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Galdos as a Dramatist

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GALDÓS AS A DRAMATIST

By

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Catherine Dempsey

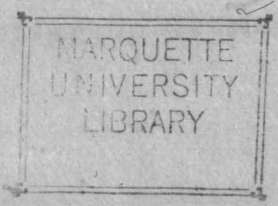
I. Introduction
II. Study of Galdós' Dramas - (1) "La Loba de la Casa"
"Los Condenados" (4) "Electra"
**A Thesis Submitted To Fulfill The Requirements For The
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GALDÓS AS A DRAMATIST

I.

Don Benito Pérez Galdós, (1843-1920) the "Grand Old Man" of Spanish letters was the exponent of the new school of drama of literary and social progress - a drama which is more real, lofty and spiritual.

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Galdós considered his literary mission as sacred. He did not believe in the principle "art for art's sake" but like other Spaniards he thought rather that life was the true criterion of art.

Galdós who lived not only Spain, but also all Europe traveled extensively over Europe and came in contact with people of every class; in this way he gained a thorough understanding of human nature which is reflected in his works.

Galdós, an indefatigable worker lived a life of

simplicity and Galdós AS A DRAMATIST society man and although

he wrote plays that were a sensational success he rarely attended the theater for it bored him. He was always a passion-

I.

ate lover Don Benito Pérez Galdós, (1843-1920) the "Grand Old Man" of Spanish letters was the exponent of the new school of drama of literary and social progress - a drama which is but more real, lofty and spiritual.

Galdós attempted to write plays three or four years before the French Revolution but at this time he was not very successful. He abandoned playwriting and gave his attention to the novel. Although he wrote many excellent novels he again attempted drama in 1892, thus returning to an early love. Because of his reverting to drama, Galdós incurred criticism for introducing into his dramas elements which belonged to narrative works. As a dramatic author Galdós achieved success - a feat rarely accomplished by a novelist.

Galdós considered his literary mission as sacred. He did not believe in the principle "art for art's sake" but like other Spaniards he thought rather that life was the true criterion of art.

Galdós who loved not only Spain, but also all Europe traveled extensively over Europe and came in contact with people of every class; in this way he gained a thorough understanding of human nature which is reflected in his works.

Galdós, an indefatigable worker lived a life of

simplicity and purity. He was not a society man and although he wrote plays that were a sensational success he rarely attended the theater for it bored him. He was always a passionate lover of music and had a special admiration for the great musician Beethoven. Galdós also had great talent for drawing. In the midst of his literary labors, Galdós acted as deputy in 1907 but he did not seem to take great interest in politics; he was neither a politician nor an orator. "Gerona" (1893); the comedy In 1912 Galdós was visited by a great affliction - blindness. Undaunted by this misfortune he continued his literary efforts dictating his works to a secretary. Galdós possessed many admirable qualities - he was noble, modest, sincere and patriotic. His personality must be sought in his works since he was little inclined to speak of himself. "His works contain his ideas, his thoughts, his struggles and his secrets. Alas, a biographer of Galdós says of him: "The brow of Galdós seems to suggest genius and intense passions experienced in imagination but held under rigorous restraint. Into a certain expression that would seem to argue tenderness and reserve there flits an occasional hint of innocent and kindly mischief.....He is taciturn, preferring to listen and lead the conversation by laconic questions, rather than to talk." (1). It is a struggle against old traditions and prejudices. "Barbara" a tragi-comedy of Syracuse was produced in 1905 and likewise "Amor y Ciencia" which manifests Galdós'

independence of thought; "Pedro Minio", a comedy, and

II.

"Zaragoza", a lyrical drama appeared in 1908; "Casandra",

an anti-Pérez Galdós' dramatic career began with the publication of the tragedy, "Realidad" in 1892; previous to this Galdós had written many novels. His work "Realidad" is a condensed form of his two prose works "Realidad" and "La Incognita". The next year saw the production of the comedy "La Loca de la Casa"; this was followed by "Gerona" (1893); the comedy "Law de Sans Quintín" and the tragedy "Los Condenados" were produced in 1894; the comedy "Voluntad" (1895) treats of an economic question; "La Fiera" appeared in 1896. This year also saw the dramatization of the tragedy "Doña Perfecta" from the well-known novel of the same name. This drama was produced in Spain with great success. Five years later "Electra" was first performed; this play created a great stir and was perhaps the author's greatest triumph. It was staged many times in Madrid, also in Paris, all through France, Belgium, Rome, Buenos Aires and even in Athens, Greece. In 1902 came the tragedy "Alma y Vida"; in 1903 "Mariucha" and the following year his novel, "El Abuelo" was dramatized. This is considered his greatest public success next to "Electra". "El Abuelo" in theme has been compared to Shakespeare's "King Lear". It is a struggle against old traditions and prejudices. Doncaza, the father of Gabriela and Victoria is unsuccessful. "Barbara" a tragi-comedy of Syracuse was produced in 1905 and likewise "Amor y Ciencia" which manifests Galdós'

independence of thought. "Pedro Minio", a comedy, and "Zaragoza", a lyrical drama appeared in 1908; "Casandra", an anti-clerical play in 1910; "Celia en los Infernos", a socialistic drama expressing the great desire of Galdós for the advancement of the laboring classes was produced in 1913. The play "Alceste" (1914) is a version of the classical story of the ancient drama by Euripides. "Sor Simona" came in 1915; in 1916 "El Tacaño Salomón", a comedy. This play, the scene of which is laid in a home of a working man, teaches a lesson of thrift. The last published play of Galdós was "Santa Juana de Castilla" which deals with Juana la Loca, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. The scenes of all of Galdós' plays are laid in Spain with the exception of "Barbara" and "Alceste".

This work will principally deal with the following works of Galdós: "La Loca de la Casa", "La de San Quintín", "Los Condenados", "Electra", "Mariucha", and "El Abuelo".

La Loca de la Casa - (The Madcap of the Family)

The scene of the comedy "La Loca de la Casa" is laid in Santa Madrona. The play is a dramatization of part of the plot of "Angel Guerra". It deals with the self-sacrifice of Victoria and her conquest of Pepet.

Moncada, the father of Gabriela and Victoria is unsuccessful in business. Victoria who has entered the convent is coming home for a few days before her profession.

Cruz is a rich man who has earned his money by struggling in America. His father was a "carretoro" for Moncada. Cruz was sent away because of his wildness; he now returns and is in love with Gabriela, Victoria's sister. Cruz does not believe in giving money to charity and "la compasión", he thinks, "desmoraliza a la humanidad". (2) Gabriela refuses Cruz for she loves Jaime, the son of the Marquesa. Victoria, who was very contented in the convent learns while writing letters for her declining father, that he is a ruined and poor man. She who is called "la loca de la casa" wishes to save him from ruin and asks God to aid her. Victoria, after being advised by Sor María to accept the cross which is most bitter and difficult of accomplishment, gives up her veil in order to save her father from financial ruin, and marries the crude Cruz after certain conditions have been agreed upon, namely that he fulfill the precepts of the true religion, and that in case of a serious misunderstanding between them, Victoria could leave. Victoria lives a hard life with the tyrant Cruz; he is very exacting and heartless in money matters. At last Cruz offends her and Victoria leaves him. Neither of them, however, seem to be satisfied with the separation. Although life with Cruz is a constant battle Victoria says that there is some mysterious attraction which seems to draw her near him. When Victoria comes from church, Cruz, having talked matters over with her father, wishes to speak to Victoria "ahora y siempre". (3) Finally, she yields to Cruz who truly believes in her now and the letter is an answer to his love letter takes it. César rages; Victor is told the truth by Rosario. Since Victor is not the

under her kind influence Cruz becomes very charitable. They feel that one of them could not live without the other.

La de San Quintín (The Duchess of San Quentin)

The comedy of "La de San Quintín", takes place in northern Spain. Don José Manuel de Buendía, a distinguished executive and far-sighted person, celebrating his eighty-eighth birthday is highly praised by Canseco, a notary. Don José declares "La regularidad es mi goce, y el orden mi segunda religión." (4) He is related to the family of San Quintín and thus to the Duchess Rosario. Don César is the heir and son of Don José. Don César has a daughter, Rufina and a son Victor, who has not been legitimized and will not be until he has reformed. Victor, brought up in foreign lands has many revolutionary and socialistic ideas and has been put to hard work so that he might be reformed. Rosario, left poor and a widow, comes to the home of Don José where she is a very willing worker. (6) She dislikes César but stays at the house for the sake of Don José and Rufina. She has met Victor before in Ostend where he made love to her; he still loves her. Don César also falls in love with Rosario but she cannot reciprocate this affection for she has inherited hatred of him from her father. The Marqués de Falfan, who dislikes César because of a trick he played on him, intends to avenge the trick. This is carried out through Rosario who has some letters in her pocket proving that César is not the father of Victor. César thinking that the letter is an answer to his love letter takes it. César rages; Victor is told the truth by Rosario. Since Victor is not the

son of Don César, Rosario proclaims her love for Victor. Victor and Rosario depart for America where he is to work in Pennsylvania. The comedy ends by the following statements: Don José - "Se van. Es un mundo que muere". Don José - "No... es un mundo que nace." (5)

of Felicians is found with the following name on the back -
Los Condenados (The Condemned)
 Martín Bravo. Salomé confesses that that is León's true name.

"Los Condenados" is a spiritual and religious play, which tries to bring out the idea that salvation can be attained only by sincerity and the voluntary confession of our sins. The action takes place in Ansó and Berdún.

Gastón wishes Paternoy to marry Salomé, his niece, but Salomé loves another who calls himself José León. Barbués suspects that José León is a criminal. Salomé confides in Santamona who warns her to be careful of José; but Salomé believes him a gentleman and loves him for his misfortunes. Santamona says: "Pobrecita de mi alma!.....Estés condenada." (6)

José León comes and wishes Salomé to flee with him; she hesitates at first but is finally persuaded when he promises that they will get married. Paternoy advises Salomé to be kind to her uncle Gastón and refuse to marry León. She does not heed the advice and Paternoy exclaims: "Criminales de amor, les condeno á la vida, al amor mismo, y á las consecuencias de sus errores." (7)

Seven days have passed since Salomé left her uncle and to her grief they have not been married yet. León consents to

the home of Garcia Yuste the guardian of Electra is the lab-
 go to see Feliciana, a rich widow, whom it seems has shown
 oratory of Don Maximo, "Magice Prodigioso" who is a great
 an affection for León, in order to seek a means of sustenance.
 authority on mathematics and electricity. His wife died
 While he is away, Paternoy and Barbués come. Justice is follow-
 leaving him two charming children. Pantaja a religious man
 ing León. Barbués has seen León with Feliciana picking cherries.
 and spiritual director of Yuste's thinks it is his duty to mark
 Salomé goes and finds that the statement is true. A portrait
 out the path for Electra and he tells her that in his sh-
 of Feliciana is found with the following name on the back -
 has a lifelong friend. Creates a brother also appears Electra
 Martín Bravo. Salomé confesses that that is León's true name.
 of his protection. Electra regards all this as if they wished
 She goes to the Esclavitud de Berdún in order to save her soul.
 to enslave her: she is told by Maximo not to consent but to
 José upon hearing this becomes furious. He is concealed from
 Barbués and others by Paternoy and Santamona who swear falsely
 let his impulses have free course. Electra often visits
 to save him. José wishes to carry off Salomé by force. San-
 Maximo to assist him. She becomes very fond of his children
 and then falls in love with him. The affection is mutual and
 tamona, however, allows León to see Salomé, for in seeing her,
 Electra is delighted. "Es el día... Día eterno para mí!"
 she believes it will be León's punishment. José is convinced
 (10) Electra exclaims. Pantaja on hearing the news is very
 at last that Salomé is lost to him; he gives himself up to
 depressed and thinks he has not done his duty; he wishes
 Paternoy and willingly announces his crimes to the public.
 in order to test Electra's spirit that she be sent to a convent.
 León says: "Se entrega indefenso á la justicia humana.....
 Pantaja when talking to Electra speaks of her mother and tells
 y á la misericordia divina." (8) Salomé when asked her opinion
 her that Maximo's father was the first corrupter of her mother.
 replies with a mystic accent, "Yo, yo sentencio ahora? Quiero
 Electra. Electra furious, rushes out flees from Maximo and
 que venga á mí.....le condeno á muerte." (9)
 then consents to go to the convent. She continually calls

Electra

upon her mother. To Maximo she says: "No te pertenezco: Per-
 tenesco á mi dolor... Mi madre me llama á su lado." (11)
 "Electra" is a play treating of the conflict between
 religious tolerance and bigotry as shown by the heroine, Electra.
 Don Questa died leaving Electra heiress to one-half
 of his estate on the condition that she will not be a nun.
 Electra, a girl of eighteen, very lively and mischievous is be-
 The Marquis and Maximo as executors come officially to the con-
 ing cared for by a wealthy and pious aunt. Electra's mother
 vent to see if Electra is going to accept the inheritance.
 had many evil ways but repented before her death. Next door to

the home of Garcia Yuste, the guardian of Electra is the laboratory of Don Maximo, "Magico Prodigioso", who is a great authority on mathematics and electricity. His wife died, leaving him two charming children. Pantoja, a religious man and spiritual director of Yustes' thinks it is his duty to mark out the path for Electra and he tells her that in him she has a lifelong friend. Cuesta, a broker also assures Electra of his protection. Electra regards all this as if they wished to enslave her; she is told by Maximo not to consent but to

let her impulses have free course. Electra often visits Maximo to assist him. She becomes very fond of his children and then falls in love with him. The affection is mutual and Electra is delighted. "Es el día.....Día eterno para mí!"

(10) Electra exclaims. Pantoja on hearing the news is very depressed and thinks he has not done his duty; he wishes in order to test Electra's spirit that she be sent to a convent. Pantoja when talking to Electra speaks of her mother and tells her that Maximo's father was the first corrupter of her mother, Eleuteria. Electra furious, rushes out, flees from Maximo and then consents to go to the convent. She continually calls upon her mother. To Maximo she says: "No te pertenezco: Pertenezco á mi dolor.....Mi madre me llama á su lado." (11)

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caído en la perdición; santos hay que fueran perversos." (14)

León, an orphan started on the wrong road and has suffered in-
It has been learned that Electra and Maximo are not brothers.
tensely and worked very hard during his life; now he believes
The shade of Electra's mother appears, dressed as a nun; it
himself a new man.

speaks and comforts her: "Te doy la verdad y con ella for-

María in order to aid her family refuses the invitation
taleza y esperanza.....Dios está en todas partes....Yo no supe
to the party and sells her beautiful outfit to Vicenta. María
encontrarle fuera de aquí.....Búscale en el mundo por senderos
continues earning money and she has a loyal friend in Vicenta.
mejores que los míos." (12) Then Electra goes with Maximo
María's family cannot believe how she earns so much but Don
and the Marqués. Pantoja says: "Huye de mí?" Maximo replies,
Rafael, the priest believes firmly in Mariucha - "Creo en la
"No huye, no.....Resucita." (13)

que ha sido y es imagen de la Providencia, mensajera de los

consuelos, que Dios envía a la desgraciada familia." (15)

News comes that Cesáreo is to marry Teodolinda
The scenes of the comedy "Mariucha" are laid in the
and he is to be given the title of Duke of Agramante. María
town of Agramante, a fictitious town.

is not joyful over the news for her parents and Cesáreo are
The Marqués de Alto-Rey formerly a wealthy man is now
hostile to the man whom she wishes to marry - León. León is
struggling for existence and hoping for better days. Filomena,
deeply in love with María who is protected by Don Rafael,
his wife, places all her trust in God. We learn that Cesáreo,
Cesáreo in a talk with León informs him that a case formerly
their son is coming from Madrid. His name is connected with
brought against him has not been withdrawn and can be brought
that of Teodolinda, a very wealthy woman. She is giving a large
up again. María, not baffled at this declares that she will
party and María, Cesáreo's sister is going to the party with
always love León and if he is killed she also wishes to be.
Vicenta, the wife of the mayor. When Don Cesáreo arrives, he
Don Rafael determines to marry them. María refuses to go with her
stays only a short time. León, a coal dealer, comes to see the
family - to them she is dead. She however, feels different -
Marquis as he would like additional property. Cesáreo believes
for she says, "Yo estoy viva. En mi reboga la salud, estalla
León to be Antonio Sanfelices. Later María speaks to León;
la alegría y en ciende el alma todas sus luces; la fe, la es-
he is not able to help María's family out of their precarious
peranza, el amor." (16) They are the generation which are
situation. León admits he is Antonio Sanfelices who has
living now.

committed many crimes. He says: "El hombre lleva en sí todos
los elementos del bien y del mal. Excelentes personas han
caído en la perdición; santos hay que fueron perversos." (14)

León, an orphan started on the wrong road and has suffered intensely and worked very hard during his life; now he believes himself a new man. on of the drama "El Abuelo" takes place in

northern Spain with the principal scenes being laid in La Par-
 María in order to aid her family refuses the invitation to the party and sells her beautiful outfit to Vicenta. María continues earning money and she has a loyal friend in Vicenta. María's family cannot believe how she earns so much but Don Rafael, the priest believes firmly in Mariucha - "Creo en la que ha sido y es imagen de la Providencia, mensajera de los consuelos, que Dios envía a una desgraciada familia." (15)

News comes that Cesáreo is to marry Teodolinda and he is to be given the title of Duke of Agramante. María is not joyful over the news, for her parents and Cesáreo are hostile to the man whom she wishes to marry - León. León is deeply in love with María who is protected by Don Rafael. Cesáreo in a talk with León informs him that a case formerly brought against him has not been withdrawn and can be brought up again. María not baffled at this declares that she will always love León and if he is killed she also wishes to be. Don Rafael determines to marry them. María refuses to go with her the desired information. The grandfather at first imagines Hell for she says, "Yo estoy viva. En mi rebosa la salud, estalla la alegría y en ciende el alma todas sus luces; la fe, la esperanza, el amor." (16) They are the generation which are living now.

he protests, as also does Dolly. The grandfather asks Don Pío,

El Abuelo (The Grandfather)

The action of the drama "El Abuelo" takes place in northern Spain with the principal scenes being laid in La Pardina, a lordly domain. The Count of Albrit, a ruined man, comes to La Pardina, his former home which is now owned by a former tenant, Venancio, to see his granddaughters, Nell and Dolly who stay at La Pardina. The Count at one time was a wealthy and very powerful gentleman of Spain. Upon seeing the children, he is immediately touched by them. Dolly is very mischievous and has a vivid imagination; Nell is more serious, thoughtful and consistent. The grandfather has come to begin a detailed analysis of their characters for when his son was found dead, a letter was also found, addressed to Lucretia, the Count's daughter-in-law who was separated from her husband. We are informed by the letter that one of the girls is not the daughter of the Count of Lain, and the Count of Albrit is determined to find out which is his granddaughter. Lucretia also comes to La Pardina to have an interview with the Count but the mother refuses to give the desired information. The grandfather at first imagines Nell is his own because of her dignity and nobility; however, in many ways they both seem alike. A storm rages within the soul of the Count. It is decided because of his mental condition that it would be best to send the proud grandfather to an asylum but he protests, as also does Dolly. The grandfather asks Don Pío,

the tutor which he considers as the noblest and most worthy of the children. He replies in favor of Dolly who waits on the Count. The grandfather really believes that she is of his noble blood.

Now, Senén, a former servant of Lain proves that Dolly is the false, the spurious child and Nell is the true child of Lain. On hearing this the grandfather becomes furious. He meets Nell who advises him to go to the asylum. The Count is much distressed because his grandchild does not seem to love him. Don Pío tries to comfort him, saying, "Love humanity, your lordship. Be like God who loves all equally." (17)

The Count and Don Pío are about to flee when Dolly comes to him, having escaped from the mayor's house where she was locked up. She does not know that she is not his grandchild. Dolly loves him and is willing to always protect and care for him. The Count, his sense of family honor changing exclaims: "O God! Out of the heart of this storm come to me your blessings. Now I see that human thought, human calculations and human plans are as nothing! All that is nothing but rust, which corrodes and decays; what endures is that which is within! The soul can never die!" (18) And in conclusion the grandfather says to Dolly: "My child, love is eternal truth." (19)

influence extends everywhere. Pantoja is so characterized that we cannot help but feel a slight sympathy for him who is really doing what he thinks best for Electra, the heroine. Galdós was not opposed to the Church but he disapproved of intolerance; he believed that monasticism was growing too strong and should be checked.

III.

He thought that in order for Spain to progress all the modern scientific thought must be accepted. Clarín tells us in his

The dramas of Galdós are dramas of problems. His plays deal especially with urgent questions of the day, with problems of social progress and of religious liberalism.

Galdós was deeply interested in the welfare of his country but above all in matters pertaining to society. He aimed at bettering his nation and humanity and he believed it was his duty to assist the people in obtaining correct ideas on all such problems. To accomplish this purpose he tried in his works, to present the truth as he saw it.

When Galdós' drama "Electra" appeared all of Spain was stirred up by the confinement in a convent of a young lady, Adela de Ubao. This drama, then caused great excitement for people believed that Electra who was induced to enter a convent represented Adela. Galdós, however, did not intend that people should connect his play with the actual event that occurred.

"Electra" has been unjustly and bitterly attacked. In "Electra" both sides of the conflict have been presented to us - the old spirit represented by Pantoja and the new spirit by Maximo. We can see easily with which side the author sympathizes. The modern spirit is victorious and we are told that God's influence extends everywhere. Pantoja is so characterized that we cannot help but feel a slight sympathy for him who is really doing what he thinks best for Electra, the heroine. Galdós was not opposed to the Church but he disapproved of intolerance; he believed that monasticism was growing too strong and should be checked.

Warner's dominating passion for money is overcome by his love

He thought that in order for Spain to progress all the modern scientific thought must be accepted. Clarín tells us in his work that Galdós was religious; as a proof of this he had a crucifix over his bed. In "Electra" Maximo says, "Confio en Dios". (20) Electra when she is in love with Maximo desires the Blessed Virgin not to forsake her. The plays "Los Condenados" and "La Loca de la Casa" abound in Christian sentiment. In "Mariucha" the portraiture of the priest Don Rafael is an example of Galdós' increasing love in his last years for religion. In "Los Condenados" a spiritual and religious theme is treated. Salvation can be attained only by living a sincere life. The last plays of Galdós' deal with spiritual problems: "Celia en los Infiernos" is an expression of desire for the betterment of the laboring classes in Spain; it teaches the value of charity; "Sor Simona" preaches divine love; "Santa Juana de Castilla" reminds us that we will be rewarded for our sufferings.

The play "El Abuelo" considered by many as his best play deals with the struggle against old traditions and prejudices. Family honor is attacked in this play. A great struggle goes on in the grandfather's mind whether he should consider the honor of noble birth of Nell as greater than the love of Dolly who is not of noble lineage. He says, "The storm is in my soul.... It is called doubt." (21) At last the grandfather's sense of family honor and pride yields to the love of Dolly for he realizes that honor lies in love. This belief is opposed to the conception of honor of Calderon. "El Abuelo" might be compared in some respects to "Silas Marner" by George Eliot where Silas Marner's dominating passion for money is overcome by his love

for the child, Eppie, who comes to him as his salvation.

National are many of the problems of Galdós as the revolts against social conventions. Such are the plays "La de San Quintín," "Celia en los Infiernos" and "Mariucha". In "La de San Quintín" the Duchess Rosario marries Victor, a workingman. Galdós wished to break down the obstacles forming the distinction of classes; he despised the members of the aristocracy who did not work. In the play "Mariucha", Mariucha the daughter of a Marquis marries León, a man of the working class. Mariucha works to aid her impoverished family but they can not become accustomed to the idea of her working. "Mariucha" reveals a society fixed in its traditions opposing with ideas of the past every advancement of a strong rising force of progress; the latter is victorious. To accomplish progress the fetters of social convention should be disregarded by Spain and the present generation should be allowed to walk with freedom.

Galdós like Ibsen, believed that if an impulse is good it should be followed even though it may be necessary to break family ties in order to carry it out. Mariucha marries León, although in doing so she disconnected herself from the family and was dead to them.

Galdós was in sympathy with modern progressive ideas but he can not be called an extremist for he believed only in modern reform. The watchword of Galdós was declared by some to be "progress".

Villegas has said of Galdós: "En el drama de Galdós

con harta más claridad que la significación simbólica se ve el propósito de dirigir los ojos del publico, ó más bien de la sociedad, hacia las grandes cuestiones de conciencia, tan olvidados en medio de la atmósfera positivista que nos envuelve."

(22)

the characters of the Galdosian drama: "Son a la manera de relojes que tuvieran la esfera de transparente cristal. Se señalan la hora, lo mismo que los demás relojes; pero, al propio tiempo el mecanismo interior esta tambien a la vista." (23)

The characters of Galdós are alive; at times his persons are so keenly conceived and presented that they become symbols. In "La Lucha de la Casa" the names are even symbolical - Cruz stands for Union of Forces, Victoria for victory and San María for preservation. The dramatic portrayal of characters in this play is admirable. Cruz is the antithesis of Victoria, the heroine. The sphere of the character Cruz is transparent. There is perfect harmony between his actions and his interior mechanism. He, a symbol of materialism, is very rich and his greatest ambition in life is to get money; for he considers money as the only good. Cruz is capitalistic and does not believe in giving away to charity for he firmly believes that this demoralizes mankind. Everything for himself is his motto. His wife, Victoria, is very generous and willing to sacrifice herself for her father. Victoria is sympathetic but Cruz is repulsive. One good trait in the character of Cruz is his belief in the sacredness of promises and when Victoria wishes

IV.

Galdós showed great skill in depicting characters - his characters are creatures of flesh and blood. The comparison applied to Shakespeare's characters by Goethe is also applicable to the characters of the Galdosian drama: "Son a la manera de relojes que tuvieran la esfera de transparente cristal. Os señalan la hora, lo mismo que los demás relojes; pero, al propio tiempo el mecanismo interior esta tambien a la vista." (23)

The characters of Galdós are alive; at times his persons are so humanly conceived and presented that they become symbols. In "La Loca de la Casa" the names are even symbolical - Cruz stands for Cross of Sorrows, Victoria for victory and Sor María for consolation. The dramatic portrayal of characters in this play is admirable. Cruz is the antithesis of Victoria, the heroine. The sphere of the character Cruz is transparent. There is perfect harmony between his actions and his interior mechanism. He, a symbol of materialism, is very rich and his greatest ambition in life is to get money; for he considers money as the only good. Cruz is egoistic and does not believe in giving money to charity for he firmly believes that this demoralizes mankind. Everything for himself is his motto. His wife, Victoria, is very generous and willing to sacrifice herself for her father. Victoria is attractive but Cruz is repulsive. One good trait in the character of Cruz is his belief in the sacredness of promises and when Victoria wishes without an equal. The outlaw Leon is saved from pursuers by the kind Paternoy and Santamona who swear falsely. Galdós

justified this by the good that comes from it; he admits that to leave, he allows her to go. Cruz, however, undergoes an alteration in character, so at the end of the play he is a changed man due to the good influence of Victoria. We realize that one of them cannot live without the other. Galdós had great faith in love. This is shown also in other of his plays. Love, to the characters of Galdós, makes life worth living and is a form of the eternal love of God.

The heroine of "La de San Quintín", Rosario, once a proud and wealthy duchess, is willing and even takes pleasure in working in the home of the proud Don José who is very kind to her. One despises the character Don César who has a weakness for women and is glad when it is proven that he is not the ancient aristocracy; Maximo, the modern progressive spirit and Electra represents Spain. As the heroine "Electra" we see a charming, capricious and innocent girl of about eighteen which would not be the case if he were Don César's son for years of age. Pantoja, a man whose early life was egoistic, Rosario has inherited hatred for him from her father. Victor is a spiritual adviser to the Yaste family of which Electra is now a member. He thinks it his duty to protect and guard Electra and because of this determination he is led into scorn the idea of becoming rich. He marries the charming Rosario and they enter upon the beginning of a new age.

"Los Condenados" is a spiritual drama. Santamona is full of devotion and humanity. Galdós in his prologue to the play stated that in Santamona and Paternoy he has placed the moral of the drama. Galdós believed that types like these really existed. Santamona declares Paternoy to be a man without an equal. The outlaw León is saved from pursuers by following it and realizes her former desire. Pantoja may seem the kind Paternoy and Santamona who swear falsely. Galdós

justified this by the good that comes from it; he admits that the false swearing might have a bad effect for a short time but soon noble persons will recover their former brightness. In this drama, León, the criminal finally repents. Salomé, his wife, who ran away with León, after much suffering enters the convent in order that she might be saved. There occurs a great dramatic scene in the play. León, wishing Salomé to leave the convent, visits her and we wonder what the outcome will be. Salomé, possessing sufficient courage and strength refuses to return. The characters of "Electra" are symbolical. Pantoja represents the conservatism of the clerical party; the Marquis, the ancient aristocracy; Maximo, the modern progressive spirit and Electra represents Spain. In the heroine "Electra" we see a charming, capricious and innocent girl of about eighteen years of age. Pantoja, a man who in early life was egoistic is a spiritual adviser to the Yaste Family of which Electra is now a member. He thinks it his duty to protect and guard of Electra and because of this determination he is led into telling a falsehood. Electra has much to contend with for Pantoja urges her to enter a convent while her love for Maximo influences her to desire a domestic life. When Pantoja falsely informed her that Maximo was her brother she was willing despite her great love for Maximo to enter a convent. Later when Electra is informed of the falsity of the statement, she listens to the counsel of her mother's spirit, follows it and realizes her former desire. Pantoja may seem

fanatic in regard to religious matters but he was really sincere in his plans for Electra, and would be willing to endure any hardship if by so doing he could save Electra for whom he had a great affection.

Mariucha, the heroine of the play of the same name, as happens in the case of the family of the Marquis de Maribella daughter of the Marquis de Alto-Rey, realizing the distressing condition of the family sacrifices her beautiful garments and engages in work which seems disgraceful to her parents because of their nobility. León, her lover is not liked because of his humble birth but to Electra, this makes no difference for she truly loves him. Mariucha resembles Nora in Ibsen's "Doll House" in regard to her idea of living her own life. Mariucha, fully realizing the value of true love marries León and because of her action, family relations with her are broken.

The play "El Abuelo" is noteworthy for the portrayal of characters. Nell and Dolly, the children form a striking contrast to the grandfather. The children are the center of interest throughout the play. Galdós is a great master of youth and the children are depicted in a realistic manner. They are portrayed in such a way that it is difficult at first for the audience to know which of the two really belongs to the Count. Nell for a time, seems to hold sway, then Dolly takes her turn; Dolly, however, has the greatest affection for him, although he is not her grandfather. We cannot help but pity the Count for he seems lonely and his own grandchild does not love him. In the end the love of Dolly conquers and we feel

that he has an ardent protector in her.

The minor characters of Galdós also are living creatures. At times we become so interested in their affairs that our attention is entirely drawn from the main interest, as happens in the case of the family of the Marquis de Malavella in "La Loca de la Casa". All of the heroines of Galdós are attractive and we become deeply interested in whatever pertains to them. They possess heroic qualities but are also very human.

It must be said that Galdós knew his characters and loved them immensely. He has so ably portrayed them that we feel that they are living friends which we have made and whose characters and deeds will be a lasting memory. Some of the plays of Galdós are dramatizations of his novels as "Realidad", "Doña Perfecta" and "El Abuelo". The technique in his later plays is better than that in his early ones because he gradually succeeded in more successfully uniting his knowledge of drama with that of the novel. Because of his lofty subject-matter and skilful treatment of it, Manuel Gálvez, a great theatrical critic forgave Galdós for presenting in his dramas some of the methods which he employed in his novels.

The dramas of Galdós have been divided into the three following groups by Ernest Martinengo: (1) those dealing with broad moral theses as "Realidad", "La Loca de la Casa",

"La de San Quintín", and "Los Condenados"; (2) dramas treating of things which he had observed and experienced as "Voluntad", "Doña Perfecta", "La Fiera", "Electra", and "Alma y Vida"; (3) drama dealing with topics of the day as "Mariucha", "El Abuelo", "Barbara" and "Amor y Ciencia". This classification, however, does not seem to be entirely satisfactory for it does not hold in all of his plays.

The first play of Galdós, "Realidad" is noted for its originality of presentation. His "La de San Quintín" was a part success when presented on the stage because of its fairly good construction. There appears much meaningful symbolism in Galdós; in this he resembles Ibsen. The best example of his symbolism occurs in the third act of "Electra". The scene takes place in the laboratory of Maximo. When the fusion of the metals are accomplished, likewise the affection of Maximo and Electra is completely fused. In "La de San Quintín", the kneading scene in the second act is also a good piece of symbolism. The duchess Rosario kneads dough for sweetcakes while Victor watches. The kneading symbolizes the union of the upper and lower classes. Galdós in his prologue to "Los Condenados" said concerning symbolism: "Para mí, el único simbolismo admisible en el teatro es el que consiste en representar una idea con formas y actos del orden material." (24) Galdós has carried out with great skill this idea of symbolism.

"El Abuelo", one of the masterpieces of Spanish tire drama treats of a simple action. It is, no doubt, the best. We can truly say with Perez de Ayala, "En don Benito Pérez Galdós

composed drama of Galdós and in it his great creative genius is reflected. The construction of some of his plays is faulty. In "Los Condenados" Galdós is too slow in leading up to the catastrophe. This play contains a great dramatic scene - the speaking of León to Salomé in the convent when he wishes her to come to him. "Mariucha" is a well-written play with a well-developed plot. suma, el elemento espiritual con el elemento plástico. "Electra" an interesting play is very sensational. (25)

At the time of its appearance some actors would not take a part in the play for they believed that art is too noble to be employed to present political disturbances. The supernatural is resorted to in this play; the ghost of Electra's mother Eleuteria appears to counsel her and convince her that she is not Maximo's sister.

Galdós lacked practical experience for he attended the theater very rarely. Many of his dramas have superfluous scenes. Galdós was unaware of the change which was taking place in the drama. He used the soliloquy and the aside very frequently in his plays and they really are out of date in today's drama.

In his last plays, we must admit, there is great improvement in his dramatic art. His style is very clear and fluent, his dialogue is natural and his handling of situations at times is excellent.

Spain owes much to Galdós who has devoted his entire life to literary labor and has produced works of a high quality. We can truly say with Perez de Ayala, "En don Benito Pérez Galdós

como en Shakespeare se ve claramente que el autor ha concebido la obra dramática como un todo, en el cual se coordinan en cada momento la acción con el lugar en donde se desarrolla, el carácter con el pergenio físico del personaje, el diálogo con la actitud y la composición, la frase con el ademán, la voz con el gesto, en suma, el elemento espiritual con el elemento plástico. Sin esta condición no hay grande obra dramática." (25)

- (6) B. Pérez Galdós, "Los Condenados" - Act I, 8, P. 46
- (7) " " " " " " - Act I, 14, P. 61
- (8) " " " " " " - Act III, 14, P. 115
- (9) " " " " " " - Act III, 14, P. 116
- (10) B. Pérez Galdós, "Electra" - Act III, 11, P. 193
- (11) " " " " " " - Act IV, 12, P. 248
- (12) " " " " " " - Act V, 9, P. 279
- (13) " " " " " " - Act V, 10, P. 281
- (14) S. G. Morley, Galdós' "Mariucha" - Act II, 2, L. 109
- (15) " " " " " " - Act III, 8, L. 631
- (16) " " " " " " - Act V, 6, L. 440
- (17) E. Wallace, Galdós' "The Grandfather" - Act V, 8, P. 231
- (18) " " " " " " - Act V, 9, P. 233
- (19) " " " " " " - Act V, 9, P. 233
- (20) B. Pérez Galdós, "Electra" - Act V, 3, P. 258
- (21) E. Wallace, Galdós' "The Grandfather" - Act III, 2, P. 204
- (22) B. Pérez Galdós, "Los Condenados" - Prologue - P. 12
- (23) Ramón Pérez de Ayala, "Las Mascaras" - Vol. I, P. 55
- (24) B. Pérez Galdós, "Los Condenados" - Prologue - P. 11
- (25) Ramón Pérez de Ayala, "Las Mascaras" - Vol. I - P. 48

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