

## THE NATURALISTIC CONTENT OF THE *LA DESHEREDADA* MANUSCRIPT

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The manuscript version of *La desheredada* provides intriguing information about the first of the *Novelas españolas contemporáneas* and about Galdós as a novelist. For many critics *La desheredada* stands as perhaps Galdós's most explicit sociopolitical exposé. Clarín, for example, referred to his colleague's program of "literatura incendiaria" (106). According to Berkowitz, the lack of contemporary critical response was due to the fact that "[t]he meat of *La desheredada*, it was apparent, was too raw for the literary teeth of Spain's readers and critics" (156). Robert Fedorcheck has labeled the work a "platform for social criticism" (43) and pointed out many of the blows aimed at mental health care, governmental bureaucracy, juvenile delinquency, and several other deserving targets. By the same token, modern critics have consistently downplayed the naturalistic content of this work. Brian Dendale is outspoken in this matter: "I have been unable to find any but the most fortuitous resemblance between these novels of Zola and Galdós's *La desheredada*" (14). Ironically, a close study of the original manuscript of the 1881 novel reveals that Galdós was prepared to initiate his "segunda manera" in a decidedly more controversial fashion. Material discovered in the manuscript demonstrates that Galdós first conceived of *La desheredada* as a work replete with sociopolitical mordacity, emphatic determinism, and raw descriptions.

Galdós accentuates both the crudity and destructive potency of the environment in the manuscript. The neighborhood where La Sanguijuelera attempts to raise Mariano affords the clearest example; it appears even more repugnant than in the published version. Isidora wonders if "aquellos eran arrabales de la corte de España o un zafio y antipático poblachón bastante horrible y sucio para no ser ciudad y bastante poblado y bullicioso para no ser aldea" (1: 69).<sup>1</sup> Later, she concludes that "el barrio entero, sin exceptuar la tienda de su tía, eranle profundamente antipáticos. La vista y el oido se indignaban á cada paso con tanta visión innoble y tanto odioso vocablo" (1: 86-87). Not surprisingly, the *barrio* is fraught with tension, and, consequently, violent quarrels, which set the stage for the knifing of Zarapicos, break out frequently: "acudía La Guardia Civil y de aquella riña surgía otra, y de esta seis ó siete, de modo que el barrio entero se contagiaba de furor y había puños y muertes como adoquines y aparecían, como por magia, cardenales, y aun después de extinguida la pelea, duraba el rumor de ella medio día con gruñidos y apóstrofes fieros" (1: 183).

For Mariano, the severity of this environment carries over into the workplace. In the manuscript, the owner of the rope factory seeks to dehumanize his workers. The one who gives directions to La Sanguijuelera is an "auténtica," more machine than man: "El huso vivo movió bruscamente la cabeza para decir que no, sin dignarse expresarlo de otro modo porque un huso que hablara podría ser un huso que no torciera. El dueño del establecimiento había inculcado

severamente, por este motivo, á los subordinados la idea de la discreción. Allí no se oía más que á las sogas" (1: 92). The rope factory itself takes on a more lugubrious air. Encarnación and Isidora must fight their way through a "telarañosa penumbra" (1: 88), and the shop figuratively swallows up Mariano: "La vacilación de los espirales por la dirección de la torcedura en forma de hélice hacía el efecto óptico de un suave movimiento de traslación en sentido de la longitud, y parecía una cosa lentamente tragada por aquel esófago negro" (1: 93). Isidora chooses Juan Bou as her brother's next mentor and suggests several teaching methods: "Para conseguirlo, no debía omitir el maestro ni las reprimendas ni los golpes" (2: 86). Miquis advocates a similar approach: "y por último autorizó al citado dueño para que le tratase con rigor, castigándole á su arbitrio, no perdonándole ninguna falta, hasta ver si se lograba un hombre laborioso (y ¿por qué no una persona decente?) de aquel muchacho levantisco. Aceptó tan delicada obligación Juan Bou, que así se llamaba el litógrafo, y desde el primer día empezó á poner en práctica sus funciones educativas" (2: 86).

Mariano is obviously the character who suffers most from this malignant environment. The narrator frequently pauses in the manuscript to drive home the idea that Pecado is both product and victim of his circumstances. He repeatedly describes Mariano as an abandoned youth who, because of his detrimental surroundings, has a partially formed, distorted character: "Era un hombre prematuro, como otros muchos que discurren por Madrid y que no tienen hogar conocido, ni padres, ni parientes y que viven de diversas industrias ilícitas" (2: 210). At times the picture is even more bleak: "Careciendo de principios morales, de dirección moral y religiosa, de amparo doméstico, del yugo paterno, quedaba solo y dueño de sí, en pleno porvenir de sus brutales instintos, gobernado por el fatal y abrumador principio-necesidad de la lucha por la existencia" (2: 212).

Biological heredity also plays a key role in the manuscript. Galdós portrays La Sanguijuelera in the printed version as a hardworking, practical, and honest member of the *pueblo*. But as Martha Krow-Lucal has shown, her manuscript personality proves considerably less positive.<sup>2</sup> Her family background, her physical and mental character, and her basic personality traits reveal a disturbed, unruly woman. She has a taste for strong liquor and little regard for men: "No había tenido hijos ni había sido casada y aun gustaba del buen aguardiente, y por nada del mundo habría colgado su vida (según decía) en la fastidiosa perchera de un marido" (1: 81). She also displays a violent temperament, one that gets worse with age: "La Sanguijuelera, con el avanzar de los años, se hacía más regañona y con su sobrina tenía frecuentes reyertas" (2: 445). Her response to Isidora's revelation about the supposed link to the Aransis family is vicious and peppered with insults such as "mentecato" and "duquesa del ajo crudo" (1: 112). Encarnación's ire does not subside quickly; the "intolerable feroz vieja" chases Isidora up the street, frenetically urging her neighbors to follow suit: "A esa, á la duquesa," she screams (1: 112). Even the neighborhood urchins who heed her call to arms behave worse than those in the text: "algunos andrajosos chicuelos saltaron detrás de Isidora haciendo indecentes cabriolas y gestos" (1: 112).

But perhaps the most bizarre aspect of Encarnación's manuscript personality becomes apparent when she returns to her store: "La Sanguijuelera se metió luego en su tienda, corrió al patio, volvió, fué, vino, dió varias vueltas, como un avechucho enjaulado, y después de hablar sola un buen espacio, como un demente

accionando con febriles movimientos, cogió con ambas manos el delantal azul que de su cintura pendía, se lo llevó á los ojos, apretó fuerte, lanzó un gran berrido, y de sus ojos, de todos los orificios de su cara brotó un raudal. ¡Qué modo de llorar!" (1: 114). Her physical appearance enhances this image of a drunken hag. The vibrant, well-preserved sexagenarian of the published version first appears as a tired woman already the victim of "atroz desfiguración y decadencia" (1: 79). Galdós describes her arms as "un pellejo fláccido" and adds that her fingers "parecían pegadas con saliva" (1: 80). This extensive list of Zola-like characteristics continues to mount as the reader recalls that Rufete blood runs through Encarnación's veins. "Pero no me has dicho nada," she complains to Isidora, "cachas!, qué puñales! Y mi sobrino tu tío el canónigo?" (1: 78). The effect of this casual inquiry is far-reaching. With it Galdós completes the Rufete genetic chain and boldly underscores the transmission of hereditary maladies by adding a blatantly naturalistic figure to a family of *dementes* that already includes an unbalanced grandfather,<sup>3</sup> a quixotic uncle,<sup>4</sup> a crazed father, a daughter best described as a promiscuous visionary, a homicidal epileptic brother, and a macrocephalic grandson.

Several other aspects contribute to the darker, naturalistic quality of the manuscript. Isidora's sexual notoriety receives attention. On the night the Marquise of Aransis rejects her, Isidora pauses to compose herself and is taken for a prostitute: "Pero meditando en esto empezó á sentir que cierto individuo de orden público la miraba con cautela y ademán suspicaz paseándose despaciosamente y como centinela por delante de ella, la obligó á marcharse de allá" (1: 520). During her trip to Santander, "No hay un solo ser con pantalones que no se crea autorizado para galantearla" (2: 17). Even her *rodrigón*, José Relimpio, offers a comment in this regard. When they are down on their luck and only Isidora's bed remains, José proffers ironic hope for the future: "Sobre esa base, hijita [...] levantarás una casa nueva, mejorarás de fortuna. Pues digo, si ganas el pleito" (2: 51).

Galdós places increased emphasis on Riquín's deformity and thus intensifies the harshness of tone. In the published version, Isidora's son is a malformed yet quite adorable child. Galdós opts for a different approach in the manuscript, where he consistently refers to Riquín as "el monstruo" or "el feo" (2: 3, 22, 28, 39, 46, 394). His appearance inspires more repugnance than sympathy: "Este niño viene al mundo rodeado de tristeza. Trae consigo el espanto de su persona. Es un monstruo. Su madre y cuantos lo rodean le reciben con terror" (2: 20). Encarnación, in 1876, laments the fact that the deformity is growing so pronounced: "Pobrecito . . . me parece que cada día tiene la cabeza más grande" (2: 47). A year later, she notices that the rapid expansion continues: "la deformidad de Riquín aumentaba á ojos vistos" (2: 445). Eventually, the distorted figure of her son haunts Isidora in her dreams: "Más tarde soñaba que un feo y aburrido monstruo la llevaba á cuestas dentro de un baúl, y la sumergía en un pozo hediondo entrándola y sacándola con una cuerda" (2: 394). The child's unsightliness is so great, in fact, that it provokes a truly callous suggestion from Miquis: "Pero si viviera, yo le dije á Isidora que cuando se vea pobre, lo que no es cosa imposible ni mucho menos, con enseñar á su hijo en las ferias, podría salir de apuros" (2: 3). Not only does the accentuated physical abnormality of

Riquín add an element of aberrancy to the work, it bolsters the notion of inherited defects in the Rufete clan.

Galdós envisioned provocative commentaries of a social nature as well. Two characters from the published text display serious drinking problems: Modesto Rico is already a confirmed drunk when he first appears; José Relimpio contracts the vice later in life, but his propensity for alcohol develops quickly. Galdós does suggest the ramifications of this disease: Modesto exhibits a taste for wife beating and José literally drinks himself to death, but there is nothing in the text similar to the full-blown attack against drink in works such as Zola's *L'Assommoir*. The manuscript, however, contains an explicit antidrinking campaign which begins when Isidora suddenly notices that the streets of Madrid are rife with taverns:

La curiosidad y la repugnancia la hacían mirar adentro cada vez que pasaba junto á una de esas puertas pintadas de rojo vivo que dan entrada á los templos de Baco. Llamábale la atención la uniformidad de su aspecto y decoración interior. Esta uniformidad es tal que cree el transeúnte ver la repetición de un mismo tipo, por ese fenómeno óptico alcohólico determinado por la influencia de la misma cosa tabernaria. El mostrador de latón con su fregadero, las sillas rojas, los vasares, y entrepaños del mismo color, y el velo son invariables y acusan extraordinaria falta de inventiva en los taberneros. (2: 215)

This plethora of drinking establishments disturbs the protagonist:

Isidora veía con cierto espanto la frecuencia con que se repite el rótulo *Vinos*, y echaba las miradas de una acera á otra leyendo en el libro de calles aquella interminable página roja de la embriaguez. Aquí *Vinos*, enfrente *Vinos*; más allá lo mismo; en la esquina *Vinos y Cervezas*; en la rinconada *Cervezas y Vinos*. Pensó Isidora, y pensaba bien que bastaba que en cada taberna se embriagara cada noche un solo hombre, para que sembrara de ello un pueblo condenado irremisiblemente á la degradación. (2: 216)

Isidora's distress in this instance almost certainly stems from firsthand knowledge of her aunt's inclination toward *buen aguardiente*, since at this juncture in the manuscript José's struggle with alcohol is more insinuation than fact.<sup>5</sup> It would appear, therefore, that Galdós meant to launch a strong attack against drunkenness on the national level, which would, at the same time, effectively underscore the personal struggle of Encarnación and eventually those of José and Modesto as well. Moreover, this heated indictment of taverns and drinking suggests a link between Galdós and Zola. It is difficult to read Galdós's tirade without thinking of *L'Assommoir*, where all of Paris seems to stagger through Colombe's notorious establishment. If one recalls that Zola's novel was published only a few years earlier, in 1877, and that Galdós was certainly familiar with it, the similarities in content and tone can easily be judged as more than coincidental.

The most daring assault that Galdós contemplates in the manuscript centers on the mysterious bombings that take place in part 2. In the printed version Frasquito Surupa, Gaitica, is a rough-edged denizen of the lower echelons of Madrid society who happens to be the owner of a gambling den. He employs Mariano Rufete, but the reasons why he pays him to plant a series of small bombs remain hidden. Actually, these events represent a veiled reference to a series of disturbances that were rocking Madrid at the very time that Galdós was writing the second part of *La desheredada*—from late January through June 1881. During the rule of Cánovas's Liberal-Conservative government from December

1879 to February 1881, the gambling houses of Madrid operated with impunity. Rumors of payoffs, police corruption, and other governmental chicanery abounded (Beck 133-37). When Sagasta and the liberals took office in 1881, the casinos were immediately ordered closed. Members of the gambling community did not wait long to retaliate. On the night of March 18, 1881 they initiated a terrorist campaign in an effort to pressure the Sagasta government to lift the ban, and they planted powerful explosives in strategic places around the city. There is little doubt that this is the chore that Pecado performs for Surupa. Curiously, all allusions to these events in the printed text are guarded and nebulous. Such is not the case in the manuscript, where Galdós opts for a frontal attack:

El tal Gaitica es muy conocido en Madrid de todo el mundo, y no es de mala familia, no crea ud. Los Surupa son Pájaros por la rama materna, es decir que están emparentados con muchos personajes del partido dominante. Ya sabe ud. que hay un Pájaro director y un gran número de Pajaritos en diversos puestos y categorías. Es familia pródiga y numerosa como la de los Peces, que hoy anda de capa caída. Gaitica se levanta y se abate según al gobierno le da por perseguir ó autorizar el juego. Así este y otros Pajaracos sueltan ó destrozan su presa de carne humana. (2: 530)

Galdós's manuscript condemnation of the corruption in the Cánovas government (Pájaros) is overt, blatant. He states rather than suggests the governmental involvement in the scandal, and, most damning of all, he establishes a direct family link between the repugnant Surupa, the gambling community, and the Cánovas government. It is apparent that Galdós's initial reaction was to administer a stinging direct blow to the guilty parties.<sup>6</sup>

Other brief but potent sociopolitical commentaries strengthen the biting tone of the manuscript. With respect to the behavior of city officials and police in the knifing incident, Galdós's mockery goes even further than in the text: "Presurosos, aunque tardíos, como hombres profundamente contrariados de que se hubiera cometido un crimen sin estar ellos cerca, aparecieron los de orden público" (1: 231). The social services representative receives similar treatment. From his perspective, the death of Zarapicos represents only a personal inconvenience: "Tarde muy desagradable fué aquella para nuestro egregio funcionario, que se vió privado de concurrir al paseo y por la noche al teatro y á la tertulia del partido" (1: 250). In spite of his promise to Pereda to avoid anything that smacked of religious controversy in *La desheredada*, Galdós cannot resist an occasional barb (Bravo Villasante 31-32). The narrator ponders the question of hypocrisy: "Hay tan distintas clases de hipocresía. Las más corrientes son las que consisten en cubrirse con el capisayo de religión" (1: 331). The elegant women begging for charity in the church provoke another caustic remark: "Mejor manera de desplumar á la gente no se ha podido inventar. La bolsa ó la vergüenza!" (2: 75). Galdós's indictment of mental health facilities in Spain takes more overt form in the manuscript, and the question of the *loqueros* draws harsh criticism: "No hay una institución bastante santa para establecer una hermandad de héroes canonizables que preste á la humanidad el servicio sublime de cuidar y amansar á los dementes" (1: 16). Canencia underscores the horror of Leganés for family and friends: "No es que padecan en ella los pobres asilados. Para estos es un Limbo, para los que de fuera vienen, para los infelices padres, hijos, hermanos, etcetera, que se han visto obligados á encerrar aquí á una prenda de su corazón, esto es un infierno" (1: 36-37). The lack of correctional facilities for juveniles elicits equally

bitter commentary. Shortly before Mariano's execution, Muñoz y Nones complains to Isidora about the problem: "Si hubiera existido *La Penitenciaria para jóvenes* y V. me hubiera dado ese muchacho hace tres años se lo hubiéramos devuelto á Ud. reformado. Pero aquí no nos acordamos de Santa Bárbara sino cuando truena; la Penitenciaria es un proyecto y dejará de serlo cuando la juventud esté ya completamente corrompida y no tenga remedio" (2: 515).

The material discovered in the manuscript of *La desheredada* leads to several significant conclusions. The findings of the present study clearly reveal that Galdós had originally traced out a more naturalistic novel, with greater emphasis placed on determinism, violence, deformity, and sexuality. Moreover, the tirade against taverns and drinking strongly suggests that Zola's *L'Assommoir* was an influential factor at this stage of composition. The material also shows that Galdós was finally learning to control his occasionally overzealous approach to social reformation. Muñoz y Nones rants in the manuscript about the lack of facilities for juveniles, but in the published text a subtle, yet brutally efficient passage about the construction of a bullring drives the same point home with more force. Finally, the manuscript findings have powerful political ramifications. The description of Gaitica that links him and the casino scandal directly to the Cánovas government is explosive, and the mere fact that Galdós was on the verge of publishing such a passage implies that the animosity between these great nineteenth-century figures, novelist and politician, ran deeper than anyone suspected.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The manuscript—MS21783 in the *Biblioteca Nacional*—consists of two parts. Part 1 contains 555 numbered pages plus an additional 37 pages of revisions. Part 2 contains 578 pages plus 12 pages of revisions. 272 pages of the entire manuscript have writing on the back. Parenthetical references are to part and page. Accentuation, spelling, and punctuation are that of the manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> In 1977 Martha Krow-Lucal revealed the existence and availability of the *La desheredada* manuscript. Her detailed analysis of the evolution involved in the portrayal of Encarnación Guillén serves as the basis for several of the comments in this essay. The scope of the present study goes beyond what Krow-Lucal originally reported, but the groundwork she laid is invaluable.

<sup>3</sup> Encarnación makes specific reference in the manuscript to the mental instability of Isidora's grandfather, the captain who appears in *Un fácioso más y algunos frailes menos*. First she accuses her young relative of "pensando en las musarañas," and then she intensifies the insult by adding: "como tu padre, como tu abuelo, como todos los Rufetes . . . maldita ralea de chiflados" (1: 110).

<sup>4</sup> Doctors confirm the eccentricity of Santiago Quijano-Quijada in the manuscript: "Era muy avaro, muy escéntrico, y sus vecinos decían que le faltaba algo en la cabeza. Los médicos opinaban lo mismo" (2: 546). As Muñoz y Nones reveals, Santiago's credulity is also more pronounced: "Hacía el amor á una aya inglesa, no mala. Los amigos nos pusimos de acuerdo para hacerle creer que la tal aya era una princesa disfrazada hija de un rey destronado" (2: 456).

<sup>5</sup> There is an early indication in the manuscript that drinking will be a significant theme. When Isidora visits the Prado Museum, she admires several works and one in particular: "Isidora se rió delante de los Borrachos, no acertando á comprender la verdad de aquella ficción del arte" (1: 125).

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed account of the political battles that resulted from this *petardo* scandal, see the March 23, 1882, *Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes* (2327-34).

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