

# WHAT IS A MAN OF FASHION? MANUEL PEZ AND THE IMAGE OF THE DANDY IN GALDÓS'S *LA DE BRINGAS*

Dorota K. Heneghan

“No he visto nunca en novelas españolas un elegante tan bien hecho como el don Alvaro de Mesía. Es completo, tipo admirable en su ligereza y corrupción provinciana. Pues y el marquesito de Vegallana también es hermosísimo [...]” wrote Galdós on April 6, 1885 in a letter to Leopoldo Alas (Clarín) about the creation of two male characters in *La Regenta* (1885) (cited in Ortiz 92). However, while Galdós was marveling at Clarín’s protagonists, he himself had already made contributions to the gallery of fictional dandies and *señoritos* in the nineteenth-century Spanish novel. Several of Galdós’s characters captured the essence of the *señorito*, such as Joaquinito Pez in *La desheredada* (1881) and José María Bueno de Guzmán in *Lo prohibido* (1885).<sup>1</sup> In 1884 the author added a new dimension to Manuel Pez, whom he had introduced as an influential politician and as Joaquinito Pez’s father in *La desheredada*: impeccably dressed, cynical, and self-absorbed, Pez shares in *La de Bringas* many of the attributes associated with the popular nineteenth-century narrative figure of the dandy. Yet, Galdós’s Pez is not a conventional dandy. The object of the present study is to show in what ways Manuel Pez resembles and, simultaneously, differs from the traditional dandy and what the image of this fashionable character reveals about Galdós’s perception of the nineteenth-century Spanish bourgeois man.

## Dandyism and its Connection to Modernity in Europe and Spain

The word dandy is of ambiguous origin. According to Ellen Moers, “[d]ictionaries trace it back no farther than the seventeen-eighties, as a term of vague significance in Scottish border songs, and offer as a source merely the local diminutive for Andrew (or the English ‘Jack-a-Dandy’)” (11). Earlier than that, the word dandy appeared in the oldest stanzas of “Yankee Doodle” written by an anonymous Englishman and sung throughout the American colonies in the 1770s to ridicule the poorly dressed American troops. As a social phenomenon, dandyism in England originated during George IV’s reign and was exported to France after the fall of Napoleon. It started with Beau Brummell, who with his austere, impeccably fitting clothing, refined toilette, and theatrical demeanor revolutionized the appearance of the aristocracy in England and the *manière d’être* of bourgeois men in Europe for the rest of the century.

Deeply connected to modernity and its cultural expressions in fashion, urbanization, and the cult of self, dandyism has provided a rich ground for observing changes in modern life. To Baudelaire, for example, dandyism was a manifestation of modern individualism, “the burning desire to create for oneself a personal originality” (27). For Benjamin and Kracauer, dandies were key components in the landscape of modern city boulevards.<sup>2</sup> Most recently, Rhonda Garelick has argued that the ideals of dandyism are similar to those of

fashion because “[b]oth depend upon the phases of newness, foreignness, surprise and scandal. Both concern the aesthetics of performance; both strive to grasp the present, existing only in an unnarratable ‘now’” (59). But in addition to being the focus of “las obras teóricas y los ensayos en el que el tema se analiza y se interpreta [...] el dandyismo,” Luis Antonio de Villena reminds us, “es sujeto y tema de la literatura” (27).

Although the catalog of fictional dandies in the Spanish narrative appears to be somewhat shorter than the list of literary dandies in French and English novels, this does not mean, of course, that the nineteenth-century Spanish authors did not experiment with dandyism (Ortiz 61-67). Mariano José de Larra, for instance, was fascinated with the figure of a dandy (Umbral 83-85; Heath 22-29). In “El castellano viejo,” (1832) Larra displays himself as a dandy poised tensely in his frock-coat, “limpísima camisa [...] y [...] pantalón de perla gris” (317). In “La Nochebuena de 1836,” (1836) the essayist again presents himself as a man who is conscious of his clothing: “frac elegante [...] media de seda, y [...] chaleco de tisú de oro” (556) on one hand, and of his bitter self-reproach, on the other. Larra, moreover, wrote an essay, “Los Calaveras,” (1835) in which he identified the nineteenth-century dandy as “un calavera de buen tono – el emblema del siglo” (513). Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer was also drawn to dandyism (Sebold 16-17; Moreno Hernández 48-50). Although Bécquer’s personal style of dressing hardly qualified him as a dandy, his role as an arbiter of elegance (which he often assumed in his articles on fashion) did (Celaya 79-80).

Galdós’s creation of Manuel Pez’s dandy-like appearance has not received much attention from critics. Even though as early as 1961 George J. Edberg called attention to the importance of Pez’s manner of dressing, he did not link don Manuel’s elegance to dandyism. Similarly, in recent years critics did not associate the fashionable politician with the figure of the dandy.<sup>3</sup> Instead, Pez’s “dazzling impressive exterior” has been interpreted mostly as a sign of the protagonist’s inner emptiness and vanity (Smith 84; Tsuchiya 41) and as an effective tool for his sexual conquest of Rosalía (Tubert 385; Bly 80). While Pez’s elaborate attire and emphasis on his toilette can certainly be viewed as an emblem of his snobbishness, egotism, and ostentation, the abundance of sartorial details used in his portrait points to a great deal more than merely the negative side of his character.

Before entering the world of Galdós’s protagonist, it is worth mentioning that prior to the nineteenth century the image of a man of fashion had been presented in the writings of Spanish moralists and social commentators mainly in a negative light. In the sixteenth century, Fray Tomás de Trugillo complained in his *Libro llamado reprobación de trajes, y abuso de juramentos* (1563) that the increasing multifariousness in men’s wardrobes made it harder to determine one’s standing in society and insisted that every man should not dress according to the dictates of fashion but “según la cualidad de su persona, estado y oficio” (qtd. in Vigíl 195). A century later, Bartolomé Ximénez Patón dedicated an extensive passage in his *Discurso de los tufos, copetes y calvas* (1639) to ridiculing men who spent most of their time in hair salons:

En ningún lugar se puede más bien conocer los hombres envanecidos, que en las barberías mirando los Ganimedes, y Narcisos, que teniendo paciencia para ponerse dos horas en manos de un barbero, con tan exquisita diligencia quieren ser afeitados, y gastan más tiempo en hacerse la barba, torcerse el bigote, levantar el copete, y peinar las guedexas, ampollar los cogotes, que la más hermosa dama. (qtd. in Vigíl 196)<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, in the eighteenth century, Juan Antonio Zamácola described fashionable men unfavorably by linking their presumed effeminacy to the corruption of morals and the degeneracy of the Spanish race. He lamented that “los nietos de españoles robustos, membrudos y procerosos forman una especie de chuchumecos raquíticos, contrahechos y afiligranados, que parecen manequines o muñecos modelados por algún aprendiz” (7).<sup>5</sup> As we have seen, throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, most writers, essayists, moralists, and social commentators considered excessive care of the body and fondness for stylish wardrobes highly improper for a man.<sup>6</sup> In the nineteenth century, however, the attitude toward fashion and men of fashion changed. As ready-made clothing began to expand in the late 1820s and forty years later came to dominate the men’s clothing market, more and more essayists and authors of conduct books were urging their male readers to dress according to the dictates of fashion.<sup>7</sup> As early as 1830, an anonymous author of the manual *El hombre fino al gusto del día o Manual completo de urbanidad, cortesía y buen tono* described the growing importance of fashion and the wisdom of dressing stylishly as follows:

La moda es la más inconstante de las fingidas divinidades, pero es la que tiene más adoradores. Su imperio se estiende por donde quiera, y hay cierta especie de sabiduría en no ir contra ella. Tan grande es su poder [...] que el hombre sabio es el primero en seguir la moda, y el último en dejarla. (86, author’s italics)<sup>8</sup>

As it appeared, however, the recommendations to dress *à la mode* were not universally followed. In the collection of essays, *Tipos y caracteres. Bocetos de cuadros de costumbres o El curioso parlante (1843-1862)*, Ramón Mesonero Romanos presented nineteenth-century Spaniards as men who relinquished their claims to personal enhancement and beautification. In his social sketch from 1840, *El Gabán*, Mesonero Romanos claimed that as the nineteenth century progressed, men, in contrast to the ladies, had practically renounced their love of sartorial finery:

[D]e supresión en supresión, los hombres hemos ido suprimiendo hasta llegar al gabán, que no es más que un pretexto para ir en camisa; siendo de suponer que, siguiendo esta progresión, lleguemos muy pronto a los mandiles indianos o a la hoja de parra de nuestro padre Adán [...] únicamente conservamos seriamente los guantes amarillos, que es lo suficiente para lo que entre nosotros se llama ir vestido. Las damas [...] han seguido un sistema contrario, y en lugar de suprimir, han ido adicionando a sus personas, en términos, que, si antes necesitaban seis varas de tela para su vestido, ahora gastan diez y ocho [...] (134, author’s italics).

However, the portrayal of the *pollo-dandy* in Antonio Flores's essay, *Los pollos de 1850*, in which the author described in detail the variety of the main character's outfits, indicates that not all middle-class Spanish men refrained from the pleasures of fashion:

[E]l pollo verdadero tiene la toilette de negligé al levantarse, la de matiné a la hora de almorzar y la de soiree [...]. El criado sabe bien las horas de esas tres revistas de policía interior y exterior, y las prendas que convienen alistar para cada una de ellas, y prepara: para la primera, las pantuflas; el echarpe, la robe de chambre y el bonnet; para la segunda, las botas a la écuyère, el chaquet y la fouet, y para la última, el habit noir, el pantalón de color y corbatas a voluntad. (141, author's italics)

Likewise, the portrait of an overdressed male in Ramón de Navarrete's sketch, *El elegante* (1851), whose arrogance and ostentation give him the reputation of "*Dandy, fashionable, leon, o [...] lion*" (158, author's italics), proves that nineteenth-century Spanish men could be quite invested in using clothes to create a new look for themselves.

Yet, the nineteenth-century Spanish man of fashion never evolved into a full-fledged dandy. At the time Antonio Flores and Ramón de Navarrete used the term "dandy" in their respective essays, the word itself was considered a neologism in Spain. According to Corominas, the word "dandy" was first defined in the *Diccionario de galicismos* (1855) by Rafael María Baralt, who described it as follows: "[d]onde quiera que aparezca este vocablo anglo-francés póngase una nota que explique a la generalidad del pueblo español como el tal significa LINDO, LECHUGUINO, PISAVERDE" (202-3). Indeed, in Spain, throughout the nineteenth century the general public used the term "dandy" as a non-discriminatory synonym for a fashionable man. Even later during the end of the nineteenth century, when readers were acquainted with writings such as Barbey d'Aureville's *Du dandyisme et de George Brummell* (1845), the dandy was generally confused with the snob (Celma Valero 126-30; Badenes 50-53).

In nineteenth-century Spanish literature, the figure of the dandy was never represented as a type of his own. Although, as I have mentioned earlier, nineteenth-century Spanish authors experimented with dandyism, they did not create a character of dandy per se. Instead, as Gloria Monserrate Ortiz points out, the dandy marks his presence in the Spanish narrative as the most "immediate and influential predecessor" of the *señorito* (13). Thus, the classic *señorito*, explains Ortiz, is "at least in part, an heir to the dandy tradition" due to his exaggerated attention to clothing, appearance, and his leisurely way of life (65). I will address later the question why the nineteenth-century Spanish man of fashion never became a true dandy and why nineteenth-century Spanish writers, such as Galdós, crafted personages that only to a certain extent resembled the typical dandy. But before turning to Galdós's portrait of the dandy-like Manuel Pez, it is worth pointing out that Ortiz's observation regarding the dandy's legacy in Spanish literature is only partially true. In addition to his influence on the figure of the *señorito*, the dandy had quite an effect on the character that paradoxically considered himself immune to dandyism: the bourgeois gentleman.

A superficial look at both the dandy and the gentleman might lead to the conclusion that the two types of men had hardly anything in common. After all, the dandy with his self-proclaimed superiority, his credo of idleness and irresponsibility was an affront to the middle-class man with his virtues of equality, energy, and responsibility. Yet, the bourgeois gentleman adopted far more from the dandy than he ever cared to admit. Even though the bourgeois male was quick to voice his disapproval of the dandy, the ease with which the fashionable *beau* navigated his way to the top of the social ladder, his talent for self-promotion, and the use he made of his clothes, poses, and wit, was not entirely lost on the middle-class man.<sup>9</sup> All in all, the dandy succeeded in becoming what the respectable middle-class man aspired to turn into: a new kind of aristocrat, an individual who, like Beau Brummell, could justify his ascendance in society by qualities other than aristocratic origin and wealth (Gagnier 51-99).

That the nineteenth-century bourgeois male emulated the dandy, while concurrently preserving the image of the proper gentleman, is well illustrated in Galdós's social sketch, "El elegante" (1893). Looking back at the sartorial presentation of nineteenth-century middle-class Spaniards, the author draws the reader's attention to the ultra-conservative, non-expressive codes of their attire:

Somos por el traje, los mayores mamarrachos que han visto las edades desde la famosa hoja de higuera o de parra [...]. Hemos proscrito el color adoptando el negro o los antipáticos tonos de cenizas, y los grises y asfaltos más feos que es posible imaginar. Hemos desterrado las tonalidades vivas [...] las joyas, las plumas; nuestros mozalbetes se forran del mismo paño negro y fúnebre que reviste la personalidad de clérigo o del magistrado. (233)

But Galdós's essay uncovers more than his dissatisfaction with men's style of dressing. The praise of the simplicity, uniformity, and comfort of the monk's robe, which the writer contrasts with bourgeois men's apparel, brings to light his critique of middle-class men's exaggerated attention to the outward appearance and their feverish consumption of fashion.

Es cosa que da envidia la facilidad con que un fraile se viste [...]. Sus movimientos, al andar, no son entorpecidos por la ropa. Su cuello está libre; va bastante abrigado y bastante fresco sólo con aumentar o disminuir el calibre de la ropa interior, **y sobre todo, y aquí viene lo más envidiable, no tiene que preocuparse de si este año se llevarán los pantalones más o menos angostos o de si las levitas llevan una o dos filas de botones.** [C]onvengamos en que es un gusto ser fraile. ¡No pensar en lo que *se lleva* y en lo que *no se lleva*; **no tener que afligirse porque su gabán sea un poquito atrasado de moda; no enterarse de cómo es el último figurín, y no lidiar con sastres...**! (239; author's italics, emphasis mine)

Of course, Galdós's description of bourgeois men's dandy-like preoccupation with the external image was hardly new at the time he wrote his essay. In what follows, we shall see that the author of *La de Bringas* had already addressed the importance of clothes and the dandy-like cult of self in his portrait of Manuel Pez.

### Galdós's Portrait of Manuel Pez

At first sight, Manuel Pez's clothes appear to serve two purposes: to make him look like a respectable high-ranking official to the outside world and like an attractive lover to Rosalía Bringas. Dressed elegantly, but always in the same style and without divulging his effort to look chic, Pez is effective in preserving the image of an upright, middle-class gentleman:

*Mañana y tarde, Pez vestía de la misma manera, con levita cerrada de paño, pantalón que parecía estrenado el mismo día y chistera reluciente, sin que este esmero pareciese afectado ni revelara esfuerzo o molestia en él. [...] Llevaba a todas partes el empaque de la oficina, y creeríase que levita, pantalón y sombrero eran parte integrante de la oficina misma, de la Dirección, de la Administración [...]. (108)*

Later on, the narrator describes Rosalía's impression of Pez's attire and demeanor as follows:

*Pez se agigantaba más cada día a sus ojos [...] aquel aire elegante [...] aquellos cuellos como el campo de la nieve, altos, tiesos; aquel pantalón que parecía estrenado el mismo día [...] (170-71) ¡Oh, qué hombre tan extraordinario y fascinador! ¡Y qué finura y distinción de modales [...]! (195)*

Yet, things are rarely what they appear to be in Galdós's narrative. While his fashionable appearance seems to aid don Manuel in seducing Rosalía, ultimately it is not his gentlemanly facade that makes Bringas's wife fall into his arms but his promise to protect her should she ever find herself in difficulties. Similarly, while the formal outfit seems to contribute greatly to his image as a serious bureaucrat, in reality the exaggerated neatness of his frock-coat and the cleanliness of his body make it obvious that Pez's existence is devoted to the creation of his external image.

There is no doubt that Galdós uses Pez's cultivation of his image throughout the novel to highlight the negative aspects of his personality. Like most of Galdós's fashion-oriented male protagonists, the elegant politician fits easily in what Gabriel Cabrejas calls "una enciclopedia de hombres inútiles" whose modish look reflects on their self-centered, effeminate, and corrupt nature (157). But the unappealing qualities of Pez deserve deeper scrutiny because they provide readers with an image that is far more complex than a simple picture of him as "a stereotypical product of a hypocritical society" (Tsuchiya 41). The many references to Pez's pursuit of elegance and the author's portrayals of the stylish bureaucrat as a man dedicated solely to his own perfection link him not only to the social vices of the time but also to the figure of the dandy.

Like most of the dandy-like characters penned by nineteenth-century Spanish novelists, such as Clarín's Alvaro Mesía, Galdós's Pez shares only some of the characteristics of the dandy. One of his most cited traits is his penchant for fashion and obsession with personal hygiene. In contrast to Francisco Bringas, who wears the "*levisac de lanilla*" made six years ago and "*el sombrero de paja*" that makes him look as if he

“acababa de venir de La Habana,” Pez dresses up for the summer in “el ligero y elegante traje alpaca de color” (178, 243, 227).<sup>10</sup> For don Manuel, however, fashion does not necessarily mean merely wearing garments appropriate for the season. As Ellen Moers writes, “the ideal of the dandy is the cut of his clothes” (21). Consequently, Pez’s elegance, like the elegance of any dandy, has very little to do with excessive ornamentation or, to use Moers’s words, “fantastic colors and frills, exotic jewels” (21). Rather, it has to do with a different style, one that, as Elizabeth Wilson put it, “was already coming into fashion, a style in which the most important element was fit” (*Adorned in Dreams* 180). “Su ropa tenía la virtud de no ajustarse ni empolvarse nunca, y le caía sobre el cuerpo como pintada,” says the narrator about Pez’s impeccable appearance (107-8). Later, he emphasizes again the politician’s affection for the superior cut and fit of his clothes by drawing Rosalía’s attention to “aquella levita negra cerrada, sin una mota, planchada, estirada, cual si hubiera nacido en la misma piel del sujeto” (170-71).

Cleanliness is the other trait that links Pez to the tradition of dandyism. The description of don Manuel’s flawlessly shaved face, adorned by “patillas y bigote de oro oscuro [...] limpios, relucientes, declarando en su brillo que se les consagraba un buen ratito en el tocador,” emulates the archetype of all dandies, the great Beau Brummell (107). “Brummell’s major contribution to history was his [...] advocacy for cleanliness,” writes Ellen Moers (32). “His laborious toilette commenced with a furious scrubbing of the teeth [...]. Then he would shave with extreme care [...] wash and scrub and wash again with plenty of good soap and hot water [...].” (Moers 32-33). The narrator further underscores Pez’s dandy-like attitude toward his toilette by pointing out how little cleanliness means to other men in the novel. Compared to Francisco Bringas, who saves on using soap and, according to his own wife’s complaints, “se opone a que el aguador [...] suba dos cubas más de agua, porque, según él, con mojarse el palmito ya basta,” Pez with “aquel discreto uso de finos perfumes” and with “aquellas manos de mujer cuidadas con esmero...” presents himself as a real dandy (130, 172, 171).

Finally, there is the carefully thought-out repertoire of poses and gestures that Pez adopts while charming Bringas’s wife with his sartorial grace. The scene of Pez walking with Rosalía shows that don Manuel, like all dandies, is essentially a theatrical being:

Pez y Rosalía [...] salían a dar vueltas por la terraza. Él, con la mano izquierda en el bolsillo del pantalón, recogido el borde de la levita, accionaba levemente con la derecha, empuñando un junco por la mitad. (109)

Yet, Galdós’s Pez is different from the classic nineteenth-century dandy. Unlike the traditional dandy, who proudly assumed the role of the pioneer in the art of dressing, don Manuel follows the current fashion trend, instead of setting it. Further, Galdós’s protagonist lacks what the nineteenth-century dandy was most famous for (in addition to his unique style of dressing): his rebellious nature (Moers 26-28). “Rebelliousness is at the heart of dandyism,” asserts José Ignacio Badenes in his study on the dandy (12). “The dandy

expresses his rebelliousness against the status quo by affirming the self though individuality and originality” (Badenes 13). “He works actively,” writes Badenes, “to create himself as a work of art, defying in his own person the standards which bourgeois society has codified at all level for everyone to conform” (13).

That don Manuel, in contrast to the traditional dandy, conforms to the established order of bourgeois society and, what is more, greatly benefits from its structure is evident from Galdós’s descriptions of the bureaucrat’s corrupt nature. What is perhaps not so obvious is that the author made further effort to point out the lack of originality and individuality in Pez by depicting him as a mass-produced commodity: a dressmaker’s dummy. “Vestía este caballero casi casi como un figurín,” announces the narrator at the outset of the novel (107). “[S]u cara simpática, sin arrugas, [parecía] admirablemente conservada” (107). “[S]u áureo bigote [...] por la igualdad de los pelos, parecía artificial” (186). His body, despite the passing years, does not show any sign of aging. For, as the narrator tells us, although don Manuel is fifty, he looks a lot closer to forty. “Eran cincuenta años que parecían poco más de cuarenta” (107).

The novelist further intensifies Pez’s mannequin-like appearance by superseding his living body with material objects. The only parts of Pez’s flesh ever mentioned in the novel are his ever-friendly face and his clean, sterile hands. The sartorial goods out of which the modish bureaucrat creates himself seem to replace the rest. Moreover, as observed by Julian Palley, “nunca entramos completamente en la mente de don Manuel ni estamos seguros de sus móviles” (156). By replacing don Manuel’s thoughts and feelings with a sum of artificial, premeditated gestures and poses, Galdós presents Pez as a man “incapaz de entusiasmo por nada” (106). The politician’s face, like the face of any dressmaker’s dummy, never reveals anything except “un reposo semejante [...] al de los santos que gozan la bienaventuranza eternal” (107).

Also the association between cheap, mechanically reproduced cards and the image of Manuel Pez captured in Rosalía’s thoughts brings to light the difference between Galdós’s protagonist and the dandy.

Pez, cada vez más frío, con un cierto airecillo de persona superior a las miserias humanas, continuaba hablando de cosas indiferentes con admirable seso [...]. Su parecido con el Santo Patriarca antojósele a Rosalía más vivo que nunca; pero consideró aquella belleza rubia como la más sosa perfección del mundo. No le faltaba más que la vara de azucenas para pasar a figurar en la cartulina de los cromos de a peseta que se venden por las calles. (266)

Unlike the conventional dandy, Galdós’s character is not a man who aspires to turn his persona into a unique and irreplaceable object of art, but a man who delights in his manufactured artifice and takes pleasure in making, to use Rhonda Garelick’s words, “an art form of commodifying personality” (3).

Finally, there is the contrast between the classic dandy, who openly professed his love for finery and the lifestyle of a *bon vivant*, and Pez, who, despite his fondness for luxury



and leisure, insists on preserving the image of himself as a serious politician and a commendable employee of the Spanish Civil Service. “Era este Pez el hombre más correcto que se podía ver, modelo excelente del empleado que llaman *alto* [...] hombre que en su persona y estilo llevaba la soberanía del Gobierno y [...] de la Administración” (106, author’s italics).

The description of Manuel Pez as a man who resembles and, simultaneously, differs from the typical dandy presents an unflattering portrait of the nineteenth-century bourgeois man in Spain. By placing the emphasis on Pez’s dandy-like elegance, the author calls attention to the middle-class Spanish man’s involvement in the excessive consumption of fashion and challenges the prevalent image of the bourgeois man as an embodiment of sartorial sobriety and uniformity.

As a consumer of sartorial luxuries, Manuel Pez differs from Rosalía Bringas and from other male characters in Galdós’s narrative that overspend on fashion. Nineteenth-century men, as the American fashion historian, Anne Hollander explains, “didn’t brood at home over fashion plates” (118). Unlike their wives and daughters, men did not “go to several different fabric stores and study many varieties of texture and fiber, and shop around for different colors for facings, and compare the thickness of ornamental braid or the size of buttons [...]” (Hollander 118). The fashionable look was something that nineteenth-century middle-class men acquired directly from their tailors. While Milagros complains about her husband spending lavishly on his tailor —“¡Ay!, créalo usted, mi mariducho tiene la culpa de que vivamos de esta manera... He tenido que pagarle ayer una cuenta de su sastre, que se había colgado de la campanilla de la puerta de casa...” (135-36)—,<sup>11</sup> Galdós is not as explicit about Pez’s consumerism (the novelist does not describe the politician’s visits to the tailor or any other luxury establishments) —as he was, for example, about the shopping habits of Agustín Caballero in *Tormento* (1884), or José María Bueno de Guzmán in *Lo prohibido* (1885). Nonetheless, the many details of don Manuel’s elaborate appearance alone—the perfectly fitting clothing, his expensive accessories, and perfumes—are clear indicators of his acquisitive appetite.

The dandy-like image of Pez (in particular with reference to his elaborate elegance) is also significant in the novel as an ironic commentary on what nineteenth-century middle-class men’s outward appearance was supposed to stand for: the bourgeois values of thrift, merit, and work. The exquisite accessories, such as “aquella olorosa cartera de cuero de Rusia,” that make Manuel Pez look so noble and gentlemanly in Rosalía’s eyes, do not attest to the bureaucrat’s thrift (172). And, it is also obvious that Galdós does not place the traditional uniform of bourgeois men (the frock coat, trousers, and top hat) on Pez’s body to accentuate his work ethic but rather his lack thereof, since the author never describes don Manuel working inside his office: “En fin, don Manuel había tomado en aborrecimiento su domicilio, y estaba en él lo menos posible. La tranquilidad no existía para él más que en la oficina, donde no hacía más que fumar y recibir a los amigos [...]” (112).

Yet, the would-be dandy, fashionable image of Pez is noteworthy not only because it captures the bourgeois Spanish man’s consumerism and lack of productivity. Dandyism,

as Baudelaire explains in *The Painter of Modern Life*, “appears above all in periods of transition, when democracy is not yet all-powerful, and aristocracy is only just beginning to totter and fall” (28). It is, therefore, not a coincidence that Galdós turned to the figure of the dandy while creating the character of Pez in his brilliant reenactment of the 1868 Revolution in *La de Bringas*.

But, as mentioned, Galdós’s Pez is not a full-fledged dandy. This partial resemblance bears a relation to the author’s disappointment with the short-lived results of the Revolution of 1868 and his critical attitude toward the Spanish middle-class’s failure to maintain their own cultural and national identity (Valis 31-76, 139-71). By endowing Pez with characteristics that differentiate him from the traditional dandy, that is, by portraying him as a follower of fashion and a dressmaker’s dummy, the novelist voiced his critique of Spanish bourgeois men’s dependence on foreign ideals of masculinity (at least in the matter of dressing) and denounced their lack of vitality and initiative to move away from the prevalent values and structures of the Old Regime. The image of Pez as a dressmaker’s dummy is particularly telling in *La de Bringas* because it enabled Galdós to capture artistically the aura of political stagnation in 1868 Spain. While the nineteenth-century conventional dandy was, as Baudelaire describes him, an individual “full of fire, passion, courage and [...] native energy,” willing to break away from the shackles of the past (28), Galdós’s mannequin-like Pez is a man that epitomizes an entirely different spirit. He represents, in the narrator’s words, “esa España dormida, beatífica, que se goza en ser juguete de sucesos y que en nada se mete con tal que la dejen comer tranquila” (107).

The description of Pez as a man who resembles and, simultaneously, differs from the traditional dandy does not leave much room for guesswork regarding Galdós’s attitude toward his protagonist. Despite his dressing in the latest style, Pez is, in conclusion, a reactionary figure who (similar to other dandy-like characters in the nineteenth-century Spanish novel, e.g. Clarín’s Alvaro Mesía, and to other real-life, middle-class, Spanish would-be dandies) likes to appear modern without undergoing any substantial changes in his way of living. Up to date only in his exterior, the dandy-like Pez embodies the illusion of progress in the second half of the nineteenth century in Spain and aptly captures the author’s critical view of bourgeois Spaniards’ superficial idea of modernity.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Shortly thereafter, Galdós experimented again with the figure of the *señorito* by creating the personage of Juanito Santa Cruz in *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1886).

<sup>2</sup> See Benjamin, *The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire* 124-25, *The Arcades Project* 806, and Kracauer 68-69. For more on Benjamin's and Kracauer's descriptions of the dandy as a modern urban phenomenon consult Gilloch 153-54 and Wilson 4.

<sup>3</sup> An exception is Gabriel Cabrejas, who in 1991 in his study, "Galdós: una enciclopedia de hombres inútiles," mentions Manuel Pez as a figure that combines three characteristics of the dandy: "sentido de elegancia [...] seguridad en sí mismo y facilidad de palabra" (178). Cabrejas's essay, however, does not focus on Manuel Pez and does not analyze any of these three characteristics in Galdós's portrait of Pez in *La de Bringas*.

<sup>4</sup> See also Pedro Galindo, in *Verdades morales en que se reprenden, y condenan los trajes vanos, superfluos y profanos; con otros vicios y abusos que hoy se usan; mayormente los escotados deshonestos de las mujeres* (1678), who reproved upper-class men for their excessive care of their bodies. Galindo created the image of a fashion-conscious, effeminate male as indolent and incapable of performing military duties. He also associated the decline of masculine virtues with Spain's decadence, writing "luego a estos peinados les dan una bandera de capitán...y [...] se pierde la plaza, la hacienda, la honra y las vidas..." (qtd. in Vigfl 197).

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the image of a man of fashion in the writings of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century moralists and social commentators, see Vigfl 194-97. On the figure of *petimetre* and the eighteenth-century man's attraction to sartorial finery, consult Kany 174-88, Martín Gaité 72-76, and Haidt 107-20.

<sup>6</sup> See Antonio Torquemada *Colloquios satíricos* (1522), Juan de Zabaleta's essay "El Galán" in *El día de la fiesta por la mañana y por la tarde* (1654) as well as Clavijo y Fajardo *Vida ociosa de algunos caballeros* (1762) and Ramón de la Cruz *El petimetre* (1764).

<sup>7</sup> The rise of ready-made clothing for men is discussed at length in Chenoune 67-70. See also Perrot 36-57.

<sup>8</sup> As the nineteenth century progressed, this type of advice became more common. In the *etiquette guide Nuevo manual de urbanidad, cortesia, decoro y etiqueta o El hombre fino* (1850), an unnamed author advised men to acquire attire appropriate for "las diferentes horas del día" (30). And in 1892, José de Castro y Serrano, a columnist for the popular magazine, *Blanco y Negro*, explained to men the need to dye their hair in the following way: "Las canas son un signo de vejez que aflige al que lo lleva, y no satisface al que lo mira. Ser viejo, es dejar de ser hombre, lo cual no todos hombres tienen el valor de consentirlo. Teñirse, por consiguiente, las canas, es perpetuar la juventud" (8).

<sup>9</sup> While a theme of frequent criticism, the dandy was also clearly a source of interest among young Spaniards throughout the nineteenth century. In 1836, in the magazine, *Semanario pintoresco*, an anonymous author wrote: "La influencia inglesa va ganando terreno visiblemente en nuestra España [...] los elegantes remedan a los dandys, montan caballos ingleses [...] y los sastres [...] corren en persona a las orillas del Tamesis para contar este nuevo empréstito" (qtd. in Strbáková 808). For an exhaustive list of quotes from Spanish texts from 1833 to 1900 with references to the figure of the dandy in Spanish society, see Strbáková (808-11).

<sup>10</sup> The presence of—*levisac*—a word, that, according to Strbáková, first appeared in the Spanish language in 1869 and was created "con toda probabilidad por unión de *levita* y *saco*" (369), serves two purposes in Galdós's novel. First, it recreates the aura of 1869 Spain. Second, it emphasizes Francisco's inferiority to Pez. Because in nineteenth-century Europe one could not be considered a gentleman without wearing a frock-coat and because Francisco's outfit consists only in part of a frock-coat, Pez, whose attire is composed mainly of this garment, embodies, therefore, the figure of a proper gentleman, *un hombre de levita*. For more on the etymology of *levisac* and the cultural meaning of *un hombre de levita* in nineteenth-century Spain, see Strbáková 369-70 and 29-31 respectively.

<sup>11</sup> A man's dependence on his tailor for providing him with an up-to-date appearance, and, consequently, for marking his social identity, was well known before the second half of the nineteenth century in Europe. "Tell me who your tailor is, and I will tell you who you are", wrote the French social commentator, Jean Grandville, in 1844 in *Un Autre Monde* (qtd. in Lehmann 297). On the importance of a tailor in the men's world in the early decades of nineteenth century in Spain, see also Manuel Bretón de los Herreros's satirical account, *Los sastres* (1835).

## WORKS CITED

- Badenes, José Ignacio. *Performing Dandy. Manuel Machado and the Anxiety of Masculinity*. New Orleans: UP of the South, 2003.
- Baudelaire, Charles. "The Painter of Modern Life." 1863. In *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. Trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne. London: Phaidon P, 1995. 1-40.
- Baralt, Rafael María. *Diccionario de galicismos. Voces, locuciones y frases de la lengua francesa que se han introducido en el habla castellana moderna. Juicio crítico de las que deben adoptarse, y la equivalencia castiza de las que no se hallan en este caso*. 1855. Buenos Aires: Alfonso Ruiz & Cía, 1874.
- Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1999.
- . "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire." In *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*. Trans. Howard Eiland and Edmund Jephcott. Ed. Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge, MA & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2006. 46-133.
- Bly, Peter. *Pérez Galdós: La de Bringas*. London: Grant & Cutler, 1981.
- Bretón de los Herreros, Manuel. "Los sastres." In *Artículos de costumbres*. Ed. Patrizia Garelli. Madrid: Rubiños, 2000. 139-45.
- Cabrejas, Gabriel. "Galdós: una enciclopedia de hombres inútiles." *Bulletin Hispanique* 93 (1991): 157-82.
- Castro y Serrano, José de. "La pintura del pelo." *Blanco y Negro*, May 22, 1892, 8.
- Celaya, Gabriel. *Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer*. Madrid: Júcar, 1972.
- Celma Valero, María Pilar. *La pluma ante el espejo. Visión autocrítica del "fin de siglo", 1888-1907*. Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1989.
- Chenoune, Farid. *A History of Men's Fashion*. Trans. Deke Dusinberre. Paris: Flammarion, 1993.
- Clavijo y Fajardo, José. "Vida ociosa de algunos caballeros." In *Costumbristas españoles*. Ed. E. Correa Calderón. Vol. 1. Madrid: Aguilar, 1964. 487-93.
- . "Sobre los petimetres." In *Costumbristas españoles*. Ed. E. Correa Calderón. Vol. 1. Madrid: Aguilar, 1964. 499-502.
- Cruz, Ramón de la. "El petimetre." In *Sainetes*. Ed. Emiliano M. Aguilera. Barcelona: Editorial Iberia, 1959. 131-50.
- Edberg, George J. "Un estudio de don Manuel Pez, una creación literaria galdosiana." *Humanitas* (1961): 407-17
- El hombre fino al gusto del día o Manual completo de urbanidad, cortesía y buen tono*. Trans. Mariano de Rementería. Madrid: Imprenta de Montero, 1830.
- Flores, Antonio. "Los pollos de 1850." In *La sociedad de 1850*. Ed. Jorge Campos. Madrid: Alianza, 1968. 139-47.
- Gagnier, Regenia. *Idylls of the Marketplace. Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1986.
- Garelick, Rhonda K. *Rising Star. Dandyism, Gender, and Performance in the Fin de Siècle*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988.
- Gilloch, Graeme. *Myth and Metropolis. Walter Benjamin and the City*. Cambridge: Polity P, 1988.

- Haidt, Rebecca. *Embodying Enlightenment. Knowing the Body in Eighteenth-Century Spanish Literature and Culture*. New York: St. Martin's P, 1998.
- Heath, Elena J. *A Dandy's Evolution from Satirist to Romantic Ironist in Three Artículos de Costumbres of Mariano José Larra*. M.A. Thesis. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997.
- Hollander, Anne. *Sex and Suits: The Evolution of Modern Dress*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1994.
- Kany, Charles E. *Life and Manners in Madrid 1750-1800*. New York: AMSP, 1970.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. *Orpheus in Paris. Offenbach and the Paris of his Time*. Trans.
- Gwenda Davis & Eric Mosbacher. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1938.
- Larra, Mariano José de. "El castellano viejo." In *Artículos Varios*. Ed. E. Correa Calderón. Madrid: Castalia, 1976. 307-19.
- . "Los calaveras." In *Artículos Varios*. Ed. E. Correa Calderón. Madrid: Castalia, 1976. 501-16.
- . "La Nochebuena de 1836." In *Artículos Varios*. Ed. E. Correa Calderón. Madrid: Castalia, 1976. 549-57.
- Lehmann, Ulrich. *Tigersprung. Fashion in Modernity*. London & Cambridge: MIT UP, 2000.
- Martín Gaité, Carmen. *Usos amorosos del dieciocho en España*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 1987.
- Mesonero y Romanos, Ramón. "El Gabán." In *Tipos y caracteres. Bocetos de cuadros de costumbres o el curioso parlante (1843-1862)*. Madrid: Oficinas de la Ilustración Española y Americana, 1881. 129-35.
- Moers, Ellen. *The Dandy. Brummell to Beerbohm*. New York: The Viking P, 1960.
- Moreno Hernández, Carlos. "Bécquer, Rimas: Bohemia, Dandismo, Cursilería." *El Gnomo* 2 (1993): 41-50.
- Navarrete, Ramón de. "El elegante." *Los españoles pintados por sí mismos*. Ed. Gaspar y Roig. Madrid: Biblioteca Ilustrada de Gaspar y Roig, 1851. 157-60.
- Nuevo manual de urbanidad, cortesía, decoro y etiqueta o El hombre fino*. Madrid: Librería de Hijos de D. J. Cuesta, 1889.
- Ortiz, Gloria. *The Dandy and the Señorito. Eros and Social Class in the Nineteenth-Century Novel*. New York & London: Garland, 1991.
- Palley, Julian. *El laberinto y la esfera. Estudios sobre la novela moderna*. Madrid: Insula, 1978.
- Pérez Galdós, Benito. *La de Bringas*. Ed. Alda Blanco and Carlos Blanco Aguinaga. Madrid: Cátedra, 1985.
- . "El elegante." *Fisonomías sociales. Obras inéditas*. Vol. 1. Madrid: Renacimiento, 1923. 231-42.
- Perrot, Philippe. *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie. A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*. Trans. Richard Bienvenu. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994.
- Sebold, Russell P. "Introduction." In *Rimas*. Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1989. 9-157.

- Smith, Paul Julian. "Galdós, Valera, Lacan." *The Body Hispanic. Gender and Sexuality in Spanish and Spanish American Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989. 69-104.
- Strbáková, Radana. "Procesos de cambio léxico en el español del siglo XIX: el vocabulario de la indumentaria." Diss. Universidad de Granada, 2007.
- Torquemada, Antonio. *Colloquios satíricos*. Bilbao: Mathias Mares, 1584.
- Tsuchiya, Akiko. "The Construction of the Female Body in Galdós's *La de Bringas*." *Romance Quarterly* 40 (1993): 35-47.
- Tubert, Silvia. "Rosalia de Bringas: El erotismo de los trapos." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* (Glasgow) 74 (1997): 371-87.
- Umbral, Francisco. *Larra. Anatomía de un dandy*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 1965.
- Valis, Noël. *The Culture of Cursilería. Bad Taste, Kitsch, and Class in Modern Spain*. Durham & London: Duke UP, 2002.
- Vigil, Mariló. "La importancia de la moda en el barroco." *Actas de las Cuartas Jornadas de Investigación Interdisciplinaria. Literatura y vida cotidiana*. Ed. María Ángeles Durán and José Antonio Rey. Zaragoza: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1987. 187-201.
- Villena, Antonio Luis de. *Corsarios de guante amarillo*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 1983.
- Wilson, Elizabeth. "The Invisible Flâneur." *New Left Review* 191 (1992): 90-110.
- . *Adorned in Dreams. Fashion and Modernity*. Los Angeles: U of California P, 1985.
- Zabaleta, Juan de. "El Galán" In *El día de fiesta por la mañana y por la tarde*. Cristóbal Cuevas García, Ed. Madrid: Castalia, 1983. 99-113.
- Zamácola, Juan Antonio. *Elementos de la ciencia contradanzaria para que los currutacos, pirracas y madamitas de nuevo cuño puedan aprender por principios a bailar las contradanzas por sí solos o con sillas de su casa*. Madrid: Fermín Villalpando, 1796.