordan los mercados de trabajo industriales” (Sarasúa, Criados xvii).

Due to financial struggles, sickness, and food shortages that furthered the division
of Madrid into neighborhoods marked along socioeconomic lines, the capital city
experienced several population shifts in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, and
eventually doubled in size, increasing the need for domestic help. Servants formed a
vital branch of society that comprised almost 35% of the total population of Madrid in 1787 (Ringrose 71), and 30% in 1860 (Sarasúa, Criados xi). Both of these figures may even be low, given that many people working as servants or who completed service-related jobs did not figure into official records. At the same time, however, by performing numerous tasks crucial to the daily functioning of the household, servants developed dynamic and multifaceted relationships with their colleagues and masters. That is, master-servant and servant-servant interactions, as well as daily responsibilities to some extent, often became a type of performance, especially if they centered on appearance, gossip, moments of tension or frustration, and household mishaps. The connection between servant and household meant that female domestics were expected to be pure, honorable, and have strong morals (Sarasúa, Criados 229-230), while males needed to satisfy their masters’ wishes in any way possible. Carmen Sarasúa writes, “el sirviente debe ‘gustarle’ a sus señores, debe gustar su presencia física, su manera de hablar, peinarse, vestirse” (Criados, 230). Servants in public areas or in the presence of others were particularly scrutinized for their appearance, gestures, actions, and words, as they reflected their masters and households at all times.⁹

In essence, servants were like actors performing on a stage for an audience that expected an entertaining presentation. When portrayed in theatrical works, these circumstances and interactions offered a unique link between theatre and real life, specifically with regard to the notion of verisimilitude and to theatrical function. Here lie the paradox and irony surrounding domestic service and drama that appear at the heart of
my dissertation, namely that I am dealing with representations of a profession that is generally “unrepresentable”, very unpredictable, and poorly documented. Indeed, among the stories taking shape in eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Madrid, that of domestic service is one of the most compelling, due particularly to the intersections of service, performance, and theatricality. This thesis will investigate the ways in which domestic service brought people from a range of classes in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Madrid, in particular the period from 1760-1810, together in a shared performance of multiple relationships around power, networking and social success in daily life; and will argue that theatrical representations of domestic service provide crucial evidence of the roles played by domestic performances of power and community between masters and servants in the capital.

Salí de Madrid el 11 de octubre, en compañía de mi sobrino Baltasar, y de D. José Sampil, presbítero, natural de Mieres, a quien antes había elegido por mayordomo, así por su talento, buen juicio y conducta, como por sus conocimientos y afición a la agricultura. Traje de familia al ayuda de cámara D. Domingo García de la Fuente, al cochero Pedro, a los lacayos Manuel, y Colás, y a un cocinero nuevo llamado Andrés; vino también el paje-alumno Periquín y el conserje Francisco, el cual se encargó de conducir mi berlina de calle, además de una silla de posta que compré en la Dirección de Correos, nueva, aunque nbuena, a lo que puedo juzgar. (Jovellanos, Diarios 482).
The second volume of Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos’ *Diarios* covers different events in his life from the years 1795 to 1801. In the final section of the ninth diary, entitled “Regreso al hogar,” Jovellanos describes how he returned home to Gijón in 1798 from the Court in Madrid with his nephew, and in the company of eight servants, ranging from the highest-ranking *mayordomo* to the footmen. Carmen Sarasúa, in *Criados, nodrizas y amos: El servicio doméstico en la formación del mercado de trabajo madrileño, 1758-1868*, uses this entry as a reference to show how servants were divided according to their responsibilities and along hierarchical lines, and how they changed titles according to the tasks they performed while preserving the smooth function of the household (102). Typically only wealthier families in eighteenth-century Spain were able to meet the expense of having such a complete staff of hired help, with male domestics and specialized workers regarded more as symbols of status.¹⁰ However, families across all social classes often employed domestic servants to assist with daily chores and fulfill the hope of improving, or just maintaining, their own social position. Sir Benjamin Keene, English Ambassador to Spain in the eighteenth-century, describes how servants were used as part of a display by the country’s elite: “On journeys in the peninsula the wealthier nobility would travel in great magnificence in a train with five or six coaches, a waggon for their household effects, and a multitude of cocks, servants, and grooms” (qtd. in Lynch: 230-1). By participating in the performance of this type of public display, domestics not only became important to their superiors for their work, but also
transformed into desirable commodities or possessions of the social elite, ones that could be freely exhibited.

Jovellanos’ diary indeed reveals the presence of an intricate hierarchy within the world of domestic service that manifests itself spatially, physically and philosophically. Although each family situation was unique, Carmen Sarasúa charts an implicit pecking order of domestics in her 1994 study, *Criados, nodrizas y amos: El servicio doméstico en la formación del mercado de trabajo madrileño, 1758-1858*. According to Sarasúa, in larger and wealthier households the servants who assisted the master or males were the most important and respected, followed by those who assisted the mistress or females. The remainder of the servants fell at the bottom of the ladder: “La estricta jerarquía de sirvientes puede dividirse entre los que estaban al servicio personal de los hombres, los que estaban al servicio de las mujeres y el resto de los empleados” (86). Within the groups of servants of males and females, there also existed other hierarchies that manifested themselves through the delegation of daily tasks and work spaces. Of course, real-life situations frequently varied from these hierarchies. In wealthier families, servants could be given different titles according to the tasks they were assigned, “Los nombres que reciben los distintos criados (la ‘familia’), cambian según las tareas que desempeñen y las necesidades” (Sarasúa, *Criados* 102). In middle class and more modest families, servants might share responsibilities or work closely together to keep the household functioning properly: “Los dos o tres sirvientes de las familias de clase media se combinaban de muchos modos” (Sarasúa, *Criados* 104). Still, the general presence of
a hierarchy was felt within households, and translated easily to depiction in theatrical works. The following chart illustrates graphically Sarasúa’s words:

Hierarchy of Domestic Servants in Wealthier Households (Sarasúa, *Criados* 86-95)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Servants of Males</th>
<th>Servants of Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Mayordomo</td>
<td>Servants in house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Ayuda de cámara</td>
<td>1a) Camareras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Paje</td>
<td>1b) Doncellas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Lacayos, Criados</td>
<td>1c) Criadas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Cocheros/Sotas/Volantes/Cazadores/Otros pajes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Situated at the top of the ladder is the mayordomo, manager of his master’s affairs and supervisor of the other servants, followed by the ayuda de cámara. The mayordomo shared an intimate relationship with his master; hence, trustworthiness, efficiency, and intelligence were highly-sought after qualities when assigning this position (Sarasúa, *Criados* 86-87). Jovellanos found these qualities in D. José Sampil, “a quien antes había elegido por mayordomo, así por su talento, buen juicio y conducta, como por sus conocimientos y afición a la agricultura” (Jovellanos, *Diarios* 482). Of course, it probably helped that Sampil was a native of Mieres in the southern part of Asturias, as well as an expert on agriculture, as his knowledge and experience would
have helped guide the group through the picturesque countryside and mountains on their way home to the north of Spain. In fact, Jovellanos trusted and respected Sampil so much, that he referred to him by the title of Don in the journal, and would later appoint his friend to personal chaplain—a title that carried the responsibility of educating others in religion and morals. Jovellanos makes reference to Sampil on nine other occasions in his journal, revealing how his confidant even assisted in significant business transactions:

“El 6 del corriente, por la noche, recibió D. José Sampil, a cuenta del convenio anterior, 5.000 reales en dinero, de los Sres. Rodríguez” (Diarios 493). Jovellanos also mentions the wages paid and items gifted to Sampil, documenting in the final diary the writing materials that he purchases for him, “Regalos: a Sampil, una escribanía de plata de peso de cincuenta y dos onzas” (502).

Following the hierarchical order, the ayuda de cámara traditionally had the closest physical contact to his superiors, as his responsibilities included helping his master get ready each day by dressing and shaving him, according to the definition of this role: “el criado destinado para afeytar, peynar y vestir a su amo” (Sarasúa, Criados 89). The private nature of these tasks made the ayuda de cámara another position that involved a great deal of trust. Jovellanos therefore filled it with D. Domingo García de la Fuente, a servant who had already been working in his family: “Traje de familia al ayuda de cámara…” Jovellanos’ choice of a male for the position of ayuda de cámara fit the norm of hiring someone from the same sex to assist with personal hygiene; mistresses would hire female servants to assist them with similar responsibilities, with male hairdressers
one of the only exceptions to their personal staff (Sarasúa, *Criados* 94). Ironically, in spite of the fact that Jovellanos was already familiar with D. Domingo García de la Fuente, he doesn’t reference his ayuda de cámara at any other point in the journal. The lack of details may be a result of the more private, or possibly even mundane, tasks that these servants typically performed. Extending this argument to our daily lives, it seems logical that we would not document or mention every minute detail such as getting dressed, bathing, or shaving. Jovellanos too, may not have felt the need to record every little step he took to prepare for each day. I will address the personal and unique side of domestic service in the chapter on daily responsibilities.

The remaining servants in Jovellanos’ group fell at the lower end of the hierarchy, but also performed small tasks that were useful to the journey. The cochero helped prepare the horses and transportation, the cocinero was responsible for the food, and the conserje would take care of the cleaning and lodging arrangements. Similarly, the paje and lacayos served as extra help and protection for their master, as their roles were to accompany him in public at all times. Because of their lesser rank and public exposure, such spots were often filled by young men looking to get a start in the profession, or who needed lodging and food. Students were prime candidates for these short-term roles, since they were less expensive to hire but valued for being male, intelligent and well-mannered.12 Given that good behavior and clean appearance of servants reflected well on their masters, hiring capable students for very little, even if only on a temporary basis, was an excellent investment. In the case of the *Diarios*, Periquín bears the title of paje-
alumno. Jovellanos writes how the young student attended university lectures and classes while also living in the house, “Se empiezan los exámenes de Aritmética: salen bien de ellos Pola, Condres menor, Perico el de casa…” (248). Jovellanos documents in even more detail the actions of the lacayo, Colás and the conserje, Francisco, both of whom accompany their master on short trips and take care of simple errands. The daily responsibilities of these two servants, certainly not more personal or special than the tasks D. Domingo García de la Huerta performed, offered something unique: they tended to take place in public or visible areas. In this regard, the lacayo and conserje, and to some extent the paje-alumno, were just as valuable as their superiors, as they publically enhanced Jovellanos’ social status. Coincidentally, Jovellanos seems to have been more open to writing about the two domestics, and mentions them quite frequently during the journal. Colás is described as delivering messages, paying bills, picking up the mail, and following his master around the city, among other activities. In total he is referenced by Jovellanos twenty-seven times in the two volumes of the Diarios, and interacts with his master on a personal level on several occasions. Francisco is portrayed with less frequency than his colleague, but has some of his own personal life revealed through the Diarios as well. The seven references to Francisco allude to the conserje’s marriage, new job, and how he takes care of a mule that slipped and fell.

The examples of the lacayo, conserje, paje-alumno bring up a particularly complex side of domestic service. In addition to involving the completion of specific tasks related to the journey, many positions like those mentioned in the Diarios carried
with them the function of acting as symbols of wealth and status. By bringing along such a large group of male servants Jovellanos not only addressed his basic needs, but also publically reinforced his social position by being able to display these assistants at will. His choice of a large staff of male servants, something that only wealthier households could typically afford, was essentially a performance or act of power. That is, the number of servants, especially more costly males, gave Jovellanos certain prestige and elevated his social position in the eyes of others. Meanwhile, the servants themselves were compensated for performing their duties in an honorable and efficient way, and were expected to act according to the expectations of Jovellanos. Carmen Sarasúa writes that the work of cocheros and other servants “of the street,” constantly required them to perform in visible areas, where they carried out basic orders: “Esperan en las puertas de la casa o palacio, y organizan el cuidado de los carruajes y caballerías” (Criados 91). These responsibilities, especially if they involve a task as simple as waiting or following, are less demanding physically than many of the daily chores completed inside the home. Yet they are valued equally for their public nature and occasional theatrics resulting from master-servant and servant-servant interactions. Other servants, like pajes and lacayos, performed similar functions. Sarasúa writes that they too were most likely brought along to accompany their master, and therefore became more beneficial for their presence in the community than for their work: “Los pajes, que en algunas casas formaban muchedumbre, no tenían más cometido específico que estar alrededor de sus señores, acompañarlos en sus desplazamientos a pie o en coche, llevar recados o notas y, en
definitivo, mostrar con su presencia pública el poder del señor a quien servían” (Criados 90). This additional purpose behind employing domestics, especially in a fluctuating society where public appearance and social status were highly valued, shows how servants played an important role projecting the power and status of masters in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Spain.

A comparable scenario to Jovellanos’ Diarios appears in Spanish drama from the time. Leandro Fernández de Moratín’s famous comedy, El sí de las niñas (1801), which was written three years after Jovellanos’ journal entry, is also set during a trip. Moratín traveled extensively during his lifetime and internalized certain aspects of the places he visited. José Montero Padilla writes in his edition of El sí de las niñas, “El perfil viajero constituye un aspecto esencial en la personalidad de Leandro Fernández de Moratín. Por gusto primero, por necesidad de desterrado después, el escritor recorrió insistentemente los caminos de Europa” (15-16). Although the fictional circumstances of El sí de las niñas are different than those actual occurrences referred to in the personal accounts of Jovellanos (the characters have just picked up the young Francisca from a convent and are traveling home to prepare for her marriage to the much older Don Diego), there are some striking similarities between the two texts. First, the leaders of both expeditions are recognized members of society. Historically, Jovellanos was well-respected for his work and lineage,15 while Don Diego claims in the opening scene of the play to be known by many esteemed citizens: “Aquí me conocen todos (el Corregidor, el señor Abad, el Visitador, el Rector de Málaga… ¡Qué sé yo! Todos…)” (54). Second, they are
traveling in the company of domestic servants who assist them in variety of ways and also solidify their social position, a typical characteristic of aspiring nobles and those hopeful of upward social mobility. Carmen Sarasúa writes, “La posición social de los cortesanos se media con precisión por el número de criados empleados, especialmente en lugares públicos” (Criados 80). The actions of Jovellanos and his staff therefore serve as a fragment of a much larger performance, while the servants in El sí de las niñas essentially perform at the theatrical level.

In each situation, the master has a personal servant who is loyal and with whom he can share private information. Jovellanos’ confidant is D. José Sampil, while Don Diego relies on the services of Simón throughout El sí de las niñas. The other three primary characters in Moratín’s comedy are assisted by personal servants as well. Finally, there is a strong hierarchy present amongst the staff of domestics in both texts. Jovellanos develops this hierarchy through the titles he gives his servants. The description of his staff in the Diarios carefully mentions the position of each servant along with their names. In El sí de las niñas the stratification is produced spatially and through the designation of household tasks. Don Diego’s personal servant, Simón, is frequently situated to the side of his master, and is assigned more visible chores such as delivering messages. At no moment is he observed completing any of the cumbersome chores in the kitchen. On the other hand, the female servant, Rita, follows her mistresses when she enters the stage for the first time, and is often depicted carrying out burdensome and less glorified responsibilities of preparing rooms, carrying clothes or serving food.
Clearly, the hierarchy of power between master and servant is reiterated among servants themselves, according to the tasks they perform.

The presence of domestic servants in Jovellanos’ journal entry and Moratín’s El sí de las niñas is not coincidental. The two texts serve as a microcosm of a much larger picture of life in Madrid during the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries, where servants played a pivotal role in society. Although the majority of households in Spain during that time couldn’t afford the luxury of having an entire team of domestics on hand, many families in Madrid sought out extra help to complete their daily chores and to better their public image, with more modest households often over-extending their financial means to maintain or impersonate a certain status and appearance (Sarasúa, Criados 103). This increased reliance on domestic service across all social classes in an age of modernization created numerous opportunities for employment and extended the migration of people to quickly growing urban areas like the capital: “el servicio doméstico no sólo confirmaba su importancia en la estructura profesional de la población madrileña, sino que aparecía como un mecanismo a través del cual los jóvenes campesinos se insertaban en el mercado de trabajo urbano” (Sarasúa, Criados xiii). Both the practical and strategical, or perhaps pretentious, reasons behind employing domestic servants in eighteenth-century Madrid created a duality regarding the profession:

“Además de realizar las tareas con las que tradicionalmente se les asocia, los sirvientes expresan la posición social que la familia para la que trabajan tiene o aparenta tener” (Sarasúa, Criados 73). Families, or even individuals in the case of Jovellanos and the
fictional Don Diego, hired domestics to help assist with daily chores and to support or bolster their own social status in the eyes of the public. The presence of servants in both Jovellanos’ journal and Moratín’s play, and the shared aspects of their functions and performativity in both real life and on stage, furthermore opens the door to a much deeper discussion that sits at the center of my thesis, namely whether the representation of domestics in theatrical works can help recreate certain aspects of the profession. To address this issue I propose to look at the practical aspects of servants’ lives that inform performances on the stage.

How does the representation and theatrical function of servants correspond to servants’ actual lives and roles? Who exactly were servants? In other words, from what locations, gender, social classes and categories did they come? What household tasks did different types of servants really do? How and where did servants in Spain, and more specifically Madrid, live during that time, both during and after their hours of work? What sources allow us to best access details of their lives? If literature seems to provide evidence for the performativity and functions of this major sector of society, what approach permits us to conceptualize the link between stage and parlor, or theatre and home? Carmen Sarasúa bases her study of domestic servants in Spain on the announcements of the Diario de Avisos de Madrid. However, she acknowledges in the opening chapter other sources of information regarding domestic service, such as family records, legal and institutional records, censuses, manuals of behavior and etiquette, surveys, artwork, and literature. My thesis expands on the final aspect, as I propose that
drama can indeed be a valuable tool in facilitating the recreation of the lives of domestics in Spain. This connection is especially clear in the comedia and the sainete, as the former is considered a low genre and the latter commonly utilized the representation on stage of characters from popular classes and marginalized groups.

It is important to examine literary sources, since there is currently a gap in statistical and documentary information regarding domestics from the same period. The primary motivation behind my research is that in spite of their enormous presence on stage and in daily life, domestic servants in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Madrid have been overlooked by historians and critics on several levels for a variety of reasons. Carmen Sarasúa writes that a variety of factors have contributed to the lack of information about servants in Spain from this era: “La complejidad de situaciones a analizar, la dificultad de utilizar y corregir las cifras de los censos y, sobre todo, la idea de que se trata de formas residuales y no productivas, contribuyen a explicar la escasez de trabajos sobre el sector” (Criados 5). Scholars of this time period have traditionally focused on the growth of the middle class and top-down social reforms, instead of seeking direct documentation of the lives of working-class persons such as servants in Spain. Only Carmen Sarasúa’s study is credited with a comprehensive study of servants in Madrid from these years; the valuable social histories of Spain of Jesús Cruz and José Nieto include information on servants in relation to people from designated classes.17 Ironically, the case of servants in France or England from the same era is supported in much more detail by critical studies such as Cissie Fairchilds’, Domestic Enemies.
Michael McKeon’s, The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private and the Division of Knowledge, Bridget Hill’s, Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth-century, or Tim Meldrum’s Domestic Service and Gender, 1660-1750: Life and Work in the London Household. The resulting discrepancy has created a unique situation where a major sector of Spanish society during an age of early modernization has to a degree been largely forgotten, while at the same time many aspects of the profession have been widely researched for other European countries. Studies of domestics in London or Paris can help provide parallel models for questions about Madrid. Nonetheless, I have turned to Spanish drama to find more answers to the questions that remain unsettled with regard to Spain.

In a first approach, my thesis attempts to recreate certain aspects of the lives of domestic servants and their complex profession in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Madrid through a study of dramatic texts from that time. Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos argues that the changes in eighteenth-century Spain, particularly in the second half of the century, are reflected most deeply in theatre, given its popularity and important role in society from the time. With a lack of theatrical notes and obviously no recordings of performances, I have chosen to focus specifically on the written texts of the works I analyze here. The meshing of domestic service and drama, a subset of theatre, fits perfectly within the chosen time period. First, the two fields simultaneously undergo significant transformation during those years. Domestic service changes from a patriarchal to a contractual model and becomes recognized less for the significant number
of male workers, all while developing into the largest employment group on the
peninsula. Concurrently, Spanish theatre as a whole enters a period of self-discovery and
reform that followed two centuries of peak literary, artistic and theatrical achievements.
Proponents of the theatre in eighteenth-century Spain, such as Ignacio de Luzán, Leandro
and Nicolás Fernández de Moratín, and Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, respond to an
assortment of problems on the peninsula, such as a lack of training for actors, poor
conditions of theatre buildings, and the absence of a major production. To address these
issues they advocate for a series of improvements and generate conversation regarding
theatrical and aesthetical reform. One of the major issues discussed is the accuracy or
plausibility of theatrical representation, a topic that extends naturally to the depictions of
the characters of servants on stage, and whether or not they are believable. Additionally,
the characters of servants appear quite frequently and with more complex roles and
functions in the comedias of Leandro and Nicolás Fernández de Moratín and the sainetes
of Ramón de la Cruz, during a period of rapid increase in the number of servants in
Madrid increases at a rapid rate. Not only is the presence of servants felt more on stage
through theatrical representations, but in society as well. Finally, both domestic service
and theatre help shed light on each other. In carrying out their responsibilities in
theatrical works, these characters provide background information and stage directions,
and contribute to the plot development. Cruz’s Sainetes even portray servants from time
to time as the protagonists on stage. Studying the roles and functions of servants and the
depictions of the complex profession on stage allows us to understand what dramatists
and theatergoers of the time considered believable, while also painting a picture of different aspects of the world of domestic service.

Before investigating Spanish drama; however, it is first necessary to mention several possible factors in the mystery and obscurity of servants: the private nature of the profession, a lack of primary documents, the exclusion of domestics from standard social divisions and censuses, and the ambiguity surrounding the term, servant. Why have domestic servants in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Spain been traditionally overlooked or practically forgotten by cultural or literary scholars? One reason has to do with the very private nature of the profession, making domestic service difficult to document or represent. Michael McKeon, in The Secret History of Domesticity, claims that we must investigate the private in order to fully understand domestic service: “its story can only make sense within the more general story of modern privacy and its separation out from the realm of the public” (xxi). Although the profession included many detectable responsibilities like delivering messages, accompanying masters, and running errands, the majority of daily chores were completed inside the home, making the lives and work of domestics difficult to access: “But for all the visibility of many (servants), probably far more remained invisible, only rarely leaving their households and venturing into the outside world” (Hill 1). Ironically, gaining access to this private or secretive side of domestic service does not necessarily guarantee information on the daily responsibilities of the profession. James Amelang, in The Flight of Icarus: Artisan Autobiography in Early Modern Europe, suggests that autobiographies or self-narratives
can help reconstruct the popular classes in society, but ultimately extend beyond the ordinary and routine. He points out that these texts are derived from interactions with others and not just personal accounts of everyday life: “The Romantic, and still widely held, assumption that self-narrative is the culminating form of individual expression has more recently given way to the realization that the autobiographical act, like all other acts of writing, is deeply embedded in a broad range of social relations” (5). In other words, personal accounts by servants themselves might focus more on their relationships and interactions with others instead of revealing mundane details centered on daily responsibilities or spaces like the kitchen, bathroom, or pantry. The end result is an infinite recurrence that takes the scholar to either unique accounts of domestic service or overarching images of the profession.

The private and personal aspects of domestic service also impede our document-based understanding of the profession, especially if those aspects involve details that are too sensitive to discuss or too common to consider. Indeed, documentation of personal issues in domestic service might tend toward providing information about the bizarre, abnormal, or even mundane, but private details are likely to be few and far between. James Amelang hints at a similar issue in studying autobiography: “Its very insistence on singularity, and its assumption of an explicitly personalized voice, render the balance between the general and particular especially delicate” (3). Families across all social classes and time periods have similar basic needs. Although they may be personal, these needs are typically handled in discreet fashion. Few elaborate on the methods of cleaning
chamber pots, scouring the floors, or completing laundry-tasks, all of which are performed in isolation, or private spaces of the home. Chores of this nature are too common and delicate at the same time to mention in normal discourse. Even in conversations today, how often do we talk about brushing our teeth, washing our faces, or scrubbing the shower? Notice I intentionally excluded going to the bathroom, which in my upbringing is still more personal and inappropriate in daily talk, no matter how customary it may be to our everyday lives. Private details can be as shocking as a broken piece of furniture or kitchen fire, or they can be as simple as a series of personal requests from a master to his servant. By bordering on the abnormal or extremely personal nature, however, they add to the individuality and complexity of the service profession and become more difficult to locate in archival documentation. Even job advertisements regarding domestic positions mentioned certain traits that were desirable but typically did not include many of the traditional duties, such as setting the table or dressing the master, that were more commonplace. Claude Lacelle in Urban Domestic Servants in 19th-Century Canada, comments on this trend in his study, “Few documents give any details of the work of the different servants, most likely because everyone knew what was expected of them” (33).

Finally, the private nature of domestic service implies that the makeup and function of each household differ. It would therefore be dangerous to generalize and classify the responsibilities or characteristics of the profession into a few overarching categories. Still, some assumptions can be made. A wealthier family might be able to
afford a larger staff of specialized servants, whereas a more modest family would probably only hire two female domestics to share the daily responsibilities (Sarasúa, *Criados* 106). The division of chores between the two households would most likely differ, given the varying economic situation between them. Other disparities are created by varying economic situations between families as well, namely the use of technology within the house, and the ability to hire servants with specific skill sets. The end result in these scenarios is a series of fine points that might be understood by one family, but certainly not across the entire profession, leading us to conclude that domestic service is even more complex than at first glance. Dorothy Marshall mentions this irony surrounding servants across Europe in, *The English Domestic Servant in History*, “Because their work is done of necessity under cover of the home, because they emerge only spasmodically into the public view, and because conditions vary so much from house to house, their history is perhaps more difficult to write than that of any other employment. Yet any social history of the century is incomplete without some account of its servants” (15). These truths have earned domestic service the label of an untold, private and unique profession that is extremely challenging to authenticate or represent.

The private nature of domestic service is just one possible factor in the lack of information on the profession. A second reason concerns the lack of primary documents. Although Bridget Hill warns against assigning the term “illiterate” to servants (226), they generally failed to write and keep records, suggesting that much of their culture and history in Spain is oral. Rebecca Haidt extends the argument to other female workers,
stating that their world can be best recreated by going, “…beyond archival sources and official recordkeeping to take into account material evidence of women’s work and lives” (“The Wife” 116). She proposes that, “Dependence on written records can prove an obstacle to the tracking of eighteenth-century women’s experience” (“The Wife” 116). Yet how can we measure material production of domestics when they often worked in inconspicuous spaces or with ephemeral materials? Carmen Sarasúa acknowledges that the private nature of domestic service adds to the difficulty in finding sources that contain evidence about servants: “En el caso de los sirvientes, se añade la dificultad de que su trabajo se realiza en la casa, ámbito que el Estado se resiste a profanar con leyes, encuestas o inspecciones” (Criados 18). Sarasúa suggests that diaries, autobiographies, family records, newspaper ads, or any other texts that traverse the private sector, would be the best source of information on servants. At the same time, she verifies that while there are examples of autobiographies of servants in England in France, no texts from traditional servants are known in Spain: “Más comunes de lo que permite pensar la imagen tradicional del sirviente analfabeto, se han publicado varios en Inglatera y en Francia. Aunque no conocemos ninguna autobiografía de sirvientes en España, noticias sobre sus condiciones de trabajo aparecen a veces en las de sus amos” (Criados 19). Sarasúa additionally points out that the frequency with which servants appear in the diaries or records of their masters in Spain is quite low, making the consultation of primary documents concerning domestics even more difficult.
Nonetheless, James Amelang uses artisan autobiographies to study popular classes in Early Modern Europe. Amelang recognizes writing personal documents as a practice that stretched across class lines, yet acknowledges the individuality and variance among autobiographies: “It is more useful instead to approach it as a social and cultural practice in which a wide range of social groups participated, and one moreover that gave rise to an even wider range of outcomes” (3). This statement implies that popular classes did indeed record accounts of their lives and should therefore be considered in social and historical studies. Amelang references over two hundred documents in The Flight of Icarus, with twenty-two of them coming from people of the working class who were either born or spent part or all of their lives in a part of Spain. Of those twenty-two autobiographies, eight extend to at least the start of the eighteenth-century. Amelang, however, cautions his readers not to judge an entire group of people on details from a few primary texts, stating instead that, “there was no such thing as a ‘typical,’ much less ‘model,’ popular autobiography, and that it would be a mistake to try to reduce such a complex series of cultural exercises to a handful of broad rules or observations” (3). At the same time Amelang’s cases come from all different areas of popular classes, and don’t necessarily point to a specific set of characteristics shared by all his subjects. Amelang also argues that although popular autobiographies do exist, they have been passed over by traditional literary and historical studies that have chosen to focus on canonical texts and established individuals: “Yet both the swelling of the ranks of autobiographers from outside the privileged classes and the significance of that
phenomenon for the social and cultural history of early modern Europe have escaped scrutiny” (11). The overall implication for domestic servants is that popular autobiographies can provide some evidence of how different individuals lived, but that they too are difficult to obtain and objectively analyze. We must therefore turn to other portrayals of servants that are believable, such as those within theatrical texts.

Another factor in the lack of representation of domestic service in Spain was the reality that in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, servants, if not forgotten, were certainly disregarded or taken for granted by the bulk of the social elite living in the capital. People performing domestic duties comprised a major portion of the population of the time, and carried out significant work. In this aspect domestics were close to other social classes. Still, the continuous mobility and unclear makeup of servants deterred them from fitting perfectly into any social class designated by the censuses. They were inferior to the nobility, bourgeoisie, and as the notion of “service” suggests, subordinate to anyone who employed them. At the same time, economists like Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus disassociated servants from the working classes by defining their efforts as unproductive labor because they did not produce on the level of industrial workers. From this point of view, domestic service was not considered “productive” with regard to the economic and industrial development of a country as it potentially kept workers away from manufacturing and industrial occupations. It also contributed to a more static economic situation and preservation of traditional structures. Even though guild artisans and other working class families often employed servants in their households, the
two groups were essentially detached due to the nature of their work, with guilds producing a material result. Thus, the end result was quite ironic: the creation of a sector that carried out a practical function (housework), as well as a symbolic one (acting as a liaison between people of different social classes), was marginalized to an extent in both economic and social arenas: “domestic workers were too close to the bourgeoisie and too distant (physically as well as mentally) from the ‘real’ working class” (Sarasúa, “Were servants paid” 520-521). Even the censuses of the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries don’t accurately account for the number of people in Madrid who were involved in service-based work, as many times these responsibilities were carried out internally by families, through part-time hires, or by others who exchanged their services for food, lodging, or a small fee. Carmen Sarasúa writes, “Los censos son inservibles para estudiar el trabajo a domicilio y para el trabajo por horas. Ocultan la actividad de los niños y la de las mujeres y hombres que trabajan en negocios familiares” (Criados 10). Sarasúa points out that the censuses typically measured full-time occupations and established professions, and therefore neglected the large portion of people that extended the vast demographics of domestic service in Madrid. Still, in spite of the lack of recognition, domestic servants developed strong networks and employed survival strategies to maintain their strong presence in the capital.

The difficulty of finding primary sources and the complexity or ambiguity of domestic service make us question whether or not the fourth and perhaps most significant factor contributing to the lack of representation of the people of this sector might be the
actual terminology itself. Just what is a “servant” or a criado? With the litany of household chores required on a daily basis, not to mention the additional responsibilities of child care and of work in the home workshop or business, it is no wonder that the term is quite vague. Even earlier uses of the word, criado, were ambiguous. During the Roman occupation of the peninsula and Medieval Spain, domestic responsibilities were carried out primarily by slaves and semi-enslaved serfs. The classification of criado existed later in the Middle Ages, but it remains unclear as to who comprised this class of workers. Aurelia Martín Casares writes that, “the precise meaning of the terminology employed to designate domestic workers in medieval legislation is difficult to interpret,” (193-4), pointing out that the term, criado, was often used interchangeably with siervo, cautivo and esclavo. In other words, the difference between domestic servitude and slavery on the peninsula wasn’t always clear in earlier centuries. The ambiguity of the term is therefore a direct result of the broad nature of the service industry, which still encompassed child care, cleaning, distribution, education, business and workshop assistance, and housework as late as the second half of the twentieth-century.

Sarasúa points out that, “El mayor problema al que se enfrenta cualquier estudio sobre el servicio doméstico son las distintas imágenes del sector que se obtienen según la definición de sirviente que se utilice” (3). Domestic service is a continuously evolving profession covering numerous situations, and Sarasúa elaborates on several categories of servants. The ambiguity also stems from the different types of people employed as domestics, such as illegitimate children, students, immigrants from the countryside, or
workers who couldn’t afford to pay their own rent. James Casey captures this very aspect, writing that a servant is not only a means for upper and upper-middle class women to communicate with people of other social classes, but also a position filled by a variety of people: “The Spanish word… reflects an inherent ambiguity about the status of this personage—who sometimes turns out to be an illegitimate son or daughter of the household head in the litigation over inheritance” (212). According to these views, it appears that if the term, “servant,” refers to anyone who performs some type of service for their work, then it is ambiguous because it groups apprentices, housekeepers, midwives, assistants, cooks, and others involved in a service occupation all under the same name. Yet, if the term is limited to those who are employed by one particular household to carry out daily responsibilities, whether or not they also live with the family, the designation becomes quite complex, because servants were rarely confined to one area or to one specific task.29

In the following chapters, I will argue that, given the scarcity or inconsistent availability of information on domestic service in Madrid during the period under discussion, examination of theatrical representations of domestic service can provide a strong resource for illumination of what the lives of domestics and the world in which they operated were like in Madrid during that time. In the representation and text of a play, certain features come across in the depiction of the characters. In the dramatic text these attributes are subjected to the point of view of the dramatist, director, actors, company, costume designer, technicians, audience, and all others who are involved or
participate in the production. Unfortunately, very little is known in Spanish theatre from these years about the reaction of the audience to the characters and plots developed on stage. There are many anecdotes concerning frequent disputes between Chorizos and Polacos over individual actors and actresses, but this is not the type of information on which one may draw effectively for analysis of audience reaction. Theatrical texts are limited to the point of view of the dramatist, the editor and censor, to dialogue, to the main plot and subplots, and to both explicit and implicit stage directions. For these reasons, dramatic texts and not performances are the focus of my study. In creating theatrical texts, playwrights have to make decisions about what exactly will be presented. Dramatists cannot simply sacrifice accuracy for entertainment. Nor can they provide every minute detail in the lives and world of their characters. They must instead select certain details that are believable and entertaining to the reader and intended audience, creating a natural overlap between domestic service and theatre. At some point the lack of documentation implies that representation of the believable is based entirely on speculation. However, certain “truths,” especially ones that repeatedly involve elements of the world of domestic service, provide valuable insight into the profession’s function within eighteenth-century society.

Before delving into the different facets of domestic service in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Madrid that appear in theatrical texts from that time, I need to define several terms, the first being “service.” In this introductory chapter I have described domestic service as a complex profession that varies from one household to the next, and
that for these reasons is difficult to document or represent or has been overlooked on many occasions. However, to be able to properly interconnect theatre and service, I need to provide a clearer designation of the latter term. The definition I have created for service is the series of responsibilities performed by an individual or group of individuals to benefit the function of a household, in exchange for some form of compensation (salary, food, lodging, clothing, protection, etc.). According to this definition, many different occupations, such as wet-nurses, washers, stable boys, lackeys, and cooks, fall under the category of service, as they all promote the maintenance and advancement of the household. The definition also encompasses those who completed other service-based tasks on a part-time basis or in exchange for an alternative form of compensation. Students, recent immigrants, and children of the family could therefore be considered servants if they completed household-related tasks. Even people who lent a hand or performed a domestic chore could be regarded as a type of servant. The scope of my definition is necessary, given the variety of tasks servants perform in comedias and the large number of servants that appear often as characters in Cruz’s Sainetes. To focus my thesis even more, I have decided to limit my investigation to criados and criadas, with occasional references to pajes and lacayos, instead of attempting to address every type of domestic servant that appears as a theatrical character. The criado and criada typically completed a variety of household tasks and often served as stock characters in theatrical texts. Examining the theatrical function and representation of criados and criadas will therefore provide the best insight into the profession.
I have also chosen to concentrate on servants in bourgeois and middle class families in Madrid since they represent a larger cross section of society than the aristocracy. With that said, I acknowledge the difficulty and danger in creating strict delineations according to class, especially with groups in transition like the lesser nobility and bourgeoisie. The trouble of classifying Spanish society from this time into specific divisions has to do with the unique period of social change in the country, where a full-blown class revolution never occurred like it did in France and America, as well as the ambiguity and subjectivity surrounding the term, “bourgeoisie.” Jesús Cruz, in *Gentlemen, Bourgeois, and Revolutionaries: Political Change and Cultural Persistence among the Spanish Dominant Groups 1750-1850*, states that what was known as the middle class in the first part of the nineteenth-century later became labeled, “bourgeoisie,” by scholars: “what Spanish writers of the first half of the nineteenth century called the ‘middle classes’ and contemporary scholars call the ‘bourgeoisie’” (3). Rather than categorizing families as bourgeois, Cruz finds the term inadequate, stating that these people “…did not constitute a new social class” (271). He argues that, “They represent instead a conglomerate of classes that were characterized by their socially dominant position” (271). Often, a change in status was directly tied to financial gains or losses, instead of lineage. In eighteenth-century Cádiz, for example, the bourgeoisie was formed by a large collection of merchants and businessmen who fell into a set hierarchy, depending on their financial situation. Those with money enjoyed many of the same privileges as the nobility and at times even bought themselves into a superior class: “estos
hombres de negocios, viven de tal manera gracias a su riqueza, que son como nobles, y si aún no tienen el título, podrán acceder a él fácilmente en cuanto se les presente la ocasión” (Bustos 48). For the scope of my thesis, I adopt the notion of the “bourgeoisie” as a group in constant flux, given the strong regard for class status and endless push for social mobility during that time. They included, on one hand, upper-middle class citizens, or, like in Cruz’s study, the merchants, bureaucrats, bankers, politicians, and anyone else who held some “social dominance” (271). With opportunities for advancement and stability difficult to find, bourgeois and lesser nobles search for any possible solution to publically secure or improve their social position, even if it is only on the surface. As a result, appearance, whether through wearing foreign fashions, being properly groomed, hosting elaborate dinner parties, or strolling through public areas in the company of several servants, acquires special importance. A similar situation holds for middle class families looking to improve their social position.

I have divided the following discussion into two related sections. Chapters two through four will treat issues of verisimilitude and theatrical function with regard to the representations of servants, while chapters five and six will address representations of servants’ relationships with masters and among themselves, as well as everyday responsibilities within the profession. Not only are servants more frequently represented in these works, but they also have increased theatrical functions. In dealing with the depiction of domestic service in theatrical texts I also need to be mindful that I am constantly working within the constraints of verisimilitude. The depictions of domestics
in these works have been selected by the dramatists, among others, and further shaped through a series of interactions, most notably with public opinion. What might be plausible to people in one area, social class, or period, might not make complete sense to people from a different place, background, or time. To meet the challenges of entertaining and connecting with a reader or audience, and also adhere to time constraints, playwrights must choose certain characteristics to present in a believable way, rather than attempting to fully duplicate nature. Some of these characteristics include the variety of tasks carried out by domestics, master-servant and servant-servant relationships, and the spatial and hierarchical boundaries inhabited by both groups. The second chapter of my thesis will trace the concept of verisimilitude in Spanish theatre, and provide it with a more concrete definition rooted in eighteenth-century society. That is, I will argue that the words, actions, and functions of the characters of servants chosen within a framework of verisimilitude in comedias and sainetes give us a close approximation of the world of domestic service from that time and provide some specific evidence of what an eighteenth-century audience considered to be true.

The growing presence and roles of domestic servants in eighteenth-century Madrid is paralleled by an expansion of the functions of these people, both in real-life and theatrically. Servants, as assistants and status symbols, complete many types of tasks for their masters during an era of modernization, and form the backbone of society of that time. On stage the comedias of Nicolás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín and the Sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz present comparable scenarios, where the figures of servants
are not only depicted carrying out similar responsibilities, but are also more crucial to the overall function of the play. The third chapter of my thesis focuses on the theatrical function of servants in comedias and points out how these secondary characters are responsible for plot development, characterization, background information, depicting the social hierarchy of the time, and even participating in the lives and affairs of their masters. The fourth chapter examines the theatrical function of servants in sainetes, where domestics often become the focal point and on several occasions play the roles of protagonists. In these shorter yet equally powerful works, servants help drive the plot, give stage directions, and reveal both social and moral undertones.

Equally important to the theatrical functions of characters of servants on stage are the representations of more practical or common functions, such as the depiction of different facets of master-servant and servant-servant relationships. The interactions that form these relationships within the profession are inevitable, given the spatial and hierarchical boundaries in households. Certain areas of the house, like the bedroom, were the primary domain of the master and therefore off-limits to most servants. Other spaces, like the kitchen or pantry, were navigated primarily by domestics, even if the master’s wife directed and supervised many of the household duties. Similar divisions followed hierarchical lines. At times, only servants interacted with each other to form a strong network, while in other instances masters and servants interrelated. These moments, whether positive or negative, contribute to the theatrical nature of the service profession, where domestics might share stories or gossip about their masters, or where masters and
servants form an intimate bond or perhaps express their differences to each other. Such circumstances existed on a daily basis but were probably not documented, leaving drama as one of the only ways to reconstruct them. The fifth chapter of my dissertation shows how master-servant and servant-servant relationships lend themselves perfectly to theatre through character development and the insertion of emotions in a play. Although theatrical works cannot capture every aspect of these multi-faceted relationships, they can recreate to a great extent their complexities.

The sixth chapter of the dissertation continues examining the practical side of domestic service and focuses on the variety of responsibilities that servants carried out and the different working conditions they faced. The chapter will re-introduce the idea of the abnormal or exclusive as a way to emphasize the complexity of the service profession. This notion of uniqueness is important to understanding domestic service through the lens of theatre, as it ties directly to representation, verisimilitude, and increased theatrical function. To what extent did dramatists include characteristics of domestic service in composing their works? How far did they stretch the truth to include details of everyday life that attract their intended readers or audience? The chapter begins by noting the significant presence of characters of servants on stage in relation to other characters. I have charted the number of servants as well as the servant/non-servant ratio in the comedias of Leandro and Nicolás Fernández de Moratín and many of the Sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz. I then present many of the realities of domestic service, as studied by Carmen Sarasúa and others, that appear to some degree in these texts. In
particular, I focus on the continuous need for servants, compensation, types of responsibilities, division of duties, working conditions, and spatial and hierarchical boundaries in both genres.

The fact that servants are mentioned in both Jovellanos’ *Diarios* and Leandro Fernández de Moratín’s *El sí de las niñas* is therefore by no twist of fate. Servants were a “real” truth in eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Madrid, forming a significant part of the population and being depicted as characters in theatrical texts, many of which were staged at the Teatro del Príncipe or Teatro de la Cruz. The emergence of this working group onto the scene and the major discussions of the time regarding Spanish theatre bring about an ideal format for studying both areas simultaneously and reconstructing the lives of domestics in the capital during a pivotal period in the history of the profession. The final chapter of the dissertation synthesizes the arguments made in the previous six sections, namely how theatrical depictions of servants reflect and reveal the “theatrical” and “performative” aspects of power and community around domestic issues in eighteenth-century life, and reiterates how theatrical works can help recreate the lives of such an important sector of society that has regrettably been overlooked on many occasions.
Chapter 2: Evaluating Verisimilitude and Theatrical Function in Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Century Spanish Drama

The fact that the domestic service profession enters its period of greatest expansion at a time of significant discussion over theatrical reform suggests that there is perhaps a close relationship between drama and society during the eighteenth-century, or that studying one area, such as theatrical aesthetics and reform, might help uncover details about the other, for instance the functions and importance of performing servitude. Carmen Sarasúa acknowledges the value of literature as a source of information on domestics, but focuses on the newspaper, Diario Oficial de Avisos de Madrid, as the primary source of data for Criados, a source that she says provides “información riquísima sobre los trabajadores, sus lugares de origen, edad, estado civil, procedencia laboral e incluso las razones por las que buscaban un trabajo” (xiii). She therefore opens the door for further associations between domestic service and drama. This chapter is a first step through that door. One of the major links between the two fields of service and (theatrical) literature is representation, in that servants were constantly required to perform their obedience, daily responsibilities and subservience to the master or employer. Dramatists who choose to depict the characters of servants on stage with verisimilitude must therefore capture the performative aspect of these actions and behaviors to some extent in theatrical works, raising the question as to why they select certain characteristics to represent.
With few autobiographical texts from domestic servants in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Spain, where do the images and characteristics of this important sector of society originate? Carmen Sarasúa cites many different sources of information on domestic servants, and explores in detail the *Diario de Avisos de Madrid*. One earlier voice originates from the memoirs of the seventeenth-century servant, Lucía de Jesús, who was forced to move to Toledo at the young age of eleven to serve in a well-to-do family. Devout, resilient, and intelligent; Lucía de Jesús actually learned on her own to read and write, and began to record and share her thoughts and observations with others. Lucía’s account of learning about the move to Toledo is quite interesting and alludes to the poor treatment and grueling demands many servants faced:

> En este modo de vida estuve dos años, con los cuales tenía once de edad, y dieron los míos orden de sacarme de allí para ponerme a servir, cosa que yo lloré mucho, porque me llevaron a Toledo y me dejaron en una casa acomodada, adonde estuve doce años (…) ocupada en cosas de tan gran trabajo que sin encarecimiento puedo decir que fue como quien estuvo en galeras. Y si hubiera de referir lo que pasé en estos doce años, para ello sólo era menester un libro no pequeño. (Barbeito Carneiro 150)

Lucía’s words clearly suggest that her time in Toledo was spent primarily against her will. Very selective in her choice of words throughout her memoirs, Lucía refers to the
move in the passage with three phrases of authority, dieron orden, me llevaron, and me dejaron. The repetition of verbs in the plural form indicates that others tried to control her. Lucía’s reaction to the situation is strong, as she admits crying upon hearing the news of the move, and with her image of the galeras, she likens the entire experience to a type of confinement. Lucía also claims to be a witness of many different acts, but avoids telling them, probably because they go beyond any possible description. The tone of the final sentence of her passage can therefore be interpreted on various levels. On one hand it is somewhat witty, given Lucía’s reference to needing a larger book in order to record all of her observations and experiences. On the other hand, the sentence can be read as Lucía’s desire to forget about her twelve years in Toledo. The tone of the final sentence also matches Lucía’s voice in a later entry, in which she reveals how during her last year in Toledo she was constantly haunted by a voice that told her to abandon her duties as a servant: “En el postrer año de los doce que serví en esta casa, oía a todas horas una voz dentro de mí que me decía: ‘Si no te sales de esta casa te ha de pedir Dios estrecha cuenta en el Día de Juicio’” (152).

Although the account given by Lucía de Jesús precedes Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos’s or Leandro Fernández de Moratin’s descriptions of servants by over a full century, and though she speaks from a different perspective, de Jesús’s first-person narrative captures hardships of the profession that don’t appear to the same extent in El sí de las niñas, and that are certainly absent from the Diarios. Lucía was obviously mistreated as a domestic servant during her time in Toledo. Surely Jovellanos’ staff
faced some challenges during their journey, much like the servants in Moratín’s *comedia* had to simultaneously assist their masters and withstand the tension from the complicated love triangle at the center of the plot. The absence of details in the two latter texts concerning woe, suffering and difficulty, compels us to ask which images and perceptions of domestic service were common in eighteenth-century Madrid; and in the case of drama, why playwrights selected certain characteristics to represent servitude in theatrical works, and not others. Is the absence of details of exploitation or harm from both Jovellanos’ *Diarios* and Moratín’s *El sí de las niñas* intentional, perhaps to maintain the interest of readers? Or did their real and fictionalized servants actually have a fairly easy life compared to the first-person account recorded in the life-memoirs of Lucía de Jesús? Do playwrights tend to focus on certain family situations, where servants were ideally treated better and worked under improved conditions? Or, perhaps, do depictions of servants respond to functional or aesthetic concerns such as stage time in drama? Is it primarily an issue of stage time in drama? Or are there deeper implications, such as trying to promote an Enlightenment vision of what the service industry “ought to be”? Do playwrights need to establish certain truths in their works? Or is it acceptable or even intentional for them to completely distort reality to fit within the boundaries of comedy? An examination of verisimilitude in drama provides an interesting perspective to these issues, as it must connect to its readers and audience on several levels. That is, a drama written in accordance with verisimilitude must present details that are true, or at least believable, but also entertaining. It is here that domestic service and drama overlap in
such a way that our understanding of eighteenth-century domestic service might be extended.

If drama is truly a mimetic act; in other words if it presents events that have happened or could possibly happen, then both representation and verisimilitude are subjective concepts that must connect to some extent with what theatergoers of a specific era regard as true, probable, or believable. Herein rests the first set of challenges. Something that is considered believable or true to a sixteenth-century audience might not be viewed in the same way by theatergoers two hundred years later. Nor can any system of rules regarding verisimilitude or representation from one era completely describe how the concepts are perceived in other periods. Russell Sebold states in his introduction to Luzán’s, La poética, “como la poética es primordialmente una teoría de la imitación, su sentido y su uso varían de acuerdo con el concepto de realidad que impere en cada época” (25-26). Similar variations may even occur between genres, as pointed out by Gérard Genette: “From one period to another, from one genre to another, the content of the system, in other words the tenor of the norms or the essential judgments that constitute it, may vary wholly or in part” (“Vraisemblance” 2). Using domestic service as a model, one can imagine how different aspects of the profession, such as the techniques involved in cooking, washing clothes, or completing other chores, change over time due to any number of technological advances. Depicting sixteenth-century servants on stage using nineteenth-century technology would certainly seem out of place. Similarly, portraying a
family of modest economic means with an entire staff of servants would also resonate poorly with the intended reader or audience.

A second quandary stems from the various interpretations of representation and verisimilitude. One part of this dilemma is that the concept of verisimilitude can be explained on different levels, as José Checa Beltrán suggests: “Para empezar, deben considerarse dos acepciones de la verosimilitud: la primera relaciona la obra con la realidad extraliteraria, mientras que la segunda se refiere a la propia estructura interna de la obra, a su coherencia interior y a su coherencia como perteneciente a un determinado género literario” (“La teoría” 1526). According to Checa Beltrán, the first meaning of verisimilitude connects the work with reality, where truths presented in the text must relate to some degree with society and life of the time. The examples proposed at the end of the previous paragraph fall into this category. The second sense of the term deals with the internal structure of a play and how components, such as events in the plot, social status and language of the characters, dress, and characterization, must work together to avoid any fallacies (1527). Some examples involving domestic service might be how the characters of servants on stage need to dress, speak, and act according to their social position, unless a day of celebration or a special occasion allows for the relaxation or momentary change of social norms. In addition to different levels of interpretation, verisimilitude has also been described as temporal, internal, material, psychological, and moral, making the concept even more difficult to frame. Understanding verisimilitude will therefore remain somewhat ambiguous unless it can be linked to more objective and
tangible evidence, such as that found in the characterization of servants and the depiction of certain aspects of domestic service in theatrical works in eighteenth-century Spain. The search for a more concrete definition of verisimilitude therefore parallels in many ways the quest to better understand and recreate the lives of domestics from the same time.

Assuming that dramatists adopt ideas from previous generations, we see that discussion surrounding representation and verisimilitude begins in classical theatre, although the term verisimilitude doesn’t emerge until the Renaissance. From the earliest of times; however, these concepts have engendered many different perspectives: “Although Aristotle’s Poetics is universally acknowledged in Western critical tradition, almost every detail about this seminal work has aroused divergent opinions” (Carlson 16). One of the pivotal points of discussion from the Poetics has been imitation, or mimesis, which from a classical perspective has influenced drama and all other forms of art. The challenge is that Aristotle offers different views of imitation in the Poetics. Marvin Carlson writes in Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present, “Aristotle sometimes uses the word to mean simple copying… but equally clearly, Aristotle soon moves on to add something more… What is being imitated is an ideal toward which the example is moving but which it has not yet achieved” (16-17). In other words, imitation can entail anything from duplication to idealization. Aristotle establishes certain guidelines, such as the unities (time, place, action), for writing a play in his Poetics, yet he also allows dramatists a certain degree of
freedom in what they choose to imitate or represent. Of the different art forms, Aristotle acknowledges that poetry, or drama, is the finest expression of nature, but one that represents the world on a fictional level. S.H. Butcher identifies this characteristic in his critical study, Aristotle’s Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, and suggests like Carlson that on one hand Aristotle viewed drama as the representation of a more perfect reality: “Poetry…is not concerned with fact, but with what transcends fact; it represents things which are not, and can never be in actual experience; it gives us the ought to be” (158). Butcher’s reading further suggests that dramatists adhering to Aristotle’s view would have the liberty to choose the subjects they depict and are ultimately responsible for presenting them in an idealized way: “…the poet has to extract the ore from a rude mass of legendary or historical fact: to free it from the accidental, the trivial, the irrelevant: to purify it, in a word, from the dross which always mingles with empirical reality” (158-159). Aristotle makes different projections regarding the general reaction of the public, using textual evidence from Sophocles and Euripides (Butcher 95); however, for a reader in the twenty-first-century, it is difficult to understand what exactly he means by “ought to be”.

The multiple degrees of imitation in the Poetics are revealed in the famous lines, “The poet being an imitator, like a painter or any other artist, must of necessity imitate one of three objects- things as they were or are, things as they are said or thought to be, or things as they ought to be” (Butcher 91). Butcher’s translation of this passage shows, like Carlson, that Aristotle not only sees representation as a means to depict things in an
idealized way, but also as a way to describe reality. The first “object” suggests that dramatists have the freedom to include historical references or to portray characters within roles that are consistent with their social position, in order to create a sense of truth and reality. The connection between verisimilitude and the unities, specifically those of time and place, is another example of this tendency as it places stricter limits what dramatists can choose to represent. An audience who attends a play of roughly on two and a half hours length should see a plot that unfolds within the same duration and in one location. Changing places and drastically lengthening stage time wouldn’t follow this model. These examples of truths and facts lean in the direction of what Ignacio de Luzán later calls, verdadera cierta in his Poética (1737), where scientific, historical or mathematic evidence supports a conclusion. However, by emphasizing similar types of details, playwrights run the risk of sacrificing more entertaining and creative elements, and ultimately losing their audience. The second “object” implies that dramatists can stretch the truth by incorporating elements that differ slightly from reality, but that still remain possible or believable to the intended reader or audience in order to capture their attention. This perspective implies that the beliefs and views of the reader or audience, or doxa, ultimately influence what dramatists choose to represent. It also validates the purpose of drama as a means to delight and instruct. The final “object”, as mentioned before, gives playwrights the liberty to select a certain aspect of reality and perfect it through theatrical representation. The presence of three very different cases and the lack of specific evidence to support them, attest to the difficulty in analyzing and applying
Aristotelian aesthetics. We are left with the reality that in spite of these theories and the fact that the title of Poetics suggests a set of rules governing drama, there is unfortunately no single recipe of how to approach representation or imitation.

Classical aesthetics is only one of the areas with ambiguities surrounding the understanding of representation and verisimilitude, as similar issues extend to Spanish drama in the Renaissance. Although Spain sees its own poetics much later than France and Italy, the creation of such a text is just one example of discussion over the rules of drama that would involve major figures like Cervantes, Lope de Vega and Tirso de Molina. Spanish dramatists, much like their Italian counterparts, seek to delight and instruct their audiences, as well as debate the extent to which representation in comedias can stretch the truth. In other words, should representation attempt to resemble nature, or copy it? Or should it focus on presenting how characters should behave or how things should be? Even in works that are based on historical figures or events, dramatists must find a balance between reality and fiction, and be prepared to alter truths to achieve one of these effects. Carmen Hernández Valcárcel, in studying the historical plays of Lope de Vega, writes that history provides a specific setting and time period that the dramatist manipulates to attract an audience. Obviously a playwright cannot depict every detail concerning a particular subject. The presentation of historical facts is therefore subjective, and not necessarily accurate, making it more of a tool to strategically generate fiction: “la historia tiene, entre otras funciones, la de proporcionar verosimilitud a una intriga ficcional, anclándola a un tiempo y un espacio precisos, y dotando a sus
protagonistas literarios de entidad seudohistórica al relacionarlos con otros personajes cuya existencia real está fuera de toda duda” (Hernández Valcárcel 111). In fact, Hernández Valcárcel argues that the selected use of history by playwrights actually creates some uncertainties and inconsistencies within the plot, instead of providing concrete evidence: “en la mayoría de los casos es la historia la que se impregna de un curioso aire ficcional, viéndose invadida de inexactitudes y anacronismos que desesperaron durante mucho tiempo a lectores puristas y críticos eruditos” (111).

According to Hernández Valcárcel, these inconsistencies in Lope’s works fall into the categories of behavior and customs, place-names, supernatural elements, treatment of love, and temporal deviations (124-127). The end product is the presentation of certain elements that for the strictest critic are inaccurate, yet for the general public, who must quickly identify with the characters and setting on stage, they are plausible and also entertaining. The resulting duality is also necessary for relating to the general reader and audience: “La verosimilitud culta es inverosímil para la realidad del gran público; por el contrario la inverosimilitud histórica y el anacronismo se convierten en un elemento imprescindible de verosimilitud para el espectador de la época” (127). In this context, verisimilitude refers to what could possibly happen and not automatically to the inclusion of documented historical or scientific details.

The quest to balance truth and delight resonated throughout Spanish theatre of the Renaissance. On one hand, the desire to entertain and attract the attention of theatergoers outweighed other aspects of drama. In referring to the interludes of Cervantes, Jesús
Maestro points out how these short works shifted from more prose-based plays to ones in verse, in order to appeal to the public. The end result was a genre of theatre produced by Cervantes that placed more value on entertainment than on actual truths: “Esta transformación, que en cierta medida remite a una preferencia del deleite frente a la verosimilitud” (770). Verisimilitude therefore allowed the possibility of approximating and even dramatizing reality, in order to maintain the interest of the audience. Ironically, Cervantes himself criticizes the lack of adherence to the unities and truths in other playwrights of the time. On the other hand, the comedia of the Golden Age arguably attempted to present and preserve certain social values, and manipulated its depictions of society and reality to achieve this effect. José María Díez Borque, in Sociología de la comedia española del siglo XVII, contends that the comedia pushed for a conservative agenda dictated by the beliefs and values of the aristocracy, among them honor and religion: “En la comedia se produce una evasión de la realidad, proponiendo una ideología gratificadora y conservadora, tendente a mantener los grandes ideales patrocinados por la aristocracia” (359). For these reasons, Díez Borque claims that the comedia does not provide a realistic portrayal of society, but rather relies on a poetic truth that is subjected to the individual playwright: “Es obvio que aunque la comedia no dé una imagen fiel de la sociedad… tiende hacia la interna verdad poética, dejando en la oscuridad las más inmediatas y cotidianas preocupaciones y realidades” (359). Verisimilitude in the Spanish Renaissance, from these perspectives, appears to involve
certain facets of reality, either true or exaggerated, and the way they are represented through characterization and other techniques employed by dramatists.

Lope de Vega’s, *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* (1609), contributes even more to the ambiguity and subjectivity of verisimilitude. Enrique García Santo-Tomás points out in the introduction to his edition of Lope’s work that classical precepts had a strong influence on medieval and renaissance drama: “La transmisión de los preceptos retóricos clásicos ya había tenido una línea de continuidad desde esfuerzos muy puntuales tanto en la Edad Media…como en el Renacimiento” (14). However, the degree to which dramatists adhered to these precepts varied significantly. To some extent the *Arte nuevo* plays with this notion. The title first suggests that the text serves as a type of poetics, although it quickly becomes apparent that Lope has included his own style in describing how he writes *comedias*. For Lope, the most important feature of a theatrical work is its ability to relate to the audience, because theatergoers are essentially the ones who keep dramatists in business: “y escribo por el arte que inventaron los que el vulgar aplauso pretendieron porque, como las paga el vulgo, es justo hablarle en necio para darle gusto” (v. 45-48). At the same time, Lope states in the *Arte nuevo* that theatre needs to imitate nature: “Ya tiene la comedia verdadera su fin propuesto como todo género de poema o poesis, y este ha sido imitar las acciones de los hombre y pintar de aquel siglo las costumbres” (v. 49-53). Has Lope simply created an amusing set of rules regarding theatre, playing with different styles of representation? Or is he suggesting that dramatists need to balance imitation and entertainment when composing a theatrical
work? The second suggestion implies that writing a successful drama is left entirely up to individual playwrights and the way they utilize verisimilitude: “Guárdesede imposibles, porque es maxima que solo ha de imitar lo verosímil” (v. 284-285). Lope refers to other dramatists as a model of how to approach representation, “El engañar con la verdad es cosa que ha parecido bien, como lo usaba en todas sus comedias Miguel Sánchez” (v. 319-321), but doesn’t offer particular examples tied to society of what would be regarded as believable to the public of that time. In other words, verisimilitude becomes a multi-level tool for dramatists to stretch the truth and attract audiences, but one that is entirely dependent on their individual opinions and choices.

Was the notion of verisimilitude proposed in eighteenth-century Spain much different than the ideas regarding representation from previous eras? Was it simply stated more clearly? Or was it more easily applicable to concrete or real-life examples? One of the major voices of the period, Ignacio de Luzán, provides a key definition of verisimilitude in Book II, Chapter IX of La poética (1737).

…la verisimilitud no es otra cosa sino una imitación, una pintura, una copia bien sacada de las cosas, según son en nuestra opinión, de la cual pende la verisimilitud: de manera que todo lo que es conforme a nuestras opiniones, sean éstas erradas o verdaderas, es para nosotros verisímil, y todo lo que repugna a las opiniones que de las cosas hemos concebido es inverisímil. Será verisímil todo lo que es creíble, siendo creíble todo lo que es conforme a nuestras opiniones. (229)
Luzán’s words echo Aristotle’s *Poetics* as they state that verisimilitude in theatrical works is based not on raw evidence, but on characteristics that are possible or believable to the intended audience. In fact, what is recognizable as “real” could be entirely false (“…sean éstas erradas o verdaderas”), yet for the purposes of imitation, it is necessary that the theatre seem to approximate the actual conditions of the world. Although Luzán’s *Poética* is saturated with classical precepts, it is important to note that its definition of verisimilitude seems to be concerned more about the connection between the public’s perspective and what the dramatist chooses to represent, and not solely on what “ought to be.” Luzán therefore emphasizes the representation of things that can happen, or that are “said to be,” over the representation of proven facts or the creation of an ideal model. To support his definition, Luzán includes several literary scenarios of characterizations of legends and social figures that would not be believable. He begins with military heroes in literature, saying that they must be portrayed as valiant: “…la opinión que tenemos de Aquiles, de Alejandro, de Escipión… es que fueron muy valientes y esforzados capitanes; conque si el poeta nos los representa pusilánimes y cobardes, diremos, con razón, que su representación es inverisímil” (229-230). Luzán then uses the example of how it would not be plausible to see shepherds depicted as philosophical and educated, since their work and lifestyles didn’t necessarily require these traits. Instead, they are traditionally regarded as simplistic or perhaps even ignorant (230).
Luzán extends his argument to include how some poets, such as Ariosto in *Orlando furioso*, intentionally exaggerated truths in order to entertain the public. Luzán states how the general public would appreciate these types of changes, even though the most versed and serious critics may see right through the fallacies in the theatrical work. The end result for Luzán is the presence of two different types of verisimilitude: popular and noble (230). The first one refers to what the general, uneducated public would consider believable. The second one stems from the opinions of the educated and cultured members of society. According to Luzán, if something is believable to the social and cultural elite, it must also be believable to the popular class. However, the reverse logic does not always apply: ―que lo que es verisímil para los doctos, lo es también para el vulgo, pero no todo lo que parece verisímil al vulgo lo parece también a los doctos‖ (230). Luzán supports his words by referring to other philosophers (231), and again evokes the ideas of Aristotle when he states that it is the responsibility of playwrights to emphasize the possible and believable over real truth: ―los poetas deben anteponer lo verisímil y creíble a la misma verdad‖ (233). Doing so helps distinguish certain details included in the characterization and plot of a theatrical work from reality, and confirms the notion that dramatists need to stretch the truth to attract their audience. For Luzán, stretching the truth also means relating to what is believable to the general audience, even if what they believe is entirely false, ―es preciso que el poeta se aparte muchas veces de las verdades científicas por seguir las opiniones vulgares‖ (233). In other words, Luzán
has given writers of comedias the freedom to create and to relate to their audience, without going beyond the bounds of decorum, or appropriateness.

While Luzán emphasizes the importance of public opinion to representation, in particular depicting what can be and what is “said to be true,” he recognizes the ultimate goal of theatre as instructing through entertaining, “el fin del poeta es enseñar y aprovechar deleitando” (233). In this aspect, Luzán has returned to more of an Aristotelian precept, where imitation ultimately implies generating an ideal model. It is here that the moral aspect or the imitation of what “should be” enters drama, as the lesson to be taught becomes the model for, and a major part of representation. This point is clearly made by José Checa Beltrán, “la comedia, la égloga y otros poemas autorizan al poeta a fingir enteramente. La finalidad también es índice de la categoría literaria de una obra: en unas se persigue la utilidad, en otras el deleite, y en las mejores utilidad y deleite juntamente.” (“La teoría” 1528). In other words, Luzán suggests that dramatists need to extend truths or relate to commonly accepted beliefs to capture the attention of an audience. At the same time, Luzán hints that by entertaining and attracting theatergoers, dramatists can also teach them if the message is appropriate and properly embedded within the text. Clearly, for Luzán, verisimilitude does consist to some extent of what “ought to be,” although it is primarily comprised of what can or what is “said to be.”

Gérard Genette, in examining seventeenth-century French literature, points out the connection between representation and the reader, and in this aspect echoes Luzán. In his essay, “Vraisemblance et motivation,” Genette acknowledges the reliance of theatre
on verisimilitude, but states that what is typically presented as believable in fiction often transforms into what should be, or eventually a model of perfection: “It has been understood since Aristotle that the subject of theatre—and, generally, of all fiction—is neither the true nor the possible but rather the vraisemblable, yet the tendency has been to identify the vraisemblable more and more closely with the ‘should-have-been’” (1). For Genette, however, verisimilitude is not the idealization of an object, but rather the connection between what is represented and what is generally regarded to be true: “what defines the vraisemblable, is the formal principle of respect for the norm, in other words the existence of a relation of implication between the particular behavior attributed to a given character and a given, general maxim” (2). Using the characters of servants as a possible example, some “relations of implications” within the realm of verisimilitude for Genette would be the way certain responsibilities and functions show how servants are inferior to their masters, or how master-servant interactions reveal an overall social hierarchy from the time. These elements, especially when hierarchical in nature, are usually understood and accepted by the audience, as they are engrained in social norms or background knowledge: “these maxims, due to the very fact that they are accepted, most often remain implicit” (3). By being woven into the plot of a theatrical work, these elements also allow for the development of other characteristics or aspects of domestic service that are more entertaining. A dramatist working from Genette’s perspective of verisimilitude can therefore stretch the normal behavior and qualities of the characters of servants on stage, without completely undermining the primary structures and restrictions
surrounding the profession of domestic service that are embedded in the dramatic and theatrical texts.

Genette’s argument centers around two literary texts, while other models of verisimilitude from different eras turn to theoretical, philosophical and literary examples. In each case it is apparent that there is a lack of concrete evidence from society supporting verisimilitude, leaving the concept still somewhat subjective and ambiguous. I have therefore chosen to return to domestic service in eighteenth-century Spain, where the depictions of domestic service in the sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz, and the sample comedias of Nicolás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín tie in naturally to many of Luzán’s ideas concerning verisimilitude. Although Spanish drama from this time does not reflect every detail of domestic service, it gives an approximation of the profession, built on dramatic and interactive elements that are believable to audiences: “No es un ‘reflejo’ de la realidad, el espejo a lo largo del camino de que hablaba Stendhal al definir la novela, sino más bien un ‘síntoma’, un indicador del lugar donde se sitúan los conflictos,” (Morant Deu 100). Indeed, eighteenth-century Spain may offer the most concrete and comprehensible model of theatrical verisimilitude, as Isabel Ibáñez points out in the proceedings to the conference, Similitud y verosimilitud en el teatro del siglo de oro: “el XVIII es cuando verdaderamente toma su forma más o menos definitiva un concepto de verosimilitud teatral que ha venido imponiéndose en el teatro europeo” (9). Therefore, when a major figure like Leandro Fernández de Moratín writes that comedia must imitate, and not copy, nature,\textsuperscript{43} we won’t necessarily find the concrete examples in
his theories regarding aesthetics, but rather in areas such as the depictions of the characters of domestic servants in his theatrical works. Choosing to include only certain facets of the service industry allows playwrights to attract an audience without completely sacrificing accuracy. That is, dramatists present something that is “said to be” true, or that can be true, in order to connect with the public. Stretching “real” truths also helps achieve the goals of both entertainment and instruction, or docere-delectare, in Neoclassic theatre.

José Checa Beltrán, in “La teoría teatral neoclásica,” points out four different manners in which Neoclassicists viewed representation or imitation: as a duplication of the way things actually are, or were, as a presentation of the ways things can be, as means to show how things should be, or as a way of how things are said to be. Obviously the portrayals of servants in both Jovellanos’ travel diary and El sí de las niñas are not typical of all families living in Madrid in that time. Only the wealthiest of households could afford a complete staff of hired help and would be able to employ several male workers. Similarly, the working and living conditions in the majority of urban households were less than ideal. However, certain qualities of domestic servants stand out in each text, among them their loyalty, daily responsibilities, and relationships. These characteristics, especially in dramatic works like El sí de las niñas, make the representations believable and therefore illustrative of the entire service profession.

The complex makeup of eighteenth-century Spanish drama also allows the extension of real truths in theatrical works with the ultimate goal of attracting an
audience. Likewise, one trend of Neoclassic Theatre seeks to model certain behaviors and values. To make these lessons easily accessible to the general public dramatists focus on entertaining theatergoers so that they will leave the performance having absorbed the important messages, a process referred to as enseñar deleitando (Carnero 39). Theatre therefore becomes one of the principal means of representing as well as communicating with society of the time, and can function as a vehicle for educating the public. Guillermo Carnero writes that for theatre to accomplish its educational objective two scenarios must happen:

Para que el teatro cumpla su misión educadora se requieren dos cosas: 1) que, aun siendo el entretenimiento o la diversión del espectador una finalidad legítima y necesaria, nunca se pierda de vista que está subordinada a la mejor transmisión del mensaje, y por lo tanto nunca debe ese entretenimiento salirse de causar impidiendo la transmisión del mensaje, o transmitiendo uno inmoral o ambiguo; 2) que la obra dramática debe estar confeccionada de modo que el espectador, sin proponérselo, interiorice y haga suyo psíquicamente el mensaje; es decir, que se logre la identificación del espectador con el discurso dramático o en otras palabras, que se impida su distanciamiento. (39-40)

The first scenario Carnero describes states that entertainment needs to be the main intention of playwrights, but that at no moment must the compelling elements of a play get in the way of the moral lesson to be learned. Such circumstances would allow the expansion of truths to attract theatergoers or readers without detracting from the primary
message. It is here that verisimilitude enters the discussion as it gives dramatists the freedom to broaden the limits of reality within a text. The second condition implies that theatrical works must be able to communicate with their audience and readers in a way that theatergoers can internalize the main lesson while engaged in the performance. In a society filled with a growing presence of domestic servants, the representations of characters of servants and certain aspects of their profession on stage lend themselves well to evaluating verisimilitude.

When Nicolás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín and Ramón de la Cruz choose possible or believable situations, how things can or are “said to be,” over certainties, they follow a model of verisimilitude more consistent with Luzán’s definition. One of the first assumptions dramatists from this era make regarding public knowledge is that an audience would recognize the presence of the characters of servants on stage as a plausible, or even as a “real” truth, due to the increased numbers and roles of domestics in Spain. Jacob Cornejo’s 1768 text, Laberinto de casados, presents three models of families in Madrid from that period and in the process shows the heavy reliance on domestic service. For Cornejo, the first kind of family in Madrid had twelve members: Husband and wife, eight kids, maid, and another type of servant or doctor, etc. The second model was a family of three, including husband and wife and their servant. The third model was a family of two: a single person and the person who served him or her (qtd. in Risco 38). The common denominator of these models is the presence of a domestic servant: “ninguna de las familias representadas por Cornejo se privaba del
servicio doméstico, a razón de criada, mozo (o ‘comprador’), y lavandera’” (qtd. in Risco 45). In fact, Madrid became so filled with servants during the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries that the periodical, El museo universal, joked that the people of Madrid can never complain about being poorly served, as seen in the publication from March 31, 1861: “resulta que por cada siete personas hay en Madrid un criado. Realmente no podemos quejarnos de no estar servidos” (qtd. in Sarasúa, Criados 70). The portrayal of households in theatrical works like El sí de las niñas or La petimetra exposes a legitimate ratio of servants to family members that will be explored more in the chapter on daily responsibilities and the environment. Although these texts don’t include every type of servant of a traditional family, they maintain the constant presence of domestics on stage, as if they were naturally part of the background, and in the process show what a household can be or is “said to be”.

To create a believable representation of eighteenth-century Madrid, sainetes and comedias not only include the characters of servants in their casts, but also depict certain elements of their personalities, behavior, and relationships they form. Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s Anita complains about her work in La petimetra, as does Ramón de la Cruz’s Aquilina in La Petra y la Juana, as I will illustrate in later chapters. These depictions of servant conduct, along with numerous others, convey a degree of insubordination that is consistent with a negatively changing image of servants in society of that time (Sarasúa Criados 226). A reader or audience would therefore be able to relate easily to these representations, or might already hold the images to be true.
Similarly, in some sainetes servants resemble the stock types of Comedia dell’ Arte, as they fulfill the roles of pranksters and rebels. Yet they also echo the sentiments of more developed characters, insinuating the complexity of the service profession. This tendency explains why many of the characters in sainetes are figures known by the public for their position, function or origin.\textsuperscript{46} That is, they fall into social roles and are consistent with what is “said to be.” At the same time, works like Cruz’s Las usías y las payas, Los payos en Madrid, Las payas celosas, and Los payos y los soldados, contain domestic servants as primary characters who are expanded more. These examples suggest that the theatrical functions and importance of the characters of servants increase along with their presence. It also explains why in both the comedias and sainetes domestics are often portrayed as carrying out a specific task, communicating with each other, or talking about their experiences. With longer stage time and more potential for characterization, comedias can develop specific attributes to an even greater depth. These interactions on stage are believable as well as entertaining, and capturing them is crucial to portraying domestic service as they recreate many of the intricacies of such a complex profession that other literary texts can’t match. Official records and legal documents might contain information about the servants a particular household; however, they too cannot reconstruct the world of domestic service as vibrantly.

The environment in which domestics operate provides further examples of what can or is “said to be”. Playwrights can approximate it by depicting spaces in the houses where domestics work, or in locations of Madrid that are frequented by popular classes.\textsuperscript{47}
In *La petimetra* and *El sí de las niñas*, the plot takes place in a more private setting, but there are clear spaces designated for domestic servants. The first of these two comedias portrays the household of a respected nobleman, Don Rodrigo, which is currently in disarray due to the frivolous actions and expensive tastes of his niece. The second text is set in a public boardinghouse, but limited to certain spaces within this building, as if it were the private household of the honored Don Diego. Both Don Rodrigo and Don Diego want to publically maintain their honor, meaning that their servants will operate in specific places to act as status symbols and help them achieve this goal. Carmen Sarasúa writes that the number and appearance of domestic servants in public places was an indication of the wealth and prestige of a court member: “La posición social de los cortesanos se media con precisión por el número de criados empleados, especialmente en lugares públicos” (*Criados* 80). Although it is not clear if the two gentlemen frequent the court, they would certainly have an invested interest in displaying their servants. The situation in each text therefore presents a possible or believable scenario to its audience.

Many of Cruz’s sainetes extend the traditional setting to include public areas, such as market places, neighborhoods, and popular streets in Madrid that servants, particularly those of wealthier families, frequented to carry out tasks for their masters. The choice of these settings is prompted by the limited stage time of such plays, as Ramón de la Cruz had to create and communicate a believable atmosphere to his audience, no matter how festive or comical the play was meant to be, in less than thirty minutes. To depict a character in a plausible manner, therefore means referring back to a
prototype and relying on certain known qualities from the time. As a result, the surroundings that Cruz portrays sound much like the Madrid that Mesonero Romanos would later describe, and the city that theatergoers of the time would certainly know. One example is El Prado por la noche, a sainete whose simple plot centers around an evening stroll taken by a variety of characters with the purpose of enjoying the evening or the hope of being noticed. As the characters set out on the popular promenade, Ramón de la Cruz immediately captures its public atmosphere, evoking through the use of stage directions and dialogue the different sights and sounds of the working classes in action. First, Cruz includes people from popular classes as part of the background, “Se descubre el Prado lo más divertido que sea posible, paseándose gentes entre la alameda. La GERTRUDIS, de limera, la MÉNDEZ y VICENTA, de mozuelas que piden limosna, danzando al compás de la música de los ciegos, que atraviesan; y FRANCHO, de aguador de cántaro” (Ed. Dowling 79-80). These stage directions are then matched in the very next section of dialogue by the sounds of the street of vendors selling different items: “¡Avellanas verdes! ¡Agua fresquita de Recoletos!” (v. 169-170). Surely, readers and audiences from the time would be familiar with these different images as the Prado was, and continues to be, a famous street in the capital city.

To emphasize the Paseo del Prado as a public space that is frequented by the popular classes and used by their superiors to attract attention, Ramón de la Cruz captures the differences of people on the street. The best example of this social hierarchy occurs when the petimetre, Paula, after observing that the people selling items are from a lower
social class, indicates to her escort that she feels uncomfortable in these surroundings: “Vámonos, don Manolito, que ya van bajando en cuerpo las gentes, y estoy aquí siendo el lunar del paseo” (v. 179-182). Although Paula herself as a petimetra is not part of the nobility, her rich tastes, preoccupation with appearance, and desires for upward social mobility allow her to feel superior in her mind to her peers and other characters from popular classes. To salvage their evening together on the Prado, Chinica’s solution for his woman is for her to switch the items of clothing that mark her superiority: “En quitándoos la mantilla y la basquiña podemos quedarnos” (v. 183-185). Paula changes her skirt and shawl for a smock, in order to fit in better in a space that is marked by the popular classes. At the same time, Paula’s actions suggest that it is much easier to lower your social class than achieve upward social mobility. Dressed more like a vendor or servant, Paula still considers herself to be superior to the majority of the characters in the background of the scene. These differences in social levels are apparent when Paula asks Chinica to order food, and adamantly describes how she wants it prepared: “Decidle a la criada que me fría unos torreznos con tomates… Decidla que no quiero hoy vinagre en la ensalada” (v. 265-269). Not only has Paula created a physical separation between herself and the popular classes by asking Chinica to buy food for her, but she has also confirmed the presence of a social hierarchy through her words and actions. It is clear that the petimetra feels superior but also out of place in this public arena, a separation certainly familiar to theatergoers of the time, and a scenario that would be considered or “said to be” true.
Street festivals and celebrations, another truth from eighteenth-century Spanish society, capture the presence of popular classes and allow for the temporary reversal of social norms at both the social level and in drama. During these festive occasions servants and workers experience upward social mobility as they are permitted to mingle with, or even dress like their superiors. At times their behavior serves as a parody of the lifestyles of their masters, and is a reminder of how different the lower classes actually are. Mark Thornton Burnett mentions public uprisings of apprentices in sixteenth-century London during street celebrations, and refers to the work of James C. Scott when he writes that in English Renaissance Drama, “carnival provided ‘a time and…place to settle, verbally at least, personal and social scores’” (15). However, it’s important to remember that upward mobility gained by servants during these events is limited to the duration of the festival, the end of which marks a return to the previously established social hierarchy. Festivals then, while they grant upward mobility and provide a means for the lower classes to express their feelings, become in actuality as well as on stage, a temporary mobility and reminder of the social norms that already exist. Mesonero Romanos captures the festive nature, freedom, and temporary change in social norms created by such celebrations when he writes, “Hoy, siguiendo el espíritu del siglo, se ha democratizado y convertido en una simple noche de holgura y desenfado, bacanal de las clases inferiores de la sociedad, que al son de bandurrias y panderos invaden el antiguo Prado de San Jerónimo, sembrado todo él de puestos de buñuelos, torrados y aguardiente” (247). Building upon this temporary reversal in roles, dramatists like
Ramón de la Cruz can insert all kinds of interesting twists into theatrical works, knowing well that audiences of their time will understand the setting but that the overall social order will not be permanently destroyed. Taking full advantage of their temporary social gain, the characters of servants in these settings are often portrayed as wearing their masters’ clothes, complaining about their working conditions, or gossiping about their masters, behaviors that would certainly be recognized by and entertaining to a reader or audience.

Whereas the comedias of Nicolás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín and the sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz seem to follow Luzán’s definition of verisimilitude in that they present aspects of domestic service that can or are “said to be” true to audiences of the time, they occasionally portray what “should” or “ought to be”, showing multiple levels of the verisimilar. This aspect of verisimilitude, consistent with a classical viewpoint, appears in the ways dramatists reshape the makeup and environment of families and households that employ servants. Carmen Sarasúa writes that the middle and lower classes outnumbered the nobility in eighteenth-century Madrid, and that their lives were generally difficult. She adds that in these families, the majority of servants were women or children, and their work conditions continuously worsened:

“Características de los criados de las clases populares son también sus pésimas condiciones de trabajo y vida (duermen en la cocina o bajo el mostrador de la tienda.)” (Criados 111). However, instead of focusing on this majority group of domestics, Nicólás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín portray a different type of household, one
where the working conditions and relationships between family members and servants are generally more positive, or at least easier to mend. In other words, the households they create embody an ideal, or what “should be”. The servants in comedias like La petimetra and El sí de las niñas might complain about being underpaid or overworked, but at no point do they reveal any graphic details of neglect or abuse, such as in a work like Lazarillo de Tormes. And while there are moments of imperfection or abnormalities, such as when the female servant in La petimetra, Martina, uses the excuse of removing fleas from herself to keep her master out of the room, “Me estoy mirando las pulgas” (Ed. Pérez Magallón v. 870), for the most part the lives of these servants are different from the reality that most domestics from that time experienced. In spite of these differences, the characteristics that both Nicolás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín have chosen to represent would still be believable to theatergoers as they share some elements with upper class families, namely that better working conditions presumably existed in wealthier households. Including more details consistent with the reality of the time would instead shift the emphasis in the play from the primary characters to the secondary characters of servants, and consequently detract from the original intent of the playwright and the traditional function of comedy: “Comedy must stay within the bounds of the morally and emotionally unthreatening” (Halliwell 272). It would also lengthen the work, as both of the dramatists would have to insert more verses to properly develop the characters of servants.
Instead of portraying public settings, much like Ramón de la Cruz does in his *Sainetes*, Nicolás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín spatially recreate private environments of domestic service in their *comedias*. *La petimetra* reveals spaces within the household of Rodrigo that are delineated according to responsibilities and along gender and hierarchical lines. Although there are two female servants in the play, their daily responsibilities are first determined and assigned by the mistresses, María and Jerónima. As the female superiors, María and Jerónima are responsible for overseeing many of the daily tasks, although in the case of *La petimetra* only María properly fulfills her role. María’s strong words toward her cousin indicate the values and behavior that women are supposed to demonstrate in the household: “Ya ves que tú no haces nada y yo siempre cocinera te sirvo, como si fuera la más indigna criada. Pues no, prima, no es razón, que la que ha de ser mujer de todo debe saber, del estrado y del fogón” (v. 410-417). Clearly, María embodies what a responsible mistress “ought to be”. The fact that María mentions specific spaces within the house, and stresses the importance of knowing how to manage them correctly, shows the types of responsibilities that that women were supposed to carry out. Normally, women were the dominant figures of these spaces, with the mistresses in charge of their servants. Women were expected to know how to cook, clean, and entertain house guests, among other things. At the same time, the two servants, Ana and Martina, reflect the behaviors and attitudes of their mistresses. They too are divided, as Ana follows the frivolous orders of Jerónima while Martina follows those of María. An excellent example occurs in the first act, when Martina asks Jerónima
why she can’t re-use a hair tie. Her question is innocent and shows the practical nature of her actions. Jerónima, however, is obviously more concerned about her appearance and replies that wearing something two days in a row would be a crime: “No que me la puse ayer, y hoy ponérmela es delito” (v. 240-241). The opposing attitudes and behaviors are dealt with at the end of the comedia. Jerónima is publically shamed by her enraged uncle, Roque, while Ana disappears entirely from the stage. The nobleman then arranges the marriage of Félix and María, and offers his hand to marry Martina.

The link between drama and society is self-representation, and, in the case of domestic service, the depiction of characters of servants on stage. Examining one field helps shed light on the other and offers some ideas to subjects that have still not been exhausted. The issue of representation has been approached from many different perspectives from classical times to the present, and has been viewed as everything from exact imitation to idealization. Its offshoot, verisimilitude, has followed a similar path, ranging from what is believable to an intended audience to what should be. The comedias of Nicolás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín, and the Sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz, although they certainly don’t provide all of the answers, function as valuable sources of information for theatrical, social and historical studies. The representation of characters of servants in these texts allow us to see different aspects of the lives of domestics in the eighteenth-century, while revealing what qualities were believable to the public of that time. These works provide examples of a level of verisimilitude consistent with Luzán’s definition of what can be and what is “said to be true”. They also hint at
what “should be,” and in the process occasionally return to more of a classical model of representation. The remaining chapters of the dissertation highlight specific examples from these works that further connect drama and domestic service.
Chapter 3: Everything is a Sign. Theatrical Function and Domestic Servants in Comedias

The representation of certain elements of domestic service and the development of the characters of servants on stage, have a direct connection with theatrical function. When dramatists assign certain qualities to the characters of servants in their plays, they are also altering their theatrical function. Servants who share more intimate relationships with their masters will probably participate to some extent in the same relationships and interactions as their superiors, and carry out more important functions than those of traditional domestics. Similarly, the characters of servants who are responsible for helping maintain the order and harmony of a household might have the chance to reveal their true feelings during a brief monologue or series of asides. They might also be depicted as interacting with or serving as a link between the other major characters in the work. Northrop Frye argues that, “In drama, characterization depends on function: what a character is follows from what he has to do in the play. Dramatic function in its turn depends on the structure of the play; the character has certain things to do because the play has such and such a shape” (271). In the case of servants, the correlation between function and character development is immediately apparent in many shorter works, such as the sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz, where servants are occasionally the main characters and sometimes the only ones present on stage. In the selected comedias of Nicolás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín, servants are secondary characters, but also possess important theatrical functions and contribute to the text in many ways. In both areas of eighteenth-century Spanish theatre it is important to remember; however, that although
the theatrical functions of servants increase, at no moment do they disrupt the overall social hierarchy from the time and the roles and characteristics traditionally assigned to each social class. That is, the selected comedias and sainetes stretch the customary roles and functions of the characters of servants, as well as present different elements of the complex world of domestic service, but always do so within the parameters set by existing social norms. Any extreme or permanent deviation from these standards would make a play less believable to the public or even possibly prevent it from being staged. In this section I will examine the theatrical functions of the characters of servants in Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s La petimetra and Leandro Fernández de Moratín’s El sí de las niñas.

The selected comedias of Nicolás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín reveal theatrical functions through verbal and non-verbal signs stemming from the everyday responsibilities and interactions within the complex world of domestic service. Without access to production notes or reviews of different performances; José Montero Padilla writes in his edition of El sí de las niñas that the play had a very successful debut (28) but beyond that our information is limited, the verbal and non-verbal signs must be inferred from the dialogue, asides, and both explicit and implicit stage directions in the dramatic text. For an audience attending a play, there are numerous signals that depend on the point of view of the director; hence the title of this section, “Everything is a Sign,” which is an adaptation of Jiri Veltrusky’s words, “All that is on the stage is a sign” (Fortier 24). Theatergoers are affected by different signs during the actual performance, ranging from
verbal cues to choices made in stage design or wardrobe selection, and although the audience might have to work to interpret these signals, they have the benefit of the performance in front of them. Readers of the same play; however, don’t have the advantage of experiencing the same performance. They must therefore construct a staging in their own minds, a distinction Donald Larson points out when he writes that performance texts, “may also include all potential enactments, that is to say, those that an attentive and imaginative reader constructs in his or her mind, often on the basis of determinants found within the literary text” (Larson 61). Fortunately, Ramón de la Cruz and Nicolás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín include detailed stage directions and many clues within the dialogue of their plays that relate back to the world of domestic service, making it easier to assemble images of society from their time, and implying that everything in the dramatic text is a sign too.

To ensure that readers accept the characterization and plot of the play, dramatists counterbalance the increased theatrical functions of servants on stage with realistic depictions of certain elements of the world of domestic service, and by other theatrical functions that help maintain social norms. A servant who shares a more intimate relationship with his master might be represented at a closer informal space to him on stage, necessitating other scenes where the servant is placed at a much greater distance away or in a significantly inferior position. Similarly, servants who offer advice to their masters or serve as the voice of reason in a specific moment may be depicted as carrying out household chores on other occasions to remind the audience of social classes and
positions. Servants also add to the humor or tension of a play by contradicting or talking about their masters, but at the same time can serve as stabilizers, creating a sense of order and harmony within the play. Including elements that both expand and monitor the roles and functions of the characters of servants, helps create a work that is more interesting, and also plausible, fitting perfectly into the Neoclassical argument that drama must be entertaining and educational, “docere-delectare…entendido tradicionalmente como una mezcla de enseñanza y deleite” (Checa Beltrán, “La teoría” 1524). I claim that this duality further develops the complexity of the world of domestic service, as it reveals different characteristics of the servants on stage, ones that extend beyond their daily responsibilities.

Just what theatrical functions do the characters of domestic servants carry out in eighteenth-century Spanish drama? Using the two selected comedias, I have identified eight main functions of the characters of servants on stage: 1) Greeting other characters and/or announcing their arrival or departure, 2) Plot development, 3) Comic relief, 4) Drawing attention to primary characters, 5) Acting as a voice of reason and giving advice, 6) Solidifying pre-determined social boundaries and divisions, 7) Helping maintain order, and 8) Revealing certain truths about domestic service and society from that time. Some of these functions have their origins in Roman comedy, in particular the works of Plautus and Terence, which were filled with such personalities on stage: “Every extant Roman comedy contains at least one slave and many have several” (Duckworth 249). At the same time, the characters of servants were portrayed as talkative, added an
element of humor, and contributed to the plot through their constant concern for gossip and self-promotion. According to George Duckworth, servants carried out two basic theatrical functions in Roman comedy: “(1) to provide humor, often of a farcical nature and, in Plautus, frequently descending to buffoonery or slapstick; (2) to supervise or assist in trickery and impersonation” (250). Still, in spite of these behaviors and the popularity they must have attracted among audiences, the characters of servants didn’t overstep the boundaries of the roles and functions assigned to them by society, a notable quality especially since Roman comedy wasn’t meant to provide a fuller picture of life from that time. 

The characters of servants on stage might have disobeyed, created dissension, or talked about others behind their back, but they ultimately remained loyal to those they served: “It should be noted that even the cunning and unscrupulous slaves act out of faithfulness to their masters” (Duckworth 251). Duckworth’s words echo those of Cissie Fairchilds, who writes about servants in Old Regime France: “Domestics manipulated their masters, gossiped about them, laughed at them, insulted them, hit them, robbed them, and occasionally even murdered them. But they also fought for them, served them devotedly, admired them, imitated them, and even loved them” (101). The end result was the development of the personalities, or individuality, of servants and the insertion of comical elements into the texts, while providing a constant reminder of the actual position of domestics within society.

This duality extends into the comedia of the Golden Age, where the character of the gracioso was a theatrical construction based on the figure of a criado (Díez Borque,
The gracioso served his master, but was depicted more as a complement to his superior than as a personal servant. Of course the gracioso had to be believable to audiences of the time, so he was created in the mold of a typical domestic servant. The major difference, however, is that in the comedia of the Golden Age the gracioso, by both agreeing with and contrasting his master, and through the use of humor, served as a complement or companion to his superior, rather than as a typical criado who was seen carrying out daily chores. One conclusion from this distinction is that the gracioso was more significant for his theatrical function in the comedia than for his practical one: “El gracioso pertenece socialmente al plano de los criados, pero no está constituido, en la comedia, según las características de este grupo social, sino según una precisa función literaria, como decía” (Díez Borque, Sociología 240). Another conclusion that can be made is that the comedia of the Golden Age eliminated some of the social context of servants, while transforming the gracioso into a side-kick of his master: “La comedia escamotea como realidad dramática la situación social de los criados, el rencor hacia sus amos, por lo que podemos afirmar que el gracioso es un tipo desocializado, construido como complemento del galán en el plano de la comedia” (Díez Borque, Sociología 240). Through the words and actions of the gracioso we can see some of the functions of this character, like attracting attention to masters, providing comic relief, and representing the voice of reason, without ever overstepping the roles and places assigned by the social hierarchy of the time: “En toda caracterización de la comedia está latente la separación social” (Díez Borque, Sociología 254). The case of eighteenth and early nineteenth-
century Spanish drama is equally intriguing, as domestic service during that time reaches its peak as a profession and becomes a constant in daily life.

The functions of the characters of servants in *La petimetra*

Nicolás Fernández de Moratín writes *La petimetra* as a model of classical precepts, as stated in the subtitle of the play: “Comedia nueva escrita con todo el rigor del arte” (Ed. Pérez Magallón 123). The extent to which Moratín followed classical rules can be debated, but an overall effort to adhere to the unities of time, place, and action is apparent, making the characters of servants an important tool in carrying out different theatrical functions. Moratín grants the characters of domestic servants in *La petimetra* these increased theatrical functions, but also monitors them to help preserve the overall social hierarchy of the time. As a result, *La petimetra* reveals many of the basic functions of servants, and begins to develop others that are more complex. One of the major functions of servants utilized throughout *La petimetra* is that of greeting guests and announcing the entrances and departures of the primary characters on stage. In many ways, this function carries over from Roman comedy, where dramatists used different conventions, servants being one of them, to constantly emphasize the identity and location of the characters in the play. In *La petimetra* the function of announcing the arrival and departure of other characters is quite natural as it fits perfectly within the responsibilities of domestic servants from the time. Even as domestic service in Spain moves from a decorative function to a more professional or industrial model; “Los
sirvientes son dedicados cada vez menos a funciones ‘decorativas’, de ostentación y más a actividades ‘productivas’” (Sarasúa, Criados 197), in wealthier families greeting a guest properly remained a sign of respect and honor for both parties, as well as a common act of courtesy. Greeting guests at the door with courtesy and caution was therefore a type of performance in real-life situations. In a theatrical setting having the character of a servant carry out this function served a variety of purposes. First, it demonstrated the honor and class of the family who employed the servant. If the servant was male, and therefore more expensive to contract, the status of the family seemed more prestigious. Second, by announcing the arrival of another party, servants added to the depiction of the social stratification present in the play and society of that time, since they were essentially completing a basic task while their masters were engaged in more “fruitful” or “important” activities. Finally, playwrights often granted secondary characters this function to keep track of the primary characters at all times and dramatize their entries on stage.

The entire plot of La petimetra takes place in the house of Don Rodrigo, making the function of servants to announce arrivals and departures even more important as it captures the honor of Don Rodrigo’s family and informs the reader at all times of the whereabouts of the other characters. The play opens with the arrival of two male guests, Damián and Félix, to speak with Jerónima. Damián has devised a plan of trying to marry Jerónima to get to her rich dowry, and has dragged his friend along to witness the events. To show the honor of Don Rodrigo’s household and properly set the scene, Nicolás
Fernández de Moratín has the female servant, Martina, greet the two gentlemen. In fact, it is clear at the start of the play that the two men have already been asked by to wait for Jerónima: “Que esperemos aquí un poco la criada respondió” (v. 1-2). Instead of getting a chance to see Jerónima, however, the two male guests are exposed to the lack of responsibility that the woman, also the “petimetría,” has shown in her daily life. This information again comes from Martina who, as a loyal servant, first informs the two gentlemen that they will have to return later as Jerónima still isn’t prepared to see them, but then admits that Jerónima still isn’t even dressed for the day: “Que mi ama está en la cocina y en la cama mi señora” (v. 134-135). At this moment the honor of the household, which was once seemingly impeccable, is suddenly viewed in a different light as a result of the frivolous choices and actions of Jerónima. As the two gentlemen begin to leave, Martina carries out her function and role as a servant one step further by asking Damián for money that he has promised her in acting as a go-between. This request solidifies Martina’s position as a servant in search of money, in this particular case to buy clothes, and describes Don Damián’s unfulfilled promise in domestic terms: “Yo quisiera un peso gordo, señor, que tengo de menester… Un delantal de labor, y aún no se ha cumplido el mes y no le quiero pedir” (v. 159-165). Martina’s words can be interpreted on two levels. First, they imply that she is still in need of a smock, which was often replaced on a monthly basis. Second, they hint at Don Damián’s unwillingness to pay the servant, and depict him as stingy rather than forgetful. Martina’s request also adds to the reality of the scene and the depiction of Don Rodrigo’s household as one that, while honorable,
is probably struggling financially as well. Martina again carries out her function as a servant and announces the arrival of Damián and Félix when they return.

Martina’s actions and words reveal another important function of the characters of servants, namely plot development. This function is particularly important in La petimetra, which was written as an attempt to model classical precepts. In the “Disertación” of the play, Nicolás Fernández de Moratín emphatically mentions his effort to adhere to the unities, beginning with that of place: “he logrado colocarla, no en el ancho circuito de Madrid, ni en una casa, sino en una pieza particular donde tiene el tocador doña Jerónima, y de allí no sale un paso” (141). He then mentions the play’s observance of the unity of time, stating that the actions take place in less than three hours: “su duración no pasará de tres horas” (141). The presence of the unities negates the addition of other spaces and episodes. Working within these parameters, Moratín must therefore use other conventions to provide important background information, depict scenes that happen off stage, and prepare the audience for other events. Martina’s words from the opening act, although tied directly to the daily responsibilities of a servant, complete these three functions that in turn develop the plot. First, Martina alludes to the differences between her two mistresses, calling María her ama and Jerónima her señora. For Martina, María, as an ama, is more practical and able to direct the chores and functions of the household. Jerónima, as the señora, is more concerned about her image and position, and is either unable or unwilling to fulfill the same responsibilities. This difference is also represented spatially, as Martina tells the male visitors that her ama is
working in the kitchen while her señora is still in bed. These lines, although simple, present the audience with some of the characteristics of the two women, tell where they currently are, and foreshadow events that will happen later in the play. Second, Martina reveals the actions of the two women that are going on concurrently, stating that María is bringing Jerónima her morning chocolate so she can begin her daily ritual of getting dressed: “su prima la llevó ahora a la cama el chocolate y va a empezarse a vestir” (v. 150-152).

In addition to announcing the entry and departure of other characters on stage, and contributing to plot development, the characters of servants add comic relief to La petimetra. Just like with other theatrical functions, comic relief can be traced back to Roman comedy and the Golden Age. In the former tradition, secondary characters, slaves and servants among them, enter the action without disturbing the plot and, “entertain the audiences and fill time while a change of roles is being effected backstage” (Duckworth 180). In the comedia of the Golden Age, the figure of the gracioso held a similar function, but did so while appearing on stage more frequently. One of the ways the gracioso added a comic element to the plot was to constantly show a preoccupation for his personal needs or humorously comment on his origins and situation. Díez Borque says that the gracioso should therefore be seen for his comical, and not critical or satirical, value: “El criado-gracioso cuando no proclama su limpieza de sangre o se burla cómicamente de su nacimiento-proclama su nobleza por descender de Adán, pero hay que inscribir esta actitud, repito, en la esfera de lo cómico y no en el plano de la crítica.
social” (Sociología 244). In openly asking Damián for money in the opening scene of La petimetra, Martina reveals many of these aspects of comic relief, even though she would probably not be considered a graciosa. Her entrance on stage originally serves the function of greeting the male visitors, but then shifts to a description of her mistresses, during which Martina offers a serious and critical account of Jerónima. Martina then abruptly changes her tone in trying to solicit a peso from Damián. The sudden shift from a serious issue to a more personal one provides the audience with some relief and allows them to digest the information about Jerónima. At the same time, the change of pace adds a comical, and quite possibly a satirical element to the play, especially since Damián is reluctant to meet Martina’s request and invents several excuses to leave. Martina meanwhile exaggerates her own situation and the fact that Damián won’t help her, even referring to herself as a simple woman who is suffering because of the lack of generosity of others: “¡Y que haya simple mujer que a galán que no da zumo por más que le aprietan quiera y por él está muriendo, siendo un don Juan Pereciendo” (v. 178-182). Martina’s emphasis on her own condition echoes the actions and words of a gracioso, as it appears to be somewhat overstated. It is essentially a performance to attempt to make some extra money. However, Martina also hints at the difference in conditions between Don Damián and her, and allows time for the gentlemen to leave before María enters the stage, much like Duckworth points out in the function of servants in Roman comedy.

The characters of domestic servants can also draw attention to other characters, especially their masters, by either imitating or contradicting them. In cases where
masters and servants share a more personal relationship, the servants are often positioned on stage closer to their masters, and can even become involved in their activities. In these situations servants tend to imitate, reflect, and therefore reinforce the values and behavior of their superiors. On other occasions servants contradict their masters, a behavior that leads to the same result as it generates an almost negative form of attention, creates conflict, and makes the primary characters stand out more. Nicolás Fernández de Moratín utilizes both aspects of this function in La petimetra, building upon the sharp differences in values and personalities between two of the primary characters. While María represents a model woman who is responsible, loyal, and knows how to run a household, her cousin, Jerónima, lacks all of these qualities and has caused problems for the family by spending money that they don’t have and by shaming them publically. As the personal servant of Jerónima, Ana participates in the same behavior when she helps her master get ready. However, the master-servant relationship between the two women oscillates from positive to tense. When Ana appears on stage in the first act, she is prepared to help Jerónima dress, but immediately encounters criticism from her mistress who is complaining about a dirty mirror. Instead of quietly accepting the criticism, Ana continues to talk and in the process upsets Jerónima. Ana even tries to take some credit for helping her mistress look good in public: “Ni negarás que tu porte es ya por mi aplicación envidia y admiración de las damas de la corte” (v. 325-328). Ironically for both women, the term petimetra is more of a complement or testament to Jerónima’s appearance and taste, rather than a criticism of her materialistic values, as indicated by
Ana’s next lines: “Y si más se penetra, según todo el mundo vio, desde que te peino yo te llaman la petimetra” (v. 329-332). Jerónima is taken back by Ana’s words and the two women continue to bicker as they work together to reach the same goal. Jerónima finally ends the argument when María approaches the room. In the final act of the play, however, Jerónima, in talking with her servant, dreams of her future with Don Damián and includes Ana in her plans, making their relationship even more intimate. Even though there is a stark contrast between the first scene, filled with friction, and the second scene that is harmonious, both episodes draw equal attention to the character of Jerónima.

Less outspoken than her female counterpart, Martina draws attention to both of the primary female characters by reflecting María and serving as a contrast to Jerónima. Part of this dynamic has to do with the distinct lifestyle choices and values between the women. As a responsible and capable woman who is more concerned about the household than personal issues, María represents a threat to the way of life of Jerónima and Ana. For this reason, Jerónima refers to María’s values as foolish before she enters: “Mas calla, que Mariquita ya con sus ridiculeces viene aquí” (v. 386-387). The distinction between the two cousins is extended to María’s servant as well, who serves as a reflection of her mistress. In the first act, prior to Ana’s entrance on stage, Martina is openly criticized by Jerónima when she asks an innocent question. Observing that Jerónima at this moment is calling for Ana to look for her hairpiece, Martina asks her “señora” why she can’t wear the one from the day before. Jerónima responds by ridiculing Martina, and in the process creates a distinct separation between their values:
“Mentecata, ¿te has criado en las Batuecas? Dime, ¿dónde has visto tú que una mujer de mis prendas use dos veces seguidas una cosa misma?” (v. 243-247). For Martina, wearing a clothing item more than once doesn’t pose a problem, yet Jerónima would never consider such an option. At the start of the second act, Martina reflects María more closely and begins to participate in her affairs. Up until this point the women seemed to share a more professional relationship, but the arrival of Don Félix has gained the interest of María. Carrying out her daily responsibilities of greeting household guests, Martina has also become the natural link between María and Félix. Martina recognizes the changes in her mistress and openly asks Maríá to share her thoughts. María hesitates for a second, asking Martina if she will be loyal, but then realizes the need to talk to her servant and involve her in her personal feelings. Martina assures her mistress of her loyalty and the two begin to talk about Félix:

MARÍA. ¿Serás fiel?

MARTINA: Pues ¡qué!, ¿eso dudando estás? Mi fidelidad verás. (v. 1139-1140)

The relationship between the two women becomes even more intimate when María asks her servant if she will help participate in a plan to win the love of Félix: “Pues bien, Martina, te encargo notar, sin que te diviertas, sus acciones y me adviertas de esto que queda a tu cargo” (v. 1162-1165). Martina does more than that, eventually warning Félix about Jerónima and revealing to him that María has a large dowry.

Although both Ana and Martina draw attention to their mistresses at different points throughout the play, either by reflecting or contradicting them, they are generally
obedient and return to the traditional roles and functions of servants. By doing so, Ana and Martina have helped re-establish social order and solidify pre-determined social boundaries. However, the male servant, Roque, tests the traditional master-servant relationship by confronting Damián in the third act of the play. Mark Thornton Burnett writes that in English Renaissance Drama the figure of the male servant was often used to mark social issues: “the mapping of anxieties onto the male domestic servant reveals the way this type functions as a trope, as a conductor for divergent interests” (92-93). In other words, flaws within the system of domestic service can be projected onto the character of a rebellious male servant or a servant acting in an inverted position. In the final act of La petimetra, Roque initiates the confrontation with his master, but does so in private: “Pues ya que estamos los dos solos y no me das blanca, cobrar quiero en modo raro, porque por hablarte claro el corazón se me arranca” (v. 2585-2589). The use of a private setting is important because, while it shows the tension between master and servant, at no point does it give Roque the right to challenge or question his master in public. Such open defiance would be regarded as a rupture of social norms and possible rebellion. It therefore cuts off any complete inversion or mobility of social classes. Still, Roque’s words serve as a strong personal attack on Damián and his authority, criticizing the master for being foolish, greedy, and stingy: “Dime, infeliz, mequetrefe, pobre trompeta, holgazán, que eres un pobre bausán y andas fingiéndote un jefe, ¿quién demonios te ha soplado, por arte de Bercebú, o de dónde sacas tú que he de ser yo tu criado?…bien ves que la paga alarga y que acorta la ración” (v. 2590-2605). The direct
-tone of Roque’s words and the private environment indicate that the servant has more issues with his master than with the overall system of domestic service. However, applying Mark Thornton Burnett’s ideas to this scene suggests that the confrontation between Roque and Damián just might represent a greater tension and rebellion felt by servants toward their masters all across Spain during the second half of the eighteenth-century.57 In spite of Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s attempt to adhere to classical precepts in the play, La petimetra was never staged, leaving his son’s later works as more exemplary of the time and widely accepted by the general public.

The functions of the characters of servants in El sí de las niñas

Whether as a result of careful writing and editing, or of forty more years of social changes in areas such as domestic service, El sí de las niñas develops the theatrical functions of the characters of servants to a greater extent than La petimetra. Set in a boarding house and taking place during one night, El sí de las niñas adheres for the most part to classical precepts, and uses the characters of servants to maintain this structure. For example, servants announce the arrivals and departures of the primary characters, develop plot, and provide comic relief. However, unlike his father, Leandro Fernández de Moratín carefully stretches the traditional roles and functions of servants in El sí de las niñas, without completely severing social norms, so while the play contains examples of the most basic of theatrical functions of the characters of domestics, it is a model for more advanced functions as well. These qualities make Leandro Fernández de Moratín
not only different from his father, but also rather unique amongst his contemporaries.

Josep Sala Valldaura writes that Leandro Fernández de Moratín was more liberal than his contemporaries for the innovations he made regarding characterization, “ponga de relieve un cambio de mentalidad en relación con el servicio doméstico, un cambio acorde con su pensamiento ilustrado y liberal” (“Los afectos” 119), and El sí de las niñas is a play in which Moratín experiments to match the servants on stage to their real-life counterparts from that time, without completely disrupting the social hierarchy. At times Moratín even wraps several functions together, using verbal and non-verbal signs to achieve the desired results: “no puede extrañarnos que una y otra vez don Leandro haga uso de signos verbales y extraverbales (mímica, gestualidad, movimiento del actor) para poner de manifiesto teatralmente la conveniencia de una conducta filantrópica y tolerante” (Sala Valldaura, “Los afectos” 114).

From the opening scene of El sí de las niñas, Leandro Fernández de Moratín triggers certain cues to reveal a hierarchy of social classes, as well as the common social cues and graces that servants employ when speaking to their superiors. In fact, the first set of stage directions calls for a gesture of courtesy by the servant, Simón, toward his master, Don Diego. Through them we see that Don Diego leaves his room and enters the common area at the start, while his servant, who appears to be sitting outside the door, immediately stands up to greet his master: “Sale Don Diego de su cuarto. Simón, que está sentado en una silla, se levanta” (53). Two elements of this stage direction emphasize the difference in status between the master and his servant. First, Simón is
seated in the common waiting area, outside the room of his master, who, we assume, is resting or preparing something privately. The division of informal space between the two characters therefore reveals the difference in their social status. Second, Simón’s action of standing up develops even more the status of the two characters. It is obvious that by rising to greet his master, Simón is the one who is subservient to, and needs to respect Don Diego. We can also infer that this interaction is taking place center stage or closer to the audience, due to the description of the furniture and when Simón exits at the end of the scene through a door in the back. As a result of the proxemics, both men become the primary focus of the audience, as does the master-servant relationship that is indicated through their words and actions. Edward Hall, in *The Hidden Dimension*, writes that actors will move closer to the front of the stage at important moments, “they will gravitate to down center for important speeches, big scenes, or in fact, for any moment that they wish to emphasize” (299). From the clues embedded in the stage directions the reader can recreate the hierarchical scene in his or her mind. Finally, these elements of the stage directions are reinforced by the opening dialogue of the play, when don Diego asks his servant for an update on the arrival of the women. It is apparent from this question that don Diego has been able to relax or detach for a brief amount of time, while his servant remained alert to all of the happenings. A few verses later Simón expresses the concern he feels for his master, as they have both been waiting for two days in the boarding house. Whether or not Simón believes it; and as a faithful servant for many
years he probably does, his gesture typifies the respect and care that servants must constantly show their superiors.

The opening scene also reveals another theatrical function of Simón, that of the temporary voice of reason. Díez Borque writes that giving advice was a common function in the *comedia* of the Golden Age, “El gracioso aparece como consejero, en cuanto que posee la fuerza práctica de la sabiduría popular” (Díez Borque, *Sociología* 248). Leandro Fernández de Moratín has obviously extended it to the eighteenth-century, using the opening dialogue between Simón and Don Diego as an example. Even though Don Diego is the wealthiest and the most honored character in the play, his servant, Simón, is the one who first understands and expresses the foolishness of a marriage between a very young, sheltered girl and a much older man. Not realizing that Don Diego is the one who will be marrying the innocent Francisca, Simón expresses his approval for a union that he has completely misunderstood, thinking instead that Don Diego’s nephew would be the perfect match for the young girl. At the same time, Simón’s role as a long-time faithful servant of Don Diego has already been established, “Tú eres hombre de bien, y me has servido muchos años con fidelidad” (55), making his beliefs even more valid and preparing us for a comical moment of truth after the two continue to talk simultaneously about different weddings. The pivotal moment happens when Don Diego mentions the discrepancy in age between the future bride and groom, and how the public will look down upon it: “Dirán que la boda es desigual, que no hay proporción en la edad” (58). Don Diego’s remarks indicate that the general belief of
Society of the time is that marriage should be between people of similar age. Simón’s response represents the voice of reason, which in this case overlaps to some extent the voice of the general public, as he claims that a difference in age between marriage partners is fine, as long as it is minimal: “Vamos, que no me parece tan notable la diferencia. Siete u ocho años, a lo más” (58). Recognizing his mistake about the identity of the future groom, Simón quickly retracts his comments and attempts to show Don Diego that there shouldn’t be any problem with the planned wedding, as long as two share a love for each other: “Si está usted bien seguro de que ella le quiere, si no la asusta la diferencia de la edad, si su elección es libre” (60). Simón’s change in opinion may be forced and somewhat awkward, but it shows the respect and loyalty he has for his master. Similarly, the original comments of Simón and his sudden “change” of opinion constitute two of his theatrical functions: representing the voice of reason, and revealing social or hierarchical positions. Simón essentially offers a powerful idea to the audience, but during the scene remains inferior to Don Diego.

Even though the characters of servants fall within lower levels of the overall social hierarchy, they are ultimately necessary for maintaining social standards and order at all times. In eighteenth-century society, that meant completing the basic tasks necessary for the overall function of the household. In theatrical works, servants do this by carrying out daily tasks that can be as rudimentary as folding clothes, or running errands, and that meet the requests and needs of their superiors in the play. In other
words, the functions of servants are a vehicle that Moratín employs to maintain social standards and harmony, and in the process contribute to the representation of different aspects of the service profession. Sala Valldaura writes: “es posible afirmar que, para Leandro Fernández de Moratín, el papel real de los servidores está plenamente inserto en el orden doméstico, un orden que se vincula con el conyugal de las clases acomodadas y que es también concéntrico con el orden social general” (“Los afectos” 126). At the end of the opening scene, Irene, Francisca and Rita arrive at the boarding house and enter the stage for the first time. According to the stage directions, they are dressed similarly, “con mantillas y basquiñas” (64), but Rita immediately reveals her position of servant by folding the shawls of the other two women: “Rita deja un pañuelo atado sobre la mesa, y recoge las mantillas y las dobla” (64). During the ensuing scene, Irene and Francisca discuss their trip and the conditions of the boarding house, while Rita remains silent. However, at the end of the scene Francisca hands the last scarf over to her servant and asks her to take it away. It is through her words and the corresponding stage direction that we see again how Rita serves the two women and helps keep things operating smoothly, “Toma (vuelve a atar el pañuelo y se le da a RITA, la cual se va con él y con las mantillas al cuarto de DOÑA IRENE), guárdameloto allí, en la excusabaraja” (65). Francisca’s request shows that Rita is responsible for arranging and storing the clothing of her mistresses in a basket while they are traveling, one of the responsibilities of female servants identified by Carmen Sarasúa: “Deben vestir a la señora, cuidar de su ropa, calzado, sombreros, joyas” (Criados 94). The scene then concludes with Francisca
reacting to how one of the cookies broke during transport. Rita again maintains the order by immediately assuring her mistress not to worry because she will eat it, “No importa; yo me la comeré” (66).

In carrying out basic responsibilities to maintain the order within the boarding house, Rita reveals one of her important functions and at the same time has placed herself on a lower social level. The increased theatrical functions of the characters of servants in El sí de las niñas require the portrayal of a social hierarchy within the play to help maintain the social norms from the time. Ignoring such stratification would misrepresent the hierarchical society of eighteenth-century Spain and therefore detract from the credibility of the play. An audience from that time would understand if a servant offered advice to his master; however, the actual social positions of the servant and master would have to be apparent at all times. The hierarchy present in El sí de las niñas is a direct result of the division of tasks and is also developed through both verbal and non-verbal cues, much like the comedias of the Golden Age that developed class distinction through roles, rights, and responsibilities: “la marcada separación por privilegios, estableciendo derechos y deberes según el nivel social” (Díez Borque, Sociología 255). Ironically, the inherent structure created through the division of tasks parallels in many aspects the reality of Spanish society of that time, where domestic servants were regarded as inferiors but were constantly relied upon for their work. Díez Borque, in focusing on Golden Age theatre, argues that the Spanish comedia has always acknowledged this hierarchy and
attempted to represent it through characterization: “Existía, pues, un rígido sentido de la 
diferencia de clases en la mentalidad social del hombre del XVII que la comedia recogerá 
y apoyará” (Sociología 262).

Moratín has attempted to do the same in El sí de las niñas, creating a more 
realistic picture of society from the second half of the eighteenth-century. In Act I, Scene 
VI, Irene stops writing letters and frantically calls for Rita, as she suddenly remembers 
some chores, like feeding the bird and making the bed, that were supposed to have been 
completed. Rita, entering the room with linens in her arms, and in control of the 
situation, calmly reassures her mistress that everything is fine. Irene seems convinced by 
her servant’s words and leaves the room to turn her worries back to finishing the letters. 
With Irene exiting the scene at this point, Rita remains alone and therefore becomes the 
primary focus of the theatre, regardless of her position on stage. Her corresponding lines, 
although brief, reveal a certain resentment or tension toward her mistress, and depict her 
as frivolous: “¡Qué chapucerías! No ha dos horas, como quien dice, que salimos de allá, 
y ya empiezan a ir y venir correos. ¡Qué poco me gustan a mí las mujeres gazmoñas y 
zalameras!” (77). Rita’s choice of words and timing of these verses are appropriate, as 
she would not have been permitted to say them in the presence of Irene. In taking 
advantage of the brief moment alone to voice her feelings, Rita has essentially stated how 
very different domestic servants are from their masters. The distinction between classes 
is developed in the types of responsibilities. Rita must constantly be alert to the needs of 
her master and her household, while Irene spends enormous amounts of time writing
letters and completing other fruitless or unnecessary tasks. Rita expresses a similar type of frustration toward her master near the beginning of the second act through a series of asides. Here Irene makes a series of requests for her servant, like preparing food, running errands and taking care of the bird. In response to these trivial needs, Rita keeps on saying the word, “Otra” (95), under her breath, referring to yet “another” request.

Rita is not the only servant assigned such tasks. Returning to the first scene of El sí de las niñas, we see that don Diego asks his servant, Simón, to prepare for the group’s departure early the next morning. In doing so, Simón must talk to another servant in charge of the stables: “Busca al mayoral, y dile que venga, para quedar de acuerdo en la hora a que debemos salir mañana” (63). Don Diego’s request is interesting because it first gives us an idea of the type of tasks that servants were expected to carry out at any possible moment, either inside or outside of the house. These tasks consisted of running errands, delivering messages, and assisting and accompanying his master at all times. By exiting to fulfill his orders, Simón demonstrates his loyalty as a servant and shows that he is both an extension of his masters’ household into a public space, and a link between his master and the working classes. Don Diego has also identified clear social or hierarchical boundaries in the boarding house by assigning Simón this errand. Operating from a superior social position, Don Diego will gladly talk to the stableman, but only inside the house and not at the stables. To make this contact, it is imperative for Don Diego to send a servant. In other words, Don Diego has designated certain areas for specific social classes, with Simón being the spatial and social liaison. Simón carefully completes the
task, announcing in Act I, Scene V that the stableman is prepared to talk to Don Diego: “Señor, el mayoral está esperando” (75). Don Diego then asks Simón to complete a series of tasks. First, he wants Simón to serve as a messenger by informing the stableman that he will speak with him shortly. He then asks Simón for his hat and cane, which the servant brings immediately, according to the stage directions: “(Entrá SIMÓN al cuarto de DON DIEGO, saca un sombrero y un bastón, se los da a su amo, y al fin de la escena se va con él por la puerta del foro.)” (75).

By carrying out the order, Simón has also transformed his role in this episode from a servant into more of an overseer, as indicated by the fact that he asserts a type of authority over the stableman. These interactions therefore allude to another hierarchy within the play, that of servants. Carmen Sarasúa indicates that the type of work servants completed in this time period gave them certain prestige, pay, and a place within the hierarchy: “Estaban organizados según una estricta división de tareas a las que correspondía un muy distinto nivel de remuneración y prestigio y un lugar en la jerarquía que regía su mundo” (86). Because of his closeness to Don Diego and the type of responsibilities he is asked to do, Simón appears to be the primary servant of the house, and the one who has some degree of authority over other domestics. Obviously most of this prestige is a result of Simón’s association with Don Diego. However, Simón has served his master well for many years and has probably worked his way up the ranks. What is not seen in El sí de las niñas are other servants of lower status that Don Diego might have on his staff. Working within certain time constraints, Leandro Fernández de
Moratín has chosen to only represent the servants of the highest levels, who are probably closest to their masters. The travelers as we know have therefore been accompanied by minimal personnel. By developing these servants to some degree, Moratín can also quickly add to the primary characters that are the main focus of the play. Mark Thornton Burnett confirms a similar hierarchical structure of domestic service in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England, divided into two principal categories: chief officers and yeomen servants (155). According to Burnett, the highest ranking domestics appeared most frequently in English Renaissance Drama, simply because of their close approximation to their superiors: “While yeomen servants make infrequent appearances in the literary materials of the period, chief officers feature prominently” (155). In El sí de las niñas the position of Simón amongst the other servants is so respected that we even see him later on in the play in charge of the finances of Don Diego, one of the greatest responsibilities a servant can have. During this scene, Don Diego orders Simón to escort Carlos and his servant away from the boarding house, and to provide them with some money for their trip. Instead of supplying that money himself, Don Diego asks Simón how much he is carrying and orders his servant to provide for the others: “Pagar el gasto que se haya hecho, sacar los caballos y marchar… Ayúdale tú… (A SIMÓN) ¿Qué dinero tienes ahí?” (123). The authority that Simón is granted over the other servants, and the fact that he watches the finances of Don Diego, indicate that Simón seems to be a type of mayordomo: “El mayordomo es ‘el xefe principal de alguna casa ilustre, a quien están sujetos y subordinados los demás criados, y a cuyo cargo está el gobierno
At the same time, the request he carries out reveals the authority Don Diego has over his own nephew.

The fact that Simón has been ordered to accompany Carlos and his servant, Calamocha, away from the boardinghouse indicates that the characters of servants draw attention to primary characters, especially their masters, by either serving as a reflection or a complete contrast to them—yet another of their important theatrical functions. Don Diego feels threatened by the presence of Carlos, and therefore Simón is threatened. Similarly, Carlos has upset his uncle, meaning that Calamocha has done the same. Díez Borque points out that there is often a correlation between the amo and criado in the comedia, where if something happens to the master, something similar will happen to the criado: “La técnica de reconvertir casi ‘literalmente’ la acción del galán al plano del criado es el procedimiento más habitual” (Sociología 248). In other words, the happenings and actions of the masters are often recreated at the level of the servant. In the case of Rita, however, the relationship is developed even more. According to Sala Valldaura, the character of Rita is special because she is different from the other two servants in regards to theatrical functions. On one hand, Rita helps maintain order and shows the social hierarchy present in the play by completing her daily responsibilities as a servant. On the other hand, Rita participates in and even directs some of the activities and affairs of her mistress, while the other servants, “continúan ejerciendo las funciones codificadas de los sirvientes en el teatro, las de confidente y enlace; y lo hacen desde la
Mark Thornton Burnett writes that in drama of the English Renaissance, “the male domestic servant is established as the locus of values integral to the healing of familial differences” (83). As both a personal servant to Irene and Francisca, whose differences in opinion regarding love and marriage fuel the tension in the play, Rita helps maintain order at every level. The family of Irene is unique, in that it has always lacked a male presence. Irene married three times, all with much older men, only to see them pass away. Similarly, of her 22 children only Francisca survived, denying the possibility of a male heir. Desperate to find stability for her family, Irene projects her own desires of marriage onto her daughter. The union of Francisca and Don Diego will not only help the family financially, but will also stabilize other household concerns: “¿Quién ha de gobernar la casa? ¿Quién ha de mandar a los criados? ¿Quién ha de enseñar y corregir a los hijos?” (73). Ironically, in the moment of the plot, Rita is the one who is sustaining the family by managing all of the daily responsibilities and dealing with any obstacle. While Irene spends her time on fruitless tasks, Rita takes care of the basic tasks and caters to the needs of her mistress. Similarly, while Francisca remains silent and suffers internally about the implications of the arranged marriage, Rita is the one who helps the
young girl understand her feelings better and act upon them. In these regards Rita represents a “healing” force in the family she serves, without ever overstepping her traditional role in society. Rita will remain a secondary character throughout El sí de las niñas, but appears on stage throughout the final scene of resolution—a testament to her important role in the play.

Rita actively participates in the personal affairs of her mistress, as revealed when she announces to Francisca that don Félix has arrived at the house. Servants are typically responsible for introducing and greeting house guests, but this case is different because of its private nature and because Rita knows about Félix’s arrival before her mistress does. As a character of superior status, Francisca is supposed to understand her personal matters. That means that Rita should really only find out about don Félix either from her mistress, or at the same time as her. However, in El sí de las niñas, the opposite happens. Rita announces to Francisca that don Félix has arrived, and does so in a drawn-out, dramatic fashion, by first evoking memories and episodes from the past. Rita refers to the gallant man by saying, “Quiero decir que aquel caballero que vimos allí con aquella cruz verde, tan galán, tan fino” (84). As Francisca and Rita continue discussing don Félix, it becomes even more apparent that Rita played a major part before in arranging meetings between the two lovers at the convent, and that she is now speaking to her mistress from the point of view of the expert or the experienced person in these matters: “Tres meses duró el terrero y la conversación a oscuras, y en todo aquel tiempo, bien sabe
usted que no vimos en él una acción descompuesta, ni oímos de su boca una palabra indecente ni atrevida” (86). The verbal signs evident in Rita’s words show that she is more than an advisor or a voice of reason. Rita is really in charge of the situation and already figuring out how the two young lovers can meet again. The most important cues for these actions appear in the middle of their dialogue, through a series of simple lines that show that Rita is looking to see where Irene is, so she can tell Francisca alone about the arrival of don Félix:

Doña Francisca: ¿A dónde vas?
Rita: Quiero ver si…
Doña Francisca: Está escribiendo. (86-87)

With Rita convinced that Irene is not close enough to overhear the conversation, she reveals the news to her young mistress, announcing the arrival of the lover and, in the process, confirming her new theatrical function of directing the affair: “Pues ya presto habrá de dejarlo, que empieza a anochecer… Señorita, lo que la he dicho a usted es la verdad pura. Don Félix está ya en Alcalá” (87). As part of this function, Rita will also try to find out more information for Francisca so that the two lovers can reunite. Rita promises her mistress to act accordingly: “Voy a traer luces. Procuraré detenerme por allá abajo hasta que vuelvan… Veré lo que dice y qué piensa hacer” (87). Astonished by the news, Francisca can’t think clearly, and must rely upon her servant to make decisions
Francica even asks Rita for personal advice: “Y ¿Cómo has de avisarme?” (88). Behaving calm and efficiently, Rita pacifies her mistress with a prompt answer and temporary plan.

Rita’s words and actions at the end of the first act indicate that she has gone beyond the traditional functions of servants in theatrical works. Leandro Fernández de Moratín develops even further this role of Rita in the second act of the play, as she arranges for and participates in the meeting between the young lovers. By doing so, Rita has established a very intimate relationship with Francisca, one that functionally places her on a much higher level than that of a traditional servant. In commenting on this relationship and the function of Rita, Sala Valldaura writes, “Rita no sólo facilita y guarda el encuentro entre su señora y don Carlos, según la vieja función de los domésticos en el teatro, sino que también casi se identifica con ella y, en el acto segundo, escena sexta, anuncia de esta manera la presencia del amante” (“Los afectos” 117-118).

Rita does more than just announce the arrival of Don Félix, however. She offers advice to her mistress, telling her that she can’t waste time, “Vaya, lo que importa es no gastar el tiempo en melindres de amor… Al asunto… y juicio…” (106-107). She also leaves to divert the attention of Irene and the other residents in the boarding house so that Francisca and Félix can be together. Rita then returns to stop the conversation and announce to Francisca that her mother needs her. She then returns to her traditional
responsibilities as a domestic, a necessary transformation, announcing and serving the dinner that she has helped prepare.

As the theme of Francisca’s love for Carlos develops throughout the play, Rita continues to participate in the affairs of her mistress, by finding out information, deceiving other characters, and giving advice to her. The intimate master-servant relationship reaches its highest level during the final scene, when Don Diego understands the love shared between the Francisca and his own nephew and resolves all of the tension by arranging the marriage of the young couple. At this moment harmony has been re-established and Rita and Francisca reveal the affection and closeness they have for each other. Rita, thrilled by the news of the arranged marriage, asks Francisca permission for a kiss, according to the stage directions: “Señorita, un millón de besos. (Se besan DOÑA FRANCISCA y RITA)” (171). Josep Sala Valldaura argues that while masters often held close relationships with their personal servants, kissing was not a typical way for a servant to express his or her respect. Rather, a hug was more appropriate: “Al formar el sirviente parte del hogar, el abrazo entre el ama y la criada se entiende dentro de una nueva forma de relacionarse, que ya no imita necesariamente el modelo aristocrático” (“Los afectos” 127). Perhaps Rita’s actions are symbolic of the changing roles of servants of the time, where they were treated more like their masters, increasingly more independent and less affected by traditional roles and standards. The presence of these types of characters also suggests a new relationship between social clases: “está
afirmando la posibilidad de entendimiento entre la clase media urbana y el pueblo urbano no maleado, mediante un adecuado proceso educativo de índole moral” (Sala Valldaura, “Los afectos” 128). Francisca affirms elements of this changing master-servant relationship in her response to Rita, not just by kissing her, but also by saying that they will always be friends: “¡Y tú, como me quieres tanto!... Siempre, siempre serás mi amiga” (171). Still, the fact remains that while the relationship between Rita and Francisca is not traditional, some traces of social hierarchy exist, especially since Rita first asks her mistress permission for kisses instead of initiating the gesture herself: “La jerarquía social se marca de todos modos puesto que es la criada quien pide en su emoción y conocida espontaneidad un millón de besos a su señorita, la cual desde su rango superior inicia y permite el abrazo” (Sala Valldaura, “Los afectos” 122).

According to Sala Valldaura, Moratín had no other option but to maintain this hierarchy when writing the final scene. Any reversal of roles and functions would not have been viewed as plausible: “Rita pide un millón de besos a su señorita, y ésta la abraza y le otorga su amistad, pero Moratín jamás hubiera podido escribir esta acción y este diálogo invirtiendo los sujetos” (“Los afectos” 128).

Whereas Rita’s return to her original role and position properly balances her increased theatrical functions in El sí de las niñas, the third domestic servant introduced in the play, Calamocha, appears more traditional as he carries out typical functions such as comic relief and drawing attention to a primary character. In Act I, Scene VII,
Calamocha enters for the first time on stage, transporting luggage and complaining about the poor conditions of the boarding house. Much like Rita in the previous scene, Calamocha is able to speak more openly because he is on stage alone at this moment. However, his commentary about Room 3, the one to which he has been assigned, is full of emotion and exaggerations, constituting at one point that he attempt to calm himself down: “¡Con que ha de ser el número tres! Vaya en gracia… Ya, ya conozco el tal número tres. Colección de bichos más abundante no la tiene el Gabinete de Historia Natural… Paciencia, pobre Calamocha, paciencia” (77). These words show that Calamocha does add comic relief to the play, and that Moratín has returned to the traditional roles and functions of servants: “todavía escribe algunos pasajes cómicos en boca de criados para no romper excesivamente con lo que era costumbre en las carteleras españolas” (Sala Valldaura 122). Calamocha’s relationship with his master is also intimate in that the two participate in similar activities and occasionally address each other as equals. Yet at the same time, the social separation between the two characters always remains intact, showing that Calamocha’s character is really just bringing more attention to the actions and affairs of Carlos. In Act II, Scene IX, Calamocha notices that Simón is in the boarding house and, suspecting something, immediately notifies his master. The stage directions in this scene show that the dialogue between Calamocha and his master becomes the primary focus of the audience, as the other characters on stage at the time turn to talk to each other: “CALAMOCHA se encamina a la puerta del foro, y vuelve; se acerca a DON CARLOS y hablan hasta el fin de la escena, en que
CALAMOCHA se adelanta a saludar a SIMÓN‖ (115). The close spatial proximity between the two characters is reinforced by their words, as Calamocha essentially feels equally involved in his master’s actions:

DON CARLOS: ¿Y qué haremos?

CALAMOCHA: “¿Qué sé yo?... Sonsacarle, mentir y... ¿Me da usted licencia para que...? (115)

By initially alerting Carlos to the presence of Simón, Calamocha has placed himself as a participant in his master’s affairs. Don Carlos’s question about what to do indicates that he is willing to rely on his servant in this situation. Calamocha’s response, in asking his master for permission to lie, reveals that he is willing to, and probably experienced, at manipulating situations, but that he still realizes his inferior social position. Later, when Don Diego discovers his nephew at the boarding house, Calamocha even attempts to intervene and defend his master against the stern reprimands of the uncle. Although valiant, Calamocha is quickly put back into his role as a servant by the nobleman, “Ya he dicho que calles” (120). Calamocha disappears entirely from the play at the end of this scene, as the action shifts to the tension surrounding the marriage.

Calamocha’s absence from the final act shows that he is indeed a secondary character. However, his actions and words prior to this point reveal his important role in the play, albeit on a much smaller scale than Rita’s contributions. A similar argument extends to the characters of the other servants, who through their theatrical functions,
contribute significantly to the comedia. Earlier, I identified eight different categories of functions in both La petimetra and El sí de las niñas, namely, greeting other characters and/or announcing their arrival or departure, plot development, comic relief, drawing attention to primary characters, acting as a voice of reason and giving advice, solidifying pre-determined social boundaries and divisions, helping maintain order, and revealing certain truths about domestic service and society from that time. It is entirely possible that the six servants from these two selected plays fulfill even more theatrical functions than these eight. A thorough examination of popular theatre from the time, such as Ramón de la Cruz’s Sainetes, turns up even more examples of the functions of characters of domestics, many of which overlap with the two comedias. The next chapter will deal specifically with Cruz’s works.
Chapter 4: The Theatrical Function of the Characters of Servants in the Sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz

Eighteenth-century Spanish theatre consisted of a variety of genres, ranging from the Neoclassic comedy to the more traditional auto sacramental. It also witnessed the emergence of the sainete, from an interlude between the second and third acts of a comedia, and its close ties to the entremés, to a short piece that often gained more popularity than the featured work of three-hour theatrical spectacle. Not only were sainetes less expensive to write and stage than their comedia counterparts, but they frequently became the preferred genre: “los intermedios se convertían en el principal atractivo de la representación, y, alentando la actitud del público esta inversión en la escala de valores, relegaban a un segundo plano los géneros llamados mayores” (Coulon, Estudio preliminar ix). Mireille Coulon describes how changing the sainetes of comedias would virtually ensure a consistent turnout at the theatre: “la única manera de evitar, o al menos de frenar, la pérdida de una parte del público consistía en renovar el espectáculo cambiando el entremés y el sainete” (Estudio preliminar x). Contrary to the earlier entremeses, which tended to focus on traditional types, like soldiers or students, the sainete of the eighteenth-century gained its popularity through features such as an expanded cast and closer representation of the popular classes and society of the time.

As one part of “Popular Theatre,” the sainete connected with the general public on multiple levels by recreating reality, “reproducir en el sainete la realidad cotidiana
(Coulon, Estudio preliminar xviii),” situating itself in well-known public spaces, “estaban ambientados en los lugares públicos más concurridos de la capital (Coulon, Estudio preliminar xviii),” and by depicting figures in eighteenth-century society, “ponían en escena no un limitado número de personajes, sino toda una fracción de la sociedad madrileña” (Coulon, Estudio preliminar xviii). At the same time, the sainete was meant to offset the principal work staged on a particular day, by providing a slightly different form of entertainment. Rebecca Haidt, in “Plato’s cave and the stocking-maker’s garret: shadows of gender and genre in eighteenth-century sainetes and tonadillas,” attributes the popularity of these interludes to even more factors, stating that they connected with the public on a variety of levels: “Tonadillas and sainetes were events, shared acts of multidimensional performativity, where performers and audience connected through the physicality and energy of gesture, movement, and voice, and shared meanings in multiple semantic dimensions” (104-105). With Ramón de la Cruz, the expansion of the sainete took place primarily in urban areas and developed into a means of connecting with theatergoers by both entertaining them and representing believable snapshots of the reality of the time: “Bajo la pluma de Ramón de la Cruz el sainete se vinculó cada vez más con la realidad coetánea” (Coulon, Estudio preliminar xiii).

In spite of the growing popularity of sainetes in the second half of the eighteenth-century, the unique nature of the works pertaining to the “género entremesil,” with their blending of music and theatre, places them in a special category of drama that doesn’t
completely adhere to Aristotelian principles. As Rebecca Haidt points out, “They were not poetry; and they were not exactly drama either (that is, the form and subject matter belonged neither to tragedy nor wholly to comedy)” (“Plato’s Cave” 102). The most obvious distinction between one act plays and larger works like comedias is their differing amount of stage time, with sainetes lasting roughly twenty five minutes and being staged between the acts of a two and a half to three hour comedy. Limited stage time means dramatists must be especially creative when portraying characters and developing the plot. John Dowling writes in his edition of Cruz’s Sainetes, “En una pieza que se representa en veinticinco minutos, no hay tiempo para desarrollar el carácter de un personaje” (29). To depict a character in a realistic or believable manner, therefore involves referring back to a prototype or relying on certain known qualities from that time. The complexity of domestic service, namely the variety of household responsibilities and number of different people employed as domestics in eighteenth-century Spain, lends itself perfectly to this representation, because it creates numerous possibilities of what is believable to an intended audience. As a result, many of the characters of the sainetes are figures like domestics, who are already recognized by the public for their position and are often portrayed as carrying out a specific task, communicating with each other, or talking about their experiences—all realities of the service profession. Similarly, the presence of characters from popular classes can add an element of humor or a critical or satirical motive to the sainete. Both of these aspects fit in well with the overarching purpose behind the short works of entertaining. With a
noticeable emphasis on humor and the presence of characters from popular classes, sainetes provide an ideal setting for the representation of the characters of domestic servants on stage.

As servants and the popular classes become more integrated into sainetes; in some works the characters of servants are actually the protagonists, they naturally acquire important theatrical functions. Concurrently, with fewer options available for characterization and plot development in one act plays, dramatists assign multiple theatrical functions to characters that are traditionally portrayed more subtly or considered secondary. The end result is often a temporary inversion in social roles and importance, and development on stage of the complexity of the service profession. However, in spite of these increased functions, the characters of servants, and popular classes for that matter, must remain for the most part within the social order. In other words, the altered functions of servants are temporary and can only happen in private scenes, under special circumstances like street festivals and celebrations, or in certain public locations such as market places and city streets that are frequently populated by the working masses. By incorporating these types of background, dramatists allow for the extension of servants’ roles and functions beyond those traditionally assigned to them, without completely disrupting social norms from the time. Carnivals and market places are excellent examples because, even though they may occur on a regular basis, they are only temporary aberrations of a traditional or hierarchical society, and permit,
“the inversion of roles, and an attention to the rituals whereby the lower orders could step out of place” (Burnett 80). They are also events or situations that take place in a public sphere, and therefore freed to some extent from the private tasks or rules within a normal household. At the same time, dramatists can take advantage of these settings to offer snapshots of the complex world of domestic service, and in the process reveal certain characteristics of this profession, such as servants complaining about their masters or working conditions-scenarios that would not commonly be observed in public places. The use of similar settings even extends into the zarzuelas of the second half of the nineteenth-century, such as La verbena de la Paloma, or El barberillo de Lavapiés, two extremely popular works that have social connections. Clearly, the characters of domestic servants in popular theatre perform functions that build upon and even go beyond the standard categories assigned to them in traditional Spanish drama.64

One of the most frequent theatrical functions carried out by the characters of domestic servants in sainetes is providing background information and filling in gaps within the plot. Los viejos burlados (1792) illustrates this tendency. The sainete opens in the parlor of a house of a rich widow in Madrid, in which a group of servants is depicted in the stage directions as singing and dancing, “(Coro de criados cantando y bailando)” (Ed. Cotarelo y Mori 297). The words of their song inform the reader or audience immediately that a wedding between the widow and her long-lost friend will finally take place: “Todos los hombres vengan, casados y solteros, viudos y manteístas, mozos, niños
y viejos, a celebrar la unión de dos {amantes que cincuenta y tres años se quisieron}” (297). The song then changes into dialogue between the servants, where the younger ones ask their older counterparts why their mistress has decided to marry at this advanced stage in her life. As the servants converse they fill in essential details in the plot regarding the widow and her new fiancé, details that aren’t staged since the sainete begins in medias res. The reader and audience learn from the character of the servant Polonia that the widow and her friend were originally neighbors, but were separated through two arranged marriages. Polonia says that in spite of the fact that the two were split, they still shared and communicated a strong love for each other: “Por fin les separaron los cuerpos, pero no les separaron las almas; pues aunque lejos, en más de cuarenta años que estuvieron, duró la correspondencia, sin exceptuar un correo” (297). Polonia then adds some suspense to the scene by stating that the heirs of the older couple have also decided to marry to avoid any future disputes and doubts regarding the estates: “Hay más; destos matrimonios quedaron dos herederos: a mi ama la señorita y un señorito al abuelo; conque para no tener disputas en los convenios ni escrúpulos adelante, casar también han dispuesto los hijos el mismo día” (297). Cruz cleverly has Polonia stop providing details at this moment, leaving the reader and audience in suspense as to what will occur next. Polonia states that she has no idea what will develop at the wedding and urges her counterparts instead to return their thoughts and focus back to the celebration. The scene concludes with the unexpected entry of other characters on stage, as announced by servants, and the immediate transition into the main plot of the
marriage. The contributions of the servants, and in particular Polonia, therefore provide all of the essential background information and prepare the reader or audience in very few verses for the action that will soon take place.

The opening scene of Cruz’s *La viuda y el letrado* (1774) achieves a similar purpose, with the character of the criada, Gallega, participating in a heated conversation between a widow and her daughter, Plácida. The stage directions and first few lines of the text indicate that the widow is upset with her daughter because she has been acting too friendly to people who pass by in the street. Plácida attempts to defend her position, but the widow refuses to listen, favoring instead the behavior of her other daughters. A loyal servant to Plácida, Gallega enters the stage and immediately defends her mistress, standing up to the widow in the process. Gallega mentions how Plácida is the best behaved of all the daughters of the widow and that the others have been deceitful in their behavior: “Lla señurita e allegre, habla, canta, brincutea dellante de su mercé y todu el mundo que venga. Llas otras hacen lla gata murtecina, zalameras, cun lla intenciún engreída y turcida lla cabeza, comu santas de pajares; ¡do au diabru mi parte de ellas!” (Ed. Cotarelo y Mori 557). Gallega’s courage would probably be viewed as subordination in many households and would certainly not be tolerated in public. In fact, the widow threatens to punish the servant for her audacity, “¿Habrá mayor insolencia? Yo te la pondré, a fe mía, más Madura que una breva” (557). However, the private setting of the parlour in this case allows Gallega’s actions to come across as believable,
as no other characters are present during the scene. The servant makes the most of this private setting, ignoring the threats and openly telling the widow that she would never be able to catch her: “Eso será si me alcanza; que, gracias a Dios, a piernas para correr, a bunita, a graciosa, gorda y fresca cun todas me llas apuestu” (557). Gallega’s dialect, combined with her boldness, add a sense of humor to the play, as they contrast completely with the strict demeanor and rigidity of the widow. At the same time Gallega carries out the theatrical functions of filling in background information and preparing the reader or audience for the action that is about to take place. Her words establish the stark contrast between Plácida and her sisters, and reveal the tension that exists within the family and at the center of the plot.

Another common theatrical function carried out by the characters of servants in sainetes is announcing the entry and departure of other characters on stage. In a theatrical performance this function can be accomplished on several levels, such as through clothing, set, position, and gestures on stage. In a dramatic text; however, the entries and departures are communicated through explicit and implicit stage directions. Cruz’s El hijito de vecino (1774) includes several excellent examples of this function. The characters of the servants in the work have relatively minor roles as compared to other sainetes, but play an important part in describing the setting and introducing other characters on stage. The stage directions from a scene in the middle of the text indicate that two criadas enter a small parlour. From the opening lines of the servants the reader
knows they are alone in the room trying to finish chores before their masters arrive, “Antes que vengan las amas, vaya, recoge los trastos que dejaron sus mercedes” (Ed. Cotarelo y Mori 425). The servants begin to converse while working and in the process fill in background information. The conversation quickly turns into an argument over a petimetre, Don Felipe, and the two servants end up quarreling and even grabbing each other, stopping only when Felipe himself enters the room. As the petimetre attempts to settle the dispute, the first criada announces that the male servant of another guest has arrived: “Y está el criado fuera; voy a ver quién es” (426). She returns moments later to overhear Felipe professing his love to the other servant and therefore further complicating the relationships between the two women and the petimetre. The scene changes tone when the masters of the first servant arrive at the house, something she also declares: “Ahí creo que están mis amos” (426). The words of the first criada, although brief, fulfill yet again the function of implicit stage directions, as they announce the entry of other characters. Meanwhile, the reader has a constant idea of what is happening on stage.

Other sainetes by Ramón de la Cruz grant the characters of servants more complex roles and functions, in addition to providing background information and announcing entries and departures. Las usías y las payas (1772) includes characters who are virtually all from popular classes and responsible for the actions in the plot and on stage. During the opening scene, the servants create a festive and intimate environment by dancing and competing in a game. The men participate in a competition of strength
while the women are depicted as dancing seguidillas, a popular musical form of the working classes of Madrid. The stage directions capture this mood: “(El teatro representa bosque a la entrada de una villa. CHINICA, CORONADO, CALLEJO, GALVAN, ENRIQUE y QUEVEDO jugando a la barra. La señora GUZMANA y POLONIA, PORTUGUESA y JUANA bailando las cuatro seguidillas)” (Ed. Dowling 198). The festivities in the opening scene establish a close connection between the workers. As the men compete, they joke with each other and place small bets, “Apostemos las almendras y la horchata de la bodega del cura, que está mejor y más cara, al mejor tiro” (v. 30-33). In a similar fashion, the women share personal stories, one of which alludes to an interaction with a wealthier male: “Ayer, al salir de misa bajé yo, como madama, la escalera de la iglesia muy despacio y agarrada de la mano de uno de ellos” (v. 59-62). The interactions between the workers also help describe other actions off stage and fill in background information. When Merino and Soriano appear for the first time, an entrance that is detailed in the stage directions, they comment that it’s a miracle the other women have stopped dancing, an action that is not included in the explicit stage directions. In this moment, the audience is made aware for the first time that the dances have ended. Polonia’s response indicates that the festivities have temporarily been halted because several usías are passing by: “No es porque lo estamos, sino dejar, mientras pasan esos usías, el baile” (v. 44-46).
While the actions of the servants create a casual atmosphere they also contribute to the temporary distortion of social roles and the depiction of a society momentarily out of order. The popular classes appear to be in charge and not engaged in any productive work, since there is a notable absence of daily chores and masters who assign them. The intentional location of the action at the entrance to a town also implies a lack of control and civility, especially since no official is present in the opening scene. Mark Thornton Burnett notes that on occasion servants participate in some type of festival or similar function, during which their roles change: “Between the broad outlines of these festivals and representations of the male domestic servant’s activities, there are some tantalizing parallels. Most often, the servant’s inversive antics involve not only a brief mastery, but also a change of identity, leading in some cases, to promotion and the enjoyment of a new authority” (98). It is from the temporary inversion of social roles that subtle comments could safely be made since, “‘carnivalesque’ inversion provided a medium through which anxieties about the status quo could be articulated” (Burnett 80). In other words, the presence of a festive environment not only entertains the reader or audience, but generates a secure outlet for social commentary. Extending this dynamic even further, while it might serve the purpose of something completely non-verisimilar and perhaps more entertaining, would only rupture social norms and ignore the boundaries of what can or is “said to be”. In the case of Las usías y las payas, social tension and a criticism directed at materialistic and frivolous behavior are revealed for the first time through Merino’s remark, “Es que por distintas causas, lo que escándalo en los pobres suele en
los ricos ser gala” (v. 81-83). This statement also prepares us for the climax of the work and pinnacle of social tension that occur when Guzmana slaps the male usía, Ambrosio.

The social implications in “Las usías y las payas,” come to the surface when the male workers disguise themselves as petimetres to play a trick on their female companions: “Lavarnos las caras muy bien primero, y después, con aquellas ropas guapas, fingir que somos señores que a Madrid acaso pasan” (v. 220-224). The intended joke targets the women of their class, but also reveals some direct criticism toward the unrealistic vision and foolish behavior of a society in flux, while depicting the changing master-servant relationship of the time. Donning their new costumes, the payos imitate the behavior of the upper classes by openly voicing their opinions on politics, money, and foreign fashions: “Para lugares a mí me gustan más los de Francia. ¡Qué París aquél, qué Londres, qué Venecia, qué Alemania! ¡O, bon Diú!” (v. 425-429). First, these comments mimic the popularity in Spain of foreign fashion and culture, especially those of France and Italy, during the eighteenth-century, as well as the desire to travel to these “exotic” destinations. The fact that payos, typically considered uneducated and uncultured figures from the countryside, would converse on such topics, adds to the humor of the play and mocks the frivolous behavior and tastes of the upper classes. Second, they reveal the importance of material possessions and status in Spanish society of that time, and suggest that these assets were freely displayed in public whenever possible with the hope of upward social mobility. Merino’s lines carry out this function: “Pues yo no quise ir a
Indias porque es tan rica mi casa que de asistencias me dan mil duros cada semana” (v. 437-440). Finally, the fact that the characters of domestic servants have initiated changes implies a complete interruption of social roles. Domestics, especially women, were supposed to carry out tasks beneficial to the proper function of the household, under the direction and control of the mistress of the family. Even the smallest of roles formed part of a much larger picture, one that could be interrupted in the long run by constant deviations, such as those seen in Las usías y las payas. Order is finally restored near the end of the play when Guzman slaps Ambrosio in the mouth, an action that, according to Polonia, symbolically shows how the working classes use their hands to make a point and avenge themselves: “Una friolera. Nada más que decir al señor del modo que dan las payas la mano” (v. 558-561). Guzman’s display of force and control is immediately followed by the appearance of officials on stage and the assumption that all of the characters will return to their original roles. Guzman’s actions, however, have accomplished the most important function of identifying social tension.

Another sainete that depicts the temporary distortion of social order and inversion of social roles is La presumida burlada. Staged in 1768, the plot begins after the marriage of a nobleman, Don Gil, to one of his former servants, Maria, shortly following the death of his first wife. Instead of finding happiness in his new relationship; however, Don Gil has become a victim of his second wife’s changed behavior, as have the rest of the members of the household. Maria relishes her improved social status and immediately
transforms into a tyrant, ordering around the domestic servants who were, up until that point, her former colleagues. María takes her new role even more seriously by commanding her husband, an action and attitude that completely reverse social norms and stretch gender lines, and by ignoring her own mother and family when they visit Madrid simply because they come from a humble background. In the opening scene, set in a public street, Don Gil shares with his best friend, Don Carlos, the abrupt conversion his new wife has undergone: “al punto que de mi mano tomó posesión, se puso más soberbia que los gallos, y empezó a mandar en jefe, no tan sólo a los criados, sino a mí; ¡y cómo me trata!” (Ed. Dowling v. 80-85). On one hand, María’s behavior adds a level of humor and suspense to the play, as her words and actions are completely unexpected and create a great deal of tension for the staff of domestics and her spouse. At the same time, María’s character carries out the function of acting as a barometer for the state of master-servant relationships and society in general. By conducting herself in a different way from her normal position and trying to disassociate herself completely from her upbringing, María demonstrates a severe obsession for social status and material wealth. Coming originally from a working class to a family of higher status, María’s significant jump suggests that servants are aware of class differences. It also points out a lack of stability in social structure, where classes can readily change. Ramón de la Cruz harnesses the humorous and dramatic effects provided by the character of María, but must ultimately keep her in check with poetic justice and resolution to avoid a total disruption of social roles. He therefore creates the believable, although highly unlikely,
situation where Don Gil meets by chance the modest family of his new wife on the streets of Madrid. Intent on restoring order and catching his spouse in the middle of a series of lies, Don Gil invites María’s family to his house. These actions are necessary to reinstate the honor and proper operation of the household. When the truth is finally exposed, Don Gil invites everyone to a celebration and peacefully restores social norms.

La presumida burlada and Las usías y las payas are just two examples of sainetes with social undertones. Other plays, especially those generally considered to be moral or critical sainetes, use the characters of domestics to develop an overarching social theme as well. Part of this theatrical function stems from the fact that regardless of the extent of humor present in sainetes, the works presented a certain level of reality through their words and actions that was also familiar to the reader or audience: “a tonadillera (or a singer in a sainete) who stepped onto the stage to sing as a critical criada, captivating calcetera, or saucy sebera performed the projection of persons that everyone in the audience knew led lives of impermanence and often drastic uncertainty” (Haidt, “Plato’s Cave” 107-108). In the case of Ramón de la Cruz’s Las Escofieteras, the male paje plays that role. Even though I have focused primarily on criados and criadas in my project, their responsibilities often overlap with those of pajes, especially when the servants deliver messages and run errands in public. One of the qualities exposed through the character of the paje is a strong awareness of social divisions, and perhaps, as Mark Thornton Burnett suggests in Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and
Culture, an anxiety concerning social mobility (109-110). This feature fits perfectly into the overarching objective of the work. According to Francisco Lafarga in his edition of Ramón de la Cruz’s Sainetes, Las Escofieteras recreates the atmosphere of a fashion store and also criticizes, much like Las usías y las payas, the growing national craze for foreign products and culture that often led to a lack of appreciation for Spanish goods and trends:

“La intención del sainete, además de la pintura de dichos personajes, es la crítica de la manía por todo lo extranjero y desprecio por lo español, que se advierte sobre todo en los artículos de moda‖ (45). The paje also points out class difference through his insistence on not calling a hat a cofia, but an escofieta. By completing his daily tasks, such as running errands and delivering messages, the paje interacts with other characters, adds a sense of reality to the plot, and directly contributes to the overarching message, as seen from the point of view of Lafarga.

The entire plot of Las Escofieteras takes place inside the fashion store, where the storeowner and workers are first seen discussing how to earn more business. During their conversation, the fascination with foreign products over national ones immediately surfaces, as the storeowner tells how falsely advertising robes from Valencia as items imported from Italy or Paris will instantly increase their value: “Él cuesta a nueve de plata escasos porque es muy feble: mas diciendo que es de Italia o de París, bien envuelto en papeles, y en su caja, podrá venderse a dos duros, o a dos y medio la vara: conforme sea el parroquiano” (Ed. Lafarga v. 36-43). The editor’s notes for these lines indicate a
conversion factor of twenty silver reales for one duro, suggesting that the altered name and price could potentially bring in over four times more for the store.\textsuperscript{66} The storeowner and abate then take the idea further, proposing a scheme to cheapen the material for certain robes, but still give them a foreign name in order to increase their profit value: “Se han de inventar unas batas que se hagan con menos tela, y que se vendan más caras, con el bello nombre: A la Constantinoplitana” (v. 78-82). This proposal emphasizes the taste for foreign fashions and informs the escofietera, who is present the entire time, on how to take advantage of popular preferences to make more profit. By involving the female worker in the discussion, the words of the storeowner and abate also hint that she would be the one to perform such alterations to the garments.\textsuperscript{67}

At this moment in the sainete, the paje enters to pick up his mistress’ hat and immediately carries out the functions of bringing a certain degree of reality to the plot, marking social differences, and further revealing the preoccupation over material items and foreign goods. As the paje talks with the store owners, he reveals a strong awareness of social classes. When asked about the type of hat his mistress brought, the paje insists that it be called an escofieta, and not a cofia or whole bonnet. For him, the distinction between the names carries a marked social division, as escofieta would be used by more refined classes and cofia by the masses: “No es cofia, sino escofieta, que mi señora no es maja, para gastar charrerías” (v. 95-97). The editor’s notes for these lines point out the connection between charrerías and charro, and label them as uncultured terms used only
by lower social classes. The paje is therefore quick to correct the store owners and defend his mistress’s social status, as it also reflects on his own social position. With pajes typically assigned to deliver messages or accompany their masters in public places, their knowledge of fashion and social classes would have probably been strong. Relating clothing items to different social positions might be a natural tendency of domestic servants in large cities like Madrid, but in a short work like Las Escofiteras it brings a social and critical element to a simple, everyday situation. Ironically, despite the fact that the paje attempts to distinguish his mistress from the employees of the store, there is a strong chance that both parties mend clothing, use patches from one garment on another, and take numerous measures to economize and deceive the public. The store uses foreign names to attract clients and make more money, while the mistress relies on such fashions to maintain a certain image and social position. The multiple functions of the paje in Las Escofiteras therefore serve as a source of information about the reality of the time, and comment subtly on the state of the Spanish nation, where the people were more interested in imitating foreign models than producing their own identity.

Even though the paje in Las Escofiteras tries to defend his mistress, perhaps as an attempt to protect his own position and status, much of the social tension revealed in sainetes exists between masters and their servants. As domestic service shifts from a patriarchal model to more of a contractual one, masters begin to view servants with skepticism and criticism, while servants start to express more freely their dissatisfaction
with their working conditions and treatment. As I will again show in the chapter on master-servant and servant-servant relationships, Carmen Sarasúa comments on the evolving dynamic between domestics and their superiors by stating that, “se produce un cambio significativo en la consideración de los sirvientes: de miembros menores de la familia, a medio camino entre los niños y los adultos, pasan a ser definidos como el enemigo en casa y tratados con recelo y temor” (Criados 226). The behavior of the characters of domestic servants on stage in sainetes, especially when the servants defy their masters or mock their actions and beliefs, capture this social change in eighteenth-century society. The defiant servant appears in “La Pradera de San Isidro,” where the main character, Cirilo, disobeys his master, Don Nicolás, by ignoring his assigned responsibilities and attending the street festival. Cirilo’s decision is compounded even more by the fact that he convinces his female companion, Juliana, that they should both dress up in their masters’ outfits to wear to the celebration, in order to fit in with the rest of the public: “Yo me pondré una chupa guapa y un peluquín de mi amo; tú ponte basquiña, bata y vuelos de mi señora, y verás qué función anda” (Ed. Sala Valldaura v. 179-184). Well aware that they are deceiving the family that they serve, the two servants proceed with their plan without hesitation: “Vamos, que es tarde, y los amos que no quieran que les hagan de estas burlas la familia, que cuiden más de su casa” (v. 189-192). The plot obviously fails when Juliana and Cirilo are seen by their master at the fair. Disappointed by the broken trust stemming from leaving the house and borrowing clothing, Don Nicolás reacts with disappointment, anger, and confusion: “¿conque la
casa, por fin, dejasteis abandonada los dos? ¡Y qué es lo que miro!: ¿mi ropa más reservada te atreves a usar!‖ (v. 708-712). Don Nicolás then turns his feelings into actions and begins to hit his servant. Cirilo cries for relief from the punishment and is saved only by the fact that the public convinces Don Nicolás to release him so as not to ruin the festive occasion. It is in this moment that Cirilo once again becomes subservient to Don Nicolás, who in turn has asserted his authority. The entire plot, fueled by the theatrical functions of Cirilo and Juliana, suggests that servants often manipulated or deceived their masters to benefit themselves: “These are evident in the ways in which male domestic servants perform balancing-acts between challenges to existing social arrangements and a submission to hierarchical requirements” (Thornton Burnett 111).

Social tension can result in unjust treatment of servants, who openly express their difficult working and living conditions in sainetes. La Petra y la Juana is a prime example of this tendency. The play focuses on a disagreement between two vain, working class women who attempt to outdo each other and see who has more wealth and class. Even though there are only two servants out of twenty-three characters in the entire cast list, they are both named and carry out the functions of conveying background information, introducing new characters on stage, and providing some details on the hardships of domestic service. The sainete opens with the majority of the cast working and singing seguidillas and jotas, songs of the popular classes, in the courtyard of a community house. While the group completes its chores, the songs depict the difficult
lives of servants and workers. This trend is carried out throughout the play and becomes a secondary plot to the competition between the main characters. Of the two servants, Aquilina is more vocal of her suffering, and at one point enters the stage dressed in ragged clothes while carrying a heavy basket of laundry on her head and complaining about her work. Aquilina’s appearance in this scene comments on her condition as well. Fatigued from the heavy lifting and heat of the day, Aquilina seems ready to give up, especially since she knows her mistress, La Capitana, has been waiting for her to arrive: “Pues que espere, o que se muera, que con el calor y el peso no puedo más” (Ed. Lafarga v. 242-244). Aquilina, however, cannot avoid the ridicule of her mistress for arriving late, and must listen to her verbal abuse and threats. Fortunately for Aquilina, the tailor overhears the punishment and intervenes. It is here that character of Aquilina acts as a voice of reality for many domestic servants and serves the function of commenting on the harsh reality of the entire profession.

Aquilina’s rugged appearance and depleted condition, from the moment she enters the stage dressed in rags, is developed even further. When La Capitana challenges the tailor for interrupting her right to publically scorn her family, the tailor sarcastically replies that her family consists of nothing more than a worn out servant: “¡Qué familia! Un arrapiezo de criada” (v. 318-319). Aquilina responds to the tailor’s help, and begins to comment on her numerous responsibilities as a servant to La Capitana: “pues yo soy su cocinero, lavandera, costurera, su modista, yo la peino, yo la pinto y si se ofrece alguna vez, papeleo” (v. 320-324). Aquilina then turns to the other characters on stage, an action
that displays her tattered clothing for the audience: “¿Lo quieren ustedes ver? Pues la ropa me llevo en prendas de mi salario: y si no me echa un empeño, ha de tener ocho días más la camisa en el cuerpo” (v. 327-332). Aquilina’s words are important because they show the impoverished state of the household she serves, as well as the unfortunate reality of domestic service. Aquilina obviously hasn’t received a salary in quite some time, nor has her mistress fulfilled her promise of providing clean and decent clothing—two common characteristics of domestic service in eighteenth-century Spain. Her theatrical function in this scene therefore is to speak as a collective voice of the profession, exposing the unjust treatment of domestics. Carmen Sarasúa writes that the contractual agreements between masters and servants from this era were generally vague, and varied across families, or according to different situations. Although some servants earned a small salary, during times of crisis or in middle or working class families, servants often exchanged their skills for food, lodging, and perhaps clean clothes: “Este tipo de acuerdos en la pobreza se hacen más frecuentes en los momentos de crisis” (Sarasúa Criados 218). Unfortunately, Sarasúa points out that even in wealthier families, masters tended to forget about the promises and contractual agreements they made with their domestic staff: “El impago a los criados aparece como característica de la forma de vida de las clases medias e incluso altas en Madrid” (Criados 218). Once introduced, the details regarding the difficult working conditions and poor treatment of servants remain present throughout the end of the play. They carry out a secondary role in the plot to the main feud between Petra and Juana, but are addressed at the conclusion through the
generous actions of the landlord, who divides his earnings amongst those in need. In doing so, the landlord resolves the main conflict between the two working women, compensates Aquilina for her labor, and establishes harmony at all social levels.

Social roles and differences are marked spatially in sainetes with the depiction of scenes in public areas such as stores or market places. In this public environment, the characters of servants and popular classes naturally acquire a more dominant position and increased theatrical functions, as areas like markets were typically navigated by domestics who would complete the daily shopping for their masters. In other words, shopping provided servants with a certain degree of freedom and responsibility, not to mention the opportunity to practice handling and working with money. Similarly, by performing these tasks, servants were taking away the need for their masters to associate with people of lower social classes. Ramón de la Cruz’s El Rastro por la mañana captures a similar environment by depicting the characters of several servants, as well as the sights and sounds of the marketplace. After a series of detailed stage directions, the play opens with the chorus announcing the arrival of a new day, and with the character Mayora advertising her bakery to the rest of the crowd. The scene becomes even more vibrant and realistic when a group of servants enters the plaza. The stage directions at this point highlight the uniforms and appearance of the servants, who, by wearing the librea, are representing the families they serve: “(Sale, de compradores, mozos de asistencia, con tres ó cuatro esportillos cada uno, CHINICA y CAMPANO, y CALLEJO de librea, con capa correspondiente y esportillo grande, y detrás de él PEPITO, de
The presence of servants dressed in uniform as the main characters on stage, coupled with the sounds of the vendors, creates a believable environment in which the popular classes function freely and become the focal point in the play.

This temporary gain in focus and social status is accompanied by a change in theatrical function. As the characters of servants gain importance, their words and actions reveal certain elements of their world and help reinforce class differences and a much larger social hierarchy. One example is the enthusiastic way in which Pepe greets some of his peers in the market: “Pues ya llegó la hora de cultivar la viña, vosotros con el pesu, nosotros con la sisa, ¡compañeros del Rastru, muy buenos días!” (131). Pepe’s words are significant for several reasons. First, they portray a northern dialect, with frequent vowel shifts from o-u. These phonetic variations match the description of Pepe in the earlier stage directions as an “asturiano recién venido.” Second, Pepe’s words mention one of the common practices, la sisa, that servants used to procure money and goods for themselves. Although shopping provided servants with several benefits, including freedom from household, it is evident that many servants still wanted to take care of themselves financially even more. They would therefore resort to different methods to achieve this goal. Carmen Sarasúa writes that, “Es posible que la práctica de los criados encargados de quedarse con parte del dinero de la compra fuera habitual; en las grandes casas parece haber permitido el enriquecimiento de los cocineros, que no
delegaban esta tarea en sus ayudantes” (Criados 201). Finally, the contrast Pepe makes between la sisa and el pesu show the difference in social status and morals between servants and their masters. His words suggest that to “cultivar la viña,” or to make a living, masters carry out an honest living to earn money, while servants must take advantage of the system. Delivered in a different setting, or in the presence of a master, Pepe’s lines would have probably merited a strong response, especially since they seem to advertise and boast about the practice of la sisa. What Pepe doesn’t mention is that la sisa was known by masters as well, who often accounted for it in the amount of money or goods they gave their servants when assigning them errands and responsibilities outside the home.

From the performance of more basic functions like filling in background information and announcing the entry and departure of other characters, to their development of social complexities, the characters of servants in sainetes played an important role. One text that includes clear examples of this entire range of theatrical functions is Los picos de oro (1765), a moral sainete that uses poetic justice to condone the frivolous behavior of the petimetre, Luis. Although the servants are not given names at the start of the play, they immediately carry out an important function in the text by helping fill in gaps and providing background information as they complete their daily tasks. The play opens with Doña Elena sewing with four of her female servants in the living room of her house. While the group is working, the servants sing and ask Elena about the celebration from the night before through a series of comments and questions.
that pry into her personal life. The servants obviously did not participate in the festivities but are eager to hear all of the gossip and learn about the events, and as a result strategically place inquiries within the friendly conversation. Elena answers the first question, “¿Bailó Vmd. Mucho, señora?” (Ed. Lafarga v. 15), but quickly realizes that her servants are attempting to pry personal details with their questioning. She therefore tries to restore the initial space between master and servant. When Elena feels as if her servants are going beyond the boundaries of acceptable behavior with their questions, she reasserts her authority and reminds one of them of their position: “Ya tú sabes que no gusto de criadas bachilleras; cose y calla” (v. 21-23). However, in spite of the fact that Elena doesn’t elaborate on all of the details of the party, the audience already knows at this point, thanks to the theatrical functions of the servants on stage, that she didn’t enjoy the evening and only returned home late because a friend insisted she stay longer. Later in the play, the first female servant alerts the reader and audience that Elena is upset with a visitor, Don Luis, who fabricates a story to gain entry into the house. The servant’s words act as implicit stage directions as they observe the mood of the mistress: “Señora, parece que no ha quedado Vmd. contenta” (v. 309-310).

While the female servants try to unearth details about the celebration from the previous evening as they help Elena sew, the male paie performs similar theatrical functions when he enters the stage in the opening scene. As a paie, his tasks include delivering messages, making himself present in public places, and interacting with others, as Carmen Sarasúa notes in the different responsibilities of this type of servant, “no
tenían más cometido específico que estar alrededor de sus señores, acompañarlos en sus desplazamientos a pie o en coche, llevar recados o notas y, en definitiva, mostrar con su presencia pública el poder del señor a quien servían” (Criados 90). Elena’s paje executes his role, and initially informs his mistress that a gentleman has arrived at the house, “Un caballero está ahí fuera, que pregunta por Vmd.” (v. 56-57). Since there are no written stage directions at this moment in the play, the words of the paje act as a type of implicit clue for the reader and audience, by alerting them that another character is about to enter on stage. Not expecting any guests, Elena asks her male servant about the visitor; and through the resulting inquiry we learn more details about him, such as the type of clothes he is wearing: “El viene de capa y cofia; pero se conoce a la legua que es hombre de circunstancias” (v. 61-63). Elena still is not sure of the identity of the mystery guest, and asks her servant to leave to find out. The process of entering and leaving adds a level of suspense to the plot and makes the role of the paje more realistic as he continues to complete his responsibilities. When the servant returns he reveals that the visitor is Don Luis, and that he attended and spoke to Elena at the party: “Dice que es don Luis María el de anoche; y que añadiera, por si usted no se acordaba, que es el que cuando la cena le guardó a usté el abanico” (v. 71-75). These lines provide more information about the occurrences at the festivities from the previous evening, and in the process fill in gaps within the plot.

The actions and words of the domestics in the opening scene, in addition to filling in background information, serve yet another function: revealing the social position and
relationship between masters and servants. Traditionally this relationship was patriarchal, where masters treated their servants like extra children and servants in turn performed their duties in exchange for this support. As previously stated, in eighteenth-century Spain these customary roles begin to change into more of a contractual agreement, where the division between master and servant disappears on many levels. The opening dialogue of Los picos de oro, while it doesn’t depict a contractual or professional relationship between Elena and her staff of female domestics, captures a relaxed and somewhat intimate environment that they share. In other words, it reveals the trajectory that master-servant relationships adopted during that time. The servants attempt to meddle in the private affairs of their mistress through a series of direct questions and comments. Elena allows this entry to some extent by responding, but on several occasions has to remind them all again of their place within the household and society in order to preserve all social norms. When the first servant remarks that Elena is the opposite of a previous master, because she is stricter and less talkative, Elena quickly counters by saying that gossiping with her servants is in essence committing two crimes. The first crime involves telling her servants too much, while the second is listening to the advice of her servants: “el primero murmurar yo, y la imprudencia de deciros a vosotras lo que no os puede traer cuenta saber, por muchos motivos, el segundo; no seáis necias, que yo sé lo que me hago” (v. 41-47). These words show that even though Elena has allowed her helpers to get away with asking such questions, she still believes in maintaining an overarching social hierarchy. At the same time, the style of questions the
female domestics ask, and the liberties they take in entering in conversations, suggest that they feel very comfortable around their superiors.

The characters of servants in Los picos de oro not only engage freely in conversations with their masters, but also participate directly in the plan to trick Luis and punish him for his actions—an event that forms the main plot of the play. Structurally, the involvement of the servants operates as another important theatrical function as it shows how secondary characters have made an impact on the primary action. Symbolically, it further suggests the changing master-servant relationships from that time. First, the servants announce that all of the preparations for the trick have been completed and that the guests have arrived: “Ya están aquí, señora, las luces puestas y el refresco prevenido” (v. 395-397). Although we don’t see the work that the servants have performed, their words indicate that they have been directly involved in the planning. Second, the servants take part in the principal action as they initially lure the male guests into the trap, and by doing so, go beyond the traditional functions of a servant or a secondary character in the theatre. In Scene IX, the servants actively partake in the trick. While the women are hiding, and pretending to see Celia (who they say is sick), the female servants are left with the other men. They are the only women seen on stage at this point and therefore spatially more important than the other females in the work. The servants relish this freedom and dance to the music that the men play. Criada 2 says she will dance to be polite; however, Criada 1 says that she will take advantage of the temporary freedom since the environment of the house is typically more stressful and regulated. For her,
dancing is an opportunity to stretch her legs and have fun, since servants in that household are normally not allowed to do anything: “Y por estirar las piernas, que en esta casa ni a la misa dejan salir las doncellas” (v. 520-522). Finally, as the servants dance with the men, they take the roles of the upper class women and temporarily gain upward social mobility. The male guests ask the women about their preferences in love, as well as other questions, and the servants respond and play along with them. The female servants are essentially the first line of attack, and successfully lure all of the petimetres into the trap. At this moment, the male servants engage in the main plot and serve as part of the “army” who will carry away Luis and make sure his eyebrows are pulled out: “son los criados, conmigo, los que la tropa aparentan” (v. 699-700). Although we don’t see poetic justice represented on stage, the announcement of what will happen shows how the male servants participate in the main plot as well. Both entertaining and critical of the foolish behavior of upper-class hopefuls, Los picos de oro effectively communicates with the reader through the words, actions, and theatrical functions of the characters of servants.

The sainete as a genre attempted to entertain its audience, as well as provide them with believable representations of society from that time. Servants obviously played a major role in these depictions as they had a significant presence in eighteenth-century Madrid. With Ramón de la Cruz, the character of the servant on stage became more than just a secondary figure. In many works domestics were actually responsible for the main action on stage. As the roles of servants grew in these short works, so too did their
theatrical functions expand. Servants filled in background information, announced the entry and departure of other characters, and helped develop social and critical messages within the texts. Ramón de la Cruz was certainly recognized as the most prolific writer of sainetes of his era, but he was not the only dramatist credited with incorporating the characters of servants into his works. Other writers like Sebastian Vásquez and Luis Moncín also turned to the representation of popular classes as a way to connect with theatergoers. In fact, significant work is currently being done on recovering and attributing texts that had previously been anonymous or incorrectly assigned, to Vásquez. As we have already seen, similar depictions appear in the comedia from the same time.
Chapter 5: Relationships within Domestic Service

Creating a realistic or even believable representation of the complexity of domestic service in drama means capturing not only the daily responsibilities and working conditions of servants, but also depicting certain aspects of master-servant and servant-servant relationships. The formation of these relationships is inevitable, given that domestics often worked and lived together, interacted with other servants, carried out a variety of tasks for their masters, and were frequently used as a display of social status or a means of contact with popular classes. Moreover, domestics were considered to be an integral part of the households and families they served and formed different types of relationships with everyone who interacted in these spaces: “El sirviente forma parte del hogar. No se la define en abstracto, sino como elemento, como pieza de un conjunto, como parte de una relación” (Sarasúa, Criados 226). At the same time, master-servant, and servant-servant relationships lend themselves perfectly to theatrical works by providing material for characterization and plot development, and allowing for the insertion of different elements in a play. Through them we often learn the true feelings of certain characters and discover important details and background information that could otherwise not be represented during the normal stage time of a play. When these relationships in actual society or in theatrical works from the time stem from or turn on monetary or material issues, such as broken contracts, withheld salary, or missing valuables, they are easier to measure because of the presence of concrete evidence. Court
records, wills and other legal documents are additional tools that help recreate the interactions between masters and servants or servants and their peers. However, to completely understand the thoughts and feelings of servants, or in the case of dramatists, to accurately portray them, is an extremely difficult task, since very little is known about how servants actually felt about their masters and their own peers. Bridget Hill writes that, in spite of the fact that servants had a major presence in society and the literature of eighteenth-century England, for the most part their world was unknown: “But for all the visibility of many, probably far more remained invisible, only rarely leaving their households and venturing into the outside world” (1). A similar scenario plays out in other parts of Europe, in particular Spain. The lack of information on the world of domestics, according to Cissie Fairchilds, is a product of three facts: 1) very few primary documents were left by servants, 2) servants frequently hid their true feelings toward their jobs and masters, and 3) the attitudes and opinions of servants were too complex to be properly understood (100-101). To develop these relationships in theatrical works therefore requires dramatists to make assumptions and to select details that are believable to audiences of the time. What then are some of the details regarding master-servant and servant-servant relationships that dramatists choose to represent? In this chapter, I will focus on the complexity of the verosímil representations of the profession, discussing first the multifaceted relationships between masters and servants, and then turning to the detailed relationships and networks amongst servants.
Master-servant relationships

In the last half of the eighteenth century, both the myth and the reality of the patriarchal household disappeared, and with them went the traditional attitudes and patterns of behavior toward servants. In place of condescending paternalism of patriarchalism came a recognition of the servant’s essential equality with his master; in the place of the old automatic assumptions of servant loyalty and devotion came suspicion and uneasiness; in the place of extraordinary intimacies of the traditional household came the physical distancing of master and servant; in the place of the traditional indifference and stereotyping came a fascination with domestics and a recognition of their dignity as human beings. In general master-servant relationships in the last half of the eighteenth century were colder, more distant, and more formal than they had been in earlier periods, but they were also more egalitarian. (Fairchilds 151)

One of the points made by Cissie Fairchilds in Domestic Enemies: Servants and Their Masters in Old Regime France is that during eighteenth-century France, domestic service transforms from a patriarchal model to more of an egalitarian or perhaps professional one. Under a patriarchal system, servants were regarded as additional children of the family, meaning that masters were obligated to provide for their basic needs, such as food, water, clothing, and protection. Meanwhile domestics, in exchange for these provisions, served their masters in a variety of areas. The evolution from a
patriarchal model to a contractual one constitutes a change in servant behavior and master-servant relationships, adding even more to their complexity. Within an egalitarian or professional system, servants are depicted as carrying on detailed conversations, forming different types of relationships, and speaking more openly with their masters. At the same time, the traditional roles of masters as parental or authority figures and servants as inferiors is abandoned, allowing for the development of more intricate scenarios. Spanish drama follows part of this trend in the fact that the characters of servants in theatrical works from the eighteenth-century are developed more and often carry out specific functions, leading to the creation of very interesting relationships between masters and servants.

In eighteenth-century Spain, both in society and on stage, the bond between masters and servants becomes the source of a variety of feelings that are augmented by the close proximity of most household spaces. Servants were supposed to carry out their responsibilities as efficiently and discreetly as possible in the house, however, coming into contact with their masters was inevitable, especially in areas like the living quarters, kitchen or dining room. The very nature of the profession also allowed servants to cross over into the personal lives of their superiors, by granting them, “access on the part of the employee to the employer’s most private spaces and valuable possessions” (Sarasúa, “Were Servants Paid” 537). Although similar spaces and interactions certainly existed before, the changes in domestic service in the eighteenth-century, such as the awareness of contractual obligations and push for equal rights, transformed these areas into the basis
for further tension. At times, the intimacy of the master-servant relationship, both spatially and personally, provided some comfort for masters and their servants: “líneas de solidaridad y entendimiento, e incluso afecto profundo, se establecerán entre señores y criados” (Sarasúa, Criados 216). On other occasions it led to friction, conflict, and even abuse, with servants taking the brunt of the mistreatment: “El maltrato de palabra y físico no parece haber sido infrecuente. El castigo físico podía incluir bofetadas y otros actos, de los cuales sin embargo, como en general de la violencia doméstica, es difícil encontrar testimonios. El maltrato de palabra era muy común” (Sarasúa, Criados 213-214).

Having servants at close range therefore meant that masters could monitor them more carefully, but it also added to social tension. These examples suggest an inverse relationship between proximity and tension that fueled a growing hostility between the two parties, “The lesser the distance between master and servant, the more mistreatments the latter had to suffer” (Maza 258). It also contributed to the mounting distrust that masters had for their servants and motivated their attempts to monitor and control the actions of domestics, not just in Spain but throughout Europe: “The deterioration in servant-employer relations that is so noticeable in contemporary comment at the end of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth may have been more about employers’ difficulties in keeping their male servants under control than about vails and perquisites” (Hill 38-9).

Ironically, no matter how much masters wanted to distance themselves from or maintain authority over their servants, domestic service was still a necessary part of
everyday life, and servants always had a major presence and role in the families they served: “by the very nature of the tasks they were expected to carry out, it was impossible to banish them from the household” (Hill 90). By immigrating to a city and seeking work, servants essentially abandoned their roots, adopted a new family, and entered a difficult and foreign environment. Clearly, the process was not easy. On one hand, domestic service provided a level of comfort for immigrants as it filled a void created by their arrival at a new location: “su desprotección y el desconocimiento de la vida urbana les hará considerar ventajoso el integrarse en núcleos familiares que cumplan parcialmente las funciones de los que han abandonando” (Sarasúa, Criados 26).

However, in many cases domestic service was a “total institution”, or a force that took complete control over the lives of servants: “It controlled every aspect of servants’ lives and stripped them of many elements necessary for a sense of identity, while at the same time exposing them to a new and by definition superior culture which they found strange, frightening and hard to master” (Fairchilds 102). For servants to survive in this environment they learned to adapt to the lifestyles of their masters and meet their demands, or at least show that they adapted to them. Failure to do so at any moment, no matter how trivial the infraction, could have easily resulted in the dismissal of the servant, “La no adaptación de los sirvientes a estos gustos y necesidades supone su despido” (Sarasúa, Criados 232). The second of these points is interesting because it implies that to some extent servants were very much like actors on stage, as they had to take on new identities and frequently disguise their true feelings and beliefs, out of fear of
losing their jobs or upsetting their masters. They were essentially performing at different moments throughout the day, especially when others were present as a type of audience. Cissie Fairchilds identifies this tendency in one of the most common figures of servants of Old Regime France, a type of servant she labels the “self-interested manipulator” (120). According to Fairchilds, these servants strategically changed or hid their feelings and beliefs, making them an even harder group to trace: “for the same skill at deception which hid his true feelings from his employer also hides them from us” (120). The discourse of servants in public places or in front of their superiors was therefore dramatized and manipulated in both the society of the time and on stage—a point made by Nikolai Evreinov, “the competition between life in actuality and life on the stage had reached the point where no one could say which was more theatrical” (qtd. in Fairchilds 100). In order to portray the feelings of servants in a realistic or believable way, dramatists in Spain had to constantly deal with the theatrics of domestic service and complexity of master-servant relationships.

As concerns the dramatization of the public arena of domestic service, the true feelings of domestics must be searched for with caution. It was assumed in Spain that servants would not only be devoted to their work, but also respectful, courteous and complimentary to their masters in all aspects of daily life, “Y no solo de trabajar: el sirviente debe ‘gustarle’ a sus señores, debe gustar su presencia física, su manera de hablar, peinarse, vestirse.” (Sarasúa, Criados 230). Servants were expected to act accordingly, even if they honestly didn’t feel this way, making their words and actions a
brand of performance. In society of the time, this exaggerated behavior hid the real views and feelings of domestic servants, especially since servants were mostly illiterate and usually didn’t record such information. Fortunately, theatrical works provide four possible scenarios for revealing or recreating some of these feelings: 1) in monologues or asides (apartes), 2) in dialogues where servants are interacting with their masters privately, 3) in dialogues where servants are communicating with other servants without the presence of any master, or 4) in a public display of contempt, which would probably be severely punished in real life. Of these four scenarios; however, the first three involve a more private and intimate setting, while the fourth conjures up images of public disapproval that could possibly contradict social values and not necessarily be accepted.  

In other words, the private side of domestic service seems to be the best source of details regarding master-servant relationships, more so than the public aspect of the profession. Michael McKeon alludes to this characteristic of domestic service by writing that domesticity, “is both a species of modern privacy and unintelligible apart from our modern experience of publicity; its story can only make sense within the more general story of modern privacy and its separation out from the realm of the public” (xxi).

Just as the trend in domestic service in eighteenth-century France followed a course from a patriarchal to an egalitarian model, a similar case holds for society and theatre in Spain. Of course, not every master-servant relationship adhered to this path. The complexity of master-servant relationships implies that at times they could be more egalitarian, while on other occasions they could include elements of patriarchal models,
“Their (masters’) experiences with their servants may have convinced masters not only of the innate inferiority of their domestics… but also of their own innate superiority and the fact that they fully deserved their position at the apex of the social hierarchy” (Fairchild 149). The presence of elements of both patriarchal and egalitarian models creates a scenario where superiors try to maintain their position and resist tension from servants who are not afraid to challenge or go beyond the established norms. Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s La petimetra serves as a wonderful example of the complexity of master-servant relationships as it contains characteristics that are more egalitarian and modern, as well as those that are more traditional. In the first act of the play, the servant, Anita, argues with and reveals her true feelings toward her mistress, Jerónima, in private. Jerónima, who is engrossed in her daily toilette ritual to get ready, casts a series of demands upon her servant and criticizes her for not having everything completed to her liking. Anita is obviously upset and offended by the trivial requests and unmerited criticism, and responds to her mistress as an equal and not as her servant. Anita boasts about her talents as a hairdresser and takes credit for making her mistress always look good in public.

When Jerónima complains about the mirror being dirty; however, Anita’s tone becomes more combative. She openly expresses her discontent about being treated unfairly and not being recognized for her good work: “Dígolo porque pudiera darme alguna estimación el tener con perfección mi habilidad de peluquera” (Ed. Pérez Magallón v. 346-349). As the conversation continues, it is clear that Jerónima is taken
back by the words of her servant, and attempts to put an end to the argument with phrases such as, “¡Qué habladora estás, mujer!” (v. 369) and “Vamos a peinarme y calla” (v. 372). Anita ignores these signals and continues to talk back until her mistress alerts her to the fact that María is approaching the room: “Mas calla, que Mariquita ya con sus ridiculeces viene aquí” (v. 386-387). At this moment the scene shifts from a private exchange to more of a public matter, allowing for different readings. From one point of view, the presence of another superior means that Anita must stop questioning her mistress and return to being the loyal servant in the eyes of other characters. Anita and Mariquita live in the same household, so the threat of any public display of content in this scene is minimal. However, the interaction suggests a much deeper relationship, where masters are ultimately responsible for the actions of their servants, “El cabeza de la familia y su mujer eran responsables, ante la sociedad y la Iglesia, de la educación moral y de los actos de sus criados” (Sarasúa, Criados 226-227). Perhaps for this reason Anita chooses to obey Jerónima’s order, and decides to serve her master more diligently in public. From another point of view, Anita appears to share Jerónima’s view of Mariquita, indicating that she is a reflection of her mistress and that they share an intimacy that transcends or contradicts formality. By mirroring the beliefs and actions of Jerónima, Anita adds to the disparity in the work and personality types between Jerónima and María, and between Mariquita and herself; a discrepancy that is based primarily on values.
The shift in Anita’s behavior and words, from openly disrespecting her mistress in the opening act to serving her diligently and flattering her on other occasions, reveals the complexity of servants’ feelings and master-servant relationships. To classify these relationships into a few categories would therefore run the risk of misconstruing the range of possibilities, as they take on a wide range of characteristics and often present conflicting elements and feelings simultaneously. Cissie Fairchilds perhaps summarizes best this complexity: “Domestics manipulated their masters, gossiped about them, laughed at them, insulted them, hit them, robbed them, and occasionally even murdered them. But they also fought for them, served them devotedly, admired them, imitated them, and even loved them” (101). This description is interesting because it suggests that the relationships between masters and servants are actually more complex than typical love-hate affairs, something Fairchilds confirms by writing that servants, “displayed a strange combination of both these reactions” (101). Anita’s actions don’t reach the extremes of servant behavior, but they do demonstrate a combination of different degrees of love and hate. The best example of the change in Anita’s feelings and actions occurs in the final act of La petimetra. Here, Jerónima shares with Anita in a private conversation her desire to marry don Félix, while also telling her servant that she would like for her to continue to faithfully serve the family: “nuestra boda en un instante, tú serás mi camarera, y por de día y de noche siempre hemos de andar en coche, tú al vidrio y yo a la testera” (v. 2493-2497). Jerónima not only welcomes Anita’s work but also invites her servant to participate in her dream wedding and accompany her in public
places. These wishes are a stark contrast from the criticism Jerónima shows her servant in the first act, and Anita responds to her mistress with flattery. She first states that they both share a love for fine fashion and recognize the importance of appearance, and that she would like to continue to satisfy these tastes with her master: “Cualquiera moda que salga, por Dios, señora, que sean las primeras que se vean nosotras con ella” (v. 2514-2517). Anita then comments on Jerónima’s beauty, remarking that, “No vi mujer tan hermosa con tanta gravedad” (v. 2532-2533). The sharp change in tone in this scene from the earlier argument between Anita and Jerónima emphasizes how servant-master relationships can change at any moment and take on a wide range of emotions. It also suggests a type of duality, or complexity, within domestic service, as the profession can simultaneously be both hierarchical and egalitarian to a certain extent.

One sainete where the master-servant relationship appears extremely close and the roles of both superior and inferior even switch slightly is Cruz’s El almacén de novias (1774). The inexperience of the young suitor, coupled with his nervousness, allow the servant to take charge, guide the situation, and offer guidance on love and relationships to his master. The play opens with the criado asking his master why he has decided to marry, to which he then adds some advice for his superior, “Vedlo bien, y muy despacio” (Ed. Cotarelo y Mori 404). The master has decided to look for a suitable wife and begin his search at the Almacén de Novias, following earlier suggestions from his own servant. To help facilitate the search the master has openly requested the help of the servant, who seems to know the streets of Madrid much better. By doing so, the master has therefore
invited the servant to participate in his affairs and has indirectly placed him on the same level: “En la misma inteligencia estoy yo; mas, sin embargo, quiero fiarme de ti, y ver si alguna encontramos en el Almacén de Novias, que me dices ha fundado para casos semejantes ese extravagante hidalgo” (404). This statement establishes a trust and close proximity between master and servant that was manifested in evolving, middle class households and the social stratification of the time. Mireille Coulon, in her “Estudio preliminar” to J.M. Sala Valldaura’s edition to Cruz’s Sainetes, states that the coexistence of the middle class, lesser nobles and the popular classes in eighteenth-century Madrid extends to the sainete, which she describes as a “puro producto de aquella ‘clase media’, en la que se codeaban plebeyos acomodados y nobles de pequeña y mediana condición” (xxii). The master’s words in El almacén de novias show that he has given complete trust to his servant by confiding his intentions in him and choosing to follow his previous suggestions. Finally, the master goes so far as to include his servant indirectly in his plan, stating that they will go and to try to find someone together. The use of the verb, encontramos immediately connects the two in a common mission that allows for the temporary reversal or overlap of roles. It also suggests the complexity of master-servant relationships and the instability within the overarching social structure, without completely breaking from social norms. Depicting a household where this change of roles of had been permanently established would not create a believable scenario and plot for the reader and audience as it would fracture any sense of the model servant who follows orders without too much resistance.\textsuperscript{81}
Judging from the master-servant relationship in *El almacén de novias* or the abrupt change in Anita’s words and actions in *La petimetra*, it could be argued that servants need to possess multiple personalities, from the loyal, dedicated domestic to the out-spoken rebel, or be excellent actors in order to manipulate their masters and survive. *Sainetes* lend themselves perfectly to these complex, master-servant relationships because they portray different aspects of daily life in a believable or realistic manner, and show “cierta toma de conciencia social de las clases bajas urbanas” (Lafarga, 84). At the same time, because of their short duration, *sainetes* must use these interactions to attract the attention of the audience from the start. Playwrights build off of master-servant relationships to insert humor, drama, suspense or criticism into a work, and to generate a sense of everyday life and the presence of popular classes. Meanwhile, the constantly changing behavior of servants is a wonderful indicator of how domestics learn to negotiate certain conversations as well as public and private spaces—one of the characteristics of master-servant relationships. An excellent example is Ramón de la Cruz’s *La pradera de San Isidro*, which includes scenes that are set both in private and public areas. In the opening monologue of the *sainete*, Cirilo reveals some of his frustration over being a servant and having to complete the same tasks each day: “¡Fiera carga es para un mísero paje peluquín por la mañana, peluquín al mediodía, la tarde y la noche larga peluquín, y peluquín cuando tal vez se levanta a media noche porque le ha dado un soponcio al alma!” (Ed. Sala Valldaura v. 4-12). It is clear that Cirilo feels the need to take a break from his routine and wants to attend the festival of San Isidro,
especially after learning a few verses later that the female servant, Juliana, has already been granted permission to do so. Cirilo teases Juliana about going to the festival and even states that his master has granted him permission to attend as well. Cirilo’s words at the start of the play must be spoken in the absence of his master, as they otherwise would not have been tolerated. It is understandable for servants to talk to other servants, or to do so alone, about their difficult working conditions and boring routines. However, in the presence of their masters, servants disguise these feelings, as stated before. This fact is verified by the change in Cirilo’s actions and statements when Don Nicolás enters the room. Instead of complaining about certain tasks, Cirilo immediately fulfills his master’s request for his cape, sword and hat. Although Cirilo realizes at this point that his dreams of attending San Isidro are probably destroyed, “Mi gozo en el pozo,” (v. 103) he keeps his thoughts to himself and carries out the order. Don Nicolás then acknowledges that Juliana has been granted permission by his wife to attend, and because of this one of the servants must stay at home to watch over the house. Cirilo disagrees with the decision, yet instead of arguing, he reminds his master politely of how he has also been promised some time at the festival, “¿Usted no se acuerda/de que ya me tiene dada licencia de ir a bureo?” (v. 127-129). Even though he is in a private setting, with only his master and Juliana present, Cirilo chooses to frame his argument within a polite question, a stark contrast from the tone Anita uses with her mistress in La petimetra.

To maintain his level of trust and loyalty in the eyes of his master while still satisfying his own desires, Cirilo devises a plan to deceive Don Nicolás by dressing in his
clothes, attending San Isidro and returning early to the house. The costume will grant Cirilo a temporary upward mobility in social class and suggests that the servant really does look up to his master in many ways. In fact we learn that the female servant, Juliana, has also been lent some of the clothes of her mistress so that she can look honorable in public during the festival. Cissie Fairchilds writes that such imitative actions were quite unique to servants: “Their (servants) tendency to imitate their masters-in dress, speech, mannerisms, and attitudes as well as in recreations-gave them tastes not shared by artisans and wage laborers” (45). From the perspective of the masters, having servants who model them in behavior and values is an added display of the honor of the household, as domestics or other hired help can act as an extension of the family. At the same time, however, masters were always mindful of maintaining a certain degree of separation from their servants, especially as the roles of domestics in the household and society transformed. Bridget Hill writes that in England, “by the end of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century ‘employers tried to emphasize the gap or social distance between themselves and their servants when in fact that gap had narrowed” (105). In some instances, these shifts within master-servant relationships play themselves out in theatre and in the process uncover the overall complexity of the service profession.

Cirillo’s actions insinuate that master-servant relationships are manifested and strengthened at times through material items, such as clothing. More important to these contacts, however, are the actions of the servants in public. In the final scene of La pradera de San Isidro, Don Nicolás first sees Juliana, and is immediately concerned
because she, although dressed like her mistress, is out alone with a male—an action that could have negative repercussions on the household, including dishonor. Don Nicolás tells one of his friends that, “He encontrado a mi criada, a quien hoy dimos licencia de venir con su paisana a paseo, con un chulo sola, haciendo mil monadas y dando qué decir” (v. 677-682). Although Don Nicolás’s friend assures him that this type of behavior is common at the festival, the nobleman disagrees, “No, que no es justo alborotara este concurso” (v. 689-690). The bigger shock for Don Nicolás is discovering that Cirilo, to whom he gave the responsibilities of watching over the house that evening, is also attending the festivities. Don Nicolás had already boasted about the loyalty of his servant, who is supposed to be at home instead, “es muchacho muy honrado y tiene ley a la casa,” (v. 692-693). Cirilo’s act of disobedience is therefore a knock on Don Nicolás’s reputation, and an action that could easily be punishable in public in order to reestablish order. Don Nicolás begins to hit Cirilo, who in turn dares not to speak out against his master out of fear of causing him more public shame. In other words, Cirilo recognizes his guilt and does not want to create any further contempt in public. He essentially returns to being a faithful servant once again, and is spared the remainder of the punishment because of the festival.⁸²

The fact that the plot of La pradera de San Isidro is set against the background of the week-long street festival in Madrid during the spring justifies Cirilo’s actions somewhat because it allows for the temporary depiction of a world in which social norms have been completely reversed and feelings can be more openly expressed. Traditionally,
lower social classes were associated with an overall sense of freedom and simplicity,\textsuperscript{83} where popular dances and festivities were plentiful and where social divisions temporarily disappeared. The presence of San Isidro validates the drastic change in social roles without permanently destroying order-an important factor in the play since Cirilo’s actions have extended beyond what is normally acceptable for servants. Without it, the \textit{sainete} would be portraying a society completely out of order-something that would not have been tolerated at the time in the theatres. No matter how close servants and masters were in their relationships, or how much masters entrusted their servants with certain responsibilities, there is always a level of separation between the two classes in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Carmen Sarasúa points out that one of the ways that the nobility upheld social order in eighteenth-century Spain was to mark classes by requiring their servants to wear specific clothing, identifying them with the family and household they serve.\textsuperscript{84} Many times this imposition created tension between servants and their masters and occasionally even resulted in protests. The issue for Don Nicolás is not that Cirilo has chosen to wear his clothes, but rather that Cirilo has disobeyed a direct order and made him look foolish in front of his friends. The nobleman wouldn’t mind if one of his servants had gone to San Isidro, as long as the household was left attended: “con tal de que quede asegurada la casa con uno; y cuenta que lo que mando se haga” (v. 137-140). Don Nicolás is obviously not happy with the public shame, no matter how small, his loyal servant has caused, and believes that it should continue to be punished beyond the blows he has already given Cirilo. However, Don
Nicolás also realizes that doing so will detract from the celebratory environment in the city: “No basta, pero le dejo solo por no hacer aciaga la tarde de San Isidro, y porque esta humorada otra sea complemento más festivo” (v. 724-729). Don Nicolás wants to preserve his own public image, so he must punish his servant to some degree, yet by dragging out this punishment Don Nicolás is competing with the tradition of an entire city and will probably hurt his own reputation even more. His only option is to therefore express his disapproval and allow the festivities to continue.

Cirilo’s actions bring up another important trend in master-servant relationships in eighteenth-century Spain, namely the way in which masters viewed those who served them. The relationships between masters and servants in Don Nicolás’s household seem to be very strong throughout the sainete. Don Nicolás initially views his servants in a positive light, as he jokes, negotiates, and communicates openly with them. He even honors the servants’ wish to attend San Isidro, so as long as one of them remains at home. Cissie Fairchilds points out that many times the relationships between servants and their masters are very close, especially if the servants took care of the majority of the personal needs and spent most of the day next to the ones they were serving: “What gave the femmes and valets de chambre their power and prestige, both within the household and without, was the fact that they lived on terms of intimacy and confidence with their masters and mistresses” (Fairchilds 27). The trust masters show their servants, as in the case of Cirilo and Juliana, is therefore a symbol of power and recognition. This positive view explains even more why Don Nicolás is disappointed with the actions of his
servants at the end of the play. Although each family situation was different in eighteenth-century Spain, the final scene of La pradera de San Isidro depicts more accurately the way masters in Madrid began to feel about their servants. Carmen Sarasúa cites a trend in eighteenth-century domestic service in which servants go from being considered as part of the families in which they work, to a group that is treated with skepticism and distrust. According to her, “Durante el siglo largo que se estudia aquí se produce un cambio significativo en la consideración de los sirvientes: de miembros menores de la familia, a medio camino entre los niños y los adultos, pasan a ser definidos como el enemigo en casa y tratados con recelo y temor” (Sarasúa, Criados 226). It is obvious from his reaction that Don Nicolás feels deceived by both Cirilo and Juliana, in spite of the festive environment. At the same time it makes sense that an audience would understand and expect masters to be skeptical and not trust their servants. This “fact,” combined with the background of the street festival, allows Ramón de la Cruz to create a play that wins over its audience because it is both entertaining and believable. It also shows how elements of master-servant relationships can fall within the realm of verisimilitude.

The negative view of servants brings up an issue related to what Cissie Fairchilds labels, “Domestic Enemies.” For her, as servants become more concerned about their own affairs and well-being than actually assisting their masters, they distance themselves from the families they serve and start to hurt them. Fairchilds writes that this separation has several important implications for masters: “The servant was no longer a docile
child; he was instead an adult, the equal to his employer. He was no longer a member of the family circle but instead an unknown stranger. And he was no longer automatically loyal and deferential… he would be loyal to his employer only when it was profitable for him to be so” (154). Ángel Muro documents an even stronger skepticism and distrust toward servants that was felt throughout nineteenth-century Spain. In El practicón, Muro reveals a negative view by masters toward their servants, whom they suspected of withholding money, cheating, and stealing. In particular, Muro mentions la sisa, or the common practice by some servants (criadas within the context of the passage) to swindle their masters by holding back provisions, money or clothing: “Y luego, la criada madrileña necesita sisar, si no en dinero, en cantidad y hasta en calidad, cuando no por los tres conceptos” (201). Muro continues, questioning why some servants are frequently seen in public dressed as mistresses when their salary couldn’t possibly pay for these items, “¿Cómo podrían ir a la plaza calzadas y vestidas como las vemos a diario, y salir cada quince días a paseo disfrazadas de señoritas, algunas con los tres, cuatro, seis y hasta diez duros que pueden ganar al mes?” (201). Muro does acknowledge that there are some good servants, in particular, criadas, but that in general they can’t be trusted.

One sainete which provides details about relationships from the perspectives of both masters and servants is La presumida burlada. Considered to be comical and moral, La presumida burlada presents a unique situation where a nobleman, and recent widower, marries a servant of the family, María, who immediately exaggerates her new social status by engaging in dramatized behaviors of a typical master. The play opens with Don
Gil discussing the drastic changes of his wife, “al punto que de mi mano tomó posesión, se puso más soberbia que los gallos, y empezó a mandar en jefe, no tan sólo a los criados, sino a mí” (Ed. Dowling v. 80-85), and marks the division between social classes from the start. Clearly class separation between masters and servants is an important issue in the work, as is the way both groups view each other. The social division and different perspectives are developed even more when the mother of María arrives in Madrid with other family members. The three common travelers converse in their local dialect that is depicted by a glaring accent and mispronounced words, and seem fascinated by the sights in the city, indicating that they have not witnessed them before. The servant of the travelers assures his two mistresses that during Holy Week the city was even more festive, as people from every social class were celebrating together, and that it would have been difficult to distinguish servants from nobles: “nenguno hubiera pensado sino que eran todos hombres de importancia” (v. 156-158). Again, the presence of a festival permits the temporary reversal of social roles. Without it, masters would to continue to view their servants as inferiors. Ironically, María adopts this latter view after marrying Don Gil. Instead of carrying out household tasks like before, she speaks to her servants in a condescending manner and ridicules the work they are doing, as if to place them on a lower level. By doing so, María exaggerates her new role as a mistress, places her former colleagues in a subordinate position, and emphasizes her recent upward social mobility. Cissie Fairchilds writes that many times, “The psychic damage caused by depersonalization was compounded by the deep sense of cultural inferiority servants
often felt in the presence of their masters” (104). On the other side of that argument, masters were superior to their servants and made it a responsibility to better them. In the case of La presumida burlada it is obvious that María feels superior to the two domestics and probably wants them to follow her orders; however, she resorts to a more critical tone. María starts to give orders, complains about the way the servants have done the chores, and is offended by any negative comments toward her: “¿Andarme a mí con respuestas a cualquier cosa que mando? ¡Friega otra vez mal; vea yo alguna mota en los platos, y verás si te los tiro a la cabeza!” (v. 250-255). Once a servant but now a mistress, María has chosen to view the working classes with skepticism and distrust.

The changes in role and social class of María add to the complexity of master-servant relationships because María must now face the responses and complaints of her servants in private. The second part of La presumida burlada opens with a dialogue between the new mistress, dressed as such, and two of her servants, with whom she previously worked. In spite of their previous friendship and connection, María in her new role is quick to order around her servants and forget about the past. The female servant, however, takes offense to the criticism and demands of her new mistress and openly states that her work was never perfect either, “que un poco mejor fregados están que cuando usiría manejaba el estropajo” (v. 258-259). These words are important because they show again how servants reveal their true feelings privately instead of in public. Additionally, they suggest that personal attacks, an unexpected source of tension that further proves the complexity of master-servant relationships, could cause servants to
resist and speak out against their masters. Cissie Fairchilds states that personal attacks indeed caused more reactions than did monetary or material issues: “What they (servants) resented, and what spurred them to active protest, was personal mistreatment” (122). Fairchilds adds that, “For both domestics and their employers, the master-servant relationship was in essence personal rather than economic” (122). The servant is obviously upset at the way she has been treated by María, but also understands that she must privately share these feelings with her mistress. At the same time, the abrupt change in María’s attitude serves as an excellent example of how masters often viewed their servants. María refuses to maintain the relationships with her former colleagues that she had in the past, saying instead, “No seas desvergonzada, que esos tiempos se olvidaron,” (v. 260-261) and then later threatening to hit her female servant. The paje, also present, breaks up the quarrel between the two women, and openly admits to María that he is still adjusting to the fact that she is a mistress and not a fellow servant: “De tú…de usted; Señora, me he equivocado, y habréis de sufrirlo mientras que me voy acostumbrando.” (v. 286-298) His words are also appropriate for a private dialogue, and would not have been spoken publically. In the very next scene, the paje loyally serves María, introducing her to the house guests with complete respect. The criada isn’t depicted as carrying out other tasks for her mistress, but she does obediently respond to María’s question, whether she agrees with her or not.

According to Cissie Fairchilds, the older or patriarchal model of domestic service established the masters as the father of the servants and head of the household, while
servants were like adopted children who needed help, protection and guidance in life (138). In exchange for these services, domestics offered services of their own, helping out around the house in any way possible. Within this model, it is clear that the master-servant relationship could be labeled as superior-inferior, parent-child, or affection-duty. As the so called parents, masters were obligated to provide for the needs of their servants, from things as simple as food and clothing, to protection, guidance, training, and spiritual and moral welfare (Fairchilds 138-139). The nineteenth-century Manual de los buenos sirvientes: El libro de los amos y el libro de los criados even goes so far as to classify servants as a part of the family, “no son otra cosa que, el complemento, la continuación de esa querida y tierna unidad de la asociación humana, á la cual se ha llamado familia: no es la familia consanguínea, pero es la familia adoptiva, la familia viajera, temporal, anual” (7). Certainly there would have been examples of masters who followed these responsibilities, but there were also many masters who ignored them completely. El sí de las niñas presents examples of strong and even intimate master-servant relationships, where important information is exchanged and honest feelings are revealed, mostly in private conversations. It is through these relationships that we learn important background information in the play and about what each character really believed. They essentially are one of the tools that Leandro Fernández de Moratín uses to drive the plot and develop characters, without spending too much time or effort, and although the play is meant to serve as an example of how to educate and raise children, it provides deep insight into the world of master-servant and servant-servant relationships.
From the start of the *comedia*, with Don Diego and his servant, Simón, arriving at the boarding house, we see traces of these close connections. The intimacy of the relationship between Don Diego and Simón is seen through their conversations, namely through the topics they discuss and the tone that is used. In the opening scene we learn that Simón has served Don Diego faithfully for many years and that he has earned the complete trust of his master. In terms of master-servant relationships, Don Diego’s words are the ultimate compliment for Simón, as servants were supposed to be obedient and faithful, even more so than hardworking. Fairchilds writes that, “Servants were not hired to perform specific tasks, but to present instead a general posture of obedience and devotion to their employers” (122). The same friendly tone continues throughout the conversation, as Don Diego talks to Simón almost as an equal, rather than his superior. Don Diego asks Simón for his opinion on several occasions, while the two interrupt each other and comment on similar items. Don Diego’s trust in Simón is not only seen in these praises and positive tone, but also in the fact that he willingly shares personal information with his servant privately. In the same scene we first learn that Don Diego deeply admires the young Francisca, whom he has just helped free from the convent. Later Don Diego comments that Francisca’s mother is a good-natured, yet vain person, and that she has spent all of the inheritance money from the death of her most recent husband. Finally, Don Diego shares with Simón that he plans on marrying the young Francisca, something that surprises the servant who originally thought that Don Diego’s nephew would make an ideal match for her. Instead of openly arguing this point with
Don Diego; however, Simón makes his feelings known to his master by speaking highly of his nephew and assuring him that he has confidence in the decision as long as Francisca agrees. Don Diego is obviously upset with his nephew, another piece of information that he reveals to Simón, but still plans on continuing with the arrangements.

Just as Don Diego shares personal information with Simón, so too does Francisca express her most intimate details to the servant of her family, Rita. The fact that the relationship between the two women is very close is not surprising, especially since domestics were typically responsible for caring for the children in the families they served. We learn in the opening scene that Rita has been with the family for quite some time and even remained with Francisca in the convent for four years: “La criada, que la ha servido en Madrid y más de cuatro años en el convento” (61). The closeness of such a relationship allows for the exchange of personal information, and Rita is not only the servant, but also the best friend and confidant of the young girl. Cissie Fairchilds writes that, “Probably the most intimate and psychologically important of all relationships between master and servant were those which developed between the children of the elite and the domestics who cared for them” (193). However, as Fairchilds later points out, “Relationships between servants and the children they care for can take many forms” (207). Her words indicate that neglect and abuse were probably just as common in these relationships as were respect and developing strong friendships. El sí de las niñas presents one of the more favorable possibilities. Having this type of relationship or outlet is important for Francisca because she is afraid to completely reveal to her mother or to
Don Diego her true feelings about the arranged marriage. At the same time, the
dialogues between Francisca and Rita provide us with more background information and
develop even further the relationships between master and servant. One obvious
characteristic of their close relationship is that Rita understands Francisca best, and
knows facts about her that her own mother doesn’t even understand. In Act I, Scene IX,
Rita observes that Francisca has been crying and begins to comfort and listen to her.
Francisca admits that she is upset about her mother’s irrational demands and has thereforе hurt her by trying to tell the truth. Francisca explains her dilemma to Rita, making it clear that she is the only one who understands her true feelings: “Empeñada está en que he de querer mucho a ese hombre… Si ella supiera lo que sabes tú, no me mandaría cosas imposibles… Y que es tan bueno, y que es rico, y que me irá tan bien con él… Se ha enfadado tanto, y me ha llamado picarona, inobediente… Porque no miento ni sé fingir, por eso me llaman picarona” (83-84). Rita responds by trying to calm down her mistress and evoking some positive memories from the past, and then tells Francisca that the young lover has also arrived at the boardinghouse. Rita continues to direct Francisca’s plan to meet Carlos, as the young mistress becomes increasingly more dependent on her servant. While this dependency grows, so too does the intimacy of their relationship, which as I described in the chapter on the function of servants in comedias, culminates in the kiss between the two women as a symbol of their friendship.
Servant-Servant Relationships

Theatrical works in eighteenth-century Spain not only present many details regarding the complexity of master-servant relationships, but also reveal an entire network of servants and the relationships they form. The formation of these networks in the society of that time was necessary for the survival and well-being of domestics as they served as a unifying force and common thread among a class of people that lived and worked in a foreign and, very often, hostile environment. On one hand servants were dependent on their superiors for necessities like food, shelter, and money, as well as the hope of one day possibly ascending social ranks. Domestic service therefore provided an attractive option, even if only temporary, for people who arrive to cities like Madrid. At the same time, it included many different responsibilities. Domestics were frequently asked to carry out any and every type of task imaginable, both inside and outside the household, and they completed these tasks to make a living. Bridget Hill writes that, “Just because an individual was taken on as a domestic servant did not mean that domestic service defined their work role” (17). Instead, she points out that, “Many appointed as servants became shop assistants, helping in the family business” (17). José Nieto describes a similar trend in Spain, “ni bajo dicha rúbrica se esconde una única ocupación. Muchos comerciantes y artesanos tenían criados en sus tiendas y talleres” (304). On the other hand, by finding employment, domestics actually established more of a connection with the nobility and bourgeois, and in the process, distanced themselves from people of the working classes outside of the families in which they worked and
interacted (Fairchilds 133). Servant-servant relationships were therefore a true comfort zone for domestics and new arrivals to the city, and possibly the only “real” ties this sector of society had to people from similar backgrounds and social classes. However, for a variety of reasons, many of which are hierarchical and territorial, the relationships and networks servants formed with other servants were quite complex.

When represented in drama, these networks carry out at least two very important functions. First, they help insert humor and popular themes into a play in scenes where servants are portrayed as having fun, interacting casually, complaining or gossiping with other servants about their masters, or commenting on different aspects of society. Second, they reconstruct to a degree the reality of the time within the work, allowing many eighteenth-century theatrical texts, such as sainetes, to present realistic elements of society from that era: “Bajo la pluma de Ramón de la Cruz el sainete se vinculó cada vez más con la realidad coetánea.” (Coulon, Estudio preliminar xiii). Part of the reality presented deals with the environment and relationships associated with domestic service. Servants relate to other servants and even bond on issues of working conditions, compensation, neglect, and abuse, and no matter how comical the tone of their dialogue, there are many truths in their words. Similarly, certain groups of immigrants, many of whom find work later on as servants, identify with specific activities, regions, experiences, cultures, and even locations in Madrid: “los inmigrantes recomponen en Madrid sus redes de contactos: se reúnen para pasar su tiempo libre y celebrar sus fiestas, encuentran alojamiento y, fundamentalmente, empleo” (Sarasúa, Criados 60). If servant-
servant relationships are depicted within a household, instead of a public setting, they probably center more around daily responsibilities and social boundaries, as servants fill different roles, or work together to some extent to make sure that all the demands are met and that everything is functioning properly. The other part of the reality is tied to the overall social hierarchy, a characteristic that extends to domestic service in other countries as well. Frank Huggett refers to the world of servants in Victorian England as that “Below the Stairs,” and argues that this sphere was marked hierarchically, “Just as there were second-class houses so were there second-class servants; rank and precedence were as divisive downstairs as they were upstairs” (35). Similar divisions existed in eighteenth-century Spanish households, with the presence of a master near these spaces placing even more emphasis on hierarchical divisions. From the public arena to the private sector, it is therefore clear that servants form a complex network amongst themselves both in theatrical works and actual society.

*El sí de las niñas* is a crucial play for studying servant-servant relationships because it depicts from the opening act a strong network between the three domestics. The *comedia* takes place in a boarding house, and although it is a public setting, the limited number of characters presented helps transform our view of the environment into more of a private space. Within this network of domestics we can observe many characteristics of servants’ interactions. First, it is apparent that the servants all want to meet the demands of their masters, with those of Don Diego being top priority. In eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Spain, a prosperous family and household didn’t
necessarily correlate to servants receiving better compensation, although they were more likely to provide for servants than a household that was barely functioning, especially in periods of crisis such as those at the start of the nineteenth-century. It was therefore in the best interest of the three servants in the play to make sure that all of the responsibilities were completed. Second, when carrying out their duties, the servants are aware of the hierarchy that exists amongst the members of their group—something that was also true in society of that time. In *El sí de las niñas*, the hierarchy is built off of the character of Don Diego, who is the most respected member on stage. His servant, Simón, is therefore given the most respected jobs, and situated at the top of the hierarchy amongst servants. This hierarchy was based primarily on gender and the different types of responsibilities, with the personal servant of the male head of household at the top of the pecking order.88 It was also dependent on spaces, both within the household and in more public areas. Frank Huggett describes domestic servants in Victorian England as territorial, and writes that they often took up drastic measures to defend their spaces and responsibilities: “Demarcation disputes were so common downstairs that, in comparison, a modern manufacturing plant appears to be a haven of industrial peace” (38). These aspects of servant-servant relationships are recreated to an extent in *El sí de las niñas*, where they generate a sense of reality, comical exchanges, and even tension between the characters of domestics.
The use of public and private spaces in Moratín’s comedy develops different aspects of the network amongst servants. Simón, the most respected of all the servants, is assigned to less repetitive tasks like delivering messages, which frequently place him in more visible places. Huggett comments how higher ranking male servants, realizing their own importance to the families they served, seemed to develop a tendency to avoid the tedious chores that were essential to the daily functioning of the household: “most of them, particularly the men, soon acquired a sixth sense which enabled them to anticipate the likely imposition of any unwelcome or extraneous task, from which they escaped by disappearing into some nether region of the house or by becoming engaged on an even more pressing duty” (41). Similar elements appear in *El sí de las niñas*. When not appearing on stage, Simón is described as carrying out tasks in other common areas of the boarding house. Simón’s presence in these spaces is important because as a male servant, he brings more honor and respect to Don Diego. As a consequence of Simón completing visible, yet more remedial tasks, the female servant, Rita, bears the brunt of the tedious responsibilities like fixing the rooms and preparing the meal. Clearly, the public areas, and supposed presence of other guests at the boarding house, dictate the actions of the servants and the hierarchy that exists between them. When the public space is altered slightly, and the servants find themselves only in the presence of their colleagues, a different dynamic unfolds. The domestics interact more freely with each other as equals, and push the limits of social boundaries. Sharing information and gossip becomes the basis of their dialogue. Prior to the scene where Rita comforts her mistress, she learns of
Don Carlos’ arrival at the boardinghouse by unexpectedly running into his servant, Calamocha, in the hallway outside of their rooms. The conversation the two servants have is filled with details previously unmentioned, as well as a genuine collegiality and respect for each other. Calamocha even jokes with Rita about where she is sleeping, and by doing so unveils for the audience his affection for the woman. He also describes each aspect of the journey he took with his master to finally arrive in Alcalá, mentioning how they left immediately after receiving Francisca’s letter, traveled quickly, and tired out the animals, and that Carlos is madly in love and needs to see the young girl. Rita then shares the specific details as to how she arrived with her mistresses at the boarding house, mentioning that Francisca’s mother has arranged for her daughter to marry. These details fill in some background information in the plot, and further develop the complexity of the relationships that have already been established, namely between Francisca and Carlos, Diego and Carlos, and those that form the network of servants. They are also a great way of building suspense for the moment when Don Diego finally confronts his nephew.

The exchange of information in these spaces also proves how servants demonstrate a dual loyalty throughout El sí de las niñas. On one hand, servants protect their masters and don’t reveal all of the information about them—a necessary action, since they first and foremost need to be loyal to the person who is employing them. The dialogue in these scenes occasionally becomes strategic, as servants attempt to pry details from one another. One example occurs when Don Carlos and his servant, Calamocha, finally run into Simón. Suspecting that Don Diego is also present at the boardinghouse,
Calamocha helps Don Carlos ask a series of questions of Simón, and in the process openly demonstrates his loyalty to his master. The absence of Don Diego temporarily grants Calamocha more authority, and the servant is quick to support his master in the interrogation of Simón. Don Carlos first asks about his uncle. When Simón avoids the question, Calamocha brings it up again, “Pero, ¿se ha quedado en Madird, o…” (116). Simón still avoids answering, as he tries to protect the truth by ignoring the question and extending the dialogue with Don Carlos: “¿Quién me había de decir a mí…? ¡Cosa como ella! Tan ajeno estaba yo ahora de… Y usted, de cada vez más guapo… Con que usted irá a ver al tío, ¿eh?” (117). Later in the play Simón takes the reverse role, as he and Don Diego find a letter and suspect that Rita is searching for it as well. Here, Don Diego asks Rita the questions while Simón tries to discredit her alibi (142). On the other hand, servants look out for each other, especially when talking amongst themselves as the absence of their masters allows domestics to demonstrate the second part of their dual loyalty. In the first dialogue between Calamocha and Rita, the male servant is surprised to learn that Francisca’s suitor is also present in the hotel. Not realizing that this suitor is really the uncle, don Diego…. Calamocha asks how many servants are accompanying him. When Calamocha finds out that the suitor is traveling with only one servant, he shows concern for the safety of his colleague, knowing very well how his own master will respond to this information. Part of Calamocha’s questions stem from the fact that he wants to properly assess the situation for his master, yet it’s also apparent that Calamocha wishes for the well being of the other servant. Calamocha warns Rita that
Carlos will probably try to approach Francisca, and that the servant of the suitor may be in danger. He gives this warning to alert them ahead of time of a possible conflict and to look out for the well-being of the other domestic: “Mira, dile en caridad que se disponga, porque está de peligro.” (82)

The depiction of servants communicating with each other in the hallway is very realistic, as domestics tend to function within theatrical works in common spaces of the household, or in public or popular locations, especially in the case of sainetes: “La acción de muchos sainetes empieza o tiene lugar en una ‘calle pública’ o un ‘salón corto’, o sea delante del telón” (Dowling, Introducción 42). These common areas create a sense of community and often serve as the setting of scenes where domestics interact in a casual manner by teasing, joking, or gossiping with each other. In these areas, servants are typically separated from their masters and can express their true feelings, complain, or tell stories without the threat of being punished. The presence of an entire group of domestics also adds to the depiction of the servants’ world because it allows for multiple characteristics and actions to occur at the same time, something that would have otherwise been impossible to develop within one or two characters, and in a short play that restricts character development: “En una pieza que se representa en veinticinco minutos, no hay tiempo para desarrollar el carácter de un personaje” (Dowling, Introducción 29). Las usías y las payas is an excellent example of this type of setting, as the sainete opens with a jovial scene outside the entrance to a town in which the female servants are dancing and singing while some male servants are challenging each other in
a competition of strength. The festive environment and deliberate setting go beyond the social construct of the city. Although Ramón de la Cruz did not include many stage directions in this particular sainete, the presence of numerous payos helps us imagine the setting better. We can easily observe that the interaction between the competitors is quite comical and becomes fairly heated when two of the payos decide to bet on who can throw a log the farthest. The scene becomes even more casual and humorous when some of the payos decide to tease the wife of the gardener, who in turn responds back with equal force: “Más facilmente quizá se burlan a las madamas de Madrid y a los usías que no a los payos” (Ed. Dowling v. 143-146). The tone of the gardener’s wife surpasses that of the other payos, showing that she is not afraid to talk back. At the same time, her words represent the attitude and strength of all domestics by declaring that their class of people cannot be deceived. It is here that the pride of the servants shows. Domestics might be regarded as inferior, but according to the attitude expressed in the sainete, they are certainly content in their world and proud to be part of a larger force.

The festive atmosphere reaches its peak in Las usías y las payas when some of the payos decide to play a trick on the women by dressing up as usías or señores: “Lavarnos las caras muy bien primero, y después, con aquellas ropas guapas, fingir que somos señores que a Madrid acaso pasan por aquí, y que se detienen esta noche en la posada; que saben que hay baile, que salen a verle a la plaza” (v. 220-228). Clearly their plot and the entire casual environment are a stark contrast from the typical responsibilities and behavior required of servants, making this scene interesting but also an important
depiction of servant-servant relationships. Such actions would have never been tolerated under normal circumstances, or in the presence of characters from higher social classes.

At the same time the actions suggest that servants considered themselves very different from their superiors, and that they constantly reminded themselves of these differences. The decision in this case to dress up as usías mimics the behavior of higher social classes who, in the eyes of servants, always have a taste for fine fashion and foreign styles. In Las usías y las payas the servants have chosen to dress up as part of a scheme, and not because they share the same tastes. In other words for the servants, dressing up and acting as usías are ways of showing that these values are not their own, and that their group is very different. A similar reaction to the upper classes is made even earlier in the sainete when some of the payos comment on acceptable public behavior. Here, one of the women asks if it’s a sin for her to leave church accompanied by the hand of an usía, when women from other classes seem to do this all of the time. The response given to her points out a clear division of social classes by stating that what is acceptable for one group is not allowed for another: “Es que por distintas causas, lo que es escándalo en los pobres suele en los ricos ser gala” (v. 81-83).

Los payos en Madrid reveals a public setting by painting a realistic picture of the Puerta del Sol, with its buildings, benches and signs, while the characters enter from every direction and engage in different activities as if they were on the streets of Madrid. The two protagonists of the play, Pechoseco and Jarapo, are payos who are visiting Madrid and who are clearly out of place in the city. The conversation between the two
servants, building upon their comical names, provides a great deal of humor in the sainete and helps contrast the world of domestics with that of other social classes. The innocence and ignorance of the payos add to this division but also serve as common characteristics of the protagonists. J.M. Sala Valldaura writes in the prologue to his edition of Cruz’s Sainetes that payos were often depicted in a role of simplicity or naivety, “la literalidad con que el simple (en general, el payo) interpreta los mensajes” (Prólogo LXXII). However, at the same time, the reader and audience are seeing the city through the eyes of the two payos, allowing them to identify with and relate to a depiction where popular spaces are glorified. J.M. Sala Valldaura states that one of the roles of the payo in Cruz’s sainetes was to portray these characteristics: “la mirada del payo sirve para defender el casticismo, la tradición mejor representada por la majeza de los barrios populares de Madrid o Cádiz” (El payo y la ciudad 14). Of the two characters, Jarapo appears to have more awareness and experience in the city, having spent an “entire” six hours there before. The more “cultured” of the protagonists makes his companion aware of this fact right away: “Pechoseco, como tú no has salido de tu casa, no has visto el mundo; yo estuve en Madrid una temporada/de seis horas, y vi mucho; pero tú no has visto nada” (61). The close relationship between the two allows Jarapo to speak to Pechoseco in such a direct manner, but his serious tone contributes even more to the lack of sophistication of the servants and to the overall humor in the play. It is obvious that while Jarapo is wiser than his companion, neither of the two have any idea about life in the city. Pechoseco confuses the statue of Mariblanca in the Puerta del Sol for a
woman, and is amazed when his companion tells him that because she is made of stone, she cannot talk. Pechoseco, with his lack of education, believes that all women never stop talking, and shares a lengthy story with Jarapo about how he tried to quiet his wife (61). The conversation then shifts to theatre, when the two visitors notice advertisements that are posted all over about comedies. When asked by Pechoseco about these announcements, Jarapo reveals that he once attended the theatre but didn’t understand what was being said: “Yo una tarde estuve en una,/pero no entendí palabra” (62). However, in spite of their naivety the two servants observe and conclude, when Don Diligencia almost knocks them down, that people from other social classes behave differently. Pechoseco comments sarcastically, “¡Maldita sea su casta! Tanta cortesía tiene como un mulo de la Mancha” (62). Jarapo follows by stating that Madrid is full of these types of people: “De éstos hay en Madrid muchos” (62). The end result of the interaction between the protagonists is a sainete that depicts the closeness as well as the lack of culture and refinement that domestics can share, and that on a smaller scale points out some of the marked differences between social classes. In other words, Los payos en Madrid is really a comical depiction of servants, something that Cissie Fairchilds states was very common in French literature from the same time: “Eighteenth-century French literature has a wealth of what we might call ‘ignorant servant stories,’ anecdotes about domestics newly come to the city who betray their rusticity at every turn” (106).

Los payos críticos makes use of a public environment to depict servants in a similar manner, namely as a rebellious, ignorant and unified group that occasionally
relishes its lack of culture and education, but also develops even further the differences between social classes. Set in the plaza of a small village near the entrance to Madrid the sainete opens with officials posting signs all over to prohibit crude behavior and to maintain order during the Easter celebrations. While hanging their announcements the two authorities, Merino and Carretero, comment on the number of payos, and in the process label them indirectly as a separate class: “los diantres son estos payos!” (Ed. Cotarelo y Mori 123). However, the officials have overlooked the fact that the majority of the payos in their area don’t know how to read—a reality that adds a level of humor to the sainete and that brings servants together within the same network. In eighteenth and nineteenth-century Spain, masters were actually responsible for the moral and religious education of their servants, although the extent of formal instruction differed between families. In the case of Los payos críticos, the servants are removed from their masters and households they serve, and depicted more as an uneducated, yet proud group. The payos in the play recognize that the posted signs contain fourteen lines and that they were probably mandated by the authorities, but they have no idea as to their content. They walk around asking for assistance in reading or determining the message of the announcements, while at the same time commenting on their own difficulties trying to read. Chinica is quick to admit that the majority of the group is uneducated: “Si nosotros no sabemos leer” (124). Espejo disagrees at first, boasting about how he is able to connect the written letters with sounds, “Tú eres quien no lo sabes; que yo, mal ó bien, entiendo que la redondita es o, y aquella del rabo tieso hacia abajo es p ú es q” (124), but
quickly realizes that he too can’t decipher the words. Fortunately, Simón arrives and is able to relay the information, not by reading the signs, but rather by having previously memorized their message.

The content of this message adds to the depiction of the servants as uninformed and uncultured, further develops the relationship they share, and creates more separation between social classes. Instead of being the loyal domestics that they are in El sí de las niñas, the servants in Los payos críticos are first given the image of a loud and rebellious bunch. Simón’s words indicate that all types of public celebration, through music, dance or just simply gathering, will be discouraged in the village during the holiday and that the entire public is expected to be clean and well-dressed. Ironically, the last of these mandates seems to bother Simón the most, creating more humor in the sainete and also suggesting that servants typically had poor hygiene: “aquí entra lo peor del cuento que salga todo vecino, bien lavado de pescuezo, cara y manos, con la ropa mejor que tenga y en cuerpo” (124). United by these characteristics and proud of them, the servants follow the lead of Callejo and decide to quietly observe some bourgeois travelers who are passing through the town. The ensuing scene shows the strength and intimacy of the payos, as they cease all festive activities, stare at the travelers, and make critical remarks about them under their breath, commenting on their clothing and the way they are positioned. At one point Espejo even states that the less privileged travelers disgust him just as much as their superiors: “Pues yo me enfado de verlas” (126). The unification of the payos reaches its greatest moment when two of the travelers, Ladvenana and Juan,
who are dressed as majos, begin to play music and obviously attract the watch of the authorities. The new regulations are disregarded in favor of more festive music, but immediately the payos take full advantage of this freedom to celebrate through a song and dance in which they imitate the bourgeois travelers. The payos share the enjoyment in the final scene, but the travelers are offended and leave town immediately: “¡Esto es una desvergüenza; porque es hacer un remedo de todos nosotros” (128).

Within their network, servants share secrets, talk about their personal feelings, argue, and plot certain actions together, such as in the case of Las payas celosas. In the opening scene of this sainet Garrido, a payo, reveals to his fellow colleagues that he is infatuated with one of the three beautiful daughters of a rich confectioner, and brags that he has recently made each of the women notice and fall more in love with him. Garrido’s friends are interested in hearing more details and bombard him with questions about their encounter. The exception is Coronado, who already knows about the confectioner’s daughters and remains skeptical about the entire situation. Coronado tells the other payos that the women possess a huge dowry, and that their father is looking to marry them to wealthy workers, and not simple servants: “¿Qué caso quieres tú que hagan de los pobres jornaleros como nosotros?” (Ed. Cotarelo y Mori 375). The mixture of questions, exaggerations, and bluntness in the conversation show from the start that the relationship between the servants is very close. It gets even closer when Garrido discloses that the women will marry the men that make the greatest effort to entertain and court them: “Dicen que tienen resuelto quedar casadas aquí con aquel o con aquellos que las festejen
mejor y hagan el mayor esfuerzo por divertirlas‖ (375). Obviously the group of payos cannot pass up on a challenge, and begin to discuss the music, plays and dances that they will use to win them over. At the same time the female servants, who are also the girlfriends of the payos, have their own network, through which they share personal information and talk about others. The women seem interested in helping and supporting each other, and are clearly upset when they learn about the plan their men have created. The group of women decides to act immediately and collectively thinks of a strong form of retaliation, as the network of payas quickly transforms itself into a type of army: “Arrancarles con las uñas los pellejos. Eso no; que si los ven desollados, los tuvieran ellas por hombres de moda, y nos ganaran el pleito. Matarlos. Eso es mejor‖ (377). Just as the payas are ready to begin their retaliation, however, Guzman enters with some information that she overheard regarding the confectioner and his daughters. Guzman informs her friends of all of the details, but is obviously concerned about being involved in gossip: “Haz cuenta que no lo sabe naide, ni yo, en todo el pueblo, porque mi hermana lo sabe de su marido el barbero; mi hermana después lo dijo a mi madre, hablando quedo; mi madre lo contó anoche…y yo os lo digo a vosotras a media voz, porque quiero que no se sepa por mi y puedan llamarme luego habladora‖ (377). These words show that while servants worry about their own image they also feel obligated to help other servants within their network. The payas plan out their revenge and involve the original suitors of the three daughters to create a dramatic ending to the play.
As mentioned before, the casual or festive side of servants’ world is seen more frequently when their masters and other superiors are absent. The presence of characters other than servants can change the environment back into the tougher reality of domestic service – a contrast that appears in the sainete, La Petra y la Juana. This play is particularly interesting because of the numerous details and stage directions that Ramón de la Cruz includes to create many realistic elements. La Petra y la Juana is set on the patio of a tenement house and opens with the servant, Celidonia, and other workers sharing responsibilities such as sewing and washing. The intimacy of the atmosphere is seen through the stage directions, as most of the workers are singing, while those who are sewing are also depicted as observing the washerwomen. Within the harmonious environment, the wife of the tailor begins to sing a song describing a girl who complains about having to work: “Dijo una niña a su madre, porque la mandó coser: menos coser, madre mía, de todas labors sé” (Ed. Lafarga v. 12-15). First, the use of popular song while working shows the intimacy of the relationships servants have. In the beginning of Los picos de oro one of the female servants is also depicted as singing to her colleagues as they sew-something that frustrates the mistress. In La Petra y la Juana the lack of reaction to the music suggests that both the song and its theme are already familiar and part of the world of domestics. A different reaction is that of the maja Petra, who is a from the same working class background as her peers, but considers herself superior. Petra enters the patio shouting at her fiancé for sitting there, and never acknowledges anyone else on stage. Interestingly, as the couple argues, the servants are trying to listen
to them discreetly. They clearly have seen the argument unfold but continue with their singing to make it look like they have noticed nothing at all: “Abundia, canta y callemos” (v. 53).

The workers’ actions indicate that much of the communication amongst domestics and working classes is done secretly. In fact, both the casual and private settings of scenes involving domestics suggests that many characteristics of servant-servant relationships are revealed through gossip or confessions—common occurrences in daily work and natural byproducts of putting together characters from the same social class, or characters from extremely different social classes. The gossip amongst servants is part of everyday life, as noted by Cissie Fairchilds: “Of course a certain amount of socializing within the household was inevitable. Domestic servants were apparently a gregarious lot. They spent much of their leisure time together, in the kitchen or office, gossiping about their masters, drinking… dancing … and playing endless games of cards” (42). Certainly the gossip accompanied their activities on many occasions, while at other moments it became their primary task. In La Petra y la Juana the desire to gossip and share information is actually expressed between two female servants as a secret. From the patio Armengol seizes the opportunity to capture Celidonia’s attention because no masters are present: “¡Chis! ¿Ha venido tu ama?”(v. 265). The two servants then quickly plan to talk later on that evening through the gate, “Por la reja” (v. 267), but abruptly end their conversation when Armengol’s mistress enters, showing that the use of secrecy is the safest way for domestics to communicate true feelings and share
information. Armengol’s warning, “Ya viene allí” (269) cuts the conversation, adding some suspense in the process, and helps transition back into a broader network of relationships in the play.

In the absence of the master, servants could express their true feelings to members of a family, friends, or colleagues without fear of being reprimanded or punished. If one of their masters were present, servants still could make known their feelings, because the only other listeners would be servants as well. The only exception would be if superiors, close servants of different masters, or someone outside the family were present, in which case servants would have to reserve their feelings to themselves out of fear of offending or shaming their masters. Los picos de oro follows the second model as it begins with three servants gossiping with their mistress while working. In fact, they the servants are singing and talking so much that their master, Elena, starts off the play by saying, “No cantéis todas a un tiempo, que me aturdís la cabeza” (Ed. Lafarga v. 1-2). During their conversation it is apparent that the servants also know many details about their mistress, such as when she fell asleep the previous night, and that they are not afraid to ask her personal questions. The servants are curious about the party their mistress attended, probably looking for more gossip material, and try to pry information out of her through questions and leading statements: “¿Bailó Vmd. Mucho, señora?... Yo aseguro que habría lindas escenas” (v. 15-20). When the mistress refuses to give too many details, one of the servants even has the audacity to compare her with a previous master: “Vmd. señora/es al revés de una cierta/ama que yo tuve” (v. 24-25). The fact that
servants would know such details is not surprising, given the nature and complexity of domestic service. Domestics were a crucial part of eighteenth-century society, and even if neglected in scholarship from ensuing periods, they contributed a great deal to the function of society and to theatrical works from that time. We can observe many of these details through the relationships they formed with masters and other domestics.
Chapter 6: Routines and Responsibilities from the World of Domestic Service in Eighteenth-Century Spanish Drama

In her book, *Staging Domesticity*, Wendy Wall poses several questions that invite us to re-think how domestic service is viewed and represented in theatrical works. She asks in the introductory chapter, “What if domesticity, were already ‘estranged’ in the early modern imagination? What if these scenes of domestic passion and panic simply foreground what everyone already, at some level, knew: that ordinary could be bizarre and disquieting?” (2) In other words, Wall is inquiring if domestic service can extend beyond the daily responsibilities or the realm of the ordinary, and if it might, “have appeared at times disturbing or slightly fantastic,” (5) two qualities that lend themselves well to conflict and the world of drama. Representing this side of domestic service could lead to the possible depiction on stage of scenes as stirring as household mishaps, sexual abuse, mistreatment of servants, or family crises, all which form part of the reality of the service industry, but are very different from the traditional activities normally associated with daily routines of domestics. Or it could result in the staging of much more simple “abnormalities,” such as preparations for a special occasion, gossip, invasions of privacy, or disagreements that create social differences and condition master-servant and servant-servant relations on a less magnified, but still dramatic level. Both masters and servants have certain personal and private needs. The difference between the two is that masters
compensate servants to take care of or assist them with their demands, figuratively “setting the stage” for potential moments of conflict or tension. Representing moments that are bizarre, abnormal, or unique, also means requires rooting them to some extent in what is believable or familiar to the general public. At the same time, however, focusing solely on a series of everyday tasks, without dramatizing or including any of the aspects that contribute to their completion, would probably turn off an audience from the moment the curtain is raised. That is why Wall writes, “Rather than simply estranging things familiar, these hypercharged dramatic moments tease out alien aspects of routine household rituals, activities, and tasks and thus expose the discrepancy between domestic ideals and an often disorderly lived practice” (5).

One of Wall’s points is that theatrical works in seventeenth-century England, in particular non-canonical plays presented between 1550 and 1642, capture a duality of domestic service, as both a part of everyday society and a source of the abnormal or unique: “In the early modern period, domestic labor was represented in two importantly different ways: as a reassuringly ‘common’ sphere in which people immersed themselves in familiar rhythms, and as a profoundly alienating site that could never be fully inhabited or comprehended” (5). Although Wall’s study focuses on the representation of domestic service in English theatre, and from a period prior to the scope of my research, its suggestion that something so common to everyday life can have a complex and highly dramatic side, makes us wonder if Spanish theatre reveals similar characteristics of this profession. Surely working conditions in a household in Madrid were less than perfect,
and daily interactions between servants and their masters were occasionally interrupted by a sudden change of events, all of which affected master-servant relationships and added to the overall complexity of the profession. The popular Spanish cookbook from the late nineteenth-century, El Practicón, tells how in some homes of the nobility the odors from the toilet, frequently located near the kitchen, occasionally invaded the cooking area: “la falta de agua y de aire, y el olvido y la necesidad muchas veces, hacen dejar abierta la puert del retrete y la tapadera fuera de su lugar, envolviendo la región de la cocina en una atmósfera que tiene mucho de química por lo amoniacal” (Muro 39). This description serves as a possible example of the abnormal or bizarre; some may even find it comical or ironic, but is it something we would expect to see staged in a Spanish play in the eighteenth or early-nineteenth centuries? Are less-sensational episodes that are still consistent with the reality of domestic service, such as servants breaking an object, the pot on the stove boiling over, or finding spoiled food in the storage, present in Spanish drama from the same time? In this chapter, I move again from theatrical to practical functions and discuss the depictions of the world of domestic service, first in the sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz, and then in the comedias of Nicolás and Leandro Fernández de Moratín. Specifically, I will examine aspects like the presence of servants on stage, routines of domestics, difficult working conditions, private and public spaces, hierarchal divisions, and delegation of responsibilities according to gender.

Even though marked differences generally existed in the working conditions of servants across social classes, the complexity of domestic service allows the limits of
what is believable to the general public to be extended. Still, it would not suffice to
continuously portray servants as superior to their masters, or show them completing
common household chores in a non-traditional fashion without retribution or special
circumstances. These scenarios might attract attention at first, but in the long run do little
to generate a sense of reality in a play and would ultimately risk losing the audience.
Facing theatrical constraints such as time and place, not to mention the added pressure to
continuously produce works for a salary, playwrights need to utilize verisimilitude when
working with characterization. They must therefore must have a good understanding of
main cultural and societal trends. In the period of my study, one constant is that servants
appear more frequently in daily life in eighteenth-century Madrid, either completing
household tasks, or running errands and accompanying their masters in a public
setting. Additionally, Carmen Sarasúa points out that, “Ningún hombre ni mujer
noble, de los que había varios cientos en Madrid, salía a la calle sin rodearse de varios
criados, mientras otros permanecían en la casa” (Criados 72). This statement is important
because it suggests that servants were needed to do household work and also help bring
attention to their masters by participating in the theatrics of public appearances. The
value of having servants therefore became important on several levels, as domestics
completed household chores and acted as symbols of wealth and status well into the
nineteenth-century: “En la España del siglo XIX, los criados seguirán siendo la medida
del poder de la casa” (Sarasúa, Criados 75). Whether in the kitchen or accompanying
their superiors, domestics were always “serving” their masters in some capacity. The
continual presence of domestics also implies that the profession is not limited to the household, but rather extends to all aspects of the masters’ lives and property, an argument made by Carolyn Steedman when she writes that, “domestic work was not confined to the four walls of a house… a household was managed and organised in its kitchen garden as well as its kitchen, in the yard and stable and byre as well as in its houseplace and bedrooms” (83). One way for drama to create a believable portrayal of eighteenth-century life is to incorporate the presence of these components of domestic service on stage.

Different Aspects of the World of Domestic Service in the Sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz

Todo lo característico, lo pintoresco, aquello que más se aparta de nuestras actuales costumbres, es lo que con mayor fuerza llama nuestra atención y esclaviza nuestro gusto, y es lo que abundan los cuadros sociales del siglo pasado bosquejados por el ingenioso escritor madrileño. Porque, en efecto, en sus obras vive y se agita una sociedad entera hoy desaparecida; pero que, gracias á tales escritos, podemos reconstruir casi con la misma verdad que si por un milagro cronológico retrocediésemos á la España del reinado de Carlos III.

(Cotarelo y Mori, Don Ramón 1)

Emilio Cotarelo y Mori suggests that we can reconstruct to a certain point life in eighteenth-century Madrid, using the sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz. The presence on stage of popular figures and groups, such as majos and majas, petimetres or petimetras
and criados and criadas, creates a believable setting and background consistent with the times, but that also contributes to plot development and humor. The nature of the sainete as a short play filled with singing or dance and meant to entertain the audience between acts of a larger work, changes significantly in eighteenth-century Spain. With Ramón de la Cruz, the sainete distinguishes itself from the entremés, often blending the festive roots of the latter with critical, satirical or realistic elements. In other words, the sainete can fulfill multiple functions with its sense of humor and colloquial language (Sala Valldaura, Prólogo XXIX-XXX). Although the classification of Cruz’s Sainetes has been widely debated, many works are filled with comical, moral, and realistic elements that not only entertain, but also instruct or critique. Josep Maria Sala Valldaura, in his book, El sainete en la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII. La mueca de Talía, identifies the realistic depictions in sainetes when he writes that they have, “cierta toma de conciencia social de las clases bajas urbanas” (84). Domestic servants, who in the process of forming a major force in this sector as well as in the working population of eighteenth-century Spain, appear more frequently in many of Cruz’s Sainetes and occasionally play more significant roles in these texts, as main characters revealing details about their lives, or as secondary characters adding to a believable portrayal of society from the time. The brief duration of the sainete, and the fact that it often begins in medias res, imply that a dramatist like Cruz selects only the most important details of these characters to present, or stretches certain truths to create a work that is verisimilar. In the case of the characterization of servants, we often see more specific examples concerning their
notable presence, daily routines and responsibilities, constant pressure to perform, link to public spaces, difficult working conditions, and limited social status.

A strong presence of servants in the sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz can be measured quantitatively. In La pradera de San Isidro, one of Cruz’s most famous one-act plays, the main characters are two servants, Cirillo and Juliana—a sharp contrast with traditional masterpieces of Spanish drama, in which the protagonists were typically from the upper or upper-middle classes. At the same time, Ramón de la Cruz incorporates five other servants into the remaining twenty-six characters, bringing the total number of servants in the play to 7, or 25% of the entire cast—a figure that is much more aligned with the percentages of domestic servants recorded in censuses. The end result is a believable representation of society from the time. Cruz also includes the names of the actors who play the parts of domestics, proving that he is writing with certain characters and traits already in mind. Other selections from J.M. Sala Valldaura’s edition to the Sainetes show a similar tendency. Of the 19 characters in La civilización, eight are payos. La presumida burlada has eleven characters, two of which are servants, and El heredero loco uses 15 characters, 8 of them servants. Focusing specifically on the characters of criados and criadas reduces the ratio of servants in plays, but still provides a strong case for the presence of this group. The following chart illustrates graphically the number of characters of servants in other selected sainetes written by Ramón de la Cruz. I included works from Andioc and Coulon’s Cartelera
teatral madrileña del siglo XVIII (1708–1808) that had servants incorporated into the title, or listed amongst their characters.

**Selected Sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz with Characters of Servants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Total Characters</th>
<th>Characters/Servants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El abate diente-agudo (1775)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>14+ secondary</td>
<td>8 + lacayo, doncella de labor, mayordomo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El almacén de novias (1774)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>10 + 6 testigos</td>
<td>criado, cocinero, portero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La bella criada (1768)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3 + paje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las calceteras (1774)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3 criadas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Escofieteras (1773)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>criado, paje, payo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El examen de la forastera (1771)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2 criadas + paje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La farsa italiana (1770)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>criado, criada, 4 payos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El hijito de vecino (1773)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3 criadas, criado, paje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La nochebuena en ayunas (1770)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>21 or 22</td>
<td>criado, criada, paje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La petimeta en el tocador (1762)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2, paje, peluquero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La presumida burlada (1768)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1 + paje</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Las señorías de moda
(1767) S 15 3 + 2 pajes

Las tertulias de Madrid ó el por qué de las tertulias (1770) S 21 2

El viejo burlado ó lo que son criados (1770) S 8 + extras 2 criadas, lacayo, disguised lacayo

Los viejos burlados (1772) S 9 + coro de criados criada, 3 criados, lacayo

La viuda y el letrado (1774) S 11 1 criada

The significant percentage of servants as characters in eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Spanish theatre is often complemented by depictions of certain elements of the environment in which they live and work, a depiction that is again entirely dependent on the choices of individual dramatists who write within many parameters. While the responsibilities and environment of domestic service may have varied according to family differences, seasonal demands, technological advances and economic changes, one overarching characteristic is that servants typically followed routines to complete all of their chores: “La actividad de los criados estaba organizada según una estricta superposición de ritmos que garantizaban la cobertura de todas las necesidades” (Sarasúa, Criados 198). These routines were essential to keeping up with
the daily work, which in turn led to the household functioning efficiently. Sarasúa divides the types of responsibilities into different categories, like daily, weekly and yearly tasks, and includes examples of typical chores that servants completed, as seen in the chart below. The daily tasks involved starting the fire in the kitchen, dressing family members, cooking, cleaning the kitchen and transporting water. Weekly tasks involved washing clothes, bathing family members, and preparing for special social events. Yearly responsibilities meant thorough cleaning of the house, stocking food, changing or storing clothing for the season and preparing for holidays and other celebrations.

Household Activities – Sarasúa, p.198

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Tasks</th>
<th>Weekly Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of fire</td>
<td>Washing clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing breakfast</td>
<td>Bathing family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressing family</td>
<td>Social activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning House</td>
<td>Family care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport of food and water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing and ironing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embroidery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of preserves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompanying family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
One-act plays and comedias can’t develop the range of household tasks completed by domestics, but these dramatic texts do include examples of household responsibilities that are believable to the reader or audience. Cruz’s Sainetes are filled with glimpses of activities that comprised parts of domestic routines in eighteenth-century Spain. At times, these fragments of routines become the focus of the action, and take the foreground of a play. On other occasions they form part of the background and are often found explicitly in the stage directions, or implicitly as part of the dialogue. In El hijito de vecino (1774), two characters of servants enter the text midway, and immediately begin to fill in background information while conversing about and completing daily routines. The setting for this entry is a smaller room with chairs, where the two criadas work and talk about whether Don Felipe or Don Pablo will marry the young woman.

Criada 1: Antes que vengan las amas, vaya, recoge los trastos que dejaron sus mercedes, ínterin voy yo limpiando la sala.

Criada 2: Con que, en efecto, ¿don Felipe será al cabo dueño de la señorita?

Criada 1: No lo creo, porque el amo piensa mejor. (Ed. Cotarelo y Mori 425)
The immediate reference to daily work creates a believable depiction of the two servants. The first one appears to be in charge as she orders her counterpart to pick up utensils after her guests before their masters return. Hierarchies amongst the staff of servants frequently existed in larger households, yet at the same time all servants would contribute in some way to its smooth functioning. The text suggests that the first servant, while she orders her counterpart, is also involved in the housework as she prepares to clean the living room. These brief references to household tasks give more credibility to the words of the servants, and place additional emphasis on the details and insight they provide in the love relationships that sit at the heart of the plot.

Often the lady of the house worked closely with her servants, supervising them and ensuring the proper function of the household as a whole. Los picos de oro (1765), a sainete that Cruz wrote with a moral purpose, criticizes the frivolous behavior of a petimetre, and uses the presence of servants in the background to create a believable environment for the reader and audiences from that time. The text begins with Doña Elena working with her four servants to sew pillows, as seen in the stage directions:

“DOÑA ELENA con las CUATRO CRIADAS, hacienda labor a las almohadillas, cantan algún tono o seguidillas de las que sean más communes; y después sale el PAJE” (Ed. Lafarga 103). Although the servants are unnamed and merely secondary characters in this sainete, their depiction in the opening scene provides a sense of reality. First, the number of servants indicates the higher status of the household and shows a strong presence of domestic help. In fact, of the 21 characters that appear in the play, nine are
servants. Second, the depiction of sewing fits perfectly into the typical household responsibilities. Carmen Sarasúa describes sewing as a chore that normally took place during the afternoon and, depending on the type of sewing done, required a certain degree of experience. The servants of Doña Elena either have the experience or are learning from Doña Elena herself, as they work together with their master to finish the pillows. Finally, the fact that the servants are singing and gossiping while working shows the level of comfort and community present in the household. Even though Doña Elena complains of the servants talking while working, she still shares personal information with them and will go so far as to defend the loyalty of her servants by later saying, “Mis criadas están hechas a no hablar” (v. 158-159).

The instructions from master to servant and the simple actions of the characters of servants in La nochebuena en ayunas (1770) perform a similar function in helping to create a believable setting from the start of the sainete. The plot of the sainete centers on a petimetra who has invited many honored guests to her house. As the hour of the party approaches, the mistress oversees the final preparations and orders her servant, Juanito, to complete last minute tasks. Juanito first announces the arrival of guests and other characters to the house, telling his mistress who has entered the door. The first one to appear is his master, “Ya entra, señora, mi amo” (Ed. Cotarelo y Mori 117). The mistress then orders Juanito to go to the kitchen and oversee the final preparations of the food, “Juanito, ve á la cocina, y prevenles que cuidado con que esté todo en su punto y los pavos bien asados” (117). Her words hint at the presence of a much larger staff of hired
help within the house, as she orders Juanito to “alert” or “warn” others that the food needs to be finished properly. Although the kitchen staff doesn’t appear at any point in the short play, the simple reference to them makes the scene even more credible, especially since larger households often took a great deal of care when selecting them. Carmen Sarasúa writes that servants who worked in the kitchen of wealthy families needed to know how to organize and set up for banquets, dinners, and other major social events. They were therefore selected after significant forethought: “Para estas tareas se prefería a sirvientes cualificados, habituados a prestar esos servicios, o que reflejaban mejor la posición social del señor, como los extranjeros” (Criados 75). Ángel Muro shows in El Practicón that the work in the kitchen extended beyond the preparation of the food. It also involved the servants and their mistress (who directs and oversees the work of the servants) to know how many leftovers there were, and to understand how to properly use them: “El primer cuidado de una cocinera, o mejor dicho de una de casa, consistirá en pasar revista todas las mañanas a las existencias comestibles de su fresquera, despensa o lugar reservado para guardar los manjares. Examinará la señora, o fámula, las sobras del día anterior, y verá la manera de arreglarlas y de condimentarlas de nuevo” (20). La nochebuena en ayunas doesn’t provide this depth of detail, but the multiple roles of Juanito, from answering the door to communicating with the kitchen staff, shows the variety of tasks that were carried out simultaneously in the household, and in which servants had to be versed and prepared to complete at any given moment.
Even in less stressful household environments servants were expected to fulfill a variety of responsibilities. One of the scenes in Ramón de la Cruz’s Las señorías de moda (1767) reveals some of the multiple tasks servants were asked to complete. In this particular sainete a lesser noble, Don Anselmo, traveling to Castilla la Vieja from Madrid, hopes to hire a female servant to work in the house of some of his relatives. The servant being discussed, Clori, appears to be without work but does not want to leave Madrid for the countryside. Clori first enters dressed as a petimetra and is certainly not shy in talking to other characters. She openly states that she doesn’t wish to travel to Castilla la Vieja and hints that she doesn’t completely trust the nobleman’s words. In attempting to reassure the young servant that the job would be ideal for her, the nobleman describes some of the typical tasks it involves: “Hija, los amos son mozos, y el trabajo llevadero: madrugar á despachar los mozos; ir con su cesto á lavar la ropa al río; amasar; algún remiendo; tal vez hilar; la cocina; cuidar los niños, y luego échate acá en cada un año siete ducados lo menos” (Ed. Cotarelo y Mori 416). Don Anselmo’s words first reveal the wide variety of chores servants were expected to complete, ranging from cooking and sewing to child care, or what Carmen Sarasúa labels “Una serie amplisima de actividades” (Criados 199). The reference to these tasks makes the depiction of domestic service in the sainete more convincing as it mentions a variety of chores. The connection to domestic service deepens when Don Anselmo references the salary of seven ducados that Clori will be paid. Carmen Sarasúa points out that a majority of the compensation of servants comes from their lodging and food, but that between the years
1758-1799, a criada could expect to earn between 30-60 reales each month (Criados 223). Using the equivalent of eleven reales to one ducado, Clori would earn 77 reales for a year of service, or a little more than 6 reales each month. This amount seems significantly lower than the average salary from that time, but it also incorporates food and lodging, two major factors in salaries of domestics.

One overarching characteristic connected to the daily routines of domestic service was that servants were expected to complete their responsibilities as discreetly as possible, and preferably before the arrival of house guests. This quality further explains Jerónima’s frantic behavior and rude treatment of her servant, Anita, in La petimetra, that I detailed in Chapter 5. So important were the appearance and self-sufficiency of the household that servants were even instructed to complete tasks as inconspicuously as possible. The nineteenth-century guide to domestic service, Manual de los Buenos sirvientes: El libro de los amos y el libro de los criados, states that all of the preparations need to be finished and the family in position to greet the arrival of their guests. According to the manual, having the guests witness servants completing chores brings an immediate disgrace to the family: “Nada hay más ridículo que el que la gente sorprenda á los criados terminando el arreglo de los departamentos” (Orrier 69). In Cruz’s sainete, El refunfuñador, an overworked servant must respond to the endless demands of her petimetra mistress, who is trying to get ready for a party. Unable to keep up with the quantity of work and properly satisfy her frivolous mistress, Joaquina grumbles to herself about the ridiculous requests, “Todo el enredo se mete en el cuerpo de éstas en teniendo
Joaquina clearly blames the selfish behavior of women like her mistress for the unnecessary requests placed on servants, but the trend continues throughout the play. Once she is satisfied with her clothing, the mistress orders her servant to finish preparing the food and then disappear when the guests arrive: “Muchacha, cuidado que la menestra esté sazonada, y la olla cocida, y á cuantos vengan, que no sabes dónde estamos” (120). The sharp tone of the mistress’s words indicates that servants are needed to complete tasks discreetly, so that the house maintains a perfect environment from the moment guests arrive.

Not only was the ideal servant versed in a variety of household skills, but to work as a domestic meant to some degree being “on call”. Many times this call happens during the completion of normal household responsibilities, such as in the case of one of the female servants in Ramón de la Cruz’s La petimetra en el tocador. Here, the mistress, Doña Agueda, a petimetra, impatiently awaits the arrival of her French hairdresser so she can finish her preparations and attend an important party with other courtly women. Snubbed by her personal hairdresser on previous occasions, Doña Agueda has learned how to survive and rely on the help of her personal servant, Beatriz, who willingly offers her help and attempts to reassure her mistress: “No se enoje usía, que, aunque no venga, fácilmente se compone, y en ahuecando los bucles así como están, las flores y los polvos taparán los defectos” (Ed. Cotarelo y Mori 79-80). Beatriz acts a calming force in this scene and clearly has some experience in grooming hair. However, Doña Agueda looks
down upon any work that servants complete, in spite of the fact that she needs Beatriz’s assistance. Instead of welcoming Beatriz’s help, Doña Agueda scowls and claims that she can always spot a noble woman whose hair has been done by her servants. Her reaction mimics the behavior of the upper class, which although they often relied entirely on servants to take care of their personal needs and get ready each day,ci would be even more honored to employ the services of a professional, especially one from France or Italy. Ironically, Doña Agueda has had to rely on Beatriz before in similar situations, as seen in the good-natured, but untimely complement of the petimetre, Don Félix, toward his counterpart: “Otra que amolde peluqueros y criadas como usted no hay en la corte” (80). The ending of the sainete follows a similar trajectory, as Doña Agueda ends up dismissing the French hairdresser after he arrives, and is forced to turn to Beatriz for assistance. Fortunately, Beatriz is already present and prepared to help out in a pinch.

As the work of a servant extended to public spaces, with tasks such as delivering messages for masters, purchasing food, or running errands, the plots of many of Cruz’s sainetes often take place in public locations, offering a more realistic portrayal of society of the time by capturing the environment and the people who help shape it. It is common to find Cruz’s sainetes set against the background of locations like a street corner, plaza, living room, or theatre, and to see the people who frequent these areas represented as characters. Mireille Coulon points out this tendency in her preliminary study to J.M. Sala Valldaura’s edition to Cruz’s Sainetes by writing that, “la declarada voluntad de reproducir en el sainete la realidad cotidiana…por los intermedios que estaban
ambientados en los lugares públicos más concurridos de la capital y que ponían en escena no un limitado número de personajes, sino una toda fracción de la sociedad madrileña” (Estudio Preliminar XVIII). The sense of reality that is created is supported by characterization, language, decoration, and the use of stage directions. At times, Ramón de la Cruz is very brief in introducing the setting and characters of a play. In La presumida burlada, an adaptation of one of Molière’s plays, Cruz states at the start that the action takes place in a plaza where many servants are present: “Mutación de plaza del lugar, con unas casas a un lado y puerta corriente para entrar y salir los que puedan, que payos, cantando atravesando el tablado, y luego sale CHINICA, de militar, muy charro, pero decente y pensativo” (Ed. Cotarelo y Mori 175). In La Petra y la Juana, the stage directions are even more complex, capturing not only the setting, “El teatro representa el patio de una casa de muchas vecindades” (Ed. Cotarelo y Mori 257), but also minute details such as doors that are opened and closed, the characters who are present, and the actions of these characters. Among them is the servant, Celidonia, who is described as helping the seamstress wash clothing at the fountain.

Another example of a public place with a presence of servants is the setting of Las Escofieteras inside a popular clothing store-something that according to Francisco Lafarga, “permite al autor hacer desfilar de modo verosímil a cierto número de personajes” (45). Although the plot is relatively simple, dealing only with a typical day inside the establishment, it reveals several details regarding the responsibilities of servants and the environment in which they operated. Three of the fourteen characters in
Las Escofieteras are servants, the most important being a paje who enters the store to pick up a hat for his mistress: “Vengo de parte de mi ama; que si está y la escofieta que vino para lavarla, y ponerle nuevas cintas” (Ed. Lafarga v. 90-93). The depiction of a servant running this type of errand fits perfectly into the responsibilities typically assigned to domestics, as it frees the master from having to leave the house and associate with people from a lower social class. It also provides the servant with a sense of independence, as in this case, the paje must pick up the item and play a small role in the finances of his master. Cissie Fairchild writes that, “Even when servants were not given complete charge of their masters’ finances, they often had extensive responsibility for purchasing items needed in the household” (25). The paje asks how much the adjustments to the hat will be and states that he has not been given any money by his master to pay for it: “Pues a mí no me han dado nada, más del orden que la lleve pronto, porque le hace falta” (v. 161-164). The owners of the shop allow the paje to leave with the hat and ask him to bring back money later, “Que la lleve; y que lo traiga después” (v. 166-167), a statement that confirms the responsibility servants were often given regarding the finances of the household. The role of the paje is developed even more when he returns, not with the four pesetas, but rather with a message from his master saying that the hat hasn’t been properly cleaned and altered: “Señora, dice mi ama que usté es una chapucera; y que está muy mal lavada la escofieta, que la cinta la pidió verde, y es blanca; se ha puesto como un demonio y ha estado para picarla en el tajo” (v. 376-383). Clearly the servant has been used in this instance as a messenger, in addition to his role in handling the financial
responsibilities, and represents a link between the upper classes (his master) and the working population (the store).

The same scene reveals some of the working and social conditions that the paje faces each day, adding a sense of reality to the plot. When the paje first asks to pick up the hat, he learns that his master previously referred to him as inept in the presence of the shop owners: “porque su paje era un bruto, que los recados trocaba” (v. 113-114). The paje seems surprised at first to learn about the opinion his master has of him and defends himself against the accusation that he cannot deliver messages correctly: “Pues lo soy de los mayores de España” (v. 119-120). This defense seems logical, given that a big part of contracting domestic servants in Spain involved personal recommendations. With a damaged reputation, the paje would have difficulty finding other employment. Therefore he must speak out publically against these accusations. The words of the master also hint at the type of treatment the paje receives. Carmen Sarasúa states that verbal and physical abuse towards servants frequently existed, and although there is no evidence of physical abuse in Las Escofieteras, it is clear that the paje feels slighted or underappreciated, especially when he takes the offensive and complains about the working conditions of the household he serves: “Pues si no lo fuera, ¿había de servir en una casa que como mal, y no almuerzo; que el salario no me pagan ni me visten, y pretenden que ande vestido de gala; donde a recados me rompen los pies, y nunca me calzan; y donde… donde… se puede aquí hablar de confianza?” (v. 119-130). The fact that a servant faces such conditions is not surprising, as the economic situation of each family varies. Yet the
treatment of servants at times has nothing to do with the wealth of the family, as Carmen Sarasúa indicates: “Las condiciones de vida de los criados que viven en la casa donde trabajan pueden ser sorprendentemente pobres para coexistir con la mayor riqueza” (Criados 214).

The complicated working and living conditions of servants extends to other sainetes written by Ramón de la Cruz. We learn from all of these texts that domestic service can be tedious, repetitive, poorly compensated and even dangerous, characteristics that are confirmed by Carmen Sarasúa, “Sin electricidad, gas, ni agua corriente, el servicio de los hogares urbanos incluía hasta finales del siglo XIX tareas muy penosas…Y otras que consumían innumerables horas de trabajo” (Criados 197). La Petra y la Juana, a sainete that is attributed to Ramón de la Cruz during his later years of writing, but that has no confirmed staging date, centers on the rivalry between two women of a tenement house, both of whom claim to be regarded more highly by their saint. However, one of the subthemes that surfaces in the text is the poor treatment of the servants, primarily of Aquilina. While scenes of work fill the background throughout the play, Aquilina is open about her experiences as a criada. She enters the play for the first time depicted by the stage directions as ragged and broken down from washing and carrying clothes in the heat of the day: “Sale Aquilina, criada despilfarrada, con un talego de ropa sobre la cabeza” (Ed. Lafarga 482). Carmen Sarasúa writes that in many households in Madrid clothing was often sent to special locations to be washed, but in families with only one servant washing was done at the river, a chore that was looked
down upon: “lo que para muchas era denigrante, porque se trataba de una tarea muy dura, especialmente en invierno” (Criados 208). Fatigued from her difficult responsibilities, Alquilina must still return to her master, but physically can’t continue. Aquilina is helped in this moment by the tailor, who later confronts the mistress of the poor servant to deal with the mistreatment. The first moment of conflict results in Aquilina describing more of her never-ending responsibilities, admitting that she cannot afford clothes and revealing that her mistress owes her salary.

In Cruz’s La pradera de San Isidro the male servant, Cirillo, complains more about the boredom and repetition of his daily responsibilities, especially having to fix his master’s hair at all hours of the day, “¡Fiera carga es para un mísero paje peluquín por la mañana, peluquín al mediodía, la tarde y la noche larga peluquín, y peluquín cuando tal vez se levanta a media noche porque le ha dado un soponcio al ama!” (Ed. Sala Valldaura v. 4-12). To an eighteenth-century audience this reaction would seem realistic, given the numerous responsibilities of servants. It is also important that Cruz represent Cirillo in this way, in order to create a reality in the play more consistent with society from the time. The duties of servants consisted of everything, from transporting water, washing and ironing, cooking, teaching, and administering medical care. Putting them all together would make anyone feel overburdened, bored, trapped, and perhaps underappreciated. Cirillo’s words are supported by the harsh reality that he cannot leave the house to participate in the festivities of the spring festival because of his work obligations. He therefore decides to sneak out, donning his master’s clothing as a disguise for San Isidro.
The fact that Cirillo has to go through so many steps to enjoy the festival adds a sense of humor and suspense to the play. At the same time, it shows the lack of freedom and independence he has, and implies that servants are often viewed and treated by their masters in a negative way. This general reaction and consideration of servants as enemies of their masters and no longer members of the family, would explain why the master initially doubts Cirillo, and later, upon discovering the servant at San Isidro, wants to punish him severely: “Aquí no hay señor que valga; y tengo de escarmentarte a porrazos y a patadas” (v. 713-715). Cirillo is only saved from the beating because of the special occasion.

Cirillo’s actions have to take place against the context of the festival because servants are normally only granted such freedom under certain circumstances. Sarasúa comments how tasks like shopping or handling the finances were often looked on favorably by servants because they gave them a level of freedom and independence from the household: “La compra es además una de las actividades más apetecidas por los criados, al realizarse en un lugar público y permitirles conversar y escapar de la vigilancia constante de las casas” (Criados 201). However, for Cirillo to forget about the chores and attend a festival is an entirely different case, especially since he decides to wear his master’s clothes. Fortunately, Cirillo’s actions are justified by San Isidro, which for Mesonero Romanos serves as an example of a friendly diversion that permits the temporary reversal of social structures. In other words, San Isidro allows servants to act like nobles by giving them a context in which they can change their dress and parade
independently through the streets. According to Mesonero Romanos, the street fair has been, “convertido en una simple noche de holgura y desenfado, bacanal de las clases inferiores de la sociedad, que al son de bandurrias y panderos invaden el antiguo Prado de San Jerónimo” (60). It is logical to assume then that attending a festival would be just as favorable for domestics as shopping or handling the financial matters of their masters. Other sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz, such as El Prado por la noche and La Plaza Mayor de Madrid por Navidad, create a similar festive background.

Whether washing clothes at the river, preparing for a special occasion, or helping their masters get dressed, servants in eighteenth-century Madrid were asked to perform a variety of tasks in both private and public spaces. Of course, the tasks carried out by domestic servants varied according to individual families and often changed across socioeconomic lines. Cissie Fairchilds’ three characteristics of domestic service, “extremely unspecialized,” “extremely erratic,” and “very different from typical housework,” apply to domestic service in Spain from this period, as does Wall’s affinity for the “abnormal.” However, the term that best describes the profession in Madrid might be “complex,” a phrase also echoed by Fairchilds. For these reasons, it is impossible for dramatists of the time to represent all of the aspects of domestic service in theatrical works. They must, instead, choose certain characteristics to develop, such as the notable presence of domestics, daily routines and responsibilities, the constant pressure to perform, their link to public spaces, difficult working conditions, and limited social status. The arrangement of these elements creates a picture of the profession that is
believable to the intended audience, although not necessary accurate. Still, studying depictions of domestic service in theatrical works like Cruz’s Sainetes helps identify trends and qualities of the profession and allows us to form a better idea of what the world of domestic service was actually like in eighteenth-century Madrid.

Aspects of the World of Domestic Service in Comedias

The notable presence of servants in theatrical works is not just limited to popular theatre. Several comedias of eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Spain also contain a ratio of servants to the total number of characters that is close to the percentages of servants recorded in the censuses. Instead of charting the total number of domestics present in many of these works, it is important to focus instead on the servant/character ratio, the main reason being that a comedia of two and a half to three hours of stage time most likely can’t fit the complete development of even more characters, such as multiple servants, into its plot. Doing so would add countless minutes to the stage time, and would run the risk of losing an audience. However, a dramatist can generate the presence of domestics by depicting nobles or households with one or two of their loyal servants. Such is the case in the selected comedias. Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s La petimetra (1762), which was written to be a model of verisimilitude and other classical precepts, includes eight characters, three of whom are named servants. The action is completed entirely within the house of Don Rodrigo, where the two female servants, Ana and
Martina, are frequently depicted serving their masters. Tomás de Iriarte, considered to be a predecessor to the son of Nicolás Fernández de Moratín, develops the roles of servants in *El señorito mimado* (1787), and *La señorita malcriada* (1788). The first of these works only has one servant, Pantoja, for the ten characters casted; however, Pantoja’s loyalty to the household is apparent from the start. In the latter of the two plays, Iriarte creates two servants for the other eight characters. One of the servants, Tío Pedro, is the loyal mayordomo to the house, while the younger Bartolo is depicted as a payo malicioso.

Finally, in two separate plays, *El viejo y la niña* (1790) and *El sí de las niñas* (1806), Leandro Fernández de Moratín includes three named servants for the seven total characters. These servants willingly assist their masters and play crucial roles in providing background information, comic relief, and developing the plot.

In addition to including a notable presence of characters of servants on stage, many Spanish comedias in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries depict certain aspects of the world of domestic service. One of the comedias that best capture the responsibilities and working environment of domestics is Leandro Fernández de Moratín’s *El sí de las niñas*. Written in 1801 and staged in 1806, *El sí de las niñas* was very popular, showing 26 straight days in the Teatro de la Cruz, until the start of Lent (Montero Padilla 28). The action takes place at a boarding house in Alcalá de Henares and opens with a dialogue between an older nobleman Don Diego and his servant, Simón, in which Don Diego reveals his love for a young girl of 16, Francisca. The problem is that the girl is actually in love with the nephew of don Diego, a fiery and free-spirited
young man named Carlos. The conflict develops when all parties end up meeting in the boarding house. The action centers primarily on this conflict, injecting an element of drama in the play and maintaining the attention of the audience throughout the staging. Meanwhile, the servants carry out important theatrical functions and are portrayed in a more realistic manner, elements that balance the sense of fiction in the play and the unlikely scenario that all of the characters would happen to converge on the same boarding house at the same time. In Act I, Scene VI, Doña Irene, mother of the young girl, goes through a list of chores with her servant, Rita. Doña Irene checks to see if Rita has fed the bird and made the bed, among other things. Rita seems frazzled by the questioning and all of the work she has been asked to do, but being a faithful and responsible servant, she assures her master that everything has been done, or is about to be completed.

Doña Irene: ¡Válgame Dios! Ahora que me acuerdo…¡Rita!…Me le habrán dejado morir. ¡Rita!
Rita: Señora (Saca debajo del brazo {unas} sábanas y almohadas.)
Doña Irene: ¿Qué has hecho del tordo? ¿Le diste de comer?
Rita: Sí señora. Más ha comido que un avestruz. Ahí le puse en la ventana del pasillo.
Doña Irene: Y aquella chica, ¿qué hace?
Rita: Está desmenuzando un bizcocho para dar de cenar a don Periquito.
Doña Irene: ¡Qué pereza tengo de escribir! (Se levanta y se entra en su cuarto.)
Pero es preciso, que estará con mucho cuidado la pobre Circuncisión.
Rita: ¡Qué chapucerías! No ha dos horas, como quien dice, que salimos de allá, y ya empiezan a ir y venir correos. ¡Que poco me gustan a mí las mujeres gazmoñas y zalameras! (Éntrase en el cuarto de Doña Francisca.)

(76-77)

The dialogue in this scene directs the reader to the typical household chores and captures a slight tension between the master and servant. Irene feels the need to manage everything, while Rita is trying her best to complete each task and stay on top of every situation. Rita is obviously upset with her master, and flustered by having to respond to so many requests, but she keeps these comments under her breath. At the same time, the variety of responsibilities of Rita fits perfectly into the routine of eighteenth-century servants, who were expected to meet all of the demands of their masters and often spent up to 16 hours each day trying to do so.iii One of the interesting facts of domestic service in the eighteenth-century is that servants typically carried out household chores as discreetly as possible. Carmen Sarasúa notes that, “El trabajo de los criados se desarrolla en contacto muy escaso con los amos en las grandes casas….La limpieza de sus habitaciones se hace en su ausencia y de manera que la presencia de los criados y su trabajo se sientan lo menos posible” (Criados 213). In El sí de las niñas, it is clear that Rita knows her routine quite well and has completed all of the work without her master being present. For example, Rita has already fed the bird, made her master’s bed, and knows exactly what Francisca is doing at that very moment. It seems as if she is always a
step ahead of Doña Irene. For the sake of time, these individual chores are only alluded to and obviously not represented in El sí de las niñas. In fact, the audience probably would have assumed that Rita had been working on similar tasks, eliminating the need to include these details. By mentioning them to a certain level, however, Moratín adds a sense of reality to the play, making the entire plot more believable and allowing for more elements of fiction and drama to be inserted into later scenes.

With servants’ work depending specifically on the demands of their masters as well as having a direct connection to social status, one task that frequently appears in comedias is that of delivering messages. The extent to which servants served as messengers in the eighteenth-century is unknown, but it certainly matches the characteristics of unspecialized and non-domestic work identified by Cissie Fairchilds, and of servants as a public display of power and prestige revealed by Carmen Sarasúa. In Spain servants are often entrusted with completing chores outside the home, such as shopping for food or finishing repairs. Some servants, such as pajes, were employed primarily for their public presence, whether accompanying their masters or running errands for them. For the masters, assigning such chores makes perfect sense, as it is a way to display their own power and prestige without making contact with the lower classes. In other words, servants were representatives or extensions of their masters’ households, so by completing such tasks as delivering messages, shopping or running errands, they were, in Fairchild’s words, “the filter through which it (household) made contact with the outside world” (32). Concurrently, if servants are entrusted with
completing chores outside the home, their masters are free from having to do such time-consuming tasks. Masters could stay at home and focus on their own responsibilities, while avoiding contact with people or areas associated with the working class. Sarasúa explains that because nobles didn’t always like to associate with people from lower social classes, they passed on certain responsibilities to the servants: “Los criados se beneficiaron del hecho de que los nobles consideraban indigno tratar con gente del pueblo y dejaran por tanto en sus manos todas las cuestiones de abastecimiento, reparaciones y compras que exigía la casa” (Criados 214). Completing these tasks may have benefited servants more than master, however. First, receiving a letter or message that was formally delivered by a servant meant a gain in social status, especially amongst members of the middle class, as they would be interacting with people who could afford to hire domestics in the first place. Second, by delivering messages or navigating places like city streets or the market, servants themselves gain a sense of responsibility and independence, and are liberated from the demands of the house, where they were constantly subjected to the rules, beliefs, and constant watch of their masters: “al realizarse en un lugar público y permitirles conversar y escapar de la vigilancia constante de las casas” (Sarasúa, Criados 201). In assigning similar responsibilities to the theatrical characters of servants, dramatists create a sense of verisimilitude in the play, fill in details and background information, and help drive the plot.

In El sí de las niñas, each servant acts as a messenger on several occasions, creating a situation that is believable and that provides us with more details about the
environment in which domestics work. One such detail appears at the end of the first scene of the play, when Don Diego asks his servant, Simón, to prepare for the group’s departure early the next morning. To do so, Simón must talk to another servant in charge of the stables, as indicated by Don Diego’s request: “Busca al mayoral, y dile que venga, para quedar de acuerdo en la hora a que deberemos salir mañana” (63). Don Diego’s words are interesting because they first give us an idea of the type of tasks that servants were expected to carry out at any given moment. Here, Simón’s responsibilities fall within the boundaries of the traditional household. As part of his simple, everyday tasks, Simón is depicted as running errands for his master. By doing so, Simón demonstrates his loyalty as a servant and shows that he is really an extension of his master into a public space. Simón will run similar errands at other points in the play, and always seems to be “on call” for his master, further evidence of his loyalty and versatile role. When Simón exits this scene, we therefore assume that he is leaving to complete the task. Leandro Fernández de Moratín then adds to the sense of reality in the play when he has Simón enter in the fifth scene and tell his master that the stableman is waiting: “Señor, el mayoral está esperando” (75). Simón’s entry is probably not necessary as the audience would assume that the servants would complete such a basic task. However, by including it, Moratín has made the plot even more believable.

Similar issues of space and hierarchy as a part of the environment of domestic service are revealed in a scene involving Rita. Here, the female servant is first asked by Doña Irene to mail a letter, but to do so she has to personally deliver it to the servant of
the boarding house: “Oyes, aquella carta que está sobre la mesa, dásela al mozo de la posada para que la lleve al instante al correo” (95). On top of the request, Doña Irene asks Rita to bring back some soup: “Mira, has de calentar el caldo que apartamos al medio día, y haznos un par de tazas de sopas, y tráetelas luego que estén” (94). Although brief, this scene is important to the representation of domestic service because it hints at a separation of social classes. At first glance Doña Irene’s requests seem simple enough, since she is busy writing and would probably not want to take time away from her work. It is therefore the responsibility of the servant to deliver the letter. However, given that the boarding house serves as the setting for the play, Doña Irene’s order raises the question of whether she even would consider associating with other servants. This question is answered when Doña Irene changes her mind about who she actually wants to touch the letter. Her new request for Rita indicates a lack of trust in and a desire to not associate with people from another social class, in this case the servants of the boarding house whom she labels as crude: “Encarga mucho al mozo que lleve la carta al instante…Pero no, señor; mayor es…No quiero que la lleve él, que son unos borrachones, que no se les puede… Has de decir a Simón que digo yo que me haga el gusto de echarla en el correo” (95). Doña Irene doesn’t even appear to be entirely interested or comfortable in speaking personally with the servant of Don Diego, with whom she has traveled. Instead, she avoids all contact with servants other than Anita. Bridget Hill, in the introduction to her book, *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century*, comments that one of the purposes of domestic service was to create this very separation
between classes, so that nobles wouldn’t have to have contact with the poor. According to her, “It served to distance the upper classes from contact with the poor and provided the only close contact most of the middle and upper classes had with the laboring class” (5). This reasoning would completely justify Doña Irene’s words.

The privacy of masters’ spaces, such as Don Diego or Doña Irene’s rooms versus the remainder of the boarding house, becomes obvious throughout El sí de las niñas. Servants like Anita must operate within these spaces in an inconspicuous manner, but also possess a strong understanding of public domains, either to reflect their masters or act as a link between them and other social classes by delivering messages, etc. Carmen Sarasúa writes that the house becomes a series of private zones that are determined entirely by the function of that space. Servants must learn to work within these zones without interfering with their masters or being seen. For example, servants must prepare a meal, set the table and clean up without being noticed by dinner guests. Perhaps the only time they might be expected to appear in front of them would be to greet them or serve the meal. Ironically, in spite of the emphasis placed on operating in private for their masters, servants themselves never enjoyed complete confidentiality in their own lives. One reason is that the living situations of domestic servants rarely granted them any type of solitude: “When servants were given rooms they were usually small attics. But wherever their quarters were, something that was common to them all was that they could rarely be locked” (Hill 45). Another factor is that servants were required to be accessible at all time, removing privacy as an option in their lives. Even though servants
might be working in a private area of the house, away from their masters, their whereabouts were supposed to be always known. Bridget Hill writes that the routine of domestic servants helped eliminate this privacy, as “The organization of servants’ day-to-day work routine was known to everyone in the house” (45). For these reasons, domestic servants became masters of both private and public spaces, and entering a communal or public area often granted servants the only privacy they could ever enjoy—the freedom of being away from the house.

The interaction between Doña Irene and Rita also alludes to a division of domestic responsibilities according to gender. While the designation of chores varied in eighteenth-century Europe, depending on the family and type of work needed, in general women were assigned tasks inside the home, while men were placed in different situations. To list all of these responsibilities would be impossible, however, according to Bridget Hill, “The sexual division in the various tasks for which domestic servants were employed is well known. For men there were places, among many others, as valets, footman, coachmen, butlers. For women, lady’s maids, chambermaids, kitchen maids” (Hill 24). This division of chores in Spain is similar in many aspects, as it follows the general trend of labor in the country from that time, where males are involved more in industry and women are associated with house work: “una estricta división del trabajo por sexo, que idealmente dedicaría a las mujeres al trabajo a domicilio, especialmente al hilado.” (Sarasúa, Criados 41). Within the division of chores, female servants were typically responsible for any work done in the kitchen. This meant buying the food,
preparing it, storing or preserving it, and cleaning up. Female servants also attended to the personal needs of their mistresses, such as dressing and bathing them and washing their clothing. The only case where a male servant might have a role in the personal needs of a mistress would be as a hairdresser. At the same time, males were given tasks that required more physical effort and occasionally kept them out of places like the kitchen. From Doña Irene’s requests it is evident that Rita acts within the personal space of her mistresses. She is also constantly told to carry out more “feminine” or “domestic” chores, such as heating up the soup in this scene, or making the bed and feeding the bird earlier in the play, while the male characters of servants are not depicted carrying out similar tasks. In fact, while Rita is responsible for the dinner, the male servant, Calamocha, feels compelled to call the guests to the table: “Pues, señor, tenemos un medio cabrito asado... Tenemos una magnífica ensalada de berros, sin anapelos” (114-115).

As seen in many of Ramón de la Cruz’s sainetes, domestic servants must constantly be “on call” when carrying out daily routines. In other words, domestics are expected to respond to the needs of their masters at any given moment and be prepared to work “short bursts of frantic activity” (Fairchilds 23). Carmen Sarasúa states that although the servants’ day typically runs from 7:00 in the morning until bed time, in reality they are working a 24 hour shift: “En realidad no puede hablarse propiamente de jornada de trabajo, pues el sirviente estaba permanentemente disponible y era de hecho llamado o despertado a cualquier hora del día o de la noche para atender cualquier
necesidad de la familia‖ (Criados 213). At times this call was physically made through a bell or system of bells, as Sarasúa points out, with the expectation that at least one of the servants present would promptly respond. A comedia that captures this aspect of domestic service, while revealing other characteristics of the profession is Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s, La petimetra. Written as an attempt to model neoclassic precepts in drama, but never staged, the play nonetheless provides a glimpse into domestic service in eighteenth-century Madrid. The notion of being “on call” transforms into an unexpected reality for the criada one day when some male visitors arrive to see her mistress, the petimetra, Doña Jerónima. The petimetra, eager to make a good impression on her guests, begins to shout a series of requests at her servant, Anita, to make the house instantly more presentable. Ironically, the list of demands Doña Jerónima makes is no more than a set of trivial tasks that she herself is probably capable of completing: “Al instante, al instante, Anita, limpia esa mesa, arrima esos taburetes, corre esa Cortina apriesa, quita de allí aquella jarra y eso que emporcó la perra, llévate ese candelero y las despabiladeras, y venga quien venga ahora” (v. 540-548). Doña Jerónima’s requests should come as no surprise, since earlier in the first act she orders her servant to complete chores that had already been finished, revealing another foolish investment of time and resources.

Another aspect of the environment in which servants operate that is revealed in La petimetra, is compensation. With urban growth and economic expansion in Europe during the eighteenth-century, domestic service transforms into more of a profession, and
many servants begin to expect a monthly salary for their labor instead of working for just room and board. Even with their demands for steady wages, however, servants still view lodging as the most attractive component of compensation, especially during times of crises. For example, the Famine of 1812 saw a sudden dismissal of domestic servants from families who couldn’t afford to provide for their basic needs. As a response, many servants searched for positions that provided basic amenities, such as food and lodging, instead of focusing solely on salaries. When the country stabilized itself, lodging still remained the principal reason why many people came to cities like Madrid with the hope of working as a domestic: “el elemento de la remuneración que resulta fundamental para los sirvientes, y que por sí mismo es responsable de la entrada al sector de un alto porcentaje de sus trabajadores, es el alojamiento” (Sarasúa, *Criados* 220). The possibility of earning a steady wage only made the industry more appealing. Carmen Sarasúa supplies some ranges of salaries for servants that are taken from announcements in the *Diario*. According to these figures, a *criada* could expect to earn around 30 *reales* a month in the 1760’s, 40 *reales* during the late 1780’s, and 60 *reales* by the end of the century. On the other hand, her data for salaries of *criados* from the 1790’s show a significant increase in pay, with announcements offering 75, 90, and 150 *reales* a month (*Criados* 223).

The interactions between Doña Jerónima and Anita in the first act of *La petimetra*, reveal certain characteristics of compensation and hint at the shift of domestic service to more of an occupation, where servants try to negotiate for higher salaries and improved
benefits. First, Doña Jerónima is frustrated by the fact that she has now to pay Anita for little tasks when in the past servants were more like members of the family and committed themselves almost entirely to their masters for basic food and lodging: “¡Qué tal necesidad reine en un siglo tan contrario que he de pagarla un salario no más de porque me peine!” (v. 277-280). Jerónima words are quite ironic, given that we already know how much time, money and effort she typically puts into maintaining her own image, often creating trivial jobs for Anita in the first place. It is apparent that Jerónima wants to use the money for other reasons, probably for her own spending, but at the same time she feels the need to have a personal servant. We then learn a few lines later that Anita’s salary is 20 reales each month plus board: “pues por cierto y por verdad que veinte reales al mes, dos cuartos que almuerzo llama y los desechos del alma moco de pavo no es” (v. 284-288). This figure is less than the normal salaries for female servants of the time, according to Sarasúa’s data, but with the added benefits it seems realistic. Examining the prices of rooms in Madrid from this time period shows that servants, especially in the case of Anita and her 20 reales, would not have been able to afford the basic rent (Ringrose 76-80); a clear indicator of why lodging was the main lure and salaries primarily an attractive benefit of domestic service.

Earning a small monthly income, Anita still feels entitled to more, and is not afraid to defend her actions or challenge her master or other adults to fulfill her desires. When blamed by Doña María for causing some of the frivolous behavior of Doña Jerónima, Anita is quick to speak up and states that she would eventually like to pursue
other professional options outside of Don Rodrigo’s home: “pues tasadamente en casa de cuatro o cinco duquesas me están rogando que vaya con mucho empeño, y si fuera, allí me celebrarían lo aquí me vituperan” (v. 524-529). Anita’s words are interesting because they first reveal a sense of independence. She is aware of other possible options for work in Madrid, and uses them to show how she is discontent with her current situation. One possible explanation is that Anita is not afraid to challenge her mistress because by doing so she can only be dismissed, therefore allowing her to pursue other employment options.

Charles Kany, in *Life and Manners in Madrid, 1750-1800*, writes that servants could only work for another master if they were released from their previous position. As a result, servants who were not completely happy with their situation, or who were looking at other possible opportunities, often defied their masters with hopes of being discharged: “These legal restrictions were doubtless the reason why a maid who wished to leave a post… often conducted herself in such a way as to provoke a summary dismissal” (253).

Another explanation for Anita’s words is that they reflect the general sentiment of servants from that time. The footnote for this section in the play refers to Carmen Martín Gaite’s, *Usos amorosos del dieciocho en España* to explain how domestic servants from that time started to become more independent and explore different possibilities for their careers. It states, “Poco a poco, la criada iba dejando de identificar sus intereses con los de aquel mundo superior…para ir sintiendo integrada en su propia clase y formando gremio con el resto de las mujeres trabajadoras” (170). Carmen Sarasúa states that domestic service, for a variety of economical and social reasons, is seen predominantly a
feminine profession in the eighteenth-century: “se ve por las familias y por la sociedad como el trabajo más adecuado para las mujeres que no pueden subsistir trabajando como esposas” (Criados 264). These lines are also important because they reveal some of the sentiment of domestics of that time and anticipate the disappearance of a field that will take place in the second half of the nineteenth-century. The reference in La petimetra to these social changes is brief, but powerful, as audiences of the time would have been aware of servants becoming more vocal and of the changing social climate in Madrid.

A servant arguing with her mistress or frantically trying to complete tasks to prepare for an unexpected houseguest might not border on the bizarre, but if for nothing else, these scenarios certainly add a degree of humor, entertainment, and authenticity to a play. A similar case can be made for domestics who temporarily act outside their prescribed roles by dressing in their masters’ clothes during a holiday or celebration. They are moments that encapsulate some of the components of the complex world of domestic service and therefore create a more believable setting for a play, while capturing the attention of their reader or audience. In other words, the overall representation in eighteenth and early-nineteenth century theatrical works in Spain of the environment in which servants live and operate, reveal certain aspects of the rigorous, daily routines, difficult working conditions, numerous responsibilities, and poor perception of domestics that were present in cities like Madrid. For this reason, domestic service is not just a verdad evidente in theatrical works from the time, but also a story of what “could be.” Although scholars like Charles Kany point out the extent to which the sainetes of Ramón
de la Cruz reflect social norms, the creation of believable elements of the world of domestic service in eighteenth-century Spanish drama suggest that *sainetes* and *comedias* can provide a believable, if not close, approximation of this profession. This approximation is not only revealed in the depiction of the servants’ world, but as we have seen, in the relationships they maintain with their masters and amongst themselves.
Chapter 7: Final Thoughts

The sudden arrival of Don Damián and Don Félix to the house of Don Rodrigo in Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s La petimetra prompts the vain Jerónima to barrage her personal servant with a series of last-second orders: “Al instante, al instante, Anita, limpia esa mesa…” (1.540-548). Unlike the earlier conversation in which Anita openly challenges Jerónima and takes credit for her mistress’ appearance and recognition in public, Anita doesn’t respond this time and presumably carries out the tasks. Such interactions and scenes, as simple and common as they may be, reveal certain characteristics and information about domestic service in eighteenth-century Madrid and establish a connection between drama and the service profession. First, the presence of servants within the eighteenth-century household is recognized. Second, Anita, like other servants, is needed to complete basic tasks essential to ensure the smooth function of the household. The simple tasks mentioned are just a few examples of the type of work that servants carried out on a daily basis within the walls or private spaces of the home. Third, the urgency with which Jerónima orders Anita to finish the chores suggests an ulterior motive behind the tasks assigned to servants, namely that servants were used to create a sense of security or perfection in the eyes of the public. Jerónima wants the house to appear perfect for the guests, and Anita’s work becomes important to achieving this goal. In other theatrical scenes, servants become status symbols for their masters, much like male servants and foreign or specialized servants were used as displays of
wealth by the social elite in eighteenth-century Madrid. The implication of the importance placed on appearance is that domestic service is not limited solely to the household\textsuperscript{cxi}, but rather can extend directly and indirectly into public spaces. Fourth, masters and servants, such as Jerónima and Anita, interact in a variety of ways and their relationships can change at any moment from sharing secrets to arguing over responsibilities. Finally, the actions and words of the characters of servants in theatrical works, as well as in society of that time, were essentially mini-performances, as domestics had to behave to appease their masters and be prepared to “act” or respond at any given moment.

The reality is that domestic service is just as complex and uncertain as it is prominent in eighteenth-century Madrid. The implications of this statement mean that domestic service is a profession that is difficult to document and objectively describe. In theatrical works, the range of what is believable to the general public regarding the representations of the service profession is equally broad. So, can drama provide an accurate picture of domestic service in society of that time?

The plays of Don Ramón de la Cruz (1731-1794) furnish, as everyone knows, a series of vivid sketches of life in Madrid in the late eighteenth century. Scholars have often said that a faithful picture of the usages and manners of the capital might be reproduced from this playwright’s lively bits of comedy (sainetes). Attracted by such a possibility, I undertook the study of Cruz’s enormous output
of playlets, hoping that the investigation might help to clarify the allusions in other writings to details of everyday life in the eighteenth century, which often perplex the student of Spanish literature or history.

(Charles Kany, Life and Manners in Madrid: 1750-1850 xi)

The opening paragraph of Charles Kany’s Life and Manners in Madrid: 1750-1850, points out the immediate connection between the Sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz and daily life in eighteenth-century Madrid, where domestic service comprised a significant percentage of the work force. Kany states that the span of Cruz’s writing supplied a wealth of information on the popular classes of eighteenth-century Madrid, but also admits that Cruz’s Sainetes did not always represent society in the most realistic or objective manner, “it soon became apparent that many significant aspects of the social setting were not to be found within the compass of this author’s production and that other aspects were evidently exaggerated or somewhat distorted by his prejudices” (xi). For Kany, to completely learn about eighteenth-century Madrid therefore meant to use sainetes in conjunction with sources such as legal records, ads and diaries, “It seemed advisable therefore to go beyond the plays of Cruz to more objective and reliable sources, and to corroborate information gained from these with pertinent matter from the sainetes” (xi). Even though theatrical works can’t completely or objectively describe a field as large or as complex as domestic service, examining the representations of this profession in drama; however, can direct us to what audiences from the time considered believable,
even if these portrayals were slightly exaggerated or altered by playwrights to attract attention. By doing so, we can create a clearer picture of the world of domestic service and gain valuable insight into what representation and verisimilitude meant in theatre in eighteenth-century Spain. I have taken this perspective in my dissertation.

My main source of information on domestic service was Carmen Sarasúa’s *Criados, nodrizas y amos: El servicio doméstico en la formación del mercado de trabajo madrileño, 1758-1868*. Yet Carmen Sarasúa also acknowledges the importance of investigating and combining different sources to study domestic service, “En resumen, de los trabajos exigentes se deduce la conveniencia de combinar fuentes distintas que reflejen la variedad de formas que adopta el servicio doméstico” (*Criados* 7). For me, meshing drama and domestic service, two fields that simultaneously reached significant heights in eighteenth-century Madrid, seemed to be a natural fit. The initial problem was selecting a corpus of texts from the wide variety of genres that collectively formed Eighteenth-century Spanish Theatre, a period generally characterized by significant transformation and discussion concerning aesthetics or reform. Looking across the broad spectrum of theatrical works from the period, I decided that it made sense to select Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s *La petimetra*, Leandro Fernández de Moratín’s *El sí de las niñas*, and the *Sainetes* of Ramón de la Cruz’s, subgenres of theatre from two different traditions, in order to provide a more objective approach to studying the representation of domestic service without overextending the scope of the project. Although *La petimetra* never reached the stage, Nicolás Fernández de Moratín stated in the *Dedicatoria* section
that the play was intended to be a model of classical unities and verisimilitude. The other texts were much more popular in eighteenth-century Spain. *El sí de las niñas* was performed twenty six consecutive days and drew an enormous crowd\textsuperscript{cxii} while Cruz’s *Sainetes* often became the main attraction for theatergoers: “muchos espectadores no se sentían atraídos únicamente por la obra principal del programa: las tonadillas y sainetes – a los que Ramón de la Cruz debió lo esencial de su popularidad – tenían tantos aficionados como las comedias” (Andioc, *Teatro y sociedad* 29).

As I have shown, the connection between drama, in particular *comedias* and *sainetes*, and domestic service is strong. Given theatrical constraints such as space or stage time\textsuperscript{cxiii}, dramatists must approximate reality in the representations they create, which are then subjected to interpretations of directors, actors and all other participants in the production. To represent society in eighteenth-century Madrid in a believable way therefore means occasionally incorporating elements of the service profession on stage in some sort of capacity, from the appearance of secondary characters of servants with minor roles and functions to more detailed descriptions of household responsibilities, master-servant and servant-servant interactions, and characters of servants who contribute significantly to the theatrical work. Depicting life in the growing capital city without including examples of domestic service would mean excluding a major sector of society from that time, a sector that would grow to over thirty percent of the working population. Similarly, I have shown how the selected *comedias* and *sainetes* include examples of characters of servants who carry out daily responsibilities, interrelate with their masters
and other servants, and perform increasingly complex theatrical functions. Domestics are therefore crucial figures to these theatrical works, much like they were essential to the function of everyday life in eighteenth-century Madrid, and a principal part of the workforce from that period.

The link between domestic service and drama extends in other directions as well. First, the genres of the selected works lend themselves perfectly to representations of popular classes. The *comedia* is often regarded as a “low genre” due to its shift in emphasis away from the social elite. *Sainetes*, by nature, depict to an even greater degree the working classes, and include the characters of all types of popular figures on stage, from the almond vendor to the domestic servant. The brief stage time and both comic and festive spirit of these short pieces, much like their musical counterpart, the *tonadilla*, allow *sainetes* to reveal and probe into some interesting social dynamics, often involving characters like lackeys or servants, without interrupting any previously established social norms. Second, the modest background of many actors from that time often resembled the makeup of the characters they played. Charles Kany describes the inferior state of acting in eighteenth-century Spain, stating that actors were frequently uneducated, inexperienced, and not much different from the often marginalized characters they represented in *sainetes*. “If an actor or actress possessed ability, it was usually, according to Jovellanos and others, an ability to portray low characters, on a level, or near so, with their own social standing” (307). In other words, playing the part of a character from the working class, or perhaps a domestic servant, would probably not
have been too much of a stretch for many actors of the time. An additional connection can be made with the diverse makeup of the audience, many of whom could relate immediately to the characters represented on stage and the actors who played these parts. In fact, the theater pit housed the spectators from the lowest classes, who had to stand throughout the entire production and gained fame for their rowdy behavior. Kany writes that the poor conduct of these guests earned them the name of mosqueteros, “or musketeers, a term which since the sixteenth century had been applied to them on account of their noisy restlessness, so reminiscent of soldiers of the same name” (300). This point is debatable; however, as the price of attending the theatre compared to the averages wages of the time would seem to discriminate against lower classes, making it difficult for them to consistently attend cxvi.

Throughout my dissertation I have presented many aspects of domestic service as well as ideas surrounding representation and verisimilitude in the selected works. In this final chapter I would first like to summarize the main points and conclusions detailed in the previous sections, as seen in the following list:

1) Domestic servants were vastly present in daily life in eighteenth-century Madrid, but have been underrepresented in social and historical studies of that time.

2) Domestic service was a profession that was not clearly defined and that affected each household differently.

3) The private and complex nature of domestic service made it a profession that was difficult to document and objectively depict.

4) Domestic servants carried out a variety of jobs, many of them essential to daily functions and life.
5) Similarly, a variety of people, and not just those employed specifically as domestic servants, performed service-related tasks.

6) Domestic servants, especially males or individuals with special talents and skills, were often viewed as symbols of status.

7) Domestic servants were part of a profession that was undergoing significant growth and evolution in the eighteenth-century, essentially transforming from a paternal model to more of a contractual or professional relationship.

8) Domestic servants often formed part of a variety of networks, as they interacted with their masters as well as other servants.

9) Verisimilitude in the eighteenth-century, as seen in representation of servants in selected theatrical works, refers mostly to what was believable to audiences of the time, although there are hints at ideal representations of what should be or what should have been.

These points also serve as examples of how verisimilitude, real life and performativity overlap in eighteenth-century Madrid. In the chapter on routines and responsibilities, I wrote that the complexity of domestic service makes it difficult, if not impossible, for dramatists to objectively or fully depict this profession in theatrical works. I offered that dramatists instead must select certain elements of domestic service to represent, with the goal of creating “a picture of the profession that is believable, and not necessarily accurate, to the intended audience”. Such a task would have been extremely difficult to carry out in theatrical texts, given theatrical restraints and the unpredictable nature of theatre of that time that stemmed from poor training of actors, limited budget and equipment, and hostile and uneducated audiences. The role of the audience is especially interesting because it directly affects the performance while theatregoers become the immediate receptors of signs on stage. In dramatic texts,
playwrights still had to consider public opinion at all times, even if the work wasn’t eventually be transformed into a theatrical performance. To attract their audience, dramatists therefore needed to convey a picture that was immediately believable, but not so detailed that it would turn away theatergoers. Elements of this picture would probably also have to be communicated from the opening scene out of fear of losing the audience. As a result, comedias, and to a greater extent sainetes, became powerful ways of connecting with the public, as they often depicted familiar places and common figures as characters on stage, spaces and faces to which theatergoers could easily relate. At the same time dramatists needed to exaggerate certain details in their representations to capture and maintain the interest of their reader and audience. John Moore, in his biography of Ramón de la Cruz, writes that “The usual reader of the sainetes is willing to believe that the world of Cruz’s stage is an objective reproduction of the world he saw and lived in, the same world that inspired or bemused Goya” (111). Of course, the word, “believe,” implies that the representations don’t need to be historically accurate. Moore adds that, “It is necessary, of course, to discount the exaggerations that caricature but do not distort beyond recognizable reality” (111). In the dramatic text, these signs were communicated to the reader through dialogue as well as explicit and implicit stage directions, meaning that the representations in the dramatic texts had to be especially effective.

The instant connection between drama, domestic service and the reader or audience reaffirms the notion of verisimilitude first as something believable to the public,
and in the process places great importance on public opinion. Lilian Furst, in *All is True: The Claims and Strategies of Realist Fiction*, comments on a similar relationship between reader and text, focusing primarily on the reader of realist fiction. Furst writes that, “in order to explore how realist fiction achieves its ‘air of reality,’ the focus of analysis must be shifted from the author to the readers, from the novel’s origins to its reception, from the putative sources onto the text itself” (26). Depicting a society permanently out of order, in which servants commanded and challenged their superiors, would certainly not strike audiences of that time as believable. However, the other extreme; a text that included every little detail of domestic service, might come across as historically and socially accurate, but would probably fail to attract the attention of its audience. The middle course is to stretch real truths as far as possible without jeopardizing their plausibility. Clearly, Ramón de la Cruz writes for the audience, or at least with them in mind, as he includes portrayals to which theatregoers can easily relate, “His main accomplishment was to make the sainete throb with the daily life of Madrid’s middle and lower classes.” (Moore, *Ramón de la Cruz* 20). Such depictions include scenarios where servants might wear their master’s clothing and sneak out of the house, like in La pradera de San Isidro, or where domestics find themselves supporting and defending their superiors in unforeseen circumstances. In the two selected comedias the latter case is developed even more. Martina’s quick response to Rodrigo in La petimetra, preventing him from entering the bedroom, or the collaboration between Rita and Calamocha in El sí
de las niñas to share information and help unite Francisca and Carlos, provide some of these entertaining, yet entirely possible, moments.

The numerous servants and wide range of elements of domestic service that appear in the selected comedias and sainetes suggest that the possibilities of what is believable to the public in eighteenth-century Madrid are endless. The list of main points in my dissertation hints at five overarching characteristics regarding this profession: domestic servants comprised a major sector of the workforce, a variety of people carried out service-related tasks, domestic service involved all different kinds of jobs both inside and outside the household, having servants was seen as a symbol of status, and servants interacted with their masters and other servants in a variety of ways. However, within each of these categories falls an assortment of examples, many of which share certain characteristics and others that are very distinct in nature. Jerónima’s female servant in La petimetra mirrors many of the materialistic and frivolous values of her mistress, but also challenges her over issues of compensation and simple household responsibilities. The relationship she shares with her mistress therefore fluctuates throughout the text. Similarly, the male servant in La Pradera de San Isidro has earned the trust and respect of his master, but decides to risk everything in disobeying a direct order to attend the street festival. When the master discovers his normally faithful servant he is insulted and enraged—a stark contrast from the strong relationship the two had formerly disclosed. The paje in Las escofieteras diligently carries out his daily responsibilities and takes great pride in his work. He is obviously offended and confused when the store owner
comments that his mistress has spoken poorly of him. The fact that such abrupt changes can occur within basic relationships and interactions confirms the complexity and continuous evolution of the service profession, and indicates the breadth of characteristics believable to the general public. The beauty of comedias is that they are long enough to develop the personalities of their characters, such as servants, on stage. Sainetes don’t have the liberty to characterize with such depth, but often begin in the middle of the action, reducing the time needed to introduce characters and events and allowing for the expansion of some of the characters on stage. Both genres therefore contain and communicate different aspects of eighteenth-century life in Madrid that are believable to their audiences and readers.

Including details that are believable, but not necessarily precise, suggests that dramatists can extend truths to attempt to entertain and capture the attention of their readers and audience. Once this relationship has been established, dramatists can then use the text as a means of conveying a specific message to them; the other part of “enseñar deleitando”. René Andioc, in Teatro y Sociedad en el Madrid del siglo XVIII, writes that comedias were targeted by reformers as a valuable tool for teaching the public good manners and habits, “en todos los tratados o planes de reforma, se afirma que el teatro debe ser una ‘escuela de buenas costumbres’, la ‘escuela más pública’, el ‘Maestro público de las costumbres’, la ‘escuela del pueblo, en donde al divertirse aprendiese sus obligaciones’” (545). For this reason, verisimilitude on another level involves what should or “ought to be,” in addition to what is already believable to the general public.
Perhaps the best example of this duality is *El sí de las niñas*. The success of this work confirms its popularity in early, nineteenth-century Madrid. However, at the same time, I have shown how the characters of servants in the play help solidify the union between Francisca and Carlos and in the process support independence and free choice in the face of rigidly imposed behaviors by the values and educational system of the time. The marriage of the two young lovers also means that Don Diego has successfully controlled his passions and understood the strength of the bond between Francisca and Carlos. In this manner, Don Diego serves as an example of rational behavior, a model that is rewarded in the end of the play through the promise of the young couple to name their first child after him. Similarly, the powerful ending of Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s *La petimetra*, where the vain Jerónima is stripped publicly of all her clothes, is not only engaging, but also contrasts the behaviors of the female characters in the text. Moratín’s insertion of a public display of shame ridicules the lack of values of Jerónima and her servant, Anita, while also indirectly justifying the behavior of María and Martina. It essentially validates the roles and standards of women within the household that María constantly attempts to uphold, and consequently communicates, much like *El sí de las niñas*, what “ought to be”. As Jesús Pérez Magallón writes in the introduction to his edition of Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s *Teatro completo*, “María, a su vez, está orgullosa de encargarse de las labores caseras y tiene perfectamente integrados los valores que deben caracterizar a la mujer de bien” (50). The characters of domestic servants therefore play a pivotal role in modeling and transmitting certain values and
behaviors for the general public, implying that theatre can be a means of instruction and communication\textsuperscript{c}, or as René Andioc states, “El teatro puede aparecer, pues, bajo ciertos aspectos, como una especie de ‘prensa del pobre’” (Teatro 87).

The focus of my dissertation on the representation of characters of domestic servants in theatrical texts in eighteenth-century Madrid also revisits a much larger issue. Even though domestic service was the largest employer of the working population from this time, its story has often been overlooked by social and historical studies of the period, leaving it underrepresented in comparison with the numerous studies of the service profession in both France and England. Domestic service in Western Europe involved similar types of tasks and underwent comparable changes during the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries, so why is it that the profession is much more thoroughly documented in France and England than in Spain? I have referred to the works of Cissie Fairchild, Michael McKeon, Bridget Hill, and Tim Meldrum in my dissertation to gain insight into domestic service, and stated in the opening chapter that some of the reasons behind the lack of comparable studies in Spain include the difficulty of accessing or recovering primary documentation on domestic servants from that era, and the complex makeup of the service profession in the capital, namely the variety of responsibilities that shaped it and the number of different people who performed service-related tasks.\textsuperscript{c}\textsuperscript{xi} In addition to theatre, where else can we turn to for information on this profession? What must we investigate to learn more about domestic service in eighteenth-century Madrid? Fortunately, the work of Carmen Sarasúa has opened the door to this major sector of
society, while the Grupo Taller de Historia Social at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid has provided a wealth of interdisciplinary resources on the working classes during the Modern Age in Spain, focusing on the working sector, the relations between rural and urban spaces, and social conflict. The current website for the Grupo Taller de Historia Social includes access to more than thirty articles, as well as links to the Asociación de Historia Social and Frentes Avanzados de la Historia, a site dedicated to the exchange of historical and cultural information from the Spanish-speaking world. The group is currently directed by José Antolín Nieto Sánchez, Santos Madrazo Madrazo, José Miguel López García, Victoria López Barahona, and Álvaro París Martín.

Additional sources of information on domestic service might still come from different theatrical works from the time. Ramón de la Cruz, Nicolás Fernández de Moratín and Leandro Fernández de Moratín are only three voices, or three perspectives, from which we can view life in eighteenth-century Madrid. I decided to choose Ramón de la Cruz as a representative of sainetes, as he was the most prolific writer of that time. However, other dramatists, such as Luis Moncín or Sebastián Vásquez, have included characters of domestic servants in their writing. Mireille Coulon generated interest in Vásquez through her study, Le sainete à Madrid à l’époque de don Ramón de la Cruz, and attributed many works to him that were previously labeled anonymous, or mistakenly ascribed to his contemporaries. Currently, Christian Peytavy has continued this investigation in attempting to uncover the entire body of works that Vásquez authored. In his article, “Más sobre Sebastián Vázquez: nuevas obras atribuidas y estado de su
producción (1766-1798),” Peytavy writes, “Con estos últimos hallazgos, ya son en total unos ochenta los sainetes que hoy por hoy se pueden atribuir a Sebastián Vázquez -15 sainetes de costumbres teatrales, 15 sainetes de ambiente rural o asimilados, 48 de ambiente urbano o asimilados” (3). Peytavy notes that this number is a significant increase from the fifty known sainetes attributed to Vásquez at the time Coulon began her study. More important to my research are the representations of popular classes in Vásquez’s works and the possible connections between his writing and domestic service. Peytavy points out that while Vásquez’s body of work includes a range of sainetes, many texts present elements of popular classes and society from that time, “en los sainetes urbanos, los verdaderos protagonistas son los abundantes personajes populares, cuyo temperamento depende de la historia y de los actores que los encarnaban y se definen a menudo exclusivamente por sus relaciones familiares” (20). Perhaps many more details about the service profession can be found in the writings of Vásquez, or in other genres of theatre from that time period.

The fact of the matter is that valuable sources of information on domestic servants in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Madrid come from both real and cultural archives. Court documents, newspapers, manuals, material products and official records like the censuses, form the core of primary material and real archives regarding domestic service, while the cultural archives extend to areas like literature and visual images. It is my hope that more of these areas will be accessed to uncover information on domestic service and recreate this vital sector of Spanish society, whether in Madrid or in other
parts of Spain with rich theatrical histories, such as Seville or Cádiz. The state of domestic service was changing all throughout Europe in the eighteenth-century, as well as in Spain. The histories of these people should therefore be represented equally. I plan on combining my work in theatre with archival research, and would like to study sainetes attributed to other contemporaries of Ramón de la Cruz to gain an even deeper picture of domestic service in eighteenth-century Madrid. At the same time, I would like to explore other genres of Eighteenth-century Spanish Theatre in detail to see how they approach representation and verisimilitude. My dissertation has approached verisimilitude as a two-step process that begins by creating depictions that are believable to the public of that time, and later presents what should or “ought to be”, using the representation of domestic service in theatrical works as an example. Meshing theatre and domestic service will continue to shed light on both of these areas and show that servants were essentially performing in their daily work to survive, just as the characters of servants in theatrical works of that time performed important theatrical functions and helped expose certain aspects of the profession. Unless more work is done in these areas, domestic service will continue to be overlooked in studies of eighteenth-century Spain and will remain underrepresented and underappreciated today.
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Notes

1 See Cruz 17.

2 David Ringrose writes, “As imperial capital and largest city in Spain, however, Madrid's most important functions were political rather than industrial or commercial, and the interactions between the capital and its hinterland were quite different from those between London and the rest of England” (37).

3 David Ringrose notes that, “The census of 1797 registered 57 grandees and 68 other titled nobles in addition to over 300 owners of lesser entailed estates and several thousand nobles residing in the city” (318). Although nobles did not by any means form the majority of the population in the capital city during that time, their private wealth and lifestyles influenced society and created a growing need for domestic help.

4 See Sarasúa, Criados, nodrizas y amos: el servicio doméstico en la formación del mercado de trabajo madrileño, 1758-1868 90, 105, regarding growth of domestic service in response to demographic growth and ways in which servants acted as status symbols.

5 Bridget Hill points out the complexity of the service profession in eighteenth-century England: “Just because an individual was taken on as a domestic servant did not mean that domestic service defined their work role. Many appointed as servants became shop assistants, helping in the family business” (13).

6 Neighborhoods near the Royal Palace, such as San Francisco, contained a larger number of nobles: “13% of San Francisco's population was classed as hidalgo, twice that of any other district. Near the royal palace, the district was centered on the Basilica of San Francisco el Grande and was an important residential area for the nobility. The presence of so many relatively affluent families, with better infant survival rates and strong motives for marrying, helps explain the demographic structure of the district and links the nobility with the city's demographic core” (39).

7 The period between 1750 and 1850 was not marked by a consistent population growth. Rather, the population fluctuated, increasing mainly between the years 1769-1787, 1787-1799, 1821-1842, and 1850-1860. See Ringrose 28.

8 Ringrose addresses the fluctuation of the population of Madrid during the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, but recognizes 109,753 inhabitants in Madrid in 1757, and 224,312 in 1836, statistics that suggest an overall positive growth during these years (27).
I discuss aspects of this performance dynamic in chapters 2, 5 and 6 of the present study.

See Sarasúa, *Criados* 74-75.

Jovellanos references Sampil in the second volume of his *Diarios* on pages 24, 378, 487, 488, 492, 493, 497, 498, and 502, in addition to page 482.

Students in Madrid sought part-time employment as servants, frequently offering their services in middle class families in exchange for room or board. See Sarasúa, *Criados* 259.

Colás appears in the first volume on page 294. In the second volume Jovellanos mentions Colás more frequently: p. 9, 117, 137, 151, 190, 204, 216, 255, 276, 278, 309, 316, 326, 335, 336, 352, 361, 377, 378, 404, 407, 478, 479, 481, 482, and 496.

The references to Francisco extend through both of the volumes of the *Diarios*. In Volume 1, Jovellanos mentions his *conserje* on pages 363, 364, 368 and 392. In Volume 2, he references his servant on pages 259, 482 and 496.

See Sarasúa, *Criados* 102.

David Ringrose in, *Madrid and the Spanish Economy (1560-1850)*, provides data from the 1850 census in Madrid, including the number of people living in the capital that were born in other parts of the country: Álava 1,244, Barcelona 1,701, Cádiz 2,598, La Coruña 2,377, Guipúzcoa 1,745, Huelva 128, Huesca 682, Navarra 2,041, Oviedo 17,195, Santander 3,388, and Vizcaya 2,881 (56-57).

Luciano García Lorenzo studies the roles of female servants in Golden Age Theatre in *La criada en el teatro español del Siglo de Oro*.

See Sarasúa, *Criados* 5.

See Álvarez Barrientos, “Neoclassical” 333.

The twenty-two documented autobiographies in Amelang’s *The Flight of Icarus from Spain and Mallorca* are Tomàs Amorós I Cerdà, Ana de Jesús, Ana de San Bartolomé, Miquel Anglada I Bonet, Ignasi Benavent, Luis de Carvajal, Josep Estellés, Francesc Gelat, Joan Guàrdia, Isabel de Jesús, Antonio de León Soto The Younger, Lucía de Jesús, María Antonia de Jesús, María de la Ascensión (María Pérez de Ocampo), Maties Mut I Romaguera, Miquel Parets, Ventura Pérez, Aleix Ribalta, Beatriz Ana Ruiz, Juan Serrano de Vargas y Ureña, Andrés de la Vega, Francesillo de Zúñiga. The highlighted texts, with the exception of Francesc Gelat, are set within the eighteenth-century. Amelang indicates that Gelat has been included in studies on 1697, clearly at the turn of the century, but does not mention any specific entries from the 1700’s. I have included Gelat in this group anyway.
Further information can be found in Rebecca Haidt’s forthcoming book, *Rags and Riches.*

Carolyn Steedman extends the argument, contenting that servants have been written out of society and social history as a result of the nature of their work: “…they are not there because… they are not already in the story that social historians are telling (or repeating, or readjusting), and they have not been there since Adam Smith first called their work ‘not work’ in the 1770’s” (22).

Sarasúa distinguishes between two main categories of servants: those who work for salaries, and those who don’t receive one: (“En esta nueva organización del trabajo doméstico continuarán coexistiendo trabajadores asalariados (los sirvientes) y trabajadores no asalariados (esposa, hija, otros familiares)” (*Criados* 270).


Mark Thornton Burnett writes, “Many writers argues that ‘servant’ was a term with a wide application, and that among those who could be classed as such were players, monks, grooms, gentlemen, lords or courtiers, and even kings. Other definitions were more capacious still, and maintained that any individual bound by a contract was a ‘servant’” (2).

See Martín Casares 189.

See Ottolenghi 9.

*Criados*, 86-111.

See Hill 14.

During my thesis defense, Professor Summerhill suggested that that the representation of the believable might be based entirely on “conjecture.”

See Sarasúa, *Criados* 18.

Professor Fosler-Lussier raised this question during the thesis defense.

See Fernández and Soubeyroux 10.

See Lista 65.

Russell Sebold writes in the introduction to his edition of Luzán’s *La poética* that we tend to forget that even Aristotle shaped his theories and beliefs from the work of others before him: “Hoy suele olvidarse que Aristóteles infirió sus reglas de la experiencia y las observaciones de poetas épicos, trágicos (y cómicos) que habían imitado la naturaleza organizando sus materiales de modo puramente instintivo, como se lo hacían posible los
procesos mentales naturales en el hombre y la naturaleza de la forma poética que havían
elegido” (28).

36 See Checa Beltrán 1525.

37 See Carlson 39.

38 See Halliwell 109.

39 Alonso López Pinciano has his Philosophía antigua poética published in Madrid in
1596. This date is much later than Jodocus Badius’s transcriptions of Terence in France
and Giorgio Valla’s translation of the Poetics in 1498 in Italy. See Carlson 37, 59, 67.

40 See Carlson 55.

41 See Carlson 61.

42 See Luzán, La poética 233.

43 See Calderone, Antonietta, and Fernando Doménech 1614.

44 See Checa Beltrán, “La teoría” 1526.

45 Sarasúa writes, “Sin electricidad, gas, ni agua corriente, el servicio de los hogares
urbanos incluía… tareas muy penosas, como el transporte de agua y combustible, el
lavado y planchado de ropa… Y otras que consumían innumerables horas de trabajo”
(Criados 197).

46 John Dowling writes in his edition of Ramón de la Cruz’s Sainetes that, “encontramos
tipos que eran familiares al público: algunos por su oficio de castañera, buñolera,
naranjera, limera, ramilletera, albañil, chispero, zapatero, peluquero, escribano, abogado,
aguacil, medico, soldado, oficial, cómico, paje, lacayo, criado; otros por su clase o
función social: hidalgo, usía, petimetre, majo, abate, marido, esposa, cortejo, viuda,
beata; otros por su origen: campesino, vizcaíno, indiano, italiano, suizo” (29).

47 These characteristics can be represented visually in the staging of a work. In a
dramatic text, they often appear in both explicit and implicit stage directions. Mireille
Coulon, in her “Estudio preliminar” to J.M. Sala Valldaura’s edition of Cruz’s Sainetes,
states that the sainete followed the tendency of larger works of the time to create more
detailed sets for their staging, “El sainete, aunque en menor escala, participa de esta
evolución, y se cuida cada vez más su decorado, como pone de manifiesto la precisión de
algunas descripciones contenidas en las acotaciones” (xviii).
Of all the spaces within the house, the kitchen usually held the most importance, as it was ideally a tidy and organized place, “La cocina es, dentro del servicio general de la casa, el más importante y el que require mayores atenciones” (Orrier 53).

George Duckworth writes that, “To attempt to derive from the comedies of Plautus and Terence a clear and coherent account of Roman economic and social life is obviously unwise” (272).

Díez Borque gives a list of different things criados-graciosos do in plays, in addition to linguistic jokes they make, as part of their typical function. The list is as follows:

Deformación de nombres cultos, históricos o mitológicos (Ovillo = Ovidio).
Utilización del sayagués.
Creaciones léxicas, sin sentido.
Juego de palabras y de etimologías.
Utilización vulgar de frases cultas.
Alusiones muy gráficas a la realidad.
Expresiones populares muy connotadas.
Breves cuentecillos cómicos en oposición a los cuentos cultos en boca del galán.
Uso confundido de las formulaciones de tratamiento.
Palos, hambre, alusiones sucias.
Ataques al matrimonio, suegras, cuñados.
Hambre y miedo, convertidos en motivos humorísticos.
Confusiones efectistas.
Efectos de disfraz y la personalidad confundida.
Alguna presencia de nonsense y absurdo.
Engaño al criado: se tizna la cara o se mancha de harina.
Situaciones ridículas, ejemplo: besa al mastín, creyendo que era su mujer” (251-252).

Jesús Pérez Magallón notes in his edition of Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s Teatro Completo, “las criadas debían cambiar su delantal una vez al mes; de ahí que justifique su petición porque todavía no se ha cumplido el plazo” (154).

The importance of the kitchen to the household again surfaces in the words of Martina. The Manual de los buenos sirvientes from the nineteenth-century, mentions that this space warrants the presence of a special servant at all times, “La cocina requiere una persona dedicada exclusivamente á su cuidado” (53). By remaining in bed, Jerónima reveals her unwillingness to perform the most important of all household responsibilities.

Díez Borque writes that the gracioso in the comedia of the Golden Age was loyal to his master, but that at times, this loyalty resulted from personal interests instead of genuine feelings: “La lealtad es actitud interesada, falsa lisonja en espera de recompensa y, en
esto, la comedia refleja los efectivos componentes en las relaciones sociales amo—
criado, destacando el interés como factor de vinculación social” (245).

55 The Manual de los buenos sirvientes states that the first important trait of a good
servant is, “la obediencia pasiva” (8), or the ability to follow orders without openly
protesting.

56 See Kany 258.

57 Burnett writes that male servants could also be “useful introducing but not necessarily
resolving a number of contemporary preoccupations” (84).

58 Sala Valldaura talks about the kiss between Rita and Francisca as symbolic of master-
servant relationships: “Leandro Fernández de Moratín estaba apuntando la idea política
de la asunción de la civilidad (del individuo como persona libre y respetable en el
conjunto social), y los besos de Paquita y Rita situaban esa asunción en el plano de las
relaciones entre amos y criados” (120); however, he also notes that a more traditional
sign of affection between master and servant in this case would be a hug.

59 See Sala Valldaura, “Ramón de la Cruz” 1654.

60 Mireille Coulon suggests that it was cheaper to stage a sainete than a comedia: “…la
compra de un entremés, un sainete o una tonadilla resultaba mucho menos cara que la de
una comedia, los gastos de decorados, escenificación y vestuario eran menos elevados;
sin contar que los papeles se aprendían más deprisa, el tiempo consagrado a los ensayos
se reducía y los esfuerzos se repartían mejor” (“Estudio preliminar” xi).

61 See Sala Valldaura, “Ramón de la Cruz” 1654.

62 Francisco Lafarga writes in the introduction to his edition of Ramón de la Cruz’s
Sainetes that during Cruz’s the sainete became similar to the entremés, with the only
major difference between the two genres being their placement in the overall spectacle:
“…en la época de Ramón de la Cruz venían a significar lo mismo, con la única diferencia
del lugar que ocupaban en el curso de la función, puesto que el entremés iba entre la
primera y la segunda jornadas (o actos) y el sainete se daba entre ésta y la tercera” (22).

63 See Sala Valldaura, Prólogo LXV-LXXIII.

64 José Luis Canet, in writing about the traditional roles of servants in Spanish theatre,
states, “Respecto a los criados, existen varios grupos. El clásico servus fallax de las
comedias antiguas, criado astuto encargado de realizar las burlas al simple, llegando
algunas veces a recibir también su merecido castigo. Los pajes, por el contrario, suelen
tener una acción accidental en el interior de estos episodios burlescos. Por último, cabe
reseñar la actuación de las criadas. Por una parte está la clásica criada activa al servicio
de la dama, que puede llegar a ser el sujeto agente de la burla del simple; por otra, la
criada cuya actuación es la de simple espectadora de la acción que ocurre a su alrededor” (464).

65 See Lafarga 22.

66 Lafarga notes, “Él cuesta a nueve de plata” 292.

67 The idea transmitted in this scene is that women of the time were very resourceful in altering clothing items. See Haidt, “The Wife” 116

68 Lafarga indicates that charrerías means charros, or uncultured people.

69 See Sarasúa, Criados 90.

70 Rebecca Haidt writes that in the eighteenth-century, “it is indisputable that most women worked with objects (e.g., textiles) whose uses are well documented” (116).

71 Álvarez Barrientos writes, “The final strand of popular theatre is the wealth of small-scale dramatic forms: sainetes (“comic interlude pieces”), fines de fiesta (“end-pieces”), and tonadillas (“sung sketches”), which provide illuminating insights into the ideological struggles in town and country deriving from issues such as the civilizing process, progress, and Enlightenment” (El siglo que llaman ilustrado. 335).

72 In A Companion to Golden Age Theatre, Johnathan Thacker writes that a character’s costume often conveyed meaning on a variety of levels: “Costume, then, including other key markers of status-swords, capes, crowns, spurs, plumed hats, gloves, boots, ribbons, handkerchiefs-was the main visual clue to a character’s status, but, along with ‘stage directions’ implicit in the text, it also helped the audience to pick up hints about the location of a scene, and the time of day being represented” (137).

73 See Peytavy, Christian, “Más sobre Sebastián Vázquez : nuevas obras atribuidas y estado de su producción (1766-1798)”.

74 Bridget Hill points out a similar trend in eighteenth-century England: “During the eighteenth-century-if not before-the old paternalistic relationship between masters and servants was giving way to a stricter contractual one. It happened slowly and at very different times in different areas of the country and different households” (5).

75 Carolyn Steedman points out the popularity of domestic jobs in England from the Industrial Age, “The agreement to serve in a domestic capacity and the contract between man or maid and master or mistress (the moment of hiring) constituted the most common labour agreement of the later eighteenth century” (66).
Caroline Davidson writes, “most domestics came from inferior socio-economic backgrounds to their employers’. They therefore had to make all sorts of cultural adjustments on entering service which, due to their inexperience and minimal education, were far from easy” (165-166).

Sarasúa writes that a servant’s inability to perform at any given moment, no matter how small or unclear the situation, could cost him or her their position and quite possibly a letter of recommendation for future work, “Si el despido se produce porque ha habido una falta, aunque sea tan vaga como que 'andaba muy engreída y respondona', el sirviente no conseguirá una carta de recomendación, requisito casi imprescindible para colocarse de nuevo” (Criados 230).

Jovellanos, in Espectáculos y diversiones públicas, states that the theatre is, “una diversión pública (y) un espectáculo capaz de instruir o extraviar el espíritu, y de perfeccionar o corromper el corazón de los ciudadanos” (198). Portraying a society out of order could therefore run the risk of communicating a dangerous message to the audience, one that is not consistent with the values of the time. In discussion with Professor Haidt, I have learned; however, that tonadillas provide “much more leeway for contempt.” In one discussion, Professor Haidt referred to the tonadilla, Las traperas, where a female servant, upon being discovered by her mistress at a dance wearing her clothes, throws the garments into the street as an act of open defiance. Perhaps the musical nature of the tonadilla allows for more flexibility in displaying levels of insubordination.

Cissie Fairchilds writes that servants were regarded differently in eighteenth-century France: “No longer the ‘adopted child’ of a patriarchal family, he became instead an employee, bound to his employer only by the wage he was paid” (154).

José Nieto, in Artesanos y mercaderes: Una historia social y economía de Madrid (1450-1850), emphasizes the importance of foreign styles in Madrid of that time. France was one of the models to which many Spaniards looked to emulate: “La moda francesa introdujo complicados peinados que obligaban a la ayuda cotidiana de un peluquero. Tener uno particular y sobre todo, francés, que peinara diariamente a la señora de la casa era signo de distinción” (295).

The Manual de los buenos sirvientes: El libro de os amos y el libro de los criados points out that the first important trait of a servant is “la obediencia pasiva” (8), and suggests that servants should be treated fairly but not given complete freedom.

Mireille Coulon points out, “los castigos corporales son más bien escasos en el sainete” (Estudio preliminar xix).
Antonio Domínguez Ortiz writes that the lower classes enjoyed a life that was simple, natural, and void of hierarchical divisions: “…una vida sencilla y natural” (“Hechos y figuras” 237).

See Sarasúa, Criados 84.

Another strong case for this intimacy, both personally and spatially, is the relationship between Ana and Jerónima in Nicolás Fernández de Moratín’s La petitemtra.

The skepticism and distrust masters felt toward their servants often manifested themselves in daily routines. Hugget writes that mistresses in Victorian England often left a coin under the carpet intentionally, to test their servants and see if they were first, cleaning properly, and second, honest about not stealing from the house (111).

Mark Thornton Burnett writes that in English Renaissance Drama masters show a strong desire to maintain distinct social classes and are generally concerned over the upward mobility of servants: “the theatre made manifest both the servant’s dangerous mobility and the concerns of the employing class” (9).

See Sarasúa, Criados 86.

J.M. Sala Valldaura writes that Cruz often contrasted payos and petimetres by having them interact in theatrical works: “Ramón de la Cruz insistirá... en confrontar payos y petimetres, ya sea en un escenario rural, ya en uno urbano” (El payo y la ciudad 116).

Pechoseco means “dry chest,” while Jarapo means, “rag”.

See Sarasúa, Criados 226-227.

Frank Huggett writes that gossip was prevalent amongst domestic servants in Victorian England: “The roots of the servant grapevine were embedded deep in the foundation of each great London house. A fragment of conversation overheard by a footman at the dinner table, or some actual confidence foolishly entrusted by some too ingenuous mistress to her maid, would be carried swiftly downstairs to the kitchen. From there it was transported lovingly up and down the neighbouring area steps by visiting the visiting butterman and butcher to be deposited with that day’s order on the great wooden tables in nearby kitchens, whence it could be disseminated to every part of the house by a word and a wink between the first and the second footman or by a whispered conversation between two under housemaids who shared the same room, and sometimes the same bed, in the cold and draughty attic” (46).

Wall writes that, “Staging Domesticity begins with the inception of English drama in the universities and grammar schools, themselves domestic spaces, in the 1550’s, and concludes with plays presented around the time that professional theatres closed in 1642” (6).
Cissie Fairchilds, in *Domestic Enemies: Servants and Their Masters in Old Regime France*, mentions some of the differences between servants of nobles and servants of the bourgeois in France. According to her, “The lone *servante* in a bourgeois or artisan household might be overworked and bullied, but the domestics of the nobility enjoyed less taxing work and more relaxed discipline than did wither the artisans and peasants of the Old Regime or servants of later periods” (37).

David Ringrose, in *Madrid and the Spanish Economy*, charts that domestics formed 19.9% of the working population in Madrid in 1757, 32.4% in 1787, and 34% by 1857 (93). However, he also acknowledges that the categorization in the censuses is not always clearly defined.

See Sala Valldaura, “Ramón de la Cruz” 1655.

Francisco Lafarga mentions different views regarding the classification of Ramón de la Cruz’s *Sainetes* in the prologue to his edition of these works. The critics mentioned are as follows: 1) J.F. Gatti, who says that the *Sainetes* can be classified as, “*sainetes críticos o satíricos de costumbres, críticos o satíricos de personajes, paródicos, de costumbres teatrales, de circunstancias, polémicos, censorios o de figuras y de asunto folklórico.” 2) E. Palacios, who reduces the number of groups, saying that there are “*sainetes de costumbres sociales* (repartidos entre los de ambiente rural y los de ambiente madrileño)... *sainetes literarios* (teatrales, polémica literaria, etc.)... todos los demás (circunstancias, novelescos, etc.). 3) A.V. Ebersole, who forms a completely different set of categories: “*madrileños, majos y petimetres, payos en Madrid, gente de pueblo en su mismo pueblo, madrileños y forasteros en un grupo, comedias caseras, actores preparando una obra.” (24-5)

Ramón de la Cruz’s *Sainetes* don’t provide the only examples of the presence of servants in society. I have just chosen to focus on Cruz because he was the most prolific and well-known of eighteenth-century *sainetistas*. Sebastian Vásquez, a contemporary of Cruz, includes a variety of characters from popular classes, as well as their behaviors, in the forefront of many of his texts. This pattern occurs most frequently in Vásquez’s *sainetes* that take place in urban environments: “Por lo tanto, en los sainetes urbanos, los verdaderos protagonistas son los abundantes personajes populares, cuyo temperamento depende de la historia y de los actores que los encarnaban.” (Peytavy 20). The titles of Vásquez’s plays also advertise from time to time the types of characters that appear on stage, by including their social position or occupation. Servants, of course, make up a portion of these cases, in titles such as *El almacén de criadas* (1774), *Un criado ser dos a un tiempo* (1777) and *La merienda desgraciada de plumistas y criados* (1782). Vásquez then builds upon this presence of domestics by occasionally providing details concerning their surroundings and actions. For example, there are many references in Vásquez’s *sainetes* to characters of popular classes trying to make money, or swindle others to satisfy their own wants and get ahead. Christian Peytavy writes that, “Por otra parte, hay
una verdadera y generalizada picaresca, de manera que numerosos son los personajes (los criados en cabeza) que se dedican a 

\textit{sisar} dinero o comida a aquellos que los tienen” (20). The end result is another body of dramatic texts that capture the significant presence of servants in society, as well as other characters from working and popular classes.

\textsuperscript{xcix} See Sala Valldaura, Prólogo xciii.

\textsuperscript{c} See Sarasúa, \textit{Criados} 208-209.

\textsuperscript{c\textdegree} Carmen Sarasúa writes, “Las necesidades personales de los miembros de la familia exigían el tiempo y el trabajo de varios criados en las familias ricas. Un caballero o una dama no realizaban por sí mismos ninguna tarea física, ni siquiera las de su arreglo personal” (\textit{Criados} 209).

\textsuperscript{ci} See Sarasúa, \textit{Criados} 57.

\textsuperscript{cii} See Sarasúa, \textit{Criados} 213.

\textsuperscript{ciii} See Sarasúa, \textit{Criados} 105.

\textsuperscript{civ} Although it is unclear as to what type of clothing Simón is wearing in this scene, his mere presence outside of the household would bring more respect and prestige to Don Diego, a point verified by Fairchilds when she writes, “But when they (servants) stepped across the threshold they were often required to don livery and behave as though they were a great lord’s lackeys, for this would reflect prestige upon their employers” (24).

\textsuperscript{cvi} See Sarasúa, \textit{Criados} 213.

\textsuperscript{cv} See Sarasúa, \textit{Criados} 94.

\textsuperscript{cvii} “La actividad cotidiana está interrumpida por las llamadas permanentes, por medio de la campanilla en las casas de la clase media, por medio de un complejo sistema de timbres accionados en las grandes casas, donde de todas formas había suficientes criados como para que alguno estuviese siempre cerca por si se le mandaba algo” (Sarasúa, \textit{Criados} 213).

\textsuperscript{cviii} See Sarasúa, \textit{Criados} 246-247.

\textsuperscript{cx} See Kany xi.

\textsuperscript{cxi} See Haidt, “The Wife, the Maid, and the Woman in the Street” (118).

\textsuperscript{cxii} René Andioc writes that \textit{El sí de las niñas} “se mantuvo veintiséis días seguidos-más que cualquier comedia de magia- y atrajo a más de 37.000 espectadores, cifra equivalente a la cuarta parte de la población adulta de Madrid” (\textit{Teatro y Sociedad} 497).

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Jesús Pérez Magallón identifies several limiting factors in Eighteenth-century Spanish Theatre, “Moratín alude a las extravagancias estilísticas o los excesos temporales y espaciales en la representación como factores que lo impiden” (Teatro completo 29).

Pinciano’s definition of comedy in the Philosophía antigua poética is similar, “imitation of inferior folk, not showing all types of vice but those vices which provoke laughter and ridicule” (qtd. in Carlson: 59).

Kany doesn’t blame the inferior position of Spanish theatre in the eighteenth-century entirely on poorly-trained actors. He also testifies to a lack of props and a generally weak internal structure in Spanish theatre of that time, “Another reprehensible custom is the appearance of actors in sainetes and tonadillas… given in a garb which is not suited to the character to be portrayed. How are we to achieve verisimilitude if in a sainete a green-grocer… a cobbler, a bricklayer, and the like, appear wearing silk stockings, beaver shoes, and jeweled buckles, often with the very insignia of king or general?” (309).

René Andioc states that in 1737 the price of admission for the pit comprised a significant portion of the daily salaries of different types of workers of that time, and increases throughout the century (Teatro 8-9).

Charles Kany describes different sections of the theatre, mentioning its dilapidated condition and typical audience. He describes the theatregoers who sat in the orchestra seats as especially crude, stating that “there was no place in the whole theater where less modesty was observed, and more impudence displayed” (297).

René Andioc writes that, “como buen ilustrado, don Diego conseguirá dominar su pasión y su despecho, casando finalmente a su sobrino, que es también su rival, con la amable doña Francisca” (Teatro 443).

René Andioc writes that because of the importance of his actions, Don Diego is the real protagonist of El sí de las niñas: “Figura más compleja que la de su antecesor don Roque, don Diego es, como hemos de ver, el verdadero protagonista de la obra maestra de Moratín” (Teatro 444).

Moratín’s writes to Godoy, “En resumen, que el teatro es escuela de moralidad, no solo en el ámbito privado sino también en el cívico, y por lo tanto es asunto directamente relacionado con la estabilidad social y el orden público” (qtd. in Carnero: 41).

Carmen Sarasúa describes the unique and complex nature of domestic service, “la extrema variedad de las formas del trabajo urbano no encajaba con el modelo de trabajador asalariado que se supone surge de la industrialización. La demanda de bienes de consumo suntuario que genera la Corte, en un Mercado aún muy pobremente articulado, será satisfecha fundamentalmente por artesanos que trabajan en sus tiendas, a domicilio o en las casas de las grandes familias... Esta organización atomizada y flexible
del trabajo no solamente caracteriza las manufacturas; los servicios (desde la enseñanza al transporte, el lavado y arreglo de ropa, el comercio de todo tipo) son realizados en las casas o en la calle por personas que trabajan sin horarios, sin contratos, ocasionalmente” (Criados xii).

Carmen Sarasúa recognizes the importance of artwork, prints, and photography to this research, “Una última fuente para el estudio del trabajo en general, y del servicio doméstico en particular, la constituyen las imágenes: grabados, pintura y fotografía” (Criados 20). Along these lines, many connections have been made between Goya and Ramón de la Cruz as accurate “painters” of society of this time. However, John Dowling warns against entirely connecting the two, pointing out significant differences between them (46-8).