

Introduction

Galdós's literary realism: *Tristana* and the series of 'contemporary novels'

Benito Pérez Galdós (1843–1920) is the Spanish author who arguably, after Cervantes, has had the most influence on all subsequent literature both inside and outside Spain. Galdós was born in Las Palmas but spent his formative years in Madrid. He arrived in the capital of Spain at the age of nineteen with the intention of studying law. However, he soon abandoned these studies and he swapped the classroom for the cafés and literary circles of Madrid.

There was an innate curiosity in the young Galdós which led him to be interested in the immediate historical, political, and social developments of his time. He quickly found a means of sating his endless curiosity when, in 1865, he began to work as a journalist for *La Nación* and the *Revista del movimiento intelectual europeo*. From an early stage in his career, Galdós devoted himself to the world of journalism as he considered this profession a valuable tool with which to witness and comment on the flow of history. Furthermore, Galdós found the blend of journalism and literature to be a productive way of exploring and articulating reality.

In 1867, after having translated Charles Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*, Galdós focused his interest and effort on a particular kind of realistic narrative,¹ the results of which first came to fruition in 1870 with the publication of *La Fontana de Oro* and *La Sombra*. That same year,

1 *Realism*: A mode of writing that gives the impression of faithfully recording or 'reflecting' an actual way of life. The term refers, sometimes confusingly, both to a literary method based on detailed accuracy of description (i.e. verisimilitude) and to a more general attitude that rejects idealisation, escapism, and other extravagant qualities of romance in favour of recognising soberly the actual problems of life. Modern criticism frequently insists that realism is not a direct or simple reproduction of reality (a 'slice of life') but a system of conventions producing a lifelike illusion of some 'real' world outside the text, by processes of selection, exclusion, description, and ways of addressing the reader (*Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 2015).

in parallel to these publications, Galdós was appointed director of a government newspaper, *El Debate*. Journalism and literature went hand in hand in Galdós' intellectual activities. In fact, during his time working at *El Debate*, Galdós was a one-man band as his duty was to publish articles on a very diverse range of topics from politics to art. In other words, Galdós' novelist style was forged within the frenetic rhythm of the newspaper's editorial offices.

For a better understanding of Galdós' literary education, we should take into account how journalism and literature overlap. On the one hand, Galdós is an observer of immediate reality around him and, on the other, he is a novelist influenced by his knowledge of Dickens' works and aesthetics. Any critical approach to *Tristana* (1892), such as the following, must consider these two early influences.

Good timing and opportunity are key to the success of any writer's career. Galdós had both. By 1870, he had already demonstrated his talent and a splendid sense of timing when analysing the contemporary problems of Spain. In 1897 (another key moment in his life), he once again displayed his perceptiveness when, in a moment of crisis and turbulence just one year before the famous Spanish 'Disaster' of 1898,² his inaugural address at the Spanish Royal Academy (*Real Academia Española de la Lengua*) discussed contemporary society as the material of his literary works. For Galdós writing had a social purpose. He believed that writers had the responsibility to bring to light the contradictions and tensions of their times.

If 1870 marked the inclusion of a new promising voice in the second half of nineteenth-century Spain, the second date, 1897, heralded Galdós' canonisation. By 1897, Galdós was already one of the most important men of letters in the country and a celebrated intellectual who had defended liberal and progressive political views throughout his career.

- 2 *Disaster of 1898*: The Spanish–American War of 1898 was a conflict between Spain and the United States (US), the consequence of US intervention in the Cuban War of Independence. US attacks on Spain's Pacific possessions also led to the US's involvement in the Philippine Revolution, and finally to the Philippine–American War. The result was the 1898 Treaty of Paris, negotiated on terms favourable to the US, which allowed it temporary control of Cuba, and ceded indefinite colonial authority over Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine islands. The defeat and collapse of the Spanish Empire was a profound shock to Spain's national psyche, and provoked a thorough philosophical and artistic re-evaluation of Spanish politics and society.

For almost thirty years, Galdós proposed a kind of realism anchored in his immediate reality and the problems of his time. His brand of realism conceived society as the raw material of fictional writing. I explicitly use the expression ‘a kind of’ realism (and not any other) because there is a general tendency to summarise Galdós’ aesthetics under the reductionist equation of a mimetic copy of reality that is equated with realist literature. I suggest Galdós’ approach to realist fiction was far more complex and creative. This is clear from the author’s attempts to define his own poetics, clearly demonstrated in his speech to the Academy.

On the 7 February 1897 in a speech entitled ‘La sociedad presente como materia novelable,’ Galdós revealed the very principles of his aesthetics. For him, a writer must reproduce life. He used the verb *reproducir* ‘to reproduce’ and not ‘to copy’. At first sight the difference might seem insignificant, but it is extremely relevant, as he notes in the following extract:

Imagen de la vida es la Novela, y el arte de componerla estriba en reproducir los caracteres humanos, las pasiones, las debilidades, lo grande y lo pequeño, las almas y las fisonomías, todo lo espiritual y lo físico que nos constituye y nos rodea, y el lenguaje, que es la marca de raza, y las viviendas, que son el signo de familia, y la vestidura, que diseña los últimos trazos externos de la personalidad: todo esto sin olvidar que debe existir perfecto fiel de balanza entre la exactitud y la belleza de la reproducción. (Pérez Galdós, 1897, quoted in Sotelo, 2013: 94–96)

As Galdós stresses in the last line of the quote, a novel is a piece of perfect architectural equilibrium balanced between attention to its raw material and its aesthetic reproduction in words. What does Galdós mean by ‘raw material’? He means the common people, ‘una muchedumbre alineada en un nivel medio de ideas y sentimientos’. The German romantics, especially Hegel,³ termed this ‘nivel medio’ (the mid-level or the average) the *Zeitgeist* or ‘spirit of the times’,⁴ while the ‘mass of individuals’ (la muchedumbre) was the *Volksgeist* or ‘spirit

3 *Hegel*: (1770–1831) German philosopher. He is especially known for his three-stage process of dialectical reasoning (set out in his *Science of Logic*, 1812–1816), which underlies his idealist concepts of historical development and the evolution of ideas; Marx based his theory of dialectical materialism on this aspect of Hegel’s work.

4 *Zeitgeist*: The German word for ‘time-spirit’, more often translated as ‘spirit of the age’. It usually refers to the prevailing mood or attitude of a given period.

of the people.’⁵ Galdós places his writing at the meeting point of these two coordinates. He explains how literature can transform reality, as

muchedumbre alineada en un nivel medio de ideas y sentimientos; [el] vulgo, sí, materia primera y última de toda labor artística, porque él, como humanidad, nos da las pasiones, los caracteres, el lenguaje, y después, como público, nos pide cuentas de aquellos elementos que nos ofreció para componer con materiales artísticos su propia imagen: de modo que empezando por ser nuestro modelo, acaba por ser nuestro juez. (Pérez Galdós, 1897, quoted in Sotelo, 2013: 94–96)

According to Galdós, the writer ‘arranges the ingredients’, reorganises sets of ideas, emotions, and actions to elaborate a fictional world from these elements. Galdós understands the processing of raw material into fictional matter as an ideological operation. He assumes that to describe reality is actually to prescribe it. In short, Galdós is well aware of the power of literature to not only recount reality but to shape it, to mould it, to transform it. For him, when the public read about themselves as historical subjects in a literary text, they also inscribe themselves within specific sets of values, beliefs, and morals. Galdós is vindicating here ‘a sort of realism’ that cannot just be simplified as mimetic reproduction.

Lisa Condé, author of an excellent critical guide to *Tristana*, has also noted Galdós’ promotion of literature as a tool for social transformation. Galdós departs from the literary context of his youth, the distorted over-sentimentalism of Romanticism. He believed he had to escape the romantic literary horizon of evasion, escapism, or pure entertainment and replace it with works that could contribute to the freedom of individuals and to critical judgement:

In literary terms, Galdós had been anxious to break away from the Romanticism of the early part of the nineteenth century and promote a more faithful ‘*imagen de la vida*’ through the novel, which he believed ‘*debe ser enseñanza, ejemplo*’ rather than empty entertainment. His early, largely anti-clerical novels, while not without art, have been described as ‘thesis novels’, while those of his ‘*segunda manera*’ (the ‘*novelas contemporáneas*’) are those for which he has been most acclaimed. *Tristana* appears towards the end of this second period, during a time of change on many levels. (Condé, 2000: 11–12)

5 *Völkgeist*: The German loanword (literally meaning ‘spirit of the people’ or ‘national character’) for the unique ‘spirit’ possessed collectively by each people or nation.

Condé thus introduces a useful division in Galdós' literary production. She explains how *Tristana* moves on from the 'thesis' novels and enters a much more experimental field where Galdós develops his personal notion of literary realism. Galdós experiments in two interconnected ways – new narrative techniques (namely, *novelas dialogadas*) and new topics (intergenerational and across social classes, and women's daily life), both articulated in the specific case of *Tristana* within the framework of a frustrated search for identity. Condé notes that:

Tristana herself envisages new potential professional identities – identities as yet uncoined and unrecognised in Spain. For '*las cosas grandes*' to which she aspires, the choices necessary for her to forge the identity she desires, are denied her because of her gender. [...] Hence the novel as a *Bildungsroman* [a novel of development from childhood to adulthood] is frustrated. (Condé, 2000: 59–60)

The narrative core of *Tristana* is frustration. The plot of the novel constantly orbits around this concept. Don Lope, in his fifties, is nostalgic about the seventeenth century and conducts himself according to a very particular code of Castilian knightly honour. The literary model here is obvious: Don Quixote. The uniqueness in Galdós' novel resides in the creation of the hybrid character of Don Lope based on both Don Quixote and, paradoxically, Don Juan Tenorio (the quintessential Don Juan).⁶ Don Lope delights in stealing the innocence of young women, as he believes that women are meant to be conquered in their naïveté and helplessness.

The complexity of the models and techniques in *Tristana* places this work in a special position within Galdós' overall novelistic production and, more specifically, in the series of 'contemporary novels'. For a better understanding of *Tristana* as a groundbreaking novel, it is necessary to contextualise Galdós' *segunda manera* of writing (namely the 'contemporary novels') within the context of his literary production. From 1873 onwards (the date of publication of

6 *Don Quixote*: Main character of Miguel de Cervantes' *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de La Mancha* (1605 and 1615). Don Quixote is an 'hidalgo', a nobleman, who reads so many chivalric romances that he loses his sanity and decides to set out to revive chivalry, undo wrongs, and bring justice to the world.

Don Juan Tenorio: Don Juan is a legendary, fictional libertine. *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* (1630) by Tirso de Molina is a play set in the fourteenth century. Don Juan is used synonymously for 'womaniser'.

the first series of the *Episodios Nacionales*), Galdós dedicated himself almost exclusively to literature.⁷ The literary success of the *Episodios* led to immense fame. After he had finished the first two instalments of the *Episodios*, written at the same time as his first novels, Galdós began his most ambitious project, the ‘contemporary novels’.

Other important events in Galdós’ life took place during the 1880s. Thanks to the support of important literary figures such as the critic Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo and the novelist Juan Valera, Galdós was nominated in 1889 as a candidate for a seat in the Spanish Royal Academy. However, due to his well-known liberal and anticlerical positions, the conservatives forced the failure of his candidature. A few months later, in a second attempt, he was accepted after conservative reluctance was overcome. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Galdós continued his activity as a novelist in parallel with his successful career as a playwright. By the end of the decade, he began the third series of the *Episodios Nacionales*. Then, just after the turn of the century, Galdós’ public commitment increased as the Spanish monarchy became more and more conservative. This social and political context led him to join the left of centre Republican Party. In 1909, he was appointed co-president of the *Conjunción Republicano-Socialista* alongside Pablo Iglesias (founder of the Spanish Socialist Party). Galdós’ last years were bitter. In 1912, his candidature for the Nobel Prize for Literature was boycotted by the Spanish conservatives. His precarious health (he became blind) required him to dictate his last works. Bedridden by illness and burdened by economic difficulties, Galdós died in Madrid in 1920.

Despite the sheer volume of Galdós’ literary output, most critics distinguish, for pedagogical purposes, the *Episodios Nacionales* from the rest of his novelistic works. In relation to the latter, critics concur in dividing Galdós’ novels as follows.

7 *Episodios Nacionales*: The *Episodios Nacionales* are a collection of forty-six historical novels written by Benito Pérez Galdós between 1872 and 1912. They are divided into five series and they deal with Spanish history from roughly 1805 to 1880. They are fictional accounts which add characters invented by the author within historical events.

First novels

These novels were published during the 1870s. Most are 'thesis novels' (*novelas de tesis*) where two antagonistic ideologies are presented in permanent confrontation: conservatives against liberals. In these novels, Galdós never concealed his support for liberal ideas. The moralism and didacticism of these novels is clearly aimed at undermining conservative morals and policies. The thesis novels are *La Fontana de Oro* (1870), *Doña Perfecta* (1876), *Gloria* (1877), *Marianela* (1878), and *La familia de León Roch* (1878). Apart from the stereotypical realist outline of the characters and ambiances, we can already discern in these early novels some of Galdós' narrative techniques that are fully developed in later texts.

Contemporary novels

Condé refers to these as Galdós' '*segunda manera*'. Galdós gave the overarching title '*novelas contemporáneas*' to a series of novels published from *La desheredada* (1881) onwards. This novel was partially influenced by Émile Zola's naturalism.⁸ However, it presents a complex articulation of actions and characters. The characters, forged by contradictions and paradoxes, undergo great psychological evolution during the course of the novel. Other works traditionally assigned to this series are *El amigo Manso* (1882), *La de Bringas* (1884), and *Miau* (1888). The last two novels share a common exploration of the complexities of the Spanish middle class. Perhaps the novel from this period that best represents this line of enquiry is *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1886–87), one of Galdós' masterpieces. It is a sprawling narrative built upon a constellation of complex social relationships during the tumultuous period between 1873 and 1876, and in which Galdós proves his mastery at blending fiction and historical fact. The pages of

8 *Naturalism*: A more deliberate, cruder kind of realism in novels, stories, and plays, usually involving a view of human beings as passive victims of natural forces and the social environment. As a literary movement, naturalism was initiated in France by Jules and Edmond Goncourt with their novel *Germinie Lacerteux* (1865), but it came to be led by Émile Zola, who claimed a 'scientific' status for his studies of impoverished characters miserably subjected to hunger, sexual obsession, and hereditary defects in for example *Thérèse Raquin* (1867) and *Germinal* (1885). Naturalist fiction aspired to a sociological objectivity, offering detailed and fully researched investigations into unexplored corners of modern society, while enlivening this with a new sexual sensationalism (*Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 2015).

Fortunata y Jacinta present a fine catalogue of Galdós' special narrative techniques: highly detailed insight into real life and stereotypes, the masterful use of dialogue, a dynamic use of interior monologues, and the clever organisation of multiple narrative threads, among others. Critics argue that *Fortunata y Jacinta* constitutes one of the greatest achievements of Galdós' realism. His aesthetics differ from the literary practices of most of his Spanish contemporaries: he added to mainstream realist techniques the recollection of memories, the interpretation of dreams, the source of the unconscious, the world of the imagination, and the exploration of illogical symbolic associations. All this is integrated in a way that results in a fresh social canvas populated by powerful characters and complex individuals. As Condé explained,

The author himself no longer conforms exactly to what we have come to expect in terms of a realist novel, and the narrator is so elusive that we cannot pin him down at all. The social realist novel, which had flourished in Spain and the rest of Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century, was now being affected by a movement towards more individual psychological and spiritual preoccupations in the manner of Tolstoy. [...] Galdós himself was clearly in experimental mode, having published the epistolary novel *La incógnita* in 1889 and the dialogue novel *Realidad* in 1891, which he was subsequently to adapt for the stage in 1892, the year of *Tristana*. *Tristana* itself is a difficult novel to define, having elements of social realism, the psychological, the epistolary, and what might loosely be termed experimental. It does have a fairly easily defined feminist theme, although not such an easily defined thesis or argument, but then it was clearly not written as another thesis novel. (Condé, 2000: 15)

In other words, *Tristana* represents the zenith of Galdós' mastery and evolution from classic realist artistic practices. The crisis of realist aesthetics and Galdós' interest in finding new pathways are clearly manifested in his novels after 1889: *La incógnita* (1889), *Tristana* (1892), *Torquemada* (1889–95), *Nazarín* (1895), *Misericordia* (1897), and *El caballero encantado* (1909). As well as experimenting with new forms, such as novels in dialogue and epistolary narratives, these novels display Galdós' engagement with experimental narrative strategies, including the introduction and development of fantastic elements (dreams, symbols, ellipsis), and the influence of a spiritu-

alism typical of the European *fin de siècle* novel. Galdós combines different features to reach new literary forms. Thus, the modernity of Galdós' narrative is connected to his progressive ideological radicalisation, which leads him to seek different aesthetic spaces as a way of understanding reality in its polyhedral nature. Having introduced the particularities of Galdós' realism, I will now study *Tristana's* structural and aesthetic singularities. The next section focuses on the novel's plot and its characters.

Plot and characters

Don Juan López Garrido, Don Lope, has no known occupation other than attending gatherings in cafés and strolling around the city. He adopts the name of Don Lope Garrido and lives on the profits he obtains from land ownership. At the beginning of the novel, the narrator explains how Don Antonio Reluz, a childhood friend of Don Lope's, had contracted debts due to failed businesses. Don Lope, as the loyal friend and grotesque, modernised version of an errant knight, arrives to assist his friend and family. Nevertheless, Don Lope's efforts cannot prevent Reluz's death. The family of the deceased, his wife and daughter, are left in the care of Don Lope. Within a short space of time, Reluz's widow also dies. The daughter, Tristana, is sent to live with Don Lope. Although he is almost three times the girl's age, after two months of being at home, Don Lope makes Tristana his lover and she becomes his property. Saturna, who lives in the house with Tristana and Don Lope, bears witness to this situation. She is a middle-aged maid, the widow of a construction worker killed in an accident and whose deaf son is in a hospice.

Time passes. Tristana, Don Lope's disciple and lover is growing up and becoming curious. Tristana and Saturna, avoiding Don Lope's control, go for walks in the evenings. On one of those outings, Tristana meets a young man to whom she is intensely attracted. After the first meeting, they begin a secret affair. The reader is provided with the details of this amorous relationship through the written correspondence of the two lovers. Horacio Díaz, Tristana's lover, is a painter. They meet every afternoon with the help of the maid. However, Don Lope, who notices a substantial change in the personality of Tristana,

becomes jealous and suspects the existence of another man. When Horacio realises that Tristana is not Don Lope's wife but his sex slave, he asks her to leave him. But Don Lope, now sure about the relationship, prevents Tristana from escaping.

In the midst of this situation, Horacio decides to spend some time in Villajoyosa with his aunt Doña Trini, and an intense exchange of love letters takes place. In her letters, Tristana narrates her life with Don Lope but also her dreams of becoming free and emancipated. In one letter, the girl hints at the possible spread of Don Lope's rheumatism to one of her knees, which causes severe pain.

When Don Lope discovers Tristana's disease, he pays for all types of care but, despite receiving medical attention, the pain continues. Finally, the doctor makes the difficult decision to amputate Tristana's leg after realising that she has a bone tumour. When he hears this news, Horacio returns to Madrid. Saturna, who acts as a matchmaker, convinces Don Lope to approve the relationship of the two young lovers and to release Tristana. Don Lope is persuaded by Saturna and goes to Horacio's study. He invites Horacio to visit the sick Tristana.

Horacio stays at Don Lope's while Tristana is still recovering, but he shows disaffection towards his lover. Don Lope does not hide his astonishment when Horacio swears to him he will not marry Tristana. Tristana realises that Horacio has changed; he returns to Villajoyosa and, although they maintain the exchange of letters, their love disappears.

Months later, Don Lope informs Tristana that Horacio is going to marry another woman. The news, contrary to what might be expected, is not received by Tristana with bitterness. Life goes on in the house of Don Lope and both become accustomed to the new circumstances: Tristana becomes fond of going to church and increasingly devout.

Years pass. Tristana uses a wooden leg and takes care of Don Lope, who is by now a very old man. The couple live a grey, monotonous life. After some time, a nephew of Don Lope, an archdeacon in a village in Andalucía, convinces his uncle to do the honourable thing and Don Lope marries Tristana, who becomes a faithful companion and resigns herself to a life with the old man. The marriage takes place and, as a gesture of reconciliation, Don Lope's relatives, two cousins, donate some land to him. The sale of the land serves to alleviate the couple's

difficult economic situation. The married couple live the mediocrity of a conformist life.

As can be appreciated from this plot summary, the characters suffer important transformations or metamorphoses during their lives. Galdós does not work in this novel with stereotypes but with living presences that psychologically evolve as a result of the logic of their actions and the interaction with the world they are living in. Ricardo Gullón provides helpful insight into how Galdós conceived his characters:

Para leer correctamente *Tristana* es recomendable observar con detalle su funcionamiento como sistema combinatorio de precisión hábilmente montado por un autor diestro y consciente de sus poderes. Empezaré examinando los recursos utilizados para dar estabilidad a la inestable protagonista: una serie de mutaciones la altera incidentalmente sin afectar a su esencia. Sucesivas metamorfosis diluyen su consistencia en el cambio, en los cambios a que su carácter la inclina. Aspira a realizarse, a ser como se desea, libre e independiente, y este deseo sirve de soporte y de amortiguador en las mudanzas ocasionadas por las fluctuaciones que la transportan de una fantasía a la siguiente hasta que 'el eje diamantino' se quiebra en la adversidad. (Gullón, 1975: 11)

Gullón's analysis accurately reflects how all the elements of the love triangle undergo a considerable evolution. On the one hand, Tristana develops from being a teenager subjugated by Don Lope (a sexual slave) to becoming a rebellious youth who eventually turns into a conformist woman devoted to her husband. Furthermore, Don Lope is portrayed as a perverse anticlerical mix of Don Quixote and Don Juan, only to evolve into a person who yields to Tristana's love affair. Furthermore, Don Lope treats Tristana with real concern during her illness and fully commits to caring for her during her recovery. By the end, he shows signs of deep religious convictions. Something similar happens with Horacio Díaz, who is not immune to all these transformations. Horacio, at the beginning of the novel, appears as an impulsive, brave, and romantic youth willing to do anything for the love of Tristana. However, over time, he will turn into a coward who is incapable of making decisions. He will choose the financial security of his own family and, in this way, avoid what he regards as a burden: the care of a disabled woman after her operation. Therefore, we can

conclude that not only does Tristana see her potential emancipation frustrated and undermined but that the other characters also experience deep frustration. In this regard, Galdós manages to create a set of very contradictory characters briefly outlined as follows.⁹

Tristana

She never receives a formal education; she is an impulsive, sincere, and idealistic girl who is subjected to a despotic man. Due to her liberal spirit, Tristana suffers the social conventions of her time. Her attempts at emancipation and her ambitious life project will be frustrated by the circumstances and decisions of the male characters. The dreams of the protagonist are unfulfilled when a twist of fate leaves Tristana dependent on Don Lope.

Don Lope

He is a unique hybrid of Don Quixote and Don Juan Tenorio. Don Lope's nature is truly complex; he acts with great generosity in some instances and with few scruples in others. Tristana eventually defines him as a man with two faces: one noble and pure in certain respects and the other cruel and evil. Don Lope has a particular set of ideas which is the result of his special blend of anachronistic code of honour and despotic and egotistical impulses. The most prominent feature of Don Lope is his irresistible and endless powers of seduction and persuasion. Don Lope struggles to retain Tristana, as he knows she is his last conquest. The old man uses his mastery of rhetoric. However, paradoxically, like Tristana, Don Lope is forced to abandon the ideals that make up the essence of his personality and he gradually turns into a conventional man respectful of the key principles, policies, and morals of his time.

Horacio

This character also suffers an important transformation. In the early pages of the novel, Horacio epitomises the romantic hero. He appears to live for his artistic ideals. He dreams of success and glory, seeking a lover. Conversely, he manifests signs of having suffered bitter oppres-

⁹ I follow here the outline of characters suggested by Montserrat Amores and Agustín Sánchez Aguilar in their informative edition.

sion during his adolescence. Horacio does not commit himself to their love affair as clearly as Tristana does. He experiences a curious metamorphosis while visiting his aunt Doña Trini. Ultimately, Horacio is a fickle character overly influenced by the people around him. When he returns to Madrid, he has very little in common with the romantic idealist who dazzled Tristana.

Secondary characters

In addition to these three protagonists, the reader encounters secondary characters that give depth to the story. The most prominent is the maid Saturna, who becomes Tristana's accomplice. Moreover, Galdós does not forget to explain to us the origins and fate of the Reluz marriage. In addition, Horacio pays an important visit to his aunt Doña Trini, who advises him to end his love affair with Tristana. Finally, there is a noteworthy feature common to all Galdós' works: in his novels, doctors very often embody scientific progress and prove to be morally upright, which is the case with Augusto Miquis in *Tristana*.

In *Tristana* the reader confronts a microcosm of complex human relationships which is developed between these characters, who, in literary terms, are far from being mere archetypes. On the contrary, they are closer to living presences that try to make sense of the times they live in.

Narrator, structure, and themes

The narrator of *Tristana* does not only recount the facts but offers an opinion about what he narrates while, in a parallel narrative movement, he judges the behaviour of the characters.¹⁰ The omniscient narrator has a thorough understanding of the events and access to the thoughts of the characters. However, in some passages he declares his ignorance of certain aspects of the story he discloses. Like other narrators in Galdós' novels, *Tristana's* storytelling exudes humour and irony. In particular, the narrative voice becomes ironic when describing the effusive signs of mutual affection displayed by Tristana and Horacio.

10 *Narrative*: A spoken or written account of connected events; a story. *Narration*: The action or process of narrating a story.

This unusual and unreliable narrator combines the role of a spectator, a voice that delivers stage directions, and an ironic commentator within a textual space bounded by narrative, playwriting, and the epistolary genre. The narrator of this novel may be omniscient but subverts his own omniscience by means of parody and ellipsis. In *Tristana*, what is said is as important as what is merely suggested. Perhaps the best example of this is to be found at the end of the novel, when the narrator asks ‘¿Eran felices uno y otro? Tal vez...’ This open ending accurately summarises the spirit embodied by the narrator. The ending was very controversial among critics at the time, as some of them assumed that the lack of punishment for Don Lope and the subsequent lack of closure to the novel meant that Galdós was not fully committed to the denunciation of women’s oppression at the time. In my opinion, Galdós’ project in this novel is much more subtle and moves beyond the political pamphlet. He gives life to these characters and their narrative develops to a conclusion according to the socio-historical logic of their time and their own personalities. This open question placed at the end of the novel has a strong impact on readers, as it invites them to reflect on the future progression of events and the destiny of the couple. In this novel, Galdós has already left behind the model of the anticlerical novel and is moving towards new ways of writing fiction based on modern conceptions of the slow release of information to the reader, the psychological evolution of characters, and the interplay between different genres.

The novel is structured into twenty-nine chapters. As suggested by a number of critics, including Montserrat Amores and Agustín Sánchez Aguilar (2003), the text can be divided into thematic sections:

Origins

From chapters 1 to 6 the narration describes the lives of Tristana and Don Lope. After some time of submission to Don Lope, Tristana begins to express her discomfort and aspires to a different and emancipated life.

Tristana hopes for emancipation

From chapters 7 to 15, we read how Tristana starts to leave the house in the company of Saturna with the pretence of long walks on the

outskirts of Madrid. During one of these walks, she meets Horacio. Tristana falls in love and the narration explains Horacio's life and his activities as a painter. They begin their love affair. After this, Tristana reveals to Horacio the kind of life she leads with Don Lope. Tristana will confront Don Lope, who suspects the existence of another man. In the last chapters of this section, Galdós transports the reader into the intimate world of the two lovers.

The fall

From chapters 16 to 23, the narrator explains how Horacio and Tristana become temporarily separated as he has to pay a visit to his aunt Doña Trini. The narrator reproduces some of the letters exchanged by the lovers. In the later part of this thematic section, Tristana becomes sick and Don Lope does everything in his power to obtain a cure for her.

Metamorphosis and disenchantment

From chapter 24 to chapter 29, Tristana experiences a deep metamorphosis after the amputation of her leg. Moreover, Don Lope will become the object of an important transformation as he visits Horacio with the aim of convincing him to pay a visit to Tristana, who is still recovering from the surgery. In chapter 27, Horacio and Tristana meet again but with clear disaffection. The last two chapters of the novel show the results of Tristana's and Don Lope's transformation and how they end up living an ordinary and conformist life.

While it is true that this division into four thematic blocks can be of help for a general understanding of the novel, it is also important to note other important themes in the text, such as love, honour, and the ideological representation of women's role in society. In this regard, Tristana reveals the discrimination and marginalisation that women suffered in the nineteenth century. Tristana wants to live alone, but she fails to find a job that could provide the necessary economic independence. She is not trained in any art or profession. She is exposed and helpless in a society that condemns her to be simply an '*ángel del hogar*' and to play a secondary role as a devoted wife. This was a common situation for women in the Madrid that provides the background to Galdós' novel, discussed in the next section.

The setting: Madrid at the *fin de siècle*

The works of Galdós, although mostly set in Madrid, provide a complex overview of Spanish society of his time. Madrid encapsulates all the social and historical contradictions of the country; it is a grand city whose complex world is represented by Galdós. Thus, while the middle classes occupy the foreground in his works, like Dickens Galdós is always attentive to all walks of life, ruined aristocrats, rich bourgeois, speculators, money lenders, landlords, merchants, civil servants, the popular classes, whose lives bubble incessantly in the streets of the big city.

From the time in 1561 that Philip II chose Madrid as the location for his Court, the capital's population began to grow. The establishment of the royal court in Madrid brought requirements for service personnel and for a large range of administrators and professionals. Centuries later, industrialisation brought in people belonging to the middle-class professions, new workers, and a cheap labour force. Many workers came from the provinces and rural areas across Spain. They needed to earn money to support their families and in many cases brought them to the city as well. Throughout the nineteenth century, Madrid almost doubled its population. In Galdós' times, Madrid's street design was chaotic. There was a lack of water supply in many sectors of the city. The poorest people lived in small houses without light or water; many lived in improvised dwellings surrounded by rubbish. The *corralas* were typical working-class buildings, or tenements, in certain areas of Madrid. They consisted of long series of tiny flats that shared a common hallway. Generally, there was a toilet on each floor, but many flats had no windows and in the courtyard there was one source of water for the inhabitants. Madrid was a city in the process of transformation during the time in which *Tristana* is set as the nineteenth century was a period of deep instability and social change. The bourgeoisie eventually surpassed the economic power of the aristocracy, who were forced to accept these 'new rich' into their ranks in order to survive. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the population of Madrid reached half a million inhabitants and urban growth led to the construction of new areas on its periphery. This was known as *El Ensanche de Madrid* (1857) or 'Plan Castro' and formed the new *barrios* (districts) of Chamberí, Salamanca, Argüelles,

and Retiro. In 1850, Madrid had a total surface area of 1,920 acres; by the time *Tristana* was finished the city had tripled in its expansion to 5,668 acres. Plan Castro had five goals: (1) to improve living conditions in Madrid, (2) to set the general standard for the construction of new buildings (the height and shape of buildings, the width of streets, improved hygiene), (3) to create new areas of economic development, (4) to integrate the infrastructures of the city, and (5) to provide accommodation for the flood of migrants into the city. Essentially, Plan Castro was the first attempt to modernise the city.

The construction of suburbs for the expansion of Madrid was driven by legislation, such as the Law of the 22 December 1876 and the Act of 26 December 1892. However, the initial plan experienced important modifications during its execution. The area of Vallehermoso did not follow the original plan, which largely consisted of the creation of military installations. Instead, this part of the city became a residential area for the middle classes. Its development was much slower than others due to the pre-existence of cemeteries. The growth of the *barrios* around Chamberí and Argüelles, together with the dismantling in 1884 of the cemeteries, allowed for accelerated construction at the end of the century.

These *barrios* or neighbourhoods were connected to the city by tramlines but many, especially those in the south-eastern area of the city, lacked basic infrastructure. Several *barrios* were created next to main roads. For instance, the suburb of Vallecas was formed on the road to Valencia. New residential areas in the periphery and outside the municipality of Madrid were planned, although many were never completed.

In short Galdós' Madrid was a vibrant city where extremes of poverty and wealth coexisted: old palaces and new hovels, new bourgeois buildings and old, over-populated tenements. Madrid was a construction site in physical and societal terms. It was a city immersed in the process of development and transformation, which led to profound contradictions such as those experienced by the characters in the novel. The move from one house to another (by Don Lope and Tristana), the surroundings of Tristana's strolls, and the changes in the urban geography accompany the successive metamorphoses suffered by the members of the love triangle. Indeed, if it is true that the city

experienced widespread changes and social upheaval, it is also possible to argue that Galdós' characters suffered the imbalances of a society at a crossroads where antagonistic forces fought to control public discourse. In parallel, Madrid is more than a mere setting in the novel but a city convulsed by political power and radical transformation at all levels. The changes in the city had tragic implications for Tristana, who saw all her hopes frustrated and dismantled.

***Tristana* as a symbol: feminism, social critique, reception of the novel, and adaptation to cinema**

In the previous sections, we discussed Galdós' *segunda manera* of writing novels, i.e. novels where the author dares to experiment and to explore the limits of the novel as a genre. In 1892, the date of publication of *Tristana*, Galdós was far more concerned with how to leave aside the model of the 'thesis novels' and to encapsulate moments from the daily life of the Spanish middle classes. Galdós' attention to the middle classes has been analysed at length by many critics who are all in agreement that his interest in this segment of the population is due to the fact that he sees in them the ability to play a decisive role in social transformation. However, in Galdós' fiction it is possible to find all kinds of characters from diverse social backgrounds. Thus, *Tristana*, despite its apparent simplicity of form, is quite complex. If we look at the titles published by Galdós in the years surrounding the publication of *Tristana*, we notice that he used female names for many of his novels. Why was Galdós so interested in female characters and stories? The answer is that Galdós was a man of his time. The vexed 'problem' of women's education was publicly debated in the second half of the nineteenth century in Spain. Women were mostly uneducated and their educational opportunities were very limited. The role of a woman as caring mother and wife was imposed by the dominant patriarchal ideology of the time.

The subjugation imposed upon women was assumed as natural by the Catholic Church and by an important part of the population, men and women, in Galdós' time. In the nineteenth century, especially in the intellectual debate created by the Krausists, the education of women, and by extension the construction of female identity, was an

issue of public concern that was also addressed in the political arena. The conception of *Tristana* was highly influenced by Krausist thought and Galdós' liberal political engagement. The Krausists were followers of the German philosopher Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832) who advocated doctrinal tolerance and academic freedom from dogma. This philosophy was widespread in Restoration Spain (after 1874) and reached its maximum practical development thanks to the work of Krause's follower, Julián Sanz del Río, and the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* established by Francisco Giner de los Ríos.¹¹ The Krausists promoted liberal ideas, among which was the education of women in order to incorporate them into a new productive economic model. Women's emancipation was considered to be key to societal development. The Krausists believed women should be able to have a profession or trade that would provide them with economic independence and free them from the domestic roles traditionally assigned to them in a patriarchal society.¹² Galdós' readers were mainly middle-class women who began to challenge the dominant social model which imposed conservative roles and morals on them. Galdós was conscious of this and, therefore, engaged with the quest to define different types of women. This topic was also discussed by fellow writers such as Leopoldo Alas and Emilia Pardo Bazán. If women's traditional roles had been undermined and questioned, in *Tristana* Galdós attempts to give voice to a new female identity that was under construction in the late nineteenth century. Galdós, always attentive to societal changes and conflicts, explores in several of his 'contem-

- 11 *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*: The Free Educational Institution was an educational project that developed in Spain for the half a century that roughly spanned 1876 to 1936. The institute was inspired by the philosophy of Krausism, which was first introduced to the Complutense University of Madrid by Julián Sanz del Río, and which (despite being subsequently thrown out from that university) had a significant impact on the renovation of the intellectual life within the Spanish culture of the time. The institution was founded in 1876 by a group of disaffected university professors including Francisco Giner de los Ríos, Gumersindo Azcárate, and Nicolás Salmerón. They declined to adjust their teaching to any official religious dogma or the moral and political imposition of the time. Consequently, they had to continue their educational work outside the state sector by creating a private secular educational institution, starting with university level instruction and later extending their activities to primary and secondary education.
- 12 *Patriarchy*: A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.

porary novels' the possibilities of real emancipation for women. It is not only in *Tristana* that Galdós addresses this important question, as noted in the following extract from his novel *Realidad* (1890):

BÁRBARA. (*Sola*) ¡Ay!, qué egoístas son estos hombres. Todo lo bueno ha de ser para ellos, y para nosotras, las del bello sexo, trabajos, hambres de amor y el no gozar de nada. Ellos se divierten con cuanta mujer encuentran, y a nosotras, si un hombre nos mira o le miramos, ya nos cae encima la deshonra, y empieza el run run de si lo eres o no lo eres... ¿Pues qué quería ese tonto? ¿Que mientras él se daba la gran vida su hermana se pudriera en casa como una monja? No, la chiquilla, aunque parece tan para poco, tiene el moño muy tieso, y ha demostrado que sabe dejar bien puesto nuestro pabellón. ¡Ay bello sexo! ¡Qué falta te hacen muchas así, resueltas y con garbo para darle el quiebro a la tiranía! (Galdós in Caudet, 2004: 453)

The last sentence is a clear vindication of women's emancipation. Critics have too often interpreted such assertions as traces of Galdós' personal life and, in this case, the echo of the opinions of his friend and lover, the writer Emilia Pardo Bazán. Critics also have perceived traces of Galdós' relationship with Concha-Ruth Morell in the character of Tristana and in several letters included in this novel. Regardless of whether these biographical details are of relevance to a critical assessment of the novel, they have resulted in several studies. For instance, Lambert (1973) studied the presence of Concha-Ruth Morell in *Tristana* and proved that Galdós used elements of his relationship with Concha-Ruth as inspiration for the letters shared by Horacio and Tristana.¹³ The vocabulary used by the two lovers resembles the language exchanged by Concha and Galdós. Furthermore, Concha-Ruth Morell appears to be present in other works, such as the novel *Realidad*. With this in mind, readers might be tempted to draw a direct analogy in *Tristana* between Galdós' life and literary fiction. However, taking into consideration Galdós' view on the art of writing, the manipulation of his own biographical experiences to reproduce

13 Condé has noted that 'Much of the heroine's dilemma in *Tristana* corresponds to that experienced by Galdós' mistress Concha-Ruth Morell and, indeed, much of the text consists of her letters to him *literalmente copiadas*, as the young actress herself complained. Concha-Ruth was subsequently to play the role of Clotilde, who can be seen as the precursor to *la mujer nueva* in Galdós' first staged play, *Realidad*, which opened at the Teatro de la Comedia in Madrid on 15 March 1892' (Condé, 2000: 11).

life in the novel is understandable. In my view, he found in his letters and personal experiences the 'raw material' for the later development of *Tristana's* fictional writing or, in his own words, the appropriate arrangement of ingredients that resulted in the literary text.

Galdós' life story and *Tristana* share a common context of cultural and social references imbricated by personal experiences that are subtly scattered throughout the text to perfectly match the autonomy and psychological development of each character. In this sense, it is important to recall that one of Galdós' preoccupations was the commodification of human relations, in particular the social question of the education of women. Both concerns are obvious in *Tristana*. It is also worth noting that sometimes Galdós' social criticism is expressed by the narrator with such fine irony that at times it is almost impossible to know Galdós' real view on a specific subject. Labanyi astutely notes that, 'Indeed the irony of all Galdós' novels, and in particular his love of unreliable narrators, means that readers have to be wary of attributing the political views expressed in the text to their author (something critics have not always remembered)' (Labanyi, 1993: 63).

This was a crucial moment for the emancipation of women and perhaps this explains the negative critical reception of *Tristana*, interpreted as a political statement on behalf of women's emancipation. Many critics believed that Galdós was discrediting the possibilities of women gaining independence by presenting the story of an idealistic woman whose every attempt at emancipation is frustrated and who ends up conforming to stereotypes and to patriarchal norms. *Tristana* provoked many reactions of disappointment. Emilia Pardo Bazán, one of the most important writers of the time, thought the novel to be a failure for two reasons: it was poorly developed and it betrayed the main idea of the novel, namely women's emancipation (see her review in Appendix 2).

Leopoldo Alas' review was no more positive than Pardo Bazán's. He thought the novel started well but lost its way (see *Obras Completas*, 1, *Tristana*, 252). Both authors interpreted the lack of a closed ending as a sign of unfinished writing. Their praise in the reviews focused on the general merits of Galdós as a writer but they insisted on the fact that *Tristana*, while promising at first, was one of Galdós' minor literary projects. These two early negative reviews had an important influence

on the fate of *Tristana*. The novel was labelled a failure, with a lack of commitment on the issue of women's emancipation, a view which Galdós could not overcome. Since then *Tristana* was considered a minor novel or a failed attempt within Galdós' literary production.

Nevertheless, as noted by Roberto G. Sánchez in his excellent article 'Galdós's *Tristana*, Anatomy of a Disappointment' (1977), these negative views *were* gradually modified when, in 1966, a major critic, Gonzalo Sobejano, published his essay 'Galdós y el vocabulario de los amantes'. This essay sparked renewed interest in this almost forgotten novel. Sobejano's article was mainly on the vocabulary of the lovers, *Tristana* and Horacio, as Galdós is well known for his unmatched ability to reproduce the sounds and linguistic patterns of diverse characters from different classes and places. In this way, Sobejano facilitated the recovery of *Tristana*. Sadi Lakhdari explained how this process took place:

Hazel Gold ve un cambio importante en la manera de enfocar la obra en el trabajo pionero de Germán Gullón que revaloriza la novela insistiendo en la 'literaturización de la vida'. Se puede añadir que el artículo de Gonzalo Sobejano de 1966 había abierto nuevos derroteros gracias a su estudio sobre el vocabulario de los amantes. También se debe señalar que el acontecimiento más importante en lo que se refiere a una revisión crítica de *Tristana* lo constituyó la adaptación cinematográfica de Buñuel de 1969 que vale como una interpretación reveladora del sentido escondido de la obra. Después de 1970 las ediciones y los estudios críticos aumentaron considerablemente gracias a la difusión mundial de la película como muestra Theodore Sackett. (Lakhdari, 2002: 12)

In Lakhdari's view, Germán Gullón's contribution was also essential for the critical recovery of the novel. *Tristana* was rediscovered by critics and the general public thanks to its adaptation to cinema by Luis Buñuel in 1969. If we carefully examine the bibliography included in this edition, it is obvious that critical attention to *Tristana* increases dramatically after 1969.

Buñuel's adaptation is an open reconstruction of Galdós' novel. The film focuses above all on the novel's implicit violence and sadism. Buñuel had adapted Galdós' novel *Nazarín* to film in 1958 and, in 1961, he filmed *Viridiana* (inspired by Galdós' novel *Halma*). By the time Buñuel had planned the adaptation of *Tristana*, he was well aware

of the novel's complexities at the level of content and form. In this so-called 'minor novel', Buñuel found the ideal terrain for exploring the repressed drives and the hypocritical morals of the bourgeoisie, two recurrent topics in his film production.

Tristana, the film, was premiered in Madrid on 29 March 1970. It was Buñuel's second film made in Spain after his exile in Mexico and France. His relationship with the authorities was still difficult. *Viridiana* had been previously rejected by the Ministry of Information and Tourism and banned in Spain. *Tristana*, which was approved, signified the authentic return of Buñuel to his homeland.

Buñuel was interested in *Tristana* for several reasons. The novel was rather short but involved complex narrative development. Within Galdós' literary production, Buñuel saw *Tristana* as a kind of pause between *Ángel Guerra* (1891) and *La loca de la casa* (1892), both considered to be novels of greater substance. It was also one of Galdós' lesser-known works, in his lifetime and beyond. Many critics have considered *Tristana* a bridge-novel between other works. In addition, *Tristana* the novel was published very shortly after the theatrical staging of *Realidad* (1892), which raised such high expectations that *Tristana* was largely overlooked.



Figure 2 Luis Buñuel's *Tristana*, 1969

Buñuel, like Emilia Pardo Bazán, considered this novel to be a critical account of the moral slavery of women, and, like Leopoldo Alas (Clarín), he thought it showed a weak character, Tristana, who was a dreamer eager to broaden her horizons but was sentenced to a life of dismal frustration. In other words, Galdós' *Tristana* was regarded as a mediocre woman whose dreams are frustrated by illness and social conventions. For Buñuel, Tristana yearns for freedom. Galdós' focus is on a woman who was forced by illness and the rejection of her love to be a conformist and to forget her dreams of liberation. After the amputation of her leg, Tristana knows she has lost the game; all her dreams are destroyed. In Buñuel's view, Galdós' ending implies that, within five years of surgery, Tristana and Don Lope are married and happy, accepting and united by their mutual mediocrity. In other words, Buñuel interpreted this novel as a sordid and sad tale of conformism.

The film begins with slight variations on the novel. While the novel takes place in Madrid during the last decades of the nineteenth century, the film is set in the provincial city Toledo during the 1930s. Buñuel adapts aspects of the original text relating to the death of Tristana's parents and Don Lope's personality. He also reinforces Don Lope's anticlerical and liberal ideological views with the addition of a scene where he comes to the defence of a thief and confronts the Civil Guard.

Moreover, in the film, Saturna is a bitter woman whose son lives with her in Don Lope's home, whereas in the novel the boy is in a poorhouse. Horacio lives in Madrid while Don Lope and Tristana live in Toledo. This change, critics have suggested, was imposed by Buñuel possibly to take advantage of the exteriors of the old city. Tristana flees with Horacio to Madrid. The years pass and Don Lope, whose economic situation has improved due to inheriting a fortune, realises that Tristana has returned to Toledo because of a serious illness in her leg. He welcomes her again at home, paying all the medical expenses relating to the disease. Subsequently, Tristana rejects Horacio. She continues her life by marrying Don Lope, although she hates him, and sexually provokes Saturno, the maid's son. In Buñuel's film married life carries on harmoniously, but only in appearance. Don Lope's strong character has softened until even his anticlericalism disappears. Tristana retains such a strong hatred towards him that she eventually

contributes to Don Lope's death, as her revenge, when the old man suffers a heart attack.

In this regard, while Galdós leaves the story open to interpretation as his protagonists apparently commit to a conformist life style, Buñuel's *Tristana*, sour and embittered, maintains a rebellious attitude, hating Don Lope for her misfortune. Saturna, in Buñuel's adaptation, is not Galdós' talkative maid and matchmaker but a dry, rough, and hateful character. Her son, Saturno, in the film is an enigmatic deaf boy unclearly united with Tristana. Buñuel amplifies the grotesque and caricatured representation of the world where the tragedy develops, and, in contrast to Galdós, he sees the grotesque everywhere. Buñuel alters the original characters to create cartoon characters. While Galdós seems to feel sympathy for his creations and treats them as products of the society they live in, Buñuel turns them into bitter and desperate beings.

With reference to the script, it should be noted that it greatly reduces the strength of the relationships between Tristana, Horacio, and Don Lope. In general terms, Buñuel has a tendency to simplify the complex relationships into mere opposition of binaries; Tristana's bitterness caused by enforced submission contrasts with Don Lope's happiness after achieving full possession of her.

In spite of critical praise for its formal perfection, the film continues to be regarded as a canvas painted with rough brush strokes that give force to the set but which miss the subtleties, contradictions, and ellipses that contributed to the modernity of Galdós' novel. For this reason, we could argue that more than adaptation, the film is a free reconstruction inspired by the novel. While Galdós' *Tristana* could be summarised as a story of frustrated aspirations, Buñuel presents a narrative of patriarchal repression, hate, and vengeance.¹⁴

14 One of the most remarkable features of this film is the interpretation of the characters by outstanding actors: Fernando Rey in the role of Don Lope and Catherine Deneuve as Tristana and, to a lesser degree, Franco Nero as Horacio and Lola Gaos as Saturna. The project was produced by Robert Dorfmann and Luis Buñuel, while the script was written by the latter and Julio Alejandro. 'Época estudios' paid Buñuel \$30,000 for the screenplay. The film was distributed by Mercurio Films and reached an impressive \$3,257,954 in takings at the box office. *Tristana* was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film and screened at the 1970 Cannes Film Festival. For further readings of the film adaptation, see: Faulkner, S. (2003); Sackett, T. (1977); Poyato Sánchez, P. (2013); López, I. J. (2001); Grossvogel, D. L. (1972).



Figure 3 Luis Buñuel's *Tristana*, 1969

Critics have asked whether the novel is better than the film and have obsessed over how faithful Buñuel remained to Galdós' novel. These issues are irrelevant as they are two different cultural projects with dissimilar purposes, despite coinciding in some of their external features and plot lines. After highlighting the free nature of Buñuel's personal reconstruction of Galdós' novel, it is important to reiterate that, paradoxically, the film awoke critical interest in what had been considered a minor novel. In this regard, Sackett notes:

The theme of women's liberation was perceived immediately by Pardo Bazán, and critics in the post-Buñuel years have expanded on that aspect of Galdós's novel. Others have begun to identify additional themes and techniques of literary interest. Julián Marías, for example, finds a pair of protagonists of extraordinary intimacy, tenderness, and invention, comparable only to the novelist's best efforts in works like *El Amigo Manso*. Casalduero has explored the relationship between Galdós and Ibsen, Leon Livingstone, the Don Juan archetype, and Francisco Ayala has provided useful insights into the origin of Don Lope de Sosa in the 'Cena jocosa' of Baltasar del Alcázar, a related archetype of a hell raising nobleman from Jaén. Recently, Ruth Schmidt has illuminated the significance of the Shakespearian elements in Galdós's novel. (Sackett, 1977: 71)

Sackett's overview leads us to a wealth of textual interpretation that has grown over the years in connection with intertextual relationships, the study of sources, and with other literary traditions. Within this constellation of readings, *Tristana* has gradually come to be seen more as a symbol of the emancipation of women, and this is today the main critical approach in the analyses of this character. This interpretation is well supported by the text itself when we read Tristana's aspiration to an independent profession and how the men she encounters express conventional views on this particular issue. However, readers of *Tristana* should also take into consideration her hopes. In this sense, I suggest that Galdós, instead of creating or presenting a symbol who epitomises women's struggle for emancipation, is attempting to give Tristana the chance to have her own voice without demonising the cruel societal and ideological context in which she is raised. Tristana, as Condé suggested, throughout the novel is trying to shape for herself professional identities which at that moment did not exist or are unrecognised in Spain. Galdós is not writing a thesis novel but a text that challenges the reader to confront both its literary and social implications. As Condé explains: 'Far from being an inferior and incomplete work, it is a carefully composed, finely tuned, and essentially modern text, which will probably continue to intrigue, inspire, and infuriate Galdós's scholars well into the twenty-first century' (Condé, 2000: 87).

In contrast to Condé's view, some critics maintain that, due to the ambiguity at the end of the novel, Galdós was anti-feminist. An example is Akiko Tsuchiya in her article 'The Struggle for Autonomy in Galdós's *Tristana*'. However, taking into consideration Galdós' political commitment, I believe there is sufficient evidence to consider that he is presenting the reader with the deep contradictions in late nineteenth-century Spanish society. It is difficult to support the view that Galdós was not concerned about women's emancipation. Instead, his social criticism functions under a much more modern set of aesthetic conventions where the reader's intelligence is preserved and shocked by the final question. This leaves us to decide what comes next and leads us to question how we should interpret the novel. In other words, Galdós invites the reader to freely engage with their own intellectual analysis of the novel and, subsequently, he abandons the



Figure 4 Luis Buñuel's *Tristana*, 1969

didacticism of the thesis novels and the political pamphlet. Galdós, as we saw at the beginning of this introduction, understood literature as an instrument for social transformation. He also learned, years later, that any change could only come from the self-awareness of the middle classes. Therefore Galdós rejects any temptation towards moral indoctrination and aspires to contribute to the sentimental and intellectual education of free-thinkers using their own critical judgement.

A note on the text

In preparing this edition, I had access to the original manuscript (MS. 21791) of *Tristana* preserved in the National Library of Spain. So far, most editions have focused on the edition published by Imprenta de la Guirnalda in 1892. The criterion that I have followed in editing the text is to update any elements which made reading difficult. In the footnotes I have explained anachronisms, slang, and neologisms frequently used by Galdós. Finally, I have respected the italics and Galdós' textual indications. I have also highlighted discrepancies between the manuscript of the first edition of 1892 and other textual solutions that have been chosen by different editors.

One of the most interesting features of the manuscript, which no other editor had noticed, is the fact that among *Tristana's* notebook pages are intercalated manuscript pages from another novel: *Realidad*. In my opinion, Galdós must have been working on these two literary projects at the same time. His intention was to experiment with forms of narration and to explore the possibilities of what he called, in his theoretical writings, the dialogue novel, *novela dialogada*.¹⁵ Another important aspect is related to the large number of drawings by Galdós in this manuscript. These drawings are graphic representations of mental concepts present in the text. In addition, other material is included such as a letter from Galdós to Emilio Mario. Although the letter's content has no direct relevance to this study, it demonstrates that Galdós was experimenting with the limits of the epistolary genre and including biographical elements in his fictional writing.

In conclusion this present edition is the most complete edition of *Tristana* to date. It has been prepared taking into account not only the original manuscript but also the various interventions of editors and critics who have dealt with the novel. The edition ends with a glossary of contemporary reactions to the publication of the novel, selected vocabulary, and a chronological table that will help the reader approach *Tristana* from a richer and more accurate perspective.

15 A novel set in dialogue allows readers to access the thoughts and feelings of the characters. Spanish literature has a long tradition of 'novelas dialogadas'; see for example *El coloquio de los perros*, a short story written by Miguel de Cervantes and published in 1613.

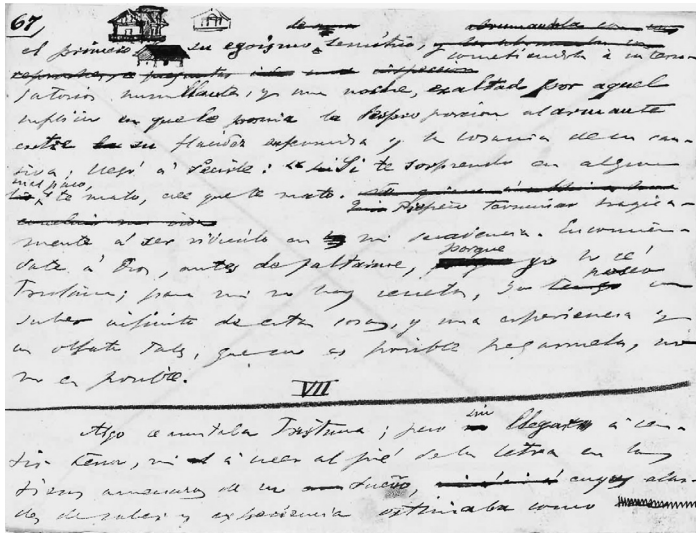


Figure 5 Extract from the original manuscript

Transcribed text: '[...] el primero su egoísmo semítico, sometiéndola a interrogatorios humillantes, y una noche, exaltado por aquel suplicio en que le ponía la desproporción alarmante entre su flacidez enfermiza y la lozanía de la cautiva, llegó a decirle:

«Si te sorprendo en algún mal paso, te mato, cree que te mato. Prefiero terminar trágicamente a ser ridículo en mi decadencia. Encomiéndate a Dios antes de faltarme, ^{porque} yo lo sé Tristana, para mí no hay secretos; poseo un saber infinito de estas cosas, y una experiencia y un olfato tales, que no es posible pegármela, no, no es posible.

VII

Algo se asustaba Tristana; pero sin llegar a consentir terror, ni a creer al pie de la letra en las fieras amenazas de su dueño, cuyos alardes de saber y experiencia estimaba como [...]

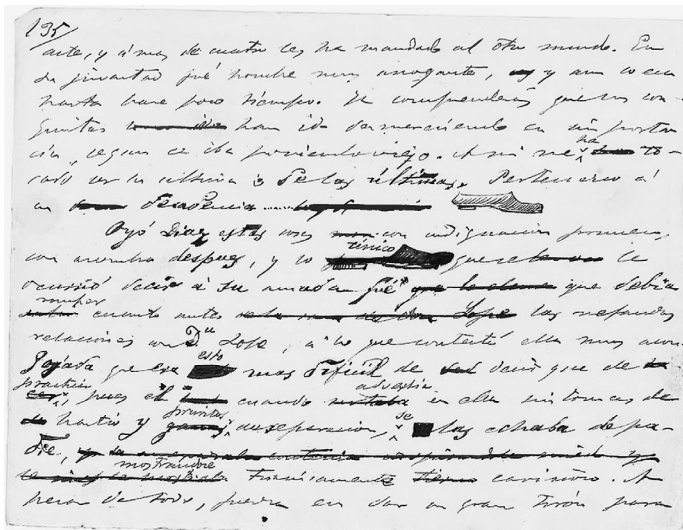


Figure 6 Extract from the original manuscript

Transcribed text: '[...] arte, y a más de cuatro les ha mandado al otro mundo. En su juventud fue hombre muy arrogante, y aún lo era hasta hace poco tiempo. Ya comprenderás que sus conquistas han ido desmereciendo en importancia según se iba poniendo viejo. A mí me ha tocado ser la última y de las últimas perteneczo a su decadencia...

Oyó Díaz estas cosas con indignación primero, con asombro después, y lo único que se le ocurrió decir a su amada fue que debía romper cuanto antes aquellas nefandas relaciones con Don Lope, a lo que contestó ella muy acojonada que era esto más difícil de decir que de practicar, pues él cuando advertía en ella síntomas de hastío y pruritos de separación, se las echaba de padre, mostrándose tiránicamente cariñoso. A pesar de todo, fuerza es dar un gran tirón para [...]