

DOÑA PERFECTA: GALDÓS' REPLY TO PEPITA JIMÉNEZ

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At first reading it is difficult to imagine two novels in all of nineteenth-century Spanish literature more different from each other than Juan Valera's *Pepita Jiménez* (1874) and Pérez Galdós's *Doña Perfecta* (1876). Yet closer and repeated readings reveal that the two works have many elements in common —so many, in fact, as to suggest that Galdós not only knew Valera's novel but used it in a very particular way as a source for *Doña Perfecta*.¹ Stephen Gilman has noted that Galdós frequently began his novels with another work in mind and that he then «wrote against» that work; that is, had a «dialogue» with it, used elements from it, and wrote a kind of answer to it.² It is my belief, based on the circumstances surrounding the publication of the two works and the evidence of the text itself, that *Pepita Jiménez* served precisely this purpose for Galdós in the writing of *Doña Perfecta*.

Pepita Jiménez and *Doña Perfecta* were published during a time of considerable ferment among Madrid's literary intellectuals. Many believed that the aims and trajectory of the realistic novel, reborn in 1849 in Fernán Caballero's *La gaviota*, were being deflected by such works as Alarcón's *El sombrero de tres picos* and Valera's *Pepita Jiménez*. The latter first appeared serially in the *Revista de España* between March and May of 1874 and immediately generated a far-reaching literary polemic.³ Aware of the importance of this polemic, the Sección de Literatura y Bellas Artes of the Ateneo Científico y Literario de Madrid, early in 1875, organized a series of debates concerning the essence of the controversy: realism versus idealism in literature. *Pepita Jiménez*, the epitome of the idealistic novel, was, of course, discussed in these sessions, and Juan Valera himself was the presiding officer. Because the Ateneo had such a profound influence on Galdós at that time and because he had been editor-in-chief of the *Revista de España* just prior to its publication of *Pepita Jiménez*,⁴ we may be sure that Galdós knew Valera's novel well and also appreciated its importance in the central literary argument of the 1870's.⁵ And there is no doubt that the realism-idealism controversy made a lasting impression on Galdós, for eleven years later, in the last volume of *Fortunata y Jacinta*, he has two characters (one a literary critic) engage in long discussions «sobre el arte realista y el ideal, y la emoción estética.»⁶ The fictional time of these discussions corresponds precisely with the period in which Galdós had been writing *Doña Perfecta*.⁷

In 1876, as the controversy concerning realism and idealism continued both in the Ateneo and in the intellectual journals, Galdós' friend Fernando León y Castillo suggested that Don Benito now write his already-germinating «valiant and very Spanish novel of struggle» and that he publish it in the *Revista de España* (the very same journal in which Valera had published *Pepita*

Jiménez).⁸ To do so would give Galdós, who felt his personal prestige and leadership in the realm of the novel to be at stake, an excellent opportunity to enter the polemic and demonstrate his own literary aesthetic.⁹

There were strong reasons why Galdós would want to follow this advice. Even before the realism-idealism polemics of 1874-76, Galdós had explained in detail his concept for the revitalization of the Spanish novel. In *Observaciones sobre la novela contemporánea en España* (1870), Galdós had said, «Los españoles somos poco observadores, y carecemos, por tanto, de la principal virtud para la creación de la novela moderna» and «somos unos idealistas desafortunados, y más nos agrada imaginar que observar.» There was needed a «novela nacional de pura observación,» and concerning the material available for such a novel, Galdós said, «Descuella en primer lugar el problema religioso, que perturba los hogares y ofrece contradicciones que asustan, porque mientras en una parte la falta de creencias afloja o rompe los lazos morales y civiles que forman la familia, en otras produce los mismos efectos el fanatismo y las costumbres devotas.»¹⁰

Pepita Jiménez, written in accord with Valera's aesthetic, «[pintando] las cosas... más bellas de lo que son,»¹¹ was not based on direct observation and certainly was not at all what Galdós had in mind for the revitalization of the Spanish novel. *Pepita Jiménez* did deal with a religious question but not the one which Galdós had stressed in *Observaciones sobre la novela contemporánea en España*. Galdós believed that the religious question was more than personal and that it was tearing apart families and the entire nation.

Moreover the Second Carlist War (1872-76) was ending, and Galdós could not only use it as a realistic background, but he could also demonstrate to his fellow Spaniards the causes of Spain's terrible civil wars: a theocratical and mummified society in which the self-interest of the Church (Don Inocencio) caused it to work with the feudal landowners (Doña Perfecta) to stir up local political bosses and *guerrilla* leaders (Caballuco), who in turn lead the *labradores* and peasants (el tío Paso Largo, Frasquito González, José Esteban Romanero) to slaughter. As Rodolfo Cardona has stated:

When Galdós had set out to write this novel, he had witnessed the devastating effect of the reactionary forces that began to rule again over Spain with the Bourbon restoration (1875). The religious problem that had begun to preoccupy Spanish intellectuals since the time of 1868 and that was reflected in Galdós' *Novelas de la primera época*, had become more acute with the reactionary wrath of the first years of the Restoration. The problem stemmed from the struggle of two types of civilization: On the one side there was the Europeanized, liberal, egalitarian spirit concentrated in — and typified by — the metropolis. On the other side there was the traditionalist, regional spirit of the province, stuck to its primitive religious faith and opposed, at times with ferocious fanaticism, to any new ideas that might result in radical changes in their cherished beliefs («Introduction,» *Doña Perfecta*, p. 30).

To Galdós, Valera's novel would have represented not only an expression of a vitiated aesthetic, but also a deliberate refusal to see, a willed rejection of the reality of nineteenth-century Spain, and thus, a betrayal of the obligation of the novelist to observe and engage the events of his own time. By using elements of the plot, characters, and setting of *Pepita Jiménez* as the basis for his novel, Galdós could challenge both the political and aesthetic implications of Valera's work, could rebut it, as it were, on its own ground.

At the most general level, there are obvious parallels in plot between the two novels. In each, a young man comes for a visit to the provinces, where he falls in love with the wealthiest young woman of the town. In each, the young woman returns the young man's love. In *Pepita Jiménez* all conduces to a happy outcome, though the young man must give up a false religious vocation in order to respond to the demands of his own nature. In *Doña Perfecta*, however, the world is set malevolently against the young people, whose love represents a threat to the powerful forces that control the life of the town. Galdós has, in effect, paralleled Valera in establishing the situation from which the climax will develop, but his working out of that situation is a complete negation of Valera's idealistic vision of triumphant love. This pattern of borrowing and transforming also characterizes Galdós' use of more specific elements, such as characters and setting, of Valera's novel.

A listing of major characters for either novel could serve almost as well for the other — in both we meet the title protagonist (a rich provincial widow), who determines the fate of the male protagonist (a well-educated young outsider); the widow's ever-present spiritual adviser; the local *cacique*; and the Dean of the Cathedral. In every case, however, Galdós has totally transformed the nature of the character. Thus, in Valera's novel, the widow (Pepita Jiménez) is a charming twenty-year-old girl whose love for the male protagonist results in a happy marriage, while in Galdós' novel, the widow (Doña Perfecta) is an older, severely rigid woman whose function is directly the opposite of Pepita's: she continually interferes in the young male protagonist's love relationship, forbids his marriage to her daughter, and finally has him murdered.

The young male protagonist of each novel has spent his formative years elsewhere, has just completed a professional education, and, as the novel opens, comes to a provincial town for what he thinks will be a brief visit. In *Pepita Jiménez*, Luis de Vargas has completed his seminary training and has come to visit his father before taking his final vows for the priesthood. Pepe Rey in *Doña Perfecta* comes to visit his aunt and cousin, with the possibility in mind of marriage to the latter. Galdós' male protagonist, perhaps in reply to an anti-Krausista slur in *Pepita Jiménez* (p. 183),¹² and certainly in contrast to Luis's devout Catholicism, is a liberal-minded Krausista engineer — one whose training and idealism could do much for the building of a revitalized, more modern Spain.¹³

Each of the title protagonists has an ever-present spiritual adviser who has a great influence on the course and outcome of the love affair, and, hence, the denouement of the novel. In *Pepita Jiménez* the Vicario is a kindly spiritual adviser who inadvertently serves as a catalyst in the developing love between the young protagonists. In *Doña Perfecta*, on the other hand, the despicable and cunning Penitenciario, Don Inocencio, works deliberately throughout the novel against the lovers in the hope that his own nephew may instead marry Doña Perfecta's daughter and acquire her property.

The local *cacique* is an important character who, in each novel, becomes a rival of the male protagonist, interplays prominently with him throughout the story, and also helps determine the denouement. In *Pepita Jiménez* the *cacique* is Luis's own father, and he helps the young seminarian evolve toward

emotional secular maturity; then, by renouncing his own amorous aspirations, he facilitates a happy marriage for Luis and Pepita. In Galdós' novel the lascivious and brutish Caballuco is a rival of Pepe's and a factor in starting the civil war; ultimately, he fires the bullet that kills the hero.¹⁴

Each novel has an ecclesiastical dignitary with the title of Dean of the Cathedral. In *Pepita Jiménez* the Dean never appears but is the understanding uncle and mentor to whom Luis writes as he is falling in love with Pepita. The Dean is thoroughly kind and flexible, and he accepts Luis' change of heart regarding his vocation. In *Doña Perfecta*, however, the Dean attends the nightly *tertulia* and is completely the opposite of Valera's character. Galdós describes him in the following antipathetic terms:

Era un viejo de edad avanzada, corpulento y encendido, pletórico, apoplético; un hombre que se salía de sí mismo por no caber en su propio pellejo, según estaba de gordo y morcilludo. Procedía de la excomunión; no hablaba más que de asuntos religiosos, y desde el principio mostró hacia Pepe Rey el desdén más vivo. Este se mostraba cada vez más inepto para acomodarse a sociedad tan poco de su gusto. Era su carácter nada maleable, duro y de muy escasa flexibilidad... (pp. 131-32).

In addition to the above-mentioned character types common to both novels, it is also significant to note that the protagonists share a common name. The title character of Valera's novel has the given name Pepita, while Galdós's male protagonist is Pepe (and both have blond hair; *Pepita Jiménez*, pp. 59, 120; *Doña Perfecta*, p. 75).

The similarities here are clearly more than coincidental, and the differences are instructive. Galdós has taken Valera's characters and recast them in the context of a realistic novel. For Galdós, realism entailed a recognition of the venality of human nature, of the intransigent self-interest of the Church, and of the poison that can seep into family relationships. The chief characters of *Doña Perfecta* reflect his experience of the way in which such people would function in the real world, the Spain of his time.

In setting, as well, Galdós continues the pattern of transformation. In *Pepita Jiménez*, one of the most popular of nineteenth-century Spain's provincial novels, Valera presented an idealized image of rural life, emphasizing its harmonious and benevolent aspects in order to develop a milieu appropriate to his story. Galdós, in turning to the provinces, had quite another idea in mind. Just three months prior to *Doña Perfecta*, Stephen Gilman has observed, Galdós had said in *La segunda casaca* (regarding the causes of religious fanaticism and civil war) that "only a sociological focus on «los pueblos del campo y las pequeñas ciudades» could permit direct novelistic experience of «la nación desnuda y entregada a sí misma obrando por su propio impulso»."¹⁵ Galdós' rendering of provincial life reflects precisely such an experience, and at the same time, his use of specific settings from *Pepita Jiménez* allows him to comment directly, if implicitly, on Valera's often romanticized representation of rural life. Thus, in both *Pepita Jiménez* and *Doña Perfecta*, the *huerta*, the casino, the nightly *tertulia*, and the family altar are settings for some of the most important scenes, and both novels also contain climactic confrontations at night in the private office of the title protagonist.

In his very first letter in *Pepita Jiménez*, Luis extols the beauty of the Andalusian *huertas* (p. 33). Knowing of his appreciation, Pepita invites Luis to visit her *huerta*, which is especially beautiful, luxuriant, and fertile. The erotic symbolism in Valera's description of this *huerta* and its connection with Pepita are intentional and (on the plot level) prepare the reader for Luis' falling in love with Pepita. The importance of Pepita's *huerta* and Luis' first visit there are reiterated in the closing scene of the novel, which also takes place in the *huerta*. The latter, however, has now been converted into a «jardín amenísimo», in which there is a small marble temple in the classical style containing a picture of Psiquis contemplating Amor and a statue of Venus (pp. 209-210). In *Doña Perfecta* the *huerta* is also very important for the young lovers. When Pepe arrives in Orbajosa, he first catches sight of Rosario standing in the *huerta* behind Doña Perfecta's house (p. 68). It is there that Pepe first declares his love for Rosario (p. 106), and, later, it is the place where they meet when Rosario is able to slip out of the house at night (pp. 245-246). However, in complete contrast to *Pepita Jiménez*, the *huerta* ultimately becomes the setting, not for a joyous scene of amorous triumph, but for the tragic and brutal act which denies the possibility of love fulfilled — Pepe's murder by Caballuco (pp. 293, 300).

The casino is one of the most important settings in Valera's novel, for it serves as the place where Luis demonstrates his emotional evolution from an adolescent commitment to a false religious vocation to full secular maturity. Specifically, when Luis hears the Conde de Genazahar, a rejected suitor, speaking ill of Pepita in the casino, he tries to defend her by preaching a sermonette to the count — but succeeds only in making himself look ridiculous (pp. 137-140). However, some time later, after he has been intimate with Pepita and has decided to abandon the priesthood in favor of matrimony, Luis returns to the casino for a great triumph, defeating the count first in a high-stakes card game and then in a duel (pp. 187-93). In *Doña Perfecta* Galdós also has his male protagonist visit the town casino. However, Galdós' purpose is completely different from Valera's: he wishes primarily to present in the casino a microcosm of the narrow-minded, closed society of Orbajosa. Thus the atmosphere in his casino is quite different from Valera's; and when Pepe finds there mostly unpleasant and fanatical provincials, completely hostile to all outsiders (pp. 137-139, 149-150), he soon ceases to attend. He further alienates the people of Orbajosa on the day of his last visit to the casino, going directly from there to the home of the socially isolated Troya sisters, an act which in turn causes a scandal and makes his life in the town even more difficult.

The use of a nightly *tertulia* as a setting is important in each novel, for the title protagonist has local dignitaries gather at her home for cards and conversation. In Valera's novel the *tertulia* provides a socially acceptable way for the young seminarian and the widow to be together. In fact, bringing his young protagonists repeatedly together at the *tertulia* is one of the main devices Valera employs to facilitate their falling in love. In *Doña Perfecta*, in contrast, the *tertulia* is an unpleasant experience for the young lovers and is even used against them, for Pepe's antipathetic opponents are always pre-

sent, and Don Inocencio even brings his nephew as a rival suitor (pp. 130-135, 146).

In each novel an important scene takes place before a family altar and a statue of Jesus. Valera's heroine has in her house an «altarito en que está el Niño Jesús» (p. 48). In preparation for her climactic meeting with Luis, Pepita goes from her bedroom down to the altar and openly prays to the Child Jesus «que le dejase a D. Luis; que no se llevase; porque él, tan rico y abastado de todo, podía sin gran sacrificio desprenderse de aquel servidor y cedérselo a ella» (p. 159). In *Doña Perfecta* Rosario likewise goes down to the family altar (in the company of Pepe), and she also declares before a statue of Jesus that she wants the male protagonist for a husband (p. 188). Now, however, rather than a statue of the Infant Jesus (which clearly served as a symbol of Pepita's maternal longings —p. 67),¹⁶ the image is of Christ crucified. Moreover, the statue is cold and hard (as is the religious fanaticism of the town), and when Pepe repeatedly bumps his head against it, he exclaims, «Señor, no me pegues, que no haré nada malo» (p. 188).

Late in each novel, there is a very emotional, climactic night-time confrontation between important characters in the office of the title protagonist, who is presented as a study in light and shadow. In *Pepita Jiménez*, Luis visits the young widow in her *despacho* for the purpose of saying «goodbye» forever. Pepita, however, has other ideas and, openly confessing her love, pleads with Luis to stay. Finally she hints at suicide and flees into the bedroom. Luis follows, then breaks his vow of celibacy, and decides in favor of matrimony (pp. 160-176). In Galdós' novel, again the widow (*Doña Perfecta*) is in her *despacho* at night when the confrontation occurs. Now the stormy conflict is between her and her daughter, Rosario, who vociferously declares her love for the male protagonist. This time, however, when the title protagonist runs from her office, it is not into the bedroom but rather outdoors to express her hatred and to command Caballuco to murder Pepe (pp. 294-300).

Again, Galdós has used Valera's settings, but has anchored them firmly in the reality that he knew — that of the actual life of a small provincial town during the Second Carlist War. His settings serve to reflect the oppressiveness of the provincial atmosphere and the power of those forces, inimical to individual aspiration, that he believed to be all too prevalent in nineteenth-century Spanish life.

There are a number of other common elements in the two novels, the more important being these: religion as theme and thesis; classicism; material from Lucretius's *De rerum natura* and Virgil's *Aeneid*; the horse as a symbol; thematic and descriptive interplay of light and darkness.¹⁷ The two authors, of course, differ greatly in their use and presentation of these elements.

Religious conflict is one of the more important themes focused upon throughout both novels. Luis de Vargas, in *Pepita Jiménez*, struggles valiantly and suffers much as he is torn between his ambition to become a priest and his ever-growing love for Pepita. In *Doña Perfecta*, Pepe Rey, a sincere, Christlike, religious liberal, is blocked, entangled at every turn, and then finally destroyed with the help of the local cleric and other religious fanatics. The basic thesis of each novel is derived from its religious theme. Valera's

thesis is that a happy marriage is more natural and more rewarding than a false religious vocation. Galdós' thesis is that clerical interference in family life is pernicious and that, in addition, the Church's financial self-interest had brought it into alliance with the feudal landowners, political bosses, and guerilla leaders who instigated the civil wars that so continually wracked Spain in the nineteenth century.

Each novel has, in its own unique way, not only a good deal of the spirit, tone, and techniques of ancient classical writers, but also many classical allusions and some classical quotations as well. Valera is correctly esteemed as a first-rate classical author; and *Pepita Jiménez* is a restrained, well-balanced, highly polished work of art which, according to Robert Lott, reflects classical antiquity, Renaissance-derived neoplatonism, and nineteenth-century idyllic classicism or classical idealism («Introduction», *Pepita Jiménez*, p. 11).

Doña Perfecta is equally classical — but in a different mode. Galdós, ever taking clues from Valera — reversing, changing, modifying them for his own purpose — wrote *Doña Perfecta* much in the manner of a classical tragedy. Significantly, the surname of the male protagonist is Rey; he has a tragic flaw; and, as in the best of classical tragedies, the fate of the entire nation depends on his unequal struggle. He dies a tragic death, not at all a personification of the *beatus ille* theme, and the town of Orbajosa is not really a classical *lugar ameno*, but exists as such only in the mistaken minds of the local inhabitants (pp. 74, 179). Classical allusions also abound in *Doña Perfecta*, but Galdós replaces the classical garden, paintings, and statues of Valera with images of hatred, terror, and desolation which recall the Trojan War. Caballuco becomes Pepe's «troyano antagonista» (p. 173) and the three Troya sisters recall the Hecuba, Andromache, and Polyxena of Euripedes's play *The Trojan Women* (p. 148).

The use of material from the very same classical poems, Lucretius's *De rerum natura* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, serves to illustrate Galdós' attentiveness to the details in Valera's novel, as well as the intensity and resolute aggressiveness of his own response. Their choices of material from *De rerum natura* illustrate clearly the differing purposes of each author. Valera closes *Pepita Jiménez* with a quotation from Lucretius' poem that stresses beauty and light and blends with preceding material to impart an idea of harmony. In contrast, Galdós chooses an angry attack on established religion from *De rerum natura* and has Pepe Rey paraphrase it in his aggressive philippic against Don Inocencio in chapter six.¹⁸ Galdós does so because, at this juncture of his novel, he wishes to emphasize (at complete variance with Valera's intent) divisiveness and increasing interpersonal conflict. As for Virgil in *Pepita Jiménez*, Luis evokes a scene from the *Aeneid* when he sees Pepita in a special way, «de un modo ideal y etéreo, en el retiro nemoroso, como a Eneas su madre» (p. 84). Galdós, as always less poetic and more direct, includes in his own novel Latin quotations not only from the *Aeneid* (pp. 92, 168) but also from the *Eclogues* (p. 110) and the *Georgics* (p. 113).

Both novels use the horse as an important symbol. In *Pepita Jiménez* Luis's maturity, his falling in love, and his final change from religious asceticism to full emotional masculinity is traced for the reader by Valera's use of the horse symbol. At first Luis has no equestrian skills at all, and he must,

in humiliation, follow behind the others on a mule. However, his emotional evolution is communicated to the reader by his desire to learn to ride a horse, and then by his progressive domination of a fiery steed. Moreover, the horse, on one significant occasion, functions as an almost independent masculine sexual symbol, when he disregards Luis' attempts to calm him and bucks, snorts, and does fancy steps in honor of Pepita in front of her house (p. 94). The reader thus learns the intensity of Luis' attraction for Pepita, long before the seminarist can admit these feelings even to himself.¹⁹

In *Doña Perfecta* the mature and self-confident protagonist Pepe Rey arrives in Orbajosa already a skillful, aggressive horseman,²⁰ and Galdós, further departing from Valera's pattern, then uses the horse symbolism to aid in the delineation of a secondary character, Caballuco. The bestial quality of the local *cacique* is emphasized by his nickname and by the fact that when he is on his horse, he seems a centaur: half-man and half-animal. Under the pressure of events in the novel, he becomes ever more animalistic until «la nariz de Caballuco expelía y recogía el aire como la de un caballo» (p. 230). Caballuco, Pepe's murderer, is as dangerous and treacherous as the Trojan horse of antiquity,²¹ and when his friends exalt him as a great man, Galdós remarks that he is really as different from the warrior heroes of old as the mule is from the horse (p. 243). Thus Galdós, like Valera, also uses the horse — mule comparison, but reverses the direction of change in order to emphasize degeneration.

Both Valera and Galdós employ chiaroscuro techniques in purely descriptive passage (*Pepita Jiménez*, pp. 92-93, 153-154; *Doña Perfecta*, pp. 180-181) and also in the theater-like lighting effects of the climactic night scenes (discussed earlier) that occur in the offices of the title protagonists (*Pepita Jiménez*, p. 160; *Doña Perfecta*, p. 294). More importantly, in both novels there is also a transcendent thematic struggle delineated in terms of light and darkness. In *Pepita Jiménez*, Luis, in his desire to be a priest and to minister in the name of Christ (the Light of the World), believes his falling in love may be the work of Satan (the Prince of Darkness). He knows human weakness often prefers «las tinieblas a la luz», but he resolutely declares, «En esta batalla de la luz contra las tinieblas, yo combato por la luz» (p. 104). Darkness appears to triumph when Pepita seduces Luis in the unlighted bedroom, but, in fact, she leads him through the darkness to the light: his recognition of the falseness of his religious vocation. Thus he not only acquires «nueva luz» about his own situation (p. 178), but he gratefully refers to Pepita as the «luz de mis ojos» (p. 174). This resolution of the thematic conflict is no surprise to the reader, whose understanding has been helped, along with other hints, by the fact that Luis' horse (so important in delineating his emotional evolution) is Lucero, a name which means not only light-giver, but also Morning Star — the latter significantly being associated with Venus.

In *Doña Perfecta* the male protagonist is also associated with light in a thematic struggle between light and darkness. Moreover he is repeatedly likened to Christ and more than once Galdós speaks of light emanating from Pepe's eyes (pp. 75, 187). His arrival in Orbajosa coincides with the dawning of a new day, but he soon finds himself almost completely alone among crea-

tures from a world of darkness. The «negro muro carcomido» of the «pavorosa catedral» casts a dark shadow over the entire town (p. 150). Black is also prominent in descriptions of Pepe's opponents: Doña Perfecta's eyes («más negros que la noche», p. 298). Caballuco's hair and mustache, and the fact that Don Inocencio, María Remedios, and Doña Perfecta always dress in black.²² Then climactically, late in the novel, Galdós reveals that the surname of Don Inocencio and María Remedios is actually Tinieblas (p. 275). Thus, in contrast to Valera, whose Luis is engaged in a more generalized and philosophical struggle «contra las tinieblas» (p. 104), Galdós personifies the word *tinieblas* and creates vile, flesh-and-blood characters in opposition to his male protagonist. Such antipathetic characters, as one might expect, carry on most of their evil deeds under the cover of darkness.²³ Thus the meeting in which Doña Perfecta and Don Inocencio incite Caballuco to insurrection occurs at night. Caballuco henceforth always carries on his revolutionary activities after dark, and Pepe is murdered in the deepest of the night — at the very hour of midnight. In contrast to *Pepita Jiménez*, in Galdós's novel darkness triumphs over the protagonist associated with light.

Claudio Guillén has stated that there is a «challenge every writer is obliged to face, namely the necessity of an active dialogue with the generic models of his time and culture».²⁴ It has already been shown elsewhere that Galdós did engage in this process with regard to French-inspired naturalism in the 1880's and later, in the 1890's, to the Russian-inspired countermovement, neo-Christianism or spiritual naturalism.²⁵ The evidence demonstrated in the present study enables us to know that this form of creativity was already well established as early as 1876 and that Galdós was then «in dialogue» with a Spanish novel, *Pepita Jiménez*, the epitome of the idealistic novel.

Doña Perfecta is, of course, much more than a rebuttal to *Pepita Jiménez*. It is an enduring work of art in its own right, and it reflects other literary sources,²⁶ as well as Galdós' consummate novelistic skill. Nevertheless, *Pepita Jiménez* needs to be recognized as a major source of inspiration in its creation — and a work whose idealism caused Galdós to respond with an excellent demonstration of his own aesthetic of realism.

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NOTES

¹ It is a pleasure to thank my colleague Seymour Menton (University of California at Irvine) for suggesting this study and sharing insights he gained when teaching *Pepita Jiménez* and *Doña Perfecta* sequentially.

² «Novel and Society: *Doña Perfecta*,» *Anales Galdosianos*, 11 (1976), 15.

³ For details see Gifford Davis, «The Spanish Debate over Idealism and Realism before the Impact of Zola's Naturalism,» *PMLA*, 84 (1969), 1649-56.

⁴ The *Revista de España* listed Galdós as editor from January 1872 through October 1873.

⁵ H. Chonon Berkowitz says that Don Benito was satisfied with neither Valera's *Pepita Jiménez* nor Alarcón's *El escándalo* (Pérez Galdós: *Spanish Liberal Crusader* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1948] pp. 133-34).

⁶ Pérez Galdós, *Fortunata y Jacinta* (Madrid: La Guirnalda, 1918), IV, 294.

⁷ The fictional time is April 1876 (pp. 278, 303), the same month in which Galdós had finished *Doña Perfecta*.

⁸ Berkowitz, p. 134.

⁹ Berkowitz, p. 133.

¹⁰ Madrid, ed. José Pérez Vidal (Madrid: Afrodisio Aguado, 1957), pp. 224-27, 236-37.

¹¹ Valera, «Prólogo» to the 1888 ed. of *Pepita Jiménez*, reproduced by Manuel Azaña in his *Clásicos Castellanos* ed. of the novel (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1953), p. 219.

¹² Valera's hostility to this philosophical movement apparently was deep-seated, because, according to Robert Lott, he again denigrated Krausismo in April, 1886: «Valera said he re-read the Spanish and ascetical writers of the sixteenth century in order to expose Krausismo as a false mysticism» («Introduction,» *Pepita Jiménez*, ed. Robert Lott [Oxford: Pergamon, 1974] p. 12).

The same year, in chapter one of *Fortunata y Jacinta*, Galdós (who was much in sympathy with the Krausistas) had his turn, slyly expressing his aggression and mentioning Valera by name. Speaking of immature men (such as his character Juanito Santa Cruz) and the appropriateness of using a diminutive of the given name for such people, Galdós said, «Hasta hace pocos años, el autor cien veces ilustre de *Pepita Jiménez*, le llamaban sus amigos y los que no lo eran, *Juanito Valera*» (Madrid: La Guirnalda, 1915), p.13.

Roxanne B. Marcus believes that in *Doña Luz* (1879) Valera created characters who contrast with Galdós' Pepe R-y. Although she does not specifically say so, it appears that Valera reacted to *Doña Perfecta* and it may have influenced his creativity much as *Pepita Jiménez* had done in the case of Galdós. Be that as it may, Marcus does note that «in Valera's 'Prólogo en inglés para la edición americana,' reprinted in *Pepita Jiménez* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1959), pp. 34-35 . . . , he discussed his response to 'la lucha entre los antiguos y los nuevos ideales' and criticized the approach we find, for example, in Galdós' *Doña Perfecta*» («Contemporary Life and Manners in the Novels of Juan Valera,» *Hispania*, 58 [1975], 465, nn. 7 and 12).

After speaking of a probable veiled attack on Valera in Galdós' *El pórtico de la gloria* (1896), Leo J. Hoar, Jr., adds: «Valera on the other hand, never brought himself to review a Galdós work in any genre, a strange omission for one of the major critics of the century. He totally neglected Galdós, even in his study of the modern novel, *Apuntes sobre el nuevo arte de escribir novelas* (Madrid, 1886) in which he studied Zola and Pardo Bazán and their contributions to naturalism» («Galdós' Counter-attack on his Critics: The 'Lost' Short Story, *El pórtico de la gloria*,» *Symposium*, 30 [1976], 307, n. 48).

Clearly Valera and Galdós were rival literati, whose interpersonal relationship merits further study.

¹³ For Pepe as a Krausista figure, see Juan José Gil Cremades, *Krausistas y liberales* (Madrid: Seminarios y ediciones, 1975), p. 137.

¹⁴ Caballuco considers Pepe his rival in regard to Mariquita Troya and Pepe's fiancée Rosario reveals her deep-seated fear of Caballuco's lasciviousness in a dream (Pérez Galdós, *Doña Perfecta*, ed. Rodolfo Cardona [New York: Anaya-Las Américas, 1974], pp. 173, 250-51). All subsequent references are to this edition and will be noted in the text.

¹⁵ «Galdós as Reader,» *Anales Galdosianos* (Anejo: 1978), 23.

¹⁶ Rosario has, in a sense, her statue of the Niño Jesús also. It is in the cathedral and she makes the clothing it wears.

¹⁷ Of all the major nineteenth-century Spanish novels, only *Pepita Jiménez* has extensive sections in epistolary form. That Galdós would also employ letters in part of his novel — and within a structure similar to Valera's — again suggests direct influence. Valera's novel begins and ends with letters, with the entire work being divided into three sections: «Cartas de mi sobrino»; *Paralipómenos* (an extensive non-epistolary, third person, omniscient narration); and a concluding epilogue, «Cartas de mi hermano.» In *Doña Perfecta* Galdós waits until very late (chapter twenty-eight) before introducing the epistolary form, but then follows Valera's pattern of interrupting the letters with a section of third person, omniscient narration before also returning to conclude the novel in epistolary form (with the exception of the two sentences which constitute chapter thirty-three. For the significance of this change, see Lee Fontanella, «*Doña Perfecta* as Historiographic Lesson,» *Anales Galdosianos*, 11 [1976], 60-62).

¹⁸ Alexander H. Krappe, «The Sources of B. Pérez Galdós, *Doña Perfecta*, Chapter VI, *Philological Quarterly*, 7 (1928), 303-06.

¹⁹ Valera makes the erotic intent of this passage even clearer by having Pepita waiting for Luis behind a «verde celosía» (p. 94).

²⁰ Pepe enters the town of Orbajosa early in the novel to the sound of the aggressive pounding of his horse's hooves on the cobble-stone streets (p. 76). Valera's masculine protagonist, in contrast, does not make any similarly aggressive entrance sounds until he undergoes a decisive personality change. Then, after having been intimate with Pepita, he enters the casino in search of Count Genazahar, «dando taconazos recios, con estruendo y con aire de taco, como suele decirse. Los jugadores se quedaron pasmados al verle» (p. 187).

²¹ Galdós refers to Caballuco as Pepe's «troyano antagonista» just after speaking of Caballuco's horse and just before Pepe calls him «un animal» (p. 173). Caballuco, of course, is just as hollow morally and intellectually as the Trojan horse was in reality.

²² Unlike Valera's positive, happy title protagonist, who early in the novel decides to stop wearing black mourning clothes (pp. 89, 124), Doña Perfecta always does so.

²³ For a discussion of the increasing animalization of these characters and its coordination with the intensification of references to blackness in the final chapters of *Doña Perfecta*, see Vernon A. Chamberlin, «*Doña Perfecta*: Light and Darkness, Good and Evil,» *Galdós. Papers Read at the Modern Language Symposium, Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia* (Fredricksburg, 1967), pp. 57-70.

²⁴ *Literatura as System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 128.

²⁵ Walter T. Pattison, *Benito Pérez Galdós* (Boston: Twayne, 1975), pp. 63-65, 90-93.

²⁶ Vernon A. Chamberlin and Jack Weiner, «Galdós' *Doña Perfecta* and Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*: Two Interpretations of the Conflict Between Generations,» *PMLA*, 86 (1971), 19-24; Stephen Gilman, «Novel and Society: *Doña Perfecta*,» *Anales Galdosianos*, 11 (1976), 15; and Juana Truel, «La huella de Eugénie Grandet en *Doña Perfecta*,» *Sin Nombre*, 7, Núm. 3 (1976), 105-15.