

Review

Reviewed Work(s):

Dreams in the Novels of Galdós

by Joseph Schraibman

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watchman waketh in vain." Another point: evidence of Góngora's influence on later poets is overwhelming. This book is, in a way, a study of the transmission of *temas gongorinos* in the lyric of the Baroque period.

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Dreams in the Novels of Galdós. By Joseph Schraibman. Hispanic Institute of America, New York, 1960: 199 pages.

This study very admirably fills a major lacuna long noted by Galdosian scholars and makes available for the first time a complete catalogue and critical commentary concerning all the dreams and references to dreams in the entire thirty-one social novels (i.e., *novelas de la primera época* and *novelas contemporáneas*), which extend throughout Galdós' long career from *La sombra* (1870) to *La razón de la sinrazón* (1915). It examines the phenomenon of dreams in the broadest sense of the word, and in addition to ordinary sleep dreams includes nightmares, hypnagogic dreams, and other subconscious activities such as day dreams, hallucinations, somniloquy, and somnambulism.

Dr. Schraibman finds that the Galdosian dream serves the following primary functions: it may aid in character delineation, or less frequently, it may be used to anticipate, forward, or recapitulate elements of plot narration. Secondly, it also provides a socially acceptable vehicle for dealing with certain topics (for example, sexual desires) ordinarily taboo to nineteenth-century Spanish novelists; it serves as a realistic recorder of folk beliefs about the supernatural—i.e., appearance of, and communication with, deceased friends and relatives, as well as with God and the Virgin; and finally it allows the author an opportunity to escape from the exacting demands of realism and give free rein to his own creative flights of fancy.

Although some dreams serve more than one function, 144 out of a total of 170 definitely aid in character delineation—one hundred and twenty-one of these are concerned with major characters, the remainder with minor characters. Forty-two dreams serve primarily (but not exclusively) to aid in plot narration—twenty-one anticipate some plot development, twelve are actually events that forward the plot, and nine serve for plot recapitulation.

Because Galdós' fame rests largely upon his ability to create convincingly realistic characters, it is not surprising to learn that the vast majority of his dreams serve primarily to aid in character delineation. By means of dreams, Galdós is able to add additional dimensions of psychological realism. Not only does he remind the reader of a character's basic

personality traits, but he may also reveal deep-seated subconscious drives, ambitions, conflicts, and feelings of inadequacy which are repressed during waking hours. In those novels generally acclaimed to be Galdós' masterpieces (e.g., *Fortunata y Jacinta*) dreams may also reveal personality changes resulting from events in the narrative. In two chapters, one dealing with major characters (III) and another very short one (IV) treating minor characters, Dr. Schraibman examines the manifest content (Galdós never concerns himself with latent content) of all such dreams and offers for each a very logical and convincing explanation of the manner in which it aids in characterization.

Dr. Schraibman notes a very definite evolutionary development in Galdós' use of dreams and therein a correlation with the generally held estimate of the artistic worth of the novels produced in different periods of his career. In the *novelas de la primera época*, the dreams are narrated by the omniscient author, from his point of view, without using any words of the character himself, and aid in the characterization of both major and minor *personajes*. In this early period dreams are also sometimes used to forward the plot narrative. Beginning with the last of this series, however, *La familia de León Roch* (really a transition or bridgebook to the *novelas contemporáneas*), the dreams become more frequent, more sophisticated (as we have noted, they may reflect current personality changes resulting from events in the narrative), and coincidentally contain more words recognizable to the reader as belonging to the *personaje* himself. The author becomes less visible, and a closer, more intimate contact is permitted between the reader and the dreamer. In autobiographical and epistolary novels, the characters completely describe their own dreams. During this period of Galdós' most acclaimed works (1878-1891), not one dream is ever used to forward a plot narrative. After *Angel Guerra* (1890-91) when the period of Galdós' masterpieces is past, there is a decline in the frequency and importance of the dreams. In every instance, except where restrained by the artistic form in three *novelas dialogadas* (*El abuelo*, *Cassandra*, and *La razón de la sinrazón*), Galdós reverts to his earlier omniscient author technique. He completely ignores his minor characters as far as dreams are concerned, and also reverts to the dream as a somewhat mechanical device to forward plot narration (for example, it serves as a kind of *deus ex machina* to aid in terminating *Nazarín* and *La razón de la sinrazón*).

Although Galdós is usually quite prosaic and succinct in describing dreams, Chapter VI—"The Use of the Descriptive Device in the Dream," reveals to what an extent he sometimes lets his reader observe the dynamisms of the subconscious. These dynamic dreams reveal almost constant motion (the imperfect being the tense most frequently used); dream images are described in terms of the senses—primarily sight and sound

although there are also examples of smell and touch. Light (usually pale, shadowy, ethereal combining with darkness to produce a chiaroscuro effect) and color (blue, red and green) are also important. Galdós shows an amazing knowledge of "dream-work": bizarre images, displacement, distortion, symbolism and the juxtaposition of objects that could never occur together in external reality. It is not surprising to find Galdós' world of the subconscious, beneath the thin veneer of civilization, to be populated with animal and other symbols. With them, characters often may work out solutions to repressed problems such as sexual desires and aggressive hatreds. It is in these passages where he is describing dreams that Galdós, so long famed for his almost photographic depiction of objective reality, reveals also a previously unnoticed consummate artistic ability in the realm of the fantastic. As Dr. Schraibman so aptly states: "he uses all the devices known to his trade: unique syntactical structures, quasi-synonyms expressing subtle nuances, far-flung metaphors. He creates unique and shocking images . . ." (p. 185). "Among the most frequent [rhetorical devices] are simile, metaphor, hyperbole, hyperbaton, and oxymoron. The frequent use of antithetical balance and parallelism is also notable in the dreams" (pp. 153-154).

Dr. Schraibman's study purposely limits itself to the literary aspects of the dreams (p. 25), and makes no inquiry into the exact measure and sources of Galdós' vast knowledge of dreams (much of which undoubtedly predates Freud). This line of investigation is obviously reserved for future studies. The present study is written in a clear, logical and concise manner. The appendix listing the entire 170 dreams, the dreamers, and their locations in both the Galdosian text and Schraibman's study is very helpful and quite accurate. The entire study appears remarkably free of typographical errors, but the dream of Pontius Pilate's wife concerning Jesus (p. 14) should not, of course, be listed as the first of a series of four Old Testament dreams. Notwithstanding this minor point, *Dreams in the Novels of Galdós*, as we have indicated earlier, is a very valuable, important, and most welcome contribution that will surely need to be examined by every serious *galdosiano*.

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Unamuno and English Literature. Por Peter G. Earle. Hispanic Institute in the United States, New York, 1960: 160 páginas.

Por el título del presente libro ya podemos adivinar que tenemos entre manos una tesis de grado universitario, y en efecto, aunque no lo indica el autor, se trata de un trabajo de esta índole, del que dió noticia M. García Blanco en los *Cuadernos de la Cátedra Miguel de Unamuno* (vol.