Mapping the Imagination: Feminine Embodiment in the Novels of Benito Pérez Galdós

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For my parents

Introduction

This dissertation offers a gendered analysis of the spatial imagination in the realist novels of Benito Pérez Galdós (1843-1920) through the critical perspective of contemporary spatial theories. While my project offers a reappraisal of Spanish realist topographies, it privileges the lived spaces of the novels' female protagonists rather than the urban cartography of Madrid itself. Following Henri Lefebvre's dynamic conception of space, I analyze the spatialities embodied by Isidora Rufete, Tristana Reluz, and Benina de Casia, the female protagonists of *La desheredada* (1881), *Tristana* (1892), and *Misericordia* (1897). I argue that these marginalized women unintentionally carve out emancipatory spaces from their everyday, lived realities that enable them to resist normalizing bourgeois discourses, if only temporarily. Through their embodiment of masculine-coded spaces, Galdós' female protagonists reveal the mounting insecurities faced by Restoration Spain in the final decades of the nineteenth century.

In nineteenth-century Spain, the ideal of a stable and well-ordered society struggles against a rebellious reality. A brief look at Spanish history in the nineteenth century reveals decades of political tumult beginning with the Napoleonic invasion in 1808. Admittedly, the Bourbon Restoration in 1874 ushered in an era of relative political stability following *la Septembrina* (the liberal revolution in 1868), the abdication of Amadeo I in 1873, the short-lived First Spanish Republic (1873-1874), and third Carlist Civil War (not to mention the Peninsular War [1808-1814], the despotic reign of Fernando VII [1813-1833] and the two *guerras carlistas* that rocked the peninsula in the first half of the nineteenth-century). The more stable period of Restoration Spain, with its

turno pacífico that fabricated elections to ensure shared power between liberal and conservative governments, was increasingly characterized by corruption and decadence as Spain pushed forward along its difficult path toward modernity. Literary scholars of Galdós generally see the realist author as revealing an increasingly critical attitude toward Restoration government and society in his *novelas contemporáneas*; through the detailed representation of everyday life, the contemporary series—which Labanyi translates as "novels of modernity" ("Modernity" 92)—leaves ample space for both celebration and critique of the hegemonic bourgeois (and predominately urban) culture that accompanied Spain's uneven industrialization and modernization in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The canonical authors of the Spanish realist novel—Leopoldo Alas, Emilia Pardo Bazán and Galdós himself—viewed their fiction as directly involved in the nation-building project taking place in Spain in the second half of the nineteenth century. Jo Labanyi insists on the privileged place of the realist novel in this respect:

> Alas, Galdós, and Pardo Bazán all argued repeatedly that the novel is the serious study of modern society. This is an important statement for what is meant by 'society' is something radically new. If we now take it for granted that the nation is 'a society', allowing us to talk of 'Spanish society' in the singular despite obvious social differences, this is partly due to the realist novel's success in propagating the concept. ("Modernity" 8)

The realist novel explores the deep anxieties that accompany "political, economic, and social modernization" in Spain; significantly, however, Labanyi observes that these texts treat modernity as "an established fact" (4). As a liberal, Galdós himself was far from

opposed to the modernizing processes underlying Spanish progress. Yet through the creation of interconnected communities of characters operating within what I will term Galdós' "real-and-imagined" Madrid, the realist author reveals many of the deep-seated anxieties and contradictions that characterize bourgeois hegemony at the end of the century.

The realist novel and urban spaces are intimately connected, especially in the case of Galdós. Indeed, Leigh Mercer has observed that "urban space and the novel were both class-infused semiotic systems that reflected and shaped the customs of the day" (2). The modern Spanish city as it emerged in the nineteenth-century conformed to the wider European trend already in progress that reformed and revitalized urban centers across the continent:

> Since the mid-nineteenth century, many Spanish urban centers followed the standard set by the great European cities and began to break the geographic limits inherited from the Old Regime. The plans for urban extension developed in the second half of the century were in response to the need to improve the living conditions of the cities, and reflect the existence of well-informed urban elites committed to European urbanizing tendencies. (Cruz 131)

Urban reformation especially transformed Barcelona and Madrid, as both cities adapted to the demands of an increasing urban population, industrialization, growing markets, new technologies and changing politics (132). Despite its uneven implementation and in the case of Madrid, slow development, Jesus Cruz views the proposed extension of urban centers—such as Carlos María de Castro's *Plan de Ensanche de Madrid*, with its

categorizing social function and massive monuments (162)—as evidence of a markedly bourgeois reform that aims to refashion the Spanish city. Urban modernization and bourgeois economic, cultural and political hegemony are thus intimately linked.

Since Foucault's theorization of the carceral city, it has become clear that such modernizing processes are accompanied by normalizing discourses of power. Recent studies of Galdós' novels have fruitfully analyzed the hegemonic bourgeois discourses that construct and sustain the author's depiction of Madrid and regulate the characters within it. Yet little to no attention has been paid to the feminine embodiment of contemporary social and medical discourses; nor has the potential of women to assert their embodied spatialities against disciplinary mechanisms been adequately explored. Following Michel de Certeau's emphasis on the everyday and the liberatory potential of ordinary activities such as walking, I demonstrate that Isidora, Tristana and Benina carve out pockets of resistance through their lived spatialities, even as their bodies are inscribed with discourses of disease and disability.

My first chapter outlines the theoretical framework that will inform my analysis of *La desheredada, Tristana*, and *Misericordia*. Following postmodern geographer Edward Soja, I propose a reading of Galdós' Madrid as a real-and-imagined place, with a fictional existence that problematizes its geographical referent. Following the Lefebvrian definition of my conception of space as dynamic and in process, I describe recent theories of feminist geography that privilege the gendered elements of spatiality. The remaining chapters follow a similar format that reviews the rich critical history each novel has engendered before embarking on a spatial analysis of the text. In addition to a more

theoretical reading of the novels, in each chapter I outline the various contemporary discourses that attempt to inscribe or shape the bodies of the female protagonists.

My second chapter turns to *La desheredada*, a text that Galdós himself considers the inaugurating work of his *novelas contemporáneas*. That is, Galdós sees this novel as representing a break with and new direction from both the *novelas de tesis* and *episodios nacionales* he has written previously. I argue against recent scholarly readings of the novel that view Isidora Rufete's turn to prostitution as emancipatory, because I stress that Madrid's municipal government not only condones but also regulates prostitution in the second half of the nineteenth century. Rather, I posit the consumerist space of the market as a space in which Isidora gains unprecedented if ephemeral autonomy as she engages in a performance of (the aristocratic) class through her embodiment of consumer power. My third chapter turns to one of Galdós' later novels, *Tristana*, and analyzes the eponymous protagonist through the critical lens of disability studies. By positing Tristana as both a feminist and a hysteric, I argue that her body is inscribed with discourses of disability—well before the amputation of her leg—that ultimately delineate Tristana's ambiguous response to her environment. Through my analysis I move beyond the question of the author's ambivalent attitude toward women to read the novel as evidence of the increasing instability of Spanish bourgeois hegemony at the end of the century.

My final chapter reads both the "real" and "imagined" spaces in Galdós' last great realist novel, *Misericordia*. Through an analysis of Benina's movement across the urban landscape, I argue that it is precisely the protagonist's innate spirituality that allows her to carve herself a lived space ultimately unfettered by bourgeois norms championing law and order. Thus while recent criticism of this novel downplays Benina's spirituality to

focus on her material reality and the pervasiveness of Foucauldian systems of control, I demonstrate that Benina's spirituality coupled with her fruitful imagination paradoxically enable her to found an alternative space within the carceral city. I conclude that in their unconscious quest for self-determined embodiment, Isidora, Tristana and Benina each temporarily lay claim to masculine-coded spaces that paradoxically render them exceptional in the eyes of bourgeois society, even as they simultaneously reveal Restoration Spain's keenly felt insecurities and anxieties.

Chapter One

Galdós' Madrid as a Real-and-Imagined Space: Theoretical Framework

> En la familia residen la virtud, el amor puro y la calma del espíritu; en los salones de grande reunión en los espectáculos públicos están el vicio, el oleaje de las pasiones y el incentivo de los deseos puros.
>
> Ángel F. Pulido (1876)

In recent years, studies of space and spatiality have come into vogue, so much so that theorists and scholars across a wide variety of disciplines now refer to a "spatial turn" that may be traced back to the 1960s. Robert T. Tally defines the spatial turn in straightforward terms: "the increased attention to matters of space, place and mapping in literary and cultural studies, as well as in social theory, philosophy and other disciplinary fields" (159). In essence, this critical focus stresses the importance of space in our analyses of human society and culture. Commenting on the inextricable link between sociality and spatiality, feminist geographer Doreen Massey describes the growing interdisciplinary nature of geography in the latter half of the twentieth century:

> To the aphorism of the 1970s—that space is socially constructed—was added in the 1980s the other side of the coin: that the social is spatially constructed too […] In its broadest formulation, society is necessarily constructed spatially and that fact – the spatial organization of society – makes a difference to how it works. (422)

Speaking from the perspective of literary and cultural studies, Barney Warf and Santa Arias in their explanation of the spatial turn express a comparable view of space as "a social construction relevant to the understanding of different histories of human subjects and to the production of cultural phenomena" (1).

For geographer Denis Cosgrove, who has been credited with coining the term "spatial turn" (Warf et al. 1), contemporary interest in spatiality has ties to concurrent theoretical movements:

> A widely acknowledged 'spatial turn' across arts and sciences corresponds to post-structuralist agnosticism about both naturalistic and universal explanations and about single-voiced historical narratives, and to the concomitant recognition that position and context are centrally and inescapably implicated in all constructions of knowledge. (7)

In the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries time gained precedence over space: as is well known history was viewed as a linear march toward progress while space was relegated to a static, non-influential position. Today, however, such a prioritization of time over space—the nineteenth-century obsession with history, as Michel Foucault saw it ("Of Other Spaces" 22)—is considered anachronistic unless space enters into the equation. For Foucault, ours is an "epoch of space". He continues: "We are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed" (22). Nor is space subjugated to language, as Kathleen James-Chakraborty and Sabine Strumper-Krobb have observed. Without dismissing the importance of language to the construction of meaning, they argue, space positions itself as an equally important part of the equation (1). To return to Massey's assessment: "'Space' is very much on the

agenda these days" (249). While she writes in the mid-nineties, Routledge's 2009 New Critical Idiom series on spatiality suggests that scholarly preoccupation with space is far from a passing fad.

Yet "space" as a concept or designating term is inherently problematic. For one, as Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift note in their anthology of essays entitled *Thinking Space* (2000) different disciplines "do space differently"; they argue that in literary theory, "space is often a kind of textual operator, used to shift registers" (1). Yet their book, which contains essays on the spatial thought of social theorists from Walter Benjamin and Georg Simmel to Pierre Bourdieu and Edward Said, effectively demonstrates the sheer variety of critical thought that the practice of "thinking space" produces. That is, we can offer no stable definition of space or spatiality; rather, following Crang and Thrift—themselves cultural geographers—it seems useful to talk about different types, or "species" of spaces. Thus Crang and Thrift outline spaces of language, spaces of self and other, metonymic spaces, agitated spaces, spaces of experience, and spaces of writing (1-25). Similarly, in his 2004 book on urban space in King Felipe IV's Madrid, Enrique García Santo-Tomás outlines "*espacios de subversión, espacios femeninos* o *espacios de escritura*" (9, his emphasis) as examples of oft-used spatial categories.

Despite the difficulties involved in establishing a stable definition of space, however, I follow in my dissertation the dynamic conception of space first ideated by Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre's description of space is predominately urban and intimately concerned with the practices of everyday life. Santo-Tomás expresses a widely-felt sentiment among spatial scholars when he writes, "lo cierto es que con Lefebvre…se inició una forma completamente nueva de ver el concepto del espacio, a partir de ideas

que han influido posteriormente en los estudios sobre la ciudad moderna por parte de sociólogos y urbanistas de ambos lados del Atlántico" (10). Despite the widely-recognized influence of Lefebvre's thought on contemporary spatial theories, many of his works have still not been translated into English, although in the past decade this has slowly begun to change. The first chapter of Benjamin Fraser's *Henri Lefebvre and the Spanish Urban Experience* (2011) contains an excellent summary and explanation of Lefebvre's theory as expressed over his many philosophical works. Fraser condenses (and necessarily simplifies) the French philosopher's thought around five "key concepts" (7): a critique of static space; a critique of modern urban planning; a critique of knowledge; a critique of alienation in everyday life; and an emphasis on "movement and method" mapped out in Lefebvre's last work, *Rhythmanalysis* (2006 [1992]). The central idea of *Rhythmanalysis* builds on his theory of urban spatiality put forth in *The Production of Space* (1974, [1991]) namely, that "the urban phenomenon 'is made manifest as movement'" (Fraser 29, citing Lefebvre, "Rythmanalysis" 174).

Lefebvrian scholars Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas argue that one of the defining characteristics of Henri Lefebvre's thought in general is his ability to transcend the strictly theoretical and anchor his analysis in everyday reality (9); they report that "the everyday was a concept which Lefebvre considered to be his major contribution to Marxism" (5). The concentration on urban analysis in his work reflects the belief that the city "expressed and symbolized a person's being and consciousness" (as opposed to Heidegger, who privileges the home in this respect) (7-8). Lefebvre's corpus of theory is not only immense but also complicated. As Fraser states, "If modern urban life is complex, and likewise if traditional theories and static explanations of it are insufficient,

then only a complex and interdisciplinary method will be of use in understanding everyday life in the city" (4). For our purposes however, an understanding of the key concepts of one of his most well-known works, *The Production of Space* will suffice. This work is of fundamental importance not only for its rich content but also because of the influence Lefebvre's thought has exerted on the subsequent spatial theories outlined in the present chapter.

The thrust behind the arguments presented in *The Production of Space* is Lefebvre's desire to unmask our everyday experience of space as abstract and static in order to reveal the dynamism and mobility inherent in the urban experience. Following Marx, Lefebvre asserts that every mode of production produces a particular social space (46) via the specific set of social relations endemic to that mode of production (31-32). Social space is therefore a social product (26) in that not only does society produce space, but space also configures society. This fact is concealed, however, in urban spaces that characterize the nineteenth-century industrial city and its capitalist mode of production (27). In this context, space is made to appear passive, abstract, and reified; we are thought to exist in a stable, well-defined and passive space. Lefebvre's aim, however, is to "decode" this particular "signification" of space (17) in order to demonstrate that space, as a social product, is above all relational: "any space implies, contains and dissimulates social relationships – and this despite the fact that a space is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things (objects and products)" (82-83). As Fraser explains, "space is not a mere thing for Lefebvre, but a process" (12), that is, a productive product.

Since Lefebvre, geographers in particular have insisted on approaching space in such dynamic rather than static terms.[1] As I approach Galdós' works in this dissertation, my own conception of literary space has been heavily influenced by the postmodern geographer Edward Soja, whose thinking is largely indebted to Lefebvre. Widely considered one of the instigators of the spatial turn, Soja's influential books include *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (1996) and *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* (2000). In his own words, Soja's scholarship is, "insistently spatial, informed, motivated, and inspired by a critical spatial perspective" (Soja, "Taking Space Personally" 11). While the term "postmodern geographer" may seem somewhat vague, it merely encompasses the idea of doing geography in today's preeminently postmodern world. Gone are the days of innocent mapping; the very concept of fixed representation seems naive if not utopic; modernist conviction of fixed spatiality has been replaced by a concept of spatial flow (Cosgrove 5). Soja's thought expands far beyond the role assigned to the map-making (modernist) geographer as demonstrated by his advocacy for the broad "reassertion of a critical spatial perspective in contemporary social theory and analysis" in general ("Postmodern Geographies" 1). In short, this geographer, like Lefebvre, would do away with the notion of space as an innocent backdrop. Rather, he posits space itself as a causal force to be reckoned with, capable not only of influencing history but also of making it.

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[1] Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift in Great Britain lead the growing discipline of cultural geography while contemporary geographers in the United States (most notably David Harvey and Edward Soja) self-identify as postmodern geographers. For excellent outlines of the major players in contemporary spatial theory, see the preface to Santo-Tomás' *Espacio urbano y creación literaria en el Madrid de Felipe IV*, the introduction to Crang and Thrift's *Thinking Space*, and Tally's New Critical Idiom Series, *Spatiality*.

Soja insists on the largely ignored epistemological status of spatiality, which in his theory enjoys an elevated position alongside historical (temporal) and social imaginations, all three of which are necessary to make sense of our increasingly globalized, postmodern and postcapitalistic world. He comments in the introduction to *Thirdspace*:

> As we approach the *fin de siècle,* there is a growing awareness of the simultaneity and interwoven complexity of the social, the historical, and the spatial, their inseparability and interdependence. And this three-sided sensibility of spatiality-historical-sociality is not only bringing about a profound change in the ways we think about space, it is also beginning to lead to major revisions in how we study history and society. (3)

As I have suggested, Soja's theory of space is anything but narrow. Taking as an example the controversy perpetuated by proponents and critics of what he terms radical postmodernism, Soja attempts to provide an alternative to "either/or" logic generally.[2] Instead, Soja proposes a "both/and also" logic that he views as an invitation to "enter a space…of critical exchange where the geographical imagination can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered…incompatible, uncombinable" (5).

Three thus becomes the key number in Soja's thinking, facilitating an alternative restructuring of binary logic that opens the doors of seemingly closed debates to new

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[2] By radical postmodernism, Soja refers to what he terms the "postmodern epistemological critique of modernism"; he seems to have in mind particularly the critique of master narratives and hegemonic discourses. According to Soja, this sharply divides scholars into two camps, those who would defend the tenets of modernism and humanism from what they view as postmodern relativism, and those who gleefully celebrate the end of modernism and its movements (3-4).

possibilities. Soja calls this critical strategy "thirding-as-Othering", a response to all binarism by "interjecting an-Other set of choices" (5), such as the interjection of spatiality into the historical-sociological imaginations. Thus if a "Firstspace" perspective analyzes the material world and "Secondspace" considers its imagined representation, "Thirdspace" represents their intersection (or what Soja would term their "multiplicity"), a space of *"*real-and-imagined*"* places (6). Thirdspace is perhaps more satisfactorily defined in Soja's later discussion of the "trialectics of spatiality" (that is, the historical-social-spatial trialectic he proposes):

> *Everything* comes together in Thirdspace: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and unconsciousness, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history. (56-57)

The critical spatial imagination thus envisioned opens up worlds of possibility for thinking about the relations (no longer static) between the center and the periphery, master and marginalized narratives, simulacra (or hyper/cyber/realism) and (the vestiges of) reality, and between fiction, history and reality ("Thirdspace" 31).

While Soja's spatial theory is explicitly invoked in my discussion of *Misericordia*, his paradoxical concept of "real-and-imagined" space has informed my approach to Galdós' Madrid throughout the dissertation. As William Risley reminds us, realism in the nineteenth-century novel constitutes creation rather than rote mimesis:

> Traditional notions about *costumbrista* material contained in the novel, or about how well and accurately the external world and social environment

> of a given period were "mirrored" or "reproduced" by an author, have given way to an *artistic* assessment: of how skillfully realist fiction actually *created* a world. (113, his emphasis)

The web of characters that populate the Madrid of Galdós' novels—and even the urban spaces of Madrid itself—constitute a literary and therefore imagined world that is nevertheless indelibly linked to reality. Galdós himself alludes to what I want to call the real-and-imagined spaces of the *novelas contemporáneas* in his famous speech to the *Real Academia,* "La sociedad presente como material novelable" in 1897:

> Se puede tratar de la Novela de dos maneras: o estudiando la imagen representada por el artista, que es lo mismo que examinar cuantas novelas enriquecen la literatura de uno y otro país, o estudiar la vida misma, de donde el artista saca las ficciones que nos instruyen y embelesan. (94)

Throughout my dissertation, then, I complement my literary-spatial analysis with nineteenth-century and *fin de siglo* social, medical and hygienic discourses that reflect the historical reality that inspire Galdós' novels. By viewing space in *La desheredada, Tristana* and *Misericordia* as real-and-imagined, we might transform these novels into "thirdspaces" that shed light on the fundamentally problematic and even paradoxical spaces that constitute the Madrid of Restoration Spain.

In his book *Geocriticism, Real and Fictional Spaces* (2011, [2007]), French theorist Bertrand Westphal examines the relationship between arts, literature and "human spaces" (6). Specifically, the geocritical approach proposed by Westphal would examine the various representations (real and fictional) of a particular geographical space (such as the "the desert" or "London") throughout a wide variety of mimetic mediums (literary or

otherwise, Westphal insists that the spatial analysis be "multifocalized" (18) although the vast majority of his examples are, as I have mentioned, literary). For this critic all art, no matter how abstract, is mimetic, that is, inspired by and fundamentally grounded in reality (84). An example of a geocritical approach to nineteenth-century Spain then would perhaps take Madrid, or Barcelona, as the subject of study. One would then examine all of the artistic representations of Madrid within an arbitrary time period, be they in literature, art, periodicals, or music to analyze (blur, blow up) the interface between the real and the imagined (the fictional) in spatial terms.

I do not in this dissertation intend to perform a geocritical analysis of Madrid, at least not as Westphal would have it; such an undertaking would be simultaneously too narrow theoretically and too broad textually.[3] Nevertheless, I have found several aspects of Westphal's theory useful in grappling with the idea of Galdós' Madrid as a real-and-imagined space.[4] Particularly appealing is Westphal's insistence on the worthwhile pursuit of referentiality (as opposed, for example, to Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacra that completely abandons the relationship between "real" and "referent") while simultaneously recognizing its ultimate impossibility. Westphal states that if the relationship between "represented" and "real" space is assumed to be indeterminate, then "rather than considering a spatial or spatialtemporal representation as not really 'real'…we view every representation as referring to a broadly imagined reality that, in

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[3] In his aforementioned introductory book on spatiality, Tally (who translates Westphal's work into English) conceives of geocriticism much more broadly, as a wider category of theoretical approaches to literature and culture that are spatial in approach. In this sense, then, this project is in fact geocritical in nature.

[4] Tally himself relates Westphal's theory to Soja's work by arguing that Westphal's proposed course of analysis allows for an even deeper exploration of the "real-and-imagined" place (xi).

and through its extreme extension, is subject to a weak ontology" (37). This, I think, is especially true of Galdós' Madrid and the characters—and spaces—that bring it to life.

Westphal also posits what he terms a "stratigraphic vision" of space (137), in which space is perceived as consisting of various heterogenic (and always dynamic) layers at every synchronic point (138): "Geocriticism emphasizes that the actuality of human spaces is disparate, that their present is subject to an ensemble of asynchronous rhythms that make their representation complex or, if ignored, overly simplistic" (139).[5] This is especially true of an urban space—such as Madrid, for example; the city is "a composite of multiple worlds" that Westphal compares to Borges' bifurcating paths. Finally, geocriticism argues that fiction allows us to better understand "real" places in much the same way as the "real" referent allow us to understand fictional spaces (x). This is true in the case of Galdós' Madrid and its historical (geographical) referent, as well as the social relations that produce both the textual and imagined spaces of the novels.

After all, as Roland Barthes reminds us, it is possible to read the city. In his essay "Semiology and the Urban" (based on a lecture from May 1967), Barthes reflects on what might constitute an "urban semiotics" (159), if such a thing were possible to define or decode. While urban space is "signifying in nature" (159) the by now post-structuralist Barthes posits that no direct relation exists between signified and signifier. In fact, certain urban aspects—such as the center of the city—may best be described as an "empty signified" (162): that which signifies an urban center refers more to the image a society possesses of the center rather than the geographical space itself. Barthes describes the city

[5] Here Westphal reveals the influence of Henri Lefebvre's philosophy on his thought.

itself as a discourse: "The city is a discourse and this discourse is truly a language: the city speaks to its inhabitants, we speak our city, the city where we are, simply by living it, by wandering through it, by looking at it" (160). In my own analysis of the spatial experiences of Galdós' protagonists, I view Isidora, Tristana and Benina as individuals who read the city on a daily basis, often in very different ways.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, considerable scholarship analyzes the role of space in realist novels in particular. Yet none of these conceives of spatiality in a post-Lefebvrian manner. The two most ambitious projects that analyze spatiality in realist novels are María Teresa Zubiaurre's *El espacio en la novela realista* (2000) and Rosa Mucignat's *Realism and Space in the Novel, 1795-1869* (2013). In both cases, each scholar defines and elaborates at great length their own methodology for investigating the function of space in the realist works they consider, suggesting both the importance they place on spatial imagination as well as the relative lack of cohesion characterizing past approaches to the subject. As Zubiaurre explains in her introduction: "Aunque se ha escrito con alguna abundancia sobre la función del espacio en la novela y en otros géneros narrativos, se echaba de menos una metodología que aglutinara y organizase los distintos enfoques" (11). For her, the role of space in the novel should not be oversimplified because, "el paisaje esconde una serie de complejas implicaciones ideológicas, culturales, antropológicas y estéticas" (13).

Thirteen years later, Mucignat (who does not appear to have read Zubiaurre) insists even more strongly on the fundamental importance of spatial imagination in a consideration of the realist aesthetic:

> [T]he rise of the realist novel between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the crucial element of space, which, in its role as organizing framework, has a significant impact on all the other aspects of style, character, time and engagement with the social context. (1)

Citing Gerard Genette's claim that the 'diegetic function' (that is, narrative telling) of description increases in European realist novels, Mucignat argues that the description of space is of particular diegetic importance, that is, "space forms the framework that, together with time, structures the plot and determines who characters are and how they behave" (5). The role of space in the realist novel thus differs markedly from the function assigned to it in earlier literary genres, such as folktales or romances. While her analysis focuses exclusively on British and French realist traditions, Mucignat's recognition of the critical role of space clearly extends to the Spanish realist tradition. One need only imagine the vivid materiality of Galdós' Madrid to conclude that, as in the case of Austen's *Mansfield Park* and Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* (Mucignat's own examples), space in the Spanish realist novel also "provid[es] an imagined geography with the appearance of concrete existence" (7). While the importance of spatial imagination in the realization of any novel may seem rather intuitive, Mucignat's sophisticated study persuasively demonstrates why an investigation of textual space is especially integral to the study of literary realism.[6]

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[6] Both Zubiaurre and Mucignat use the idea of the chronotope as a springboard for their investigations of spatiality in the realist novel. Zubiaurre's study considers both European and Latin American realist literary traditions and examines in particular the repeated spatial *topoi* present in such novels (such as gardens, windows and *boudoirs*). Mucignat investigates the "narrativization" of space in French and British realist novels through an

Two other recent critical works that reconsider the representation of geographical space in the realist literary tradition are Robert Alter's *Imagined Cities* (2005) and Tanya Agathocleous' *Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (2011). In the former, Alter reconsiders the relationship of the rapidly growing European city of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries with the seminal urban novels written during that time period. He argues that authors as seemingly diverse as Flaubert and Kafka, Dickens and Joyce create what he terms "experiential realism" "as a searching response to the new felt reality of the European city", in which "the perception of the fundamental categories of time and space, the boundaries of the self, and the autonomy of the individual begin to change" (xi). Focusing exclusively on nineteenth-century urban writing, meanwhile, Agathocleous in her book reexamines the novelistic portrayal of Victorian London (2011).[7]

Literary realist space also surfaces as a contemporary preoccupation in Spanish literary criticism, perhaps most notably in *Espacios y discursos en la novel española del realismo a la actualidad* (2007), a collection of essays edited by Wolfgang Matzat and compiled to demonstrate that "la constitución del espacio novelesco puede entrar en un diálogo polifacético con los discursos socio culturales contemporáneos" (Matzat 8).[8] Edward Baker's *Materiales para escribir Madrid: Literatura y espacio de Moratín a*

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examination of what she terms the "three fundamental qualities of narrative space" (2): visibility, depth, and movement.

[7] Although she does not consider it as such, Agathocleous' project corresponds to the type of geocritical analysis posited by Westphal.

[8] In his introduction, Matzat establishes the theoretical framework of the collection of essays with references to Bahktin's theory of the chronotope as well as Yuri Lotman's theory of literary space, which posits that "los espacios literarios representan determinados modelos culturales a través de las oposiciones espaciales que estructuran el mundo ficticio" (7). I mention Matzat's reference to Yuri Lotman because Lotman's thought is also influential in the methodologies put forth by Zubiaurre and Mucignat.

Galdós analyzes different Madrilenian cultural spaces as they appear in various nineteenth-century texts; of most particular interest to this project is his analysis of the café as it appears in Galdós's *La Fontana de Oro* (1870). Focusing on Spanish urban novels written between 1845 and 1925, meanwhile, Leigh Mercer's excellent *Urbanism and Urbanity* (2013) examines what she calls the "interplay of realism and reality in modern Spain" by focusing on the "illusion of space" (1) produced in realist novels. More specifically, she examines the literary representations of public spaces (such as the museum, the theater, the stock market, and the casino) to explore the ways in which urban discourses in fictional texts reflect and illuminate the preoccupations of the growing Spanish bourgeoisie.

In analyzing the real-and-imagined spaces of Galdós' Madrid, my dissertation privileges the gendered spatial experiences of the female protagonists. Of course, "gender" can be as loaded a term as "space"; as Judith Butler reminds us, the word "gender" itself connotes "a certain sense of trouble" (vii). My understanding of gender follows that outlined by Catherine Jagoe in her introduction to *La mujer en los discursos de género* (1998), in which both "gender" and "sex" are socially constructed concepts ("Introduction" 17). In thinking about gender in my analysis, I have found it useful to follow Judith Butler's concept of "gender performance", which argues that gender is not innate but rather a learned characteristic that corresponds to societal expectations:

> [A]cts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body…Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are

> *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. (136, her emphasis)

As I argue in my chapter on *La desheredada*, Butler's formulation of "performance" also seems useful when thinking about issues of class and class identity as well. Rita Felski helpfully formulates the concept of gender in terms of process: "Gender is continually in process, an identity that is performed and actualized over time within given social constraints" ("Gender" 21). In this sense, we might conceive of both gender and space (following Lefebvre) as dynamic processes in constant production.

Felski argues persuasively in *The Gender of Modernity* (1995) that "gender symbolism" pervades our construction of historical and cultural discourses. This is particularly the case of the modern European imagination at the turn of the nineteenth century (1). Indeed, images of masculinity saturate the central symbols of nineteenth-century modernity—"the public sphere, the man of the crowd, the stranger, the dandy, the flâneur"—while cotemporaneous women-coded spaces often hark back to the Romantic ideal of the feminine: "woman embodied a sphere of atemporal authenticity untouched by the alienation and fragmentation of modern life" (16). In vindicating the so-called "feminine" experience of modernity, however, Felski warns against creating a "counter-myth of emblematic femininity" that assumes that "the history of women can be subsumed and symbolized by a single, all-encompassing image of femininity" (7).

Indeed, Isidora, Benina and Tristana embody very different images of femininity; their spatial experiences, as we shall see, clearly deviate from contemporary normative discourses that relegate women to the private, domestic sphere. Indeed, Lou Charnon-Deutsch observes that, "the nineteenth century is one of the favored test periods feminism

uses to confront patriarchal values because the ideologies of gender are so heavily inscribed in its discourses and because…it is a century of such great sexual polarization" ("Gender and Representation" xiii). Teresa Peris Fuentes in *Visions of Filth: Deviancy and Social Control in the Novels of Galdós* (2003) and Akiko Tsuchiya in *Marginal Subjects: Gender and Deviance in Fin-de-Siècle Spain* (2011) both demonstrate that "social deviancy is a crucial aspect of Galdós' work" (Peris Fuentes 1) that in his novels is often linked to gender. In this dissertation, I follow Peris Fuentes' definition of deviancy as "behavior that is seen to be diverging, or deviating, from the accepted social norm and is therefore considered in need of regulation or control" (1).

In analyzing the lived spatialities of Galdós' protagonists, then, I often refer to hegemonic bourgeois discourses that are invariably gendered masculine. While it would be absurd to deny the patriarchal nature of Restoration Spain's society and its dominant middle-class[9], I do not wish to naively assume a reified, singular view of nineteenth-century masculinity.[10] Yet in his introduction to the second edition of *Masculinities* (2005), R.W. Connell reaffirms the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" as "necessary if theories of masculinity are to connect with wider theories of gender and are to have any grip on practical issues" (xviii). Following Toril Moi's emphasis on the importance of elaborating feminist theories capable of enacting meaningful change (ix), it seems to me that the use of generalizing terms such as "masculine bourgeois hegemony" is necessary

[9] Following Jesus Cruz in *The Rise of Middle-Class Culture in Nineteenth-Century Spain* (2011), I use the terms "Spanish middle class" and "Spanish bourgeoisie" interchangeably (7-9) throughout my dissertation.

[10]See R. W. Connell's groundbreaking work on masculinities (1995), which engendered more research on the subject. Within my own field, Collin McKinney is doing interesting work on nineteenth-century masculinities. See for example his recent article "Enemigos de la virilidad: Sexo, masturbación, y continencia en la España decimonónica" (2014).

in order to effectively analyze the spatial experiences of women (in this case, Galdós' female protagonists) repressed by such systems. Moi further rescues the term "woman" for feminist use by following Wittgenstein's argument that "in most cases, the meaning of a word is its use in language" (viii). Thus she argues that feminist theories may use the word "woman" without a philosophical commitment to metaphysics or essentialism (7).

After all, it is well-known that women have a strong presence in Galdós' novels. The centrality of women in Galdós' works is aptly summarized by Catherine Jagoe:

> The importance of women in Galdós's novels, as in his life, has become something of a truism. He has acquired the reputation as the creator of more "strong women" characters than perhaps any other author in Peninsular fiction. […] Galdós named a large proportion of these novels after women and located the exploration of the relation between subjectivity and society that is so characteristic of his work primarily in feminine rather than masculine experience. As Susan Kirkpatrick comments, it is "Galdós's female protagonists who embody for him the most poignant contradictions of consciousness and the world". ("Ambiguous" 2)

Throughout *Ambiguous Angels: Gender in the Novels of Galdós* (1994), Jagoe demonstrates the complex depiction of Galdós' female characters, all of whom are imbued with multiple, sometimes conflicting, and often hidden (at least to the twentieth-century reader) ideologies of gender that constitute the complicated gender discourses of nineteenth-century Spain.

The nature of women and her domestic mission—*la cuestión femenina*—are obsessively debated throughout nineteenth-century Spain into the turn of the century. Jagoe describes the controversial woman issue:

> Era un tema que fascinaba y preocupaba a su vez una abigarrada multitud de ambos sexos: alienistas, higienistas, religiosos, políticos, filósofos, docentes, sociólogos, literatos y literatas, conservadores y radicales, periodistas, y novelistas. ("Misión" 23)

Although more reactionary treatises on women resurrect the traditional misogynist position that define women as inferior versions of men and inculpate them for humankind's sinful nature—a clear return to the Biblical fall originating with Eve—the majority of nineteenth-century commentators view women in more positive terms ("Misión" 26). While fundamentally different, women are not necessarily inferior to men; rather they are increasingly thought of as man's complement (29). While men are associated with "razón, objetividad, cabeza, creatividad, agresividad y ambición", women demonstrate "sensibilidad, subjetividad, el corazón, las emociones, el mimetismo, y el amor altruista" (30). Perhaps unsurprisingly, these characteristics are derived from essentialist views of the respective natures of men and women. Through repeated references to biological determinism, contemporary texts delineating gendered differences define and defend "el papel de la mujer"—woman's domestic and redemptive functions—via scientific positivism (28).

Throughout the nineteenth century, the idealized image of *el ángel del hogar* begins to consolidate in Spanish texts theorizing the feminine (Blanco, "Virtuosas" 12). The angel of the hearth, extremely virtuous and above all domestic, flawlessly carries out

what contemporary writer Ángela Grassi calls her "misión santa" (55): that of marriage, maternity, and domesticity (Jagoe, "Misión" 24). An ideological construction (Aldaraca 27), *el ángel del hogar* nevertheless becomes "la norma para el comportamiento femenino" (Blanco "Virtuosas" 12) from the reign of Isabel II (1833-1868) onward. Above all else, she possesses great quantities of moral virtue that in some accounts renders her superior to her male counterpart precisely "por su abnegación y su capacidad para amar, perdonar y consolar" (Jagoe, "Misión" 26). While the angelic paradigm continues to define women in relation to the needs of men, Jagoe notes that "estas necesidades masculinas ahora por primera vez son morales y no simplemente materiales, reproductivas y sexuales" (31). Evidently, women under this model are further defined with relation to the family; contemporary commentators especially glorify the *ángel*'s maternal role. In his essay *La mujer* (1865), Fransisco Alonso y Rubio defines the woman's *razón de ser*:

> El destino de la mujer es […] embellecer y sembrar de flores el árido camino de la vida del hombre, formar el corazón de los hijos, y ser el ángel tutelar de todos los desdichados que demandan a la sociedad consuelo, amparo y protección. (67)

Thus the abnegated *ángel del hogar* cares tirelessly for her children and husband, who in turn come to embody her virtuous example (Aldaraca 66).

The idealized *ángel* is, as we have seen, clearly delegated to the private, domestic sphere. Critics agree that the rhetorical separation of gendered roles into public and private spheres in nineteenth-century Spain directly results from the growing power of the bourgeoisie (Jagoe, "Misión" 34; Aldaraca 19; Blanco "Virtuosas"), which as a class

defends its right to economic and social hegemony on the basis of its superior moral virtue (Jagoe; "Misión 26). Jagoe explains, "la obsesión burguesa con la moralidad se centraba en la mujer: era ella la que, desde el hogar, representaba y garantizaba la moralidad" (27). Accordingly, women operate within the confines of the home, creating a domestic space reflective of her moral purity. In fact, contemporary domestic discourses often describe this private sphere in spiritual rather than material terms (Aldaraca 58). Men, for their part, pertain to the dangerous public sphere of materialism and egoism that characterizes Spain's growing capitalist economy (56). Thus the purified space of the home acts as a masculine refuge from corruptive outside influences (for which men are not held responsible). Through their angelic example, women provide spiritual support for their husband and children (57).

Much like the *ángel del hogar* motif, the reified separation of spheres results in an image of femininity alienated from modernity: "by being positioned outside the dehumanizing structures of the capitalist economy as well as the rigorous demands of public life, woman became a symbol of nonalienated, and hence, nonmodern, identity" (Felski 18). Furthermore, the expectations engendered by angelic discourses of domesticity become increasingly paradoxical as women find themselves aspiring to often contradictory ideals. Aldaraca, for example, demonstrates that while masculine-public and feminine-private spaces are complementary and interdependent in theory, in practice the spheres of influence "are more often depicted as antagonistic and mutually exclusive" (57). In reality, women also do not confine their activities only to domestic tasks; many increasingly participate in financial transactions or even physical labor especially in support of family businesses (Jagoe, "Misión" 33).

Accordingly, feminine "conducta angélica", though innate to women's nature, also comes to be viewed as a product of educational formation (36). The issue of women's education is intensely debated in Spain throughout the final decades of the nineteenth century. In the 1880s, as women begin (extremely gradually) to gain access to formal education traditionally reserved for men (Jagoe, "Enseñanza" 127), most nineteenth-century social commentators prefer *educación* for women as opposed to rational *instrucción*.[11] Such "educación" entails a basic moral-religious formation in order to produce good wives and mothers (109). Even those who defend *la mujer burguesa ilustrada* do so on the grounds that literacy enhances women's ability to perform their maternal duty (127). As Concepción Gimeno de Flaquer writes in 1886: "una mujer ilustrada hace más suave y fácil la vida del hogar" (cited in Aldaraca 70).[12]

While the separation of public and private spheres was "not as fixed as [it] appeared" (Felski 19)—as, we shall see, Galdós' female protagonists often demonstrate—nineteenth-century discourses of domesticity in Spain clearly indicate the fundamentally spatialized nature of bourgeois conceptions of femininity. In their book *Putting Women in Place: Feminist Geographers Make Sense of the World* (2001), Mona Domosh and Joni Seager emphasize that even the most ordinary physical and abstract spaces around us are indelibly linked to gender. They outline three key assumptions that they hold as feminist geographers:

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[11] In the words of Severo Catalina, who writes in 1858, "Eduquemos a las mujeres, e instruyámoslas después, si queda tiempo" (59).

[12] Emilia Pardo Bazán becomes the first woman to defend a woman's right to rational education for her own benefit (Jagoe, "Enseñanza" 108).

> 1) That the design and use of our built environment is determined in part by assumptions about gender roles and relations—or, as we like to say, that space is gendered;
>
> 2) that spatial organization and relations are not simply a neutral backdrop for human dramas, but instead help to shape them; [once again, we have the idea of space as existing not as an empty vacuum but rather as a dynamic process]
>
> 3) that gender is an important interpretative lens that influences human relationships to and perceptions of both built and natural environments. (xxi)

Tally summarizes the primary aims of feminist geography as a field: "to make visible the hitherto undisclosed gendering of spaces, while also establishing a revisionary critique of the power/knowledge relations of male-dominated social formations" (132). As I examine the spatial experiences of Galdós' female protagonists—both how their lived environment affects them and how they affect their lived environment—the theories put forth by feminist geographers will be important to my analysis.

In her landmark book *Feminism and Geography* (1994), Gillian Rose demonstrates that geography, as a traditionally male-dominated field, has for the most part been content to leave feminist issues to the side. In doing so, challenging but crucial questions of what counts as geographical knowledge—and who produces it—remain not only unanswered but also unasked. Thus geography has tended to condone if not disguise assumptions of gendered behavior while focusing exclusively on "spaces, places, and landscapes" conceived as masculine (12). Rose identifies two types of masculinity

inherent to the traditional practice of geography. First, "social scientific" masculinity "asserts its authority by claiming access to a transparently real geographical world" (24). The issue is that such a discourse claims total knowledge of that which is "Other", that is, of "Woman". Secondly, Rose identifies "aesthetic masculinity", which, in recognizing the existence of the "Other", claims an exclusive right to speak for and on behalf of that "Other" (25). In both cases, women (and marginalized groups in general) are sidelined, stripped of voice and agency.

In her own collection of essays, *Space, Place, and Gender* (1994), feminist geographer Doreen Massey similarly argues that gender should be reinserted into investigations of space and place. Where traditional (masculine) geography privileges social and especially class relations when conceptualizing space, Massey argues that gender should also be taken as an integral part of spatial analysis (1). Conversely, geography itself affects the construction of gender as well as gender relations; gender is "a significant element in the production and reproduction of both imaginative geographies and uneven development" (2). As a way to move forward, Gillian Rose argues that feminist geography ought to employ various "strategies of resistance" (25) that question and critique the existing norms and structures of spatial representation. Neither Rose nor Massey dismiss concerns of masculinity nor the advances of traditional geography; as Massey puts it, "The aim…is not to substitute a 'feminine' view for a 'masculine' one…but rather to problematize the whole business" (13). Rose concurs that exclusion is not the goal. Rather, feminist geographers "imagine a geography based not on exclusion of a mode of knowing that is dependent on a relationship of dominance between Same and Other, but on an acknowledgement of difference" (32).

Massey additionally criticizes Edward Soja's 1989 book, *Postmodern Geographies* in a way that resonates with Rose's own critique of masculinized geography. In Massey's view, Soja adopts a privileged viewpoint that establishes his own authority (power or discourse) as purveyor of geographical knowledge. While the representation of space and place is decidedly problematic, she argues, Soja's stance "ignores the major debates about the difficulties of such an approach" (224). Where Soja claims in *Postmodern Geographies* that "critical human geography must be attuned to the emancipatory struggles of all those who are peripheralized and oppressed by the specific geography of capitalism" (74, cited in Massey 220), Massey argues that it is simply naïve to believe that blacklisting one culprit—capitalism—will solve the problems of the marginalized, especially as the individual arguing for their "emancipatory struggle" adopts a totalizing, authoritarian viewpoint throughout the majority of his analysis. On Soja's claim to speak on behalf of the "peripheralized and oppressed" she writes: "the difficulties of difference – perhaps, at its simplest, the fact of complexity – are simply erased by the steamroller of an analysis which insists that capital and labor…are all there is to it" (242). Although Massey does not make the connection, Soja's critical stance (or at least her accounting of it) fits well with Rose's account of aesthetic masculinity, which "establishes its power through claiming a heightened sensitivity to human experience" (Rose 25) and assumes authority to speak for the marginalized he purports to represent.[13]

[13] In *Thirdspace*, Edward Soja delves more constructively into an "excavation" of contemporary writings of bell hooks, Gloria Anzaldúa, María Lugones and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (12, 14) that for him exemplify a "Thirdspatial imagination", that is, a willingness to go beyond traditional forms of representation and break down dichotomies, often to create spaces of creativity and emancipation. Although Soja does not explicitly recognize Massey's critique, he does cite her as leading what he calls an "antagonistic" attack on masculine postmodern geographers (he mentions specifically

Despite the apparent theoretical disagreement between Massey and Soja, the former actually conceptualizes space itself in a rather similar manner to the latter's description of the spatial in *Thirdspace*, published two years after Massey's *Space, Place, and Gender*. The most striking parallel is Massey's insistence on formulating space as space-time; like Soja, who asserts that the social, the historical and the spatial demonstrate "inseparability and interdependence" (3), Massey too wants to rescue space from those who would conceptualize the spatial as "stasis, as utterly opposed to time" (251). Of course, both demonstrate their debt to Lefebvre in this respect.

While Massey additionally insists that social relations in space are experienced differently depending on one's spatial position (2), she, like Soja, criticizes modes of thinking that produce binary oppositions and dualisms. Massey argues that dichotomous categories are not only always gendered (258) but also assume positive and negative poles. Such dichotomies (space/time, private/public etc.) are polarizing; one component (such as time) is viewed as positive and masculine while the other (such as space) acquires a feminized, negative valence. As she argues that "what must be overcome is the over-formulation of space/time in terms of this kind of dichotomy", Massey proposes a concept of space-time similar to Soja's formulation of Thirdspace, which would hold space and time as univocal elements on an even plane of analysis. As she vigorously

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David Harvey, whom she also criticizes). Soja argues that Massey's work, although not without merit, fails to move beyond a Firstspace-Secondspace perspective (121-22). That is, she never moves beyond the realm of geography as she theorizes the spatial. However, he greatly admires Gillian Rose's work *Feminism and Geography* and spends several pages demonstrating how especially the final chapter, which references solely aesthetic-literary instead of geographical works of representation, constitutes a Thirdspace exploration of geography (122-25) as she attempts not only to reconcile but to move beyond "the exclusions of the Same and the Other" (Rose 137, cited in Soja, "Thirdspace" 123).

condemns static, non-temporal conceptualizations of space—and insists on the fundamental inseparability of the social and the spatial (251)—Massey further finds herself in agreement with Soja as both privilege in their analyses the dynamic nature of social relations that construct urban spatiality. Thus while the postmodern and feminist geographers that constitute the theoretical framework of my dissertation may differ in their respective points of departures and focuses, both represent geographical fields that embrace Lefebvre's conception of space as simultaneously process and product.

The profound influence of Foucault's iconic *Discipline and Punish* (1975) on my dissertation will be immediately evident in the chapters that follow. Before I turn to Foucauldian analyses of knowledge and power, however, let us first examine his lesser-known reflections on space. In his brief lecture, "Des espaces autres", or "Of Other Spaces", Foucault develops his concept of a "heterotopia". The opposite of utopias—"sites with no real place" (24)—heterotopias are situated in reality and function to question or contest the spaces in which we live. Heterotopias exist in all types of societies but may perform different functions according to the culture to which they belong. As literary critic Enric Bou explains, "[heterotopias] are places beyond all other places, even if they are visible to everybody" (88).[14]

Despite Foucault's categorizing definitions, his concept of heterotopia is perhaps best illustrated through the various examples of heterotopic spaces supplied throughout his essay, each of which demonstrates a particular principle of Foucault's privileged spatial category. The cemetery as appropriated by the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie, for

[14] Bou uses Foucault's concept of heterotopias to analyze Camilio José Cela's *La colmena,* Mariano José de Larra's well-known article "El día de Difuntos de 1836", and Valle Inclán's *Luces de bohemia* (88-94).

example, converts death into an illness—that is, the dead are seen as carrying contagion; in Europe cemeteries are accordingly moved to the outskirts of the city and constitute "the other city", separated from yet simultaneously related to every member of society through the inevitability of eventual occupation (25). Another characteristic of the heterotopia, as demonstrated by the theater, cinema and particularly the garden, is that it is "capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (25).[15] Within a heterotopia, meanwhile, humans experience time as infinitely extended (libraries or museums) or as ephemeral and instantaneous (fairgrounds and festivals) (26). While access to heterotopic space is never totally open, heterotopias are always penetrable whether via compulsory entry or submission to "rites and purifications" (26). The baths that were all the rage throughout Europe in the nineteenth century come to mind as heterotopic sites, which are "entirely consecrated…to activities of purification", whether religious, hygienic, or both (26). Finally, Foucault tells us that heterotopias render the rest of human experience either more illusory than illusion itself (the brothel) or more real than reality itself (the colony). I shall return to this discussion in my chapter on *La desheredada* as I analyze Isidora Rufete's reflection in what for Foucault is a privileged heterotopic space, the mirror.

Over the past two decades, Galdós scholars have gravitated toward the theories put forth in *Discipline and Punish,* where Foucault outlines his theory of the carceral city, with its invisible systems of control and discipline and its citizens who have internalized them. In her aforementioned book on social deviancy in Galdós' novels, in which she

[15] Foucault writes of the garden, "The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world. The garden has been a sort of happy, universalizing heterotopia since the beginnings of antiquity" (26).

focuses on the working classes, Fuentes Peris eloquently summarizes what she terms the "two fundamental facets" of Foucault's surveillance society:

> Firstly, the creation and implementation—the physical writing, printing and dissemination—of rules, procedures and regulations, which can operate inside and outside enclosed institutions, and which are used to log and track citizens. […] Secondly, it is possible to conceptualize the surveillance society in terms of the way in which power is exercised through discourse (essentially social or human science discourses, which often dovetailed with knowledge and the pure sciences) produced by experts. ("Visions" 4-5)

The aforementioned bourgeois discourse of domesticity provides an excellent example of a disciplinary discourse internalized by nineteenth-century Spanish women attempting to live according to the social ideal put forth by the *ángel del hogar* model. In this dissertation, I follow Fuentes Peris in considering nineteenth-century Spanish socio-medical discourses as discourses of power. My own analysis will focus, however, on how such discourses affect the lived spatiality of the novels' female protagonists and particularly their embodiments of space.

The body constitutes an important locus for feminist geographers, who follow feminist theorists such as Susan Bordo, Elizabeth Grosz, Iris Marion Young, and Judith Butler (among others) in privileging the body as a place that both evidences repression and enables resistance. The body is "the place, the location or site…of the individual, with more or less permeable boundaries between one body and another" (McDowell 34); bodies do not exist in a void but rather are "positioned in space" (40). Through our

previous description of the gendered private and public spheres put forth by nineteenth-century social discourses, we have already seen evidence of McDowell's claim that "spatial divisions…are also affected by and reflected in embodied practices and lived social relations" (35). While feminist theories tend to use the words "body" and "embodiment" interchangeably (39), in this dissertation I follow McDowell's preference for the latter term; like our concept of space—"*as process* and *in process"* (Thrift 3, his emphasis)—, "embodiment…captures the sense of fluidity, of becoming and of performance" characterizing recent theorizations of the body. That is, the body possesses a geography precisely because of its malleability, its ability to change shape and form (39).

Embodiment—like Lefebvre's conception of space—are both process and product, as Elizabeth Grosz reminds us: "Bodies…are not only inscribed, marked, engraved, by social pressures external to them but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social constitution of nature itself" (x). In her essay "Throwing Like a Girl" from *On Female Body Experience* (2005), Young observes that women commonly possess what she terms "modalities of feminine bodily comportment, motility, and spatiality" that derive from their "sexist oppression in contemporary society" (42). The bodily experience of women in patriarchal societies—like Restoration Spain—is severely limited both physically and figuratively by dominant masculine discourses. As I shall argue is the case for the female protagonists of Galdós' Madrid, Young provocatively writes that "women in sexist societies are physically handicapped" (42). Of course, both of Young's and Grosz's conceptions of embodiment are indebted to Foucault's theorization of "docile bodies". In the carceral society, disciplinary discourses subject

bodies to "subtle coercion" ("Discipline" 137) rendering them "docile": such bodies may be "subjected, used, transformed and improved" (136) by systems of power. As Susan Bordo points out, while Foucault does not view modern, normalizing power as imposed from above but rather as "non-authoritarian, non-conspiratorial and indeed non-orchestrated" (252), this does not mean that power is distributed evenly throughout the system: "no one may control the rules of the game. But not all players on the field are equal" (253).

I view my dissertation as entering into direct dialogue with another excellent study inspired by a Foucualdian analysis of Galdós' novels, Collin McKinney's *Mapping the Social Body: Urbanisation, the Gaze, and Novels of Galdós* (2010). In his book, McKinney convincingly demonstrates that Galdós writes his novels against the backdrop of a Spanish society—namely, the rising middle class—that privileges *lo visual* over the other senses. Obsessed with what McKinney terms a "categorizing fever", the bourgeois class consistently demonstrates the need to control and subsequently marginalize groups conceived as "other", that is, those who are "non-bourgeois/male/Catholic/Spanish" (McKinney 10). Through recourse to cartography (social mapping), McKinney links bourgeois practices in nineteenth-century Spain to various methods of control discussed by Foucault, such as the imprisonment both of criminals and the mentally handicapped, the contemporary obsession with cleanliness, the popularity of physiognomy as a so-called science, and even stratified urban planning as exemplified by Carlos María del Castro's *Ensanche de Madrid* (1861). The Spanish bourgeoisie for McKinney is a social class driven largely by fear—fear of contamination (28), fear of crime (34), fear of the urban and its masses of migrants, even fear of the no longer idyllic countryside (46)—

hence the desire to define, isolate and control those perceived as other. Toward this end, McKinney argues that Madrid's middle class undertakes a social mapping enterprise meant to bring order to the disorientating, labyrinthine experience of urbanization (174). As he unearths evidence of the bourgeois social mapping project in several of Galdós' novels, McKinney suggests that Galdós himself becomes increasingly at odds with the middle-class obsession with social categorization.

Both the conclusions of McKinney's study and the nature of his analysis are illuminating; he effectively demonstrates that twentieth-century theory may prove extremely useful in a study of nineteenth-century works. That is to say, concerns regarding the anachronism of a twentieth- and even twenty-first-century theoretical framework in an analysis of Spanish realist novels may be discarded, especially as many of the contemporary theorists I discuss here concur that the origin of our contemporary postmodern or postcapitalist society (or as Fredric Jameson would have it, condition) stems from the burgeoning capitalist economy and cultures of consumption that accompanied the industrial revolution—and its adjacent urbanization—in major European cities. Benjamin Fraser defends in a similar fashion his Lefebrvian analysis of Mariano José de Larra's newspaper articles in his book *Henri Lefebvre and the Spanish Urban Experience* (2011):

> [G]iven the central idea of [Henri Lefebvre's] work—which hinges precisely on a shift to exchange-value that begins during the nineteenth century—a return today to the French philosopher's understanding of modern urban processes (his immersion in Marxian ideas) need not be

> restricted either to the time (the twentieth-century) or the place (France) in which he lived and wrote. (41)

Of course such a claim depends, as Fraser himself appreciates, on the recognition that despite claims of its supposed "exceptionalism" or "backwardness" nineteenth-century Spain's experience of industrialization adheres to the larger European paradigm of modernization in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thankfully, the recognition that Spain's process of modernization in fact shared more commonalities with its neighbors than differences is becoming increasingly commonplace in contemporary literature regarding nineteenth-century Spain.[16]

McKinney's analysis of Galdós' novels, like Fuentes Peris', clearly demonstrates that in the second half of the nineteenth century, bourgeois discourses of power and control in urban Spain defend against destabilizing deviancy and attempt to bring order to the disconcerting and often threatening experience of increased industrialization and urbanization. In fact this is one of the central assumptions of my dissertation—hence the debt that this project owes to Foucault. Yet one leaves McKinney's book feeling overwhelmed if not suffocated by the controlling gaze exercised by middle class hegemonic culture. My dissertation aims in part to provide a complementary analysis to McKinney's, one that considers spatialized social relations on the ground, so to speak, and identifies (albeit momentary and even unintentional) pockets of resistance to normalizing discourses. This is not to say that Foucault does not recognize the possibility of such resistance, especially in his later theory (Bordo 246); in fact, the closing sentence

[16] See Cruz (5) and also Fraser (41) for a list of critics from various disciplines who in recent years have contributed to what Cruz terms the "revisionist task" of integrating nineteenth-century Spain into its largest European context.

of *Discipline and Punish* reads very much like a call to arms: "In this central and centralized humanity, the effect and instrument of complex power relations, bodies and forces subjected by multiple mechanisms of 'incarceration'…we must hear the distant roar of battle" ("Discipline" 308).

While we should be careful not to exaggerate their liberatory potential, the theories outlined in Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984 [1980]) recount the potential of ordinary individuals (that is, consumers) to momentarily thwart the system, so to speak. Like Lefebvre, Certeau privileges the everyday; his thought focuses on the ordinary actions of individuals, pedestrians who navigate urban space from the streets.[17] To illustrate the viewpoint that most interests him, Certeau compares the experience of gazing upon Manhattan from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center to that of walking the city's streets. Certeau argues that the view from above is akin to the perspective of a map or the vision of a city planner; it represents but a "facscimile" of the city: "The panorama-city is a 'theoretical' (that is, visual) simulacrum, in short a picture" (92-93). Certeau however is interested in the city's "ordinary practitioners" who, roaming the streets, "live 'down below,' below the threshold of where visibility begins" (93). These individuals are above all pedestrians who write the city—and following Barthes, perhaps read urban spaces as well:

> They are walkers…whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of space that cannot be seen…The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator.

[17] It seems clear that the title of this book in French, *L'invention du quotidien,* alludes to Henri Lefebvre's three volume work *Critique de la vie quotidienne*.

> […] A *migrational*, or metaphorical, city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city. (93, Certeau's emphasis).

This is not to say that Certeau's philosophy opposes that of Foucault's. In fact the two are quite compatible; in a sense they are interested in two sides of the same coin. Yet works by a novelist such as Galdós seem particularly ripe for an analysis in the style of Certeau, especially as the reader follows the female protagonists analyzed here on their tireless and often meandering *paseos* through Madrid.

Certeau himself recognizes that the literary representation of everyday activities is most notable in the nineteenth-century realist novel, where "ways of operating…find there a new representational space, that of fiction, populated by everyday virtuosities that science doesn't know what to do with and which become the signatures, easily recognized by readers, of everyone's micro-stories" (70). Accordingly, an analysis of Galdós' novels through the lens of Certeau's theory of the everyday (coupled with Lefebvre's parallel interest in everyday spatiality) ought to complement McKinney's Foucauldian analysis of his works. In my view, Certeau's vision of the city opens Galdós' urban novels to an alternative reading from the ground—or streets—up. While Isidora, Tristana and Benina do not aim to overturn bourgeois systems of power (for them this is of course ultimately impossible), my dissertation demonstrates that their spatialized, embodied experiences opens up spaces of resistance that, however ephemeral, point to the growing insecurities faced by Restoration Spain at the turn of the century.

Certeau envisions his consumer-pedestrians as walking along wandering trajectories that "trace out" actions and desires undetected by the strategists involved in

cultural production.[18] While trajectory necessarily connotes movement, Certeau maintains that, "it also involves a plane projection, a flattening out" (xviii). This flattening out of space calls to mind the concept of the rhizome put forth by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in the introduction to their co-authored book *A Thousand Plateaus* (volume two of *Capitalism and Schizofrenia* (1987, [1980]). Of more relevance to this project is their formulation of smooth and striated spaces, each of which belongs to two different but not entirely opposed systems of spatial understanding. In his excellent explanation of Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of space in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Bou writes, "When speaking of space they simultaneously refer to physical space, a way of living and, ultimately, a way of being" (86). To further explain the differentiation between the smooth and the striated, Deleuze and Guattari consider various models—technological, musical, maritime, mathematical, physical, aesthetic—that describe different versions or characteristics of their dual spatial categories. As we are most interested in that which pertains to urban space, I will outline those characteristics of smooth and striated space that will inform my own analysis of Galdós' Madrid.

Striated space is associated with societal organization (the city is the "striated space par excellence") while smooth space belongs to the wandering nomad (481). For example the town that invents agriculture striates the smooth space of the nomad and turns him into a farmer (481); inversely, the smooth space of the desert effaces the remains of ancient ruins, turning them to dust. Accordingly, smooth space is associated with powers of deterritorialization while striated space occupies itself with

[18] Here we can see that Certeau differs from Foucault in his formulation of power. For Certeau, certain individuals and groups—the producers of culture—have consolidated power, while for Foucault, power is not associated with any particular group or authority.

(re)territorialization (480). As a space becomes increasingly striated, Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate that the area in question—such as modern urban centers—becomes increasingly homogenous. Although they admit it seems somewhat counterintuitive, the philosophers insist that smooth space is defined by its heterogeneity. In one example, the rigid pattern of woven fabric exemplifies homogenous striated space while the haphazardly pieced-together quilt embodies heterogeneous smooth space (488).

Importantly, however, the two are not always mutually exclusive nor do they always exist in direct opposition. Thus it is possible to translate between different types of spaces, to cross from the smooth to the striated or vice versa. As the philosophers observe, "Nothing is ever done with: smooth space allows itself to be striated, and striated space reimparts a smooth space. […] Perhaps we must say that all progress is made by and in striated space, but all becoming occurs in smooth space" (486). To return to Bou's observation, "smooth" and "striated" are not only spatial descriptions but also ways of existing in space. One may move smoothly or in striation; the nomad paradoxically often does not move but rather clings (becomes) the smooth space that he inhabits. Thus it also possible to live smoothly—become an "urban nomad" or "cave dweller"—in the striated space of the city just as the territorializing forces of striation tend to impose homogenizing or at least organizational frameworks upon smooth spaces (482). I shall return to Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of smooth and striated space in my chapter on *Misericordia*; both Benina and her friend Almudena, in my view, exemplify this concept of the urban nomad.

At this point we can begin to see that despite their many nuances, the spatial theories outlined in this chapter possess many commonalities that together put forth a

comprehensive and finally postmodern approach to spatiality. Preeminent in our broad conception of space is the assertion that space itself, as a construction, consists of dynamic social relations that are in constant flux. Doreen Massey effectively summarizes this position: "the social and the spatial are inseparable and […] the spatial form of the social has causal effecticity" (423). Another constant, whether explicitly stated or implied, is that space and time are intricately and indelibly interwoven. Above all, we see repeated again and again that space is not a static void into which persons and things are placed; rather, space is endowed with causality even as it is produced. It is worth noting that not all contemporary theorists conceive of space in this way. Both Ernesto Laclau and Fredric Jameson, for example, prefer static, negative formulations of space that are quite separate from the temporal dimension (Massey 415-16). Another key element shared by the spatial theories that form my theoretical framework is their dislike of dichotomous categories and dualisms; each theorizes the need to move beyond the very binaries that Foucault, if we remember, posits are constructed as a result of the anxiety endemic to the twentieth century. Even Deleuze and Guattari, whose theorizing of smooth and striated spaces seems at first to rely most heavily on binary logic, insist that the two not only overlap but often exist in constant flux. Finally and perhaps most importantly, the theorists cited in this chapter share an interest in the everyday that renders their particular formulations of space especially appealing to a study of Galdós' realist novels. Let us now turn to an analysis of the embodied experiences of three female protagonists, as they attempt to navigate lived social space in Galdós' real-and-imagined Madrid.

Chapter Two

Paradoxical Market Spaces: Fashioning Identity in *La desheredada*

Tes yeux, illuminés ainsi que des boutiques
Et des ifs flamboyants dans les fêtes publiques,
Usent insolemment d'un pouvoir emprunté,
Sans connaître jamais la loi de leur beauté.

Your eyes, lit up like shops to lure their trade
or fireworks in the park on holidays,
insolently make use of borrowed power
and never learn (you might say, 'in the dark')
what law it is that governs their *good looks*.

Charles Baudelaire
Trans. Richard Howard

As mentioned in the introduction, *La desheredada* (1881) occupies an important position in Galdós' lengthy—and varied—canon as the novel that inaugurates the author's *novelas contemporáneas,* suggestively translated by Jo Labanyi as "novels of modernity" ("Modernity" 92). Galdós himself is conscious of the shift away from both *novelas de tesis* and historical novels (the *episodios nacionales*)[19], as he writes to Jose María de Pereda in 1879: "Ahora tengo un gran proyecto. Hace tiempo que me está bullendo en la imaginación una novela que yo guardaba para más adelante, con el objeto de hacerlo detenido y juiciosamente….Necesito un año o año y medio" (cited in Ribbans, "History and Fiction" 44). Indeed, the first part of *La desheredada* appears twenty-two months later, a conspicuous amount of time for an author who throughout much of his

[19] Galdós will take up writing more *episodios nacionales* nearly twenty years later in 1898. Geoffrey Ribbans discusses Galdós' shift from *las novelas contemporáneas*, which become increasingly spiritualized in the '90s, to theater and the historical novel ("History and Fiction" (45-48). The first chapter of his book, *History and Fiction in Galdós's Narratives* (1993), offers an excellent comparison of the *episodios nacionales* and *las novelas contemporáneas*.

career publishes one novel every year.[20] (The first part of the novel appears in January of 1881; the second part in June of the same year). In the pages that follow, I will first offer a preliminary sketch of the general tendencies that characterize criticism of this novel before turning to my own analysis, which studies consumerism within the space of the market as it relates to Isidora Rufete, the novel's protagonist.

Cognizant of the avid readership garnered by his *episodios nacionales*, Galdós seems disappointed by the relative lack of enthusiasm his newest novel engenders. In an oft-cited letter to Krausist reformer Francisco Giner de los Ríos in 1882, Galdós states that his novel has been received with "cierta frialdad en el público y en la crítica", a fact that seems to bother him particularly as he writes, "Puse en ello [la novela] especial empeño, y desde que concluí el tomo, lo tuve por superior a todo lo que he hecho anteriormente" (cited in Ruiz Salvador 51). Clarín himself grumbles with his characteristic wit:

> Y si el silencio fuese la muerte para el ingenio…bien muerto estaría Galdós, o por lo menos *La Desheredada*. ¿Saben ustedes algo de lo que ha dicho la crítica acerca de *La Desheredada*? ¿Han escrito los periódicos populares, con motivo de este libro, artículos de sensación, de los que tienen un titulejo o rótulo especial para cada párrafo? Nada; el silencio. ("Galdós" 105)

In the aforementioned letter to Giner, Galdós writes of *La desheredada*, "Efectivamente, yo he querido en esta obra entrar por nuevo camino o inaugurar mi segunda o tercera

[20] This delay may be attributed in part to an illustrated edition of the *Episodios* that Galdós is simultaneously preparing, as Ribbans suggests ("novela por entregas" 70).

manera, como se dice de los pintores" (cited in Rodgers, "*La desheredada*" 285).[21] The few contemporary critics who praise the novel point to the author's embrace of naturalism as evidence of a radical shift in his work (López, "Realismo y ficción" 24).[22] In fact, Tomás Tuero suggests in a positive review of the novel for *La Iberia* that *La desheredada* signals a shift in Spanish fiction in general:

> A propósito de talento, el Sr. Pérez Galdós que lo tiene tan grande, parece que lo dirige hoy por nuevos rumbos. Lo hemos dicho al principio: el naturalismo se impone decididamente, y he aquí al Sr. Galdós, el ilustre autor de tantas novelas históricas y novelas de tesis…abandonando las realidades del pasado…para estudiar la vida que le rodea y arrancarle su continuo y palpitante drama. ¿Hemos de felicitarnos por ello? Seguramente. […] El novelista, en adelante, se verá precisado a trabajar en firme y a ahondar… ahondar siempre. Si queréis que viva, llevad la vida a vuestra obra. (2)

Clarín also links the novel to a (for him, much needed) regeneration of Spanish letters, identifying in his review of the first part of *La desheredada* a naturalist current:

> Aquí sólo me he propuesto notar la tendencia naturalista, en el buen sentido de la palabra, de la última obra de Galdós; tendencia que yo aplaudo…Es

[21] For obvious reasons, virtually every twentieth-century study of *La desheredada* mentions Galdós' letter to his Krausist friend. It is first reprinted by M. B. Cossío in the *Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza* 719 (1920): 60-62. It has now become commonplace to equate Galdós' "segunda manera" with his *novelas contemporáneas*, as Linda Willem's 1998 book, *Galdós Segunda Manera*: *Rhetorical Strategies and Affective Response*, demonstrates.

[22] Of course, it is unlikely that Clarín and Tomás Tuero would have read Galdós' letter to Giner. For his part, Galdós' Krausist friend writes enthusiastically to Galdós, "Es [*La desheredada*] no sólo la mejor novela que usted ha escrito, sino la mejor que en nuestro tiempo se ha escrito en España" (cited in López, "Realismo y ficción" 24).

> claro que en Galdós ese naturalismo no puede ser servil imitación, sino original manera; y en efecto…lleva en ella el naturalismo un sello singular, el de la personalidad de su autor, quizá el novelista de más equilibradas facultades…entre cuantos grandes novelistas hoy trabajan en la transformación lenta, pero infalible, de la literatura contemporánea. ("Galdós" 105)

While Galdós' contemporaries emphasize the naturalist elements of *La desheredada*—Brian Dendle demonstrates that Alas compares the novel explicitly with Émile Zola's naturalism ("Zola" 447)—twentieth-century critics of the novel (Russell, Gullón, Bonet, Rodgers) have by and large concluded that Galdós borrows from but does not strictly adhere to Zola's rigid naturalist maxims.[23]

Robert Russell is one of the earliest twentieth-century critics to argue that Galdós employs a somewhat tempered version of naturalism in *La desheredada*, similar to that envisioned by Emilia Pardo Bazán in *La cuestión palpitante*. Such "naturalism *a la española*" (Russell, "Structure" 794), through a depiction of the unsavory southern parts of Madrid, directly suggests the negative influence of the environment on the novel's

[23] Brian Dendle's 1997 study of *La desheredada* is a critical exception in that he definitively denies any correspondence between Zola's naturalism and Galdós' novel. While I would not agree with Stephen Gilman's extreme position that the text, wholly deterministic, fully embraces Zola's naturalism (93-104), Dendle's opposite argument seems equally unlikely, as I hope to demonstrate in the following brief overview of naturalist influence in *La desheredada*. Paradoxically, Dendle and Gilman do agree that the novel does *not* represent a break with Galdós' previous works, regardless of the author's claim to a "segunda [or "tercera"] manera" (449; 89). López, for his part, argues throughout his book that while *La desheredada* shares some thematic commonalities with prior novels, the novel represents a turning point both for Galdós' own canon and—as Alas and Tuero argue—for nineteenth-century Spanish literature in general. Perhaps Ribbans' more moderate description of Galdós' *segunda manera* is most appealing: "The new direction, then, is real enough, but does not entail a radical break with the past" ("History and Fiction" 45).

characters. A discourse of disease, too, permeates the text as "the precise symptoms of illness, both physical and mental, are paraded before the reader from the first page to the last" (795). Of course, many critics have recognized insanity as a hereditary trait that plagues the Rufetes[24]: the novel opens with Tomás Rufete's nonsensical monologue in Leganés, Madrid's insane asylum; Isidora's uncle cannot differentiate fantasy from reality; Isidora and her brother Mariano both (in the eyes of less sympathetic critics) suffer delusions of grandeur; *Riquín*, Isidora's son, has macrocephaly.

Yet Russell argues that the text stops short of overdeterminism in that Isidora possesses some control over her life and, over and over again, chooses a path that ultimately leads her to prostitution (800). Rodgers, for his part, sees Mariano's plight as the most determinedly naturalist ("*La desheredada*" 289) but like Russell concludes that Isidora is ultimately responsible for her own downfall (293).[25] Both critics possess an extremely negative view of the protagonist—Rodgers goes so far as to call her "coarse and sluttish" ("*La desheredada*" 287)—and view the novel as didactic and moralizing in function.[26] In a more recent (1997) evaluation of the text, Laureano Bonet disagrees explicitly with Dendle's aforementioned negation of naturalism in the novel and argues, "Creo personalmente en la posibilidad de una mezcla entre una tropología alegórica…y

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[24] See Russell ("Structure") 795; Rodgers (*"La desheredada"*) 286; Bonet 157; Anderson 21; Labanyi ("Political Significance" 51);

[25] Ribbans argues that even Mariano's fate is not wholly determined and that he too bears some responsibility for his choices: "the outcome is not inevitable, for he is not preordained to be a criminal, and only becomes one as his mindset, spurred by deprivation and illness, gradually takes on a rigid and unalterable cast, culminating in near dementia" ("Mariano" 797). Ribbans' article represents by far the most complete study of Isidora's brother.

[26] Dendle concurs that the novel offers a "lección…de una responsabilidad personal y nacional" (453). While I do not necessarily disagree with these critics—the last chapter of the novel is indeed titled (albeit perhaps ironically) "Moraleja"—I will in my own analysis treat Isidora more sympathetically, as has more recent criticism.

un entramado estilístico en buena parte naturalista" (155). Through a close reading of the children's fight scene that culminates in Mariano's unwitting murder of *Zarapicos*, Bonet proposes that the text's naturalist elements enrich what he interprets as an allegory for *las dos Españas* that in this context seems to prefigure the Spanish Civil War.

If Bonet's historical-allegorical reading seems if not anachronistic a bit forced, many critics have analyzed the specific historical setting of *La desheredada*, which takes place approximately between the years of 1872 and 1877. Although Isidora remains largely unaware of and uninterested in Spanish politics, the political instability that rocks the nation during this time bubbles beneath the surface of the narrator's portrayal of Isidora's downward spiral into prostitution (the abdication of Amadeo I, the formation of the First Spanish Republic, the Restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, the difficult situation in Cuba, the rampant corruption of the Republic and especially the Restoration government). As Peter Bly argues of the *serie contemporánea*, "History is not ignored in these predominantly social novels, as has often been suggested; on the contrary, Galdós's interest in history is still insatiable. No mere backdrop, history is being reinterpreted for the reader" ("Historical Imagination" 6).

Critics who emphasize the importance of history in *La desheredada* tend to posit the novel's fictional plot as an allegory for Spain's difficult historical and political situation. On this interpretation, Isidora and her tragic decline are commonly read as representative of the situation of Spain itself (Ruiz Salvador 56; Gilman 90). Following her rejection by the Marquesa de Aransis, Isidora's decision to sleep with Joaquín Pez coincides with Amadeo's abdication and the arrival of the First Republic; she finds her

lover on the very street that marks General Prim's assassination in 1870. Ruiz Salvador explains the political allegory:

> [E]n *La desheredada*, España (Isidora) vuelve a sucumbir. Ñoña y frívola, pero con indudable nobleza (la Historia de España desde la revolución del 68 hasta el asesinato de Juan Prim), empieza a perder su estatura moral…con la llegada de la primera República. […] La relación Isidora-España queda apuntada: si el asesinato de Prim precipitó a la España de la revolución del 69 [sic] en la anarquía, el 'suicidio' de la Rufete la hundirá en la prostitución. (56-57)[27]

Ruiz Salvador further argues that nearly every individual in *La desheredada* (with perhaps the exception of Miquis and Emilia as exemplar members of the middle class) represents a symptom of Spain's ubiquitous national illness, that obsession with money which plagues so many of the novel's characters (59).

Following Ruiz Salvador's critical lead, Gilman and Bly each emphasize an allegorical reading of *La desheredada* that reveals the frustration and even anger characterizing Galdós' negative attitude about Spain's future. For Gilman, Isidora's plight demonstrates her author's lack of faith in historical progress (87); this critic commends Galdós' criticism of the Restoration (89), which seemingly trades stability for progress and espouses a generation of money-hungry opportunists (122). Gilman even argues that contemporary readers would recognize in "Isidora's impracticality, her helpless extravagance, her capacity for corruption and above all her illusions about her own identity" as directly representative of Spain (104). While Bly, for his part, at times

[27] Gilman also links the assassination of Prim to Isidora's moral suicide, both of which represents Spain's "death" according to this critic (107).

stretches allegory too far (José Relimpio does not, in my mind, represent Spain's national consciousness, for example (20)), his interpretation of Canencia's map in the Leganés office is for me convincing: "Spain is to be viewed as a madhouse in *La desheredada*" (3).

Lara Anderson also focuses on the concept of insanity in her analysis of the novel, which posits Isidora—who she (somewhat erroneously, in my mind) would confine to Leganés from the moment she appears in the narrative ("Diagnosing"23)—as an allegory for Spain's diseased social body and national decadence (21). Chad Wright's article, the culmination of political allegory, posits Isidora's house on Hortaleza Street as a metaphor for the first Spanish Republic (231) and her child *Riquin* as representative of the Restoration (241). Isidora's house, as a gaudy collection of outdated, used furniture and decorations, suggests the "borrowed and already antiquated nature of Spain's impracticable New Republic" (232). *Riquín*, with his oversized, macrophelic head, recalls the "over-centralization of power in Madrid": like the Restoration, Isidora's child is "but a head without a functioning body" (243).

In light of the historical and political events that frame the novel, other critics have read in *La desheredada* a call for social reform that would consolidate power in the emergent middle class. Martha Collins claims that the text decries human corruption without abandoning "liberal democratic ideals" and views in the novel an admittedly utopian (397) "blueprint for social change" (390) that would place power in the hands of the nascent, hard-working and ethical middle class (397) represented, one must assume,

by Miquis or perhaps Bou.[28] Jo Labanyi presents a much more convincing argument for an empowered middle class by proposing that the novel's title refers not to Isidora—who never actually possessed a noble inheritance—but rather to "las clases desheredades", that is, the lower classes of society. The poor, as Galdós demonstrates through the text of *La desheredada*, have the right to a place in society through hard work ("Political Significance" 52); Labanyi thus reads in the novel a defense of a "genuine meritocracy" (53) supported by the "liberal notion of a free enterprise society" (54). Isidora and Mariano ultimately fail because they each identify with the extremes of society—the nobility and those supporting popular revolution—both of which Galdós criticizes throughout the novel (57). Finally, in her brilliant article, Elizabeth Amann convincingly argues that the depiction of "the uprising of 1873" in *La desheredada* represents an attempt by Galdós to situate Spain's *sexenio revolucionario* in the greater European context of revolution (specifically the French revolution of 1878 and the myriad European revolutions of 1848) (437).

Two brief articles by Brian Dendle and M. Gordon shed helpful light on specific historical circumstances that may be unknown to the twenty-first century reader. Dendle notes that the *mantillas blancas* donned by the noblewomen in protest against Amadeo would be linked in Spain's popular imagination with prostitution: "On a Sunday afternoon in late June 1871, an ardent *amadeísta*…arranged for a number of carriages containing prostitutes, dressed in a caricature version of national costume, to mingle with

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[28] Collins' argument, for me unconvincing, revolves around a distinction between a middle class that results from a leveling of the *pueblo* and the aristocracy and the *parvenus* class (consisting of Botín, the *Peces,* and the *Pájaros*). She does not mention the bourgeoisie as a class that by 1872 is already well established, if not yet fully dominant, in Spain.

the procession of noblewomen" ("Isidora" 51-52). This historical anecdote, Dendle claims, is fresh in the minds of *La desheredada's* contemporary readers. By desiring to wear *mantillas blancas* while on a stroll with Miquis, Isidora not only reveals her political naiveté (moments earlier she professed admiration for Amadeo's procession) but also unwittingly associates herself albeit indirectly with prostitution (52).[29] Gordon, for his part, convincingly demonstrates that Galdós draws from contemporary medical and psychological sources in his depictions of Tomás Rufete's treatment in Leganés and his portrayal of Mariano (67-68). Both Dendle and Gordon note that Mariano's attempted assassination of Alfonso XII seems inspired by historical events. Two unsuccessful attempts are made on Alfonso XII's life, in 1878 and 1879 (Bly "Historical Imagination" 20).[30] Like the prostitution episode associated with the *mantillas blancas* protest, Mariano's terrible deed is thus inspired by (slightly) anachronistic events. Bly argues: "Galdós is not trying to be the historian stating the facts as they happened. He is more anxious to show Mariano's tragic unawareness of the import of his actions for the nation" ("Historical Imagination" 21).

Michael Schnepf, whose critical work has largely focused on analyses of Galdós' original manuscripts and galleyproofs, has further pointed to the presence of anachronisms in *La desheredada*. He argues that allusions to contemporary politics—that is, from the time that Galdós is writing from 1879-1881—are embedded in the text to

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[29] Numerous critics have commented on Isidora's awed reaction to the parade of carriages that promenade down the Castellana, especially as opposed to Miquis' practical dismissal of the scene as ostentatious and for the most part, *cursi* (Fedorchek 53; Ribbans "History and Fiction" 164; López "Representación" 474-5).

[30] Dendle associates Mariano's deed with the 1878 historical attempt ("Isidora" 53) while Gordon claims that the 1879 attempt inspired the literary scene. For whatever reason, neither recognizes that Alfonso XII in fact survives two assassination attempts in his lifetime.

send his nineteenth-century readers a "sharp-politico-didactic message concerning the current state of affairs in Spain" ("History" 303). Thus the *petardos* that Mariano plants at the behest of the Machiavellian *Gaitica* (Frasquito Surupa) recall a major casino scandal in early 1881 (295); Melchor's fictional lottery scam echoes "real-life" lottery corruption uncovered by *El Imparcial* in 1880 (296). In short, the text recalls a series of embarrassing episodes for the Cánovas government that allow Galdós to ridicule the conservative party and simultaneously comment on the need for reform (298). In an equally convincing article, Schnepf argues that the multiple direct and indirect references to suicide throughout the novel constitute a sly marketing technique on the part of the author, who capitalizes on his contemporary public's keen interest in suicide scandals ("Suicide" 47) given that in 1880, the nation's suicide rate increases by 180% (41).

While such criticism of *La desheredada* provides insight into the unique nature of the fictional text's parallelisms and intersections with its historical moment, more recent scholarly work on the novel has moved away from purely historical readings, perhaps following the arguments of both López and Ribbans that an overpreoccupation with political specificity and historical allegory may lead to a stunted appreciation of the text as a literary work ("Representación" 478; "History and Fiction" 255).[31] Of course, critical patterns are never strictly chronological and often resist categorization. Nevertheless, two relatively recent trends that are not mutually exclusive have in my opinion proved

[31] Although Ribbans is fundamentally interested in the role of history in Galdós' fiction, as the title of his book suggests, he fundamentally disagrees with both Gilman and Bly, denying Isidora (or any other female Galdosian protagonist, for that matter) allegorical status with Spain: "Literature of all kinds may be, and realistic literature always is, a representative but not a 'standing for' in the sense of replacement of that which it represents. Certainly, no character represents 'Spain', 'the 1868 revolution', 'Amadeo', 'the Restoration', etc. as such. […] What does occur is interweaving and parallelism" ("History and Fiction" 255).

particularly fruitful: that dialoguing in one way or another with Foucauldian discourses of institutional repression and insanity; and most recently, studies that engage with contemporary social discourses and particularly Spain's late-nineteenth century culture of consumption. The latter tend also to deal more satisfyingly with questions of femininity and in some cases refrain from a total condemnation of Isidora's flawed character.

Debra Castillo offers the earliest Foucauldian analysis (1988) of *La desheredada* in which she emphasizes the "repressive enclosure" of virtually all of the spaces in the novel and argues that institutions in the novel instill madness where they should promote reason (60). The image of the prison dominates Castillo's excellent analysis of the text as she identifies not only the panoptic structure of many of the novel's social spaces—such as the rope factory—but also the contemporary obsession with moral instruction for prisoners themselves. Thus the prison, Castillo observes, "conflates asylum, hospital, school, factory, and church" (66). Additionally, the omnipresence of machines in the novel subjugate their users; although the narrator generally portrays Emilia's attachment to her Singer in a positive light (63), the machines present in the rope factory as well as Juan Bou's printing shop "repeat and intensify the imagery of repression" (67). The only critique I may offer of Castillo's excellent article is that she does not pursue the narrator's evident gender bias revealed by her analysis: Emilia and her sister, who sew ten hours a day, are lauded as exemplifying petit-bourgeois work ethic and feminine abnegation while the text's naturalist discourse emphasizes the terrible conditions of the rope factory and to a lesser extent Bou's printing shop. Yet all three working spaces—the Relimpio's house, the factory, and the shop, are characterized by a lack of light that greatly strains the working subject's eyes (Galdós *"La desheredada"* 183; 104; 326). Sarah Sierra also

emphasizes the deep horror that the mechanization of the rope factory causes Isidora, concluding that this particular experience leads the protagonist to "rebel against social confinement" (Sierra 39).

Rather than the prison motif, Liana Ewald focuses on the omnipresence of Leganés, Madrid's mental asylum, in an analysis that arrives at many of the same conclusions as Castillo's essay. Like Bly, she argues that the asylum resembles Spain in that the "defining characteristic" of both is confinement (381). Through an analysis of contemporary medical and religious discourses, Ewald demonstrates that the operations within Leganés represent an uneasy combination of Old and New Regime practices. Thus, she views the asylum as a microcosm of the Spanish nation, characterized by the "imperfect separation of one cultural system with another" that leads to social anxiety, instability, and an utter lack of consensus regarding much-needed social reform (370). While such critical emphasis on claustrophobia in the novel rightly underlines Isidora's continual struggle against both physical and normative confinement, whether or not she successfully frees herself from societal regulation, as Ewald claims (367), is another question. Conversely, the protagonist is often denied entrance to various social spaces throughout the novel, as López reminds us ("Representación" 472). In the novel's opening chapter, for example, the director of Leganés refuses to allow her past the asylum's office, despite her insistent requests to see her recently deceased father (472-73). Nor is she able to fully penetrate the seemingly rich bourgeois world of appearance and corruption, as Joaquín's refusal to marry her demonstrates. And of course, Isidora ultimately finds it impossible to enter the aristocratic class to which she aspires. In fact, the motif of "el no poder entrar" that López identifies in *La desheredada* (472) can be

seen as a natural consequence of the pervasive institutional confinement uncovered by our Foucauldian critics in their studies of the novel.

Spatial analyses of *La desheredada*, of evident interest to this chapter, have focused not only on institutional confinement and repression but also on the structure of the novel itself. Martha Collins argues against a linear reading of Isidora's trajectory and emphasizes instead the spatiality of the narrative, which revolves around oscillating patterns of ascent and descent (13). Collins too conceives of the novel as a didactic piece (14); in a harsh denunciation of Isidora she claims that the protagonist "relinquishes her authentic claim to human dignity and independence" in her pursuit of Aransis' name and fortune (16). The text critiques a society plagued by envy and corruption by portraying Madrid as a decentered maelstrom, a vortex or vacuum that devours those who do not follow the positive examples offered by Miquis and Emilia (21).

Nil Santiáñez's brilliant recent (2013) analysis of *La desheredada* focuses on the *botas* or shoes of Isidora herself as a way of mapping the protagonist's spatial practices throughout Madrid. Walking becomes a vital part of Isidora's identity formation, as Santiáñez argues: "Por medio del acto de andar, Isidora construye su identidad; caminar es su modo de conocer, organizar y otorgar sentido a los lugares que recorre" (357). Yet paradoxically, walking as mode of spatial practice, albeit liberating, in fact differentiates her from the upper classes to which she aspires. Unlike those who can afford to promenade in their carriages, Isidora actually must use (in the sense of *utilizar*) her shoes to get from one place to another—hence the often dilapidated state of her *botas* that she must hide more than once under her dress (360-61). The protagonist's nomadic wanderings throughout the city deepen her painful sense of exile, both from the nobility

and the various houses that she occupies and then is invariably forced to quit (355-56). Wilfredo de Ràfols also emphasizes Isidora's sense of homelessness as she moves from one shelter to the next. For Ràfols, the lack of a fixed domicile ultimately strips the protagonist of her identity at the end of the novel (81). Yet Isidora's non-identity actually grants her greater autonomy, which allows her to defy patriarchal structures of control and to pursue a self-determined path of prostitution (72). Santiáñez also perceives Isidora's turn to prostitution as liberating in that she escapes the masculine narrator's dominating gaze: he does not dare follow her down the path of prostitution at the end of the novel (306).

Contemporary criticism of *La desheredada*—and, as we shall see, of Galdós' novels in general—seek to reposition the novel in its contemporary context by reading the text through a cultural lens that privileges the anxieties inherent in Spain's uneven quest for modernization as well as Spanish material culture. Stephanie Sieburth's controversial book, *Inventing High and Low: Literature, Mass Culture, and Uneven Modernity in Spain* (1994), dedicates two chapters to an analysis of *La desheredada*. Her unique reading of the novel essentially considers the narrator himself as a character in the text—something that will greatly irritate Linda Willem, who in her book on narrative strategies in the *novelas contemporáneas* takes issue with Sieburth's relatively loose approximation of narratological theory and terms.[32] At any rate, Sieburth somewhat radically posits the narrator as an artist deeply anxious about the place of high art in an increasingly industrialized society of mass commodity and uniformity. Accordingly she

[32] Willem objects, "Sieburth disregards the long-standing distinction in literary criticism between the narrator and the author. […] It is only by blurring the boundaries between real authors, implied authors, and narrators that Sieburth is able to speak of the narrator in *La desheredada* [in a way that supports her argument]" (53-54).

detects in the narration a nostalgic mode that longs for the aristocratic values of the Old Regime (38-40), when the participation of the masses in public life did not endanger the livelihood of high art and high culture (34; 48). On this reading, Isidora functions within the novel to answer "the crucial question…[of] whether art can survive in a world based on efficiency, utility and materialism" (53). Ultimately, the text reveals the "apocalyptic" conclusion that modernity signals the impossibility of high art, irreversibly contaminated by multiplying systems of reproduction (98). Whether or not one finds this interpretation convincing, Sieburth's analysis certainly conveys the dizzying effects of modernity through the novel's urban text.

Six years later Labanyi articulates even more effectively the indelible link between the text of *La desheredada* and Spanish modernity and the development of a liberal free market. From the beginning her analysis privileges the figure of the prostitute: "*La desheredada*…tak[es] prostitution as its emblem. As a commodity circulating among buyers of every social class, the prostitute figures the freedom and equality promised by the market" ("Modernity" 91). Following the denial of her supposed inheritance, Isidora realizes that in Spain's newly-forming capitalist society, wealth may be acquired "through private initiative in the public sphere of the market" (105). Labanyi underlines that in their desire to climb the social ladder, Isidora and Mariano in fact act like ordinary members of a consumer society. They soon learn, however, that "the market offers equality only in theory" (114). Mariano allows envy to overcome him and plots to assassinate the king, who in his mind has refused to defend the equality supposedly guaranteed in a liberal market economy (115). As a woman, Isidora may only enter the market as a prostitute, by offering her body as a commodity (106). Paradoxically, this

positions her within the public space of the market without affording her a place in civil society (105). Isidora's decision to abandon the private sphere (which encompasses her role as mother) for the public life of the prostitute ultimately negates her individuality, as the protagonist becomes "one of the anonymous masses" (115), another commodified body. At the same time, however, Isidora becomes "her own *dueña de su voluntad*" (115) in as much as she freely chooses to become a prostitute and in doing so expresses ownership of the only property she is at liberty to sell.[33]

Colin McKinney's evaluation of the novel in his 2010 book *Mapping the Social Body* offers a decidedly more negative view of Isidora's decision to become a prostitute. Unlike previous critics who argue that Galdós employs a tempered form of naturalism that allows for some element of free will, McKinney proposes that the text's insistence on insanity as a hereditary trait recalls nineteenth-century degeneration theories, which establish a "critical link between degeneracy and heredity" and grow in popularity in the years preceding the publication of *La desheredada* (61). While Isidora's "true" identity remains ambiguous in the first part of the novel, McKinney argues that "[g]iven the emphasis on heredity by degeneration theorists, and the core theme of inheritance in the novel, the reader will inevitably connect the genealogical dots" (64). The protagonist's apparent unwillingness to accept reality—coupled with *Riquín*'s (degenerate)

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[33] Labanyi views the issue of property rights as fundamental to the argument of *La desheredada*. This extends to the protagonist's refusal to marry Juan Bou: "In preferring to prostitute herself to Bou rather than marry him, Isidora is maintaining her belief in the market model whereby freedom and civil status consist in the ability to sell one's property" ("Modernity" 114). Nevertheless, she adds, Isidora's situation becomes particularly ambiguous because as a woman, she is legally unable to take part in economic contracts. While this is an excellent argument, Labanyi does not recognize that, following her release from jail, Isidora actually plans to marry Bou before finding out that he has in fact found another bride.

macrocephaly—would be interpreted by contemporary readers as definitive proof that Isidora's biological surname is the common "Rufete" rather than the noble "Aransis" (64). Although prostitution in Spain is tolerated in the second half of the nineteenth century as a necessary evil, contemporary social discourses categorize prostitutes as a degenerate class of women (68). Thus Isidora, as a degenerate, seems predisposed toward prostitution (68); the contemporary association of illness and even prostitution with an unbridled desire for luxury goods (*lujo*) renders Isidora's fate all the more probable (71).

In her excellent book *Marginal Subjects: Gender and Deviance in Fin-de-siècle Spain* (2011), Akiko Tsuchiya focuses on the female body as a site of resistance and place of protest in nineteenth-century Spanish novels. Of our author she acutely observes, "[m]any of Galdós' protagonists are women who defy, through the deployment of their bodies and sexualities, the bourgeois norm of feminine conduct and the institution of marriage itself" ("Marginal" 28). Tsuchiya's study is of special interest for our purposes given its insistence on the spatiality of the body—a key concept to which I shall return in the following chapter. While she recognizes that Isidora cannot expect to radically alter or change society through her actions, Tsuchiya argues that the protagonist evades bourgeois, patriarchal discipline precisely through the "self-commodification" of her body (39). At this point, Tsuchiya's argument closely resembles that of Labanyi, but will soon become more radical. Like McKinney, Tsuchiya identifies the close relationship between uncontrolled desire (embodied in Isidora's unrelenting consumption of luxury goods) and deviance (32) but claims that by crafting her own body as a luxury commodity, she resists pure objectification and instead fabricates a space of subjectivity based upon her aristocratic fantasies:

> In spite of what might seem to be Isidora's moral suicide from society's perspective, her decision to flee with Joaquín is a conscious tactic to recover her agency as a subject, exchanging her body for the fantasy life she has fabricated for herself. […] …by transforming herself into a commodity, she negotiates, to a certain extent, her own place within the culture of consumption. (39)

Thus for Tsuchiya, Isidora's decision to become a prostitute represents a liberation from bourgeois discipline; her escape should be (albeit not naively) celebrated (54). Tsuchiya and Labanyi differ mainly in their view of Isidora's entrance into the public sphere: the former regards her rampant consumption and self-commodification as transgressive while the latter views as entirely natural the protagonist's desire to form a part of the liberal market economy.

Evidently, contemporary criticism of *La desheredada* has tended to focus on the image of the prostitute as the emblematic symbol of the novel. This is fitting in that the prostitute, as Labanyi suggests, quite literally personifies commodification, embodying the market economy that characterizes modernity. Walter Benjamin recognizes this as well, as he posits the prostitute-commodity as a dream image: "The commodity provides such an image [a dream image]: as fetish. […] And such a [dream] image is provided by the whore, who is seller and commodity in one" (171). More recently, Elizabeth Wilson has underlined the omnipresence of the prostitute in discourses of the modern city, observing, "prostitutes and prostitutions recur in the discussion of urban life, until it almost seems as though to be a woman—an individual, not part of a family or kin group—in the city, is to become a prostitute—a public city" (8). Rita Felski, too, notes

the hold of prostitutes on the cultural imagination: "Positioned on the margins of respectable society, yet graphically embodying its structuring logic of commodity aesthetics, the prostitute…fascinated nineteenth-century cultural critics preoccupied with the decadent and artificial nature of modern life" ("Gender" 20).

Yet Isidora, despite serving as a "kept woman" for various lovers, does not become a full-fledged prostitute until the final pages of the novel. Her affair with Joaquín Pez perhaps represents the greatest challenge to bourgeois order as she establishes a house on Hortaleza Street with her newborn son; yet we discover that throughout their initial affair, Isidora actually aspires to marry Joaquín. In the chapter "Liquidación" written uniquely in second person narration,[34] the narrator scolds Isidora for her illicit relationship with her lover, not so much for its supposed immorality as for the damage it has caused her reputation:

> Considera cuánto perjudican a tus planes de engrandecimiento tus relaciones con el hombre que ha manchado tu porvenir y deshonrado tu vida. […] Tonta, ¿has creído alguna vez en la promesa de que Joaquín se casará contigo? Advierte que siempre te dice eso cuando está mal de fondos y quiere que le ayudes a salir de sus apuros. ("*La desheredada*" 301)

Likewise, her relationship with Botín hardly qualifies as destabilizing bourgeois norms, as his dictatorial control over her movements—she may not leave the flat except to go to church on Sundays—coincides with his desire to keep up appearances (337). Although Isidora eventually defies his orders, rekindling a relationship with Joaquín and reclaiming

[34] For excellent analyses of the varied narratological structure of the novel, see Linda Willem's aforementioned book, *Galdós' segunda manera*.

a degree of spatial mobility, Botín soon finds her out and expels her from the house. Although she returns from a summer with Melchor, "dejando fama en la colonia veraniega de El Escorial" (375), their relationship takes place outside the boundaries of Madrid; her affair with Juan Bou, meanwhile, is cut short by Isidora's incarceration. Her final "protector", the infamous *Gaitica*, physically abuses her and seems to cause almost single-handedly her final degradation. In reviewing her list of lovers I do not mean to deny Isidora's refusal of bourgeois norms and especially the idealized *ángel del hogar* motif that, as we have seen, assigns the wife to a private, domestic sphere. Yet Isidora's so-called transgressions do not seem to pose a real threat to bourgeois order. While I agree with Tsuchiya's observation that Miquis represents societal discipline in the novel ("Marginal" 32-33, 40, 47), the young doctor's urgings that she undertake "una vida arreglada" ("*La desheredada*" 490) stem more from a concern for her wellbeing (and, of course, propriety) than some larger anxiety that Isidora's actions fundamentally threaten the established order of Restoration Spain.[35]

As we have seen in the review of criticism, Ewald, Sierra, Amann, Nil Santiáñez, Ràfols, Tsuchiya and to a lesser extent Labanyi all condone if not celebrate Isidora's embrace of prostitution at the end of the novel, describing her decision as "self-determined" (Ràfols 77), a "symbol of liberty" (Amann 547), and as "assert[ing] her autonomy" (Tsuchiya 54). When presented through a theoretical lens that highlights the

[35] Tsuchiya follows Sieburth in comparing Miquis to *el Magistral* in Clarín's *La Regenta*: through his contemplation of Isidora's beautiful body and desire to sleep with her, "Miquis seeks to *'actively produce*' her state of degradation that would make her end up in an institution of social control, the hospital (for syphilitics)" ("Marginal" 48, Tsuchiya's emphasis). In my view, this argument is problematic in that it places Miquis in an impossible and unfair double bind, in which his rational advice ("*las recetas*") is condemned as perpetuating oppression through regularizing discourses and his irrational desire, which he ultimately controls, is also viewed as complicit in her downfall.

oppressive nature of patriarchal institutions, positing or even idealizing prostitution as (perhaps the only) means of evading societal control, such arguments are quite convincing. Yet to assign prostitution such a liberatory function is I think inherently problematic, not for moral reasons but rather because prostitution necessarily entails perhaps the ultimate degradation of the body. If, as Cifuentes and Tsuchiya convincingly argue, Isidora comes to view herself as a luxury commodity ("Signs" 310; "Marginal" 41) as she takes on her various lovers, once on the market as a prostitute it is difficult to believe that her body—already scarred by *Gaitica*'s knife—will continue to fetch such a high price.

Additionally, such arguments fail to take into account the specific historical circumstances surrounding prostitution in nineteenth-century Spain. While prostitutes, as McKinney has suggested through his detailing of contemporary degeneration theory, are clearly viewed as inferior beings both physically and mentally—"la lógica rehusa concebir—dice la Sra Tarknowsky—que un ser humano en posesión de sus facultades mentales, sano de cuerpo y espíritu, pueda prestarse a cualquier hora del día y de la noche el acto genésico con el primer venido" (Quirós and Aguilaniedo 232)[36]—their existence is seen as a necessary evil actually crucial for the orderly functioning of bourgeois society. Following France's lead, Madrid in 1865 passes legislation that regulates "el cómo, cuándo y dónde de la prostitución" (Cuevas de la Cruz 167). While the potential for disease and moral degradation render prostitution a potential societal harm (Fuentes Peris 31), the prostitute paradoxically performs a necessary social function as the

[36] Pauline Tarnowski, along with Cesare Lombroso, are two of the most influential anthropologists on the subject of prostitution (and criminality) in Spain. Their theories are rigidly deterministic: "Ambos parten de la idea de que existe un tipo de delincuente nato, llegando a fijar los caracteres antropométricos del mismo" (Cuevas 167).

receptacle of excess male desire that otherwise would destabilize bourgeois society (Cuevas 166). Both Fuentes Peris and Cuevas demonstrate that Spain's tolerance of prostitution represents the triumph of the double moral standard perpetuated by bourgeois ideology (31; 166), in which respectable women must preserve their virginity until marriage while (even married) men are expected to "contravenir las leyes de la fidelidad, siempre que se comporte con discreción y no atente contra su propia respetabilidad" (Cuevas 165).[37] From this perspective, Isidora's decision to take on different lovers—far from contradicting societal norms—fits nicely within the bourgeois ideology of male desire. Men are expected and even encouraged to siphon off, as it were, excess desire through recourse to "unrespectable" women in order to preserve order and tranquility in their home and in society at large.[38]

Writing in 1900, Constancio Bernaldo de Quirós and José María Llanas Aguilaniedo in their sociological study *La mala vida en Madrid*, describe two types of legalized prostitution: "las *pupilas* o *huéspedes de mancebía*, y las autorizadas libres, llamadas *carreristas*" (246). The latter group possesses many commonalities with "la prostitución clandestina" (Quirós and Aguilaniedo 252). Clandestine prostitution, which reaches alarming rates at the turn of the century, flouts municipal attempts at regulation and is thus viewed as a potentially destabilizing force that threatens public health

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[37] Cuevas observes that contemporary Spanish moral discourses commodify women's virginity: "La virginidad, exigida en la mujer, significa ahora un *ahorro* de sentimientos y actos amorosos para su buena *inversión* (el matrimonio)" (165).

[38] Labanyi (118), Fuentes Peris (37), McKinney (65), and Corbin (4) all demonstrate that in contemporary hygienic discourses prostitutes are likened to drains and sewers of sexual desire. In fact, the famous nineteenth-century French hygienist Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet, whose ideas are very influential in Spain, studies sewer systems and prostitution *at the same time*. In 1882, Spanish hygienist Juan Giné y Partagás similarly compares "the cleaning up of 'cloacas' and 'alcantarillas'…to the cleaning up of prostitution", as Peris Fuentes notes (39).

(through syphilis) and bourgeois morality (Fuentes Peris 40). However, Labanyi convincingly suggests that Isidora does not take to the streets clandestinely but rather enters a regulated brothel, as evidenced by the visit from a woman who "has been tempting her with finery" ("Modernity" 117). In this case, Labanyi observes, "the threat is not so much that of a woman gaining individual autonomy as that of women gaining autonomy by setting up business together, in a 'public' house 'manned' entirely by women" (117).

Yet even this view of a group of women cooperating toward a shared financial aim seems somewhat utopic in comparison with the contemporary description of Madrid brothels offered by Bernaldo de Quirós and Aguilaniedo: "Las mujeres…viven en común bajo la dependencia de una dueña… […] La pupila es una verdadera esclava, la esclava del prostíbulo, explotada y maltratada" (247). They continue, "la mancebía es, como dijimos, un tipo condenado a extinguirse en breve" (250). Submitted to weekly medical examinations by Madrid's department of health, such a prostitute does not wander the streets but rather remains indoors (249-50), as municipal regulation reinforces their confinement. Madrid's *reglamento* of 1865 forbids prostitutes from occupying public spaces; they are not even permitted to stand outside the doors of brothels (Fuentes Peris 40). Hygienist Francisco Javier Santero recommends more severe measures clearly designed to delimit the prostitute's movement and confine her operations:

> Es preciso que las casas destinadas a este objeto [prostitution] no ocupen los sitios céntricos, sino los barrios retirados. Que estén señaladas con un distintivo especial. Que no se permita a las mujeres que se dedican al

> tráfico de su cuerpo salir a la calle para excitar con sus miradas y posturas lúbricas a los transeúntes. Inscribir a éstas en registros especiales. (II, 488)

Accordingly, Quirós and Aguilaniedo observe fifteen years later: "De algunas calles céntricas, ocupadas antes enteramente por mancebías descaradas, han sido lanzadas las prostitutas" (251). It seems, therefore, dubious that Isidora encounter the freedom she desires through prostitution, especially if as Labanyi suggests—rightly in might mind—Isidora takes refuge in a brothel. The *botas* that Santiáñez so elegantly isolates as a sign of the protagonist's spatial liberty would seem, under these circumstances, to warrant little use.

McKinney's argument that the popularity of degeneration theory would cue contemporary readers to identify Isidora as an insane "Rufete" rather than a noble "Aransis" further suggests that the protagonist's fate is in some sense predetermined. While I hesitate to embark on a thoroughly naturalist reading of the protagonist, the similarities between Isidora and the portrait of the prostitute put forth by French hygienist Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet are uncanny: immaturity (reflected in her refusal of social norms and bourgeois values); rejection of work for pleasure, where "her laziness, her love of idleness" defines her day; refusal to settle down and an attraction to movement; sudden shifts in mood; inability to concentrate; various forms of excesses, including "a readiness to be 'carried away' by various enthusiasms"; indulgence in "useless expenditure; a "deep sense of solidarity and charity"; greed; and raucousness of voice (Corbin 7-9).[39] Isidora demonstrates such traits in varying degrees from the moment she arrives to Madrid to her decision to become a prostitute, when she declares in solidarity

[39] To be fair, Isidora does not demonstrate every characteristic that Parent-Duchâtelet attributes to the prostitute, such as a "plumpness of figure" or alcohol abuse (Corbin 9).

with other oppressed women, "Los hombres sois todos unos. […] Nosotras nos vengamos con nosotras mismas" ("*La desheredada*" 489).

Parent-Duchâtelet's work on prostitution, highly influential throughout Europe, is predicated on biological determinism, although he does recognize that environmental conditions, such as low wages and poverty, play a part in a woman's fall into prostitution. If the similarity between Parent-Duchâtelet's sketch of the prostitute and Isidora's textual presentation in *La desheredada* is not mere coincidence—that is, if she has been created as biologically predetermined to become a prostitute—any argument that posits Isidora's "choice" as autonomous or self-determined becomes suspect. I do not mean to suggest that Galdós wrote *La desheredada* with Parent-Duchâtelet's *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris* (1836) on his bedside table. Nevertheless, given the obvious influence of naturalism on the novel and the social and medical discourses surrounding nineteenth-century prostitution in Spain, we should be cautious in exaggerating the autonomy and independence that Isidora's turn to prostitution entails. In the pages that follow I will posit the space of market—the shops, shop windows, and merchandise found in Madrid's city center that so fascinate Isidora—as an alternative space in which the protagonist, at least momentarily, is able to fashion her own identity and operate somewhat autonomously. While her freedom in this space is not absolute, I argue that the protagonist's consumer power, albeit limited, allows her to enact a persuasive performance of class that problematizes the rational bourgeois penchant for organization and categorization represented by the novel's narrator.

Despite the rigidly gendered dichotomy of public and private spheres promoted by Spain's bourgeois ideology, ultimately their division is more theoretical than

practiced. Spanish women, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century, actively participate in various public spaces, as they enjoy museums and theaters and promenade through the park (Mercer 61; Jagoe, "Ambiguous Angels" 88).[40] The ever-increasing participation of women in consumer culture represents by far the greatest feminine invasion of the public sphere. While the middle classes originally view consumption with suspicion, relegating luxury and its commodities to the frivolous aristocracy, as Spain's urban capitalist economy grows throughout the nineteenth century "the impulse to spend and consume" increases accordingly ("Ambiguous Angels" 87). As bourgeois and even petite-bourgeois identity progressively hinges on the ownership of particular goods (Auslander 81), luxury goods tend to be viewed as necessary commodities now endowed with symbolic meaning as signifiers of social class (Cruz 91). Pocket watches, for example, enjoy great popularity in nineteenth-century Spain and come to be owned by virtually all members of the middle class (106). Therein José Relimpio's sadness when Isidora orders him to pawn the pocket watch she has given him ("*La desheredada*" 308)—he parts not only with a gift from his treasured godchild but also a status symbol that identifies him as a member of the middle class.

Feminist geographer Gillian Rose argues that when women undertake transgressive practices, they occupy by definition "paradoxical spaces" that are described by hegemonic discourses but nevertheless enable "strategies of resistance" (155). Nineteenth-century consumer society—that is, the space of the market—undoubtedly

[40] In doing so, Spain follows wider European patterns of the consolidation of bourgeois hegemony, in which growing consumerism accompanying the expansion of capitalist economies increasingly confounds the gendered ideology of separate spheres (Felski, "Gender" 19, Hetherington 106; Auslander 83).

constitutes for women such a paradoxical space. As Leigh Mercer argues, "the female shopper in the nineteenth century instigated intense unease" (63); the fine line perceived by society between decorous "promenading" and licentious "street-walking" (75) demonstrates that women navigating masculine-coded public spaces are automatically integrated into what Guy Debord has famously called the society of the spectacle. As they shop, women undergo intense scrutiny and observation (65); turned into objects by the men who observe them, Mercer notes that women may even contemplate themselves in shop windows, as does Isidora on numerous occasions. Accordingly, Carlos Franco de Espé describes the redesign of Spanish shops in the nineteenth century: "poco a poco las tiendas, a pie de calle, se abrieron a los transeúntes por medio de una nada discreta cristalera disimulada por *visillos que permitían ver y ser visto*" (quoted in Mercer 64, his emphasis).

As the century progresses, women become almost exclusively responsible for adorning their bourgeois household (Jagoe, "Ambiguous Angels" 88) and for maintaining the fashionable appearance of *una mujer fina* (Cruz 91). As Leora Auslander observes, "Bourgeois women as consumers had two tasks. They were to adorn themselves and they were to constitute and represent the family's social identity through goods" (83). This, I argue, is precisely what Isidora is trying to do as she buys as many luxurious goods as her money can afford. The market demand for luxury items, both in Spain and throughout Europe, originates in the aristocracy and only later is transferred to the middle classes (Hetherington 110; Sánchez Llama 129). Unable to buy food the day after Christmas, Mariano—resplendent in a dapper new outfit—asks his sister "de qué servía tanta pomada en el cabello, tal lujo de corbata y camisa blanca, si entre los dos no tenían ni un

ochavo partido" ("*La desheredada*" 255). Although Isidora does dignify him with a response, her anxious possession of unnecessary and even frivolous goods clearly reinforces, in her mind, the noble parentage that she and Mariano share. She aspires through the consumption of luxury items not so much to an upper-bourgeois identity but rather to an aristocratic one.

Yet the market space, to return to Rose's phrasing, is inherently paradoxical because *el lujo*, as McKinney has insinuated, is problematically tied up with anxieties surrounding feminine desire. In fact, Aldaraca has convincingly demonstrated that contemporary social commentators consider an insatiable desire for luxury even more "horrifying" than feminine sexual desire, as the latter at least is restrained to "the physical capacity for orgasm" (107). Discussed in terms of illness, luxury as a "destructive force" (106) consumes and corrupts the angelic and asexual wife mold (104). In a public lecture in 1869 on *el lujo*, Ángel María Segovia addresses his female audience:

> …son más frecuentes en las personas de vuestro sexo los casos del hidrópico frenesí del lujo….Las mujeres, y solamente las mujeres, son las que propagan este funesto contagio….Inoculado en el alma este insaciable apetito de lucir, de distinguirse, no se repara[n] en los medios de satisfacerle. (cited in Jagoe, "Ambiguous Angels" 88)

Similarly, María Pilar Sinués de Marco, a conservative *literata*, laments, "el lujo es el cáncer de nuestro sexo, por él se pierde la modesta obrera; por él emprende negocios el laborioso empleado que ya no puede atender con su sueldo al lujo de su mujer y de sus

hijos" (cited in Aldaraca 105).[41] Clearly, the rhetoric decrying luxury directly contradicts the expectation that bourgeois women will pursue both personal and household fashions through direct participation in the public space of the market.

Lara Anderson and Catherine Jagoe have both observed that the spendthrift dominates the image of femininity in many of Galdós' *novelas contemporáneas* ("Fabricated Shopper" 100; "Ambiguous Angels" 86). The ubiquitous figure of the woman dominated by "locura crematística" or "money madness" ("Ambiguous Angels" 86) in Galdós' texts suggests for Jagoe a contemporary anxiety bordering on obsession with the apparent uncontrollability of the feminine appetite for *lujo*, which becomes both a social and moral concern (90-91). Anderson convincingly suggests that the spendthrift character, always lazy and unproductive, registers the author's concern with Spain's relative lack of production as compared with other European countries ("Fabricated Shopper" 100). Less allegorical, Jagoe's argument is equally persuasive: "The spendthrift image dramatizes the fear that masculine capitalist society, which defined bourgeois women as consumers and displayers of wealth produced by men, felt at the power it had thus placed in feminine hands" ("Ambiguous Angels" 90). Tsuchiya's reading of the protagonist as a desiring subject—which she most certainly is—clearly follows this line of argumentation. Labanyi has noted that the narrator directly compares Isidora's avid consumerism to Relimpio's drunkenness ("Modernity" 110) while Sieburth in the first chapter of her book attempts to demonstrate that the narrator views Spain's consumer

[41] Rita Felski's study of Zola's *Au bonheur des dames* analyzes the "relationship between sex and capital" ("Gender" 67) in the novel. Jagoe briefly conducts a similar analysis of Rosalía, the protagonist of Galdós' *La de Bringas*, claiming that the novel's narrator "accounts for Rosalía's passion for clothes as a kind of secondary sexual characteristic" ("Ambiguous Angels" 92).

society (in fact, the totality of modernity) as overwhelming and distasteful. Anderson likewise maintains that the novel establishes a direct causal link between consumerism (by both men and women) and Spanish decadence ("Diagnosing" 20).

Yet to claim that the narrator of *La desheredada* presents a criticism of consumerism seems deeply problematic, given that his sympathy with Miquis links the narrator to a liberal vision of Spain that would entail support for an expanding capitalist economy. While the narrator's attitude toward women is far from progressive—he comments of the female inmates of Leganés, "no serían mujeres si no necesitaran alguna vez estar bajo llave" ("*La desheredada*" 77)—he more often than not adopts a condescending or moralizing tone when chiding Isidora for her spendthrift ways. For example, the narrator often ridicules Isidora's inability to manage her money, disparagingly (although not inaccurately) lumping her in with other "gastadores—cuya organización mental para la aritmética les hace formar un grupo aparte en la especie humana" ("*La desheredada*" 174-75). At other times he reprimands her as he might a child, as when he seems to directly address the protagonist: "De vez en vez parece que quieres ordenar tu peculio; pero tus apetitos de lujo toman la delantera a tus débiles cálculos, y empiezas a gastar en caprichos, dejando sin atender las deudas sagradas" (302). Although the influence of "la célebre modista Eponina" (399) plays no small part in Isidora's abandonment of Miquis' *recetas* while she resides with Emilia and her husband José, the narrator refrains from criticizing the dressmaker, whose most recently crafted gowns are for "una joven condesa que tenía la misma estatura y talle de nuestra enferma" (400). While the narrator, often through Miquis, undoubtedly categorizes Isidora's desire for luxury items as a terrible disease to be remediated—Tsuchiya

observes that the narrator increasingly "pathologizes" the protagonist ("Marginal" 49)—he seems to have no qualms with the young countess for whom the ball gowns are intended. The narrator looks down on Isidora's spendthrift character—what he considers her "illness"—not simply because her love of luxury is itself anxiety producing but rather because it represents the protagonist's ambition to be recognized as a member of the aristocracy, that is, to belong to a higher social class.

Few critics of *La desheredada* have recognized the anxiety experienced by the novel's bourgeois narrator as he confronts an urban society characterized by increasingly unstable class categories.[42] Both Sieburth and Luis Fernández Cifuentes observe that signs of social class and respectability are rendered increasingly ambiguous throughout the novel (43; "Signs" 300). Sieburth further argues that the protagonist's aristocratic beauty, lavish dress, and utter lack of money defy existing models of social class, rendering Isidora herself a symbol of the indeterminacy of the sign implied by modernity and critiqued by the narrator throughout the novel (43). Yet the narrator's anxiety regarding class and categorization extends beyond Isidora's particularly problematic case. In the novel's opening chapter, the narrator conflates his description of Leganés and its deranged inhabitants with that of Madrid and its citizens: "Las ideas de estos desgraciados son nuestras ideas…[e]stos pobres orates son nosotros mismos. […]¡Oh!, Leganés, si quisieran representarte en una ciudad teórica…no habría arquitectos ni fisiólogos que se atrevieran a marcar con segura mano tus hospitalarias paredes" ("*La desheredada*" 72). Tomás Rufete himself suggests the difficult if not impossible

[42] Here I disagree with Sieburth, who reads the narrator as sympathetic to (if not a member of) the aristocracy. I tend more to agree with Willem, who argues that "the narrator [is] critical of Isidora precisely because she has turned her back on the middle class in favor of the aristocracy" (54).

differentiation between the sane and insane, as the narrator ponders in his description of Isidora's father, "La movilidad de sus facciones y el llamear de sus ojos, ¿anuncian exaltado ingenio, o desconsoladora imbecilidad?" (68). "Hay muchos cuerdos que son locos razonables", the narrator comments, before undermining the statement's apparent wisdom by immediately adding, "Esta sentencia es de Rufete" (72).

Rufete's *locura* is directly related to his ambitions as a social climber. Ironically, it is Isidora who describes her father's only defect: "nunca se contentaba con su suerte" (82). Throughout the first part of the novel, the narrator repeatedly grumbles that uniformity of fashion leads to a confusion of social classes that causes many to entertain ideas beyond their station. Despite their poor dress, even the working class women of *la Sanguijuelera*'s barrio "tienen su lujo, su aseo, y su elegancia de cejas arriba" (102). Although Miquis' dry analysis of the carriages promenading down *la Castellana* falls on Isidora's deaf ears, his remarks reveal the destabilizing effect of the commodity market on social class:

> Aquí, en días de fiesta, verás a todas las clases sociales. Vienen a observarse, a medirse y a ver las respectivas distancias que hay entre cada una, para asaltarse. El caso es subir al escalón inmediato. Verás muchas familias elegantes que no tienen qué comer. […] Todos se codean y se toleran todos, porque reina la igualdad. No hay envidia de nombres ilustres, sino de comodidades. (137)

Despite their evident lack of money, José Relimpio's family likewise fits this pattern. As the narrator scornfully reveals, Relimpio's wife Laura has determined that their daughters will marry doctors or government officials; her plans for their son Melchor are perhaps

even more ambitious (189). Fashion is particularly culpable for engendering a world dominated by unstable signs that no longer denote social class. In fact, clothes can no longer be counted on to signify anything: "¿Qué mujer no tiene sombrero en los años que corren? […] La humanidad marcha, con los progresos de la industria y la baratura de las confecciones, a ser toda ella elegante o toda cursi" (189).[43] Isidora herself embodies this blurring of *cursilería* and elegance, as the narrator admits that "tenía una maestría singular y no aprendida para arreglarse" (188). Even McKinney, who in his analysis of the protagonist definitely concludes that Isidora lacks *distinción* and is in fact a *cursi*, cannot resist noting that "her great beauty, her charm, [and] her imaginative capacity" (74) somehow render Isidora beyond such categories—and in doing so, effectively undermines his entire argument.

The narrator, then, looks down on Isidora's passion for luxury goods not because they symbolize some latent erotic desire—we remember Labanyi's observation that Isidora is not seduced by her lovers but rather by the commodities they offer ("Modernity" 110)— but rather because her consumerist activities (and ensuing fashionable display) problematize the social categories that the narrator wants desperately to maintain. While the narrator balks at her inability to manage money, Isidora herself experiences consumerism liberating, especially in the first part of the novel when she relies only on her quixotic uncle's money for spending power. As the narrator laments the

[43] In her excellent book, Noël Valis demonstrates that *cursilería* and its dominant image of the *mujer cursi* "arise out of middle class aspirations and frustrations" (4). *Lo cursi* "reflect[s] the need to keep up appearances and the inability to do so in a satisfactory way", especially for members of the lower middle class who face mounting pressure to differentiate themselves from the working classes (11).

democratizing potential of fashion, Isidora believes precisely the opposite[44]: that through the acquisition of goods she will successfully craft her noble identity. In addition to an evident performance of gender, we might view Isidora's shopping sprees in the first part of the novel and breathtaking manipulation of high fashion in the second as an (ultimately failed) performance of class.

Rita Felski has theorized that to be a member of the lower middle class, a label that she uses interchangeably with the petite bourgeoisie throughout her essay, is to have a nonidentity as opposed to a firm class identity ("Nothing" 34). Thus Isidora, who according to the narrator belongs to the lower middle class,[45] is left to construct for herself a positive social identity as a disenfranchised member of the aristocracy. In the first part of the novel, the urban spaces of Madrid—and particularly the city center's shopping district with its irresistible shops and tempting store windows—strongly influence the protagonist's self-image. Her first day in Madrid, Isidora walks with eager steps to visit her aunt Encarnación, nicknamed *la Sanguijuelera*, and brother Mariano, alias *Pecado*, neither of whom she has seen for several years. Once a middle class merchant, Encarnación's economic situation has taken several turns for the worse (most of her fortune lost to bailing Tomás Rufete out of various difficult situations). She now resides in "uno de los barrios más excéntricos de Madrid" ("*La desheredada*" 94). Although Isidora clearly looks forward to her reunion with her family, as she approaches

[44] On the "democratization" of fashion and clothes in nineteenth-century Europe and the United States, see Diana Crane's book, *Fashion and its social agendas* (2000).
[45] Here I follow Ribbans' claim that Mariano and Isidora have "an entirely different social and class orientation" ("Mariano" 779). Mariano has been raised to identify with the working class. Despite Isidora's aristocratic pretensions, her humble appearance at the beginning of the novel ("que inspira lástima" ("*La desheredada*" 78) according to the novel's narrator) coupled with her residence in the Relimpio household suggests that the narrator situates her as lower-middle class.

her aunt's house the protagonist experiences increasing disgust at the neighborhood's squalid surroundings. She picks her way through the filthy *barrio*, perceiving it as "la caricatura de una ciudad hecha de cartón podrido" (95). The narrator continues his grim description:

> Aquello no era aldea ni tampoco ciudad; era una piltrafa de capital, cortada y arrojada por vía de limpieza para que no corrompiera el centro. […] [L]os residuos de varias industrias tintóreas, al punto le pareció [a Isidora] que por allí abajo se despeñaban arroyuelos de sangre, vinagre y betún, junto con un licor verde que sin duda iba a formar ríos de veneno. Alzóse con cuidadosa mano las faldas y avanzó venciendo su repugnancia. (95-96)

Of course we see here Isidora's active imagination at work. At the same time, however, her repulsion by the evidently poor, working-class neighborhood not only suggests that she will not see eye to eye with her aunt but also reinforces her nascent aristocratic aspirations.

Horrified by the rope factory where Mariano works and offended by her aunt's disbelief of her nobility, Isidora indignantly leaves *la Sanguijuelera*'s neighborhood behind: "salió andando aprisa, cuesta arriba, en busca de la ronda de Embajadores, que debía conducirla a país civilizado" (112). Similarly disgusted by the common *ventorillo* where she eats with Miquis ("qué ordinario es esto…Esto no es para mí" (127), Isidora delights in their visit to the Prado, where she expresses dismay that the lower classes are granted access to such artistic finery (117).[46] Likewise, she enjoys el Retiro, quickly dispatching her childish desires to run free in the grass and lamenting instead her

[46] For an excellent analysis of Isidora's experience in the Prado Museum, see Cifuentes' aptly named chapter, "Isidora in the Museum".

embarrassing lack of gloves and a parasol (118-19). While she finds the decoration of Joaquín Pez's study extraordinarily impressive (233), the Aransis palace not only leaves her awestruck—"Isidora, muda, absorta, abrumada de sentimientos extraños a las emociones del arte; mirándolo todo con cierta ansiedad mezclada de respeto" (210)—but also cements her conviction of her noble identity. In the palace, as Isidora gazes at the portrait of the women she believes to be her deceased mother, she nearly faints; feeling expatriated from her homeland, as she leaves the Aransis residence she can only exclaim, "¡Todo es mío!"

Yet the city center—la Puerta del Sol—is the urban space that most attracts the protagonist in the first part of the novel, when she still fervently believes that the Marquesa de Aransis will joyfully embrace her as a grandchild once they are presented the opportunity to meet. On her daylong *paseo* with Miquis we first see Isidora admire the shops' tempting window displays, enraptured by both the merchandise on display and her own image: "Isidora se detenía ante los escaparates para ver y admirar lo mucho y vario que en ellos hay siempre. También era motivo de sus detenciones el deseo oculto de mirarse en los cristales" (117). Storefront windows begin to display merchandise in Madrid and Barcelona beginning in the 1820s and '30s, bringing with them fixed prices, ready-made clothing, and credit lines (Cruz 124; Mercer 63). By the 1850s, the *escaparates* of Madrid's city center constitute a tourist attraction in and of themselves with visitors: according to Antonio Flores, visitors to the capital "viene[n] expresa y decididamente a ver los escaparates" (cited in Mercer 64). According to Mercer, by the second half of the nineteenth century, "[s]hopping has become an incomparable

spectacle, and shops are described as destinations or monuments, possibly even outranking the inveterate cultural landmarks of Madrid" (43).

Tsuchiya argues that in the chapter "Tomándose posesión de Madrid", in which the protagonist's spendthrift ways spiral out of control, Isidora "embodies the archetype of the flâneur" ("Marginal" 33). Tsuchiya's interpretation of Isidora privileges the character's erotic desire, as the critic bases her theorization of the female flâneur on Wilson's assertion that the "sphinx in the city"—her term for women who roam freely through urban space—is in the nineteenth century indelibly connected to prostitution. Wilson's argument here is predicated on Baudelaire's comparison of the poet-flâneur to the prostitute, as both sell themselves on the market and also walk the streets.[47] Thus Wilson argues, "just as the flâneur was a prostitute, perhaps also the prostitute could be said to be the female flâneur. There were of course important differences, but both shared an intimate knowledge of the dark recesses of urban life" (55). In my opinion, Tsuchiya's comparison of Isidora in "Tomándose posesión de Madrid" to Wilson's female flâneur is deeply problematic given that at this point in the text the protagonist has resisted Joaquín's advances. Isidora reflects on her situation at the beginning of the "Tomándose posesión" chapter: "No es caso nuevo ni mucho menos…Los libros están llenos de casos semejantes. ¡Yo he leído mi propia historia tantas veces…! Y ¿qué cosa hay más linda que cuando nos pintan una joven pobrecita, muy pobrecita…que es bonita como los ángeles y, por supuesto, honrada, más honrada que los ángeles?" (*La desheredada* 171).[48]

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[47] Wilson explains that in Baudelaire's estimation, the poet expresses the deepest part of his soul. In selling his poetry, then, he in essence sells himself—hence the connection to prostitution (55).

[48] Multiple critics have aptly commented on Isidora's propensity to confuse her own reality with the fiction of her romantic books, in which the poor heroine discovers an

Despite her attraction to Joaquín, then, Isidora continues to mold for herself a noble identity that privileges her *honrada* virginity, following the models set forth in her romantic novels until the Marquesa refuses to recognize her as a granddaughter.

Yet Isidora, for whom the streets and shops of central Madrid hold a special fascination, does delight in exploring this urban space alone, of losing herself in a crowd of potential consumers: "[h]abía salido temprano a comprar varias cosillas, o, si se quiere, había salido por salir, por ver aquel Madrid tan bullicioso, tan movible, espejo de tantas alegrías, con sus calles llenas de luz, sus mil tiendas, su desocupado genio que va y viene como en perpetuo paseo" (170). Here we can see that she directly relates her liberating *paseos* to the joy of shopping. While the protagonist herself walks alone, it seems as though the city itself, "en perpetuo paseo", accompanies her as she goes from storefront to storefront. The commodities displayed in the store windows fuel her imagination: "Al punto empezó a ver escaparates, solicitada de tanto objeto bonito, rico, suntuoso. Ésta era su delicia mayor cuando a la calle salía, y origen de vivísimos apetitos que conmovían su alma" (172). Instead of Wilson's eroticized female flâneur, I suggest that Isidora resembles the *flâneuse* as theorized by Anne Friedberg.

As Friedberg posits her, the flâneuse is indelibly related to newly-opened urban spaces of consumerism:

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aristocratic inheritance (Gullón, "Originalidad" 41-45; Rodgers "*La desheredada*" 285, 289; Hafter 22). Perhaps of most interest is Jagoe's convincing argument that Galdós in *La desheredada* sets out to diminish and accordingly feminize serialized novels in order to establish his own realist novels as a canonical, national genre (see "Disinheriting the Feminine"). This is somewhat ironic given that Ribbans has demonstrated that *La desheredada* itself is first published as a *novela por entregas* (see "*La desheredada,* novela por entregas").

> The female flâneur, or flâneuse, was not possible until she was free to roam the city on her own. And this was equated with the privilege of shopping on her own. The development in the late nineteenth century of shopping as socially acceptable leisure activity for bourgeois women…encouraged women to be peripatetic without escort. (36)

More recently (2007), Kevin Hetherington has expanded the theory of the consuming flâneuse, emphasizing (to return to Rose's term) the "paradoxical space" that she occupies.[49] Although the flâneuse is the object of the male gaze as she shops, she "looks back" at those who would objectify her by asserting herself as a consuming subject (121).

While she is harshly criticized by the narrator for rashly spending rather than saving the money her uncle periodically sends her, Isidora experiences the rush of shopping not only as an idle or even erotic pleasure but rather as an affirmation of her aristocratic identity. Isidora's initial purchases of gloves and a parasol are in essence necessary for a stylish *paseo*, as we have seen her observe in the park that no one goes out into public without such items. Yet the myriad other items that the protagonist buys in the first part of the novel are luxury commodities that function to either adorn her body—diamond earrings, dresses, perfumes—or beautify her humble living quarters—birdcage, porcelain jar, bronze candlesticks—in the Relimpio household. Even the purchase of

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[49] Hetherington's study provides a useful history of the term "flâneuse", as well as the flâneur, evidently drawn from the writings of Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin. The existence of the flâneuse (either as a consuming subject, as Friedberg and Hetherington posit her; or as a potentially erotic subject, as per Wilson's formulation) continues to be debated. Janet Wolff, for example, insists that the "flâneuse" does not exist because she lacks the self-awareness that Baudelaire's flâneur implies (19-20). The essays compiled in *The Invisible Flâneuse?: Gender, Public Space, and Visual Culture in Nineteenth-century Paris* (2006) comprise a helpful introduction to this debate.

books, a map of Madrid and the Royal Academic Spanish dictionary squares with Isidora's self-critique that "verdaderamente ella deseaba y necesitaba instruirse" (122) in preparation for her aristocratic position. The consumption of such luxury goods becomes for Isidora a performance of the noble class to which in her mind she belongs, where money is no object.[50] We can see in the protagonist's plans for future purchases the desire for differentiation from her lower-middle class relatives, the Relimpios: "Estaba muy desconsolada por no tener un buen baño; pero ¿cómo podía satisfacer este gusto en casa tan pequeña? […] Mucha, muchísima falta le hacía un buen mundo [un baúl grande] para poner la ropa; pero ya lo compraría más adelante" (243-45). While she dares barely speak of her noble aspirations for fear of ridicule or miscomprehension, the shopping district of the city center becomes the only place where, through her purchases, Isidora may act as the noblewoman she believes herself to be.

While he does not consider the protagonist a flâneuse, Cifuentes comments on Isidora's "voracious gaze" (81) as she greedily takes in the sights—especially in the *escaparates* and the museum—on her *paseo* with Miquis. As she contemplates the varied items for sale in the store windows, Isidora's stare resembles the aforementioned "look back" that Hetherington theorizes as the gaze of the flâneuse. Specifically, the flâneuse's

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[50] While, as we have seen, bourgeois women are expected to participate in the market and even buy some luxury items, thrift—meaning keen money management—remains a central value of the bourgeois class. As Mercer has argued, Spanish women as consumers are actually evaluated while shopping and even promenading on their ability to discretely differentiate between necessary and superfluous goods: "a woman's ability to resist the luxuries on the marketplace would legitimize her in the public sphere" (67). Iñigo Sánchez Llama affirms that "el lujo y las modas en Occidente tienen un origen aristocrático y son factibles por la alta capacidad adquisitiva de las mujeres nobles" (129). Thus, through her consumption of luxury goods Isidora acts as a member of the aristocratic class to which in her mind she belongs.

gaze is that of choice, as the spaces of the shops and their window displays allow for the expression of her desires and tastes: "Stores…encouraged a distracted, glancing, roving way of seeing that wanted to take everything in without mastering it, a way of seeing that was fascinated by details, in order that multiple purchases might be made on impulse or through browsing" (121). Isidora employs such a distracted and roving gaze as she admires the many items on display in the *escaparates*, including of course her own reflection:

> Sin dejar de contemplar su faz en el vidrio para ver qué tal iba, devoraba con sus ojos las infinitas variedades y formas del lujo y de la moda. […] Aquí, las soberbias telas, tan variadas y ricas…; allí, las joyas que resplandecen…; más lejos, ricas pieles, trapos sin fin, corbatas, chucherías que enamoran la vista por su extrañeza, objetos en que se adunan el arte inventor y la dócil industria…; después, los comestibles finos, el jabalí colmilludo…; más adelante, los peregrinos muebles…y por último, bronces, cerámicas, relojes, ánforas, candelabros y otros prodigios sin número que parecen soñados, según son de raros y bonitos. ("*La desheredada*" 173)

I have suppressed in this citation nearly half of the original text to preserve space. This section in its entirety comprises one breathless sentence; item after item is described and listed as though Isidora's hungry gaze rapidly and haphazardly inventories her options with little regard to her own purchasing power.

Hetherington further posits that the gaze of the flâneuse "facilitated dreaming and fantasy as an expression of desire. […] Shoppers were allowed to browse in a space that

presented an interior world of luxury and fantasy" (122). Similarly, as Isidora contemplates the luxury items on display, our narrator tells us:

> El entusiasmo y la esperanza que llenaban su alma la inducían a mirar todo como cosa propia, al menos como cosa creada para ella, y decía:
>
> — Con esas pieles me abrigaré yo en mi coche; en mi casa no habrá otros muebles que éstos; pisaré esas alfombras; las amas de cría de mis niños llevarán esos corales; mi esposo…, porque he de tener esposo…, usará estas petacas, bastones, escribanías… (173)

The list of items that her husband will use goes on and on. Isidora's gaze, that of the flâneuse, not only determines her purchases but also clearly affirms through such flights of fancy the noble lifestyle that she anticipates. While we should not overstate the flâneuse's empowerment—her freedom of choice is predicated on access to usually male purse strings—to view Isidora as flâneuse suggests that the protagonist experiences the shopping spaces of the city center as potentially liberating: only through shopping can she both act as a moneyed aristocrat and accumulate goods that affirm her identity as such. "La confusión de clases es la moneda falsa de la igualdad" (189), laments the narrator. While short-lived, Isidora's shopping sprees—powered by democratizing money—allow her to consume luxurious goods in accordance with her noble self-conception.

As her extreme reaction to her noble mother's portrait in the Aransis palace suggests, Isidora's identification with the wealthy upper classes is largely predicated on a self-awareness of her own beauty. While she eagerly buys luxury commodities in the first part of the novel, Isidora clearly considers her body—and not the items that adorn it—as

testimony of her innate nobility. During one of her many nights of insomnia, she thinks, "Tengo un cuerpo precioso. Lo digo yo y basta" (216). With this reflection the protagonist launches into a vivid *ensueño* in which she attends aristocratic balls and delights in an endless supply of luxurious fabrics, clothes and jewelry. Yet it is her beautiful body that in Isidora's mind represents her right to the Aransis name: "Soy mi propio testigo y mi cara proclama un derecho. Soy el retrato vivo de mi madre" (268), Isidora desperately cries to the Marquesa following her refusal, who is willing to admit only a casual resemblance. At this point in the text, I agree with Cifuentes' assertion that Isidora believes in a one-to-one correspondence of signs ("Signs" 304). In Isidora's mind, her natural beauty serves as direct proof of her nobility. Following the Marquesa's rejection, however, I believe Isidora's worldview undergoes a radical change as demonstrated by her decision to embrace Joaquín Pez as a lover. For the rest of the text, she will not compare herself to the rags-to-riches heroines of her romantic novels as they, unlike her, are *honradas.* Rather, she directly compares herself to aristocratic heroines, such as when she decides to dress up as a "mujer del pueblo" to celebrate the San Isidro festival—"en varias novelas de malos y buenos autores había visto Isidora caprichos semejantes, y también en una célebre zarzuela y en una opera" (355)—or when she compares herself to Marie Antoinette during her time in the Modelo jail (431).

Following her expulsion from the Aransis palace, the narrator suggests that something within Isidora has changed: "ella misma era punto menos que otra persona" (270). Denied the warm homecoming she expected, Isidora walks breathlessly to the city center, where "en ella renacía, dominando su ser por entero, aquel su afán de ver tiendas, aquel apetito de comprar todo, de probar diversos manjares…Se admiraba en los cristales

y se detenía larguísimos ratos delante de las tiendas como si escogiera" (274-75). José Relimpio can barely keep up with her as she walks from storefront to storefront down Montera street: " —Dejemos esto, chica—decía don José a su ahijada, que miraba embebecida las joyas—. Esto no es para nosotros" (275). In response, Isidora returns to la Puerta del Sol in search of Joaquín, denying once and for all identity with the lower-middle class that Relimpio and his family represents. Isidora—holding fast to her belief in her nobility—refuses to give up the world of luxurious commodities to which, as the daughter of a marquesa, she declares a right.

With the rise of shopping spaces—and particularly the department store—in nineteenth century Europe, Hetherington argues that women who buy goods in such public spaces construct their subjectivity differently from men who participate in the market (125). While men in a capitalist economy adopt a "production view of the subject" –meaning that they are "actualized through production and labor" (129)—women embrace a "consumption view of the subject". Hetherington elaborates, "A consumption view [of the self] is one that…see[s] the self as something that is constituted through the act of extension into the world of goods (through consuming the material world)" (125). Such a construction of subjectivity I believe characterizes Isidora in the second half of the novel. When the Marquesa refuses to recognize her natural nobility—represented by her body and specifically by her face—Isidora realizes that it is not enough to "be" or to "act" noble to ensure the aristocratic recognition to which she aspires. Rather, she must do whatever it takes to "look" noble in a society based almost wholly on appearances. The protagonist becomes increasingly dependent on the accumulation of luxury goods in order to construct and maintain an aristocratic façade

that affirms her noble identity. Therein her resolution—decided in the heart of Madrid's central shopping district—to give into Joaquín's advances and take him as a lover.

It would be perhaps unfair to not recognize Joaquín Pez as the only man that Isidora claims to love throughout *La desheredada*. Yet their relationship, constantly parodied by the narrator as a clichéd romantic play, functions only as long as Pez enables his lover to enact her aristocratic identity. While in the early years of their relationship Isidora enjoys virtually unlimited access to luxury commodities, following Joaquín's economic annihilation Isidora's determination to twice save his endangered reputation (and bank account) also represents, in her mind, an aristocratic performance of generosity—even as the means to this end paradoxically entail decidedly dishonorable actions. As Isidora dramatically hands over to her lover one thousand *duros*, she declares, "No hay nada que me cautive tanto, que tanto interese en mi alma, como un acto de estos atrevidos y difíciles, en que entren la generosidad y el peligro. Nací para estar arriba, muy arriba" (343). Thus while Schnepf has convincingly interpreted their relationship as evidence of Isidora's narcissism ("Mirror" 234), it seems important to observe that such acts of exaggerated generosity also fortify her identification with the aristocracy, especially as Joaquín—albeit by marriage and not blood—enjoys the title of "marqués".

Let us return to the chief means through which the protagonist delineates her noble identity in the second half of the novel: through the accumulation and display of sartorial goods. Until Joaquín's credit runs dry, Isidora is able to shed the worn clothing that represents her embarrassing petite-bourgeois identity and dress instead as a noblewoman, employing her impeccable taste and style. Significantly, Pez maintains control of his lover's abode on Hortaleza Street, not only by paying the rent but also by

managing the house's interior space. It is Pez who takes charge of furnishing the rooms, buying odd compilations of mismatched furniture pieces that the narrator enumerates in great detail. Isidora, who finds even Joaquin's wall decorations distasteful and the living room set terribly *cursi*, exercises little to no control over the furnishing of her residence. Yet Miquis describes the protagonist—even after the birth of her illegitimate child—in glowing terms: "Está ahora esa mujer…, vamos…, está guapísima, encantadora. Parece que ha crecido un poco, que ha engrosado otro poco y que ha ganado considerablemente en gracia, en belleza, en expresión. Se me figura que será una mujer célebre" (290). While her domestic spaces are defined by men throughout the text, Isidora successfully constructs for herself an aristocratic identity based on the consumption of especially sartorial commodities.

While Isidora's attractiveness does not go unremarked in the first half of the novel, once she possesses the financial means to dress as *una dama* the protagonist's breathtaking elegance takes on almost mythological proportions. In Isidora's most "aristocratic" moments—when her beauty is described as unparalled—the narrator focuses almost exclusively on her clothing as he describes the protagonist's awe-inspiring appearance. When Relimpio contemplates Isidora "más que con amor con veneración" (340) following his *ahijada*'s liaison with Alejandro Sánchez Botín, her beauty emanates from "una bata azul de corte elegantísimo"; it is the elaborate style of her hair—rather than its natural color, length or even abundance— that completes the goddess-like image (340). Before the San Isidro Festival, as she dons her luxurious disguise as "una mujer del pueblo", Isidora once more achieves mythical status, described by the narrator as a "Venus flamenca" (355). While the narrator makes passing reference to her "hermosos

ojos" and admires once more her breathtaking hairstyle, Isidora's conversion into an Andalusian Venus is largely predicated in sartorial terms: "No le faltaba nada, ni el mantón de Manila, ni el pañuelo de seda en la cabeza, empingorotado como una graciosa mitra, ni el vestido negro de gran cola y alto por delante para mostrar un calzado amarillo, ni los ricos anillos, entre los cuales descollaba la indispensable haba de mar" (355). And while Miquis overcomes the temptation to seduce Isidora when she first asks him for financial help, days later, when he surprises Isidora trying on the aforementioned ball gowns designed by the French Eponina, Miquis—after exclaiming, "Estás…ya no hermosa, ni guapa, sino… ¡divina!" (402)—literally runs away to resist her magentic attraction (405).

That Isidora delights in her own reflection has been the subject of much critical attention. Schnepf claims her affiliation with mirrors and storefront reflections manifest acute narcissism, for which Isidora is ultimately condemned (233). For Tsuchiya, Isidora's adoration of herself in the mirror demonstrates her body's commodification, as well as an awareness of "the value of her body in the marketplace" ("Marginal" 43). Yet we might also view her self-contemplation in the mirror as a method of affirming the aristocratic identity to which she aspires. In a series of lecture notes on utopias and heterotopias, Michel Foucault argues that the space of the mirror in fact espouses a singular combination of both. The mirror, as a "placeless place", is utopic in that it allows the viewer to visually project themselves into unreality: "I see myself where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space…I am over there, there where I am not" ("Of Other Spaces" 4). Yet, Foucault continues, the mirror must also be heterotopic given that it possesses a concrete existence. Thus when Isidora looks in the mirror—as a *dama disfrazada* before

the San Isidro Festival, as Melchor's *modistas* prepare her for summer travel, and in Eponina's gown shop—she sees her image as occupying the utopic space of the mirror. Isidora is fascinated by her beautiful image precisely because the mirror not only displays the concrete accumulation of sartorial goods that constitute her aristocratic identity but also projects her consumption-based subjectivity into an-other (utopic) space where, we might assume, her nobility is both proven and unquestioned.

For even as Isidora believes that, through the consumption of fashionable clothes, jewels and other accessories, an aristocratic façade affirms her noble identity, the narrator underlines that in the eyes of society the appearance of nobility, attained through decidedly dishonorable actions, does not directly translate. As I have already suggested, the protagonist's refusal to act in accordance with her more humble social class greatly unsettles the narrator, who chides her: "Isidora de Aransis, mírate bien en ese espejo social que se llama opinión, y considera si con tu actual trazo puedes presentarte a reclamar el nombre y la fortuna de una familia ilustre" (301). He continues shortly thereafter, "Sabes vestir con tal arte la mentira, que tú misma llegas a tenerla por verdad" (301). While this quote actually condemns her fantasy life, his use of the word "vestir" extends his didactic rant to a critique of Isidora's presumptuous fashion.

Yet the narrator must admit the protagonist's flawless sense of style and the perfect execution of her noble appearance, even as he accentuates her ambiguous position within society:

> Isidora salió. Su traje realizaba el difícil prodigio, no a todas concedido, de unir la riqueza a la modestia, pues todo en ella era selecto, nada chillón, sobrecargado ni llamativo. Llevaba en su cara y en sus

> maneras la más clara ejecutoria que se pudiera imaginar, y por dondequiera que iba hacía sombra de blasones. Y, sin embargo, por desgracia suya, empezaba a ser conocida y cuantos la encontraron sabían que no era una lady.
>
> ¡Dama por la figura, por la elegancia, por el vestido!... Por el pensamiento y por las acciones, ¿qué era?... La sentencia es difícil. (340-41)

Notable here is that, despite the narrator's clear unease and at times condemnation of Isidora's upper-class aspirations, her noble appearance continues to preclude clear categorization. That is, even though in this passage the protagonist has left Botin's flat to rekindle her illicit romance with Joaquín, the narrator still cannot absolutely deny—even as he refuses to affirm—that through her beautiful appearance Isidora embodies nobility.

In her illuminating article on Galdós' *La de Bringas,* Dorota Heneghan challenges traditional interpretations of Rosalía Bringas, the spendthrift protagonist of the 1884 novel. She reads Rosalía's consumption, modification, and arrangement of sartorial items as an empowering performance of gender. The protagonist's unswerving love of fashion provides her only aperture for self-expression and freedom within the confines of the strict, bourgeois household her husband maintains. Thus while both Jagoe and Heneghan read Galdosian spendthrift characters as evidencing the growing complexities of the *ángel del hogar* model—let us remember that Jagoe entitles her book chapter on depictions of insatiable feminine consumption in Galdós' novels "Struggling with the Angel"—Heneghan views Rosalía's penchant for fashion in a decidedly more positive light. Similarly, in this chapter I have suggested that Isidora's seemingly irrational

spending habits and ardent "need" for luxury commodities—and especially clothes—may be read as potentially liberating practices and desires. In the space of the commodity market, as the flâneuse who through her exercise of choice looks back at and destabilizes—if only for a moment—the masculine gaze objectifying her, Isidora as she roams from store to store engages in a performance not only of gender but also of class. Her exquisite sense of style, exercised most freely during her liaisons with Joaquín, Botín and even Melchor, simultaneously destabilizes indicators of class and in Isidora's mind affirms her noble identity.

Yet in Isidora's case, the confusion regarding social class does not stem from the democratization of style or the fact that, as we have already seen the narrator glumly comment, all women possess hats. Rather, Isidora problematizes class categories precisely because her performance of nobility—when she has access to money, of course—is so convincing. Here, the word "performance" emphasizes the extent to which she relies on outward appearances for the success of her enactment. If McKinney's evaluation of Isidora as a *cursi* has merit, then, she must at least be differentiated from "ordinary", bourgeois *cursis* such as Rosalía, who are relatively content with their petite bourgeois identity. Perhaps the biggest difference between Rosalía and Isidora consists in the latter's unbounded imagination. While Isidora's aristocratic pretensions may ultimately cause her material ruin—here I must reiterate that I see very little emancipatory potential in her turn to prostitution—she, as will Tristana, dares to envision for herself an ultimately unattainable space in society.[51]

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[51] Like Tristana, Isidora too comes to desire "libertad honrada" ("*Tristana*" 124). Moments before police appear to incarcerate her (the irony is inescapable), she tells

Of course, to return to Gillian Rose's formulation of gendered paradoxical space, the "liberatory" possibilities implied by the space of the market are inherently paradoxical and ephemeral in nature. Isidora's reclamation of her noble right to unconstrained consumption necessitates both the sacrifice of her honor and the espousal of an aristocratic identity based on appearance, a noble façade that requires subjugation to a lover in order to engage in the very activities that allow for self-expression. We can see the untenability of Isidora's precarious occupation of market space most vividly through her aforementioned participation in the popular San Isidro Festival. In openly defying Botín's orders to not leave the flat, Isidora asserts her own power of consumption and momentarily attains the independence it affords her. After all, her exhibition at the festival fully affirms her aristocratic identity—she looks the part and plays it well, generously giving alms to all of the beggars in her path and buying nearly everything within her grasp. In fact, this scene denotes the last time we see Isidora act as flâneuse:

> De todas las fruslerías hizo acopio, y los bolsillos de la pandilla llenáronse de avellanas, piñones, garbanzos torrados, pastelillos y cuanto Dios y la tía Javiera criaron. Nunca como entonces le saltó el dinero en el bolsillo y le escoció en las manos, pidiéndole, por extraño modo, que lo gastase. Lo gastaba a manos llenas, y si hubiera llevado mil duros, los habría liquidado también. […] Por último, se le antojó también pitar, y compró el más largo, el más floreado y sonoro de los pitos posibles. (356)

While the narrator views Isidora's frivolous purchases, as he does all her reckless spending, with characteristic disapproval and unease, in this scene the protagonist

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Joaquín in the manner of a daydream, "No me casaré, Joaquín; viviré soltera, riéndome del mundo. ¡Soltera, libre!" (*La desheredada* 419).

delights in this carnivalesque space of consumption and charity precisely because it allows her to perform her aristocratic identity: "Por dondequiera que pasaba, recibía una ovación. Preguntaban todos quién era" (356). That she buys the longest "pito", in phallic terms, further suggests her feminine ("pito floreado") appropriation of traditionally masculine buying power.

Yet Isidora's occupation of this space is, as I have already suggested, ultimately untenable: Botín abandons her that very night. While Isidora certainly has the final word in their final argument—"Su dinero de usted no basta a pagarme…valgo yo infinitamente más" (359)—this assertion clearly points to the growing recognition of herself as an objectified commodity, as we have seen both Cifuentes and Tsuchiya argue. I do not wish to minimize Isidora's own sense of objectification, especially as her conversion into commodity defines her fate as a prostitute. Yet I would emphasize that it is not until Isidora gives up the belief in her noble parentage that she enters into her final crisis. Abandoning the *pleito* in exchange for her freedom from jail, Isidora's acquiescence to *Gaitica* represents the protagonist's final attempt to construct her subjectivity via consumption. Incredulous that Isidora would accept *Gaitica*'s offer, Relimpio despairingly recapitulates his goddaughter's justification, expressed through her ardent need for "libertad, comodidades, buena ropa, baño, casa, lujo, dinero" (481). Yet now, the narrator tells us, "Isidora no creía en sí misma, o lo que es lo mismo, ya no creía en nada" (480). As she no longer identifies as a member of the aristocracy, the protagonist can no longer convincingly perform that role; she no longer claims the right to those luxurious commodities that previously affirmed quite convincingly her identity as "Isidora de Aransis". "Yo me fui, ¿te enteras?" she tells Miquis. "Yo me he muerto.

Aquella Isidora ya no existe más que en tu imaginación" (490). Neither "de Rufete" nor "de Aransis", Isidora returns once more to the space of the market, this time as an anonymous, powerless commodity as opposed to an empowered consumer.

In this chapter, I have argued against interpretations of Isidora's turn to prostitution as liberating. While she does choose her fate, the historical reality of prostitution in Restoration Spain suggests that Isidora will enjoy very little autonomy; the strict municipal regulation of brothels and mandatory registration of prostitutes in Madrid at this time would in effect prevent the protagonist from escaping hegemonic bourgeois control. Instead, I posit the consumerist spaces that Isidora occupies throughout the novel as ephemeral sites of liberation for the protagonist. As a flâneuse, she exercises choice in the market—a public space—and thus challenges the impractical bourgeois ideology of separate private and public spheres. The impeccable sense of style she demonstrates through the acquisition of sartorial goods renders her so breathtaking beautiful that she completely disrupts any meaningful system of signifying class. Through both the consumption and display of luxury goods, Isidora denies her petite-bourgeois identity, engaging instead in a performance of class that posits an aristocratic appearance as sufficient affirmation of her noble identity. While Isidora ultimately seems destined to fail, the protagonist's foray into spaces of consumption highlights not only contemporary gendered preoccupations but also deep-seated anxieties regarding the suddenly malleable and therefore unstable constitution of class identity. Writing in 1881, Galdós seems to foreshadow the growing instability of bourgeois hegemony in Restoration Spain at the turn of the century. As we shall see in the following chapter, the insecurities faced by

Spain's dominant middle class will become even more pressing in the text of *Tristana*, published by Galdós over ten years later.

Chapter Three

Embodying Disability in *Tristana*

> Illness often takes on the disguise of love, and plays the same odd tricks. It invests certain faces with divinity, sets us to wait, hour after hour, with pricked ears for the creaking of a stair, and wreathes the faces of the absent (plain enough in health, Heaven knows) with a new significance, while the mind concocts a thousand legends and romances about them for which it has neither time nor taste in health.
>
> Virginia Woolf, *On Being Ill* (1926)

It may seem strange to include in a project on the spatial imagination Galdós' relatively short novel, *Tristana* (1892). The bustling streets of Madrid, the cacophonous throngs of people, the complex social networks that characterize many of the *novelas contemporáneas* and indeed the other novels studied in this project: all are conspicuously absent. In fact Farris Anderson argues in his revealingly titled article "Ellipsis and Space in *Tristana*" that the novel functions on the basis of absence and lack. This is particularly apparent in the novel's conception of space, which underlines the characters' marginality through both the "virtual invisibility" of Madrid (Anderson 63) and don Lope's movement northward, away from the city center, as he moves from house to house in Chamberí. Anderson's excellent article vindicates the novel's perceived lack of realist detail by arguing that *Tristana*'s indeterminacy are intentional on Galdós' part, and that

this later work in many ways aligns itself with or at least foreshadows literary modernism (61).

Yet space in Anderson's conception is static, and his extremely informative tracking of the novel's characters across the cityscape (or rather, the outskirts of it), traces them against a two-dimensional map of Madrid's *afueras.* There is of course nothing wrong with this; the critic's exemplary knowledge of nineteenth-century Madrid's topography serves the purposes of his essay while his article takes an important step towards the legitimation of *Tristana* as a novel worthy of study in its own right. In this essay, however, I propose to follow recent conceptualizations of space and place by feminist geographers, who in their field assert the central role of gender in spatial production. Just as space and place are gendered, so too gender relations and "gendering" are social and spatial processes (Nelson and Seager 7). Broad and interdisciplinary by nature, feminist geography demonstrates how "oppressions are embedded in, and produced through, material and symbolic space and place" (7).

Feminist geography is especially interested in studying the body as it moves through space. The body itself is no longer considered a concrete location but rather a "concept" that, according to Lise Nelson and Joni Seager, "disrupts naturalized dichotomies and embraces a multiplicity of material and symbolic sites" (2). This chapter proposes a rereading of Galdós' *Tristana* that analyzes the eponymous protagonist's embodied experience in the spaces she inhabits. I argue that throughout the novel, Tristana's body is inscribed with discourses of disability that delineate her responses to the repression implied by Restoration Spain's masculine bourgeois hegemony.

Although scholarly analysis of *Tristana* has exploded in recent decades, critical interest in the novel may be considered a relatively recent phenomenon when compared to the reception of the majority of Galdós' other *novelas contemporáneas*. Even Galdós' contemporaries seem underwhelmed by the text. As is well-known, Emilia Pardo Bazán takes umbrage with Tristana's tragic fate and criticizes her author for failing to fully develop the feminist themes that are nascent, to Pardo Bazán's critical eye, in the novel: "cree el lector que va a presenciar una obra transcendental; que va a asistir al proceso libertador y redentor de una alma [sic] que representa millones de almas por el mismo horrible peso, a sabiendas o sin advertirlo… No es así" ("Tristana" 85-86). Anticipating a wave of recent feminist criticism of the novel, Pardo Bazán holds Galdós himself responsible for Tristana's mutilation. Leopoldo Alas unsurprisingly disagrees with Pardo Bazán's assessment of the novel, arguing that "Galdós fue con Tristana no menos cruel que el mundo" (26). Despite their differences (in this particular critical opinion and more broadly), both Clarín and Pardo Bazán account for what they view as the lower quality of the novel by concluding that Galdós was too engaged in the production of his play *Realidad* (1892) to write *Tristana* to his usual standard. "Si él hubiese empeñado en esta obra los recursos que generalmente emplea", Alas concludes, "la pobre coja soñadora resaltaría entre las más bellas figuras femeninas que ha ideado el autor" (26). Disappointing novel or not, *Tristana* garners virtually no attention at the time of its publication (Sackett 71).

The tendency to view *Tristana* as an inferior work characterizes critical opinion of the novel in the 1970s and '80s. Before Luis Buñuel's 1970 film adaptation of the novel—starring Catherine Denueve as the heroine—virtually no critical attention is paid

to the novel. Theodore Sackett begins his 1976 article with a summary of contemporary criticism: "The *sine qua non* of all criticism of Galdós' *Tristana* is: 'it is not one of his best novels, but…'" (71). The same year, John Sinnigen attempts to explain "what accounts for the deficiencies of *Tristana*", suggesting that Galdós fails to see the link between women's emancipation and "his continual search for social redemption" (287). In her 1985 examination of aging and irony in the novel, Jennifer Lowe cites "the frequently expressed belief that *Tristana* is far from being a successful novel" (105) as explanation for the relative lack of critical attention garnered by the novel. Yet recent criticism—and scholarly essays on *Tristana* have veritably multiplied—has tended to vindicate the quality of the novel, even as some contemporary readings of *Tristana* continue to hold Galdós responsible for the protagonist's cruel fate.[52] In addition to the wealth of feminist criticism engendered by the novel, Lisa Condé notes in her 2000 critical guide to *Tristana* that "the novel's irony, ambiguity and indeterminacy have increasingly been seen in positive rather than negative terms" (12). Contrary to the claims of Pardo Bazán and Clarín that their friend completed *Tristana* hastily, Condé demonstrates through analysis of the novel's manuscripts and galley-proofs that Galdós subjected the text to extensive revision (13).

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[52] In her excellent analysis of the novel, Catherine Jagoe concludes, "Patriarchal order, with the woman safely confined to the home, relative and subordinate, is made to triumph in the novel by dint of the overt machinations of the author" ("Ambiguous Angels" 139). She argues, however, that the novel's ambiguous ending and subversion of the *ángel del hogar* figure allows the reader to reach her own conclusions regarding nineteenth-century domestic ideology. While less overtly accusatory, Bridget Aldaraca claims of *Tristana,* "Galdós uses a gothic lexicon of mystery and the supernatural to cover up the truth of don Lope and Tristana's perverse family romance […] the real evil of her guardian's [don Lope's] uncontrolled and unmediated exercise of patriarchal power remains safely disguised as gothic horror" (249).

While any comprehensive literature review runs the risk of oversimplification, contemporary criticism of *Tristana* might be broken down into two categories: one that analyzes the novel's form and aesthetics and another that prioritizes *Tristana*'s feminist themes. These two branches are not mutually exclusive and often enter into dialogue; the former often acknowledges the relative importance of the so-called woman question in the text but attempts to encounter a broader thematic. Although a complete review of scholarship privileging *Tristana*'s aesthetics and form is beyond the purvey of this essay, an extensive treatment of the novel such as the one proposed here would be incomplete without a necessarily brief outline of the critical panorama. Germán Gullón's landmark essay is the first to seriously study the novel's literary allusions that seem to multiply as the text progresses. Arguing that "el feminismo…es un subtema" (19), Gullón turns instead to an analysis of *Tristana*'s rich intertextuality, evident even in the title.[53] The novel's opening lines, "En el populoso barrio de Chamberí…vivía, no ha muchos años, un hidalgo de buena estampa y nombre peregrino" ("*Tristana*" 37) parody the presentation of don Quijote in Cervantes' masterpiece; don Lope's *caballerosidad* and self-crafted identity (he even invents his name) has much in common with Cervantes' hero, not-withstanding the narrator's classification of Lope's *caballería* as "sedentaria" as opposed to "andante" (Gullón 14-15). Gullón is thus the first of several critics to analyze the function of not only quixotic but also don Juan-esque allusions in the novel, situating Lope as a near antecedent to "las figuras decaídas de los donjuanes del siglo

[53] Joan Grimbert offers an in-depth analysis of the presence of the Tristan myth in the novel in her 1992 article, "Galdós' Tristana as a Subversion of the Tristan Legend".

XX" (16).[54] In what he terms *Tristana*'s "literaturización novelesca", Gullón demonstrates that Galdós draws as much from literary as socio-historical sources in the construction of this novel in order to imbue his characters with multivalent qualities (25).

Noël Valis also argues against an exclusively feminist reading of the novel, which "reduces Tristana to the status of a mere woman, when as a character creation she is much more than that" ("117). In her reading, Tristana's constant metamorphoses into painter, polyglot, actress, writer, and musician both demonstrate the unstable and malleable nature of personality and the intimate (and ultimately insufficient) relationship between art and the construction of personality. The conception of subjectivity as changing and unstable as opposed to fixed is for Valis preeminently modern (118); she demonstrates in another essay from her collection that the text of *Tristana* dialogues with *fin de siècle* impressionism through its recognition of "the frustrating limitation of both art and the outside world and, ultimately, of their insubstantiality" (290).[55] For Valis, *Tristana* self-consciously foregrounds the process of artistic creation both within the text and at the authorial level: Galdós demonstrates an awareness of the shortcomings of art both as a method of representation and as a foundation for personality (19, 128). While Tristana is Galdós' own artistic creation, described in the novel as a white piece of paper

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[54] In his critical edition to the novel, Gordon Minter explores in depth the novel's explicit and implicit intertextualities. In his introduction he focuses explicitly on don Lope's quixotic and don juanesque affinities as well as the narrator's allusions to various Golden Age plays and several of Velázquez's paintings (x-xv). In his notes to the introduction, he compiles a list of over thirty literary, musical and artistic allusions that he identifies throughout the text (xxx).

[55] Concerned with the construction of gender roles in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spain, Louise Ciallella has also argued that *Tristana* is a precursor to later modernist texts through its use of "incipiently modernist prose" (14) and relative lack of concrete historical and topographical references (48).

(on which the author literally writes), through her writing of an idealized Horacio she is also artist: "both Tristana and Horacio…are at once art objects and artists, for just as the narrator views the protagonist as an *objet d'art* and a failed artist as well, so Tristana in her role as artist perceives in her lover her very own creation, which is in effect the great artist" (125).

Peter Bly also views Tristana as an *objet d'art* with which she has more in common than a "real" person ("Vision" 212). Yet art for Bly performs a negative function in the novel in that it aids and abets Tristana's fantasies, disrupting her ability to see reality objectively. Thus he argues that the novel becomes Galdós' "most complete indictment of the collusion of art and imagination in deceiving the human eye in its attempt to appreciate phenomenal reality" (218). As Bly views Tristana's imagination as her demise (211), her fate is parallel to that of Isidora in *La desheredada*. In contrast, Minter contends that art and artistic allusions within the novel function positively "as a kind of safety-valve which enables her to make an imaginative escape" (x). Against the privileging of visual art, Vernon Chamberlin argues for the primacy of music in the novel and demonstrates that the novel itself is structured in the form of a sonata ("Sonata" 83-84).

In her semiotic analysis of *Tristana*, Akiko Tsuchiya views the protagonist herself as a sign of the semiotic process implicit in the novel's creation ("Images" 55). As she struggles to gain autonomy, "Tristana defines the fictional process of the novel itself" (79). Thus we see once more that the novel foregrounds its own artistic creation. Andrés Zamora, meanwhile, reads in *Tristana* the gasping anxieties of the almost-exhausted realist genre. He writes:

> *Tristana* es un instante de confusión poética, fruto de las tensiones internas de la novela realista que, aun creyendo parcialmente todavía en sus bondades estéticas, al reflexionar sobre sus propios mecanismos y sus leyes internas descubre sus limitaciones, sus inseguridades y tal vez los nuevos derroteros que habrá de seguir el género. (209)

Just as don Lope only fully possesses the handicapped Tristana when she is reduced to "un busto y nada más" (209), the realist narrator (and by extension his author) has come to realize that the textual world of the realist novel is a handicapped, lesser version of the reality it purports to represent.

While it is perhaps easiest to read in the lines of *Tristana fin de siècle* anxieties regarding gender roles and female emancipation, some critics have argued persuasively that Galdós' novel reflects other (or additional) socio-historical concerns plaguing Restoration Spain. Through his analysis of the ironic treatment of the concept of Calderonian honor in the novel, David Goldin argues that Galdós paints a "grotesque portrait of bourgeois marriage" (98). Yet this critique extends to the entirety of Spain's situation as Goldin draws a parallel between Tristana's own failed narrative and that of Spain: "Tristana, the orphaned daughter of impoverished and deluded petty nobility, represents a contemporary Spain corrupted and led astray by seductive myths enduring on from the past" (103). Minter attempts to draw further parallels between the novel and its historical backdrop, although ultimately he is not as successful as Goldin. In his critical introduction, Minter argues that Tristana herself symbolizes the political backdrop of Restoration Spain. As Tristana goes between Horacio and don Lope, so too Spain alternates between liberal and conservative governance as sanctioned by the *turno*

pacífico. Minter even draws a parallel between the liberal Práxedes Sagasta and Horacio, and the conservative Antonio Cánovas and don Lope (viii-x). While at this point Minter's argument in my opinion falls apart, his sensitivity to Lope's decadence and Tristana's ultimate helplessness certainly point to typical *fin de siglo* sensibilities.

A wider body of criticism explores the feminist themes evident in *Tristana* in the first half of the novel and then apparently undermined in the second half of the novel through Tristana's crippling illness, the amputation of her leg, and her eventual marriage—"[Tristana] casi apenas se dio cuenta de que la casaron" ("*Tristana*" 233)—to don Lope. Since Pardo Bazán's review of the novel in May of 1892, critics debating the novel's treatment of *la cuestión femenina* in Spain tend to offer various answers to two central questions: Does *Tristana* constitute a feminist novel? And, does Tristana herself (and this question is often extended to don Lope and Horacio as well) fail at the end of the novel? Such deceptively simple questions have garnered a multiplicity of often contradictory yet well-argued answers. In his 1996 introduction to the novel, Minter offers his own appraisal of contemporary criticism of *Tristana*: "The provisional verdict – and the jury is still out – would seem to be that the failure of Tristana's project represents a failure by Galdós to rise adequately to the challenge posed by the theme of the emancipation of women" (xv-xvi). Yet more recently Zamora (and, as we shall see, he is not the only one) has argued against readings that inculpate Galdós or the novel's implicit author, pointing out that critics rarely take offense when misfortunes befall other Galdosian characters, such as "la ceguera de don Francisco de Bringas, o la aciaga suerte que lleva al suicidio a don Ramón Villaamil, o las prematuras muertes de María Egipcíaca, Gloria y Alejandro Miquis en otras novelas" (192). What follows is a

necessarily truncated sketch of criticism that attempts to take up the feminist themes so ambiguously presented in the novel.

For many critics, Tristana's fate represents an abject failure. In fact Joan Grimbert and Gonzalo Sobejano argue that all three characters representing the novel's love triangle ultimately fail, as they are doomed to ultimately accept mundane reality (read: socio-historical norms) against which each struggles throughout the text. Sackett argues similarly that the personalities Tristana and don Lope create for themselves are destroyed by the novel's end. He is one of several critics to talk of a "spiritual death" for Tristana. Farris Anderson concludes that Tristana "withdraws from consciousness" (73) at the end of the novel. Likewise, Bridget Aldaraca interprets Tristana's final silence as evidence of her psychological, spiritual death (250) while Catherine Jagoe claims that the protagonist suffers an internal, emotional death ("Ambiguous Angels" 138). Claiming that *Tristana* is "thoroughly ambivalent on the woman question" (140), Jagoe goes on to deny the presence of overtly feminist sympathies in Galdós generally and particularly in this novel.[56]

Other critics view Tristana's failure or tragic end as evidence that the novel should be viewed as a feminist work, reflective of Galdós' growing sensitivity to the effects of patriarchal bourgeois oppression on women. In her study of *Tristana,* Louise Ciallella concludes that the text demonstrates through Tristana's cruel fate the need to change dominant gender discourses (94) and is therefore a feminist novel (97). Carlos

[56] Jagoe's assertion does not translate to an unawareness of Galdós' often ambivalent treatment of women, especially in his novels following the Restoration when "the ideal of the angel is refracted in more qualified and equivocal ways" (58) and often "the bourgeois feminine role appears… as an ideal and as a cause for female dissatisfaction" (59). Indeed, the open-ended question that closes the novel "leaves the whole edifice of bourgeois gender roles dangerously undermined" (139).

Feal Deibe similarly argues that through Tristana's failure, the novel reveals societal control, as "el mundo exterior…impone sus leyes a quienes intentaron rebelarse" (129).[57] Lisa Condé seems to agree, arguing that despite Tristana's failed quest for autonomy, we should view the novel as pro-feminist. Condé's position is largely influenced by what she views as an endorsement of "the new woman" in Galdós' later plays (for example, *Electra*) ("Critical Guide" 109) and claims that we begin to see the development of a "feminist consciousness" in the author by the turn of the century.[58] As Condé's book *Stages in the Development of a Feminist Consciousness in Pérez Galdós (1843-1920)* demonstrates, also implicit in her argument is the assumption that Galdós' clandestine affairs with Emilia Pardo Bazán (from 1889 to 1890), who at the time was translating John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women* (1869) into Spanish, and the struggling actress Concha-Ruth Morrell (from 1891 to as late as 1899) impacted his feminist sensibilities:

> Clearly Galdós' particular experiences with these two women prompted the exploration of radical female emancipation in *Tristana*, unresolved at this point due perhaps in part to the disillusion he experienced through both

[57] In doing so, Feal Deibe explicitly rejects Joaquín Casalduero's argument that *Tristana* demonstrates Galdós' belief that "la naturaleza, no la sociedad, ha sometido la mujer al hombre" (129, cited in Feal Deibe 126).

[58] Jagoe, meanwhile, explicitly disagrees with Condé's assertion that the *novelas dialogadas* demonstrate Galdós' *fin de siècle* feminist leanings: "My concern is that the novelistic and critical celebration of these characters' strength has overshadowed the anti-emancipationist agendas of the novels themselves. Close attention to the way that the representation of gender dovetails with the novels' avowed class objectives makes it much harder to sustain the thesis that these novels are aligned with any feminist project" ("Ambiguous Angels" 159). Nevertheless, she too recognizes that "the woman question must have touched Galdós on a personal level"(125), largely because of his relationships with Pardo Bazán and Morell.

> women as well as his realization of the impossibility of such emancipation in nineteenth-century Spain. ("Feminist Consciousness" 158-9)[59]

As Condé and Gilbert Smith have demonstrated[60], several parallels exist between Tristana and Concha-Ruth Morrell such as her overactive imagination and desire for and ultimate inability to achieve independence through her acting career. Although Morrell complains to Galdós that her letters to him have been "literalmente copiadas" in the novel, she expresses her desire to read "esa novela que dices que he inspirado yo" (reproduced in Smith 105) and even signs some of her letters "Tristóna" [sic] (Condé, "Critical Guide" 32-33).

Quite separate from those who interpret Tristana's withdrawal and ultimate silencing as a reflection of her failure, other critics view the protagonist's final state as evidence of her ultimate spiritual victory.[61] John Sinnigen argues that although Tristana stops rebelling at the novel's end, she continues to reject society and through her silence and indifference defies social norms even as she marries don Lope (287, 291). Akiko Tsuchiya, for her part, claims that Tristana ultimately triumphs by transcending the world around her through spiritual supremacy ("Signs" 77). As opposed to those critics claiming that the protagonist ultimately loses faith in the world of her imagination and

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[59] For whatever reason Condé does not mention here that in January of 1891 another woman, Lorenza Cobián, fathers Galdós' only child ("Ambiguous Angels" 126).
[60] Gilbert Smith reproduces several of Morell's letters to Galdós and identifies parallels between this correspondence and Tristana's letters to Horacio.
[61] The most positive of these is perhaps the most controversial. In his article, Leon Livingstone argues that "*Tristana* serves once again to illustrate Galdós's adherence to the principle of the 'law of nature' and his use of literature as a corrective to digressions from this standard" (93). In Livingstone's view, marriage for Galdós' is a natural state that the author embraces (despite the fact that Galdós himself never married); accordingly, the critic reads Tristana and don Lope's marriage as a (not-ironic) happy ending.

accepts, albeit despondently, real world strictures, Tsuchiya argues that her indifference demonstrates her rejection of the world around her (78). Minter argues most strongly for Tristana's spiritual transformation by the end of the novel as he claims that critics have largely overlooked the novel's religious undercurrents (xxvi). In his view, Spain's nineteenth-century society is one of spiritual repression in which Tristana's mysticism can find no avenue of expression or release. For Minter, then, at issue are not only questions of feminism but also of religion as Galdós's text poses the question, "What place is there for religious fervor in Spain's contemporary society?" (xxvii). As might be expected from his feminist reading of the novel, Feal Deibe interprets Tristana's supposed spiritualization differently as he states, "Como tantas mujeres frustradas, pasará largas horas entregada a la contemplación religiosa. Tristana…repetirá así el destino de muchas mujeres españolas" (128).

Abundantly clear in this brief critical sketch is *Tristana*'s ultimate ambiguity with regard to the question of female emancipation. Before embarking on my own analysis of *Tristana*, then, it seems important to pause briefly to consider what might be understood as Spanish "feminism" at the *fin de siècle*, so as to not conflate the feminist themes so often cited in the novel with our own twenty-first century ideas of what "feminism" (itself a none-too-stable category) implies. As Alda Blanco demonstrates in her essay on feminism in nineteenth-century Spain, Spanish feminism does not directly parallel emancipation movements in England or the United States (today generally termed by feminist critics as first-wave feminism). For one, the issue of women's suffrage is not central to Spanish feminism in Spain until the Second Republic (Blanco 466); secondly, the growing arguments in Spain in favor of women's equality at the end of the nineteenth

century are not conceived of as an international women's struggle (454). Hence Pardo Bazán's frustration following her return from the "Congreso de la condición y derechos de la mujer" held in Paris in 1900: "Yo fui el único español [sic], y no me había delegado nadie, sino mi propia curiosidad e interés por las cuestiones agitadas en el Congreso. ¿A quién se le iba a ocurrir, en España, enviar un delegado al Congreso feminista? Ni al mismísimo diablo" ("Cuarenta días" 150). While it would be historically inaccurate to talk of a feminist movement in Spain before the twentieth century, Blanco confirms that a growing "conciencia feminista" is increasingly evident in the second half of the nineteenth century (447).

Before Pardo Bazán's more militant writings most women defend female equality, the right to an education and even participation in the public sphere in relational terms, that is, they continue to envision woman as mother and wife (464). As Anna Caballé describes, "el feminismo moderado, por supuesto católico y practicante, de la generación del medio siglo estará basado en la convicción de que no hay que variar sustancialmente la condición de la mujer, pero sí se hace impostergable mejorarla" (82). Even Concepción Arenal's landmark works protesting the idealized *ángel del hogar* continue to conceive the fundamental role of women as mother and child, although in *La mujer del porvenir* she defends *la mujer soltera* on the basis of her hard work for the common good. As Ana Caballé observes, however, Arenal envisions only *la mujer soltera casta* (98); Tristana's self-proclaimed goals to live "libre y honrada" thus do not fit into Arenal's schema. In the nineteenth century's final decades, however, we can trace growing feminism within Spain both by the (admittedly small) number of feminist conferences and journals introduced and by the (comparatively extreme) misogynous

responses they incur (Jagoe, "Ambiguous Angels" 123-24). Even Galdós comments on a socialist feminist meeting held in Barcelona: "Entre las curiosidades de estos días, la más señalada es el *meeting* de mujeres celebrado hace dos días en Barcelona. ¡Las mujeres también en huelga! ¡Emancipación, igualdad de derechos con el hombre! La cosa se complica" ("El primero de mayo" cited in Jagoe, "Ambiguous Angels" 123).[62]

Nevertheless, the number of women espousing more radical forms of feminism in Spain constitutes an extremely small portion of the population even at the turn of the century. Both Blanco and Caballé's accounts of Spanish feminism in the nineteenth-century leave little doubt that the aspirations Tristana expresses to Horacio and Saturna (especially her invention of the words "médicas, abogadas, senadoras") would seem extremely radical to the majority of Galdós' middle-class readership (although, as we have seen, not to Pardo Bazán). Yet Tristana's bitter complaints regarding her inadequate education might have seemed more reasonable to Galdós' readership. The difference

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[62] Jagoe takes this article from Laureano Bonet's collection of Galdós' work entitled *Ensayos de crítica literaria*. Bonet suggests 15 April 1895 rather than 15 April 1885 as the publication date for "El primero de mayo" (13). Yet he does so in passing, without any indication of why he makes this assertion; yet his conclusion is not unreasonable, given that in 1885 the term "emancipación" for women would not have been in vogue. But further research into the uncertainties that surround this article—cited frequently by critics—demonstrates the need for a new, complete collection of Galdós' articles. Bonet has taken this article from volume four of the *Obras inéditas de Benito Pérez Galdós* (1923), compiled by Galdós' good Argentine friend Alberto Ghiraldo. According to this volume, the article is published in Madrid, on 15 April, 1885. However, a previously unpublished part of this article is also reproduced in William Shoemaker's *Las cartas desconocidas de Galdós en* La prensa *de Buenos Aires*. Shoemaker explains that when compiling Galdós' articles Ghiraldo takes many liberties, as he would have worked from various clippings, many of which were undated and untitled. Thus, he adds titles and dates where he sees fit. Shoemaker explains that many of the articles in the *Obras inéditas* actually come from the Argentine newspaper *La prensa*, including "El primero de mayo" (9-15). According to Shoemaker, Ghiraldo also mistakes the date of the article, which he claims is published on 7 July 1891 (448).

between *instrucción* (for men) and *educación* (for women) dominates nineteenth-century discourses on education in Spain (Jagoe, "Enseñanza" 110). María del Pilar Sinués demonstrates what such *educación* entails in her outline of feminine instruction (1859): "Nada de ciencias ni de estudios áridos, que al paso que las robarán el tiempo que deben emplear en sus deberes domésticos…la instrucción de la mujer debe estar reducida únicamente a sentir, a amar a su esposo e hijos" ("El ángel del hogar" 184). Nevertheless, Spain experiences a definite push for female literacy beginning in the 1880s as women (and some men) argue that a basic education is necessary for women to better perform maternal and spousal roles. Although Tristana's denouncement of her own deficient education ("Quejábase amargamente de no haber tenido a su lado, en tanto tiempo, personas que supieran ver en ella una aptitud para algo, aplicándola al estudio de un arte cualquiera") ("*Tristana*" 116) parallels Pardo Bazán's ardent defense of women's learning for its own sake,[63] Tristana's concern for her lack of education would have been more palatable to the novel's more sympathetic readers.

Tristana's situation at the beginning of the novel is defined by lack. Her doll-like, alabaster qualities as initially described by the narrator point to an inanimate lack of personality that we see developed throughout the novel, as several critics have observed (Sackett, Valis, Condé). But what about the transformation of her body, how she and others view her body, in the text? Feminist geographer Linda McDowell observes, "while bodies are undoubtedly material…and tak[e] up space, the ways in which bodies are presented to and seen by others vary according to the spaces and places in which they

[63] Pardo Bazán rejects the relational role of women in "La educación del hombre" (1892) in her vindication of women's education: "la instrucción y cultura racional que la mujer adquiera, adquiéralas en primer término para sí, para desarrollo de su razón y natural ejercicio de su entendimiento" (45).

find themselves" (34). As a fictional construct, Tristana is merely a mark on the page (Tsuchiya 55); both Tsuchiya and Bly point to Tristana's initial unreality as her presentation by the narrator underlines her inherent artificiality (Tsuchiya "Signs" 57; "Vision" Bly 213). The narrator's lengthy description of Tristana's physical body, her perfect, clean hands, and white face, dark eyes and lips, exhausts itself before we are even told her name. This portrayal contrasts sharply with that of don Lope, where, before we are treated to any meaningful physical description of the character, the narrator states that the name "Lope" is actually a self-invention: "O había que matarle o decirle don Lope" ("*Tristana*" 38). As McDowell notes, "dominated groups are defined as nothing but their bodies, and seen as imprisoned [in them]" (48). Thus while don Lope is identified first by name, Tristana is originally identified with her body; her white skin ("toda ella parecía de papel…de papel nítido era su rostro blanco mate, de papel su vestido, de papel sus finísimas, torneadas, incomparables manos") enwraps her empty body (compared to a "petaca") (41). Tristana is indeed an object, not only an artificial *objet d'art* as Valis and Bly claim, but also an objectified woman, a malleable, empty body with skin like blank paper, waiting to be written upon and molded. Throughout the novel, this is precisely what both don Lope and Horacio strive to do.

That Lope views Tristana as an object to be acquired is patently obvious throughout the text. After a dying Josefina leaves her daughter in his care, we read, "contento estaba el caballero de su adquisición porque la chica era linda" (56). Brushing aside any moral misgivings as to her seduction Lope continues, "Dígase lo que se quiera…bien me la he ganado" (56). His view of Tristana throughout the novel as a *bien* to be possessed is apparent even during her sickness. After Miquis tells him that

amputation is unavoidable, Lope (almost gleefully) addresses an imaginary Horacio, "Te he vencido. Triste es mi victoria, pero cierta. […] Ya nadie me la quita, ya no…" (190-91). Lope's collection of women's portraits with which he is unwilling to part parallels the fragmented female body parts and pictures of nude women in Horacio's studio, further underlining their shared objectified view of the female body.

In her analysis of *Tristana*, Ciallella argues that the text posits a "battle of male versus female looks, as women fight for subjectivity from within institutional controls" (63). Although Tristana certainly rebels against Lope through her affair with Horacio, at no point do women in the novel assert a way of looking that is analogous to the male gaze, especially as employed by Lope. Saturna, whose view of things is decidedly realistic ("su mirada desmitifica cuanto toca") (Gullón 21), secretly helps Tristana maintain her relationship with Horacio but poses no real challenge to Lope's patriarchal authority, especially as he intuits Tristana's affair almost from the beginning. Meanwhile, Doña Trini's inability to fully open her eyes resembles hysterical paralysis. Although it is Tristana's admittedly daring look in Horacio's direction that enables them to fall in love at first sight, the narrator emphasizes Tristana's inability to "see" Horacio properly blinded as she is by love: "Asombrábase ella del engaño de sus ojos en las primeras apreciaciones de la persona del desconocido. Cuando se fijó en él, la tarde aquella de los sordo-mudos, túvole por un señor así como de treinta o más años. ¡Qué tonta! ¡Si era un muchacho!" (*Tristana* 79). For this reason, Bly points out that as Tristana meets Horacio, she shares much in common with the blind children surrounding her ("Vision" 214).

As compared to the partial and unreliable female mode of looking in the novel, Lope's despotic gaze physically acts upon Tristana's body. As he accuses her of having

an affair, he says, "hace días que te lo leo" ("*Tristana*" 105). The sensation of being read—visually deciphered—by Lope strongly affects his ward: "Tristana palideció. Su blancura de nácar tomó azuladas tintas…Parecía una muerta, hermosísima, y se destacaba sobre el sofá con el violento escorzo de una figura japonesa. […] No sabía tener ni un respiro de voluntad" (105). The sheer force of Lope's accusations relegates Tristana to her initial description as artificial object as the narrator reaffirms both her skin's whiteness and resemblance to a Japanese doll. As he continues his threats, Lope "echó una mirada tan viva y amenazante sobre la pobre joven, que Tristana se retiró un poco, como si en vez de ser una mirada fuera una mano la que sobre su rostro venía" (107). The old man's intimidating gaze produces a physical reaction in the body he is attempting to control.

As this conversation progresses, however, Tristana for the first (and last) time stands up for herself; it is in fact their argument that catapults her into a sexual relationship with Horacio. The narrator describes her awakening sense of self as the transition from doll to woman, that is, from inanimate object to living being: "Y a medida que se cambiaba en sangre y médula de mujer la estopa de muñeca, iba cobrando aborrecimiento y repugnancia a la miserable vida que llevaba bajo el poder de don Lope Garrido" (59). Anderson rightly observes that Tristana's "spatial interiorization becomes almost absolute" (70) following her illness, as she is confined not only to Lope's house but to her own room. In fact, the protagonist clearly experiences the house as a space of confinement and repression even before she falls sick. Before meeting Horacio, she daydreams of learning a profession that will enable her to leave Lope's house forever (64); as Sinnigen (280) and Ciallella (63) both note, her daily walks represent moments

of freedom and rebellion. Michel de Certeau writes, "To walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper" (103).[64] Walking thus not only physically separates Tristana from the imposing walls of Lope's house but mentally liberates her as well, allowing her to conceive of having an affair—and falling in love—in the first place. The "search" to which Certeau alludes brings to mind Gillian Rose's assertion that feminist subjects envision a "discursive space that depends on a sense of 'elsewhere' for their resistance" (153). Though their fight takes place within patriarchal structures, feminists must imagine a position outside them to which they aspire. Although Tristana's rebellion of course lacks the self-awareness of Rose's eloquent argument, our protagonist's desire to live "libre y honrada" ("*Tristana*" 151) suggests her formulation of a space outside the repressive forces acting on her body.

Yet we should not overestimate the freedom experienced by Tristana on her daily *paseos*. Her revolt against don Lope's repression takes place within a larger system of mores dictated by nineteenth-century norms of propriety. Thus Tristana's body, inscribed with her gender, is not authorized to move unaccompanied through exterior spaces (the masculine-coded public sphere) without risk of social stricture. Her walks are never taken alone but rather in the company of Saturna or, following their heart-stopping meeting, Horacio. While Tristana asserts control over her own body through her decision to sleep with Horacio, she continues to define herself relationally; ironically, her impossible desire for self-autonomy renders her simultaneously dependent on both Horacio and don Lope as she moves between the former's studio and the latter's house. While Tristana

[64] This somewhat awkward phrasing reveals the difficulty of translating theory from French to English. "Proper" here is translated from the French "propre", and refers to the search of one's own place, or a "lugar propio".

clearly envisions this as a temporary state of affairs ("has de verme en mi casita, sola, queriéndote mucho, eso sí, y trabajando, trabajando en mi arte para ganarme el pan; tú en la tuya, juntos a ratos, separados muchas horas", 125), we should be cautious in interpreting her movement between Lope and Horacio as a clear sign of Tristana's burgeoning independence.[65]

Even when she is with Horacio, Lope's shadow often seems to loom over the lovers. When Tristana first admits to her situation—namely, that she is in fact not married to don Lope—she ends up defending the man who has dishonored her. Although she immediately reassures Horacio that she is not in love with his rival, she finds herself making excuses for the aging don Juan: "Porque no es malo, no vayas a creer que es muy malo, muy malo… No; allí hay de todo: es una combinación monstruosa de cualidades buenas y de defectos horribles" (102). What follows is a lengthy and surprisingly flattering depiction of don Lope as a gallant, cunning and terrible don Juan Tenorio in his prime (102-3), after which Tristana adds that despite Horacio's urging, leaving Garrido "era más fácil de decir que de practicar" (103). Weeks later, Tristana explains their relationship further to Horacio: "hay días en que me toca mirarle con lástima; días en que me toca aborrecerle, y anoche le aborrecí" (133). When Horacio rather oddly responds that he would like to hear more stories of Lope's conquests, Tristana replies with

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[65] Ciallella asserts that women's physical movement in the novel undermines repressive male surveillance (63). While I agree that Tristana's *paseos* allow her to ideate greater spheres of freedom for herself, I am hesitant to view her movement between don Lope's house and Horacio's studio as an indication of great independence because she is in essence bouncing from one man to another. Nor should Josefina and doña Trini's movements be considered liberating, in my opinion. Tristana's mother's inability to live in a house for more than three months is taken as a sign of mental illness (and contributes to her daughter's hardship); doña Trini wants to go to Villajoyosa largely because she is sick as well.

enthusiasm, “Como bonitas [las historias], cree que lo son” (133) and embarks on an explanation of Lope’s adventures in Toledo and Barcelona. It is clear through these passages that both Horacio and Tristana admire the old man’s past, even though Tristana counts among his many victims. This speaks both to Lope’s firm hold over his ward even as she attempts to escape him and to the obvious societal double standard on which the legend of don Juan operates.

I would suggest that Garrido’s locus of control is not confined to the place of the home. Rather, Lope’s panoptic gaze spills over the material boundaries of his residence, modifying Tristana’s actions whenever she leaves the house. Whenever Garrido’s name surfaces in Horacio’s company, Tristana seems unable to fully denounce don Lope and always refuses to leave him, even as Horacio offers to confront Lope himself (134). Elaborating on the definition of place, McDowell writes that places are “distinguished from each other through the operation of the relations of power that construct boundaries between them” (34). Despite Tristana’s desire to be “libre” and “honrada”, she seems unable to fully separate herself from her place at don Lope’s side, whether as his partner or child. We might view Tristana’s body as inscribed by this sense of place, suggesting that she has internalized her own objectification as another one of Lope’s possessions. Even as she adopts Lope’s aversion to marriage in the hope of achieving autonomy, her mantra will ironically render her neither *libre*, dependent as she is on Garrido, nor *honrada* in the eyes of society. How might we read Tristana’s reaction to her unquestionable situation of repression?

In her book on women in European modern drama, Gail Finney argues that Victorian women—analogous to the Spanish *ángel del hogar*—struggling under

bourgeois domestic discourses at the turn of the century react against oppression in two dominant ways: by embracing feminism or succumbing to hysteria. Whereas the turn to feminism constitutes an "outward-directed" reaction, hysteria represents an "inner-directed" response (4). As is well known, hysteria—although first described by Hippocrates and widely recognized and studied throughout the history of Western medicine—reaches a veritable heyday in Europe in the nineteenth century.[66] Both men and women may be hysterics (Aldaraca 121); Gustave Flaubert writes to his friend George Sand in 1867, "I maintain that men are hysterical just like women, and I am one of them" (cited in Ender 26). Nevertheless, hysteria is a deeply feminine-coded illness even before Freud links hysteria to sex (Ender 12). Janet Beizer's claim that even when attributed to men hysteria is couched in feminine terms (6) finds a perfect example in another letter from Flaubert to Sand, in which the creator of Emma Bovary writes, "I am going to get rid of my congestion…following the advice of Doctor Hardy, who calls me 'a hysterical woman,' a profound statement, I find" (cited in Ender 25). In the second half of the nineteenth century, hysteria connotes much more than a medical condition, as Beizer demonstrates: "Appropriated by the intelligentsia and later by the general public, the medical term became an aesthetic and then a more general sociocultural category. Figure of femininity, label of disorder and difference, hysteria was available for a wide and often contradictory range of aesthetic and political purposes" (8). Practically speaking, however, hysteria (no matter how unconsciously manifested) as illness

[66] See the introductions to Janet Beizer's *Ventriloquized Bodies: Narratives of Hysteria in Nineteenth-Century France,* Cristina Mazzoni's *Saint Hysteria: Neurosis, Mysticism and Gender in European Culture*, and especially chapter one of Evelyne Ender's *Sexing the Mind: Nineteenth-Century Fictions of Hysteria*.

provides an escape from the "reproductive and domestic duties" mandated by nineteenth-century domestic discourses (Finney 8).

Although Finney's study of hysteria focuses on Victorian England while Ender and Beizer analyze hysterical narratives in France, the hysterical woman is also alive and (un)well in nineteenth-century Spain. As Catherine Jagoe observes, "En la segunda mitad del XIX, el cuerpo de la mujer histérica, con sus misteriosas parálisis y anestesias, canaliza la confluencia y colisión de discursos antiguos y modernos sobre la mujer, su sexualidad, su fisiología y su carácter moral" ("Sexo y género" 340).[67] Spanish doctors tend to be more conservative than their French counterparts and believe that only women suffer from hysteria (342). If in the mid-1800s most affirm that hysteria is caused by a genital (as opposed to neurological) disorder, during the final quarter of the century the hysteric is seen in an increasingly negative light that inculpates the patient herself. Jagoe explains at length the medical—and, following Beizer's reasoning, cultural—appraisal of hysteria in Spain:

> La histeria se originaba en una serie de defectos de carácter y se desarrollaba sólo en mujeres impulsivas, fraudulentas, coquetas, excéntricas, emotivas y propensas a la lascivia. Las pacientes se caracterizan como presentando una emotividad y sensibilidad exageradas, con altibajos excesivos. Además, se afirmaba que son dadas a la mentira y la exageración; son egoístas y buscan la atención de todos. La histeria,

[67] This chapter provides an excellent overview of the evolving and often conflicting views of Spanish doctors (predominately gynecologists) regarding the causes and treatments of hysteria.

> desde este punto de vista misógino, es una caricatura o hipertrofia de la femineidad. ("Sexo y género" 344)

Jagoe's appraisal at the end of this paragraph echoes Ender's affirmation that discourses of hysteria in nineteenth-century France redefine femininity in terms of hysterical suffering (4). Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the emphasis of Spanish doctors on the fragility and sensitivity of even "healthy" women[68], in the 1880s Spanish doctors begin to think of hysteria as indelibly linked to imagination (Jagoe, "Sexo y género" 346). As for the Spanish counterpart to the French and English literary representations of the hysterical woman, we only have to look as far as Spanish Romantic theater, according to David Gies. The prototypical Romantic woman—"la mujer vestida de blanco (ángel), con el pelo suelto, medio enloquecida o casi muerta" (219)—is also the hysterical woman who, according to Gies, will shape Spanish cultural conceptions of femininity throughout the nineteenth century (217).

A few critics allude obliquely to hysteria in *Tristana* without fully developing its implications for the novel (or the protagonist herself). Jagoe notes that in the second half of the novel, the narrator no longer demonstrates sympathy for Tristana but rather depicts her increasingly as "an impossible, hysterical female" ("Ambiguous Angels" 132). At this point, however, Jagoe directly relates the narrator's ambivalence to Galdós' own stance toward his lover Concha-Ruth Morell, who too was prone to flights of the

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[68] The conceptualization of the female nervous system is a case in point. The doctor Ángel Rodríguez y Pacheco describes it thusly in 1882: "La impresionabilidad del sistema nervioso [de la mujer], excitado e influido por el aparato útero-ovárico, no siempre permitirá la exacta trasmisión de la impresión recibida, sino que por el contrario la hará llegar un tanto desfigurada…de ahí que en ella dominen las facultades afectivas, el sentimiento […] La mujer busca el calor de los tiernos afectos…y rechaza el frío razonar de las lucubraciones científicas" (56).

imagination and mood swings (133). Ciallella mentions briefly in her analysis that an obsession with cleanliness and particularly washing (as we see not only in Tristana but also her mother Josefina) is in the nineteenth-century thought to symptomize hysteria (70). Aldaraca lists hysteria as one of several possible illnesses, including hypochondria and depression, manifested by Tristana's final silence (251).

On the one hand, Tristana's obsessive quest for autonomous self-determination qualifies her as a feminist, even if given her historical circumstance and lack of education she is ill-equipped to perceive herself as such. Teresa Bordons compares Tristana to the protagonists of the New Woman novels that enjoy increased popularity in England in the late nineteenth-century. In England and the United States, so-called "New Women" criticize the convention that marriage constitutes the only means for women to achieve fulfillment and happiness (Showalter 38). Perhaps unsurprisingly, they immediately garner unbridled hostility (39). While more radical New Women, especially in the first decades of the twentieth century, embrace sexual freedom and insist on the validity of female sexual desire (46), most uphold Victorian strictures of female "sexlessness and purity"—although in their view, such self-restraint renders them superior to men (45). If in Spain *la mujer nueva* remains an abstract concept to be ridiculed and feared as opposed to an identifiable category[69], Emilia Pardo Bazán is one of (very) few Spanish women who personify the New Woman model.[70] Tristana certainly shares the New

[69] In December of 1895, *La España Moderna* publishes an article on the international press in which it notes that *la cuestión femenina*, so contentious in England and France, "comienza a ocupar a los pensadores en España" (Castelar 141). In this article he makes passing reference to "la mujer nueva" (142) before treating the reader to a reductive outline of male and female characteristics based on biological determinism.

[70] Rocío Charques Gómez concludes as much in her study entitled *Los artículos feministas en* el Nuevo Teatro Crítico *de Pardo Bazán*.

Woman's assertion for independence but fundamentally lacks the tools necessary to realize her liberation. As Elaine Showalter notes, New Women may consider alternatives to marriage because they have "new opportunities for education, work, and mobility" (39). Tristana lacks all of these, notwithstanding the tutors that don Lope provides for her—and one suspects Lope of supporting Tristana's "education" as a means of distracting her from the authority he continues to wield.

Where Tristana partially resembles the New Woman (her lack of resources preventing full assimilation), she also reminds us of the so-called Odd Woman, the term given to those women who are unable to marry in Victorian society (Showalter 19). Although Horacio wants to marry her, Tristana is aware that according to society's mores she is no longer fit for marriage. While Saturna tells her, "Siempre se encuentran unos pantalones para todo, inclusive para casarse" ("*Tristana*" 61), Tristana seems to internalize her "unfit" condition for marriage, citing her past with Lope as reason enough for not marrying Horacio: "No podría hacerlo [casarme], ni aun contigo…siempre tendría ante ti cierto resquemor de haberte dado menos de los que mereces, y temería que…me dijeras que habías tenido que cerrar los ojos para ser mi marido" (119). While perhaps not as threatening as the audacious New Woman, "Odd Women of the *fin de siècle* [were] conspicuous, troubling and dramatic" for men weary of a new "constituency with potential opportunities, powers and rights" (Showalter 21).

The anxiety produced by unmarried women is perhaps best illustrated in an article published by William R. Greg in England entitled "Why Are Women Redundant?" (1873), in which he exposes "the enormous and increasing number of single women in the nation, a number quite disproportionate and quite abnormal; a number which

positively and relatively is indicative of an unwholesome social state" (cited in Showalter 19). According to Showalter, "the popular image of the Odd Woman conflated elements of the lesbian, the angular spinster, and the hysterical feminist" (23). Whether as New Woman or as Odd Woman, it is unsurprising that well before her sickness Tristana begins to intimidate (if not scare off) Horacio. Perhaps the pressure from Lope's family to marry Tristana at the end of the novel stems not only from a Christian fear for their souls but also from anxiety generated by Tristana's "unnatural" state.

Her lofty goals and flights of fancy certainly occasion ill-veiled derision from the narrator, as both Jagoe and Bordons have underlined in their criticism. Yet even critics such as Pardo Bazán, who complains that the novel "prometía otra cosa" (88) seem at a loss to explain our narrator's initial support of Tristana and then his (for there can be little doubt that the narrator is masculine) apparent flip-flop, especially as he goes to great lengths to describe Lope's relationship with Tristana as tyrannical at the beginning of the novel. If, as I think she is, Bordons is correct in her assertion that our narrator represents the anxieties of male bourgeois hegemony confronted with nascent aspirations of female emancipation (487), then the narrator's initial approval of "[el] despertar de Tristana" ("*Tristana*" 58) actually fits well his bourgeois identity. Don Lope, who resists assimilation to middle-class values and their attachment to "el vil metal" (43), also represents a threat to bourgeois normalcy. Our narrator expresses his anxiety somewhat humorously: "se nos ponen los pelos de punta sólo de pensar cómo andaría la máquina social si a sus esclarecidos manipulantes les diese la ventolera de apadrinar los disparates de don Lope" (56). His relationship with Tristana, which the narrator reveals somewhat hesitatingly to the reader ("hay que decirlo, por duro y lastimoso que sea") (53), further

deviates from the established norm.[71] It is therefore unsurprising that our narrator, as an adherent to hegemonic bourgeois culture, would encourage Tristana to free herself of Lope's clutches but disapprove of her soon-evident desire to resist societal expectations and refuse Horacio's perfectly desirable marriage proposal. While Tristana's lack of experience seems to excuse her initial "fall", her fervent mantra of independence ("libertad honrada es mi tema…o si quieres, mi dogma") (124) renders her markedly less sympathetic in the narrator's eyes.[72]

Where Tristana recalls some of the feminist characteristics of the New Woman and even the Odd Woman,[73] she also shares as we have seen much in common with the female hysteric. Besides the so-called symptoms of hysteria that Tristana demonstrates (flights of imagination, nervousness and excitability, and most notably aphasia) the narrative treatment of our protagonist parallels that of other hysteric literary characters, particularly at the end of the novel. Ender observes that Emma Bovary's defining hysterical trait is "a form of dissociation, which Flaubert renders most palpably in his

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[71] The narrator condemns Lope's views on love ("que en las relaciones entre hombre y mujer no hay más ley que la anarquía"): "inútil parece advertir que cuantos conocían a Garrido, incluso el que esto escribe, abominaban y abominaban de tales ideas" ("*Tristana*" 55).

[72] We see something similar in the narrative treatment of Horacio. As Horacio describes the horrors of a youth suffered under the tyrannical reign of his grandfather, the narrator maintains a certain ironic distance that renders Horacio's sense of suffering as unduly romantic and rather ridiculous. The narrator describes even their love affair in patronizing yet indulgent tones. As Horacio and Tristana walk through an amusement park, for example, the narrator comments, "Ellos también eran niños" ("*Tristana*" 93). When Tristana's former love returns from Villajoyosa having fully embraced his bourgeois identity, however, the narrator treats him much more sympathetically and seems to commend the delicate and tasteful way in which he distances himself from Tristana: "La retirada fue tan lenta y gradual que apenas se notaba" (221).

[73] While not overtly feminist, Odd Women were often targeted by those promoting female emancipation and were seen as potential supporters of the women's liberation movement (and therefore, by their detractors, as a threat) (Showalter 21).

literary representation: she exists as the outward bodily inscription of an inner state, which neither the outer voice of the narrative (the omniscient narrator) nor its inner voice (the protagonist's stream of consciousness) can retrieve" (4). Galdós seems to employ a similar narrative strategy at the end of the novel. Completely dissociated from the world around her, Tristana has fully lost the narrative voice that dominated the text of her letters to Horacio—although Horacio continues to send her letters following his return to Villajoyosa, "Garrido era el encargado de leerlas y contestarlas" ("*Tristana*" 226). As in the case of Madame Bovary's portrayal, our narrator too seems unable to penetrate Tristana's inner thoughts; she exists as an impermeable body, incapable of self-expression and, it would seem, unreadable by the formerly omniscient narrator. While this narrative strategy leads to the novel's enigmatic ending, it also draws Tristana closer to the hysterical Emma Bovary.

The desire for knowledge is also closely related to hysteria. This perhaps explains in part nineteenth-century strictures against reading for women; fiction in particular is viewed as both morally compromising and unhygienic for female readers. Ender suggests, "hysteria…necessarily assumes a desire for knowledge" (238); in her interpretation of Freud's theorizing of hysteria, she argues that "[Freud] suggests that women are unable to differentiate between the acquisition of knowledge and erotic fulfillment" (12). While for Ender this represents a "mis-step" on Freud's part, Tristana does seem to conflate the two throughout the novel. Although she laments her lack of education in Horacio's presence and voices aloud her desire to learn, it is not until her lover's absence that Tristana's voracious thirst for knowledge becomes apparent. She writes to Horacio:

> Pues espérate ahora y sabrás lo más gordo: dice mi maestro que tengo unas disposiciones terribles, y se pasma de ver que apenas me ha enseñado las cosas, ya yo me las sé. Asegura que en seis meses sabré tanto inglés como *Chakesperas* o el propio *Lord Mascaole*. Y al paso que me enseña inglés, me hace recordar el franchute, y luego le meteremos el diente al alemán. […] Estudio a todas horas y devoro los temas. Perdona mi inmodestia; pero no puedo contenerme: soy un prodigio. ("*Tristana*" 151-52)

At this point Tristana has not yet begun to transform Horacio into the absent "bello ideal" (211); earlier in the letter she refers to him as "el *señó Juan"* (150) and plays humorously with language throughout, inventing new words even as she denies and even ridicules Horacio's marriage proposal.[74] In the absence of her lover, of "la enormísima exaltación de las tardes" (137) passed each day in Horacio's studio, Tristana turns with unbridled and for Horacio alarming enthusiasm to the acquisition of knowledge.

We might conclude that Tristana's fervent love of languages and books replaces her ardent sexual (and material) desire for Horacio. In her earliest letters, Tristana's feelings are far from spiritual: "venga mi vidita mortal, y la tierra en que padecí y gocé, en que está mi pícaro *señó Juan*. Venga vida mortal, y salud y amor, y todo lo que deseo" (146). This attitude mirrors Horacio's later affection for the earthly delights that Villajoyosa offers him and with which he tries to tempt Tristana. Yet following Horacio's worried response to her English lessons ("no te hagas tan sabia") (152), we are privy only to Tristana's letters for the remainder of the novel. Through her letters, the text

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[74] During her illness, the narrator observes that as Tristana's imagination recreates Horacio, "ya no volvió a usar el *señó Juan* ni la *Paca de Rímini*, ni los terminachos y licencias gramaticales que eran la sal de su picante estilo. Todo ello se borró de su memoria, como su fe desvaneciendo la persona misma de Horacio…" (178).

establishes a strong connection between reading and what may be interpreted as extreme confusion, hysteria or insanity. As her English lessons progress, she ecstatically writes to Horacio (whose voice is no longer represented in the text):

> [Don Lope] ha empezado por traerme un carro de libros, pues en casa jamás los hubo. Excuso decirte que he caído sobre ellos como lobo hambriento…Dios mío, cuánto *sabo*! En ocho días he tragado más páginas que lentejas dan por mil duros. Si viera cerebrito por dentro, te asustarías. Allí andan las ideas a bofetada limpia unas con otras… Yo lo mismo le hinco el diente a un tomo de Historia que a un tratado de Filosofía. (156)

The following letter reads:

> Ahora que estoy malita y triste, pienso más en ti. […] Hay en mi cabeza un barullo tal, que no sé si esto es cabeza o el manicomio donde encerrados los grillos que han perdido la razón grillesca… ¡Un aturdimiento, un pensar y pensar siempre cosas mil, mil millones más bien do cosas bonitas y feas, grandes y chicas! Lo más raro de cuanto me pasa es que se me ha borrado tu imagen… (158)

In these twin passages we clearly see an indelible link between women reading and their acquisition of knowledge with confusion, disorder, and insanity. The text further suggests that Tristana's inability to recall her lover's face stems from the fact that her mind has been inundated by the confusion of ideas bred by her newfound knowledge.

While her illness certainly contributes to Tristana's idealization of Horacio, this transition is further abetted by the protagonist's own thirst for knowledge. To return to Ender's interpretation of Freud, it seems that Tristana's desire for knowledge has

replaced her carnal desire for a lover she cannot even remember. From now on, she will love Horacio's recreated image spiritually; her conception of their relationship seems purged of sexual desire. Describing her adoration of the "ser ideal", our narrator observes, "su corazón se inflamó en un cariñazo que bien podría llamarse místico" (178). Mysticism, or hysteria? The two, as Cristina Mazzoni has demonstrated, are indelibly linked. For Mazzoni, hysteria exists in "dialogue…with its repressed other, that mystical element with which it holds several ambiguous connections" (2). I shall return to the connections between mysticism and hysteria later in this chapter.

At first glance feminism and hysteria seem like radically different and even opposite reactions to male oppression. Given the positive historical associations of feminism and the (mostly) negative and even demented connotations of hysteria,[75] it is even tempting to view them as a dichotomy. Feminist geographer Doreen Massey theorizes that every dichotomization consists of a positive and negative term, the positive associated with masculinity and the negative with femininity (255). On this view, our hypothesis of hysteria and feminism as dichotomous poles begins to break down: both terms are not only associated with femininity but also are regarded negatively (and with much anxiety) by *fin de siècle* hegemonic culture. Even as the hysteric body transcended medical boundaries to become a culturally constructed "figured of femininity" (Beizer 7), at its most basic the hysteric is defined by illness. But nascent murmurings of female emancipation in late nineteenth-century Spain—and indeed gender relations in general—

[75] The surrealists found inspiration in the hysterical body, as Beizer has pointed out. In 1928 Andre Bretón and Louis Aragon view hysteria as a form of poetic liberation, writing that it constitutes "the greatest poetic discovery of the late 19th century" (cited in Beizer, 2). Beizer criticizes this attitude for "romanticiz[ing] a condition in fact suffered as expressive blockage or constraint" (2).

are often couched in terms of disease as well. Jagoe summarizes the antifeminist reaction in Spain:

> In Spain, a major part of the pervading sense of impending collapse stemmed from a perception of a disease in gender relations threatening to invade the heart of the countries. […] [Julio Alarcón y Meléndez] raised the possibility of the sexes themselves disappearing into a monstrous androgynous figure, "el hombre-*femina*". Feminism was represented by its detractors as an infectious disease afflicting women, who were particularly vulnerable to "el creciente contagio de un feminismo morboso, de que adolecen tantas neuráticas [*sic*], histéricas, desequilibradas, hipnotizadas y autosugestionadas que…sólo son útiles a la medicina". ("Ambiguous" 123-24)

In this quote by contemporary commentator Julio Alarcón y Meléndez, feminism is not only described as a dangerous, contagious disease but also intimately linked to female maladies.[76] Here we see ideas of women's emancipation insinuated as *cause* of hysteria as opposed to two separate threats.

Given the centrality of Tristana's physical illness to her sad fate—and the fact that her disease has enraged so many readers—it is surprising that more critics have not focused on what I see as the pervasive presence of disease in the novel's narrative.

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[76] This quote comes from Alarcón y Meléndez's book entitled, *Un feminismo aceptable (con las licencias necesarias*) (1908). In it, he argues for what he calls "un feminismo según Dios" (58): "la mujer formada según el concepto de la vida que tiene el cristianismo, y perfeccionada cada vez más, física, intelectual y moralmente, ha de ser tal, que si se mira al cristal azogado, que se llama espejo, y al inmaterial espejo de su conciencia, que lleva en su alma, no pueda menos de complacerse en sí misma ingenua y constantemente, dando gracias a Dios, autor de todos sus bienes" (58).

Rather, as Zamora observes, a critical obsession seems to exist over Tristana's amputated leg. He points out that even the cover of Ricardo Gullón's 2004 edition of the novel "ostenta una solitaria pierna ortopédica que, destacada contra un monótono fondo azul y calzada de una media desvaída y mal tirada, alude fatalmente por vía de ausencia y contraste al miembro amputado" (192). Thus the amputated leg itself has been imbued with metaphor, viewed by Vilarós as "una metáfora de la escritura" (126) and by Feal Deibe as a phallic symbol that implies castration (124). Aldaraca too talks of a psychological castration (244). Jagoe (and others) refer to Concepción Arenal's 1883 condemnation of the *ángel del hogar* construct as an "obra…de mutilación" against women (cited in "Ambiguous Angels" 126) and reads Tristana's amputation as literally embodying the mutilating effects of nineteenth-century domestic discourses. Underscoring such criticism, of course, is the Spanish maxim "la mujer honrada, la pierna quebrada, y en casa".

The exclusive critical focus on her diseased leg risks overlooking that Tristana's healthy body represents a threat to hegemonic culture as soon as she begins to envision an autonomous existence. Even before her illness we have seen that the narrator codes her alternatively as feminist and hysteric. Both represent diseased portrayals of the female body. We have already established a link between her increased education and the delirious letters Tristana composes to Horacio; like Alarcón y Meléndez, our narrator seems to posit Tristana's feminist thought as a causal factor in her hysteric emotionalism. Of her earliest letters to Horacio the narrator tells us, "Tan voluble y extremoso era en sus impresiones la señorita de Reluz, que fácilmente pasaba del júbilo desenfrenado y epiléptico a una desesperación lúgubre" ("*Tristana*" 144). Horacio clearly notices the

frenetic nature of Tristana's text as he attempts to persuade her to marry: "Aquí te curarás de las locas efervescencias que turban tu espíritu, y que anhelas ser una feliz y robusta villana" (149). The implication is clear: if Tristana were only to give up her feminist dream of self autonomy, she would be "cured" of the emotional extremism reminiscent of hysteria. Jagoe observes that the hysteric's other becomes "la mujer normal y sana, la madre de familia" ("Sexo y género"). We can see then that Tristana's feminist designs categorize her as an unnatural and sick "other" who finds her best representation in the culturally constructed body of the hysteric.[77]

In recent years disability studies have highlighted the socially constructed nature of disability, which includes not only physical and mental handicaps but also chronic illness and aging. Many theorists have underlined the parallels between gender oppression and that of individuals with disabilities. As Susan Wendell explain, "Disability is not a biological given; like gender, it is socially constructed from biological reality" (104). To this argument Rosemarie Garland-Thomson adds, "disability, like femaleness, is not a natural state of corporeal inferiority, inadequacy, excess or a stroke of misfortune. Rather disability is a culturally fabricated narrative of the body, similar to what we understand as the fictions of race and gender" (336). In a sexist society, to be a woman then is to embody disability (Young 42). As disability as a social construct in this sense extends to illness (Lindgren 145), we can see that in the case of Tristana's body, to

[77] By categorizing Tristana as "other", I mean to assign her a place of deviancy with regard to contemporary bourgeois social discourses that are "disciplinary" in nature, following Teresa Fuentes Peris' and Colin McKinney's descriptions of Restoration society as fundamentally disciplinary and regulatory in nature, as I have illustrated in chapter one.

be inscribed with femininity *is* to be inscribed with disease/disability. As Garland-Thomson succinctly puts it, "Femininity…[is] the performance of disability" (338).

Disability permeates the pages of *Tristana* well before the amputation of our protagonist's leg. Josefina's senility toward the end of her life leads her to clean so obsessively that even the cat fears becoming the object of her hygienic fanaticism; she moves neurotically from house to house and is unable to recall her fascination with baroque theater that previously had endeared her to don Lope. Josefina's own passion for "el ideal" (*Tristana* 51) predicts her daughter's powerful imagination as Tristana re-creates Horacio according to the "ser ideal" she envisions. As in the case of Isidora in *La desheredada*, we see the naturalist suggestion that the overactive imagination—so closely linked to madness—is heredity. Horacio's aunt, who structurally parallels don Lope in the novel, is afflicted with an eye condition that at times forces her to hold her eyelids up with her fingers. Although Trini succeeds in persuading her nephew to accompany her to Villajoyosa, her inability to keep her eyes open contrasts sharply with Garrido's penetrating male gaze.

Saturna's deaf and mute child, Saturno, lives in a *hospicio* with several other *ciegos* and *sordomudos*. While visiting Saturno, our protagonist first sees Horacio: in the midst of children unable to see, their eyes meet for an instant and Tristana falls madly in love. It is tempting to compare Tristana to the blind children, as Bly does. The disabled children, however, are isolated from society. Labeled as "other" because of their handicaps (Tristana herself thinks of them, "no acababan de ser personas") (74), they live apart from society in a space, the *hospicio*, designed to contain them. Susan Wendell comments that "suffering caused by the body, and the inability to control the body, are

despised, pitied and above all feared" (112) and for this reason, disabled bodies are kept private, locked away, out of the public sphere (111). Unlike the blind and deaf children maintained safely within their designated place, Tristana's movement through space is relatively unrestricted before her physical illness confines her to the bedroom. We recall Jagoe's observation that once Tristana begins her relationship with Horacio, the narrator increasingly portrays her through "typically fin-de-siècle images of drunkenness, delirium and hysteria" ("Ambiguous Angels" 132). Horacio is both surprised and alarmed as he "empezó a notar que la enamorada joven se iba creciendo a los ojos de él y le empequeñecía" ("*Tristana*" 117). Tristana's refusal to be contained within the confines of bourgeois normality is anxiety-inducing precisely because as a woman her body is inscribed with disability.

Well before Tristana re-creates Horacio to correspond to her ideal, he attempts to mold her into a wife corresponding to his own ideal: "[Horacio] había soñado en Tristana la mujer subordinada al hombre en inteligencia y en voluntad, la esposa que vive de la savia moral e intelectual del esposo y que con los ojos y con el corazón de él ve y siente" (117). These characteristics correspond perfectly to the bourgeois ideal of the *ángel del hogar*, demonstrating Horacio's bourgeois inclinations even before he travels to Villajoyosa. Tristana, however, definitively resists this mold, despite her lover's various attempts to persuade her to join him in marriage, both before and after he leaves for Villajoyosa.

On the contrary, as Tsuchiya observes, through her letters Tristana "seeks to impose her own text on the male subject, rather than conforming to the role of woman as the text to be written" ("Signs" 67). Following Horacio's departure, Tristana does not

indulge in her daily *paseos*; in fact, we never see her leave the house. Certeau's reflection that "writing on a blank page is a 'walk'" (134) suggests that Tristana has replaced one activity for the other. Like walking, writing is potentially both a creative and liberating movement, "a concrete activity that consists in constructing on its own, blank space (*un espace propre*)—the page—a text that has power over the exteriority from which it has first been isolated" (Certeau 134). Yet unlike an author such as Pardo Bazán, whose writing is so often categorized as "viril" and "varonil", Tristana's writing, as Sobejano has observed, does not break free of its romantic models and repeats "literatura pobre, muletillas narrativas" (196); her prose is undoubtedly gendered feminine.[78]

The narrator views Tristana's idolatry of her "ser ideal" as evidence of the toll her illness has taken on her body and perhaps as a sign of her mental instability: "De aquel bonito fantasma iba haciendo Tristana la verdad elemental de su existencia, pues sólo vivía para él, sin caer en la cuenta de que tributaba culto a un Dios de su propia cosecha" ("*Tristana*" 179). Tristana constructs Horacio in the image of an artistic prodigy (as she herself possesses prodigious languages skills, in her opinion) who will respect and enable her to realize an autonomous lifestyle, even as her illness jeopardizes her dream of becoming an actress:

> Hoy me he sentido muy aliviada, y me dedico a pensar en ti. ¡Qué bueno eres! Tu inteligencia no conoce igual, para tu genio artístico no hay dificultades. Te quiero con más alma que nunca, porque respetas mi

[78] Maryellen Bieder suggests that ninteenth-century writing in Spain is gendered. While men's writing is "gender-neutral", women's writing (unless one writes like a man, partaking in "manly writing" as in the case of Pardo Bazán) is relegated to the sphere of feminine otherness (98-99).

> libertad, porque no me amarras a la pata de una silla ni a la pata de una mesa con el cordel del patrimonio. Mi pasión reclama libertad. (177)

Of course the Horacio of flesh and blood will never measure up to her ideal; we are unsurprised to see that Tristana hardly recognizes him when Horacio finally returns following her surgery.

Yet Tristana's text does exercise power "over the exteriority", to return to Certeau's phrase, in the sense that her idealization of Horacio may be read as a parallel to the idealized expectations placed on women by masculine domestic discourses that describe the *ángel del hogar.* Just as Horacio will never resemble the *ser ideal* that Tristana creates, the nineteenth-century woman—although expected to—will struggle to live up to her ideal, angelic counterpart.[79] Tristana refuses to attempt the impossible in molding her body to the *ángel's* strictures. Rather, the letters she produces in the depths of her illness unmask the iconic *ángel del hogar* as a model painfully difficult if not impossible to imitate. They also point to the increased instability of the feminine *ángel* category at the turn of the century, to which, as we have seen in chapter two, Galdós is sensitive even as he writes *La desheredada*.

Of course, Tristana's letter writing also becomes with the onset of her painful illness a coping mechanism, a way of transcending her bodily pain through the imagination as she finds spiritual solace in her idolized creation. In her 1926 essay *On Being Ill,* Virginia Woolf observes that for those not accustomed to pain or sickness, the

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[79] Both Aldaraca and Jagoe emphasize that women face many paradoxes as they attempt to assimilate to the the *ángel del hogar* model. For example, in chapter two we have already seen that despite the so-called separation of spheres perpetuated by domestic discourses, women actually are expected to participate in the public (masculine) sphere of the market.

body passes by unnoticed: "the body is a sheet of plain glass though which the soul looks straight and clear, and…is null, and negligible and nonexistent" (4). Those who suffer from illness know better; they recognize and must learn to cope with their corporal incarceration. Tristana herself seems taken aback by her body's rebellion as she writes:

> Nunca creí que en el destino de las personas influyera tanto cosa tan insignificante como es una pierna, una triste pierna, que sólo sirve para andar. El cerebro, el corazón, creí yo que mandarían siempre; pero ahora una estúpida rodilla se ha erigido en tirana, y aquellos nobles órganos la obedecen… Quiero decir, no la obedecen ni le hacen maldito caso; pero sufren un absurdo despotismo. ("*Tristana*" 176)

Tristana's use of the word "despotismo" to describe her leg's dominion over her body's (im)mobility simultaneously links her disease to don Lope, Tristana's mother, and Horacio's grandfather. We are told by the narrator that Garrido exercises over Tristana "un despotismo que podremos llamar seductor" (42) while Josefina's death is couched in terms of liberation for those supporting her: "Mejorando con su pase a mejor vida la de las personas que acá gemían bajo el despotismo de sus mudanzas y lavatorios" (53). The reign of terror imposed by Horacio's grandfather is described similarly: "[Horacio] vivió…padeciendo bajo su férreo despotismo" (80). The text's repeated use of "despotismo" establishes a link between disease (Tristana's leg and her mother's senility) and the repressive societal controls of patriarchy (don Lope) and those imposed by bourgeois society (the pressure to conform exemplified by Horacio's grandfather.) Despite their attempts at rebellion, both Tristana and Horacio ultimately bend to society's

dictums by the novel's end. If we interpret their elders' despotism as representative of diseased societal mores, no cure would seem to exist on the horizon.

In the above passage Tristana also expresses a sense of estrangement from her body akin to that described by Drew Leder in his book *The Absent Body*. He writes: "[p]ain effects a certain alienation. White and Sweet report that their patients almost universally describe their pain as an 'it', separate from the 'I'. The painful body is often experienced as something foreign to itself" (76). Woolf describes a similar phenomenon in her essay, citing "[t]hose great wars which the body wages with the mind a slave to it" (5) before describing what she seems to view as the only escape possible: "this monster, the body, this miracle, its pain, will soon make us taper into mysticism, or rise, with rapid beats of the wings, into the raptures of transcendentalism" (6). Such mysticism, it would seem, is precisely the outlet embraced by Tristana's reaction to the painful, bed-ridden state of her body, as she writes: "Maestro y señor, mis dolores me llevan a ti, como me llevarían mis alegrías si algunas tuviera. Dolor y gozo son un mismo impulso para volar… […] ¿Qué me importa el dolor físico? Nada. […] ¡Y no me digan que estás lejos! Yo te traigo a mi lado…; tengo bastante poder de la imaginación para suprimir la distancia" (178-79). Unable to walk, she no longer possesses the means for rebellion and instead relies on the mystic reaches of her imagination to traverse distances.

As both Tsuchiya and Minter have observed, Tristana seems to tend toward mysticism and the immaterial following her amputation as well. Although she initially founds her musical aspirations in yet another quest for artistic greatness ("creyóse llamada a ser muy pronto una notabilidad, una concertista de primer orden") (201) Tristana's interest in such material goals rapidly wanes as she loses herself spiritually in

the music she produces. As she practices, "[e]l sentimiento, así como el estilo para expresarlo, absorbíanla por entero; su rostro se transfiguraba, adquiriendo celestial belleza; su alma se desprendía de todo lo terreno para mecerse en el seno vaporoso de una idealidad dulcísima" (223). Tristana's alienation from "lo terreno" manifests itself most immediately as a sense of continued estrangement from her body as she stops taking care of her appearance and as a *beata,* devotes herself to the contemplation of her ideal, who "si antes era un hombre, luego fue Dios, el principio y fin de cuanto existe" (229). Yet also evident in her supposed transcendence of the body is her increased isolation from society itself. The one-legged Tristana now participates with the *sordomudos* and *ciegos*—who, as we recall, "no acababan de ser personas" (74)—in the same marginalized category of disability.

Kirsten Lindgren argues that in a culture where femininity itself is treated as a disability, a body that is both female and diseased is viewed as "doubly devalued…and doubly shameful" (147). Garland-Thomson, who posits that female and disabled bodies are spectacles to be looked at and molded (340), adds, "cultural stereotypes imagine disabled women as asexual, unfit to reproduce, overly dependent, unattractive—as generally removed from the sphere of true womanhood and feminine beauty" (344). Although Garland-Thomson's cultural critique is situated in contemporary western society, *Tristana*'s text describes our protagonist in similar terms following the amputation of her leg. Ciallella has observed that Tristana's operation reduces her to a "classical, asexual statue" (86) while Aldaraca argues that "Tristana's amputation signifies her death as a sexual being" (244). Lope rather gleefully recognizes that Tristana's handicap—and it is unclear if he is referring to her mind or her leg—renders

her unmarriageable: “La perdiste para siempre, pues esas bobadas del amor eterno, del amor ideal, sin piernas ni brazos, no son más que un hervor insano de la imaginación. Te he vencido. Triste es mi victoria, pero cierta” (“*Tristana*” 191). Between them Horacio and don Lope determine Tristana’s immediate future, providing her with painting materials, music lessons and even an organ. With her disease and consequent deformation return the objectifying descriptors of Tristana: she once again is called a “muñeca “(183, 189, 190) by both the narrator and don Lope. At the height of her illness, our narrator comments: “Tristana no era ya ni sombra de sí misma. Su palidez a nada puede compararse; la pasta de papel de que su lindo rostro parecía formado era ya de una diafanidad y de una blancura increíbles” (167). Through the narrator’s masculine gaze Tristana’s diseased body is transformed into a beautiful object akin to the female tuberculosis patient; her skin once more is made of paper, a blank surface waiting to be inscribed.

Iris Marion Young argues that the “threat of being seen” (45) (“seen and evaluated”, Rose clarifies) (146) often causes women to perceive of themselves as objects in space. As a disabled woman, Tristana would feel doubly objectified and doubly alienated; her description of herself as “una belleza sentada, ya para siempre sentada, una mujer de medio cuerpo, un busto y nada más” (“*Tristana*” 213) suggests that she has internalized what Harlan Hahn has called the “asexual objectification of people with disabilities” (cited in Garland-Thomson, 345). Tristana clearly defines herself through the objects associated with her disability, saying of her crutches, “No, por mucho que yo discurra, no inventaré un bonito andar con estos palitroques. Siempre seré como las mujeres lisiadas que piden limosna a la puerta de las iglesias” (“*Tristana*” 221). Yet even

within the church, she cannot escape the objectification engendered by her disability. Institutionalized as "la mujer coja" in the eyes of the devout, she comes to be viewed as a part of the religious building itself: "los acólitos la consideraban ya como parte integrante del edificio y aun de la institución" (230).

Gillian Rose has observed that women often describe their experiences in space as confined and oppressive (144) and adds that the twin feelings stem from "a body feeling constrained by a particular gender, class and race position" (145). To this list we can most certainly add disability. If Tristana feels suffocated in don Lope's house before her illness but liberated while walking the outskirts of Madrid, her spatial experience following her amputation would be one of complete enclosure and isolation. Inside don Lope's house, in the streets while pushed in her "carrito de mano" (221) (which she only uses for two to three months), even while praying in the church: wherever she goes, society inscribes her body with the pejorative discourses of disability. Perhaps Tristana does manage to transcend her body—as she did in her letter writing—through what the narrator describes as mystical experiences with her idealized other, be it the idolized Horacio or God himself. It seems more likely however that Tristana, unable to enact her feminist dream of self-autonomy, ultimately turns against herself in an embodiment of hysteria.

We might read Tristana's final foray into music as a last attempt to transcend her body through art; once Horacio returns and shatters her ideal, release through writing is no longer an option. While this interpretation parallels Valis' assertion that the novel links art to the formation of personality, I view art in the novel not as a failed foundation for identity but rather as a failed means to transcend her oppressive bodily experience.

Ciallella notes that Tristana's musical talent expresses torment "from her dissociation from human contact and from her own ideas" (86). Music, the least verbal of the arts, reinforces the expression of her isolation. "Su aislamiento era completo, absoluto" ("*Tristana*" 224), comments the narrator as she plays the organ. As I have tried to demonstrate, however, Tristana's isolation stems directly from her bodily experiences of objectification and inscription with deviant discourses of illness—both as a feminist and as a hysteric. Art, therefore, ultimately fails as a means of bodily transcendence and instead reinforces Tristana's acute sense of isolation from society.

Even what Minter views as her mysticism at the end of the novel may be interpreted as a manifestation of hysteria, as Mazzoni has demonstrated the two are often mistaken for each other or conflated: "The difference between human and divine could coincide with the line that separates the sane from the mad, the saintly from the symptomatic" (11). The last two chapters of the novel in particular are filled with narrative ambiguity, with the narrator seeming to doubt his own narrative authority as exemplified by the enigmatic question and answer that close the text: "¿Eran felices uno y otro?... Tal vez" ("*Tristana*" 234). While the narrator is certain of don Lope's growing senility and even privy to Garrido's interior disbelief at his growing tendency to accompany Tristana to church, when it comes to Tristana, the narrator is left with questions: "En cuanto a Tristana, ¿sería, por ventura, aquélla su última metamorfosis? ¿O quizá tal mudanza era sólo exterior, y por dentro subsistía la unidad pasmosa de su pasión por lo ideal?" (229). As readers we are as isolated from Tristana's interiority as she seems to be from society. Her body, however, represents the despondent, aphasic body of the hysteric; marriage to don Lope demonstrates her rejection of feminism as a response to

repression. Tristana, as a hysteric, perpetuates her own isolation as she turns inward on herself. On this reading, her silence at the end of the novel neither indicates transcendence nor protest but rather entrapment. Finney observes that hysteria is "compliant, imprisoning, and self-destructive" (8). As Toril Moi maintains:

> Hysteria is not, *pace* Hélène Cixous, the incarnation of the revolt of women forced to silence but rather a declaration of defeat, the realization that there is no way out. Hysteria is, as Catherine Clément perceives, a cry for help when defeat becomes real, when the woman sees that she is efficiently gagged and chained to her feminine [and in this case disabled] role. (192)

Despite Tristana's attempts at rebellion, society in the end reigns supreme. First inscribed with disability because of her gender, Tristana's physical disability intensifies her experience of objectification and societal stricture. Rose observes that for women, being in space is often difficult and restricting. "At its worse", she writes, "this feeling results in a desire to make ourselves absent from space; it can mean that we 'acquiesce in being made invisible, in our occupying no space. We participate in our own erasure'" (143)[80]. We might assume that for Tristana her physical handicap only intensifies this feeling and that at the end of the novel, Tristana experiences her body as an object occupying negative space. Her body is thrice inscribed with disability: as a woman, as a hysteric, and as "una coja" ("*Tristana*" 230).

And what about don Lope? While many critics have observed that he too represents a failed rebellion against bourgeois norms, Garrido also embodies another losing battle against his age. As I have noted, disability studies makes clear that aging is

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[80] In the latter part of this quote, Rose cites M. Frye, *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (2).

also culturally considered a disability. The pains that Lope takes to mask his age from Tristana (as well as the rest of society) at the beginning of the novel call to mind Lindgren's observation that "the project of self-construction takes place in a sociocultural context and is shaped by…cultural discourses about body, self and illness" (153). Don Lope's own self-construction (we remember he has even changed his name from don Juan López to don Juan Lope) demonstrates his view of aging as a discourse of disability: "La edad del buen hidalgo…era una cifra tan imposible de averiguar como la hora de un reloj descompuesto, cuyas manecillas se obstinaran en no moverse. Se había plantado a los cuarenta y nueve, como si el terror instintivo de los cincuenta le detuviese en aquel temido lindero del medio siglo" ("*Tristana*" 38). He also spends an inordinate amount on his appearance, attempting, we might suspect, to hide his true age: "se ponía en planta a punto de las ocho, y en afeitarse y acicalarse, pues cuidaba de su persona con esmero y lentitudes de hombre de mundo, se pasaban dos horitas" (39).

Throughout the novel, our narrator records both Lope's declining financial situation and deteriorating appearance, as the two seem to go hand in hand. By the end of the narrative, Lope is quite senile and appears almost childish as he plays with the chickens in his small garden, fully integrated into bourgeois society through his marriage to Tristana. Leon Livingstone has attempted to argue that their marriage represents a "natural state" given that at the end of the novel Tristana appears nearly as old as don Lope (98). While I believe most critics would respond that there is nothing inherently "natural" about Garrido and Tristana's situation—Aldaraca argues quite convincingly that their relationship is nothing short of incestuous—society has surely inscribed both Lope and Tristana with a common discourse of disability.

It is well known that as Restoration Spain approaches the turn of the century, the once-dominant bourgeois middle-class grows increasingly insecure, perceiving attacks on its cultural and economic hegemony from all sides. The response is an attempt to control those who threaten bourgeois convention, be it through intentional rebellion (the feminist) or differences embodied in disability (the *ciegos* and *sordomudos* confined to their *hospicio*). Lope and Tristana's marriage at the end of the novel does not imply the inevitably of bourgeois conventions so much as the inherent insecurity of bourgeois cultural discourses: even the handicapped woman and the senile man, united in their disabled otherness, must be parceled off and subsumed within the middle-class solution of marriage to restore a sense of fragile stability. In this domestic space, where Tristana is left to bake her cakes while don Lope putters about his garden, they—like the disabled children—no longer represent an immediate threat. By rereading *Tristana* through the twin lenses of feminist geography and disability studies, we might move beyond the question of its author's feminist stance and view the novel instead as evidence of Galdós' growing recognition of the increasing instability of Spanish bourgeois hegemony.

Chapter Four

Lived Space and the Imagination in *Misericordia*

A reinar, fortuna, vamos;
no me despiertes, si duermo,
y si es verdad, no me duermas.
Mas, sea verdad o sueño,
obrar bien es lo que importa.
Si fuere verdad, por serlo;
si no, por ganar amigos
para cuando despertemos.

Pedro Calderón de la Barca
La vida es sueño (1635)

Written in 1897, *Misericordia* is often seen as Galdós' last great realist novel, an expression of both his increased spiritualization and growing disillusionment with the promised potential of Restoration Spain. In this final chapter, I propose a reading of the novel that analyzes how Benina conceives of her own lived spatiality and operates within it. I begin with an overview of the novel's literary tradition and turn to a discussion of poverty and charity in Spain at the turn of the century. I then examine Benina's own spatiality through the lens of Henri Lefebvre's triadic theorization of social space. He envisions lived social space as comprised of both the real and the imaginary, a conception that helps me to analyze and compare the imaginary spaces created by many of the novel's characters. I conclude that Benina's spirituality is paramount to her own experience of spatiality, and that to focus exclusively on the material reality represented in *Misericordia* is to miss the important intersection between materiality and spirituality as posited by the novel.

Misericordia was received with mixed reviews by contemporary commentators. Clarín emphasizes in his review of the novel that Galdós, in essence, continues to be Galdós—which for Alas is undoubtedly a very good thing: "Galdós no ha renegado, ni reniega, de los procedimientos del realismo sano, racional, eterno; no hay en *Misericordia* manera de análisis que no hubiera en la *Desheredada,* por ejemplo" (1). For Clarín, Galdós' recent novels differ from his earlier works only in that now "se trata de la excepción, más rara sin duda de lo bueno, de la abnegación y el sacrificio" (1). Another critic, Eduardo Gómez de Baquero, comments that while the general reading public may find *Misericordia* to be of little interest, "para cuantos conocen algo…la última novela de Galdós es una de las que mejor manifiesta la maestría de este escritor" (91). Blasco Ibáñez, however, decidedly dislikes the novel; he complains that the characters lack interest not because they are overly realistic but precisely because "antes de fotografiarse sobre las cuartillas han pasado por la imaginación de Galdós" (cited in Chamberlin, "Mistaken Evaluation" 209). He especially protests what he views as the exaggerated depiction of Madrid's beggars and finds Benina's character utterly unbelievable: "Benigna [sic] pidiendo limosna para mantener a su señora resulta una criada Providencia de aquellas que hacían derramar lágrimas en las novelas de Pérez Escrich [a well-known sentimental novelist]" (209). As Vernon Chamberlin in his 1990 critical article is anxious to refute Blasco Ibáñez's criticisms of *Misericordia*, one wonders if Clarín's vehement insistence that Galdós "no reniega…del realismo sano" constitutes an unspecified response to Blasco Ibáñez's negative review, published a little over a month previously.

Joaquín Casalduero's seminal scholarly article on *Misericordia*, published in 1944, firmly establishes several lines of critical inquiry that *galdosistas* will grapple with

throughout the following decades: the problematization of reality; the relative strength of fantasy and imagination—including the true nature of that mysterious priest, Don Romualdo; Galdós' increasing spiritualism and concern with religion; the author's self-conscious interrogation of fiction. Such themes have consistently resurfaced, intersected and at times overlapped as innovative critics continue to offer new perspectives on the novel. As in previous chapters, I will provide a roadmap with which to navigate the vast amount of scholarship that *Misericordia* has amassed over the years. I pause first to consider more traditional criticism that tends to view Galdós' *fin de siècle* novel as the culmination of the author's spiritualization on the one hand and disenchantment with Spain's bourgeois class on the other. I then turn to later approximations of the novel that examine *Misericordia*'s metafictionality and that attempt to explain the origins of Don Romualdo without reference to religion. Finally, I enter into dialogue with more recent studies that privilege an examination of the material reality represented in the novel.[81]

In his aforementioned study of the novel, Casalduero affirms that while Galdós examines Benina's reality "con su perfecta y perfeccionada técnica naturalista" ("Significado" 1104), the author goes far beyond the determinist limits of Zola's literary philosophy: "a este dolor infinito, a esta pobreza sin límites, el novelista les superpone un amor infinito también" (1105). In this literary period of spiritual naturalism, Galdós privileges spiritual reality—that is, the possession of a pure conscience that embraces not money but love—over material reality (1109). For Casalduero, *Misericordia* prefigures

[81] Although critical studies of *Misericordia* have generally evolved according to the broad pattern I identify, these critical trends are by no means strictly chronological.

the stylistic preferences of the so-called Generation '98.[82] In 1967 Gustavo Correa outlines what he too views as Galdós' increasing spiritualization:

> Su voluntad [la del hombre] y libre arbitrio pueden encauzar su vida hacia la superación de dicha realidad [la material] y a la búsqueda de una trayectoria significativa para su existencia. De ahí la creciente espiritualización de la realidad que observamos en las novelas de Galdós... ("Realidad" 10)

Thus the limits of reality are transcended by what Correa calls "un sentir religioso" ("Realidad" 163) that Galdós explores in the individual consciences of his characters. C.A. Longurst, meanwhile, emphasizes the artistic elements of Galdós' naturalism in *Misericordia*. While the vivid portrayal of Madrid's squalid and desperate poor is meant to evoke repulsion, Galdós' descriptions are also beautiful: "the human and physical environments sometimes merge to produce a composite picture teeming with life, repugnant yet colorful, fascinating in a perverse kind of way" (79). Less deterministic than Zola, Galdós further emphasizes the primacy of individual action throughout the novel (81). Traditionally, however, critics have tempered *Misericordia*'s naturalist descriptions by asserting Galdós' increased spirituality (rather than artistic sensibility). As another prolific *galdosista*, Peter Bly, affirms in his 2004 study of the eccentric type

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[82] According to Casalduero, Galdós' description of the poor is as impressionist as it is naturalist, as the author imbues his descriptions of poverty with poetry (1105). Almudena's declarations of love for Benina, meanwhile, recalls the amorous expressions of Rubén Darío and Valle-Inclán: "ya no se expresa un amor burgués y doméstico en un mundo comercial e industrial, sino un amor eterno en la llanura ardiente de Castilla" (1107). References to Darío and Valle-Inclán are Casalduero's; I leave aside the well-known debates of terminology regarding the Generation '98, the Latin-American *modernistas*, and modernism understood more broadly as a European literary current.

in Galdós, *Misericordia* "is often considered Galdós' triumphantly positive resolution of the religious problem in contemporary Spain" ("Eccentric" 157).

Thus critics have found in Galdós' *novelas contemporáneas* a well-established trajectory that Casalduero describes as a shift "de lo político-económico a lo religioso y de lo nacional a lo universal" ("Morton a Almudena" 182). The later spiritual novels, Correa adds, witness "una nueva *valoración* del mundo moral y religioso" ("Realidad" 164, his emphasis). *Ángel Guerra* (1891) is generally seen as the first of the "spiritualist" novels, with *Nazarín, Halma,* and *Misericordia* forming a trilogy that builds toward the author's spiritual culmination (Sinnigen, "New Totality" 234). Although in this chapter I consider *Misericordia* separately from its preceding novels, Sinnigen's differentiation between this so-called trilogy and the earlier *novelas contemporáneas* is useful: "Rather than seeking integration into society and proposing that this synthesis lead to a renovated society, here [in *Nazarín, Halma* and *Misericordia*] the protagonists strive to establish an alternative to society or to transcend it" (234). Although couched in terms of an unwinnable struggle between materiality and spirituality, Sinnigen's essay simultaneously reminds us of Galdós' growing frustration with Restoration Spain. To this end, Julio Rodríguez Puértolas suggests that *Misericordia* is in fact "una novela antiburguesa" (101). He perceives in Don Romualdo's ambiguous ontology a challenge to the unwaveringly positivist conception of reality embraced by bourgeois ideology (102). The beggars' untenable situation as depicted by the novel, meanwhile, highlights the incapacity of the bourgeoisie to carry Spanish society forward (112) and more specifically points to the failure of bourgeois notions of charity (113).

Traditional critics who view Galdós' spiritualization as the driving force behind *Misericordia* tend to unearth a moralizing message in the novel as well. For Sinnigen, Benina is a "charitable alternative to the social norm" (245), a saint who represents the (ultimately unattainable) ideal of charity (251). Vernon Chamberlin, who goes so far as to describe the novel as a "moral gospel", conceives of Benina in still more didactic terms, arguing that Galdós uses humor to ensure the "moraleja"—that we should all strive to emulate Benina's Christ-like example—is not heavy-handed ("Deleitar enseñando" 182).[83] According to John Varey, charity as espoused by the protagonist is "a state of mind, a way of living which enables the human being to escape from his own troubles because it allows him to escape into the troubles of others" (Varey 193). In their respective studies on the centrality of charity in the novel, both Varey and Arnold Peñuel conclude that Benina exemplifies the type of selfless, undiscriminating charity posited by Galdós as a preferable alternative to Carlos Trujillo's self-aggrandizing almsgiving, institutions dedicated to charity (poorhouses such as the *Misericordia* itself), and even Doña Guillermina's charitable example (Varey 176, 179; Puñuel 84). For Sara [Cohen] Schyfter, the kind of charity exercised by both Benina and Almudena possesses a redemptive function that actualizes salvation ("Jewish Theme" 54).

Indeed, critics have traditionally viewed Benina as a Christ-like figure. Theodore Beardsley in his illuminating article draws several convincing parallels between the trajectory of Galdós' protagonist and the life—and particularly Passion—of Jesus Christ,

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[83] It is worth noting that neither Sinnigen or Chamberlin promote Benina's lifestyle as a practical one recommended by Galdós but rather an ideal that we would do well to emulate. Eamonn Rodgers also conceives of *Nazarín, Halma* and *Misericordia* as a trilogy and notes that, unlike the protagonists of the first two novels, Benina does not renounce the material world in which she lives but rather realizes her own spirituality within it (193).

culminating in Benina's symbolic crucifixion when she is arrested for begging and imprisoned in el Pardo (49). Similarly, Correa writes, "Benina comprende todo el sentido religioso de su profesión mendicante como vía de ascensión ascética y perfeccionamiento espiritual", culminating in the imitation of Christ (206, "Simbolismo religioso"). In short, Benina's selfless charity and agile imagination quite literally brings Don Romualdo to life; that is, Romualdo's apparition in the "real world" of the novel is traditionally viewed as a miracle unwittingly worked by Benina herself (G. Gullón, "Un milagro realista" 171; Beardsley 53; Casalduero, "Significado" 1108; Russell 108; Correa, "Simbolismo religioso" 214; Lida 357). Bly's explication of Frasquito Ponte Delgado, meanwhile, posits the decadent dandy as the lone voice of truth at the end of the novel, the only individual to insist on Benina's angelic and saintly nature (165-66) besides, perhaps, the Hebraic *moro* Almudena.

As Benina's most trusted and loyal companion, Almudena has engendered a prolific vein of critical enquiry all of his own. According to *Misericordia*'s text, Almudena, also called Mordejai, is a Jewish-Arabic-baptized-Christian who hails from the land of Sus in Morroco and speaks in a bizarre, barely intelligible dialect of Spanish infinitives and invented words. Scholars have taken particular interest in this unusual character not only for his unlikely descent and narrative depiction but also because of the tantalizing comments published by Galdós himself regarding Almudena's creation. In a preface to the 1913 edition to the novel, Galdós writes that Mordejai "fue arrancado del natural por una feliz coincidencia" ("Introducción" 6). On one of his many strolls through the *barrios bajos* of Madrid as he "researches" the future setting of *Misericordia*, Galdós claims to have befriended an elderly, Moroccan beggar of whom Almudena is, in

essence, a carbon copy. On the subject Galdós concludes, "toda la verdad del pintoresco *Mordejai* es obra de él mismo, pues poca parte tuve yo en la descripción de esta figura" (7).

Scholarly criticism on the whole has met Galdós' claims with not undeserved skepticism. In one of the earliest essays on Almudena, French critic Robert Ricard accepts that Galdós based his character of the aforementioned Moroccan beggar but adds, "Pero su sintaxis, su vocabulario, su pronunciación *no son un documento"* (his emphasis, translated into the Spanish in Casalduero, "Morton a Almudena" 187). For Ricard as for Chamberlin, Almudena's character promotes religious tolerance by harkening back to a time when Christianity, Islam and Judaism coexisted in the Iberian Peninsula (Ricard 25, cited in Lida 303; Chamberlin, "Significance" 492). While Casalduero insists that the Moroccan character represents the value of unfailing love and mercy over religious division ("Morton a Almudena" 187), Chamberlin takes Almudena to task for what he views as the character's pointless and ultimately deceptive scheming (494). Marcel Crespil views Mordejai in an especially negative light for transmitting negative stereotypes of both Jews and Muslims held by most nineteenth-century Spaniards (467).

Neither Chamberlin nor Crespil believe that Almudena is based on a "real-life" individual befriended by Galdós. In fact Chamberlin demonstrates quite convincingly that the character is most likely derived from a variety of literary sources, such as Rodrigo Soriano's travel narrative, *Moros y Cristianos: notas del viaje* (1894) (Chamberlin, "Importance" 105). While Denah Lida argues that Galdós has based the "real" Arabic beggar of his 1913 introduction on *Misericordia*'s fictitious Mordejai, her evaluation of the character is much more positive. Lida suggests that Almudena's eccentric dialect

stems from Galdós' own fertile imagination and further distinguishes the Moroccan, whom she calls "[e]l individualísimo héroe de la fe y la imaginación pura". In her illuminative book *The Jew in the Novels of Benito Pérez Galdós* (1978), Sara Schyfter convincingly demonstrates that Almudena's Hebraic heritage allows Galdós to highlight the "limitations and hypocrisy" of many of Spain's contemporary Christians ("The Jew in Galdós" 78) and to commend personal spirituality over ritualized religion (86).

Schyfter further posits Benina as a Messianic figure with relation to Almudena (97) and, like several of her critical predecessors, credits Nina with the creation of Romualdo (92). Although Germán Gullón insists that the priest does not function within the novel as Augusto Pérez in Unamuno's *Niebla* (1914), the ambiguous nature of reality and fiction that Romualdo's appearance implies has further engendered a number of critical studies privileging the novel's metafictionality. John Kronik's controversial article (1981) is the first to view Romualdo's creation not as a religious miracle but rather as a metacommentary on the nature of fiction itself. Exhorting readers to embrace the "sublimity" (rather than rationality) of the creative process (43), Kronik insists that Benina's priestly creation represents Galdós' own self-conscious interrogation of the nature of fiction itself (42). That is, Benina—both creation and creator—successfully fabricates Romualdo precisely because Galdós, as her author, has endowed her with this power. He writes provocatively that in *Misericordia*:

> [D]reams come true and the impossible happens. When we expunge from the exegetical fabric our drive towards logic, rationality and verisimilitude, Don Romualdo becomes exactly what he is: a fiction, an invention, the impossible shadow of a dream. Curiously, as the character's conversion

> into person is thwarted, the full shamanistic dimension of fiction is exposed. (44)

I quote from this article at length because Kronik's essay signals a shift in critical attitude toward the ever-problematic Don Romualdo. From here on out, the priest's appearance tends to be viewed as a coincidence within the novel's textual world, as a metafictional commentary, or both.[84]

While Geoffrey Ribbans concurs with Kronik that the text of *Misericordia* fundamentally questions the nature of reality, he adds: "Galdós does not, in my view, assert the superiority of imaginative creation over imitation of reality; he presents them both in parallel fashion and problematizes them both" ("History and Fiction" 210). The novel's narrative, dominated by ambiguity, interrogates the nature of reality and imagination, of materiality and spirituality (203). Ultimately, Ribbans concludes, readers are left to decide the "true" nature of Romualdo's origins on their own (216). Eamon Rodgers, for his part, insists that despite the intentional ambiguity of Galdós' text, the "real" Romualdo coincides only superficially with Benina's imagined priest. While they share the same name, Benina's (imaginary) Romualdo embodies genuine Christian charity while his flesh-and-blood counterpart represents institutionalized (bourgeois) forms of charity (191). While Rodgers accurately observes that Benina and Doña Paca experience Romualdo's existence differently (189), William Worden goes so far as to

[84] As I have already demonstrated in this critical overview, recent work on *Misericordia* by more traditional scholars such as Peter Bly and Vernon Chamberlin continue to view Romualdo as the product of Benina's miraculous intervention.

posit four Don Romualdos.[85] Clearly, what we might call the Don Romualdo dilemma remains unresolvable. I am most inclined, however, toward Ribbans' argument and its open-ended conclusion, which simultaneously preserve the ambiguity of the narrative, allow for a metacritical analysis of the text, and privilege the creative function of the imagination in the novel.

From the mid-1980s to the present, then, criticism of *Misericordia* has tended to shift away from the novel's spiritual emphasis to focus on the material reality represented in the pages. In a recent article that revisits the self-conscious nature of the text, Juli Highfill engages with postmodern theories of metafiction to suggest that *Misericordia* posits a gift economy of shared story-telling and fabulation that promotes commutative justice as an alternative to the "brutal, unfettered, and highly stratified capitalist economy" (217).[86] Walter Glannon and Lieve Behiels also explore the justice theme in *Misericordia*, specifically through the lens of John Rawl's theory of justice. While the particulars of their arguments do not concern us here, both scholars arrive at two very different conclusions. Glannon defends institutionalized structures of charity—such as Romualdo's *Misericordia*, which for Glannon inspires the name of Galdós' novels—and insists that both Benina's charity and spirituality cannot transcend her material limits.[87]

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[85] While his thesis sounds provocative, Worden's essay essentially traces the evolution of Benina's attitude toward Romualdo as she struggles to make sense of his imagined and then practical intercessions in her life.

[86] Highfill's central thesis is more generally theoretical as she is most interested in demonstrating that metafictive theories (such as that advanced by her mentor, Robert Spires) are relevant beyond the heyday of postmodern criticism. She does so with great effect.

[87] Glannon provocatively argues that Galdós ultimately recommends distributive over commutative justice in the novel: Benina's indiscriminate charity offers no permanent fix while charitable institutions are deemed more efficient (248). While his conclusion belies

Behiels, for her part, uses Rawl's theory to demonstrate Benina's moral superiority in the novel. Written in response to Glannon's article, hers is a defense of the protagonist's conception of charity.

As recent scholarly work on *Misericordia* privileges the novel's portrayal of material reality in Restoration Spain, it is unsurprising to uncover a substantive body of criticism that privileges the function of money in the novel. Richard Young reminds us of the thematic prevalence of money in realist novels generally (185) and observes that in *Misericordia* (as a reflection of contemporary society) money determines which spaces the characters occupy. Many critics have rightly underlined that both Benina and Almudena view money differently from other characters, from doña Paca and Frasquito Ponte to the beggars of San Sebastián. Schyfter demonstrates that Benina and Almudena garner money for the purpose of sharing it ("The Jew in Galdós" 91); Daniel Lorca argues that the novel's conclusion advocates "un rechazo total de la obsesión por la riqueza como poder y como valor supremo…a favor de la preocupación por el estado del alma" (90).[88] However, in my view Lorca's conclusion represents an overly idealistic position incompatible with Benina's desperate and unending search for money throughout the novel.

More persuasive is a critical stance that allows for multiple economies in action within the textual world of the novel. James Mandrell argues that the text of *Misericordia* foregrounds two representational modes of interpreting the world: through money

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traditional criticism of *Misericordia*, his essay is well-argued and allows for a defense of capitalist systems of justice.

[88] Lorca's article is refreshing in that he does not condemn Juliana but rather argues that through Benina's absolution, Juliana is ultimately transformed, her former obsession with money tempered (91).

(numbers; reality) and through narratives (words; imagination) (185). Mandrell convincingly questions the critical tendency to view each camp as mutually exclusive in the novel. Rather, he advocates a "recognizing of *not* the either-or nature of the distinction carefully drawn in the novel, but on seeing them as reciprocal processes in a world of economies" (178). In his view, then, both forms of representation are necessary and desirable; Romualdo's character personifies a blending of narrative and numeric representations of reality. Beth Bauer, meanwhile, is the first critic to trace out the monetary and narrative economies simultaneously at work in the novel (236). Money and narrative each function within the text (and in our own everyday worlds) as circulating economies of exchange (238). Both are equally important: "we might now suggest that if *Misericordia* is about salvation, it is also about savings; if it is about redemption, it is also about the strictly monetary sense of the verb *redimir*" (239-40). As the novel's chief storyteller and money-manager, Benina manifests the link between narrative and money as a source of exchange (237). Both Bauer and Mandrell additionally note that the novel's emphasis on narrative (that is, the privileged position of narrative creation within the text itself) constitutes a metafictive exploration of the nature of fiction and self-representation.

By now the general shift in criticism from an emphasis on the novel's spirituality to the text's representation of material reality should be coming into clearer focus. This is not to say that we should dismiss the spiritual concerns clearly manifested in *Misericordia* or indeed in any of the novels from Galdós' so-called spiritualist period. On the contrary, although contemporary critics have tended to privilege the textuality and materiality of the novel, we might think of this critical shift as complementary to—and

not a departure from—traditional criticism. Colin McKinney's recent book, who as we have seen analyzes various Galdosian novels through a Foucauldian lens, argues that in *Misericordia* Galdós turns nineteenth-century physiognomy on its head precisely because Benina's physical description does not reflect her (inner) spiritual beauty (166). Only the blind Almudena recognizes his friend's true worth. By undermining the primacy of vision, Galdós "cuts against the grain of prevailing discourses (and even Galdós' earlier novels), which educated readers in the art of visually based social mapping" (173). In an article published the same year as McKinney's book, Amy Wright argues that *Misericordia* represents a departure from the omnipresent realist narrator (in league, according to Wright, with the repressive Foucauldian gaze) (96) and instead describes "un mundo a través de la mirada de los marginados" (93).[89]

In fact, Foucault provides the theoretical framework for two of the most innovative studies of *Misericordia* to date, Teresa Fuentes Peris' chapter on *Misericordia* in her book *Visions of Filth: Deviancy and Social Control in the Novels of Galdós* (2003) and Hazel Gold's 2001 article, "Outsider Art: Homelessness in *Misericordia*".[90] Both critics purposefully leave to the side questions of Galdós' religious thought as well as the text's metafictional elements. They instead read the novel as actively engaging with contemporary discourses of poverty in Restoration Spain. Although Fuentes Peris focuses on contemporary attitudes toward begging and charity while Gold explores the ramifications of homelessness in Madrid at the turn of the century, both view the novel as

[89] We should be careful in describing "the rest" of Galdós' narrators as unequivocally omniscient, as Wright's argument comes uncomfortably close to suggesting. As is well known, many of the narrators of the *novelas contemporáneas* are at times unreliable and often problematic.

[90]Fuentes Peris' chapter is a revised version of her original article "A Diseased Morality: Begging and Indiscriminate Charity in Galdós' Misericordia" (2002).

evidence of Galdós' dissatisfaction with "existing power structures" (Gold 151) designed to control and categorize the poor. Each concludes that while Galdós recognizes the limits of Benina's charity (she is after all materially worse off at the end of the novel), her refusal to enter the asylum Misericordia represents an assertion of independence and ultimate resistance to bourgeois methods of social control.

Both Fuentes Peris and Gold emphasize the threat posed by the urban poor to Spain's "national image and identity" (Gold 144), already in deep crisis at the turn of the century. As filth denotes not only a lack of hygiene but also immorality, deviant mendicant populations endanger both national health (hygiene) and morality (Fuentes Peris, "Visions" 2). Urban poverty is particularly threatening if only for the sheer number of *mendigos* that swarm the streets. Contemporary commentators often characterize Madrid's beggars as a plague on the city, much like the animalized horde of beggars in *Misericordia* that descends upon the wedding party in the church of San Sebastián ("Visions" 217; "*Misericordia*" 185). Increases in urban mendicancy derive from the sheer lack of jobs. In Madrid, for example, the newly industrialized economy is simply unable to keep up with the urban demand for employment, especially as provincial populations increasingly flock to the capital in search of a better life (Fuentes Peris, "Diseased" 109). As a case in point, Bahamonde Magro and Toro Merida report that in May of 1853, between 1,000 and 1,500 Galicians migrate to Madrid in response to an acute economic crisis in their homeland (353). In 1898, immigrants make up nearly half (49.83%) of Madrid's population (354). It is worth noting that in *Misericordia*, doña Francisca, Frasquito Ponte, Benina and of course Almudena are not native *madrileños*.

Skyrocketing population statistics for the capital of Spain speak for themselves: if in 1857 Madrid's total population numbered 281,170, by 1900 Madrid has 539,835 inhabitants.[91] Madrid's population nearly doubles in half a century despite possessing one of the highest urban mortality rates in Europe. In 1882, the mortality rate in Madrid is 42 out of every 1,000 inhabitants; in 1900, 36 in 1,000 (Bahamonde at al. 353). Although sporadic epidemics contribute to higher mortality rates in Madrid in the 1860s and 70s, hunger—that is, starvation—is often seen as the primary causal factor. As contemporary commentator Diego Ignacio Parada writes in 1876:

> Se habla y se discute mucho sobre la mortalidad excesiva de Madrid, y una de sus principales causas se halla en la insuficiencia alimenticia del vecindario… Indudablemente entre las causas de la excesiva mortalidad de esta corte, entre a figurar en primer término la que vamos indicando, pudiendo asegurarse que el pueblo de Madrid, más que de otra cosa, se muere inconscientemente de hambre. (78).

Meanwhile, the salary of even an employed *jornalero* often fails to cover even the basic costs of living (Bahamonde at al. 355). As the unemployed and underemployed members of the working class turn to begging as a last resort, the term *mendigo* itself is increasingly associated with various social categories (Fuentes Peris, "Diseased" 109). Returning to the scientific study *La mala vida en Madrid* (1900), Bernaldo de Quirós and Llanas Aguilaniedo differentiate between *el pauperismo* ("aquella situación en que individuos de *determinadas clases* carecen de un modo permanente de las cosas necesarias a su alimento, abrigo y aseo, produciendo, además, por su continuidad y otra

[91] As a point of comparison, Madrid's population in 2012 is recorded at 3.2 million.

causas, una decadencia en las costumbres físicas y morales de los mismos") and *la mendicidad* essentially by defining the latter as a natural result of the former (my emphasis, 320).

The above reference to "determinadas clases" of beggars points to a new classification and resultant hierarchy of *mendigos* widely accepted by bourgeois social commentators in the second half of the nineteenth century. Traditional modes of indiscriminate almsgiving do persist throughout the nineteenth century—poverty under the *Antiguo Régimen* is viewed as God-ordained and a means for the rich to attain salvation through the giving of alms. Spain's uneven industrialization and its traditional religiosity ensure that the individual practice of almsgiving—as evidenced by Carlos Trujillo in *Misericordia*—remains as a key charitable outlet throughout the nineteenth century (Fuentes Peris, "Visions" 177). Yet, as Adrian Shubert notes, throughout the nineteenth-century "there were numerous loud and influential voices criticizing charity on the street as useless and even counterproductive" (37).[92] Far from providential, beggars are described as addressing passerby in increasingly menacing tones (37), as Quirós and Aguilaniedo make clear as they cite the dishonest means through which the *mendigo* often garners "la reacción de piedad del *asaltado*" (320, my emphasis). Hence the classification of the poor into two broad categories: the deserving and the undeserving poor (Fuentes Peris, "Diseased" 110).[93] In her expansive study on "the new poor",

[92] Shubert's excellent article details Spanish legislation on mendicity from the eighteenth century through the nineteenth and charts changes in national and local welfare laws in Spain throughout the nineteenth century.

[93] Fuentes Peris qualifies that although the division between *pobres verdaderos* and *pobres fingidos* exists in Spanish legislature as early as the sixteenth century, she argues that "it was in the nineteenth century that the exacerbation of the mendicity problem as a consequence of industrialization and urban growth accentuated the distinction between

Concepción Arenal, one of the most prolific writers on poverty and charity in Spain, criticizes indiscriminate almsgiving as promoting idleness and immorality (Fuentes Peris, "Visions" 134). A common theme in Arenal's reflections is the need to differentiate between those unable to work and those who choose not to work: "[entre] el que pide por necesidad y el que pide por vicio" (cited in "Visions" 134). Although Arenal recognizes that on occasions it is impossible to differentiate between the two (184), an anonymous voice in the newspaper *La Época* unequivocally condemns the unworthy poor—for him easily identified—in 1889:

> Han de hallarse seguramente medios para corregir el abuso de que numerosa pléyade de gentes holgazanas apelan a esa industria para excitar los sentimientos caritativos del pueblo y le exploten [sic], evitando que el dinero que esos mendigos falsificados se llevan se destine a usos verdaderamente caritativos. (2)

This author goes on to affirm that eight out of every ten beggars that populate Madrid's streets do not deserve charity and should be deported from Madrid.

Contemporary critics Quirós and Aguilaniedo cite "Doña Concepción Arenal" (385) and her book *El Pauperismo* (1897) as they divide Madrid's begging population into three specific categories:

1) Los que lo son accidentalmente y por necesidad;
2) Los que lo son definitivamente por imposibilidad de trabajar, sea que no haya para recogerles casa benéfica o que no quieran estar en ella;

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the deserving and undeserving poor"("Diseased" 123). Shubert adds such a "bourgeois conception of poverty" accommodates the middle-class emphasis on private property (37).

3) Los que lo son definitivamente y por aversión al trabajo.

Compone la mendicidad estas tres clases, sin que sea posible estudiar la proporción que lleva cada una. En toda serie de mendigos, por reducida que sea, se hallan representantes de las tres divisiones. Así, por ejemplo, sucede en el grupo que ofrece la fig. 44.a. (326)

I include the cited picture (below) as an example of the many arbitrary photographs of beggars that litter the pages of the chapter on mendicity in *La mala vida en Madrid*. As we have seen in its detailed descriptions of prostitution, this entire study provides an excellent example of the aforementioned bourgeois desire to categorize and control those who deviate from the established social norms.

Both Fuentes Peris ("Visions" 178) and Bahamonde et al. (359) emphasize that the issue of Madrid's urban poor is conceived in terms of a social rather than economic problem. Thus mendicity, vagrancy and even prostitution are tolerated as long as such marginalized members of society are perceived to be "under control" (that is, not too numerous, disruptive or dangerous) ("Visions" 179). Paradoxically, therefore, beggars are more often arrested and mendicant immigrants exiled from Madrid during

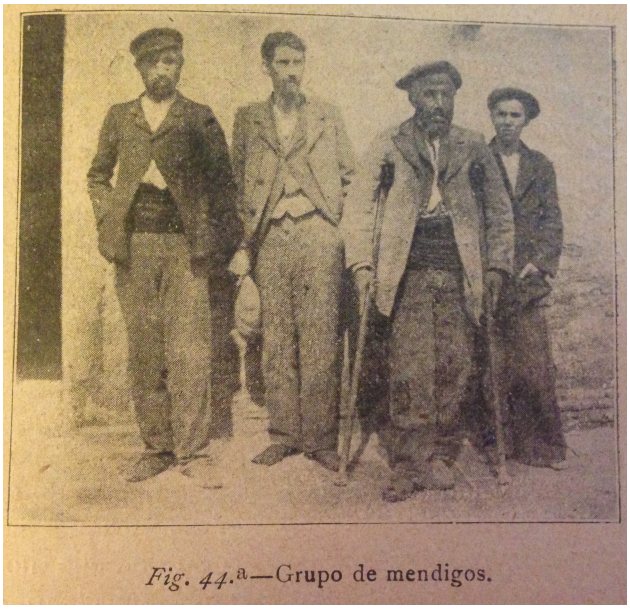

*Fig. 44.*ª—Grupo de mendigos.

moments of economic crisis, when jobs are especially scarce (178).[94] As evidenced by Benina's experience in *Misericordia*, begging outside of churches is generally more accepted than in the streets, although only *mendigos* carrying explicit, state-sponsored licenses (difficult to obtain) may freely beg without fear of arrest (189-90). Gold further emphasizes the risk of arrest that Benina consistently runs, observing that "during the Restoration period, Spanish police endorsed the practice of locking up suspects [including, she later clarifies, beggars] for a fortnight, often without due cause or without bringing formal accusations" (148). Indeed, without "la orden" from his friend in the government that Antonio Zapata procures to ensure Benina's release ("*Misericordia*" 292), the duration of Benina and Almudena's imprisonment in el Pardo may have extended for quite some time.

While I disagree with Glannon's aforementioned conclusion that Galdós ultimately promotes Romualdo's Misericordia (that is, the asylum for the elderly poor) over Benina's notion of *caridad*,[95] mainstream opinion in Restoration Spain favors the construction of *asilos* as the ideal solution for simultaneously caring for and removing (from view) the deserving poor (Bahamonde et al. 360)[96]. Although Madrid's "instituciones benéficas" at the turn of the century severely lack both material and economic resources (not to mention the shortage of asylums in general) (359), social

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[94] Fuentes Peris elaborates, "The measures adopted by the authorities to address the problem of mendicity—such as the rounding up of beggars of the expulsion from Madrid of those who were not in possession of a 'carta de vecindad', and the granting of licenses to be by the Ayuntamiento—were aimed at the control or regulation of the 'mendicity market', rather than at the outright repression of mendicity." ("Visions" 178).

[95] I am more persuaded by the arguments of Gold, Fuentes Peris and McKinney that *Misericordia* (the novel) manifests Galdós' dissatisfaction if not frustration with bourgeois institutions.

[96] For a discussion of state versus private funding for Spain's charitable institutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries see Shubert, especially pages 46-50.

commentators continue to promote poorhouses as a more practical solution to mendicancy than indiscriminate almsgiving. Of the poor, Demetrio Lainez writes in 1874 "recogidos en los hospicios y cuidados con esmero, serían elementos de la prosperidad del país los que antes eran gravosos, trabajando a medida de sus fuerzas" (cited in Bahamonde et al. 362). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the anonymous voice from *La Época* in 1889 advocates the construction of both *depósitos* (where the poor are held following detainment) and *asilos* to rid the streets even of the deserving poor:

> Respecto de los otros [the 20% of Madrid's *mendigos*, if we recall his previous calculation, who truly have no alternative] ocúpense las autoridades en la creación de un depósito de mendigos, ya que los Asilos de San Bernardino y El Pardo son poco capaces para contener el número de los que por Madrid pululan, y, una vez en el depósito, envíense por tránsitos de la Guardia Civil a sus respectivas provincias, o fúndese otro asilo de mendicidad. (3)

While *La Época* is known to be a conservative newspaper, it is nevertheless striking that this journalist advocates the expulsion of even legitimate beggars. At no point in the article does he address how the provinces should deal with the newly-returned poor, who presumably left owing to a lack of opportunity in the first place.

Those living in the asylums lead regimented lives dominated by a strict work regime. Even unproductive work or work without value is deemed better than idle hands. Equally important to discipline within the poorhouses is what Shubert terms "moral therapy"; moralizing instruction dominates discourses of charity in nineteenth-century

Spain (44-5).[97] Mainstream thought viewed the poor as morally diseased, "in need of spatial and social fixing" (Fuentes Peris, "Visions" 193). To this end the regulations of Madrid's San Bernadino asylum are worth quoting at length:

> The inmates were segregated by sex and then divided into groups of ten to fifteen called brigades or squadrons…Inmates were given a uniform, a number that had to be visible at all times, a haircut, and a bath. During the spring and summer they awoke at 4:30 A.M., had roll call at 5, worked from 5:30 to 12 and then, after lunch, from 3 to 7. After work they read and attended religious services until dinner time and then went to bed at 9:30 P.M. (Shubert 45)

While Benina, considered an *anciana* despite her extremely active lifestyle, might not have expected such a grueling schedule in the Misericordia, the description of life inside San Bernardino lends further credence to the critical claim that in refusing to enter the asylum, Benina asserts her independence and resists bourgeois classification.

Thus in Galdós' novel the asylum Misericordia represents the rational charitable option while Carlos Trujillo's condescending almsgiving demonstrates the persistence of conceptions of charity from the *Antiguo Régimen*. Nor is doña Paca's miserly relative the charitable exception to the rule; Quirós and Aguilaniedo's description of the beggars crowding Madrid's parishes masks an ill-disguised complaint against those who continue to give money to *mendigos* according to what they call "una moral imprudente"—that is, viewing the poor as a reflection of Christ Himself (322). Incredibly, the authors cite the

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[97] While the *hospicios* of the eighteenth century championed work and discipline, Shubert argues that the idea of moralizing the poor as a central tenet of charity begins in the nineteenth century.

very text of *Misericordia*—which they call "un hermoso estudio de la mendicidad madrileña" (324)—in their section on parish beggars; some pages later they reference the fictional Pedra, Almudena's alcoholic roommate and fellow beggar, to demonstrate the capricious nature of the poor to whom sharing comes as easily as stealing. Ironically, they cite Almudena (Moroccan, Jewish, *mendigo,* and visibly diseased) as expert witness: "Así la Pedra que Pérez Galdós estudia en *Misericordia*. 'Con una breve frase sintetizó Almudena a su compañera de hospedaje: Ser güena, ser mala… Coger ella *tudo,* dar ella *tudo*.' Esto es exactísimo" (343).

Where Quirós and Aguilaniedo's *estudio psico-sociológico* attests to the verisimilitude of Galdós' depiction of Madrid's poor in *Misericordia*, literary critics have also repeatedly cited the geography of the novel as an (unsurprisingly) accurate reflection of Madrid's urban reality at the turn of the century. Echoing Russell (108), Gold argues that in *Misericordia* Galdós demonstrates an "increasing preoccupation with spatial relations" and how these regulate and influence individual behavior (142). As several critics have rightly observed, the novel underlines how topographic space delineates social class (Russel 109; Longhurst 76; Ribbans 203). In this regard the church of San Sebastián occupies a central position in the spatial logic of the novel. *Misericordia* opens with the well known lines, "Dos caras, como algunas personas, tiene la parroquia de San Sebastián… mejor será decir la iglesia… dos caras que seguramente son más graciosas que bonitas: con la una mira a los barrios bajos, enfilándolos por la calle de Cañizares; con la otra al señorío mercantil de la Plaza del Ángel" ("*Misericordia*" 61-62). Both Russell (108) and Ribbans (203) note that the church straddles the geographical line

between the poor *barrios bajos* to the south and the bourgeois world of the commercial *Madrid alto* to the north.

In his 2012 article on the portrayal of impoverished urban spaces in nineteenth-century Spanish realism, Yvan Lissorgues argues that while "el inveterado transeúnte que es Galdós" (88) knows central Madrid like the back of his hand, his initial unfamiliarity with the *barrios bajos* of the south merits special attention when it comes to their literary representation (89). As evidence Lissorgues points to Galdós' introduction to the 1913 edition of *Misericordia,* where (along with the aforementioned interview with the Moroccan *mendigo* who supposedly inspires Almudena) Galdós confesses that he spends months studying in meticulous detail what he terms "las capas ínfimas de la sociedad" ("Introduction" 5). In addition to wandering "los populosos barrios del Sur de Madrid" (5), he visits various *casas de dormir* accompanied by police escorts. He also pretends to be a doctor working for the Department of Health in order to gain access to those spaces that Galdós politely describes as "las repugnantes viviendas donde celebran sus ritos nauseabundos los más rebajados prosélitos de Baco y Venus" (6). Lissorgues observes that both Galdós and Baroja emphasize the isolation of the *barrios bajos* from the rest of Madrid in their novels, through which we can "verlos vivir en su presente de ayer, observarlos, medir las capas de sus trabajos y miserias y hasta olerlos" (93). Based largely on Galdós' descriptions of the southern slums of Madrid in *Misericordia* and also in *La desheredada*, Lissorgues has drawn a map entitled "*Los barrios populosos del sur de Madrid*". I have included it at the end of this chapter as an invaluable tool for anyone who wants to easily trace Benina's energetic *paseos* from her house on calle Imperial through the *barrios bajos*. I have further highlighted on the map the slums of *las*

Cambroneras and *las Injurias*, the *Parada de Santa Casilda* where Almudena lives for a time with Petra, the church of San Sebastián to the north and doña Paca's apartment nearby on calle Imperial. Also on the map is the calle de Moratines, where the memorable *Sanguijuelera* of *La desheredada* dwells.

The concrete geographical references in *Misericordia* further trace the falling fortunes of many of its characters (Young 196; Gold 145), much like don Lope's frequent *mudanzas* in *Tristana*. As Gold observes, the declining situations of doña Paca, Frasquito Ponte and even Almudena may be "mapped over the urban grid" (145). [98] Thus Paca's absolute inability to manage her deceased husband's wealth forces her to move from the comfortable, bourgeois neighborhood of Salamanca; Ponte takes refuge in increasingly cheap *casas de dormir* until he is ultimately rendered homeless; and Almudena leaves an impoverished dwelling in *Santa Casilda*—"no tan sucias como otras del mismo caserón o humana madriguera" ("*Misericordia*" 92)—for *las Cambroneras* on the Manzanares River, portrayed in the novel as the poorest part of Madrid. Finally, the geographical referents in *Misericordia* distinguish between the different degrees of poverty portrayed in the novel. As Longhurst notes, "Benina moves between the Madrid 'alto', which extends to the Puente de Toledo, and the Madrid 'bajo' of the slopes beyond, and in the novel this serves as a demarcation between the two types of poverty" (76). Doña Paca and Ponte Frasquito clearly pertain to the poverty found above the Puente de Toledo; they, along with members of the working class able to keep a roof over their heads, live

[98] Gold maps each of Paca's *mudanzas* (some of which, we should recall, Benina herself finances) ("*Misericordia*" 108). "From the stately Calle Claudio Coello in the Barrio de Salamanca she…relocates to the sucessively poorer "barrios" of Lavapiés (Calle del Olmo), Cuatro Caminos (Calle Suáco), Puerta Cerrada (Calle Almendro) and the Plaza Mayor (Calle Imperial)" (145).

in "poorly maintained *patios de vecinos* that have seen better days" (76). Benina's descent into *las Cambroneras*, Madrid's squalid underworld where rooms are rented for ten cents a night, allows Galdós to describe the hellish slums in the southernmost part of the Spanish capital that most middle- and upper-class *Madrileños* are not aware exist (78). As Rodriguez Puértolas succinctly describes, "[La] miseria es presentada topográficamente, distinguiendo con todo cuidado barrios y calles en que se mueven los más desgraciados habitantes de la capital de España. Es una topografía de la miseria urbana" (104).[99]

As we have seen, then, space in the novel functions symbolically to trace changes in financial fortune, for worse or for better. Following her inheritance, Paca moves to "the prosperous calle Orellana, a symbol of her financial solvency" (Gold 152). *Misericordia*'s geographical markers, evidently a crucial element of Galdós' realist depiction of Madrid, have enabled critics like Lissourges to recreate accurate maps of Madrid's *barrios* and to enumerate formidable lists of street names in an effort to map Benina's movements across the city. Luciano García Lorenzo's critical edition of the novel pairs every mention of a street or plaza with a footnote establishing each site's present-day location. Readers need only plug the names provided by the footnotes into Googlemaps to effectively plot the novel's action across twenty-first century Madrid. But

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[99] Rodríguez Puértolas enumerates the concrete spaces to Madrid's impoverished geographies witnessed by readers of *Misericordia.* I include the full quote here as a reminder of the detail of Galdós' rich topography: "Es el Madrid del entonces extremo Norte, de Cuatro Caminos; de la calle de Mesón de Paredes, de la calle de Ruda; de Mediodía Grande y Chica; de los barrios cercanos al Manzanares y a la Fábrica del Gas: la Ronda, la Injurias, el paseo de las Acacias; Cambroneras y el Puente de Toledo, en cuyos alrededores se puede dormir por diez céntimos; la propia orilla del río, donde acampan los gitanos; la Estación de la Pulgas, incluso la carretera de Toledo, último refugio de Almudena y de Benigna" (105).

critical interpretations of space as either symbolic or technical, while highly relevant and in the latter case quite practical and even fun, run the risk of freezing the urban space itself into a static set of coordinates on a map. Of course, the Madrid so vibrantly described by Galdós in all of his *novelas contemporáneas* is quite literally ultimately reduced to marks on a page, signs that we as readers bring to life through the imaginative act of reading. Yet in a novel such as *Misericordia* that so clearly privileges the imagination, it seems somehow unfair to reduce the experience of Madrid at the turn of the century to a series of geographical markers.

The idea of spatial mobility is central to the thought of French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, as Benjamin Fraser explains in the introduction to his excellent book *Henri Lefebvre and the Spanish Urban Experience*. Not only in *The Production of Space* (1974) but also throughout his works Lefebvre advances the conception of space as constantly mobile and dynamic (Fraser 8). While he does not privilege space over time (11), Lefebvre's philosophy develops a conception of space and time as united forces through "social space", a lived space that exists in a constant "process of creating" (10): the dynamic creation of space throughout time.[100] Lefebvre asserts that every society produces its own social space based on social relations of reproduction and production; capitalist society puts forth the conception of space as empty and static (Lefebvre 31-32).

[100] As Edward Soja points out, Lefebvre attempts to break and then go beyond binaries ("Thirdspace" 60). Thus, in social space Lefebvre unites physical space (as we perceive it) and mental space (what we think, imagine, or see as potential) (62). Yet Lefebvre emphasizes that social space is "distinguishable from mental and physical space" (27), that is, while social space encompasses both what we perceive and what we imagine, it does not constitute a mere addition of the two. With regard to the relation of space and time in Lefebvre's theory, Fraser describes it as "an attempt to destabilize the concept of static space and fold it back within the temporal perspective" (13).

This is precisely the representation of space that Lefebve writes against in *The Production of Space*.

Social space, in constant production, is a field of action that "incorporates social actions, the actions of subjects both individual and collective who are born and who die, who suffer and who act" (33). Lefebvre puts forth a theoretical triad that describes what Edward Soja has called the "three moments of social space" (65). These are 1) "spatial practice", which Soja roughly equates to "perceived space"; 2) "representations of space", or "conceived space"; and 3) "representational spaces", or "lived space" (Lefebvre 33; Soja 66-67). Spatial practice simultaneously sustains and is created by everyday practices of production and reproduction (Lefebvre 33). Perceptible to the senses, it is easily measured, quantified or described (Soja 66). Think, for example, of the streets Benina walks, of the railroad where the "Good Samaritan" *guardaagujas* works. Representations of space are best described as the ways in which space is conceived, ordered and organized by those who in essence determine cultural signifiers. As Soja confirms through an allusion to Foucault, "these mental spaces are…the representation of power and ideology, of control and surveillance" (67). To return to our previous example, think of the urban planners who designate the paths of the roads and railroads, thereby delineating the shape of Madrid in the urban imagination.

Finally, Lefebvre theorizes representational spaces: "space as directly *lived*…the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'"(39). Although spatialized systems of power are in place here, Soja theorizes that within this dynamic lived space "counterspaces" also form, "spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning" (68). The kindly *guardaagujas* and his wife allow

a beaten Almudena to stay in their home for several days without pay; Benina shares with them the food she brings to sustain her friend. In this space that combines "the real and the imagined, things and thought, on equal terms" (68), unconventional economies spring up and alternative realities take flight, borne on the voice of imagination. In my own spatial analysis of *Misericordia*, I propose to view space not cartographically (a measured manifestation of spatial practice) nor symbolically (itself a representation of space) but rather as a dynamic, lived space that exists, as Lefebvre theorizes social space, in a constant process of production (Fraser 10).

Let us take as an example the urban space delimited by the church of San Sebastián. At the perceptual level of social practice, the narrator assures the reader that the sixteenth-century architects have created a baroque monument boasting "una fealdad risueña, del más puro Madrid" ("*Misericordia*" 62). After a detailed description of the church's twin facades, our ironically light-hearted narrator concludes, "Admiremos en este San Sebastián, heredado de los tiempos viejos, la estampa ridícula y tosca, y guardémoslo como un lindo mamarracho" (63). We have already noted that, at the conceptual level, the "dos caras" of the church represent the working class poor of Madrid living to the south and the members of the bourgeoisie who reside to the north. Additionally, even though the *puerta principal* faces the south, "casi todo el señorío entra por la [puerta] del Norte" (63) precisely because the parishioners pertain to the bourgeois middle class as opposed to the (increasingly unreligious) working class.

Thus we might expect the space of San Sebastián, which as a monument performs a social and topographic dividing function, to perpetuate class divisions and provide the bourgeoisie with a "safe" enclave in which to practice prayer. Yet the church itself also

provides a liminal space that encourages interaction between the *mendigos* and the wealthier classes. While the beggars of San Sebastián at times flout the limits of decorum, as in the wedding scene, the narrator makes clear in the initial description of the beggars' community that they are generally well self-regulated, with Casiana and Eliseo holding the positions of most authority (75). As long as they keep to their prescribed positions, then, intermingling between the classes is not only tolerated but also encouraged, as Carlos Trujillo is surely not the only "regular" who gives alms to the poor congregated there. In *Misericordia* the lived space of churches is one markedly different from the myriad other social spaces that constitute Galdós' Madrid. While Bauer observes that the *novelas contemporáneas* illustrate the destabilizing effect of money on identity (238), the possibility of social mobility (or at least upward mobility) in nineteenth-century Madrid—at least as portrayed by Galdós—should not be overexaggerated. Rosalía Bringas will always be a *cursi*, Isidora Rufete will never be a *marquesa*, Juanito will never marry Fortunata, and Frasquito Ponte will never abandon his *sombrero de copa*, by now entirely out of fashion. Even as members of different classes pass each other in the streets, they do not frequent the same bars, cafes and certainly not the same *casas de dormir*, unless perhaps if the latter is a brothel. In *Misericordia*, then, the church constitutes a uniquely lived social space that allows for a temporary breakdown—within obvious parameters—of boundaries between the classes.

The majority of the novel's characters face either society- or self-imposed limitations on their freedom of movement throughout the city. Indeed, Paca and Ponte are each sufficiently mortified by their deteriorated financial and social circumstances to hardly dare to venture outside for fear of running into old acquaintances. In other words,

they align the boundaries of their spatial relationships with the exigencies of society's expectations. Painfully recognizing the depths to which she has fallen, Paca in a moment of desperation confesses, "Yo no aspiro a la buena vida, Nina…sólo aspiro al descanso" ("*Misericordia*" 100). For Doña Francisca, who equates mobility with social standing, her lack of money limits her to a lived space that does not extend beyond the stairs of her apartment. She refuses to answer the door that opens to the street; she does not take to the street even to visit her daughter Obdulia when she falls ill. Paca keeps to her claustrophobic living space not only from fear of social embarrassment but also because she has internalized the spatial norms of the upper bourgeois social class with which she identifies. The doña Francisca of old would never leave the house without fashionable attire; possessing no new clothes, Paca thus confines herself to the invisibility of her apartment.

Benina, on the other hand, knows no such limitations. While Paca heeds the spatial boundaries conceived by bourgeois demands of *decoro*, Benina's lived space ignores societal norms and obeys only the dictums of her conscience. When she brings the sickly Almudena to Paca's apartment following their internment in el Pardo, the ensuing argument is spatial at its root:

> —A casa le traía, porque está enfermo, y no le voy a dejar en medio de la calle—replicó Benina con firme acento.
>
> —Ya sé que eres buena, y que a veces tu bondad te ciega y no miras por el decoro.[101]

[101] Nor is this the first time Paca criticizes Benina for lacking "decoro": "Es que tú no tienes vergüenza, Nina; quiero decir, decoro, quiero decir, dignidad" (100). This in

> —Nada tiene que ver el decoro con esto, ni yo falto porque vaya con Almudena, que es un pobrecito. El me quiere a mí…y yo le miro como un hijo (297-98)

While Juliana does not want Benina to enter the apartment because of her filth and the diseases she and Almudena (who she believes has leprosy) may carry, Paca's concern is one of social decorum: the African beggar, no matter how needy, simply has no place in the bourgeois conception of household space.[102] Unable to act outside the boundaries dictated by society, she forever loses her *criada,* both her caretaker and best friend.

Thus Benina ventures to the bourgeois heights of the miserly Carlos Trujillo—who, viewed in a different light, could be seen as embodying the bourgeois value of thrift[103]--to the unimaginable squalors of the southernmost *barrios* of Madrid. The immediate shock and consequent gossip that Trujillo's invitation induces in San Sebastián ("ocurrió un suceso tan extraño, fenomenal e inaudito, que no podría ser comparado sino a la súbita caída de un rayo en medio de la comunidad mendicante, o la explosión de una bomba") (84) suggests that for the *mendigos* accustomed to their specific arrangement within the church, Benina's summons to Trujillo's home represents a shocking break in established spatial relations. While her descent into *las Cambroneras*, meanwhile, certainly flouts Paca's delicate sense of decorum, Benina finds herself in the

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response to Benina's affirmation of life, which includes walking freely the streets of Madrid.

[102] Authorities on charity such as Concepción Arenal advocate that women visit the homes of the poor to provide material necessities and moral guidance, not the other way around (Shubert 44).

[103] Peris Fuentes reminds us that thrift is a bourgeois value that the middle class sought to impress upon the working class through moralizing charitable efforts. Galdós however suggests in *Misericordia* (as well as in *La de bringas*) that members of the working class—such as Juliana, who Paca often describes as "ordinaria", and Benina herself—possess equal if not greater skill in managing financial economies.

gypsy slums driven by an acute sense of Almudena's need. We remember that at this point, Mordejai is driven mad by his raging jealousy of Frasquito Ponte. He later determines to stay in *las Cambroneras* to carry out a self-imposed penance for mistreating Benina: "él insistió, dolorido y melancólico, asegurando que *quería estar mal*, hacer penitencia, pasarse los días *yorando, yorando*" (216).

Benina's most ordinary rounds through Madrid are exhausting to read as she catapults her way through the streets with an energy and purpose that belies her age: "Casi no es hipérbole decir que la *señá* Benina, al salir de Santa Casilda, poseyendo el incompleto duro que calmaba sus mortales angustias, iba por rondas, travesías y calles como una flecha" (96). That is, Benina's lived space is bounded only by the pressing needs of others; her trajectory evades the striated spaces of urban propriety and responds indiscriminately to those in her power to aid. Thus when Obdulia becomes ill, Benina tends to her (249); she tracks down Ponte at *la casa del Comadreja,* where he suffers from continued strokes, and prevents him from being taken to the hospital (190-95); although at one point it takes two days, Benina scours the slums along the Manzanares until she finds Almudena, singing haunting and almost mystical songs atop his Mount Sinai, really a trash heap (235).

The narrator's account of a quite ordinary day for the protagonist demonstrates the grueling nature of Benina's *recorridos* through Madrid. After Almudena helps her unearth a *duro* from disparate sources (itself an exhausting process), the narrator describes her trajectory:

> Con increíble presteza entró en una botica de la calle de Toledo; recogió medicinas que había encargado muy de mañana; después hizo parada en la

> carnicería y en la tienda de ultramarinos, llevando su compra en distintos envoltorios de papel, y, por fin, entró en una casa de la calle Imperial, próxima a la rinconada en que está el Almotacén y Fiel Contraste. (96)

The lack of periods, replaced by a succession of semicolons, lends the sentence a sense of rushed urgency that echoes Benina's hurried pace. As many critics have noted, it is of course possible (and certainly desirable) to locate Paca's residence on a map and even trace Benina's path on the urban grid. I want to emphasize instead the breathless rhythm of her flight as she traverses the disparate geographies of Madrid. Even toward the end of the novel, when a penniless Benina struggles to support Doña Paca, Frasquito Ponte, Almudena and Obdulia, her gait, albeit exhausted, is one of pressing purpose: "Tenía, pues, sobre sí la heroica mujer carga demasiado fuerte; pero la soportaba, y *seguía con tantas cruces a cuestas por la empinada senda, ansiosa de llegar*, si no a la cumbre, a donde pudiera" (250, my emphasis).

Such a focus not on where Benina walks geographically but rather on how she embodies the space she occupies as she walks recalls the difference between place and space as theorized by Michel de Certeau. While a place for Certeau implies a stable "configuration of positions"—such as those outlined on an urban map—space incorporates "vectors of direction, velocities, and time variable" (117). Like Lefebvre's theorization of social space, Certeau's conception of space thus incorporates time and privileges movement.[104] He concludes, "in short, *space is a practiced place*. Thus the

[104] Ian Buchanan explains what Certeau claims (perhaps too idealistically) as the emancipatory character of space: "Taking discipline as his stipulated point of departure, de Certeau reversed the accepted polarity of thinking up to that point, using 'place' to denote the restrictive and unhomely and 'space' (hitherto the designation for the uninhabited and uninhabitable) to theorize a tenuous new form of freedom—in space one

street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers" (117). As we have already seen, walking is a privileged activity for Certeau. If we shift the critical lens from mapping Benina's movements geographically from above to rather focus on the breathless pace and purposeful bent of her walking, we might view her trajectory as carving out a possible path of resistance that for Soja is implicated in Lefebvre's notion of lived space.

Lest we credit her excursions through Madrid (or Certeau's own theory) with undo emancipatory power, let us remember that Benina's (surely unconscious) perception of Madrid's urban space as open and unfettered from the external imposition of discipline and power structures gets her into trouble on at least two occasions. When Benina attempts to bring lunch to Almudena in *las Cambroneras*, she is first accosted by a numerous band of impoverished beggars who mistake her for the philanthropist Guillermina Pacheco, obliging Benina despite her protests to spend her remaining money on numerous loaves of bread (242-43). When she finally extracts herself from their company and meets Almudena to eat, the two are ultimately forced to flee as the slum's starving members, now converted into an angry hoard, mercilessly throw stones at the pair of them. As they run away, the narrator paraphrases the barely intelligible condemnations of their accusers: "Palabras sueltas llegaban… que si era santa de pega; que si era una ladrona que se fingía beata para robar mejor… que si era una lame-cirios y chupa-lámparas" (246). While the unrestrained anger of the impoverished residents of Madrid's *barrios bajos* is surely fueled by hunger and despair, their insults also reveal a very real sense of confusion regarding their ambiguous spatial relation to Benina. Is she a

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has the liberty to experiment, to try new things, but the price is one cannot keep what one gains" (3).

dama en disfraz, like the charitable Guillermina of old, who in the power structure implicated by the class system (and by condescending practices of nineteenth-century charity) relegates them to a lower position of inferiority? Is she, as she insists, a beggar as poor as them and so of equal standing on the social ladder? And if this be true, how is it possible that she resides in a more northern part of Madrid (for them unknown) and, despite her claims to the contrary, acquiesces to buying bread for a few? Their anger results in large part from the inability to fix Benina's social position (or lack thereof) with relation to their own. Madrid's most decrepit poor are confused and ultimately offended by the ambiguous social space that *Misericordia*'s protagonist claims as her own.

Benina's arrest and subsequent incarceration in el Pardo similarly stem from the problematic occupation of a space deemed off-limits by the state. Although Peris Fuentes accurately asserts that the protagonist constantly runs the risk of arrest when she begs for money in the streets ("Visions" 189), Benina herself seems either unaware or in denial of the danger she willingly places herself in. Interested only in providing for those she feels responsible for, Benina runs up against a "representation of space", to again borrow the Lefebvrian term, put forth by the state that demarcates beggars to the spatial limits of the parish (where they may be seen and not heard), the institutionalized *asilo* or the southernmost outskirts of Madrid (where the police are conspicuously absent). Where in *las Cambroneras* the poor revolt against their inability to locate Benina within their admittedly limited cosmovision, as he arrests her the unfriendly *guardia* expresses no doubt as to the social position he erroneously assigns Benina. As the reader utters a cry of protest, Benina's own protests are ignored as the policeman shouts, "Calle usted, ¡so borracha!" (254), thus revealing the homogenizing categorization of all beggars in the

eyes of the law. Here I think there can be no doubt in Peris Fuentes' assertion that with this scene Galdós condemns more generally "[the] abuses committed by the authorities' agents in picking up beggars…which were justified by the authorities on the link they established between mendacity and criminality" ("Visions" 193). Clearly, when Benina's own assertion of her lived space conflicts with the limited spatiality afforded her by institutionalized systems of power, outright resistance is futile.

Yet before Benina arrives at the point of her arrest, we have already seen her occupy not only physical space in unusual ways but also imagined spaces as well. For those critics who do not consider Romualdo's incarnation a miraculous event occasioned by Benina, the function of imagination and its correlative, fiction, within the novel has generally been interpreted as a means of escapism (Ribbans 205) and of satisfying basic human needs (Bauer 235). Similarly, Highfill as well as Bauer emphasize that the exchange of narrative becomes a process of gifting ostensibly designed to bolster spirits in the face of hardship.[105] That imagination foments hope in the novel is undeniable; Benina's elaborate fabulation of her serving position in Don Romualdo's household prevents Paca from worrying (too much) about their increasingly desperate financial situation. As Benina herself says: "Venga todo antes que la muerte, y padezcamos con tal que no falte un pedazo de pan, y pueda uno comérselo con dos salsas muy buenas: *el hambre y la esperanza*" (100). However, imagination does not only connote flights of fancy; the imaginative faculty dares to envision potentialities as of yet unrealized in the spaces we occupy. Guy Davenport defines the imagination not via reference to fantasy or frivolity but rather as "the way we shape and use the world, indeed the way we *see* the

[105] At this point I leave aside the aforementioned metafictional consequences of the privileged role of imagination in the novel.

world" (4). As we have already seen, Lefebvre's representational spaces combine the real and the imagined: our lived space—always in process—is a space that "the imagination…seeks to change and appropriate" (39). Correa reminds us, "el acto de imaginarse es un acto de verdadera *creación*" ("simbolismo religioso" 214, his italics). Through their respective imaginations the characters of *Misericordia* create imagined spaces that possess their own geography and architecture. While some are purely fantastic, others are grounded firmly in reality and demonstrate an effort by the characters themselves to manipulate and even change their everyday experience.

The fantasies that sustain both Obdulia and Frasquito Ponte Delgado are by far the most fanciful manifestations of the imagination in the novel. Both characters are described by the narrator as romantic has-beens. Seduced at a young age by her future husband Luquitas, a veritable *golfo*, Obdulia lives in a thoroughly run down *pieza*, eating whenever her in-laws remember to bring her food or when Benina finds herself with food to spare. Frasquito Ponte, meanwhile, is none other than Lazarillo's *escudero* reincarnated. Incredibly old but certainly not ageless, Ponte spends all of his (virtually nonexistent) money at cheap tailors who attempt to maintain his tattered clothes in somewhat passable condition. In essence, he wears his *gabancillo* at all times; as the narrator wryly remarks, "Lo que se escondía debajo de tal prenda, solo Dios y Ponte lo sabían" ("*Misericordia*" 159).

We have before us two characters that could not be more detached from the reality of their circumstances. In fact their inclination to drift into the lofty realms of fantasy accounts for the unusual friendship between Obdulia and Ponte:

> Uno y otro, marchita dama y galán manido, poseían, en medio de su radical penuria, una *riqueza* inagotable, eficacísima, casi acuñable, extraída de la mina de su propio espíritu… […] Consistía pues, esta riqueza, en la facultad preciosa de desprenderse de la realidad, cuando querían, trasladándose a un mundo imaginario, todo bienandanzas, placeres y dichas. (Galdós' emphasis 157)

When Benina arrives one day with a basket of food for the pair of them, we are treated to one of their fanciful conversations; as the narrator almost warns us, "se lanzaran a cien mil leguas de la realidad, para espaciar sus almas en el rosado ambiente de los bienes fingidos" (163). The young hysteric and the outdated *galán* create imaginary worlds that for them are almost tactile. Obdulia, who has never traveled, laps up Ponte's surely exaggerated stories of his trip to France; she in turn dreams of going to the theater, of coming out into society, of living amongst flowers, gardens and greenhouses. The imaginative spaces created by this pair are multisensorial, as Obdulia recounts: "Paréceme que estoy dentro de mi estufa viendo tantos primores, y oliendo fragancias deliciosas" (172). As we have already seen McKinney comment on the general lack of smell in the novel, this detail gains an added importance. The narrator, meanwhile, relays without comment the pitiable state of Obdulia's education as she confuses the French novelist Eugène Sue with Victor Hugo (168). While I feel that Rodgers' characterization of their imaginations as "negative" (188) is a bit harsh—their escape to these imaginary realms are more of a defense mechanism than anything else—Obdulia and Ponte do seem to function within the novel as a means of portraying the imagination at its most febrile and infantile.

Some critics have also found Almudena's imagination to be equally fanciful. In his article Rodgers calls the *Samdai* myth absurd (188) while Kronik claims that "[his] imagination can provide no more than a momentary escape" (45). Yet Benina clearly finds the possibilities offered by *Samdai* appealing; even as she laughs at herself for putting stock in the legend, she plots the most efficient method of procuring the supplies necessary to put the spell into action. How should we interpret the Morrocan beggar's clearly vibrant imagination? As Schyfer observes, the narrator is slow to paint a full picture of Almudena's character; his religious affiliation at the beginning of the novel is ambiguous and only gradually do we as readers come to recognize his faith as Jewish ("Jewish Theme" 52). Despite the initial veil of mystery surrounding Mordejai, I do not share Kronik's view that the Moroccan constitutes a romantic character (45). While Romantic Spanish authors certainly look to Africa (and the Middle East) as a prime source for the exotic in the first half of the nineteenth century (Martin-Márquez 24), a galdosian narrator would surely treat such a character humorously or even sarcastically, as we see in the light-hearted descriptions of Obdulia and Ponte. For example, when the tormented decision shared by Obdulia and her young lover to commit suicide as a couple abruptly changes one day, the narrator humorously comments, "la posesión del dinero realizó el prodigio de cambiar las ideas de suicidio en ideas de prolongación de la existencia" (113). Meanwhile, the narrator describes the misplaced vanity of Ponte the "proto-cursi" thusly:

> Dos presunciones descollaban entre las muchas que constituían el orgullo de Ponte Delgado, a saber: la melena y el pie pequeño. Para las mayores desdichas, para las abstinencias más crueles y mortificantes, tenía

> resignación: para llevar zapatos muy viejos o que desvirtuaran la estructura perfecta y las lindas proporciones de sus piececitos, no la tenía, no. (158)

This quote perfectly captures the galdosian humor we would expect to be unleashed on Almudena's character if he were conceived as a parody of the Romantic exotic type.

While Almudena's bizarre dialect may cause the reader to smile on occasion, his character is generally portrayed positively throughout the novel. My sympathy for the Moroccan is shared by other critics. Denah Lida writes, "[Almudena] parece perdido en una desierta 'tierra de nadie'. Pero no. Donde vive es en una tierra de todos, guiado simplemente por su fe en un Dios único y en el amor al prójimo" (306). While she outlines the bourgeois identification of filth with immorality, Peris Fuentes is quick to add that the narrator does not judge Almudena negatively as he prays penitently on the trash pile: "he is not degenerating nor does he represent a degeneration of the race" ("Visions" 185). Mordejai's generosity as he helps Benina gather the impossible *duro*, coupled with her own positive appraisal of her friend, Schyfter argues, function to win over the reader's sympathies (201). Mordejai's character then, in my opinion, does not represent outdated Romantic exoticism.

Nevertheless, Almudena's dialect, customs—including his chanted prayers, pungent incense, and the haunting songs that accompany his one string guitar—and stories, like his origin, are markedly foreign. In fact the life story that Almudena relays to Benina, Petra and Diega in the café blends the mundane with the supernatural even before he recounts his vision of the two angels. Mordejai's nostalgic description of his native town recalls Biblical passages describing the Promised Land (Schyfter 54): "ser yo nacido en un *puebro mu bonito* que lamar allá Ullah de Bergel, *terra* de Sus…¡oh! *terra*

divina, *bunita… mochas arbolas, aceita mocha, miela, frores, támaras, mocha güena*" (*Misericorida* 145). While his blindness results from bathing in a river with "dos caballos muertos, cosa mala" (146), Almudena interprets his loss of sight as a divine punishment from "Dios Nuestro Padre y Juez" (146) for an offense committed against his father. Even the story of the two angels that announce the coming of *Samdai* derives from the ordinary everyday: they appear to him as the Moroccan tries unsuccessfully to kill a flea that bites him.

Schyfter's study is essential in that it rescues the Judaic tradition behind the *Samdai* legend and demonstrates that the fantastic elements of Almudena's stories—as well as his belief in complex, magical rituals—are in fact based on Jewish folklore and Biblical legends. History indicates that during the Middle Ages, many Jews are involved in developing sophisticated and coveted magical practices, in part explaining ancient Christian legends that link Jewish faith rituals to sorcery. Schyfter explains Jewish magic and *Samdai*'s role in this mystical tradition:

> Jewish magic is founded on the powers of good and the invocation of the personalized attributes of God and the angels. Though Jewish folklore abounds in tales of demons and other magical beings, these are never as powerful as the Christian Satan: Jewish demons are mortal and never in open conflict with God. Almudena's *Samdai* falls within this tradition. […] In addition, there is no doubt that *Samdai* is an alternate form of the Hebrew *Ashmedai*, the king of the demons. ("Jewish Theme" 55)

Ashemedai, or *Asmodeus* as he is also called, figures prominently in popular Biblical legends especially regarding King Solomon. Like Almudena's *Samdai* in *Misericordia, Ashemadai* is traditionally associated with wealth, women and wisdom (55).

Thus Schyfter demonstrates that Almudena's elaboration of his personal experience with the "*rey bunito"* ("*Misericordia*" 137) neither jeopardizes his monotheistic declarations of faith nor represents a completely random or absurd exercise of the imagination (54). Via indirect narrative style he describes in delicious detail the magical rituals needed to summon *Samdai* as per the angels' instructions: "era preciso que se fuese mi hombre al Matadero por la noche, que estuviese allí quemando *ilcienso*, y rezando en medio de los despojos de reses y charcos de sangre, hasta las doce en punto" (147). Following much magical pomp and circumstance that recalls the Biblical Egyptian plagues, *Samdai* at last appears in a showering of diamonds and gemstones and offers Almudena "una fortuna superior a la de todos los soberanos de la tierra" or "una mujer buena, bella y laboriosa, joya sin duda tan rara que no se podía encontrar sino revolviendo toda la tierra" (148). As opposed to Mordejai's initial mention of *Samdai*, in which he describes to Benina the complex, magical rite designed to reveal jewels and other riches, this description of *Samdai*'s powers—intimately connected to his own life story—demonstrates that Almudena's faith in Jewish magic derives not only from his fertile imagination but also from his belief system. That is, Almudena's spatialized conception of the universe extends beyond the realm of the perceivable real. Ironically, while the blind Morrocan cannot see the space in which others ground their reality, "en…los mundos misteriosos que se extienden encima y debajo, delante y detrás, fuera y dentro del nuestro, sus ojos veían claro" (147).

While his stories of the visions he shares with his friends in the café undoubtedly derive from his imagination, Almudena's everyday spatial experience also relies heavily on his imaginative faculty. As a blind man, Almudena relies on faith and imagination to construct both the space of the concrete world and that of the mystical realm with which he occasionally comes into contact. Thus while the fanciful spaces created by Ponte and Obdulia stem from a defense mechanism imbued with escapism, Almudena's mystical imagination is neither "absurd" nor "escapist" but rather intimately linked to his everyday spatial experience. As Certeau reminds us, "stories tell us what one can do in [space] and make out of it. They are treatments of space" (122). Mordejai's accounts of *Samdai*'s powers have shaped his life in a very concrete way: it is precisely his quest for the mysterious woman destined to him that causes him to leave Morocco on a wandering pilgrimage that takes him all over Algeria, France and Spain (149).

Benina's reaction to Almudena's fascinating ideas alternates, as we have noted, between credulity and disbelief. Most striking, however, is the unrelenting practicality with which she confronts her Moroccan friend's fantastic beliefs. After Almudena shares his conviction that with the proper incantation and equipment *Samdai* will grant her "todos los dinerales de D. Carlos" (137), the admittedly superstitious Benina—rather than dismiss his claim outright—focuses on the spell's many inconveniences.[106] The idea of speaking in a foreign language (Hebrew) presents a colossal challenge (139) and buying the necessary supplies "sin hablar *paliabra*" poses another difficulty (138). Indeed, the entire ordeal strikes Benina as unnecessarily complicated as she protests, "Pero con tanto

[106] It is worth noting that Almudena's spell is initally meant to allow Benina to redistribute Carlos' wealth in a more just and democratic manner as opposed to earning her limitless riches. That is, even Benina's appropriation of *Samdai*'s spell is charitable.

requesito, si una se descuida un poco, o se equivoca en una sola palabra del rezo mental…" to which her friend cheerfully replies, "Tener tú cuidado *mocha*" (139).

As we shall see, Benina's imagination is firmly planted in reality; although she professes an unwavering faith in God, her actions demonstrate an unshakable practicality that shape even her interpretation of Almudena's tales. As Mordejai, driven crazy by jealousy, demands to marry Benina and take her back with him to his homeland of Sus, Benina reappropriates *Samdai*'s spell as a more practical alternative to her friend's passionate proposal: "Mucho más práctico, según ella, era dejar todo ese lío de casamiento y del viaje de novios para más adelante, ocupándose por el pronto en realizar, con todos los requisitos que aseguraran el éxito, el conjuro del rey *Samdai*" (212). Whether Benina at this point considers *Samdai* as a possible source of riches or merely as a means to calm her agitated friend, in either case Benina effectively tethers even a mystical demon of the underworld to the demands of her own practicality.

Whatever stock Benina ultimately puts in her friend's magical convictions, however, her willingness to believe stems largely from the very fact of the legend's foreignness. Benina's practical nature does not preclude a belief in the supernatural, as she makes clear to Almudena: "te digo que suceden a veces cosas muy *fenómenas*, y que andan por el aire los que llaman espíritus o, verbigracia, las ánimas, mirando lo que hacemos y oyéndonos lo que hablamos" (140). She reflects that "lo que contaba Almudena era de lo que *no se sabe*" (140, Galdós' emphasis) and reasons, "Allá estaban las Américas desde que Dios hizo el mundo y nadie lo sabía…hasta que sale ese Colón, y con no más que poner un huevo en pie, lo descubre todo y dice a los países: 'Ahí tenéis la América y los americanos, y la caña de azúcar, y el tabaco bendito…" (141). The spatial

orientation of Benina's reasoning suggests that the unknown and the seemingly impossible reside not in the familiar but in the foreign. For Benina, Africa is a land as foreign and magical as the world of *espíritus* and *ánimas* and that of the Americas.[107] When Almudena later confesses that only men may call on *Samdai* (much to Benina's irritation), he hurriedly describes a spell that uncovers hidden treasure underground. Benina responds, "No creo yo que haya dinero enterrado en los campos. *Puede que en tu tierra se den esos casos*; pero lo que es aquí…" (215, my emphasis). Admitting once again that unknown lands may possess magical qualities, Benina's wavering belief in the legend of *Samdai* seems predicated on his mysterious, non-Castilian origins. In short, Benina posits the foreign as where the imagination bears fruit and miracles occur.

While virtually every critic of *Misericordia* has lauded Benina's creative imagination, few have placed equal emphasis on the inherent practicality of the protagonist. I have already suggested that she approaches Almudena's magical religiosity with a practical air; although optimistic, she sees clearly that the responsibility for her own survival—and that of her friends—rests firmly in her own hands. Hence the lack of decorum that dismays Doña Francisca at various points in the novel. Benina's practicality often assuages Paca's ill-suited vanity. For example, when Paca vainly advises her *criada* to reject money from Carlos Trujillo, Benina responds reasonably, "No nos conviene. Podría incomodarse y decir que es usted orgullosa y qué sé yo" (128). The following day, when Paca hopefully predicts that Trujillo has given her forty *duros*, Benina—as she is wont to do throughout the novel—brings her friend more or less gently back to reality. "'Señora, usted está delirando,' replicó la otra [Benina], *plantándose con firmeza en la*

[107] Morales Lezcano affirms that for the average nineteenth-century Spaniard, Morocco and Africa are interchangeable geographies (18-19).

realidad. 'El Sr. D. Carlos no me ha dado nada, lo que se llama nada. Para el mes que viene empezará a darle a usted una *paga* de dos duros mensuales" (181, my emphasis). Throughout the novel Benina repeatedly embraces the burdens imposed on her without complaint; her impressive ability to keep Paca unaware of their true destitution derives directly from Benina's intrinsically practical nature.

Of course, the primary means by which Benina maintains Paca's ignorance is through her invention of the priest Don Romualdo: "Mas no queriendo que su señora se enterase de tanta desventura, armó el enredo de que le había salido una buena *proporción* de asistenta, en casa de un señor eclesiástico, alcarreño, tan piadoso como adinerado" (119). As we have seen, critics have already productively spilled ample ink on the novel's most problematic character, commenting both on the extreme dexterity of Benina's imagination and Romualdo's own disruptive incarnation (or coincidental appearance) in Benina's own life. To this scholarly work I would add that Benina's imagination, although remarkably agile, is in fact not boundless. Quite the contrary: the imaginative spaces created by Benina are always grounded by her own inevitable practicality. This is what makes don Romualdo, his promotion to bishop and even his cross-eyed niece so fundamentally believable in the first place.

In his analysis of Benina's narrative creation, Kronik convincingly posits Benina as expert storyteller and Paca as an expert reader who fills in the gaps of her *criada*'s tales in a style reminiscent of Wolfgang Iser's theory of readerly reception (41): "Doña Paca is an expert 'reader,' with an imagination lively enough to make her a fit audience for Benina. Begetter and recipient have cooperated in bringing to life through their respective imaginings a non-existent reality" (40). For example, as Benina casts around

for an excuse for her tardiness one afternoon, Paca supplies, "Me acordé…de que hoy es San Romualdo, confesor y obispo de Farsalia. […] Habrás tenido que dar un gran almuerzo. Ya me lo figuro. ¡Y que no serán cortos de tragaderas los curánganos de San Sebastián, compañeros y amigos de tu D. Romualdo!" (97-98). We might even view Paca's progressive involvement in Benina's fabrications as a sort of *aprendizaje*, in which Paca becomes increasingly implicated in the imagined world of don Romualdo as narrated by Benina.

Whether Don Romualdo's translation from Benina's imagination to reality—the textual reality of *Misericordia*—connotes an act of creation or a mere coincidence, Paca's hand in the supposed *milagro* has remained unrecognized by critics. Where Benina ideates the priest, doña Francisca also dreams of an inheritance that will resolve her financial penury once and for all. Significantly, as Paca describes her dream to her *criada* in a wealth of detail, Benina remains unsure as to whether her friend's enthusiastic story recounts an actual occurrence or a dream. "Pero dígame," she asks, "¿es soñado lo que me cuenta o es verdad?" When Paca ignores her ("Espérate, mujer") Benina later insists, "Pero vamos a cuentas: todo eso es, como quien dice, soñado" (200). In fact, she only identifies the story as a dream when Paca mentions that her relatives are good friends with don Romualdo and that through the priest's intervention, they successfully track down Paca's address. That is, Paca's dream effectively foreshadows the inheritance both she and her children receive.

Of course, that Paca dreams of an inheritance alleviating her financial crisis is entirely natural given her particular circumstances. However, her dream also foreshadows the profound confusion between reality and imagination that Benina is about to

experience with the arrival of the "real" don Romualdo. Unlike Ponte and Obdulia, who prefer to wander their puerile imaginary worlds rather than set foot in reality, Almudena, whose faith and imagination render *Samdai*'s magical realm as real as the streets of Madrid, and even Paca, who later fancifully talks of her inheritance dream as if it really happened (222-23), Benina's practicality consistently ensures a firm separation between the concrete needs that drive her daily tours of Madrid and the imagined world of don Romualdo. In fact, her creation's abrupt interruption into the concrete world of reality does not merely confuse Benina. Her experience is nothing short of uncanny.

When Paca first reports Romualdo's mysterious appearance, Benina attempts to put the oddity out of her mind. But when a beggar that same day mentions Romualdo's intervention in his own life, Benina can hardly respond. "'Justamente…' dijo Benina, más confusa, sintiendo que lo real y lo imaginario se revolvían y entrelazaban en su cerebro" (233). The following day, the *guardaagujas* recommends that Benina herself seek refuge in Romualdo's *asilo*, the Misericordia. Desperately trying to ascertain the degree of similarities between her own invention and the Romualdo *de carne y hueso*, she responds "¡D. Romualdo¡ […] ¿Es un señor cura, alto y guapetón, que tiene una sobrina llamada Doña Patros, que bizca un poco?" The narrator adds, "Al decir esto, sintió la Benina que se renovaba en su mente la extraña confusión y mezcolanza entre lo real y lo imaginado" (249). When she actually sees Don Romualdo outside the Parish of San Andrés, her consternation knows no bounds:

> Benina llegó al mayor grado de confusión y vértigo de su mente, pues el sacerdote alto y guapetón que poco antes viera, concordaba con el que ella, a fuerza de mencionarlo y describirlo en su mentir sistemático, tenía fijo en

> su caletre. Ganas sintió de correr por la Cava Baja, a ver si le encontraba, para decirle: 'Sr. D. Romualdo, perdóneme si *le he inventado*. Yo creí que no había mal en esto. Lo hice porque la señora no me descubriera que salgo todos los días a pedir limosna para mantenerla. Y si esto de *aparecerse* usted ahora con cuerpo y vida de persona es castigo mío, perdóneme Dios, que no lo volveré a hacer. ¿O es usted otro D. Romualdo? […] Dígame si es usted el mío, mi D. Romualdo, u otro, que yo no sé de dónde puede haber salido, y dígame también qué demontres tiene que hablar con la señora, y si va a darle las quejas porque yo he tenido el atrevimiento de *inventarle*.'(253)

In his excellent book on theories of the uncanny, Nicholas Royle describes the uncanny as "involv[ing] feelings of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of who one is and what is being experienced" (1). As we can see in these quotes, the uncertainties that Benina faces revolve around an unprecedented confusion between the real and the imaginary. That is, we can boil down Benina's anxiety to fundamental questions regarding the nature of existence. Royle continues his explanation: "The uncanny is a crisis of the proper: it entails a critical disturbance of what is proper (from the Latin *proprius* 'own'), a disturbance of the very idea of personal or private property" (1). Clearly, Benina experiences something similar as she meditates, "¿es usted mío, mi D. Romualdo, u otro?" That Romualdo depart from the boundaries of her imagination and appear to exercise his own agency would seem to throw into question Benina's ownership of not only the priest himself but also her imaginative faculty in general.

In his famous essay on the uncanny, Sigmund Freud writes in 1919, "the uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar" (124).[108] While the "new" don Romualdo, director of the Misericordia*,* certainly renders her own invented priest suddenly yet bizarrely unfamiliar—we might remember that Freud posits "the double" as particularly uncanny (141-42)—Benina also experiences her initial return to Paca's flat following detention in el Pardo as markedly uncanny: "¿Era sueño? No, no, bien segura estaba de verlo con los ojos corporales. Encima de la mesa, pero sin tocar a ella, como suspendido en el aire, había *un montón* de piedras preciosas, con diferentes brillos, luces y matices, encarnadas unas, azules o verdes otras" (296). Benina is of course face to face with the ludicrously large chandelier recently acquired by Paca. The chandelier renders the once familiar abode unrecognizable but also fills Benina with both awe and fear, as she wonders if her friend has somehow managed to realize *Samdai*'s spell without her.

As the novel closes, Benina and Almudena live in a hut in the extreme south of Madrid while doña Paca, now under the domineering control of her daughter-in-law, has moved with her family to much more respectable lodgings on the calle Orellana. While Benina does not credit herself with Romualdo's creation, the fact that Paca receives the inheritance of her dreams is a miracle in and of itself. Thus the home once shared with doña Francisca has become for Benina irrevocably foreign. As we have seen, Benina views the foreign as a space in which miracles are possible; perhaps for this reason she no longer finds Romualdo Cedrón's existence strange. As she explains to Juliana, "ya estoy

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[108] The uncanny is of course related to psychoanalysis. The familiar (*das Heimlich)* becomes the uncanny (*das Unheimlich)* (134) when "something that was long familiar to the psyche…was estranged from it only through being repressed" (148).

segura, después de mucho cavilar, que no es el D. Romualdo que yo inventé, sino otro que se parece a él como se parecen dos gotas del agua. Inventa una cosas que luego salen verdad, o las verdades, antes de ser verdades, un suponer, han sido mentiras muy gordas" (317). In essence, Benina relegates Paca's sudden inheritance to the same foreign domain as *Samdai*'s jewels. In the end, neither is necessary for Benina to obtain happiness and spiritual peace.

Money and happiness are in this case negatively correlated: Benina "[está] en buenas apariencias de salud, y además alegre, sereno el espíritu" (316) while Paca, irremediably sad, "era la res humilde que va a donde la llevan, aunque sea al matadero" (309). Whether or not one attributes Romualdo's appearance to a miracle worked by Benina, to ignore her evident spiritual triumph at the end of the novel—especially regarding the final episode with Juliana—would be to do an injustice to Galdós' text. Noël Valis rightly identifies the sense of religiosity that persists in the modern world, that is, "the enduring religious underpinnings of the ties of sociality and hence the moral sense that is attached to being in the world with others" (3).[109] I would add, however, that Benina's serenity and contentment at the novel's end stems also from the affirmation of her spatial independence. Unlike Paca, who now bends unthinkingly to the will of her despotic daughter-in-law, Benina has successfully forged a lived social space that ignores bourgeois rules of decorum and flouts Juliana's decree that she enter into the Misericordia.[110] Practical and without pride, she continues to beg at the Church of San Andrés. With the food Romualdo gives her, however, necessity does not drive her to beg

[109] To this Valis adds that "the realist novel has always understood this" (3).
[110] When Juliana tells a recently liberated Benina to await further instructions, she responds, "Puede que yo lo sepa sin necesidad de que usted me lo diga" (300).

in the streets; she no longer risks arrest and thus thwarts yet another institutionalized assertion of spatial control. In Benina's case, then, spatial independence and spirituality are indelibly linked. Don Romualdo, who could very well insist that she enter his asylum, chooses instead to support her unorthodox lifestyle most likely because he both recognizes and appreciates the charitable impulses that drive her. Benina ultimately remains in control of her own lived space precisely because she uncompromisingly obeys the dictums of her own conscience.

In her aforementioned article on homelessness in *Misericordia*, Gold describes Madrid's beggars—including Benina and Almudena at the end of the novel—as "condemned to the harsh, contingent life of the new urban nomads". Urban nomadism additionally "engenders isolation and marginalization" (143). Although she rightly supposes that this itinerant lifestyle represents a threatening "crisis of social authority", the contentment shared by Benina and Almudena at the end of the novel leads me to disagree with Gold's unequivocally negative appraisal of what she describes as urban nomadism. Galdós' narrator makes clear that Benina and even Almudena are not what we might call "normalized" beggars precisely because of their heightened spirituality and shared sense of what we have already seen Lida call, "el amor al prójimo".

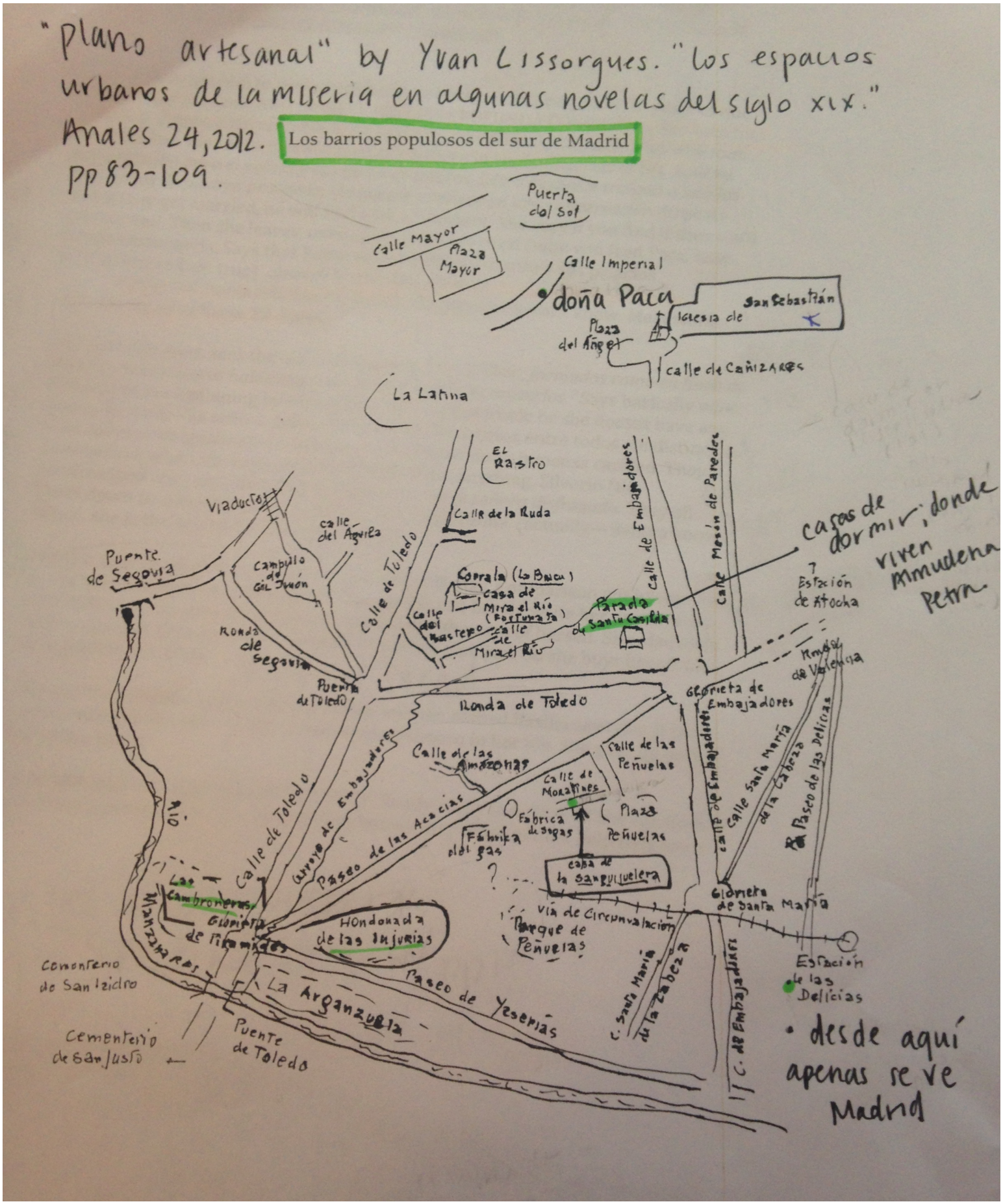
Thus we might conceive of the protagonist as an urban nomad but with the positive connotations that Deleuze and Guattari ascribe to their theoretical concept of nomadism. Where the state occupies what Deleuze and Guattari designate "striated" space, or sedentary spaces of regulation, the nomad operates in what is called "smooth" space, heterogeneous, open spaces dominated not by specific traits but rather by one's trajectory (481). While they call the city "the striated space par excellence" (481), the

smooth and the striated are not mutually exclusive. Rather, the theorists affirm that "it is possible to live striated on the deserts, steppes, or seas; it is possible to live smooth even in the cities, to be an urban nomad" (482). Whether one lives striated or smoothly depends not so much on topography but rather on *how* one moves, on the voyage itself. One who moves striated "goes from one point to the other" (478); one walks the streets of Madrid in order to arrive at the supermarket or at home. While a nomad's path is also by necessity between two points, "the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and direction of its own. Even the elements of his [her] dwelling are conceived in terms of the trajectory that is forever mobilizing them" (380). That is, for the nomad living smoothly the endpoint is subordinated to the journey itself, to the way in which one moves. Benina is ultimately content and even happy with her dwelling in the slums of Madrid precisely because for her the end destination—the geographical coordinates that her house occupies—are ultimately unimportant. Benina, as a nomad, lives smoothly: it is the way that she moves in space—as an embodiment of Christian charity— rather than the concrete space she occupies that ultimately matters to her.

In the end, Benina and Almudena do not have to go to Jerusalem or to any other foreign land to obtain a sense of spiritual fulfillment. An analysis of *Misericordia* that privileges dynamic lived space over cartographic coordinates reveals that Benina, unlike the other characters of the novel, does not recognize any boundaries placed on her own spatiality. While this represents a challenge to bourgeois institutions of authority as Gold and Fuentes Peris have argued, Benina herself does not appreciate it as such. Rather, she seeks only to comply with the obligations of her conscience. As don Romualdo's support for her lifestyle at the end of the novel suggests, it is precisely Benina's innate spirituality

that paradoxically allows her to carve out a unique space for herself and Almudena unfettered by bourgeois strictures of decorum and claustrophobic institutions championing law and order. Benina's uncompromising dedication to the needs of others leads her to imagine Romualdo in the first place, crafted as an alternative source of income to assuage doña Paca's financial anxieties and to hide the truth of their terrible misfortune. Whether or not Benina brings Romualdo Cedrón to life or Paca dreams her inheritance into reality, the text of *Misericordia* strongly suggests the potential of the human imagination to manipulate and even radically change our everyday experience.

"plano artesanal" by Yvan Lissorgues. "los espacios urbanos de la miseria en algunas novelas del siglo xix." Anales 24, 2012. Los barrios populosos del sur de Madrid pp 83-109.



Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation we have seen the omnipresence of bourgeois discourses of power in Restoration Spain, many of which are designed to limit or designate the lived spatiality of its citizens—and especially, given the prevalence of anxieties stemming from *la cuestión femenina*, of women. While markedly different, the female protagonists I have chosen to analyze in this dissertation share a common marginalization in that they do not belong to the dominant bourgeois class. Isidora, Tristana and Benina thus differ from other Galdosian protagonists such as Rosalía Bringas and Jacinta. Even as the protagonists studied here carve out alternative and even emancipatory spaces for themselves, Isidora and Tristana ultimately fail in achieving their common goal of *libertad honrada*; it is Benina's spirituality, meanwhile, that ultimately renders the social space she establishes for herself and Almudena more sustainable. In each case, the embodied experiences of these characters underline not only the categorizing zeal but also the growing insecurity of Spain's bourgeois hegemony at the end of the nineteenth century.

As I move this project forward, I propose to examine other feminine protagonists in Galdós' novels through the analytic lenses of gendered spatial theory and disability studies —beginning with *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1887)—to remedy the eleven year chronological jump between *La desheredada* and *Tristana*. I have not discarded the possibility of a comparative study that investigates the lived spatiality of female protagonists in the realist works of Emilia Pardo Bazán; her novel *Insolación* (1889) seems particularly ripe for an analysis of this kind. While in this dissertation I focus on

discourses of disease and disability exclusively in my *Tristana* chapter, disability studies will form an integral part of my larger project moving forward, as well. As we have seen, any woman in a patriarchal society such as Restoration Spain's may be read as engendering discourses of disability. Like Tristana, however, both Isidora and Benina are inscribed with discourses of disease and disability. From the moment she steps foot in Leganés, Isidora is associated with insanity throughout the novel; like Tristana, Isidora's attempts to occupy a space outside the regulatory scaffolding of societal norms—which, significantly, include Isidora's claim to greater education—are repeatedly couched in terms of hysteric disease, as Miquis' *recetas* make quite clear. As a prostitute, Isidora at the end of the novel would embody disease in the popular imagination, given the widespread fear of syphilis and its unavoidable association with prostitution. Benina's position as an elderly beggar, meanwhile, doubly inscribes her with discourses of disability. Her refusal to abandon the diseased (and blind) Almudena at the end of the novel further identifies her with the fear of contagion and filth, as Juliana's dismissal of the loyal *criada* demonstrates.

When read in conjunction with contemporary socio-hygienic discourses, the bodies of Galdós' marginalized, female protagonists are inscribed with disease and disability. Nevertheless, each appropriates traditionally masculine spaces in their everyday lived spatialities: Tristana delves into art and education; Isidora exercises consumer power in the market; Benina freely walks the streets unfettered by the norms of *decoro* that paralyze doña Paca. Despite the obvious anxieties produced by their respective occupations of masculine-gendered space, within them these women paradoxically excel. Tristana possesses true artistic talent that dazzles those around her.

Isidora's sheer beauty as she dons aristocratic garb acquired in the market is both heart stopping and indescribable. Through her day to day acts of charity that take her all over the streets of Madrid, Benina acquires a saintly, angelic status. That is, precisely through their appropriation of traditionally masculine spaces these female characters achieve fleeting moments of emancipation that actually "cure" them, if only momentarily, in the eyes of critical bourgeois society. Indeed, in each case, the masculine, bourgeois narrator describes them as utterly remarkable.

In this dissertation I hope to have demonstrated that despite their canonical status and even museum-like veneer, Galdós' realist novels continue to lend themselves to new and innovative readings. My hybrid analysis has brought together nineteenth-century social and medical discourses with contemporary gendered spatial theory to reevaluate the everyday experiences of Galdós' marginalized female protagonists. Critical focus on the feminine embodiment of space in the novels reveals the contradictory positions adopted by so many women of this time period. Reading Isidora, Tristana and Benina through the lens of disability studies not only emphasizes their subordinate status but also paradoxically highlights their exceptionality: determined to follow their conscience, all three defy social norms and in so doing dare to live a unique spatiality all their own. This unexpected victory, however fleeting, should resonate strongly with twenty-first century readers, many of whom face similar challenges even today.

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