SOCIAL PATHOLOGY IN THE NOVELS OF GALDÓS

by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical survey of nineteenth-century Spain, 1. -- Changes in Spanish society resulting from War of Independence, 9. -- Sale of Church estates in 1836 and social consequences, 9. -- Industrial revolution and its effects on Spanish society, 14. -- Turmoil of Spanish urban society in latter nineteenth century reflected in Galdós' novelas contemporáneas, 16. -- Value of novelas as a social study in the opinion of various critics, 18. -- Social problems which appear in Galdós' novels, 19. -- Aim and scope of this study, 22.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. MONEY</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many members of Spanish society ruled by materialistic philosophy, 28. -- Attention of chapter focused on harmful aspects of money problem, 29. -- Examples of sudden, fabulous wealth in Galdósian society, 29. -- Money of paramount importance, 32. -- Examples of social prestige enjoyed by wealthy men in Galdósian society, 33. -- Characters in the novelas who reveal a craving for money, 37. -- Graft and corruption frequent consequences of unreasoning worship of wealth, 50. -- Indications of graft and corruption in the society studied by Galdós, 51. -- Evidence of tolerant and even approving acceptance by society of such dishonest acts, 53. -- Examples of fraudulent, unethical practices and social indifference or approval in Galdós' novelas, 54. -- Honest, ethical individuals in Spanish society and in Galdósian society, 64. -- Evidence indicating corruption was a serious problem, 65. -- Further indications in novelas of tendency to condone malfeasance in office, 66. -- Contrasting fortunes of an honest man and a dishonest man in Galdósian society, 69. -- Conclusions, 71.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. LUXURY .......................................................... 81

A. Luxurious, Wasteful Living: Luxury one of several reasons for desiring money, 81. — Spanish urban society of latter nineteenth century one of many societies affected by luxury mania, 82. — Conditions which increased the passion for luxuries and pleasures in Spain; new wealth from sale of Church lands and increasing number of products following industrial revolution, 82; philosophy of living for the day, 87. — Galdós' early observations upon industrial progress and luxury in his society, 89. — Galdós' evaluation of luxury problem in Madrid, 90. — Immoderation cited by Galdós as an important factor in luxury problem, 91. — Exaggerated luxury and its consequences in the society of the novelas, 93.

B. Frivolous, Corrupting Pleasures: Quest for pleasures caused by same factors that give rise to craze for luxuries, 126. — Physical harm a possible consequence of the unrestrained pursuit of pleasure, 127. — Other evils resulting from constant nocturnal diversions, 131. — Consequences of frivolous, corrupting pleasures in Galdosian society, 133. — Conclusions, 138.

IV. CURSILERÍA ......................................................... 151

Definitions of terms cursai and cursilería, 151. — Mania for luxury and craze for social ostentation inseparably related by a common cause: vanity, 151. — Vanity considered by Baudrillart as one of three reasons for luxury, 152. — Vanity a prominent trait in Galdosian characters, 155. — Early observations by Galdós on role of vanity in his society, 154. — Galdós' changing attitude toward vanity and its consequences, 155. — Vanity not always productive of evil, 156. — "Conspicuous consumption," a manifestation of social pretense, analyzed by Thorstein Veblen, 157. — Urwick's discussion of "conspicuous waste," 160. — Moderate social display and luxury not unduly harmful, 162. — Conditions in nineteenth-century Spain that fostered the rapid growth of luxury and ostentation: new wealth and increased number of luxury articles, 163; pronounced class change, 164; harmful example of upper class, 169; Spaniard's feeling of hidalguía, 176. — Cursilería in the society of the novelas, 182. — Conclusions, 222.
V. ANALYSIS OF THE FUNCTION OF THE THREE PROBLEMS IN THE NOVELS OF Galdos

Discussion of each novel in chronological order (includes a summary, an examination of the three problems, and a reference to other social material in the novel), 232. -- One period of concentrated study of the three problems revealed in over-all survey of novels, 265. -- Significant facts to be derived from over-all picture of the three problems in the novels, 266. -- Social criticism by Galdos in treatment of the three problems, 271. -- Galdos' not dispassionate and detached in study of the three problems, 272. -- Galdos' a moralist and a teacher, 273. -- Evidence of Galdos the moralist in the novels, 274. -- Both society and the individual blamed by Galdos, 283. -- No variation in Galdos' attitude toward money, luxury, and curasleria throughout his novelistic career, 285. -- Education offered by Galdos as a cure for these social problems, 288.

VI. CONCLUSION

Three aspects of Galdos revealed by present study: the analyst of social problems, 293; the novelist, 299; the moralist, 300.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
A survey of nineteenth-century Spain reveals a nation harassed by constant strife and bloodshed; by bitter political differences that divided the country and its people; by frequent ebbing of the agricultural, economic, and commercial tides of the nation; and by profound and extensive changes in the social structure of the country.

The century began ominously when Napoleon sent his troops into Spain in the year 1808. During the five years that followed, the Peninsular War, or War of Independence, created numerous problems with which the nation had to contend. In 1808 both Charles IV and his son, Ferdinand, surrendered the Spanish throne to Napoleon, leaving a nation unaccustomed to governing itself faced with the grave problem of choosing a form of government and the policies to be followed. This governmental crisis nourished a growing liberal sentiment, which was in opposition to the traditional absolutism of the crown, and produced an early manifestation of the cleavage between liberal and conservative elements that was to divide and agitate Spanish society for many decades. The five-year struggle also restricted agriculture and greatly hampered commercial activity.
Furthemore, Spain found itself struggling with an alarming increase in the national debt while at the same time she had exhausted her credit.

The defeat and ousting of the French armies brought only slight relief. Although the specter of war had disappeared, its companion, famine, remained to torment many of the people. Equally distressing were the tyranny and reaction which followed the return of Ferdinand VII to the Spanish throne. The Constitution was repudiated, the old system was re-established, and liberals and afrancesados alike were persecuted and swept away. These actions caused a certain exaggerated liberalism among some, which was to result in excesses within a few years.

The growing discontent of the nation eventually led to the rising of Riego and the repeated proclamation of the Constitution of 1812. As is so often true in such periods of political turmoil, the liberal reaction brought anarchy to some areas, attempted revolt to others, riots, and bloodshed. Finally, in 1823, the Duke of Angoulême intervened with French troops and restored the absolutist regime. As a result, the poor country was subjected to a period of vengeance and persecution by Ferdinand and the Royalists. During the next few years, political unrest produced some disastrous minor attempts at revolution while the financial scene revealed that the national treasury was continuing in its unhealthy state.
Twenty-five years of strife and disorder did not exhaust the tribulations of Spain, however. In 1833, upon the death of Ferdinand VII, the afflicted nation embarked on a dynastic struggle that was to plunge it into the tragedy of a civil war, a war which was to be repeated on two more occasions during the century and which was to divide the country into two bitter factions. The opposing parties in this controversy were the supporters of Don Carlos, brother of Ferdinand and pretender to the throne, and the friends of Queen Cristina, who was acting as regent for her daughter, Isabel. The Carlists were composed, for the most part, of the extremely religious, conservative, absolutist groups, and the Cristinos included the moderates, liberals, and radicals. The death of Ferdinand removed the leash which was restraining the two factions, and the smoldering country burst into a civil war that was to last for seven cruel years. A civil war is always a catastrophe for any nation, but the Carlist War brought with it a host of evils which tormented the stricken land. The fighting was carried on with great ferocity at times, and both sides were guilty of massacring prisoners, burning entire villages, and destroying crops.

Another woe was the confusion that reigned within the established government. The period from 1833 to 1839 saw frequent governmental crises, constant changes of ministers and cabinets, quarrels within the Liberal Party between moderates and radicals, pronunciamientos, occasional riots
and excesses by mobs, and mutinies in the army. An additional source of trouble were the military rivalries which were to plague Spain for many years during the century.

An uneasy peace returned to the country in 1839 with the signing of the peace treaty at Vergara. The government was practically bankrupt, much of the land had been devastated by war, and commerce and industry had been seriously affected. Even more ominous for the unfortunate country was the growing struggle for power between the moderates, including Generals O'Donnell, León, Córdova, and Harvéz, and the radicals and General Espartero. For the next several decades, Spain, which seemed unable to solve her vexing problem of civil and governmental instability, was to be the victim of rival generals.

Due to the growing opposition of the radicals, Queen Cristina abdicated in 1840, and Espartero became regent until 1843, when he was forced out by another revolution. During this period, the familiar pattern quickly reappeared: confusion and dissension within the government, military insurrections and rebellion, and growing opposition to the head of the government. All of this terminated in the overthrow of Espartero and his departure from the country.

Meanwhile, the army was becoming a constant threat to stable government in Spain. It was a nest in which were hatched many intrigues leading to uprisings and insurrections. It was a political weapon used by ambitious men, usually officers of high rank, in order to further their
plans for personal gain or to promote their ideas of government. Because of this, forceful and often violent changes of administration seemed to become the accepted norm, and as a result the nation was continually shaken by political upheaval.

Isabel was declared of age in 1843, and the following twenty-five years of her reign were characterized by continuous discord between political parties, by the rise and fall of governments due to force of arms, and by frequent rotation of power among the three generals, Narváez, O'Donnell, and Espartero. Stable government, orderly changes of administration, peace, and prosperity still did not bring their blessings to the troubled land. It is true that the country revived somewhat under the stern rule of Narváez and other conservatives from 1844 to 1854. Likewise, during O'Donnell's ministry from 1858 to 1863, the most durable ministry since the days of King Ferdinand, the country was granted some rest. Commerce improved, railways were built, and public works were begun; but unfortunately these periods of relative calm were rent by recurring political storms, wars, military insurrections and rebellions, civil disorders, court and government scandals, and financial crises which left the country burdened with a large debt, no credit, and an empty treasury. In the years 1866 and 1867 revolution was brewing, and in 1868 Isabel's chaotic reign collapsed before the revolution instigated by Generals Prim and Serrano and by other liberals.
The departure of Queen Isabel from Spain, marking the downturn of the hated House of Bourbon, did not free the tortured nation from the rack of turmoil and discord. The next six years, years of incessant disorders and disputes, were to be among the worst that Spain had experienced during the nineteenth century. The political scene was a confused jumble of Carlists, republicans, unionists, progressives, radicals, liberals, and Alfonists. For two years the political leaders of the country sought vainly for a monarch, until finally in 1870 the Cortes elected Amadeo of Savoy to be king of Spain. By this year the condition of the nation was deteriorating at an alarming rate. Industry and commerce were at a low ebb, the Carlists were once again arming and organizing, and the administration was threatening to go to pieces. The reign of Amadeo began unpropitiously with the assassination of General Prim, who had been instrumental in securing the election of Amadeo to the throne. This event deprived the country of a strong power and further doomed the foreign king to failure. After two years, during which time Spain was confronted by political, financial, and dynastic crises, Amadeo abdicated, and the Republic was proclaimed in 1873.

The Republic, although short-lived, was an ordeal of confusion and bloodshed, and to an outside observer it must have seemed as if the nation was determined to destroy its integrity. By 1874 the situation was truly appalling. The Carlists were masters of three provinces in the north;
anarchy was raging in the south, where the Cantonalists, who desired a federal form of government similar to the Swiss Federation, were guilty of starting a second civil war; Catalonia, cut off from the rest of Spain by the Carlist forces, was functioning as an independent state; commerce was almost paralyzed and the treasury was empty; and Cuba was in revolt and was draining Spain of needed men, supplies, and money. Finally, on the last day of 1874, Alfonso XII, son of Queen Isabel, was proclaimed king as a result of pronunciamientos by Generals Martínez Campos and Primo de Rivera, and the country welcomed his accession, hoping that his arrival might bring a return to more orderly government.

At the Restoration Spain was a very sick nation. For three quarters of a century the country had squandered thousands upon thousands of lives and millions upon millions of pesetas in foreign and civil wars. The constant upheavals and the uncertainty of the future had seriously damaged commerce, business, agriculture, and industry. The six years since the Revolution of 1868 had added a tremendous burden to the debt, and the large army was consuming most of the country's entire revenue. In order to meet this financial crisis, taxes had to be increased beyond their already high levels. After such an ordeal, recovery was to be a slow and gradual process, and unfortunately much of the improvement was merely superficial. Inwardly, the nation was still sapped by deep-seated weaknesses, and
this lack of national vigor and health was to become evident in the war with the United States.

Politically, the last twenty-five years of the century brought relief from the incessant military insurrections and revolutions. The pronunciamiento for Alfonso was the last of the era, and the country became more peaceful than it had been since the death of Charles III. The constitutional monarchy apparently furnished a solution to the governmental dilemma which was acceptable to most parties. The Carlist War was soon brought to a victorious conclusion, and proceedings both within the country and abroad became somewhat more stable and harmonious, with the exception of the vexing Cuban problem.

Economically and financially, the nation continued to experience difficulties. There was some prosperity for a while, but taxes were still oppressive, falling most heavily on the poorer classes, and many farmers emigrated, leaving the Spanish soil untilled. By 1891 and 1892 exports were beginning to fall off, and prices were increasing. Of still more serious concern was the everlasting problem of the national treasury. Despite a short period of prosperity, there were continued yearly deficits, which had increased the national debt until bankruptcy threatened.

However, by the end of the century it was not a domestic but rather a foreign question that was to be Spain's undoing. In the last thirty years of Spanish rule, Cuba cost the nation over 100,000 lives and countless millions
of pesetas, and eventually it led to war with the United States. This war greatly added to the national debt, and it revealed all too clearly the weakened condition of the country. A century of bloodshed and turmoil had exacted its toll of the afflicted land, and it was, perhaps, significant that another war should bring the curtain down on one of the most turbulent epochs in Spanish history.

It is only natural that such disorders and disturbances as those which plagued Spain for a century should have repercussions in the society of the nation. They brought about changes and intensified many of the problems with which all societies are burdened. The War of Independence caused some alterations in Spanish society. The struggle was carried on, for the most part, by the people, who, after learning to rule themselves, were unwilling to return to the old system of exclusion and privileges for the nobility. As a result, class barriers were broken down. Furthermore, there was a growing restlessness in Spanish society following the war due to the assimilation of more liberal ideas which weakened the religious and political bigotry that had checked, for centuries, any tendency toward change.

Fernando's death in 1833 brought an end to the absolutism which had tyrannized the country for years, and a more liberal government came into power. This made possible, in 1836, an event which was to exert great and lasting influence on Spanish society. In that year Mendizábal, in a daring move to bolster the revenues of the impoverished
government, declared the estates of the Church to be national property, and they were sold at public auction. The sale of these lands produced an abundance of money, but unfortunately only a small part of it found its way into the national treasury. Much of the proceeds from the sales was embezzled, and many speculators succeeded in acquiring great wealth in a short time. This profusion of money and the quick fortunes which it nurtured caused an interesting social phenomenon: the rapid growth of the burguesía, or middle class. Unhappily, there were attendant evils which created some knotty social problems for Spain in the last half of the nineteenth century. In fact, Luis Vega-Rey states emphatically that "La causa ocasional y primitiva que suscitó en España la cuestión social...fué la supresión de las comunidades religiosas y la desamortización y venta de sus bienes." He then discusses the disentailment and sale of the property of the Church, and he indicates some of the social ills that have cursed Spain as a result of this act. Vega-Rey describes the swarms of agents that descended upon the convents to attach the properties as soon as the religious orders were suppressed and the members expelled. Ignorant and incompetent, for the most part, these agents carried out their duties in a scandalous manner. Taking advantage of the confusion and disorder, they appropriated jewels, ornaments, paintings, and other art treasures of value, and they also engaged in many illegal transactions involving the sale of the land.
Vega-Rey slyly observes that "Había tanto, que cada cual podía retirar lo que le era posible y dejar un considerable remanente para el Estado, el cual perdió grandes valores de las manos muertas, que fueron a perderse y a fundirse en otras manos vivas y ágiles."

The sale of the Church property was dispatched in a casual transaction that did not adhere very closely to sound business practice. After having been appraised at a low price and offered at public auction, the property was awarded to the highest bidder. The purchaser needed only the security of any guarantor in the transaction. If hard cash was paid, the purchaser received a discount. However, if he was unable to do this, he could pay in annual installments, using treasury bonds. Because of these easy terms, many people, with an empty pocket but a discerning eye for a profitable bargain, became owners of estates, paying the annual installments with the products of their property. Others sold the estates which they had obtained so cheaply, and in this fashion fortunes were quickly gained.

The craze for wealth now began to grip the nation. Those who had received the Church properties almost as a gift desired to derive a quick profit. Rentals in the large cities and in the rural areas were doubled and tripled. Easy money and the increase in wealth fostered a growing desire for additional comforts and pleasures. A wish for luxury, another mania of that society, began to spread, the demand for articles increased, and prices soared. This
caused a real hardship for the lower middle classes since wages and salaries did not keep pace with this new mode of luxurious living. Vega-Rey has drawn an absorbing picture of the social and moral ills that beset Spain when the torrent of money began to undermine the foundation and structure of that society: "El aumento de riqueza produjo un cambio radical en los usos y costumbres públicas y privadas, y ya nadie vivía como vivían en otro tiempo aun los considerados como ricos. El lujo y la esplendidez brillaban por todas partes.... Los elegantes cafés, antes en número tan reducido, se multiplicaban por doquier, aun en recónditas calles, porque se había hecho una necesidad indispensable acudir a ellos a pasar las horas de la noche destinadas antes al descanso.

"Diez o doce teatros, siempre llenos, apenas bastaban para entretenecer los ocios de la multitud, y los coches particulares circulaban por las calles y paseos en tan considerable número, que el hombre de mediana fortuna se avergonzaba si no poseía uno de estos vehículos.

"Tanto brillo ficticio y aparente ocultaba bajo su dorado manto un inmundo lodazal de corrupción, donde pululaban todo género de vicios y desórdenes....

"Los ricos labradores no dedicaban sus hijos al honrado ejercicio de la agricultura. Deseando distinguirlos, elevarlos y hacerles hombres, los enviaban a Madrid y otras grandes capitales a desempeñar empleos o cursar carreras científicas, en particular la abogacía y la diplomacia, que
podían en breve tiempo llevar a los más altos puestos del Estado, porque la política, ese cáncer social, empezaba a ser el general pensamiento...”

It was under such conditions as these that society began to undergo a noticeable transformation. Rapid changes from one social level to another became more common, and this in turn tended to produce a levelling or mixing of classes. The new middle class began to grow and to form an important and, at times, disturbing element of Spanish society. Emboldened by the abundance of its easily acquired wealth, the new aristocracy of money aspired to reach the levels of the aristocracy of blood and birth. Palatial houses were built, titles of nobility were purchased, extravagant parties were given. This desire to ascend the social scale soon became an ill that infected and also tormented people of nearly every social level since frequently the longing lacked the financial support necessary for success. However, if the attainment of such a goal was impossible, the pretense and deceptive show of a higher position were not, and the society of that era devoted much of its energy, time, and money to a false display of greater wealth and position. Unfortunately, the elegant dress or frock-coat, often purchased with borrowed money, frequently cloaked an empty stomach or a malnourished body, but for many people such a sacrifice became an imperious necessity in order to carry on the social comedy.
During the first part of the nineteenth century there took place in Europe a revolution, an industrial revolution, which was to bring about a pronounced change in the social life of every nation. Although this movement reached Spain at a later date because of the nation's intellectual and geographical isolation from the rest of Europe, it introduced some striking innovations into a country bound for years by tradition and conservatism. A natural consequence of the impact of these scientific and industrial advances was the creation of additional social problems for the nation. After describing some of the mechanical marvels that replaced the primitive methods then in use, Vega-Rey sets forth the evils that accompanied such improvements. Among these was the vast unemployment occasioned by the new methods. Thousands of men were deprived of the only tasks which they could perform, and as a result, relates Vega-Rey, "...los más inteligentes y avisados, molestando a sus conocimientos y procurándose recomendaciones, acudían a los grandes centros de población en que se había desarrollado la terrible epidemia de la empleomanía, solicitando cualquiera ocupación y aumentando el número de la gente ociosa e inútil." This rage for public office was recognized by Spanish writers as a grave malady that contaminated many levels of society in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Industrial progress also stimulated the unhealthy craving for pleasures. The improved methods of production increased the supply of articles which were in great demand
as a result of the growing desire for material comforts, and the railroads, in a relatively short time, brought an enchanting variety of luxuries into the homes of the wealthy.

Other Spanish writers support the assertion of Vega-Rey that the great strides in material progress made by Spain's neighbors produced an unwholesome and disturbing atmosphere in the country. Juan Valera observes that "La cultura material, mercéd a la facilidad de comunicaciones, lo invade y quizá lo corrompe todo." In fact, Valera attributes the social woes of Spain primarily to this impact of more modern cultures on a backward nation: "Creo, por último, que el malestar puede y debe explicarse de otra suerte: tiene causas más hondas....

"Las causas están patentes y bastan a explicarlo todo. Nuestro atraso en la cultura material es harto grande aún para que no podamos vivir sino a duras penas como las demás naciones cultas de Europa, y sin embargo, sentimos la necesidad de vivir como ellas.

"Y el contacto de la moderna civilización ha ingertado en la nuestra, castiza y propia, pero atrasada y enteca en su desarrollo, tal fermento de doctrinas nuevas, de utopías audaces, y de ciencia de última moda, que no es de maravillar la agitación y desasosiego de todo el ser de esta nación desventurada....

"Añádanse a esto algunas faltas nacidas de nuestra condición natural de españoles, y algunos extravíos que surjen
fatalmente de las entrañas de nuestra historia, y se explicará todo."

It is evident, then, that by the time of the restoration of Alfonso XII in 1874, the nation and its people had been subjected to several decades of unwholesome turbulence and stress. Politically and socially, the country had experienced a constant state of agitation which had left it exhausted, and the many years of instability and uncertainty could not help but leave their imprint on the life of that time. The situation presented complexities that made a normal existence difficult. A changed philosophy with a different set of values and attitudes, some of them distorted, began to dominate the thoughts of many people. Additional social and moral ills further weakened an already insecure and ailing society that seemed to live only for the day.

It was at this time that Benito Pérez Galdós was beginning to create his vast panorama of contemporary Spanish society, or, to be more specific, Madrid society, in the novelas contemporáneas. Few will question, it is believed, the statement that Galdós was an interested observer and an accurate chronicler of the Spanish scene, for this observation has been made by innumerable literary critics, both present and past. Menéndez y Pelayo, Leopoldo Alas, Federico de Onís, César Arroyo, Angel del Río, César Barja, José Balseiro, Gamero y de Laiglesia, and H. Chonon Berkowitz, to name only a few, provide adequate testimony
to this assertion. In fact, some critics have regretted the detail and the exactness of Galdós' portrayal of Spanish life, finding the scenes, at times, somewhat painful and the atmosphere depressing. However, it is to be remembered that the nation and the society which are mirrored in the novelas were not happy and vigorous. Writers of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries seem to agree that the country presented a distressing spectacle. Juan Valera, describing the nation as a whole in 1876, admits that "Todos convienen en que España, social, política, y económicamente considerada, está bastante mal. Salvo la Turquía, quizá no haya en Europa otro pueblo que en esto nos gane. En punto a estar mal, somos potencia de primer orden." Another well-known writer, Ricardo Macías Picavea, offers the same cheerless observation some twenty years later: "A la desolación y decadencia, que hemos pintado, del país, corresponden del modo más elocuente y triste, la decadencia y desolación de la sociedad y de las gentes." In analyzing the novels of Galdós, César Barja gives a significant description of this troubled period during the years following the Revolution of 1868: "Son años característicos. En ellos agoniza una España vieja, ya desquiciada en la serie de luchas y de crisis por qué había venido pasando a través de todo el siglo XIX, y una España más nueva, acaso más consciente de sí misma, va formándose con dificultades y confusamente. Las novelas de Galdós acusan este estado de transición y de inseguridad. Instituciones e ideas,
personas y cosas aparecen vacilantes, sometidas al cambio diario, aquí hundiéndose y allí levantándose.\textsuperscript{12}

If Pérez Galdós and his work are, therefore, a product and a reflection of the decadent years of the Restoration and the Regency, one might expect to find in the novelas contemporáneas some treatment of the social problems that were disturbing the nation at this time. It is true that a few critics have refused to recognize or admit that Galdós has dealt with any questions of this nature or that his novelas constitute a valuable sociological study of that period. For example, Unamuno, in an article on Galdosian society, states at one point that Galdós "...no sintió lo que llamamos cuestión social...," and again he repeats this idea, saying, "De aquí el que sí de la obra novelesca gal- dosiana se puede extraer alguna psicología elemental y poquísimio complicada, será difícil extraer sociología de ella."\textsuperscript{13} Antonio Espina believes that "La vida española tiene problemas, formas, paradojas que no salen a flote en la obra de Galdós,"\textsuperscript{14} while the Jesuit, Eguía Ruiz, asserts emphatically that "Esto de lo económico es un flatus vocis porque a Galdós, tan dado a la solución de problemas, nunca le importó cosa el problema social."\textsuperscript{15}

It is difficult to see on what facts these critics base their opinions. Perhaps prejudice, or perhaps a too limited concept of the term "social problem," has originated these comments, for a careful study of the novelas contemporáneas reveals that Galdós is vitally concerned with social
problems, and he treats the various aspects of these questions with the concern of one who wishes to teach and to correct. This assertion is substantiated by an impressive number of recognized authorities in the field of Spanish literature, and it will be made evident, it is believed, in the study which is to follow. The distinguished scholar, Menéndez y Pelayo, affirms that the _novelas contemporáneas_ contain "...un valor sociológico muy grande, que ha de ser apreciado rectamente por los historiadores futuros."\(^{16}\)

Azorín, likewise, has found that Galdós is preoccupied with social problems, and he adds that "La sociología de Galdós, como la de Larra, la constituye una constante preocupación por el avance humano."\(^{17}\) Barja believes that Galdós' novel is a social one in two respects: first, it presents us with a body of facts, a sociological, moral, and economic report of urban society; and second, the problems treated in the novels are those which originate in city life.\(^{18}\)

These critics and many others have realized that the _novelas contemporáneas_ provide a wide field for the investigation of Spanish social problems.

Anyone who is familiar with the difficulties of urban life will recognize in the _novelas_ the usual ills that plague any society. Some of these problems receive extensive treatment, appearing again and again, while others do not assume the proportions of serious questions in the Galdosian society, but nevertheless they are considered by sociologists as evils of city life. Poverty and its train
of bad housing and poor health are found in many works. The beggar has long been a familiar figure in Spanish society, and he is present in Galdós' society. There are some alcoholics, a few prostitutes, homeless men, and delinquents; there are neglected and abused children. Illiteracy and ignorance, always social handicaps, retard the advance of some Galdosian characters. Mental incompetence and mental ailments create a definite burden for the society of the novelas. An insecure old age harasses several characters, while other social case histories involve gambling, widowhood, and suicide.

These categories involve the usual classes found in any sociological study of urban life. However, the society of that era had its own peculiar maladies which are not to be found listed among the usual classifications, and they are due to the social and political transitions of that time or to certain traits of the Spanish character. One deplorable social condition which afflicted Spain at that time was caused by the vast bureaucratic family which was growing more and more troublesome because of the empleo-mania that was sweeping through Spanish society. Most government employees received inadequate wages, and frequently they were unemployed, or cesantes, due to the continual changes of government. The cesante, never seeking other employment, but longing and scheming only to return to the uncertain life of public office, posed a vexing question for Spanish society. Another social group that
occasioned undesirable situations was the upper class, or certain elements of the upper class. Many of the wealthy and dissipated members of this group, especially the spoiled señoritos, were content to live indolently on the wealth accumulated by their forebears. They contributed nothing to the betterment of society, being concerned only with gratifying their desire for pleasure, and they formed a disturbing element and provided the lower classes with a very unwholesome pattern of life. The ruined aristocrat was too proud to work but felt no shame in accepting a parasitic existence which caused him to become a burden to those about him. Sudden class changes due to the influx of easy money and the loss of family estates resulted in maladjusted people who could not adapt themselves to their new environment.

To these categories one should add another group of social ills which had their origin in the philosophy prevailing at the time, or in the Spanish temperament. The inordinate desire for money and for luxuries and pleasures and the frantic efforts to attain the next social position and to make a vain display led to all manner of problems for the individuals of that society. Frequently an inner conflict was set up, for many people were denied the attainment of most of these things because of their apathy, their idleness and scorn of useful productive labor with one's hands, their laziness, and their unrestrained imagination and lack of practical common sense. These weaknesses also
encouraged a way of life that seemed to accept the social parasite in all levels of society, from the ragged beggar to the titled but penniless aristocrat, and so many useless members could not fail to constitute a very harmful drag on social progress. All of these conditions -- the life of the government employee; the sudden changes in class; the dissipation and waste of the upper class; the acceptance of the social parasite; the craving for money, luxury, and position; and the apathy and indolence -- produced problems which are found in Galdosian society.

It is evident that such an extended range of subjects offers material for many interesting investigations. The purpose of this study will be to examine three of the subjects listed in the last group mentioned: the unreasoning love of money, the unrestrained passion for luxury and pleasure, and the unhealthy preoccupation with ostentation and a higher rank in society. The conditions in Spain that promoted the extensive growth of these three evils will be discussed, and the resultant harmful effects on the individual and on society will be demonstrated. These subjects do not necessarily constitute the most important social studies in the novelas, but they do play an important role in many of them. Furthermore, a study of one leads quite naturally to the study of the other two, for money, luxury, and ostentation are interdependent upon one another. Therefore, since the three problems are so closely related, they form a significant unit for investigation.
It is realized that an objection may be raised to the classification of such items as social problems. It may be claimed that some of these subjects are more moral or ethical in nature than sociological. However, it would seem that anything that affects adversely the well-being of society and its members, whether it be of a moral, ethical, economic, or political nature, must be considered a social problem. This is the position taken by the well-known politician and eminent sociologist, Gumersindo de Azcárate, who, in 1878, said, "...el problema social es hoy tan complejo como lo es la vida y a él alcanza la crisis total que ésta atraviesa. Si no tuviera un aspecto científico, no se hablaría de la ignorancia del proletariado, ni de enseñanza gratuita, ni de enseñanza profesional, ni de instrucción integral; si no tuviera otro religioso no pretenderían los unos resolverlo con los principios del cristianismo, ni pedirían los otros desde el campo opuesto la renuncia a toda religión; si no tuviera otro moral, no clamarián éstos contra los vicios de unas clases, y aquellos contra el egoísmo de otras, ni enaltecieran unos y otros los efectos del ahorro, de la laboriosidad, de las virtudes todas; y no digo nada del aspecto económico, porque en este punto todos están conformes, y lejos de desconocer el papel importante que juega en este caso la miseria, la tendencia general es a hacer consistir en esto sólo el problema social; ni necesito decir que tiene también un aspecto jurídico, porque todos recordáis cuanto se ha hablado en este debate de
libertad, igualdad, personalidad, asociación, propiedad, arrendamiento, herencia, libertad de contracción, usura...

Another prominent nineteenth-century figure, Concepción Arenal, feels that the social question is primarily a moral one, for she declares that "51 en todos los países la cuestión social es cuestión moral en gran parte, en el nuestro mucho más..." On another occasion she emphasizes this fact again: "Cierto que todo fenómeno moral es social, puesto que pasa dentro de la sociedad e influye en ella..." Another objection might be that such weaknesses are found to some degree among societies of all eras. This is to be granted. Also, it is true that the individual may recognize in himself certain peculiarities and idiosyncrasies that are said to be symptomatic of insanity, but it is only when such traits become magnified and exaggerated that the individual is considered to be mentally sick. The same is true of a society. The desire for money, luxury, and social prestige; the lack of a realistic approach to life; the indolence and parasitism of its members; these tendencies are to be found in all societies, the degree varying, frequently, in proportion to the political, economic, and social stability of the nation. However, when such cravings and such weaknesses become so intensified that they tend to dominate the way of life for a society and to warp its philosophy, then it would seem that such a society is manifesting symptoms of a morbid condition. This is not to imply that every member of that society was a victim of
these ambitions and these frailties, no more than one would say that the lawlessness and immorality that flared up in the United States after the first World War were the pattern for every citizen of this country. In both cases, however, the existing situation presented problems that posed a threat to the well-being of each society.

In addition to examining these social ills and the effect on the lives of those who fell prey to them, this study will also attempt to substantiate the factuality of these problems which are presented in Galdosian society with observations of other writers of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A study will also be made of the role that Galdó's assigns to these three problems in the novels, and careful attention will be given to the attitude that Galdó's displays toward these subjects and to any variation in this attitude during the course of his lengthy novelist career.
NOTES

1 The following works were used in this historical summary: Elizabeth Wormly Latimer, Spain in the Nineteenth Century, Chicago, 1898; Martin A. S. Hume, Modern Spain, 1783-1898, New York, 1900; and H. Butler Clark, Modern Spain, 1815-1898, Cambridge, 1906.

2 Luis Vega-Rey, "La cuestión social en España," Revista contemporánea, XC (1893), 405.

3 Ibid., 405-418.

4 Ibid., 409.

5 Ibid., 414-415.

6 Ibid., 513-523.

7 Ibid., 515.

8 Juan Valera, "De la perversión moral en la España de nuestros días," Revista de España, LI (1876), 176. This article can also be found in the Obras completas of Juan Valera, XLV (1905), 253-295.

9 Ibid., 191-192.

10 Ibid., 175.


12 César Barja, Literatura española; libros y autores modernos (Los Angeles, 1933), p. 349.


15 Constancio Eguía Ruiz, Crítica patriótica, cuatro semblanzas literarias (Madrid, 1921), p. 274.

16 M. Menéndez y Pelayo, Discurso de contestación al de ingreso de Galdós en la Real Academia Española (Madrid, 1897), p. 43.
17 José Martínez Ruiz (Azorín), Obras completas, III (Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1947), 1218.

18 Barja, p. 324.

19 Gumersindo de Azcárate, "El problema social," Revista de España, LXIV (1878), 439.

20 Concepción Arenal, La cuestión social (Obras completas, VIII), Vol. II: Cartas a un señor (Madrid, 1925), 27.

21 Ibid., 182.
CHAPTER II

MONEY

Easy money, luxurious living and frivolous pleasures, and ostentation: these were the false gods worshipped by many members of Spanish society after the Restoration. This creed attracted followers from almost every social level, regardless of position or financial status, as Berkowitz has observed (in his work, Pérez Galdós). Some of those in high society, who already possessed wealth and material comforts, sought prestige and distinction in honors and titles, for a position among the nobility was within easy reach of the parvenu, and counts and marquises abounded. Others, especially the young señoritos, desired well-paying positions in the government; however, their concern was not service to the country, as the only thing that they esteemed was the elegance of their appearance and of their manners. Among the lower social levels the craving for material comforts and wealth was paramount, and Berkowitz notes that here the driving force "...was largely motivated by a desire for easy living, fashionable dress, and money effortlessly acquired."2

The guiding philosophy of the period had become more and more materialistic. The principal criterion of success for many individuals seemed to be based on the ability to
acquire wealth, regardless of the means employed, to live luxuriously and extravagantly, and to attain a higher social position.

It is obvious that the first and primary requisite in such a society is money, for its possession automatically assures one of luxury, pleasures, and position; and it is the purpose of this chapter to study certain aspects related to the frantic search for this golden key which would provide access to the material comforts and social prestige so eagerly sought. The chapter will not concern itself with those whose desire for money follows the path marked by reason, honesty, and hard work, for in any modern civilized society it is normal and desirable that the members should seek to acquire a certain amount of the wealth of that society. Since the focus of this investigation is upon the symptoms and causes of certain social ills, interest will be centered upon the undesirable conditions that aroused the craving for money and upon the harmful consequences of this desire that can so quickly flare into a consuming passion.

The society of Galdós' time provided a sharp stimulus to the eager appetites for quick wealth in the glittering spectacle of fabulous wealth acquired within a short time. The oscillating fortunes of the stock market, the new demands created by industrial progress, the civil wars, and the tolerance of an indifferent, bankrupt government and of a society hungry for luxuries produced situations rich with
opportunities for those with clever minds, daring hearts, and easy consciences. The Marqués de Fúcar, a lesser but nevertheless important figure in La familia de León Roch, is one of these enterprising individuals who has readily perceived these opportunities, and he seems to have enjoyed great success in funneling a large stream of his society's wealth into his well-filled coffers. On one occasion when the "escandalosa fortuna de Fúcar" is the subject of conversation between León Roch, Joaquín Onésimo, and Federico Cimarra, the latter very graphically describes how "...Fúcar ha labrado su rica colmena en el tronco podrido del Tesoro público..." since, to continue the comparison, the honey from this beehive has increased his wealth one hundred-fold."

The young man who makes this clever figure of speech eventually appears to have found the road to his El Dorado, for the Marqués de Fúcar reports in a letter that Federico Cimarra "Se ha metido en Bolsa y...acometiendo con serenidad y tino las jugadas, hace una fortuna loca."4

The knowledge of these easily acquired fortunes fired the imagination of many in that society, giving rise to wonderful tales of easy money, and such tales became a part of the social atmosphere. Thus it is that Melchor de Relimpio, a worthless young man who appears in La desheredada, could not escape being infected by this fever that claimed so many victims, for everywhere he went, "...oía la historia de fortunas improvisadas. En el café, en los círculos
todos, se referían maravillosos cuentos, como los de magia. Aquí un pobrete audaz había redondeado colosal ganancia en pocos meses. Allá una idea feliz, engendrando el más pingüe de los negocios, había hecho poderoso al que un año antes era mendigo. Mil agentes bullían en Madrid, realizando, con maravillosos beneficios, esas combinaciones obscuras entre el Tesoro y los usureros, entre los servicios y las contratas, de que resultaban los únicos milagros del siglo XIX.5

Two other Galástean characters who have become men of wealth within a few years are Gonzalo Torres and Isidro Barragán. Concerning the fortune of Torres, José María Bueno de Guzmán has this to say: "Aquel gato se había enriquecido en pocos años con atrevidos agios;..."6 As for Barragán, José María reports that his sudden wealth has made him extremely objectionable: "Me atacaba los nervios aquel pedazo de bárbaro, que por el hecho de haberse enriquecido de la noche a la mañana, se lo quería saber todo, disputaba a gritos, quería imponer su opinión, se concebía más rico que nadie, y más listo y más agudo y más caballero y rumboso..." As José María continues his comments about Barragán, it becomes apparent that his rise to riches was slow at first, but soon it gathered astounding momentum; "La fortuna de Barragán ha sido uno de los grandes misterios de Madrid.... El 60 tenía una tenducha de géneros de punto en la Plaza Mayor. Metióse en no sé qué contratas; hizo préstamos al Tesoro; empezó a crecer
como la espuma. El 77 se le citaba como un gran tenedor de valores del Estado. El 80 eclipsaba su recargado lujo a muchos que siempre pasaron por muy ricos. El 83 no había ya quien le aguantara. 7

It was inevitable that these fortunes, blooming rapidly in the midst of rather widespread poverty, should loom ever larger in the eyes of a society that had witnessed the phenomenal rise of the new aristocracy of wealth. Money had become the most important and the most essential asset in this highly materialistic society, and even the members of the old aristocracy were well aware of this fact. Galdós discusses this in an article entitled "Vida de sociedad:"

"Hablando en puridad, hoy no hay más aristocracia que el dinero. Los mejores pergaminos son las acciones del Banco de España. Todos los días estamos viendo que tan o cual joven, cuyo apellido es de los que retumban en nuestra historia con ecos gloriosos, toma por esposa a tal o cual señorita rica, cuyos millones tienen por cuna una honrada carnicería o el comercio de vinos." Galdós continues his analysis of this noteworthy trend in his society by pointing out that it is an easy matter to obtain a title, "que siempre suena bien," and as a result one constantly sees "...marqueses y condes cuya riqueza es producto de los adoquins de Madrid, del monopolio del petróleo o de las acémilas del ejército del norte en la primera y segunda guerra civil. Esto mismo ha contribuido a desmoralizar
nuestra sociedad. Los individuos de la antigua nobleza se han convencido de que para nada les valen sus pergaminos sin dinero, y sólo piensan en procurarse éste, ya por medio de los negocios, ya por medio de sus alianzas."8

The men of wealth, the true high priests of this cult of money, were regarded with awe and respect by their society, which attributed such importance to the riches that they had acquired. Of the fabulously wealthy Marqués de Fúcar, Galdós asks, "¿Quién no conoce al Marqués de Fúcar, de quien ha dicho la adulación que es uno de los pocos oasis de riqueza situados en medio del árido desierto de la general miseria? Así como ocupa el primer lugar en la constelación citada, también es el alpha de la sociedad española."9

Another who is well received in Galdosian society because of his money is José María Manso. His brother, Máximo, has this to say about the social success of José María, who, after twenty years in the Antilles, returns to Spain a wealthy man: "Bien se le notaba la satisfacción de verse tan obsequiado, y atraído por mil lisonjas y solicitudes, que a la legua le daban a conocer como un centro metálico de primer orden."10 Máximo also slyly observes that the family of José María experiences no trouble in increasing its social contacts: "Las relaciones de la familia aumentaban de día en día, cosa sumamente natural habiendo en la casa olor a dinero."11
José María Bueno de Guzmán also basks in the sun of social adulation because of his money. He describes the warmth of his reception shortly after he has established himself in Madrid: "No necesito encarecer lo bien recibido que fui en toda clase de círculos. Los que esto lean comprenderán al punto que teniendo yo lo que en claros números queda dicho, y suponiéndome el vulgo mucho más aún, no me habían de faltar relaciones. No necesitaba ciertamente buscarlas; ellas venían solas, me perseguían, me acosaban con descargas de saludos, invitaciones y cortesanías."12

For many people in that society the aroma of money is so pleasant, so life-giving, that it dulls or completely conceals any disagreeable odors that may have lingered from the lowly beginnings of the princes of wealth.13 The reasoning of these individuals seems to be that the possession of money, large quantities of money, is adequate proof that the fortunate possessor of such wealth is endowed with outstanding talents and great wisdom. The presence of the wealthy man is more than socially acceptable; it is desirable. Rafael del Agüila, the blind and embittered young aristocrat who appears in Torquemada en la cruz and in Torquemada en el purgatorio, comes to realize this fact all too well. The need for money has caused his sisters, Cruz and Fidela, to decide to accept the crude and ruthless usurer, Francisco Torquemada, as husband and brother-in-law. Rafael emphatically declares that he will never compromise the family honor by agreeing to a union with
Torquemada, and he refers to "...la ignominia de sus riquezas, amasadas con la sangre del pobre..." Whereupon Cruz exclaims, "¡Pero, hijo, si vamos a buscarle el pelo al huevo...! Tu estás en Babia.... Sí, porque meterse a indagar de dónde viene la riqueza...es tontería mayúscula.' Ven acá.... ¿No andan por ahí muchos, que son senadores vitalicios, y hasta marqueses, con cada escudo que mete miedo? ¿Y quién se acuerda de que unos se redondearon vendiendo negros, otros absorbien con el chupón de la usura las fortunas desleídas? Tu no vives en la realidad. Si recobrarás la vista, verás que el mundo ha marchado, y que te quedaste atrás, con las ideas de tu tiempo amojamadas en la mollera."¹⁴

Previous to this argument with her brother, Cruz has had her own misgivings about accepting Torquemada into their family. She realizes that they will be ridiculed and criticized by others, but she proves to be a shrewd judge of her society when she cynically remarks: "Los mismos que nos critiquen le besarán la mano a él, sí...porque con esa mano firma el talonario...la besarán, por si algo se le pega.... ¡que risa!"¹⁵

Despite Rafael's objections, the marriage of Fidela and Torquemada takes place. Nevertheless Rafael cannot believe that this repugnant product of the lower classes, whose only forte is the ability to accumulate wealth, will be accepted in high society. He is soon disillusioned, however, for the avaricious Torquemada, under the discreet
guidance of Cruz, ascends the social scale rapidly. His unerring judgment in business matters gains for him the respect of the financial leaders of the upper social spheres, despite his lack of culture and elegance. Later, Rafael sees his despised brother-in-law enter the senate and, finally, the ranks of the aristocracy as the Marqués de San Eloy. Fully cognizant now of the power of money, Rafael cynically advises Torquemada to address the notables who are to gather at a banquet in his honor as follows:

"¿Qué celebrás en mí? ¿Las virtudes, el talento? No; las riquezas, que son, en esta edad triste, la suprema virtud, y la sabiduría por excelencia. Celebrás mi dinero, porque yo he sabido ganarlo y vosotros no.... Me envidiáis, veis en mí un ser superior."16

Shortly before hurling himself to death from his window, Rafael once again refers to the great prestige that the wealthy man enjoys in that society. While conversing with Torquemada he says: "...la sociedad que nada agradece tanto como el que le lleven dinero, no ve en usted el hombre ordinario que asalta las alturas, sino un ser superior, dotado de gran inteligencia. Y le hacen senador, y le admiten en todas partes, y se disputan su amistad, y le aplauden y glorifican, sin distinguir si lo que dice es tonto o discreto, y le mima la aristocracia, y le bendice la Iglesia, y cada paso que usted da en el mundo es un éxito,..."17
During the same conversation with his brother-in-law, Rafael adds further comment on the important position that Don Francisco has in that society, and he remarks: "...por una cosa o por otra, quizás por esa maravillosa aptitud para traer a su casa el dinero de las ajenas, tiene usted un valor propio muy grande." 18

It is not difficult to imagine the excitement, the avid longing, and the frustration that boiled in the minds of those who had not shared in the new wealth that was agitating their society. These unsatisfied yearnings frequently resulted in serious consequences for both the individual and for society. It was inevitable that many should become excessively preoccupied with the subject of money, and their anxiety manifested itself in an exaggerated passion for wealth and in fanciful get-rich-quick schemes. There are many in Galdosian society who reveal the symptoms that stamp them as victims of this widespread frenzy, and the degree of infection varies from a somewhat abnormal interest in money to an unconquerable obsession.

The first example of such a character in the novelas of Galdós is found in Marianela. Señana, mother of Felipe Centeno, a recurring character in some of Galdós' novels, is an avaricious woman who greedily seizes the wages of her husband and children, who work in the mines of Socartes: "Apandaba bonitamente el jornal de su marido y de sus hijos, que era una hermosa suma, y cada vez que había cobranza parecía que entraba por las puertas de su casa el mismo
Jesús Sacramento; tal era el gusto que la vista de las monedas le producía. In return for these wages Señora gives the very minimum to her children in the way of food, clothing, and other necessities.

La familia de León Roch contains several examples of those whose monetary desires are usually uppermost in their thoughts, but a more illuminating example of one whose brain has become completely mentalized from thinking about money is provided by Melchor Relimpio. Bewitched by the stories that he has heard about fantastic fortunes gained within a short time, Melchor formulates extravagant plans that will enable him to take his place among the geniuses of wealth: "...Melchor ideaba todas las semanas un plan o arbitrio nuevo. Lo maduraba en su mente, lo comunicaba a su madre...trataba él de llevarlo a la práctica, y entonces, de las dificultades venía la muerte del plan y el engendro de otro." One plan "Consistía en combinar un sistema de anuncios con un sistema de regalos, ofrecidos por las tiendas a cuantos comprasen en ellas." Another plan concerned "una red de tranvías aéreos," but the bankers who were to supply the capital "...no supieron ver la inmensidad de millones que podía dar de sí el negocio, y los tranvías aéreos se quedaron en los aires."

After this came new ideas and "otros delirios y extravagancias," but "Entre tantas combinaciones no se le ocurrió al joven Relimpio la más sencilla de todas, que era trabajar en cualquier arte, profesión u oficio, con lo que podría
ganar, desde una peseta para arriba, cualquier dinero." This is now impossible, for Melchor "...fanatizado por lo que oía decir de fortunas rápidas y colosales, quería la suya de una pieza, de un golpe, no ganada ni conquistada a pulso, sino adquirida por arte igual al hallazgo de la mina de oro o del sepultado tesoro de diamantes."21

Others in La desheredada who are dominated by a passion for money are the two Rufete offspring, Isidora and Mariano.22 Mariano, who is incapable of any sustained effort and who is hopelessly scatterbrained, does display one unwavering, tenacious thought: he wants to be rich. When Isidora asks her brother what career he wishes to follow, Mariano replies: "La de tener mucho dinero."23 Galdós explains that Mariano "...se desovia por satisfacer todos los apetitos de la concupiscencia humana y por tener mucho dinero, viniera de donde viniese."24 Thus it is that when Juan Bou asks him what he desires, young Rufete answers: "Tener dinero."25

Doña Cándida, widow of García Grande, is one of the most fearsome of the sablistas in Galdosian society, and her "loco apetito de dinero" makes her even more terrible.26 Alejandro Miquis, the young law student and frustrated dramatist, is another unfortunate whose spirit is troubled by this terrible longing, for, as Galdós explains, "Poseer dinero era para él como la razón del vivir...."27 Rosalía de Bringas is not obsessed with the idea of money, but on one occasion her thoughts linger pleasantly on the
advantages that would be hers if her husband, Francisco, should die and she should marry the wealthy Agustín Caballero. 26

However, it is in the person of Eloísa Bueno de Guzmán, a leading figure in Lo prohibido, that Saldós presents one of his most interesting studies of this passion for money, and her case history will be analyzed in more detail. Eloísa has two great loves in life: a love of luxury, which will be treated later, and a love of money, since the former cannot be enjoyed without the latter. Her cousin, José María, informs us quite early that she, like many others in her society, constantly yearns for wealth: "El 'si yo fuera rica,' esa expresión, esa queja universal que sale de los labios de toda persona de nuestros días (y de estos aliento se forma la atmósfera moral que respiramos), brotaba de los suyos con entonación tan patética, que me causaba pena." 29

Eloísa's dream is partly fulfilled when her husband, Pepe, inherits the estate of his aunt, but the money from this modest fortune cannot begin to satisfy all of her longings, and thus it is that one hears her still expressing a wish for greater wealth: "¡Qué lástima no poseer muchísimos millones para comprar todo lo que me gusta!" 30

Expenditures soar alarmingly as Eloísa indulges her taste for luxuries, and consequently there is a considerable reduction in the amount remaining from the inheritance. This causes her to think more and more about money, the
quick, easy money to be found in certain types of business transactions. Proof of this is made evident one evening at a weekly dinner which she gives for some eighteen or twenty people. On this occasion, Eloísa, "...que empezaba a pensar mucho en los fabulosos aumentos que ciertos hombres de pesquis dan a su capital en poco tiempo...," turns to the Marqués de Fúcar, a master in financial maneuvers, for advice and assistance. She proposes that the Marqués employ some of her money in negotiating tobacco contracts, and she asks avidly: "¿Qué rédito me dará?" The Marqués realizes that Eloísa is dominated by her yearnings for great wealth, and he gives to José María, who has become her lover, the following advice: "...es preciso que se dedique usted a los negocios para tener contenta a la señora. No se fíe usted del amor puro. La señora tiene los espíritus muy metalizados.... He tenido que darle una lección de cosas de Bolsa, sin olvidar las tríquiñuelas del oficio.... Mucho ojo, que la señora piensa demasiado en el dinero."32

The truth of this observation made by Fúcar becomes increasingly evident in a later conversation that occurs between Eloísa and José María, and the latter indicates in the following remark that he is beginning to realize that love is not paramount in the thoughts of his covetous cousin: "La viva imaginación de Eloísa trajo al altar de Cupido expresiones que no encajaban bien entre las medias palabras del amor, y prosaísmos que no se entreveraban bien con las rosas."33 The "expresiones" and "prosaísmos"
which occasion this comment by José María are of a purely financial and commercial nature, for Eloísa is disturbed by her cousin's indifference toward gaining greater wealth. She reminds him that if he wished, he could be much richer, and she cites the example of Púcar and others who tripled their fortunes during the war. However, Eloísa regrets that there is one obstacle: "El inconveniente que hay ahora es que el Tesoro está desahogado y no hace ya empréstitos." This lack of consideration on the part of the treasury and the nation seems to upset Eloísa, for a moment later she utters another lament: "¡Lástima que no hubiera guerra civil pues si la hubiera o te hacias contratista de víveres o perdíamos las amistades!" It would seem evident from these remarks that Mercury and Mammon are replacing Cupid as the deities most revered by Eloísa.

After the death of Eloísa's husband, the passion which José María feels for his cousin begins to wane, and shortly thereafter a definite break occurs. By now the inheritance has largely been squandered, and money and luxuries will no longer be coming from the straying José María. Thus it is that Eloísa, who, as Saca-mantecas says, "...no se harta nunca de dinero," must turn elsewhere for protection, and it is quite logical that her fancy should select as protector the one who has demonstrated that he possesses the touch of Midas; the Marqués de Púcar. Since the Marqués is many years her senior, it is apparent that Eloísa is motivated only by the passion for wealth and the comforts
By now the desire for money has gained complete ascendency over Eloísa's will, and she herself is well aware of this domination and of her demoralization. She tries to explain this to José María later, saying that her actions are worthy of censure. However, she adds as an excuse that "...hay muchas necesidades y poco dinero.... Fue un remolino que me arrastró, fue lo que llaman los marineros un ciclón: di muchas vueltas, sin poder luchar con él."37

Eloísa remains a hopeless addict to the craving for wealth, and her irresistible thirst for money continues to lure her into further moral transgressions.38 Even when seriously ill, Eloísa cannot free herself of her obsession, and when José María accompanies her at her bedside, she questions him eagerly concerning his business affairs and his profits. Apparently this subject serves as a tonic and a stimulant, for José María notes that "...hablándolo de dinero se entusiasmaba, excitándose mucho. Su pasión era el vil metal, viniera como viniese."39

Several other members of the Bueno de Guzmán family are, or have been, infected by the fever for wealth. José María himself once expresses the wish for even greater riches;40 Raimundo, brother of Eloísa, is frequently preoccupied with the idea of money;41 and Eloísa's father, Rafael, confesses that in his youth he had hoped to acquire a fortune "por herencia o por negocios."42 Gonzalo Torres,
previously referred to as one of those who experienced a quick rise to wealth, is another character in Lo prohibido who reveals an excessive interest in wealth. Of this friend, whom he describes as a "...tipo esencialmente madrileño, el más madrileño quizás que en los años que en la Corte estuve," José María makes the interesting observation that it is in the field of business that "...se descubría el hombre tal como era, con sus lados malos y sus lados buenos; el español agudo, vividor, de trastienda, que se mete por el ojo de una aguja y va en pos de su interés saltando por encima de cuanto se le opone; tipo perfecto del que no ve en la humana vida más ideal que hacer dinero, y hacia él marcha con los ojos cerrados, digo, abiertos y bien abiertos."44

Doña Lupe de Jáuregui, the aunt of the Rubín brothers who figure so prominently in Fortunata y Jacinta, and frequent business associate of Francisco Torquemada, the money-lender, apparently is far from satisfied with the lucrative gains which the usurer has brought to her as a result of well-placed loans. Her wish is that Maximiliano, her nephew, shall invent some drug or combination of drugs that will be, as she says, a "panacea." She feels certain that this is the road to quick wealth, and she says to Maxi:

"¡Ahí, si tú fueras otro, si tú tuvieras ambición, pronto seríamos todos ricos. El farmacéutico que no hace dinero en estos tiempos es porque tiene vocación de pobre. Tú sabes bastante, y con un poco de trastienda y otro poco de
farsa y mucho anuncio, mucho anuncio, negocio hecho."

On another occasion Doña Lupe expresses her annoyance over Maxi's ideas of professional ethics with regard to "panaceas," and she exclaims: "¡Oh!, pues en el ramo de Farmacia, Dios mío, hay una verdadera mina. Yo estoy bregando con Maxi para que invente, para que salga por aquí con su poco de panacea. Pero nos hemos vuelto todos muy morales y muy rigoristas. Veán por qué esta nación no adelanta, y los extranjeros nos explotan llevándose todo el dinero."

José María Cruz, the forceful protagonist of La loca de la casa, resembles Torquemada in his avarice and in his frank admission that money is his chief goal in life. It is quite evident that Cruz glories in this passion of his when he says: "...aseguro que el dinero es bueno. Tengo bastante sinceridad para declarar que me gusta...que deseo poseerlo, y que no me dejo quitar a dos tirones el que he sabido hacer mío con mis brazos forzudos, con mi voluntad poderosa, con mi corta inteligencia." His philosophy about wealth shows him to be relentless, even brutal, in his quest for money: "Sí, hay que ganarlo, perseguirlo, ahondar en las entrañas de la tierra o en las de la sociedad.... Y una vez encontrado el rico metal, es preciso cogerlo, antes que lo descubran otros...y después, guardarlo con prontitud, rodeándolo de hábiles defensas para que no se escape." The name Torquemada has become synonymous with avarice and usury in the novels of Galdós. This man, masterfully
drawn and analyzed by Galdós, appears frequently in the earlier novels as a minor figure, and in the Torquemada series he is, of course, the principal character. It is noteworthy that in such novels as El doctor Contencio, La de Eringas, Lo prohibido, and Fortunata y Jacinta, Galdós constantly presents Don Francisco as the implacable moneylender. It is a study of the ruthless usurer rather than the miserly usurer. Indications of a passion for money are implied, as Galdós portrays Torquemada to us as a man who goes about his business, and for Galdós it is an abominable business, with the same zeal, the same industry and diligence as that displayed by a successful merchant or industrialist. In these earlier novels one feels that for Galdós, Torquemada is not only a living being; he is a symbol, a representative of a social type that Galdós obviously abhors. Because of this, Galdós consistently emphasizes Torquemada as the flint-hearted, unscrupulous moneylender. Not until the Torquemada series, in which Galdós probes and lays bare the innermost thoughts of this character, does one clearly discern the avarice that dwells within. In Torquemada en la hoguera, the first of the series, Tía Roma confronts Don Francisco with his obsession over money, his exorbitant rates of interest, and his unbelievably niggardly practices in the early years of his marriage with Silvia.

After Torquemada has married Fidela del Aguila, the latter's sister, Cruz, lays siege to the usurer's hoarded riches, and such is the power of her words that she
experiences little difficulty in obtaining large sums for her carefully conceived plans for a luxurious, ostentatious life which is commensurate with their income. The usurer's avaricious instincts are aroused by the prodigality that he sees in his household, and he laments that Cruz does not allow him to follow his "...santísimo gusto, que es economizar." He then exclaims: "¡Qué desgracia me ha caído encima! ¡Ganar tanto guano, y no poder emplearlo todito en nuevos negocios, hasta ver un montón tan grande, tan grande que...! Pero con esta casa, y estas señoras mías, mis arcas son un cesto. Por un lado entra, por mil partes sale...."50

In the long conversation that Torquemada has with his brother-in-law, Rafael, in which both confess to one another their secret thoughts, the unhappy Don Francisco expresses his regrets over the increased expenditures for luxuries, for such an outlay of money is depriving him "...del gusto inefable de amontonar sus ganancias para poder reunir un capital fabuloso, que era su desideratum, su bello ideal, y su doña...." In reply, Rafael remarks to Torquemada: "Usted padece, señor mío...porque no puede hacer lo que le gusta, lo que le inspira su natural, reunir y guardar dinero; como que es usted avaro...." Torquemada quickly agrees, saying: "Sí lo soy.... Ha, lo soy, ¿y qué? Me da la gana de serlo."51

On another occasion, Cruz del Aguila watches Don Francisco leave the house, and she laughingly observes to
Father Gamborena, the spiritual adviser of the house:

"¡Ya va, ya va; ya le tiene usted navegando por esas calles, pobre pescador de ochavos!... ¿Qué hombre!... ¡Qué ansiedad por aumentar sus riquezas!" And Father Gamborena, who possesses the fortunate gift of insight into the hearts and minds of those whom he guides, sadly replies: "Hay que dejarlo.... Si le quita usted la caña de pescar dinero, se morirá rabioso, y ¿quién responde de su alma? que porque... ¡que porque, hasta que Dios quiera ponerle en el anzuelo algo que le nueva al aborrecimiento del oficio."52

Eventually Torquemada's health fails, and he is forced to divorce himself from his money-making enterprises. As a result of this separation from his most cherished activity, one finds him "...dándose a los demonios, de sólo pensar que ya no ganaba dinero, y que sus capitales se estancarían improductivos."53 As the illness becomes more ominous and death becomes a greater possibility, Father Gamborena believes it advisable that Torquemada prepare himself by confessing his sins. Don Francisco replies, somewhat indig-nantly, that he has no sins and that he even considers himself a saint. To this bit of foolish vanity, Father Gamborena replies: "Usted no tiene más que un vicio, uno solo, que es la avaricia. Convéznme de que puede ser santo un hombre avariento y codicioso en grado máximo, un hombre que no conoce más amor que el dinero, ni más afán que traer a casa todo el que encuentra por ahí; convéznme
do esto, y yo seré el primero que pida su canonización, señor don Francisco. 54

Father Gamborena struggles desperately to save this avaricious soul from the grasp of Satan, but even in Torquemada's dying moment, he cannot be sure that he has triumphed. As the poor miser dies, he mutters one word: "conversión;" and the priest wonders: "¿Conversión! ¿Es la de su alma, o la de la Deuda?" 55

Torquemada's desire for greater wealth never destroys him as it does others. As an example of the fate that may befall those who are not content with the riches that an already bountiful providence has given them, there is the case of the father of Rafael, Fidela, and Cruz del Águila. While meditating on his past life, Rafael says to himself: "Contaminóse mi padre del mal de la época, de la fiebre de los negocios, y no contento con su cuantioso patrimonio, aspiró a ganar colosales riquezas, como otros muchos.... Comprometido en empresas peligrosas, su fortuna tan pronto crecía como mermaba. Ejemplos que nunca debió seguir le perdieron." 56

Years of poverty have apparently sharpened the taste of Fidela del Águila for money, that most delightful substance that was so long denied to her. In her new state as the wife of Torquemada she makes it quite evident that she has savored and enjoyed the riches that her husband brings home, and she reveals a hearty appetite for such things as she says to Torquemada: "Pues a ganar mucho dinero, Tor,
pero mucho.... Me declaro apasionada del vil metal, y lo defiendo contra los sentimentales.... Pues yo me paso al campo del sordido positivismo, sí señor, y me vuelvo muy judía, muy tacaña, muy apasionada al ochavo, y más al centén, y sobre todo al billete de mil pesetas, que es mi delicia." As Don Francisco listen ecstatically to these words, Fidel a continues: "Conque ya lo sabes, Tor.... Tráeme a casa mucho platita, oro en abundancia, y resmas de billetes, no para gastarlos en vanidades, sino para guardar ... ¿qué gusto?"57

There are still others in Galdosian society who have breathed too deeply of that moral atmosphere which is formed by the breath of those who are crying "si yo fuera rica,"58 and their cravings, their obsessions, and their schemes for certain wealth are echoed in the cases of those who have already been studied. 59

Of equal importance for this investigation are other harmful consequences that inevitably are found among the host of evils that always accompany the unreasoning worship of Mammon. Among these are graft, corruption, and similar dishonest acts; for it would seem obvious that financial gain must be the principal motive for such unethical practices, although Émile de Laveleye, the Belgian economist, feels that another cause of corruption is vanity: "When public opinion bows only before virtue, vanity or self-love becomes a powerful stimulus for good. When, on the
contrary, public opinion worships wealth, this sentiment urges men to luxury and corruption. 60

If, then, a society attaches undue importance to the acquisition and possession of wealth, one would expect to find an increasing number of its members yielding to the temptation to engage in fraudulent practices, for such moral and social ills are always waiting, like insidious ailments, to attack a weakened and demoralized society. At times these ills can be controlled, although not cured, by a forthright and vigorous attitude displayed by a sound society. Social rejection and the quick retribution of justice are effective checks on unscrupulous and unethical actions. Unfortunately, however, these restraints seem to have been lacking in the society studied by Galdós. The longing for riches quickly and easily acquired and the envy and admiration for the man of money caused many people to disregard the means by which wealth was obtained. The fervent desire for money, combined, perhaps, with a cynical indifference, seemed to dull the sense of right and wrong, and society as a whole did not appear to feel outraged at the widespread graft and corruption. Dishonest practices in business and unscrupulous methods in government were condoned and observed by many, who seemed to consider money as vital to life as breath itself, as something whose attainment justified any means that might be employed.

Direct and damaging evidence of the dishonesty and lack of ethics that frequently characterized activities in both
business and government is found in the comments of various Spanish writers of the nineteenth century. Julian de Zugasti y Saenz, in an article written in 1877, notes that "...hoy el ideal supremo, la aspiración universal y el objetivo único para todos, consiste en adquirir, tener, gastar, y gozar sin preocuparse de que los medios para conseguirlo sean o no dignos y honrosos; y como éstos son más difíciles o lentos, se prefieren naturalmente los más fáciles, es decir los más reprobados y criminales."61

The criticism that all members of society have succumbed to this mania for ill-gotten wealth is exaggerated, to be sure; yet no less an authority than Concepción Arenal finds reason to condemn the same evil in La cuestión social, written in 1880, in which she observes that those who "se enriquecen pecando" are growing in number. 62

A few years later, Lucas Mallada, by profession a mining engineer, departed from the fields of geology and geography, in which he had written numerous articles and books, and devoted his energies to a lengthy work in which he examines the evils besetting his country. While discussing the harmful results of indolence, he says: "...con el mal ejemplo de otros tales que medran por ruines mañas, se hace más descansado, breve y lucrativo recurrir a la intriga y al fraude, como método de vida, que desempeñar honrada y tranquilamente un modesto papel en la lista de personas trabajadores."63 Concentrating his attack more specifically, then, on governmental corruption, Mallada
asks: "¿Qué nación hay en el mundo, ni jamás la hubo, donde con tanto descaro y tan a mansalva se saqueen los fondos del Estado y se derroche la fortuna pública?... Diariamente se dan noticias de desaparición de caudales, filtraciones, irregularidades, chanchullos, infundidos, y otros mil suertes de latrocinios...."64

Not only do Arenal and Mallada censure the misdeeds that they see about them, but they also criticize the lack of social condemnation that tolerates such acts. Arenal calls attention to the fact that not only does public opinion not reject those who have acquired their wealth "pecando," but it "...los tolera y aun los aplaude, mirando a los hombres de conciencia y de honor con una extrañeza en que no se sabe si hay más desdén que respeto."65 Later Arenal again speaks out against this deluded conception of worth which has led many to accept and even to esteem the man of wealth who owes his opulence and position to immoral and reprehensible means. In this instance she assails the malfeasance of certain "...empleados y altos funcionarios [que] se enriquecen por medio del fraude.... Ellos se tienen y son tenidos por personas decentes: la decencia en España nada tiene que ver con la moral: como la contribución, se mide por la renta. El que viste bien, como mejor, tiene alfombra y sillería con muebles, es decente: si va en coche, distinguido.... Todo esto sale de un bolsillo que se llenó vaciando las arcas del Estado."66
While Arenal decries the failure of her society to repudiate these miscreants, Mallada denounces the shortcomings of justice which allow such actions to go unpunished: "Uno de los rasgos más notables de la inmoralidad pública española es la impunidad. En el arte diabólico de explotar al Erario no hay quien nos iguale. Se cometerán diariamente todas las clases de engaños, pero nunca se sabrá quienes son los delincuentes." Furthermore, adds Mallada, "...por muchos robos que se cometan en España, no han de ir a la cárcel ni a presidio más que los ladrones...vulgares, esto es, los ladrones que carecen de educación, o sea los que no saben guardar las buenas formas...."  

Galdosian society reflects the crooked deals and fraudulent conduct which occurred in business and in government. Some of the characters also reveal a tolerant, and even admiring, attitude toward the men who fleece the long-suffering government and people. The heedless quest for money, this passion that tramples underfoot all considerations of ethical conduct, has preoccupied Galdós throughout his novelist career. Evidence of this is found in one of Galdós' earliest novels, *Marianela*, in which there is almost an entire page devoted to a moral censure of the evils of the mania for money. Galdós speaks of the "...positivismo de las ciudades, plaga que entre las plagas y el esplendor de la cultura corroce los cimientos morales de la sociedad." However, he adds, "...hay una plaga más terrible, y es el positivismo de las aldeas, que petrifica millones de seres,
matando en ellos toda ambición noble y encerrándoles en el círculo de una existencia mecánica, brutal y tenebrosa."

Galdós recognizes that there are formidable evils in society: "Hay en nuestras sociedades enemigos muy esaptonosos; a saber: la especulación, el agio, la metalización del hombre culto, el negocio." Still, Galdós continues, there is an evil worse than these, "...el monstruo que a callada destroza más que ninguno: la codicia del aldeano. Para el aldeano codicioso no hay ley moral, ni religión, ni nociones claras del bien.... Un aldeano que toma el gusto a los ochavos y sueña con trocarlos en plata para convertir después la plata en oro, es la bestia más inmible que puede imaginarse...."69

The Marqués de Fúcar is an excellent example of the type of highly successful businessman whose fabulous wealth is, in great part, due to questionable dealings, some of them unethical, some actually criminal. In addition to capitalizing shamefully on the bankrupt condition of the national treasury, Fúcar has turned his money-making talents in other directions, and as a result the unfortunate public also has had opportunity to appreciate firsthand the irritating results of his business acumen. Joaquín Onésimo recalls a previous recital by Federico Cimarra in which the latter cast additional light on the unscrupulous deals of the Marqués: "El tabaco de sus contratas es de un género especial, teniendo la ventaja de que si amarga en la boca, puede servir para leña; y también son especiales su arroz
y sus judías, las cuales se han hecho célebres en Ceuta:
los presidiarios las llamaban píldoras reventonas del
boticario Púcar."71

The Marquesa de San Salomo scornfully refers to
Púcar’s wealth, and she also remarks about the quality of
the tobacco that he supplies, saying that he has poisoned
Spain "...con su tabaco, que dicen es la hoja seca de los
paseos...." She also states that whenever she sees Púcar
within earshot at some gathering, she begins to speak
"...del tabaco podrido, de la multiplicación de los ado-
quines, del gas que apesta, y del calzado con suelas de
papel que dio a la tropa."72

Later it is revealed that Púcar’s nefarious operations
have, at times, been of such a nature that they could send
him to jail. On these occasions his accomplice has been
Federico Cimarra, his contemptible son-in-law, who adds
dishonesty to his other despicable acts.73

Melchor de Rolimpio, he of the wild schemes for easy
money, finally discovers the solution to his pecuniary pro-
blems in the forgiving and tolerant arms of the govern-
mental family, and he thus demonstrates that he too has com-
prehended and capitalized on the warped philosophy that
governs many people in his society. In a clever, sarcastic
passage, wherein Galdós once again makes evident his ability
to combine sly humor with social censure, it is learned that
in 1875 "Ocupase la prensa de cierta irregularidad adminis-
trativa en que ha intervenido, como irregularizador,
Melchor de Relimpio. La gente se pregunta si será mandado a presidio, y efectivamente, la Gaceta le nombra...oficial primero de aduanas en Cuba. Parte decidido a concluir la insurrección, para lo cual no procede llevar tropas a Cuba, sino traerse a Cuba a España. Habas contadas. El se traerá de seguro las tres cuartas partes de la Isla, o las Antillas todas, dejando vacío el Mejicano Golfo.  

Just as the name of Francisco Torquemada might be called synonymous with avarice and usury, so might the name of Don Manuel Pez be termed synonymous with governmental fraud and graft, for the activities of this enterprising servant of the government indicate very well the dubious road to success and wealth. In a delightfully satirical chapter, Galdós sketches the family history of the numerous Peces who have found bountiful feeding grounds in the governmental service. As an example of this, he cites the family of Don Manuel, explaining that in addition to the father, four sons, whose ages are twenty-six, twenty-two, nineteen, and fifteen, receive salaries from the government. Turning his attention, then, to the family life of Don Manuel, Galdós informs us that the ostentation displayed by this happy group was equal to that of a "...familia propietaria con quince o veinte mil duros de renta," yet oddly enough Don Manuel "...no tenía bienes raíces de ninguna clase, no estaba inscripto en el gran libro, no debía tener tampoco economías." Even if one were to add his salary with that "de los pececillos," the total would not reach "seis mil
duros." This discrepancy poses an intriguing problem:
"por qué misteriosas alquimias pasaba esta cantidad para
alimentar las siguientes partidas: casa de diez y ocho
mil reales, buena mesa, estreno constante de ropa por todos
los individuos de la familia, lujoso vestidos de baile para
las niñas, landó, palco a primer turno al Teatro Real, ex-
cursiones a los otros teatros, viajes de verano...."
However, concludes Galdós, "...estos rompecabezas, que en
tiempos pasados preocupaban algo a los vagos, amigos de
averiguar vidas ajenas, ya, por ser de todos los momentos,
han llegado a parecer cosa natural y corriente. Familia-
izada la sociedad con su lepra, ya ni siquiera se rasca,
porque ya no le escucce."75

The knowledge of the fraud, graft, and corruption in
both business and government and the realization that un-
scrupulous men such as the Marqués de Púcar and Manuel Pez
are reaping an abundant harvest of pesetas from the nation
and the people, whom they victimize with impunity, give
rise to some rather bitter remarks by Juan Bou. This hard-
working champion of the proletariat, while speaking with
Mariano Rufete, gives the following advice for success in
his society: "...busca un negocio atrevido, emprende algo,
especula con la candidez de los demás. Yo he visto mucho
mundo, y sé que los más pillos son los que tienen más
dinero. Cuando tú lo tengas, gástalo, que hay tontos que
al verte tirar tu dinero te darán el suyo; así es el mundo.
Haz cosas atrevidas, date a conocer, aunque sea con un gran
escándalo.... Aquí hay dos papeles, el de víctima o el de verdugo. ¿Cuál vale más? El de verdugo. Chupar y chupar todo lo que se pueda. 76

Raimundo Bueno de Guzmán, a young man who devotes a great amount of his leisure time, his greatest possession, to pondering questions of money, is another character who has definite ideas on this problem, and it is evident that he, like Juan Bou, has scant regard for the honesty of his fellow citizens. His theories are that "...en Madrid se gastaba más dinero del que existe...la sociedad matritense está en perpetuo déficit, en perpetua bancarrota...no se verifica una transacción grande o pequeña, desde el gran negocio de Bolsa a la insignificante compra en una tiendecilla, sin que en dicha transacción haya alguien que sea chasqueado." 77

Eloísa Bueno de Guzmán, the prodigal young woman who finds the subject of money such a fascinating one, seems to have at her finger tips the facts concerning the origin of many large fortunes. Not only can she reveal the maneuvers which have increased the riches of Fúcar, but she can also tell a most interesting story about the father of Cristóbal Medina. This artful gentleman, knowing that the government did not have any means of transport, went to the "Ministerio de la Guerra" and entered into a contract whereby he agreed to provide two thousand carts. Actually, however, he furnished only fifteen hundred; and, furthermore, whenever an old mule died, the veterinarian certified it as
"mula de primera," which meant "cuatro mil reales por cadáver de mula." This bit of chicanery gained for the unfortunate beast a value it never could have dreamed of achieving in life, and afterwards "...la administración militar liquidaba, y allá te van millones."78 Thus, with this skulduggery Medina has provided society with another questionable model of the quick and easy way to wealth.

Simón García Babel and his two depraved sons, Arístides and Fausto, are as unwholesome a trio as can be found in Galdosian society. This social plague is not guilty of large-scale graft, as are others who have been studied, but one may assume it is only because in this as in everything else they are incapable of anything extraordinary, be it good or bad. Simón García provides an example of the venality of the petty government official in the provinces. As "inspector del Timbre" in the city of Toledo, he has developed a profitable business, best described in the vernacular of the United States as a "shakedown." If, after inspecting a commercial establishment, Babel discovers that books have not been kept according to the requirements of the law, he threatens the terrified owner with a heavy fine. However, these fines are not paid. And how is the matter settled? "Como se componen todas las cosas en estos tiempos de tanta libertad, de tanta democracia, de tanto sello móvil e inmóvil, y de tantísimo enjuague administrativo," explains Don Francisco Mancebo.79 A short time later Don Francisco reveals that "...estas pejigueras de la inspección se
liquidan con una corta cantidad," and such proves to be the case with the rascally Babel. 80

Arístides Babel and Fausto have had frequent brushes with justice because of their dishonest attempts to gain a livelihood. Arístides had to flee from Cuba, where he had obtained a position, "por causa de un desfalco." Another time he had to leave Madrid "...perseguido por la justicia, a causa de haber cedido en Bolsa una letra que resultó ser más falsa que Judas." 81 On still another occasion, the mother of Arístides explains that her son, once again threatened with a prison sentence, is in hiding because "...se metió a empresario de circo, contrató la compañía y los caballos, tomó dinero, y ahora dicen los saltimbanquis que no les ha pagado, y que sí vendió o no vendió la caballerías." 82

Fausto has fared no better than his brother, Arístides. Galdós explains that "Había servido en Correos; pero le echaron por actos de infidencia." His real skill is in calligraphy, but this skill has been his downfall, "...porque un día le acusaron de haber desplegado sus talentos en la imitación de todos los perfiles y rúbricas de un billete de Banco, y el infeliz lo pasó muy mal, pues aunque nunca se le pudo probar el delito, ello es que por sí o por no estuvo a la sombra como unos tres años...." 83 As fate would have it, he, too, has had to go into hiding at the same time that Arístides has disappeared, and the distraught mother explains that in his case it is because he had the
misfortune to be in the company of some men who swindled a
gentleman "con una letra falsa."84

Francisco Torquemada's avarice has not led him up the
dark and devious paths of graft and corruption that so many
others have travelled. However, his passion for money has
caused him to show the same callous disregard for ethical
and moral laws as the others have shown for the legal code
of their society. He makes loans with usurious rates of
interest,85 and he is merciless in his dealings with the
unfortunates that are in his grasp, showing himself to be
devoid of any humane feelings. He is especially adept at
brandishing the sharp sword of scandal above the heads of
those who cannot pay and who fear the resultant publicity.86
This "inhumano," this "fiero," this "implacable fogonero de
vidas y haciendas"87 is the "...habilitado de aquel infierno
en que feneoen deaudos y fritos los deudores...." From
these wretches Torquemada has squeezed his fortune, "Pues
todos estos, el bueno y el malo, el desgraciado y el pillo,
cada uno por su arte propio, pero siempre con su sangre y
sus huesos, le amasaron al sucio de Torquemada una fortunita
que ya la quisieran muchos que se dan lustre en Madrid...."88

It has been observed that the unprincipled acts of many
rich men, who have found such a mine of wealth in their under-
handed maneuverings within the government and business, have
been received with attitudes ranging from indifference to
envy and admiration. Such is not the case with Torquemada,
for every peseta that falls into his hands is accompanied
by the vituperation and hatred of those whom he has stripped. Tía Roma criticizes him for "...la guerra que le hace al pobre, su tacañería, los réditos que mama...." His own daughter, Rufina, recognizes his serious faults: "Es que papa no aprende...aprieta sin compasión, quiere sacar jugo hasta de las piedras; no perdona, no considera, no siente lástima ni del sursum Corda...." Repeating the same criticism again, she says: "...papa estruja demasiado, ahoga al pobre, y...hay Dios en el cielo, que está mirando donde se cometen injusticias para levantar el palo. Claro, ve que mi padre es una fiere para la cobranza...." Cruz del Aguila, although she welcomes the prospects of peace and security which Torquemada's fortune offers, has no illusions about the source of her future brother-in-law's wealth, and she says to Fidela: "Cierto que se ha enriquecido prestando dinero con espantosa usura, y lleva sobre sí el menosprecio y el odio de tanta y tanta víctima." And Galdós himself, after stating that Torquemada continues to enjoy a fantastic success in every financial endeavor, asks the following question: "¿Por qué le favorecía la fortuna, habiendo sido tan viles sus medios de enriquecerse?" Don Juan Gualberto Serrano, friend of Torquemada and "varón de conciencia tan elástica," is another whose dealings with the government rival those of the Marqués de Fúcar, for he also possesses the questionable talent of acquiring great wealth by deceiving the administration.
His activities, like those of Fúcar, have enabled the troops to step lightly, as he, too, has supplied the soldiers "con zapatos de suela de cartón." Not content with this, he has fed them "alubias picadas y bacalao podrido," but, as Galdós satirically observes, such swindles are merely "travesuras que lo más, lo más, motivaban un poco de ruido en algunos periódicos." Moreover, the threat of legal retribution for his business chicanery causes no qualms in Don Juan Qualberto, for he is "...primo hermano de directores generales, cuñado de jueces, sobrino de magistrados, pariente más o menos próxima de infinidad de generales, senadores, consejeros, y archípampanos." 93

The preceding examples which have been selected from the novels of Galdós and the observations of contemporary writers which provide corroborating evidence for these incidents with which Galdós reflects the dishonesty and lack of ethics in business and in government would seem to indicate that this malady of unpunished corruption and graft was rather widespread and had infected many levels of society. This does not mean that everyone had fallen prey to this evil, for it is obvious, of course, that no society nor any sphere of a society is wholly good or bad. There are honest, moral, and ethical members, and likewise there are dishonest, immoral, and unethical individuals; and the proportion of the two will vary, it would seem, according to the philosophy, objectives, and attitudes that prevail at that particular time. It is realized, therefore, that the
Spanish society of the latter half of the nineteenth century had upright and virtuous men, not only in politics and in government but also in commerce, business, and other fields of endeavor. Galdosian society reflects this, for there are characters who do not succumb to the temptation of ill-gotten gains. Francisco Bringas reveals himself to be a hard-working, honest, and, incidentally, poor governmental employee in the novels, Tormento and La de Bringas. The same traits are demonstrated by Ramón Villaamil, the tragic protagonist of Miau.

The knowledge of such honest men in government as those depicted by Galdós undoubtedly caused Juan Valera, the celebrated novelist, to take exception to the charge that an excessive number of Spanish political men are corrupt. Valera believes that the list of corrupt men "...no excediera en proporción a la que se pudo formar en España en otra época cualquiera, o a la que puede formarse fuera de España, en cualquiera nación de Europa en la época presente." He attempts to substantiate this contention by stating that he has known many men in political life who apparently did not yield to the desire for easy, dishonest money since "...vivieron y murieron sin dejar de estar a la cuarta pregunta...." While recognizing that there were many honest individuals in Spanish society at that time, one is inclined to believe that the problem must have been a serious one, nevertheless. First, there are the criticisms of
Julian de Zugasti y Saenz, Concepción Arenal, and Lucas Mallada. Second, there are the frequent examples of dishonest men found in the novels of Galdós. Third, and equally interesting, there is the striking contrast that is present in the fates that befall some of the honest characters and some of the unscrupulous members of Galdosian society. To take Francisco Bringas and Ramón Villaamil as examples, one sees that the two live always in the shadow of want and insecurity, struggling in quiet desperation to meet the demands of their pretentious, extravagant society. The unfortunate Villaamil would certainly qualify for a distinguished position among the poor but honest acquaintances of Valera; after years of faithful work in governmental service, he becomes cesante when lacking only two months for retirement, and he is truly "a la cuarta pregunta" when he dies by his own hand. On the other hand, men such as the Marqués de Fúcar, Melchor de Relimpio, Don Manuel Pérez Medina, Simón Babel, and Gualberto Serrano prosper with impunity, and their success in pocketing gratifying sums as a result of their maneuvers both with and within the government seems to stress the fact that in this society, where money is king, honesty is not the best policy.

It is quite illuminating to examine the thoughts of those who have had ample opportunity to experience first-hand the results of honest conduct in office; the wives of Bringas and Villaamil. Rosalía de Bringas is considerably
 vexed by her life with the rather miserly, unimaginative, and plodding Francisco, and she selects as her ideal none other than Don Manuel Pez, who has displayed such aptitude for feathering his nest at the expense of the government. In the secrecy of her thoughts, she laments the fate that has placed her at the side of Francisco rather than at that of Don Manuel, and angrily she mentally berates her husband:

"¡Ah! roñoso, menguado, nunca serás nada." She follows this scornful observation with the advice to learn from Don Manuel Pez: "Aprende tú, bobo, de quien con cincuenta mil reales de sueldo vive con la apariencia de doce mil duros de renta y paga veinticuatro mil reales de casa. Y no es que tenga deudas; es que sabe agenciar y saca partido de su posición. Esto no lo sabrá nunca un poca-cosa, un pisa hormigas... que no ve más allá de su sueldo mezquino...."96

Doña Pura, wife of Don Ramón Villaamil, seems to have a similar idea about the value and advantages of integrity and probity in governmental service, but she differs from Rosalía in one respect. Rosalía does not dare to reproach her husband for his failure to take advantage of his position, whereas Doña Pura does not spare the poor Villaamil, and in a bitter discussion she criticizes and derides him for refusing to conform to the customary pattern followed by others: "¡Inocente!... Ahí tienes por lo que estás como estás, olvidado y en la miseria; por no tener ni pizca de trastienda y ser tan devoto de San Escrúpulo
bendito. Créeme, eso ya no es honradez, es sosiería y necesidad.... Tú no serás nunca nada, y si te colocan, te darán un pedazo de pan, y siempre estaremos lo mismo...."

Becoming more enraged, she declares: "Yo que tú, me iría a un periódico y empezaría a vomitar todas las picardías que sé de la administración, los enjuagues que han hecho muchos que hoy están en candelería. Eso, cantar claro, y caiga el que caiga... desenmascarar a tanto pillo.... !Ah! entonces verías como les faltaba tiempo para colocarte...."

Doña Pura then closes her tirade by mocking her husband, and she tells him that the others are laughing at him as they say: "¡Ah, Villaamil, que honradísimo es! ¡Oh! el empleado probo." To this Doña Pura cynically adds: "Yo, cuando me enseñan un probo, le miro a ver si tiene los codos de fuera. En fin, que te caes de honrado. Decir honrado, a veces es como decir noño."97

The attitude of these two women further indicates that graft, especially within the government, was widespread and that such a practice was regarded as the accepted and expected way to wealth. Their criticism of their husbands' honest conduct, with its meager remuneration, and their regrets that they do not emulate the fraudulent but lucrative acts of others point up the contrast in the success that accompanies the two ways of life. Furthermore, the fact that these women censure their husbands rather than the scoundrels who are perpetrating such acts reveals how serious the situation must have been, for apparently the
moral decay that inevitably follows flagrant breaches of the legal and ethical code of conduct has already damaged the concepts of right and wrong. 98

Especially in the case of Villaamil, one cannot escape the conclusion that Galdós may have intended that this hapless servant of the state should demonstrate the tragic proof of the fact that in his society values have become so distorted that the unscrupulous man enjoys greater success and esteem than does the man of honor. In addition to the evidence furnished in the contrast between the fate of Villaamil and that of other characters already described, there is further proof to be found in the comparison of Villaamil's lot with that of Victor Cadalso, his knavish son-in-law. The latter has also been a governmental employee, but there the similarity between the two men ends. Whereas Villaamil has apparently dispatched his duties with scrupulous care, much to the disgust of his wife, Cadalso reveals that his "manos no están muy limpias," to use an expression of Villaamil. Cadalso rationalizes in this fashion: "...el Estado es esencialmente ingrato, bien lo sabe usted, y no sabe premiar. Si el funcionario inteligente no se recompensa a sí propio, está perdido," and with this philosophy as a guide, he has taken steps to protect himself "...de la ingratitud, que nos ha de traer la miseria." 99

Further revelations concerning irregularities and frauds committed by Cadalso while previously in office are
made by Pantoja, a close friend of Villaamil. However, Pantoja remarks to the latter that these offenses will not lead Cadalso to jail: "No irá por lo mismo que lo merece. Tiene pararrayos y paracaídas. Se están poniendo los tiempos tan corruptos, que estos granujas como tu yerno son los que cobran el barato." This observation about the impunity enjoyed by such rogues recalls the denunciation of this social failing by Mallada.

And what are the results of these two widely diverging paths of conduct followed by Villaamil and Cadalso? The unfortunate Villaamil, as stated before, loses his position after many years of honest endeavor, and his prolonged cesantía drags him down to the desperation of poverty, the shame of borrowing with its resultant loss of dignity and self-respect, and the tragedy of suicide. And Cadalso? He fulfills the prophecy of Pantoja, for not only does he suffer no retribution for his crimes, but, irony of ironies, he, not Villaamil, receives an appointment to a governmental office.

With these and other examples Galdós presents an interesting insight into the doctrine that, in the case of money, the end justifies the means. This is the philosophy that controls the thoughts and actions of many characters in Galdosian society, just as it influenced many individuals in Spain in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It is the philosophy that causes Bou to say: "Chupar y chupar todo lo que se pueda," that evokes from Rosalía de Bringas
the wish that her husband might emulate the chicanery of Pez, and that elicits from Doña Pura the bitter remark that "Decir honrado a veces es como decir ñoño." In this picture of unscrupulous individuals bleeding, with impunity, their government and their people by means of fraudulent and unethical schemes, Galdós offers impressive evidence of the grave consequences that may result when the glitter of gold blinds a society to the more real and lasting values of life.

An analysis of the case histories and of the remarks and observations made by Galdós or his characters in this chapter would seem to indicate that money is a disturbing factor in this society. The social atmosphere is surcharged with the magnetic appeal of large fortunes and easy wealth. The possessor of money becomes a man of distinction and of esteem, regardless of his moral or physical flaws, and the wealthy class occupies the topmost rung of the social ladder. It is small wonder, then, that the desire for money fascinates and corrupts many individuals, just as the frenzy of a gold strike captivates the imagination of a community and incites its members to rash actions and wild dreams. To achieve this coveted goal of wealth, many people brazenly flaunt moral, ethical, and legal rules. A philosophy compounded of materialism, cynicism, and indifference seems to reward the dishonest, while frustrating the honest, and the eternal and often unsatisfied longing and striving for a rapid accumulation of wealth must, of
necessity, burden the society with many misfits. Furthermore, these are not the only evils that accompany the new religion of money, for frequently the "vil metal" serves only to fire the passion for luxury and ostentation, the two problems that will be studied in the following chapters. It would seem evident, then, that in the society of Galdós' Spain reflected in the society of his novels, money is indeed the root of much evil.
NOTES

1 H. Chonon Berkowitz, Pérez Galdós: Spanish Liberal Crusader (Madison, Wisconsin, 1948), pp. 122-123. See also pp. 143-147.

2 Ibid., pp. 122.

3 La familia de León Roch, I, 36-37. Further evidence of Fúcar’s eye for quick, easy money is found in Eloísa Bueno de Guzmán’s remark that “Durante la guerra Fucár y otros como él triplicaron su fortuna en un par de años” (Lo prohibido, I, 162).

4 Ibid., II, 387.

5 La desheredada, I, 162. In the same work Galdós also refers to “las colosales riquezas de los contratistas” (II, 14). Other indications of the growing wealth and vast fortunes are found in Maximo Nanso’s observation that “La riqueza general crece como espuma...” (El amigo Manso, p. 300); in Eloísa Bueno de Guzmán’s preoccupation with “...los fabulosos aumentos que ciertos hombres de pesquis dan a su capital en poco tiempo...” (Lo prohibido, I, 117-118); and in Eloísa’s statement that “...aquí el que no dobla el capital en pocos años, es porque no quiere” (Lo prohibido, I, 162). Still further evidence of rapid financial gains may be found on the last page cited.

6 Lo prohibido, II, 79.

7 Ibid., II, 94-95. Jacinto Villalonga is another who has realized a quick, lucrative profit from his loans to the Treasury, “...ganándose el ciento por ciento en pocos meses” (Fortunata y Jacinta, I, 278).

8 Benito Pérez Galdós, Obras inéditas, Vol. I: Fisonomías sociales (Madrid, 1923), 121-122. Apparently this article was written sometime between the years 1883 and 1895. Alberto Ghirald, the editor of Obras inéditas, explains in the prologue of Fisonomías sociales that “...el original más antiguo de los que figuran en este libro lleva la fecha de 1883 y el más moderno diez años más tarde, o sea la de 1893...” (p. 9).
9 La familia de León Roch, I, 20. Later in the same novel the sharp-tongued Marquesa de San Salomó comments bitingly upon Pucaré's exalted position in society, explaining that the newspapers now call him "...egregio porque se ha enriquecido adquiriendo calles, haciendo ferrocarriles de muñecas, envenenando a España con su tabaco...y, por último, prestando dinero al Tesoro durante la guerra, al doscientos por ciento; un buen apunte, un gran señor de ahora, un dije del siglo, un noble haitiano..." (II, 87).

10 El amigo Manso, p. 66.

11 Ibid., p. 68.

12 Lo prohibido, I, 30.

13 As evidence of this Máximo Manso says: "Todos conocemos a diferentes personas de origen humilde, que llegan a los primeros puestos, y aún se alían con las razas históricas. El dinero y el ingenio, substituidos a veces por sus similares, agio y travesura, han roto aquí las barreras todas..." (El amigo Manso, p. 51). Also, Francisco Bringas says to his wife: "Al que tiene dinero no se le pregunta nunca si ha comido la sopa boba" (La de Bringas, p. 232). Many years later Galdós makes an observation in the same vein: "La sociedad no es aquí tan escrupulosa que repudia la riqueza por la ruindad o por querer pestilente de sus orígenes..." (El caballero encantado, p. 51).

14 Torquemada en la cruz, pp. 146-150.

15 Ibid., p. 113.

16 Torquemada en el purgatorio, p. 149.

17 Ibid., p. 176.

18 Ibid., p. 178. Galdós employs practically the same expression on another occasion in which Joaquín Viera speaks of "...el arte de estos tiempos, que consiste en traer legalmente a las arcas propias el dinero que anda por las ajenas" (Realidad, p. 163). Other references to the respect that Torquemada's wealth inspires are found on pages 177 and 179 of Torquemada en el purgatorio. Still further evidence of the honors that come to the rich man is found in the case of Don Hilario de Berzosa, Marquesa de Tobalina (Casandra, p. 80).

19 Marianela, p. 36. On another occasion Galdós speaks of Señana having "...con embriagador deleite las monedas contenidas en el calcetín" (Marianela, p. 89).
20 La familia de León Roch, I, 54, 69-70, 170; II, 181.

21 La desheredada, I, 162-163. Melchor's fertile brain continues to conceive new plans for quick wealth in addition to those which have been discussed. Examples are found in La desheredada, II, 67, 68, 116.

22 Indications of Isidora's passion: La desheredada, I, 214-215; II, 86.

23 La desheredada, I, 237.

24 Ibid., II, 56.

25 Ibid., II, 89. Pages 62, 65, and 68 of the same volume contain further evidence of this obsession of Mariano's.

26 El amigo Manso, p. 225. See also pages 70, 238, and 330. Doña Candida's husband was also "apetitoso de riquezas fáciles" (El amigo Manso, p. 32).


28 Tormento, p. 48. Rosalía also regrets that her daughter, Isabelita, is not older in order that she might marry Caballero, "ese monte de oro" (Tormento, p. 47).

29 Lo prohibido, I, 22.

30 Ibid., I, 73.

31 Ibid., I, 117-118.

32 Ibid., I, 119.

33 Ibid., I, 161-162.

34 Ibid., I, 162. José María is surprised by such statements as these, but he admits that he still did not understand "...la gravedad que entrañaba aquel insano entusiasmo por cosas tan contrarias a la condición espiritual de la mujer" (Lo prohibido, I, 163).


36 Although José María has left Eloísa, he is greatly annoyed when he hears of her affair with Pucar, and he exclaims: "¡Venderse por dinero! Es una ignominia en la familia que no debo consentir!" (Lo prohibido, II, 35).
Further evidence of Eloísa's willingness to sell herself for money is found in Lo prohibido, II, 102 and 187.

Lo prohibido, II, 102.

Ibid., I, 102.

Ibid., I, 167.

Ibid., II, 204.

See page 31.

Lo prohibido, II, 79.

Fortunata y Jacinta, IV, 10. Doña Casta Moreno de Samaniego shares Doña Lupe's ideas about the desirability of a pharmaceutical cure-all that will prove very profitable (Fortunata y Jacinta, IV, 10).

Ibid., IV, 29. Other instances that indicate Doña Lupe's love of money: III, 149, 161; IV, 51.

La loca de la casa, p. 30.

Ibid., p. 110. Cruz also gives utterance to his passion for money on pages 122 and 153.

Torquemada en la hoguera, pp. 90-93.

Torquemada en el purgatorio, p. 64.

Ibid., p. 174.

Torquemada y San Pedro, pp. 20-21.

Ibid., p. 125.

Ibid., p. 159. During this same conversation with Father Gomborena, Torquemada regrets that he cannot take his money with him when he dies: "¡Si nada de lo que tengo he de llevarme, y todito se ha de quedar por acá!" (Torquemada y San Pedro, p. 162).

Ibid., p. 203.

Torquemada en la cruz, p. 165.
57 Torquemada en el purgatorio, p. 44. Later Fidela repeats the same idea as she says: "Si, Tor, tienes que ganar muchísimo dinero, pero muchísimo, y yo te lo guardaré" (Torquemada en el purgatorio, p. 83). It should be pointed out that in his portrayal of Fidela Galdós seems to be somewhat inconsistent, for in the next novel Fidela says: "...me cargo que mi marido sea tan rico. No quiera Dios que seamos pobres, eso no; pero tanta riqueza me pone triste" (Torquemada y San Pedro, p. 47). This latter statement seems incongruous when compared with her outspoken demands for more and more money, and the contrast is even more striking because of Galdós' failure to indicate any reason for this change in attitude, if it is really a change. Furthermore, there has been no great lapse of time that might explain such a reversal of feeling.

56 See page 40.

59 These characters are: Victor Cadalso (Miau, p. 113), Arístides Babel (Ángel Guerra, III, 144), José Antonio de Urrea (Hálma, pp. 50-51), Senén (El abuelo, pp. 17, 22), Rogelio (Casandra, pp. 54, 92, 131, 217, 223, 305, 377), and Don Carlos de Tarsis (El caballero encantado, pp. 15, 22, 23, 31).


61 Julián de Zugasti y Saenz, "Estado moral de la sociedad española," Revista de España, LVIII (1877), 182.

62 Arenal, La cuestión social, II, 36.

63 Lucas Mallada, Los males de la patria y la futura revolución española, primera parte: Los males de la patria (Madrid, 1890), p. 176. Los males de la patria is to be found also in Revista contemporánea, LXXII (1888) to LXXVIII (1890).

64 Ibid., pp. 176-177.

65 Arenal, La cuestión social, II, 36-37.

66 Ibid., II, 101-102.

67 Mallada defines public immorality as follows: "...la immoralidad pública, por la cual entendemos la mala o desacertada conducta, observada por una parte considerable de los habitantes de una nación, en contra del bien general" (Los males, p. 173).

68 Mallada, Los males, pp. 177-178.

69 Marianela, p. 35. An example of such a type is Señana, who has been previously discussed. See page 37.
70 Pícar has increased his fortune one hundredfold in his operations with the Treasury, and during the war he has loaned money to the Treasury at two hundred percent interest (La familia de León Roch, I, 36; II, 67). Activities such as these cause Cimarra to say: "Es preciso escribir un nuevo aforismo económico que diga: La bancarrota nacional es una fuente de riqueza" (La familia de León Roch, I, 36).

71 La familia de León Roch, I, 37.

72 Ibid., II, 67-68.

73 Ibid., II, 327-328. Evidence of Cimarra's past activities is also found on pages 325 and 336. Máximo Manso also has some illuminating remarks about Cimarra and the social type that he represents: "...Federico Cimarra, hombre que conocen en Madrid hasta las piedras, como le conocían antes los garitos, también diputado de la mayoría, de estos que no hablan nunca, pero que saben intrigar por setenta, y afectando independencia andan a caza de todo negocio no limpio. Constituyen estos, antes que una clase, una determinación cancérea, que secretamente se difunde por todo el cuerpo de la patria, desde la última aldea hasta los Cuerpos Colegiados" (El amigo Manso, p. 80).

74 La desheredada, II, 17-18. See also pages 67 and 116 for additional proof of young Relimpio's unscrupulous activities.

75 Ibid., I, 199-200. In Tormento one finds information that would aid in solving the riddle presented in La desheredada, namely, the disparity between the luxurious life of the Peces and the salary received by this family. According to Galdos, "es fama" that "los Peces y otros funcionarios de la casta iotológica" create for themselves "un sobresuelo" (Tormento, p. 58). Also, Rosalía de Bringas gives additional proof that Pez "...sabe agenciarse y saca partido de su posición" (La de Bringas, pp. 92-93).

76 Ibid., II, 209.

77 Lo prohibido, I, 167.

78 Lo prohibido, I, 163.

79 Angel Guerra, II, 223-224.

80 Ibid., II, 226. On page 260 there is another reference to "los fondos malamente adquiridos" by Simón.

81 Ibid., I, 51-52.
83 Ibid., III, 144.
83 Ibid., I, 52-53.
84 Ibid., III, 145.
85 Lo prohibido, II, 80.
87 Torquemada en la hoguera, p. 9.
88 Ibid., p. 10.
89 Ibid., p. 90.
90 Torquemada en la cruz, pp. 42-43.
91 Ibid., p. 113.
92 Torquemada en el purgatorio, p. 14. Mention should be made here of others who have been associated with Torquemada in his usurious practices: Gonzalo Torros (Lo prohibido, II, 80-81), Doña Lupe de Jáuregui (Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 56, 88, 101, 103-106), Doña Silvia, wife of Torquemada (Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 106), and José Bailón (Torquemada en la hoguera, p. 29).
93 Torquemada en el purgatorio, p. 66.
94 Valera, in Revista de España, LI, 174.
95 Ibid., LI, 172-173.
96 La de Bringas, pp. 92-93.
97 Mialau, pp. 37-38.
98 The fraud and graft that seem to have become an accepted practice for many of the Spanish politicians and governmental employees, and the approval of such acts by many in Spanish society, may have a partial explanation in the insight that Galdós furnishes into the philosophy of some Spaniards regarding the "Estado." In La incógnita Manolo Infante is describing his friend Jacinto Villalonga, "...privado en absoluto de paladar moral, tratándose de política, que es su pasión y su manera de vivir." Villalonga "Es el tipo del pillito simpático, que aquí tanto abunda. Considéra al Estado como cosa propia, y si puede despojarlo de algo, lo hace sin recelo alguno, con la consciencia tan tranquilla como la de un niño. Al propio tiempo, incapaz de quitarle al individuo el valor de un alfiler.
El pobre Estado es la eterna víctima. Y cuenta que si al día siguiente de haber hecho Villalonga una de las suyas, vas a verle y le pides un favor, te da todo lo que tiene, hasta la camisa si no tiene otra cosa. ¿Ves que moral? En España la gastamos así" (La incógnita, p. 65).

99 *Kiau*, p. 105.

100 Ibid., pp. 143 and 210. Other indications of Victor's halTiasance are on pages 110 and 111.

101 Ibid., p. 211.

102 cf. page 54.

103 These examples are: the father of León Roch (La familia de León Roch, I, 28), Alejandro Sánchez Botín (La desheredada, II, 75, 80-81, and Lo prohibido, I, 130), certain members of the Miquis family (El doctor Centeno, I, 204-205; since this is based only on the testimony of the insane Doña Isabel de Godoy, it is doubtful), an observation by Galdós (La de Brignas, p. 190), comments of Eloisa and José María Bueno de Guzmán (Lo prohibido, I, 35, 36; II, 34); a comment by Galdós (Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 94); José Orozco (La incógnita, pp. 64, 117; and Realidad, p. 75), Joaquín Viera (La incógnita, pp. 76-77; and Realidad, p. 75), Aguado (La incógnita, pp. 68-69), Don Carlos Moreno Trujillo (Misericordia, p. 63), neighbors and fellow towns- men of Don Rodrigo (El abuelo, p. 37), a comment by Zenón de Guillarte (Casandra, p. 48), Don Hilario de Berzosa (Casandra, p. 42), Don Carlos de Tarres (El caballero encantado, p. 15), a character who returns from Cuba with a "capitalazo" (El caballero encantado, p. 30), and a comment by Arimán (La razón de la sinrazón, p. 12).

104 See pages 59, 67, and 68.
CHAPTER III

LUXURY

A. Luxurious, Wasteful Living

The craving for money obeys various impulses. There are those who derive great satisfaction from the possession of wealth, and their endeavors are directed toward the goal of acquiring and treasuring riches. Others desire money in order to employ it in new commercial and industrial enterprises, and in this fashion they are using wealth to create new wealth. Financial security, particularly in one's old age, will also stimulate the desire for money, and there are those who long for money in order to indulge their appetites for material comforts and in order to maintain or enhance their social positions.

Every society will, of course, contain varying numbers in these different categories, and the proportions will fluctuate according to the philosophy that is prevailing in the society at that time. It would seem that any one of these different reasons for seeking wealth may demoralize a society if the number obeying this impulse becomes unduly large. For example, a society whose members hoarded wealth because of avarice or because of a desire for security would soon become static, while on the other hand a society
whose members squandered money in an effort to satisfy un-
restrained yearnings for luxuries and pleasures would not
be building wisely nor constructively for a sound, stable
future.

History contains examples of societies in every land
and in every epoch that have devoted an excessive amount of
their time and fortune to the pursuit of material comforts
and pleasures. One of the victims of this insidious vice
that can weaken or destroy civilizations was Spanish urban
society of the latter half of the nineteenth century, which
had embarked on a way of life that placed excessive impor-
tance on the gratification of desires for luxuries,
pleasures, and wasteful living. In the novels of Galdós
and in the comments of other contemporary writers one may
study the ramifications and the results of this mania that
affected all levels of society.

Before beginning this study, however, it may be well
to consider the circumstances that combined to render more
virulent and infectious this fever for luxuries and
pleasures. In the introduction, reference was made to the
sudden increase in wealth and to the quick fortunes that
were gained as a result of the sale of Church lands. By
an unfortunate coincidence, unfortunate at least for Spain,
the increase in wealth was accompanied by a rise in the
quantity of manufactured goods as a result of the new and
improved methods of production that followed the industrial
revolution. Thus it was that luxuries, which hitherto had
been unattainable for most people, increased in number and found a ready market in the homes of those who had succeeded in channeling into their pockets a part of the rising stream of money. Likewise, new cafes and theaters came into existence in order to satisfy the swelling demand for pleasure and amusement, and growing numbers of private carriages gladdened the hearts and flattered the vanity of those who possessed this positive sign of increased wealth and higher social position.

Human nature being what it is, it was quite natural that many of those in the lower classes who had not shared in this new wealth should, nevertheless, cast longing eyes toward those luxuries that surrounded them. They were living in a materialistic environment that stressed to an inordinate degree the importance of physical pleasures and material comforts. As a result, many who had formerly been satisfied to live within the limits established by their modest wages or incomes began to emulate their wealthier neighbors, and they squandered their scarce funds on unnecessary luxuries and trivial pleasures while yearning at the same time for more money to spend on additional luxuries.

It would appear evident, then, that the material progress achieved in the neighboring countries and later introduced into Spain had a disturbing effect, both socially and economically, on the nation. It will be recalled that this was the position taken by some contemporary writers of the
period. Luis Vega-Rey attributes Spain's social troubles to the sale of the Church lands and to the influence of technological progress and new methods of production on a backward nation, while Juan Valera believes that the impact of this new materialistic culture on his country is responsible for most of the social ills besetting Spain.¹

The observations of other writers reveal a similar conclusion with regard to the effects upon Spain of these great strides in material progress. Julian de Zugasti y Saenz analyzes the situation in the following manner: "Ciertamente las desventuras y males de la sociedad contemporánea no consisten de un modo absoluto en los adelantos materiales, sino en su exclusivismo, desarmonía o falta de equilibrio, así como tampoco puede con razón asegurarse, que la corrupción moral que por todas partes se advierte, proceda necesariamente y precisamente de la instrucción científica, sino de su constante desacuerdo con la educación moral, que es y debe ser su preciso y saludable complemento."²

Another observer of the contemporary scene who seems to be alarmed by the discordance which resulted from the march of progress is Dionisio Chaulié, who in 1884 expressed this opinion: "Resulta, pues, que de 1840 acá se han realizado grandes adelantos y mejoras. Madrid se ha rejuvenecido adquiriendo cuantas condiciones necesita para ser una capital de primer orden." However, Chaulié believes that these advances have their dangers, and he warns that
"...síntomas alarmantes anuncian que esos mismos adelantos pueden ocasionar grandes males si no se neutralizan material y moralmente los efectos desastrosos que una civilización extraviada lleva consigo."³ Chaulié concludes that "...el Madrid moderno es superior en conjunto al antiguo en grandezas, comodidad, y ornato, pero si de su vida íntima tratáramos, si en lo concerniente a su existencia social nos detuviéramos, en verdad que me viera en grave compromiso al decidirme por el mejor."⁴

Societies, then, as well as individuals, are frequently guilty of a lack of moderation in accepting a new philosophy or a change in a way of life and habits, and it would seem that Zugasti y Saenz and Chaulié have indicated a primary cause of the ills that are afflicting their society, namely, the failure to observe a sane, moderate course when accepting these innovations. In the introduction it was recognized that nearly every society will manifest, to some degree, an interest in and a desire for wealth, luxuries and pleasures, and social position or prestige. However, when these desires become unrestrained and when they begin to dominate the other objectives and ideals of the group, then the consequent loss of equilibrium may result in pernicious social ills.

It is quite possible that if these two social and economic phenomena, i. e., the rapid increase in general wealth resulting from the sale of Church lands, and the growth in production following the advances achieved by the
industrial revolution, had occurred in Spain at wider intervals, the consequences would not have been so disturbing for Spanish society. In the absence of a tempting abundance of luxuries, more of the new-found riches might have been invested in things that would have produced results of a more beneficial and lasting nature for society.

However, such was not to be the case. The industrial revolution that took place in England at the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century was spreading across the channel. Mr. Frederic Ogg points out that "France was the first of continental countries in which the great modern industrial transition -- the introduction of machinery, the widespread displacement of the handicraft system, the rise of the factory -- took place." After describing industrial conditions and changes in France in the early part of the nineteenth century, the author goes on to say that "After 1825-30 the transition set in upon an extended scale, and if the French industrial revolution can be dated from any fairly specific point, the years mentioned would probably be as accurate as any that could be indicated." When one remembers that the sale of the Church lands took place in 1836, the coincidence becomes more striking. By this time, or shortly thereafter, the products of the industrial transformation in France were arriving in Spain, where they took deep root in a soil made fertile by the recent showers of money. This is substantiated by
Juan Valera, who in 1876 states that "La difusión del lujo data en España de hace treinta o cuarenta años." 7

Both events would inevitably be followed by widespread social repercussions, but, as was said before, it is conceivable that Spanish society as a whole might have escaped the more serious consequences inherent in such profound changes if they had taken place at widely separate times, just as, for example, a town may withstand the dangers of a flood until the threatening river has receded. If, however, the waters are swollen by the torrent from an adjoining river, then the town will be overwhelmed, and such was the case with Spanish urban society, which was inundated by the rising streams of money and luxuries.

There is still another factor that may help to explain the passion for luxuries and pleasures that dominated Spanish society in the last half of the nineteenth century. During the whole century the Spanish people were subjected to wars, insurrections, political upheavals, and economic disasters. It is little wonder, then, that many persons, either consciously or unconsciously, may have resolved to live for the day, enjoying the luxuries and pleasures that lured them; and thus they lavished their money on material comforts rather than saving it for a future that did not appear too promising. The same tendency has been evident in our nation during the last decade. The recent war and the present threat of another global conflict have caused and are causing some of our people to live for the day also.
In the last conflict many workers squandered their ample salaries on any amusement or diversion to be found, with no thought of the future, and at the present time the well-filled sports arenas, the crowded taverns, the bright new automobiles, and the forests of television antennas provide history with another example of a luxury-loving, pleasure-seeking society.

Lucas Mallada paints a serious picture of the disruption and havoc that have resulted from the spread of the ruinous gospel of luxury in Spanish society: "Cuando antes de nuestros días eran mucho menores las necesidades ordinarias de la vida y menos extendido el lujo, con poca cosa se mantenía satisfecha a una familia. Más ahora la ruindad ha cundido como el aceite, y a millones de españoles, que en tiempo de nuestros abuelos no rebasaban los límites de su modesto y sencillo régimen, han sucedido otros tantos que, con recursos poco superiores a los de un obrero, pretenden hacer ostentaciones de príncipes y de grandes personajes en las villas y ciudades." This change in habits and beliefs is leading to serious consequences, for Mallada observes that "La estúpida fatuidad a que nos hemos acostumbrado de juzgar al prójimo por su parte exterior; el loco empeño tan general de competir en lujo y en boato con la aristocracia o con los acaudalados burgueses, tanto más aparatosos y fanfarrones cuanto de más villano origen proceden, por la mayor necesidad de honra y de respetabilidad que les acomete, obligaron a muchas familias a vivir al día..."
o con el deplorable sistema de trampa adelante, siguiendo el mal ejemplo hasta las clases más humildes, y desde las ciudades más pobladas hasta las más apartadas aldeas."8

Early in his career Galdós comments upon the effect of industrial progress and the resulting luxury in his society. In 1870, after having been in Madrid some eight years, the young journalist states that "El gran progreso de la industria ha hecho que una infinidad de productos de arte, objetos bellos y de valor que estaban reservados a las clases altas y poderosas, le son hoy accesibles a todas las clases; y si los objetos de gran valor intrínseco no pueden hoy ser adquiridos por las personas de modesta fortuna, en cambio la facilidad de la producción, el acierto con que se aplica el arte a la industria, ha dado origen a las cosas elegantes que están al alcance de todos. Pues bien: no es extraño que esta maravilla realizada en nuestro siglo haya fomentado el vicio de la presunción, y que este mal se haya propagado, causando muchos grandes disturbios en el seno de la familia. La vanidad en las mujeres, el lujo en el vestir es hoy uno de los males de que más se preocupa la categoría de los maridos trabajadores y modestos."9

To illustrate this observation, Galdós cites a short story which is found in the Proverbios ejemplares of Ventura Ruiz Aguilera, which are, in the words of Galdós, a "...colección de pequeñas novelas, muy apreciables y bellas particularmente, además del mérito y la importancia que tienen en su conjunto como pintura general de nuestra
society." In this proverbio, which is entitled Al freir sera el reir, we find a husband, Lozano, who is dominated by his wife, Isabel, a woman who is "...tan amante de lo elegante y lo lujoso, que pone a su esposo al borde del abismo, y da origen a muy graves disturbios." Doña Isabel's scandalous luxury causes her to neglect the servant's wages and to pawn her jewels in order to buy more jewels. Eventually it drives her husband to embezzlement, and it almost causes her to sell herself in order to save the family from the predicament in which her mania for luxuries has placed them.

One may assume that Ruiz Aguilera's portrayal of and comments on the problem of luxury in Spanish society are true to life, for Galdós himself assures us of the veracity of the pictures which are sketched in the Proverbios ejemplares: "Allí estamos todos nosotros con nuestras flaquezas y nuestras virtudes retratados con fidelidad, y puestos en movimiento en una serie de sucesos que no son ni más ni menos que éstos que nos están pasando ordinariamente uno y otro día en el curso de nuestra agitada vida." That Galdós considers the problem of luxury one that fully deserves attention is made evident in his article, "Vida de sociedad." In this he exclaims: "¡El lujo! ¡Cuánto se puede escribir sobre este fenómeno de la vida moderna!" As is to be expected, it is in Madrid where one finds the greatest manifestation of this phenomenon, for "...Madrid es una especialidad en la importancia que se da
a lo superfino. En ninguna ciudad de Europa hay más teatros. Relativamente a su población, que hoy pasa de quinientas mil almas, Madrid tiene muchos más coches particulares que París, Londres, y Viena. En Madrid es raro encontrar una mujer que no vaya bien vestida." The latter statement applies to all classes, for Galdós observes that "Las criadas de aquí suelen ser más elegantes que las señoras de ciudades famosas, muy distintas de las nuestras en el ramo de las costumbres." As for the beautiful objects of art and similar articles that bewitch various Galdosian characters such as Eloísa Bueno de Guzmán and Isidora Rufete, they are to be found in tempting profusion: "Los establecimientos de muebles riquísimos, de porcelanas y broncees, de objetos de gusto y de los mil primores que se usan para regalos, se han generalizado tanto aquí que es incomprensible cómo viven y cómo encuentran despacho para tantos y tan variados artículos."14

An examination of Galdós' novelas contemporáneas reveals that he has, indeed, found much to say about the mania for luxury, this frenzy that causes so many people to waste their money and their energy in the pursuit of material comforts and physical pleasures. In Gloria, one of his earliest novels, Galdós indicates that he not only is aware of the dangers inherent in the new industrial advances that have entered Spain, but he also places his finger on the underlying cause, which is the inability or unwillingness of his society to exercise moderation and judgment in the
quest of luxuries and pleasures that have become increasingly available. Daniel Morton, following his rescue from a shipwreck while en route to England, is residing at the home of Don Juan Crisóstomo de Lantigua. One day the young Jew becomes involved in a discussion with his host, and he criticizes the reaction of the Spanish people to the impact of the new material progress that comes from neighboring countries: "Veo que muchas cosas que en otras partes hacen poco daño, aquí envenenan. Sin duda el organismo moral de España es tan endeble como el de aquellos seres enfermizos y nerviosos, que se emponzóan sólo con el olor del veneno." When don Juan echoes, questioningly, "¿Con el olor...?" Morton continues: "Sí; porque de los inmensos progresos industriales, del lujo, del colossal aumento de las riquezas, del refinamiento material, ustedes no tienen más que el olor. España, por lo que veo, no puede vivir sino metiéndose dentro del fanal de su catolicismo para que nada la toque ni contamine, para que ni átomos siquiera de lo exterior lleguen hasta ella." As they continue their discussion, Daniel, who is criticizing the lack of a real, sincere religious feeling in Spain, notes this additional evidence of the lack of equilibrium among the concepts that govern that society: "En Madrid, pueblo rico, vemos más teatros que en Londres, una plaza de toros que es un monumento, cafés sobrios, tiendas, paseos y distracciones donde se conciertan el lujo y las artes; pero no hay una sola iglesia que no sea pocilga."15
As Galdós shifts the locale of his novels to Madrid with the appearance of *La familia de León Roch*, he begins to direct greater attention to the problem of luxury in his society. In this novel, the characters who are most guilty of indulging their passion for luxury are León Roch's father and mother-in-law, the Marqueses de Tellería, and their worthless son, Leopoldo. Just as the Peces may be considered to be symbolical of the unscrupulous, conniving government employee in Galdosian society, so may the Tellerías be said to represent the decadent, parasitic element of the aristocracy that constitutes such a burden in nineteenth-century Spanish society. One of the greatest of the many failings of this family, which now finds itself in a serious state of decline, is its refusal to adjust its way of life to a reduced income. Gustavo, the oldest son of the Tellerías, denounces his mother's ill-advised attempts to live luxuriously: "Es tontería disimular que mi madre...no ha sabido apartarse y apartarnos a tiempo del torbellino de la sociedad sedienta de goce... Hoy mismo...cuando nuestra fortuna ha mermado tanto, y según creo, lo poco que resta será bien pronto de los acreedores, ¿no es monstruoso que mi madre sostenga su casa en un pie de lujo que no nos corresponde?... ¡Infame vanidad!..." It is obvious that Gustavo does not share the enthusiasm of his mother, the Marquesa, for luxuries, and he gives expression to his bitterness as he says: "Cuando veo los sáraos dispendiosos de mi casa, lo que en vanas apariencias
se gasta allí donde escasean tantas cosas, tantas...que son necesarios; cuando veo la escandalosa variación de vestidos de mi madre, su asistencia casi diaria a los teatros, su afán de competir con quien tiene mucho más dinero que nosotros; cuando veo esto...siento impulsos de renunciar al porvenir que he soñado en mi patria, y correr a buscar un pedazo de pan en país extranjero."17 With these caustic words, Gustavo has indicated the true character of the Marquesa, and he has revealed her to be hopelessly infected with the luxury virus.

Galdós does not limit his study of the Marquesa's fervor for luxuries to La familia de León Roch. He refers briefly to "los derroches de la marquesa de Tellería" in El amigo Menso;18 and then in La de Bringas, whose story time is earlier than that of La familia de León Roch, he provides further insight into the character of this extravagant woman. Galdós discloses that the Marquesa, or Milagros, as he usually calls her, shares with Rosalía de Bringas the passion for clothes.19 Even Rosalía herself recognizes that Milagros cannot resist squandering her money on every attraction the stores offer, for she remarks: "La pobre Milagros es muy buena, es un alma de Dios; pero hay que reconocer que es muy gastadora. Si le ponen mil duros en la mano, se los gasta en un día como si fueran cien reales.... A veces parece reformada; pero sale, pasa por una tienda, ve cualquier trapo, y adiós mi dinero..., pierde el seso, le entra la fiebre...."20 It comes as no surprise
to learn that the Marquesa plans to go away for the summer with her family, even though she is in debt, and for this vacation she will spare no expense. It would seem quite evident, then, that she, like so many others in her society, does not intend to deprive herself of a single pleasure or material comfort if she can possibly find any means of attaining it; and it is no wonder that in later years her son, Gustavo, reports that their fortune has dwindled.

The Marqués and Leopoldo are proper companions for the Marquesa, since they, too, are concerned only with satisfying their every whim for pleasure and luxury. It is ironical, though, that the Marquesa should be the one to criticize them; but, like many others, she fails to realize that the faults she reproves are but a reflection of her own. She complains to her son-in-law, León, that she does not know how the Marqués "...se las compondrá...con su sastre, porque es un gasto de ropa que abruma...." To this accusation she adds: "Mi buen marido gasta lo que no tiene ni puede tener en toda la vida." Leopoldo is another care, for he "...no es ni será nunca nada, por su ineptitud y esos hábitos de ociosidad y disipación...." Later, the Marquesa tells León that her husband's "...despilfarros habían llegado a un extremo escandaloso," and she adds that she "Se sentía fatigada, consumida de aquel género de vida aparatoso y de relumbrón en que la sostenía, mal de su grado, el orgullo de su marido y de sus hijos." Such
hypocrisy or self-deception bodes ill for any change in the Marquesa's luxurious habits.

Further revelations of the extravagance and waste of the Tellerías are found in a dramatic scene between León and the Marqués. The latter discloses that a horde of creditors are swarming about the family, and he asks León to save them. The latter, angered by the continuous attacks on his fortune by the parasitic Tellerías, lashes the Marqués with reminders of their "despilfarro," their "desorden," their "vanidad;" and he exclaims: "Usted, Milagros y Polito han consumido la cuarta parte de mi fortuna." The virus of the luxury fever spares no social group, and it counts its prey among the rich and the poor, the high and the low. A lack of money does not assure one of immunity, and once the individual has been infected, the dread malady quickly saps the financial strength of its victim, exhausting his pesetas whether they be few or many. As evidence of this, there is the case of Isidora Rufete, poor, but pathetically eager to sample the luxuries that are demoralizing her society. The story of this young woman is presented by Galdós in La desheredada, a novel that has been described by Balseiro as a psychological study "...del alma femenina víctima de la seducción del lujo." Having an abundance of leisure time, Isidora is free to engage in a delightful but dangerous pastime, a pastime
that is the downfall of many women of that society. This seemingly harmless diversion is window-shopping, for "Era su delicia mayor cuando a la calle salía, y origen de vivísimos apetitos que conmovían su alma, dándole juntamente ardiente gozo y punzante martirio. Sin dejar de contemplar su faz en el vidrio para ver que tal iba, devoraba con sus ojos las infinitas variedades y formas del lujo y de la moda." 28

Since Isidora suffers from a lack of money, she is deprived of the joy of squandering a fortune on the elegant objects that catch her eye. Nevertheless she gratifies her thirst for luxuries as much as her meager funds will allow her. On one occasion when she is fortunate enough to have in her possession a very small sum of money, Isidora cannot resist the impulse to buy some widely assorted trifles, following the dictates of a passion for luxuries rather than the laws of common sense and necessity: "Necesitaba comprar algo, poca cosa." Compelled by this obsession, Isidora "Entró en una tienda de paraguas a comprar una sombrilla. Le pareció tan barata; Todo era barato. Después compró guantes." The purchase of these things stimulates the craving for additional acquisitions, and, after buying a fan, "...no pudo resistir la tentación de comprar un imperdible."

Isidora is unable to recognize the inevitable reduction of funds that must follow any expense. This is an alarming symptom and one that almost invariably indicates
that the victim is hopelessly afflicted: "Incapaz de calcular las mermas de su nada abundante peculio, vio en los Diamantes Americanos ciertos pendientes.... Comprólos, y no tardó en enamorarse de un portamonedas." Thus the spending spree continues, for Isidora "...siguió viendo cosas, y a cada instante emigraban...las pesetas y los duros, ya para tomar algo de perfumería, ya para horquillas...bien para una peina modesta, bien para papel de cartas, con su elegante timbre de iniciales."29

It is a well-known fact that any overindulgence of a vice or passion is frequently followed by physical, mental, and emotional consequences of a painful or unpleasant nature. Thus the carefree, thoughtless drinker who imbibes excessively the night before may suffer a throbbing head on the following day as a disagreeable reminder of this natural phenomenon. A parallel experience can befall the unfortunate victim of the luxury mania, who may suffer a distressing remorse, usually temporary, when the overindulgence of the passion for luxuries brings the shocking surprise of an empty pocketbook as a warning that subtraction is an arithmetical process that cannot be ignored in daily living. This is the "hang-over" that Isidora experiences as a result of her intemperance. Blissfully confident of still having enough money for some required expenses, Isidora "...registró los huequecillos rojos del portamonedas, contó, revisó, pasó las piezas de una parte a otra; pero por más vueltas que daba y trasiegos que hacía,
Isidora cannot seem to resist the compulsion to buy unnecessary and, for her, extravagant articles, and it may be asked if this is not the manifestation of a disordered mind rather than evidence of the influence of the luxury mania. It is true that some of Isidora's actions are very illogical, and it must be admitted that at times she seems somewhat irrational. Her unreasonable extravagance and her complete inability to arrange and order her life might be offered as evidence that Isidora is not of a completely sound mind. Furthermore, the fact that her father, Tomás Rufete, died in an insane asylum would add support to this contention.

However, even though this may be a partial explanation of Isidora's ill-advised purchases, there is another reason that would seem to be more important. It must be remembered that Isidora has grown up in a society that devotes an excessive proportion of its time and money to the satisfaction of its desires for luxury and material comfort. The writings of Saldós and other contemporaries of that period stress the fact that luxuries, whether they be clothes, personal adornment, household furnishings, or food and drink, lured many members of that society with their siren charms. On every side Isidora has seen examples of wasteful living as a result of this inordinate craving for luxuries, and it is not astonishing, then, that Isidora should spend
foolishly, for so many are squandering their incomes in like fashion. The accepted mode of life is to spend, not to save, a fact that has been noted by Andrexio, who states that in Spain "...ricos y medianos ignoran el ahorro y viven al día,..."32

There are moments in the life of Isidora when the bright sun of prosperity gladdens her life. One such occasion finds her enjoying the blessings of a small inheritance and some money from her dissolute lover, Joaquín Pez. However, such fleeting rays of sunshine are quickly obscured by the ever-present clouds of want and privation that inevitably follow one of Isidora's quests for luxuries. This inconsistent way of life elicits the following admonition to Isidora: "Hay otro desorden, Isidorita, que te hace muy desgraciada, y que te llevará lejos, muy lejos. Me refiero a las irregularidades de tu peculio. Unas veces tienes mucho, otras nada.... De vez en cuando parece que quieres ordenar tu peculio, pero tus apetitos de lujo toman la delantera a tus débiles cálculos, y empiezas a gastar en caprichos, dejando sin atender las deudas sagradas."33

These words are a part of what Galdós describes as the "Voz de la conciencia de Isidora o interrogatorio indiscreto del autor...,"34 but such prudent counsel is not heeded by Isidora. A lack of funds and the threat of a return to difficult times can never force her to cast off the shackles of her vice. In a moment of concern, which is occasioned by the anemic condition of her finances, she
speaks of order and thrift, saying: "...de aquí en adelante, gastar poquito, y sobre todo, saber lo que se gasta..." However, it soon becomes apparent that this new wave of economy will quickly shatter on the unyielding passion that dominates her. Almost with the same breath that she speaks of spending little, Isidora indicates that she still intends to keep a maid, and on the following day the hair dresser comes, as for Isidora it was "...difícil adquirir el hábito de peinarse por sí misma."36

Isidora's hopeless addiction to luxuries is frequently the cause of her moral transgressions because, explains Galdós, "El loco amor al lujo y a las comodidades eran los puntos débiles de Isidora; su necesidad la brecha por donde la atacaban, prometiéndola villas y castillas."37 As the months pass, Isidora sinks lower and lower into the slough of degradation until eventually she is willing to accept the attentions of Gaitica, a thoroughly despicable and worthless character who offers her the bait that she seldom can resist: luxury. Isidora herself frankly admits the reasons that cause her to become the mistress of such a scoundrel as Gaitica: "...me dió cuanto necesitaba, mucho más de cuanto necesitaba...." Following this explanation, Isidora then confesses her fatal weakness: "Yo tengo este defecto de volverme loca con el lujo. Vi los trajes, el dinero, y las comodidades, y no vi al hombre."38

It is Isidora's misfortune that her will is always enslaved by the thought and by the sight of luxuries, which
seem to act as a drug, narcotizing all other sensations and ideas. With her gaze riveted on the clothes, the comforts, and the money that always entice her, she stumbles along the path of indiscretion and immorality until, at the end of the story, she goes out to the streets and a life of prostitution. In the words of a friend, Isidora "...se ha caído al fondo...," and the victory of the luxury mania is complete.

It is true that other factors have contributed to the fall of this misguided girl, but her most serious failing, and it is one that is recognized by Isidora herself, is the unrestrained love for luxuries. To indulge this passion she will sacrifice the respect of those closest to her, and she will accept degradation and shame. It is, of course, obvious that Isidora does not possess strong moral fiber. She lacks strength of character. However, even with these defects it is possible that she would have survived in a more favorable environment, just as a fragile flower will grow and bloom if the proper conditions are maintained. In this case, however, the tender sprout could not long withstand the unhealthy atmosphere that surrounded it. Reared in a society that emphasized the desirability of material comforts and the necessity of living beyond one's means, Isidora was quick to succumb to the fascination of ephemeral luxuries, and she soon became another tragic example of the consequences of this way of life.
Other characters of La desheredada reveal that they, too, are infected with the same deadly germ that destroys Isidore. Her brother, Mariano, can satisfy his dream of luxuries very rarely, but when the opportunity presents itself, he goes to ridiculous extremes. If his bad luck in gambling varies and he wins a small sum, Mariano "...se permitía lujos desenfrenados.... Cuando las ganancias habían sido por ventura fenomenales, alquilaba un jamelgo...." Following the example set by some among the upper class, he enjoys his luxuries in the midst of his debts: "Para que esta parodia vil y nauseabunda de las disipaciones de la clase superior fuese más completa, tenía sus pequeñas deudas con el mozo del café y con los amigos." Like his sister, Mariano suffers from the same unquenchable thirst: "El afán de goces, el apetito y ardiente de satisfacciones materiales que tan grande parte tenían en el ser moral de Mariano, y qué habían de tenerla mayor cuando fuera hombre formado,..." 

The Pez family enjoys fully the many luxuries that their society can offer them. However, Joaquín Pez attributes his failures and defects to this unreasonable luxury that surrounded him as a youth: "Mis faltas son debilidades, y además un efecto preciso de la mala, de la perversa educación que he recibido. ¿Por qué educaron en el lujo al hijo de un pobre empleado con treinta mil reales? ¿Por qué desde niño me enseñaban a competir con los hijos de los grandes de España?" Joaquín Pez has blamed his
family for rearing him in a false, artificial life; yet it would seem obvious from this study that he should have probed deeper for the cause of his difficulties. Although his parents have caused him irreparable harm morally and mentally because of their gratification of every desire for luxury and ostentation, they have but followed the creed that is worshipped by much of their society. It is the society, not the family, that is basically at fault. In contrast to Joaquín, Mariano Rufete has known only a life of hardship and poverty. Fine clothes, succulent dishes, carriages, and summer vacations have not gladdened his rocky road; yet it is evident that he, too, is a fervent worshipper at the altar of luxury.

The protagonist of El amigo Manso, Máximo Manso, has observed the havoc wrought in his society by the craze for luxuries. This paragon of sobriety and discretion, who has remained aloof to the materialistic doctrine of his society, describes graphically the dangers that may befall the unfortunate individuals who are contaminated by the passion for luxuries. He speaks of "criaturas inocentes" who have fallen "al abismo del pecado." This tragedy occurs because "La serpiente las ha mordido, inoculando en su sangre pura el virus de un loco apetito." Máximo explains that the "loco apetito" is "El lujo. El lujo es lo que antes se llamaba el demonio, la serpiente, el ángel caído; porque el lujo fue también querubín, fue arte, generosidad, realeza, y ahora es un maleficio mesocrático, al alcance de la
burguesía, pues con la industria y las máquinas se ha
puesto en condiciones perfectas para corromper a todo el
género humano, sin distinción de clases."46

The scholarly Manso, who on another occasion tells
Manolo Peña that "...las competencias de lujo llegan a lo
increíble,"47 occasionally makes observations on the evi-
dence of luxury in the lives of his relatives and friends.
Most of these individuals seem able to confine their
desires within their financial limits, but Doña Cándida,
the widow of García Grande, has not been so fortunate.48
Mансо paints a very unflattering portrait of this woman,
saying that "Jamás vio Madrid mujer más disipadora, más
apasionada del lujo, más frenética por todas las ruinosas
vanidades de la edad presente."49 As long as she had money,
her "...vanidad y disipación...superaban a los derroches de
la Marquesa de Tellería...."50 Years of scarcity have not
lessened Doña Cándida's hunger for luxuries, and even
though her shameful "sablazos" provide her a living, she
craves more: "Nada le basta, y mientras más tiene más
quiere," remarks Manso. "Se le ha matado el hambre, y
ahora aspira a ciertas comodidades que antes no tenía.
Proporcionalé las comodidades, y aspirará al lujo. Dale
lujo, y pretenderá la opulencia. Es insaciable. Sus ape-
titos adquieren con los años cierta ferozidad."51

There are many characters in Galician society, just
as there are in real society, who succumb to the corrupting
influence of luxury. Among these many unfortunates, three
stand out above all others: Isidora Rufete, Rosalía de Bringas, and Eloísa Bueno de Guzmán. In these three women Galdós provides a detailed and penetrating study of the manifestations and serious, even tragic, consequences of the luxury mania. Each one of these women is from a different social level. Isidora belongs to the poor, lower class; Rosalía is a member of the lower middle class; and Eloísa enjoys the wealth and position of the well-to-do upper middle class. All three share a bond, however, for their thoughts, actions, and emotions reveal clearly that each one is a victim, as the critic Balseiro says, "de los peligros del lujo."52

The passion for luxuries destroys Isidora, but in the case of Rosalía de Bringas the vice cannot demoralize its victim so completely because its poison is checked by a most effective antidote: Don Francisco Bringas, ruler of the Bringas household and guardian of the family funds. In order that one may realize how insidiously this evil can gain access to a household so assiduously protected against the ravages of luxury and extravagance as is the Bringas domicile, Galdós explains that "En otro tiempo, la prudencia de Thiers [Francisco Bringas] pudo poner un freno a los apetitos de lujo, haciéndonos creer a todos que no existían, cuando lo único positivo en esto era la imposibilidad de satisfacerlos." However, into this stronghold of thrift and prudence comes a cousin of Don Francisco, Agustín Caballero, who, quite innocently, arouses in
Rosalía the dormant desires for luxury: "Los regalitos de Agustín Caballero y la desición de todas las galas que había comprado para su boda, despertaron en Rosalía aquella pasión del vestir... Mientras no se probó la fruta, prohibida por aquel Dios doméstico, todo marchaba muy bien. Pero la manzana fue mordida...y...después de haber estrenado tantos y tan hermosos trajes, ¿cómo resignarse a volver a los trapitos antiguos y a no variar nunca de moda? Esto no podía ser. Aquel bendito Agustín había sido...la serpiente de buena fe que le metió en la cabeza las más peligrosas vanidades que pueden ahuecar el cerebro de una mujer."53

Rosalía's desire for luxury in dress, an evil previously described by Galdós as a source of concern for "maridos trabajadores y modestos,"54 is a vice which Rosalía must indulge secretly, however, with only occasional morsels to appease her taste for beautiful clothes. Her husband, Francisco, receives a meager salary as an insignificant member of Spain's teeming bureaucratic family; and, furthermore, this Argus-eyed guardian of the family funds would look with horror upon any foolish expense for unnecessary finery. Consequently, Rosalía must snatch her few moments of bliss behind the back of her husband: "Como Bringas reprobaba que su mujer variase de vestidos y gastase en galas y adornos, ella afectaba despreciar las novedades; pero a cencerros tapados estaba siempre haciendo reformas, combinando trapos e interpretando más o menos libremente lo que
traían los figurines. Cuando Milagros iba a pasar un rato con ella, si Bringas estaba en la oficina, charlaban a sus anchas, desahogando, cada cual a su modo, la pasión que a entrambas dominaba.55

On such occasions when the two conspirators were able to confer unobserved, Rosalía would quietly take out her treasures of cloth and "...empezaba un febril consejo sobre lo que se debía hacer para lograr el efecto mejor y más llamativo dentro de la distinción."56 Surely, one may say, this is the harmless indulgence of a minor vice. Nevertheless, Galdós remarks that if notes of these counsels had been recorded, "...ofrecerían un curioso registro enciclopédico de esta pasión mujeril, que hace en el mundo más estragos que las revoluciones."57

Years of indoctrination in the ways of thrift and sound economy do not avail Rosalía, however, when luxury dazzles her eyes with a beautiful manteleta. So keen is her yearning for this that she experiences a physical disturbance: "...de tal modo arrebataba su sangre el ardor del deseo, que temió un ataquillo de erisipela si no lo saciaba."58 Helpless, now, in the relentless grip of her passion, Rosalía returns to the store where the fire of her longing was first kindled, and at the sight of the object of her desire she again experiences a pronounced bodily sensation: "Rosalía hubo de sentir frío en el pecho, ardor en las sienes, y en sus hombros los nervios le sugieron tan al vivo la sensación del contacto y peso de la manteleta,
que creyó llevaría ya puesta." The inner conflict is of brief duration. The high price and the realization that her husband will not authorize such an expensive luxury are not enough to withstand the onslaughter of her own craving and the persuasion of Milagros. Again the temptations of luxury triumph, and the manteleta is purchased on credit, its presence being explained to Don Francisco as another example of the generosity of the Queen, who is described as having graciously bestowed it upon Rosalía as a gift one day when the latter happened to be with her Majesty.

This unwise purchase plunges Rosalía into some very trying moments, as she searches desperately for the necessary money with which to pay the bill. She obtains a loan, a frequent recourse for so many madrileños whose way of life causes them to exceed the limits imposed by their financial condition, but she pays only half the bill. The remaining money is destined to be consumed by a small loan to a friend and by the inevitable purchases of what Rosalía describes as a "...pedazo de foulard... las dos o tres plumas del sombrero de Isabelita y los botones de nacar." Rosalía admits the sovereignty of her ruling passion when she adds: "La verdad, no me puedo pasar sin ellos." This one line, uttered in the privacy of her own thoughts, depicts the character of this unfortunate woman. She cannot do without them, nor can she ever resist the temptation of clothes and finery. They are as necessary to her as is drink to the alcoholic, and, apparently, they are capable
of producing the same stimulating effect, for Galdós describes Rosalía and Milagros, another clothes addict, "...corriendo de tienda en tienda bajo la acción intoxicante de una embriaguez de trapos."61

Even though Rosalía is hampered by the strict economy that prevails in the Bringas household, she continues to gratify her constant yearning for clothes, but with it all her conscience must be troubled, for Galdós comments that "...su pasión del lujo la había llevado insensiblemente a un terreno erizado de peligros, y tenía que ocultar las adquisiciones que hacía de continuo por los medios más contrarios a la tradición económica de Bringas. Tenía los cajones de la cómoda atestados de pedazos de tela..... Enorme baúl mundo guardaba, con sospechosa discreción, mil especies de arreos diversos."62 This weakness of Rosalía not only results in ill-advised purchases, but it also leads to other faults, too, for she must resort to falsehoods to deceive her frugal husband, but the problem is: "¿Con qué patrañas explicaría el crecimiento grande de la riqueza y variedad de su guardarropa?"63

It becomes increasingly evident that the furtive indulgence of her desire, even though on a small scale, has seriously undermined the foundation of Rosalía's character, for not only does Galdós point out that she is guilty of deception and lying, but he also states that "...su pasión de los perifollos o el anhelo de cubrir las apariencias y de tapar sus trampas, la cegaban hasta el punto de que no
The authority of Don Francisco Bringas and his laws of thrift prevent his wife from becoming a real social problem. Nevertheless, Rosalía's passion is constantly smoldering, and occasionally it erupts in the form of some new acquisition for her secret wardrobe. These stealthy transgressions of her husband's economical decrees must worry Rosalía, for she resorts to every subterfuge in order to prevent Don Francisco from knowing the truth; yet apparently she is powerless to resist the allure of new clothes. It would seem evident, then, that there must be an inner struggle in Rosalía, a severe, vexing conflict; for on the one hand there is a resentment of her husband's economic tyranny and a fear of his rage if he discovers her deception, and on the other hand there is the irresistible longing to buy the new attractions that are to be found in the clothing stores. Because of this conflict and this yearning for things that are quite frequently beyond her grasp, Rosalía cannot be a sound, healthy member of society. She, too, suffers from this widespread distress, this frustration which the Marqués de Púcar calls "el eterno quiero y no puedo." It is a symptom exhibited by all of the unhappy people of that society who crave something unattainable, be it money, luxuries, or social prestige. One may conclude, then, that even though the fever for
luxuries has not destroyed Rosalía, it has left her a chronic sufferer of this social affliction.66

The study of Eloísa Bueno de Guzmán illustrates the disaster that may result from the often fatal combination of money and the unrestrained passion for luxurious living. Eloísa is able to feed the fires of her passion with the money which her husband has recently received from an inheritance, and she pays no heed to cost as she seeks to furnish her home with the many elegant adornments that a luxury-conscious society offers her.67 Eloísa herself recognizes that she is addicted to this craving for luxuries, which she calls "...el vicio...el vicio, sí: ¿para qué darle otro nombre?"68 On another occasion, while conversing with José María, her wealthy cousin, she says: "Qué quieres, soy mujer envidiada ya en el lujo.... Los placeres de la sociedad me son tan necesarios como el respirar." Furthermore, Eloísa perceives, quite correctly it would seem, the origin of her vice, recognizing that the fault lies not only with her but also with her environment, with her social atmosphere: "Un poco que yo tengo en mí desde que nací, y otro poco que me han enseñado...los amigos, tú, tú, tú."69

However, Eloísa's awareness of her weakness does not provide her a weapon with which to fight the tyranny of her passion, and the vice reigns untrammeled, as she disregards the serious breaches that have been made in the inheritance by her luxurious forays. It has been observed in the study
of Isidora that the inability or refusal to heed the indications of approaching financial disaster is a symptom that is manifested by those who have fallen prey to the rage for luxuries. A blissful ignorance of the inexorable laws of arithmetic and common sense anesthetizes many of the victims, who continue along the path of prodigality. This is evidenced in Eloísa, who, after the staggering expenses of the first year, shows no sign of moderation.  

José María reports that "Lo peor de todo fue que en aquel otoño Eloísa montó la casa con más lujo, tomó más criados, hizo reformas en el edificio, anunciando que iba a dar comidas todos los jueves."  

A lack of funds does not seem to deter those who follow the lure of luxuries, for frequently they can correct this situation, even if it be only temporarily, by borrowing money, or by pawning or mortgaging some possession. The latter solution is the one used by Eloísa and her husband, who makes no effort to bridle the runaway passion of his wife; and they mortgage one of the estates which form a part of the inheritance. It is the Marqués de Fúcar, the astute businessman and scourge of governmental funds, who reports that the estate has been mortgaged. The Marqués is not surprised by this transaction, however, and he explains that "No podía ser de otra manera. Esta gente no ha podido apartarse de la corriente general, y gasta el doble o el triple de lo que tiene. Es el eterno quiero y no puedo, el lema de Madrid, que no sé como no lo graban en el
escudo, para explicar la postura del oso, si, del pobre oso que quiere comerse los madroños, y por más que se estira, no puede...." Just as the doctor foresees the inevitable result of a disease whose prognosis is well-known to him from experience, so does the Marqués predict the inescapable fate that will befall Eloísa and her husband, who are sufferers of this widespread ill that plagues their society: "...al paso que vamos, la debacle no tardará."73

Eloísa's thirst for luxuries is never quenched. Just as the drug addict constantly seeks more of the narcotic to satisfy the craving within him, so does Eloísa continue to acquire more treasures in response to the urge to indulge the longing that dominates her. Unfortunately, the gratification of this desire apparently serves only to increase the craving, which manifests itself in a driving force that gives her no peace nor allows her any satisfaction.

Saca-mantecas, a gossipy acquaintance of José María, refers to this fascination for more and better luxuries in his analysis of Eloísa: "No he conocido mujer de más imaginación...para discurrir modos de gastar. Ella es persona de gusto...pero con nada se conforma." The praise that her house and its furnishings elicit from her guests draws only a lament from her: "Se lamentó de no tener más que porquerías...de que no posee cosas de verdadero mérito ni de verdadero chic." In short, says Saca-mantecas, "...quiere más, más todavía."74
Following the death of her husband, the squandering of the inheritance, and the break with José María, her paramour, Eloísa is faced with the prospect of less money and, consequently, fewer luxuries. In such a situation she does not hesitate to become the mistress of wealthy men who can provide her with more and more of the elegant things that she always covets. Thus, she is quick to accept the attentions of the elderly Marqués de Púcar, and she wastes little time in giving a convincing demonstration that she has lost none of her extravagant habits. After returning from Paris, where she had gone with the Marqués, she enthusiastically displays to José María new delights. The latter mentions various articles, but apparently the number is such that description would be tedious or endless, for he states that there were "...mil chucherías de todos tamaños, en tal número, que apenas había ya en la casa sitio donde ponerlas."75

It is not until the end of the story, however, that Galdós reveals how deeply the roots of Eloísa's passion have extended. In this instance Eloísa generously comes to the aid of José María when the latter suffers two calamitous blows by fate. The first disaster is a financial one which occurs as a result of severe reverses in stock market operations, and the second misfortune is a serious illness that leaves him sadly incapacitated. At this crucial time Eloísa extends a helping hand to her former lover by giving him ten thousand duros, a sum desperately needed by José María in order to liquidate his accounts. And where
had Eloísa, who is prodigality personified, accumulated such an amount? The answer comes from Severiano, a friend of José María, who explains how the money was acquired. As a result of a visit to Eloísa, Severiano was assured by the former that there would be aid from that quarter; "Venderé todo lo que tengo, por sacarle de su compromiso," Eloísa declared. However, this assurance seemed somewhat doubtful because, explains Severiano later to José María, "...lo que en la casa vi más me revelaba propósitos de engrandecimiento que de liquidación. Enseñóme un cuadrángano grande que había comprado el día anterior y otras preciosidades." Severiano's report that ten thousand duros were needed drew from Eloísa the comment, "Mucho así" with "miradas de amor a sus cachivaches." Feeling that it is useless to prolong the story or evade the truth, Severiano explains to José María that Eloísa, "Sin vender ni un alfiler, me trajo ayer los diez mil duros. Se los ha dado Sánchez Botín." 76

José María does not need further explanations from Severiano in order to understand the significance of this information, and he realizes that his cousin has sold herself in order to free him from his predicament. To the cynical observer, this sacrifice might not appear so great when it is remembered that Eloísa has grazed in several illicit pastures, moving from one to another as her voracious appetite for luxuries threatens to destroy her foolhardy protectors. However, there is evidence that this arrangement is, indeed, a sacrifice, a painful, revolting
sacrifice for Eloísa, who has indicated very emphatically her feelings concerning Sánchez Botín. José María states that he has heard his cousin make the following declaration more than once: "Si me ponen en la alternativa de querer a todos los soldados de un regimiento uno tras otro, o vivir dos horas con ese orangután, opto por lo primero."77

It is evident, then, that Eloísa is hopelessly addicted to the craving for luxuries, and, as José María observes, "...para que se vean las raíces que la pasión del lujo tenía en su alma; puesto en el caso de vender sus últimas adquisiciones de trapos y arte decorativo, no tuvo valor para ello, y apachugó con el aborrecible, asqueroso e inmundo estafermo que la perseguía."78

The luxury mania has won a complete victory, and another victim has been claimed by this social ill that troubled Spanish society in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The objection may be raised that Galdós has exaggerated the character of Eloísa in order to portray more effectively the dangerous results of too great a love for luxuries. However, urban society constantly offers the spectacle of individuals enslaved by drink or drugs who follow the same path as that pursued by Eloísa: excessive gratification of the desire, which leads to financial ruin and debt, which in turn lead to an increasing disregard for moral and social laws and eventually to degradation. Whenever any passion, whether it be for drink, drugs, or for luxuries, completely dominates a person's mind and will,
then the consequences will be aggravated. The behavior pattern may appear exaggerated and unreasonable to the fortunate observer who has escaped contamination by this vice, but the results of this overindulgence are, nonetheless, tragically real, and they will invariably create for society a difficult and distressing problem.

The evil effects of this terrible hunger for luxuries are not confined only to the misguided ones who indulge their passion with no regard for the necessities of the present or the future. It sometimes happens that innocent victims must suffer from the irrational prodigality of those about them. Such is the case with the father of Eloísa, Rafael Bueno de Guzmán. It has been his misfortune to be married to a woman who can never curb her craving for luxuries. In a moment of confidence Don Rafael informs his nephew, José María, that he has arrived at the end of his life with little or no money to show for his forty years of work. The cause of this regrettable financial condition is his wife, Pilar, who "Nunca supo más que gastar y gastar."

Don Rafael goes on to explain: "¿Canaba yo mil? Pues ella a darse vida de mil y quinientos.... De este modo, ¿que quiere que resulte? Miseria, vejez triste.... Me preguntarás que dónde han ido a parar mis ahorros. Derrama, hijo, tu imaginación por los teatros de esta pequeña Babel, por sus tiendas, por sus increíbles y desproporcionados lujos, y encontrarás en todas partes alguna gota de mi sangre."
In Miguel de Cervantes, offers another study of a man whose unkind fate has caused him to be shackled to a woman with a ruinous appetite for luxuries. The name of this unhappy soul is Ramón Villaamil, the wretched government employee whose prolonged cesantía is made worse by the foolish extravagance of his luxury-conscious wife. This failing of Doña Pura de Villaamil, who has always had "el arte de no ahorrar un céntimo, y una gracia especial para que la paga de primero de mes hallase la bolsa más limpia que una patena," inevitably places a severe strain on the family budget. It would seem that the Villaamil family might be cited as distressing proof of these words written by Miguel Cabezas: "La clase media se encuentra más descentrada, y una parte de ella en condiciones peores que la trabajadora, a lo que contribuye el desenfreno del lujo, las consecuencias de las vicisitudes políticas y de las guerras, y a la dificultad de que los conocimientos adquiridos en los centros docentes se apliquen útiles; es decir, proporcionando un medio honroso de vida, no siendo en el servicio del Estado." Not only could Villaamil write volumes on the life of one in the service of the State and "las consecuencias de las vicisitudes políticas," but, as an innocent victim of his wife's extravagant folly, he could speak from bitter experience of "el desenfreno del lujo."

Unfortunately for Villaamil, Doña Pura has the enthusiastic cooperation of her daughter, Abelarda, and of her sister, Doña Milagros, in her quest of luxuries. A neighbor
criticizes the three women, saying that "El día que loscae algo, aunque sea de limosna, ya las tienes dándose la gran vida y echando la casa por la ventana." Doña Pura is quick to prove the astuteness of this observation. The endless unemployment of Villaamil has driven both him and his wife to the embarrassing extreme of seeking loans from friends. However, when Doña Pura does obtain "diez duros" to help the family in its financial straits, it becomes quite evident that this small sum will quickly disappear in the same bottomless pool of waste and mismanagement that has swallowed up the earnings of Don Ramón. An examination of the market basket reveals that Doña Pura once again is "dándose la gran vida," for there are "...diferentes especies de comestibles, vegetales y animales, todo muy bueno, y más adecuado a la mesa de un Director general que a la de un mísero pretendiente." 

No one is better qualified to censure the actions of Doña Pura than her long-suffering husband, and this he does in a damning indictment in which he sets forth the follies that result from his wife's refusal to adjust to a life that is commensurate with his income. What is more natural, asks Villaamil, than to stay within the limits of what is possible? "Que no hay más que patatas...pues patatas.... Que mejora la situación y se puede ascender hasta la perdiz...pues perdiz." However, this is not the philosophy of Doña Pura, for "...ella no está contenta sin perdiz a diario." In this way, laments Villaamil, "...llevamos
treinta años de ahogos, siempre temblando; cuando lo había, comiéndonoslo a tranquilones como si nos urgiese mucho acabarlo; cuando no, viviendo de trampas y anticipios."

Obviamente Doña Pura es like Isidora and the other disciples of the luxurious, frivolous way of life, who never pause to consider that there is a tomorrow when retribution will be exacted for the overindulgence of their passion. Villaamil emphasizes again that this defect of his wife is a serious one: "Porque esta doña Pura es atroz...y como se encuentre con barro a mano, se armó la fiesta, y mesa y ropa y todo ha de ser de lo más fino, sin considerar que mañana faltará la condenada libreta."

Just as Isidora's passion for luxuries is one of the principal causes of the degradation that eventually engulfs her as she sinks lower and lower until she finally resorts to prostitution, so is Doña Pura's unrestrained devotion to the good life an important factor in the decision of Villaamil to commit suicide. It is evident, then, that the craze for luxuries is not only a social evil in itself, but it can lead to many other ills that plague and weaken a society.

A brief study of the cases of two characters in Misericordia, Doña Francisca Juárez de Zapata and Prasquito Ponte Delgado, and one in El abuelo, the Conde de Albrit, will reveal two more social problems that are direct results of an unreasonable desire for luxury. These two ills are poverty and class change, that is, the shocking, painful
fall from the comforts and pleasures of the upper or middle class to the want and adversity of the poor class; and like birds of prey these two evils hover above the carefree, unwary fools who so often stumble weakly into their grasp after having bled themselves with the luxurious habits of the period.

Doña Francisca Juárez de Zapata is another one of those unfortunate creatures like Isidora, Doña Pura, and Doña Pilar, whose "...cabeza no era buena...para el gobierno de la vida." This type is, of course, especially susceptible to the luxury virus since the latter thrives and multiplies if the victim is incapable of appreciating the hard laws of arithmetic or of adjusting his way of life to his income. Ominous symptoms become apparent immediately following the marriage of Doña Francisca to Don Antonio María Zapata, for once the couple has established itself in Madrid, "...le faltó tiempo a la señora para poner su casa en un pie de vida frívola y aparatoso que, si empezó ajustando las vanidades al marco de las rentas y sueldos, pronto se salió de todo límite de prudencia, y no tardaron en aparecer los atrasos, las irregularidades, las deudas." As in the case of Doña Pura and Doña Pilar, there is lacking the firm hand of a Francisco Bringas to check the runaway passion of the foolish wife: "Hombre ordenadísimo era Zapata; pero de tal modo le dominaba su esposa, que hasta le hizo perder sus cualidades eminentes;... Paquita no se ponía tasa en el vestir elegante, ni en el lujo de mesa, ni en el continuo
zarandeo de bailes y reuniones, ni en los dispendiosos caprichos." At the very moment that Zapata, frightened by the inevitable ruin that he sees approaching, attempts to establish order in the midst of this luxurious chaos, he is stricken by pneumonia and dies. Nothing can save Doña Francisca now, and her descent is rapid, until eventually one finds her helpless under the harsh hand of poverty, existing from the few coins that Bonigna, her servant and companion, can obtain from begging. "Ved aquí," remarks Galdós, "en qué paran las glorias y altezas de este mundo, y qué pendiente hubo de recorrer la tal señora, rodando hacia la profunda miseria... hasta que la encontramos viviendo inconscientemente de limosna, entre agonías, dolores y vergüenzas mil." Galdós might well have admonished us to behold here the tragic fate that befalls many of those of his society who live so high that they cannot see the pitfalls that lie in their paths. Unfortunately, these headlong tumbles from prosperity to adversity are a widespread evil of that urban society: "Ejemplos sin número de estas caídas nos ofrecen las poblaciones grandes, más que ninguna ésta de Madrid, en que apenas existen hábitos de orden...."

Another in Misericordia who tastes the shame and suffering that is the common fare for those who sup at poverty's table is Frasquito Ponte Delgado, and it would appear that once again the trouble must be ascribed largely to luxurious living and the resultant lack of savings. Ponte "Había
heredado una regular fortunilla, desempeñó algunos destinos buenos, y no tuvo atenciones ni cargas de familia..."

Under these circumstances, it would seem logical to assume that such an individual might reach an advanced age with sufficient provisions to withstand the attacks of poverty and the accompanying evils of malnutrition and bad housing. Such is not the case, however; for Ponte, like many others of his society, has been ignorant of one thing that is essential to a tranquil old age: "...no había sabido ahorrar." Furthermore, "Años antes se había comido los últimos restos de su fortuna." There is no indication that a voracious appetite for luxuries had consumed the inheritance, as was the case with Eloísa, but the circumstances of Don Fraquito's earlier life would lead to the conclusion that the luxuries, and not the necessities, of life are a factor that have contributed extensively to his becoming a social problem. It is enough that Galdós informs us that Ponte "...consagró su vida a la sociedad, vistiendo con afectada elegancia,..." in order that we may recognize the reasons for the fortune's untimely disappearance "años antes." The attempts to keep pace with a society which is devoted to luxuries and physical pleasures and the financial drain of elegant dress; these were the currents that gradually swept away the sands of his fortune, exposing, eventually, the hard, bare rock of scarcity and privation.

Don Rodrigo, the Conde de Albrit, is another who must face a troubled old age, menaced by the dreary visage of
poverty, which is always close by, and humiliated by the humble role that he is forced to accept following his change of fortune. Extravagant, luxurious living is again the cause of this unfortunate plunge from the very pinnacle of society, a fall that is described by Gregoria and Venancio, two former tenant farmers on the land of the Count, as punishment. Venancio explains: "Todo ello por no ser económico, y no pensar más que en darse la gran vida, sin mirar al día de mañana... En fiestas y viajes, en caballos y trenes, en convitazos y otras mil vanidades se le escurrieron al señor los bienes de la casa de Albrit, parte de los de Laín, que eran de su madre." Thus another has learned to his sorrow that the good life may ultimately lead to a deplorable life if one is led astray by the insidious charm of unrestrained luxury.

These three unfortunate old people, or perhaps one should say these three unwary ones, have paid the price for their irrational worship of the luxurious way of life. The philosophy of living for the day, of consuming one's present and future income solely in the vain pursuit of luxuries and pleasures, has an obvious and terrible weakness, for such a concept of living foolishly disregards the grim certainty of the tomorrow that must always come. For Doña Francisca, Frasquito Ponte, the Conde de Albrit, and for many others like them, this tomorrow has come, bringing with it the despair and mortification of poverty and pronounced class change. Certain innate weaknesses of
character may have contributed to this predicament, but, as has been observed before, a contributing cause must be sought in their society and the prevailing philosophy of life. They have only followed the well-worn path travelled by so many others of that period.

E. Frivolous, Corrupting Pleasures

It is evident, of course, that a society that yearns to possess every material comfort will also strive to enjoy every pleasure. In Spanish urban society the frenzy for luxurious living not only caused those who were afflicted to crave the delightful treasures of the many stores, but it also drove them to seek the diversions that were to be found in the growing number of theaters, clubs, and cafes that adorned Spanish society. For many people of that period, luxury and pleasure had become the twin goddesses of evil of their misguided creed, and the senseless worship of the two resulted in a constant stream of victims who were sacrificed on their altars. Just as the longing for fine clothes and personal adornment, expensive food, and elegant household furnishings led to disastrous extravagance, so did the quest for entertainment cause many to live beyond their incomes as they strove to savor every pleasure that their society offered. The tragic, and all too frequent, consequence of this lack of moderation has been observed in the study of the preceding cases. Mental turmoil, frustration, financial difficulties, and eventually
economic disaster, with its accompanying degradation, poverty, and despair, have often engulfed those whose appetites have blinded them to the precepts of common sense.

However, financial ruin was not the only danger that menaced the many unfortunates of that society who were dominated by the passion for luxury and pleasure. The inordinate desire for diversion could also cause irreparable harm to the health and well-being of the individual. The pursuit of pleasure in that society involved a nocturnal existence, as the doors to the many theaters, clubs, and cafes did not close until the early hours of the morning. It is realized, of course, that in Spain and in many Spanish-speaking countries the evening's entertainment usually begins and ends at a later hour than in our society. It would seem obvious, however, that such a practice may well lead to unhealthy and unfortunate consequences if it is not observed with discretion. It is not surprising to learn that the same lack of moderation and judgment that caused that society to attribute such exaggerated importance to money, luxury, and social pretense may have led it to irrational excesses in the never-ending search for frivolous pleasures. In 1887 Almirall, in his work, *L'Espagne telle qu'elle est*, notes that "Une autre originalité de Madrid, c'est que la vie et l'animation s'y développent à l'heure où elles prennent généralement fin dans les autres villes." 95

Earlier, in 1882, Dionisio Chaulé had vigorously attacked this practice of his society from the standpoint
of health. Discussing the growing death rate in Madrid, a figure that does not compare favorably with other large European and American cities, he gives various explanations, which have been advanced, that attribute the cause to sanitation, climate, topography, and housing. The author is not satisfied with these reasons, however, and he says: "No tratemos de engañarnos en asuntos de tan vital interés. Madrid sigue donde estaba y en iguales o mejores salutíferas condiciones..." Chaulié attributes the lack of health and the excessive death rate to a change of customs and habits: "Las costumbres del Madrid de hoy son diversas en absoluto de las antiguas, cosa que nada importaría si el cambio no se hubiese verificadon en completa oposición con el orden de la naturaleza. Y ¿rara casualidad: la falta de salud y excesivo número en las defunciones...siguen el mismo progreso que la variación en el género de vida." One habit that Chaulié considers to be quite harmful is that of seeking one's diversion during all hours of the night: "Pernicioso al extremo es el uso establecido de hacer de la noche día y del día noche; el sueño cuando el sol brilla no suple de ningún modo al reposo nocturno; podrán el hábito y las precauciones hacerlo tolerable, pero será un descanso ficticio el que proporcione, nunca el necesario para restablecer el sistema nervioso en su conveniente armonía." Chaulié goes on to say that not only is this "vigilia" harmful in itself, but "...por lo común toda, o gran parte de ella, se pasa en teatros o cafés, donde la
mucho concurricencia, las luces y el humo del tabaco hacen el aire irrespirable, pues para ser inspirado impunemente preciso es que sea puro."

Add to this, continúa Chaulié, "...alguna cena condimentada Dios sabe de qué modo, o tal cual bebida espiritosa bien lejos de ser tan pura como debiera, tomada antes de recogérse a las altas horas, y se tendrá una explicación de las muchas excitaciones de la economía, palpitations de corazón y desarreglos de estómago."

The author also believes that inadequate sleep and an injurious diet are not the only evils that threaten those who persist in following this way of life, for it is his theory that "En estos centros de aire viciado es donde se debilita el sistema respiratorio, predisponiéndole a las pulmonías del invierno, pues conviene saber que atacan con preferencia a los viejos, a las mujeres y a los niños, prueba de que la robustez de los órganos que tanto padecen en una atmósfera impura es garantía contra las enfermedades reinantes en Madrid."99

Some of Chaulié's beliefs may cause the present-day reader to smile, but his criticisms do contain certain basic ideas of health that would probably draw an approving nod from many doctors of our day. An occasional night out is not going to undermine the health of an individual, but when the night out, with its constant stimulation and with its intoxicants and coffee, becomes a pattern of life for many members of a society, one is justified, it would seem,
in condemning this social custom as one that bears in itself the seeds of inevitable harm for the individual and for the society that observes and encourages such practices.

One may, of course, dismiss Chaulie’s criticism as inconsequential. However, it would seem that his views cannot thus be disregarded since his work as a journalist and as a chronicler of his society has earned for him some words of commendation in the Enciclopedia universal ilustrada, where one reads that he “se distinguió también como periodista... Colebore en El Museo de las familias, Occidente de Asturias, y Revista Contemporánea, para la cual escribió una serie de artículos que, publicados posteriormente en un libro con el título de Cosas de Madrid, merecieron elogios, y Fernández Guerra afirmó de ellos que no desmerecían al lado de las Memorias de un setentón, de Mesonero Romanos.”

Likewise, one may reject Chaulie’s protests as those of an old man—he was nearly seventy years old at the time this article was written—who would deprive those about him of the pleasures that beckon so enticingly. He himself recognizes that some will say this, and he explains: “No soy un misántropo censor de costumbres, ni tan falto de conocimiento práctico que pretenda sujetar a regla conventual una población de primer orden. Quisiera, para bien de mis vecinos, que usasen de todo sin abusar de nada.”

A sensible request, but unfortunately a distorted philosophy of life prevented many of Chaulie’s "vecinos" from practicing this moderation he desired.
More money, more luxuries, more pleasures, more pretense and splendor: these were the goads that drove them recklessly on.

There was another inescapable evil that could not fail to ensue from this habit of turning night into day. Those who retired late arose late, as might be expected, with the result that many a desk and many an office probably did not see its occupant until late in the morning or early in the afternoon. Chaulie comments on this situation, saying that "Hemos llegado a ser uno de los pueblos en que las gentes se acuestan más tarde, y en que por consiguiente se levantan menos temprano y trabajan menos, resintiéndose la salud de esa inversión de las horas que la prédica naturaleza ha destinado alternativamente al sueño y la vigilia." The danger in this pattern of life is readily apparent. The less one works, the less one desires to work, and if one is obliged to sacrifice a few hours to labor in order to live, the tendency will be to seek employment where the minimum amount of effort and application will suffice. Perhaps this was one of the motives which consciously or unconsciously compelled thousands of Spanish people to seek positions with the government, which apparently was a haven for those who did not look favorably upon any endeavor that might interfere with their hours of pleasure and relaxation.

Concepción Arenal states quite frankly that "Hay empleados en España, probos, inteligentes y trabajadores, pero hablando con verdad, usted y yo, y todos, sabemos que esta..."
es la excepción, y que por regla general en las oficinas del Estado se trabaja muy poco, que en ellas se fomenta, si no la vagancia absoluta, la semivagancia, y que cuando hay un jefe que quiere que se trabaje, parece una exigencia exorbitante, y es un deseo vano que no consigue. Tres o cuatro horas diarias, no de trabajo, sino de presencia, suelen parecer bastante para ganar el sueldo, sin contar los que no asisten ni éses."103.

This type of unproductive life which plagued not only the offices of the government but others as well cannot be attributed solely to the nightly round of pleasures that kept people out until the early hours of the morning. However, it would seem obvious that the devotees of this rather widespread practice could not possibly face the new day, which they had already greeted many hours before, with the alert, vigorous attitude that would produce a high standard of work. Furthermore, the social atmosphere provided no incentive to work diligently and conscientiously. It was, apparently, an accepted custom to arrive at work late or not at all. Such a way of life could not fail to have a detrimental effect on the individual, for gradually the will to work would be destroyed as the dominant passion for pleasures and relaxation strangled all incentive. Of course, the need for money in order to enjoy the delights of that society would provide a stimulus, but all too frequently it was a harmful spur, for instead of arousing the individual to a sustained, methodical effort, it caused him
to dream of easy money and to seek a short, smooth path to the fortunes that had come into being with this new era. If there were some other source of income, such as an inheritance, or revenues from property, or wealthy and generous relatives and friends, then the inducements of idleness became increasingly attractive. In this way the unfortunate victim was gradually sapped of all vigor and vitality, and his life was increasingly devoted to the frivolous pursuit of corrupting pleasures.

There are numerous individuals in Galdosian society who enthusiastically engage in these harmful practices that undermine the individual and, consequently, the society in which he lives. Federico Cimarra is "...un acicalado y muy bien parecido joven, en cuyo semblante pálido y linfático parecían extinguidas prematuramente la frescura y la energía propias de sus treinta y dos años." Galdós continues his description of this character, whom he seems to regard as illustrative of his society, by referring to him as "Este tipo esencialmente español y matritense, nocturno, calenturiento, extenuado, personificación de esa fiebre nacional que se manifiesta devorante y abrasadora en las redacciones trasnochantes, en los casinos que sólo apagan sus luces al salir el sol, en las tertulias crepusculares y en los mentideros que perpetuamente funcionan en pasillos de teatro, rincones de café o despachos de ministerio,..." 104

The dissolute Marqués de Tellería and his son, Leopoldo, show no restraint or judgment in their quest of pleasure.
The Marquesa de Tellería informs León Roch that her husband has become "un viejo verde." She explains that within the last two years he "...empezó a frecuentar el Círculo de los muchachos; tropezó con algunos mozalbetes que le enloquecieron, cambió de lenguaje, de modo de vestir, trasnochó, jugó..."105 As a result of these ill-advised actions, the Marqués "...había esparcido por las mesas verdes de los casinos y por los cuartos de las bailarinas el patrimonio de Tellería..."106

Gustavo Tellería, thoroughly disgusted with his brother, Leopoldo, who has quickly succumbed to this craze that blinds its victims to all thoughts of reality or propriety, asks León Roch, "¿No es horrible ver a mi hermano corroído por el vicio, encenagado en la frivolidad corruptora que envejece a tantos individuos, no diré de nuestra clase porque no es exclusiva de ella esta ignominia, sino de todas las clases? Empeñándose en hacer un papel superior a nuestros medios de fortuna, el ejemplo de otros le arrastra a una disipación absurda. Pero esos otros son ricos, y mi hermano no. Yo me indigno al ver a Leopoldo guiando coches y montando caballos que cuestan más de lo que puede poseer en un año."107

Máximo Manso condemns the habit of late hours that appeals to so many members of his society, and, like Chaulié, he attributes much of the ill health of his society to this practice. The occasion for this criticism arises from a conversation which Manso has with Manolo Peña,
his young disciple. The former is hurrying toward his home, having in this instance remained up until almost four in the morning. When Manolo observes that it is still early and that he does not plan to retire yet, Manolo gives him a lecture "...sobre el desarreglo de sus costumbres y la anti-higiénica de hacer de la noche día, motivo de tantas enfermedades y del raquítismo de la generación presente."\(^{109}\)

The generous and fanciful Alejandro Miquis provides a striking lesson of the tragedy that may befall those who live too well but not too wisely. After having received a rather large sum of money from his aunt, Doña Isabel de Godoy, he embarks on a course of senseless luxury and injurious pleasures. Galdós remarks that "...Alejandro, desde que era rico, entraba a hora avanzadísima de la noche..."\(^{109}\)

His companions in the boarding house realize that his diversions are of a harmful nature, and one night, when young Miquis still has not returned by one o'clock, a friend says: "¡Pobre Alejandro! Ya sé donde está. Nada, nada: se lo beben, se lo sorben."\(^{110}\) Galdós himself observes that Alejandro's "...compañeros de casa conocían bien el género de vida que llevaba, y los unos con interés y lastima, los otros con desdén y mofe, hacían comentarios mil y tristísimos augurios."\(^{111}\)

Their prognostications of dire consequences prove to be true, for eventually poor Alejandro, after having dissipated his modest fortune, descends to poverty, tuberculosis, and death.
The gay night life of Madrid certainly does not meet with the approval of Agustín Caballero, the industrious indiano who has gained his wealth as a result of a life of hard work, far from the shallow pleasures of Spanish society. For him there will be no season ticket to the theater because "...eso de que el teatro fuese una obligación...sólo existía en Madrid, pueblo callejero, vicio, que tiene la industria de fabricar tiempo. En Londres, en Nueva York no se ve un alma por las calles a las diez de la noche, como no sea los borrachos y gente perdida. Aquí la noche es día, y todos hacen vida de holgazanes o farsantes."112

The desire for pleasure can drive its victims to the same foolish extravagances that destroy those who hunger for elegant luxuries. In some instances no sacrifice is too great, apparently, in order to satisfy this craving. None can speak with more authority on this failing of his fellow citizens than Torquemada, the moneylender whose threshold has been crossed by many Galdosian characters who still are striving vainly to keep pace with their pleasure-conscious society. He marvels at the young students who come to his house deeply concerned about an extension of the time allotted for payment of their loan and who afterwards are found "...en el café atisbándose bisteques...y vengan copas de ron y marrasquino." And this is not the only case. There is, for example, "...aquel tendero de la calle Mayor, aquel Rubio que tenía paletotería." This
gentleman's desire for pleasure knows no bounds, it would seem, for Torquemada recalls that he brought "...su reloj, los pendientes de su mujer y doce cajas de pieles y man-guitos, y aquella misma tarde, aquella mismísima tarde," exclaims the usurer, "me le veo en la puerta del Sol encaramándose en un coche para ir a los toros."113

The unquenchable thirst for every pleasure is the direct cause of the ruin that eventually overwhelms Don Carlos de Tarso, the indolent, self-indulgent aristocrat who appears in Galdós' next to last novel, El caballero encantado. This foolish young man allows his passion to carry him to ridiculous extremes, for "...se despertó en él furiosamente el ansia de satisfacer todos los goces de la vida, sin poner en ello tasa ni freno."114 As a result of his extravagant diversions in Madrid, Paris, and other continental cities, "...ya se le habían escurrido por entre los dedos todas las rentas y alguna parte de su cuantioso capital, motivado al lujo y refinamiento de sus regocijos en distintas tierras civilizadas."115

Bálsamo, the administrator of the house, and a "genio del orden," can do nothing to restrain this ungovernable passion for sensual delights of Don Carlos, who "...en cuatro años se había comido parte de su capital, y en los últimos había gastado el triple de las rentas de la propiedad rústica." It is apparent that his desire for pleasure is without limits, for Don Carlos "Tenía...dos automóviles para correr por el mundo, y había encargado a
París el tercero.... Por un lado el auto, las cacerías, el vértigo de viajes, franchelas y competencias deportivas, por otro el club esclavante, las mujeres oferentes o vendedoras de amor, daban tales tientos a la bolsa del caballero, que apenas llenada con fatigas por Balsamo, se iba quedando floja, hasta dar en vacía."116

Such waste and folly on the part of Don Carlos are the cause of his punishment by La Madre. She transforms him into the laborer, Gil, and subjects him to painful work, in order that he may appreciate "...con que fatigas angustiosas se crea la riqueza..." which he thoughtlessly squanders "...en los ocios de la Corte." La Madre then rebukes Don Carlos: "Todo lo mereces, Tarsis,... Pensando sólo en ti mismo y avído de goces, no has tenido consideración de tus pobres esclavos."117

In this chapter it has been shown that certain conditions which prevailed in Spain during the nineteenth century encouraged a way of life that stressed unduly the importance of luxuries and pleasures. Various writers, such as Zugasti y Saenz, Chaulié, Valera, Mallada, Ruiz Aguilera, Cabezas, Almirall, and Arenal, have commented on these conditions and the resultant luxury that swept through their society, and they have indicated some of the evils that accompanied the new doctrine of material comforts and pleasures.

Galdós has mirrored the spectacle of his society in the relentless grip of luxury, for many of his characters
scurry through the pages of the novelas, dissipating their lives and energies in a senseless quest for every material and physical satisfaction that their society offers.¹¹⁸

The study of various characters has revealed that the overindulgence of this passion often produced dire results for the individual. The unsatisfied desires, the "quiero y no puedo" that tormented many persons; the instability, lack of security, and privation that resulted from extravagance and waste; the physical and moral harm that followed the constant dissipation; the degradation and despair that ultimately overwhelmed many who paid any price for the attractions of their age; these were some of the ills that weakened and destroyed the wretched addicts of that period. Likewise, the manifestly extensive nature of the luxury mania would seem to make apparent that Spanish urban society was suffering as the number of such victims became greater. There was increasing immorality and corruption, which were tolerantly condoned, since in the mad scramble for money and luxuries considerations of ethics and good taste were often ignored. Such universal and constant social problems as poverty, bad housing, malnutrition, poor health, prostitution, and suicide were aggravated as a result of the heedless extravagance that gave no thought to the future.

It is true, to be sure, that there are characters in Galdósian society, just as there were individuals in Spanish society, who are not infected by the luxury virus. León Roch,
Juan Bou, Máximo Hanso, Agustín Caballero, Francisco Bringas, and Ramón Villaamil, to name only a few, try to lead lives of moderation and reason in the midst of this gay, frivolous existence. Unfortunately, such individuals are sometimes the innocent victims of the mania that rules their society. It will be remembered that the firm foundation of the Bringas household is weakened by Rosalía's obsession with elegant clothes, and Ramón Villaamil's desperation and suicide are, in part, due to his wife's foolish insistence on luxuries in spite of the straitened circumstances in which they have frequently found themselves.

Sad indeed is the fate of those who yield to the thirst for luxuries and pleasures, however, for it is evident in the novelas of Galdós that once the longing of the individual has been aroused, the thirst is very rarely quenched. It frequently happens that these individuals are fully aware that they are the victims of this vice, but this knowledge does not provide them with a weapon with which to free themselves. It is merely an awareness or an occasional regret caused by financial pains rather than by pangs of conscience. There seems to be no wish to overcome the tyranny of this passion, and slowly and inexorably it devastates their lives.

If these characters were studied as individual, isolated cases, they might be considered to be victims of their own failings. Many are weak-willed; some are mentally incompetent; all seem to be lacking the ability to face
reality or to attach a proper value to things. However, an analysis of the whole group and an understanding of the social setting reveal a very unhealthy environment that does nothing to help these weak ones maintain their equilibrium. It is their misfortune to be born in a society that worships luxury and pleasure, for their weaknesses cause them to be quite susceptible to this mania. Just as the individual with weak lungs will soon succumb if he is placed in a damp and smoky atmosphere, so do these unfortunates fall prey to the social atmosphere that surrounds them.
NOTES

1 See pages 14 to 16.
2 Zugasti y Saenz, in Revista de España, LVIII (1877), 197.
3 Dionisio Chaulié, "Cosas de Madrid," Revista contemporánea, XLIX (1884), 135.
4 Ibid., XLIX, 137.
6 Ibid., p. 207.
7 Valera, in Revista de España, LI (1876), 177.
8 Lucas Mallada, Los males, p. 176.
9 Benito Pérez Galdós, "Observaciones sobre la novela contemporánea en España," Revista de España, XV (1870), 170.
10 Ibid., XV, 168.
11 Ibid., XV, 170–171.
12 In addition to this cuento, which depicts the dangers of excessive luxury, vanity, and desire for ostentation, Ruiz Aguilera, on another occasion, refers to "...los caprichos de la moda y las exigencias del lujo desenfrenado que hoy reina en todas las clases..." (Ventura Ruiz Aguilera, Proverbios ejemplares, primera serie (Madrid, 1864), p. 239).
13 Galdós, in Revista de España, XV (1870), 168.
14 Galdós, Obras inéditas, I, 124–125. For the approximate date of this article, see page 73, note 8.
15 Gloria, I, 98–99.
16 Others in La familia de León Roch who reveal a love of luxury are: (1) María Eglíasza Sudre, daughter of the Marquesa (I, 147, 149), but her desire for luxury is not exaggerated and is soon replaced by a religious fervor; (2) Pepa Rúscar (I, 10–11, 35, 54, 58, 320–321). Also, a reference to luxury in clothes is found in volume I, 182.
La familia de León Roch, I, 135. Other references in this novel to the Marquesa's passion for luxurious living are found in volume I, 177, 262-263.

El amigo Manso, p. 54.
La de Brinzas, p. 51.
Ibid., p. 77.

Ibid., pp. 205-206, 214. Apparently the Tellerías are never ones to forego the summer vacation, for on another occasion Galdós observes that the family goes away "...contra todo fuero y razón de la aritmética, y dando al traste con toda ley económica" (La familia de León Roch, I, 170). There are several references in Galdós' novelías to the insistence of the madrileño on the summer vacation, regardless of the cost, the individual's present economic status, or the serious financial consequences of such a luxury. In one instance Galdós speaks of the mania for going to baths and health resorts, and he observes that all the Spaniards go to such places "...unos con su dinero, otros con el ajeno, y desde que apunta julio son puestos en prensa el administrador o el prestamista para que alleguen los caudales que reclama aquel importante fin de la vida moderna" (La familia de León Roch, I, 17-18). Other references to this practice are: La familia de León Roch, I, 170; La de Brinzas, p. 217; Torquemada en el purgatorio, p. 82.

La familia de León Roch, I, 94. The Marqués and Leopoldo appear in other novels in which it is evident that they are paying the price of their mania for luxury. References to the Marqués are found in La de Brinzas, pp. 77, 79; and in Lo prohibido, I, 152. As for Leopoldo, who becomes first the Conde and later the Marqués de Casa-Bojío as a result of his marriage to the heiress of this Cuban family, he is "...en las últimas, porque las fortunas cubanas habían bajado a cero" (Lo prohibido, I, 152). Later Cristóbal Medina reports that "...los de Casa-Bojío habían llegado a la extremidad de vivir con lo que les quería fiar el tendero de la esquina, y, sin embargo, daban balles, metían mucho ruido, salían por esas calles desempeñándolas con las ruedas de su coche..." (Lo prohibido, II, 90).

Ibid., I, 175.
Ibid., I, 355-365.
Ibid., I, 360.
Ibid., I, 361.
José A. Balseiro, Novelistas españoles modernos (New York, 1933), p. 209.

28 La desheredada, I, 135-136.
29 Ibid., I, 137-138.
30 Ibid., I, 139.
31 Ibid., I, 225-226. Her purchases are similar in nature to those described on pages 137-139.
32 Eduardo Gómez de Baquero (Andrénio), Novelas y novelistas (Madrid, 1918), p. 84.

33 La desheredada, II, 21.
34 Ibid., II, 22.
35 Ibid., II, 36.
36 Ibid., II, 39.
37 Ibid., II, 130.
38 Ibid., II, 264.
39 Ibid., II, 281.


41 In addition to the cases of Mariano Rufete and the Pez family and its various members, which will be briefly discussed, there are other characters in La desheredada who give indication of a desire for luxuries: Tomás Rufete (I, 1), Kelchor Helimpio (II, 111, 202), Gaeteno (II, 213, 240), and the wife of Juan Bou (II, 49). There are also references to the consequences of the craving for luxuries: I, 86-87, 157; II, 6.

42 La desheredada, II, 63.
43 Ibid., II, 107.

44 Ibid., I, 199-201, 205. Manolo Peña has some interesting observations on the luxury displayed by members of the Pez family. He calls it a "lujo inverosímil, misterioso." And as for the daughters of Señor Pez, Peña believes that "el desgraciado que se case con cualquiera de ellas, ya puede hacer la cuenta que se casa con las modistas, con los tapiceros, con los empresarios de teatros..."
y con todos los arruinadores de la Humanidad. Acostumbradas esas niñas al lujo, ¿dónde encontrarán capital bastante fuerte para sostenerlo?" (El amigo Manso, pp. 117, 118).

45 Ibid., II, 179. Other references to Joaquín's love of luxury and the grave consequences of this way of life are: La desheredada, II, 6, 14, 76, 85, 150, 165; and Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 86-87.

46 El amigo Manso, p. 144.

47 Ibid., p. 300.

48 In addition to the comments on Doña Cándida, there are remarks on the luxurious life enjoyed by the family of José María Manso, Máximo's wealthy brother (Ibid., pp. 59-61, 63). Doña Jesusa, José María's mother-in-law, refers to the extravagance involved in the family's social life (Ibid., p. 121). Máximo also mentions certain indications of an awakening desire for luxury in the heart of Doña Javiera, mother of Manolo Peña (Ibid., pp. 267, 309-310). Young Peña also has an observation on luxury in his society: "La frivolidad, el lujo, y cierta precocidad de mal gusto imposibilitan a la doncella de estos países latinos para la constitución de las familias futuras" (Ibid., p. 118).

49 El amigo Manso, p. 35. Additional testimony to Doña Cándida's extravagance is furnished by Francisco Bringas (La de Bringas, p. 125).

50 Ibid., p. 34.

51 Ibid., p. 143.

52 Balseiro, p. 209.

53 La de Bringas, pp. 50-51. An earlier reference to Rosalía's growing preoccupation with fine clothes is found in Tormento, where Galdós states that Amparo had observed "...ciertas novedades en el carácter de Rosalía, y era que se le había desarrollado el gusto de las galas...." (Tormento, pp. 209-210). Even more illuminating is Rosalía's reaction to the break between Agustín and his sweetheart, Amparo. Believing now that the Bringas family, rather than Amparo, will enjoy Agustín's wealth, Rosalía dreams of "...montones de rasoas, terciopelos, sedas, encajes, pieles, joyas sin fin, colores y graciaz mil, los sombreros más elegantes, las últimas novedades parisienses, todo muy bien lucido en tertulias, paseos, tertulias. Y esta grandiosa visión, estimulando dormidos apetitos de lujo, le mareaba el cerebro y hacia de ella otra mujer...." (Tormento, p. 296).
54 See page 89.
55 La de Bringas, p. 51.
56 Ibid., p. 52.
57 Loc. cit.
58 Ibid., p. 56.
59 Ibid., p. 57.
60 Ibid., p. 64.
61 Loc. cit.
62 Ibid., pp. 80-81.
63 Loc. cit.
64 Ibid., p. 209.
65 Lo prohibido, I, 123.
66 Further proof of Rosalía's passion is found in La de Bringas, pp. 55, 60-61, 101, 226-227, 254. Comments on the luxurious habits of Spanish society and the consequences of such practices are found on pages 154, 179, 217, 276-277.
67 José María describes the expensive works of art and beautiful furnishings that fill her home, and he observes that the possession of these articles and the admiration which he expresses act as an exhilarating stimulant on Eloísa: "Júbilo vanidoso animaba su semblante; sus ojos brillaban; entrábale inquietud espasmódica, y su charla rápida, sus observaciones, los términos atropellados con que encomiaba todo, señalándolo a mi admiración, decíame bien claro el dominio que tales cosas tenían en su alma" (Lo prohibido, I, 72).
68 Lo prohibido, I, 75.
69 Ibid., II, 12.
70 José María, after calculating the expenses of Eloísa and her husband during the year following the inheritance, reports that "El pasivo del primer año era enorme, abrumador...," and he is certain that by now one-fourth of their capital has been dissipated (Lo prohibido, I, 100).
Lo prohibido, I, 100-101. Eloísa shows the same extravagance in the dinners that she displays in everything else she does: "Una vez por semana, Eloísa daba gran comida, a la que asistían dieciocho o veinte personas..." (I, 111).

This reckless waste of money for luxurious living, even though it requires the sacrifice of property, illustrates the truth of a statement by Galdós in the article "Vida de sociedad." Speaking of the madrileños, he says: "...siempre están de humor de gastar dinero, y lo gastan, venga de donde viniera..." (Galdós, Obras inéditas, I, 124).

Loc. cit.

Ibid., II, 203. Another reference to Pilar's habits of luxury is on page 204.

Misericordia, p. 43.


Misericordia, p. 44.

89 Ibid., p. 413.

82 Misericordia, p. 43.

87 Ibid., pp. 43-44.
Loc. cit. However, it becomes evident that years of poverty have not taught Doña Francisca a lesson. Shortly after receiving a modest sum from an inheritance, she allows herself to be conquered by "...la tentación de adquirir superfluidades dispenciosas" (Misericordia, p. 208). Likewise, her daughter, Odulía, has her ideas of luxury, ideas that surpass those of her mother (pp. 207-208).

Loc. cit.
23 Ibid., p. 93.
30 Ibid., p. 94.
32 Ibid., p. 93.

Doña Francisca provides additional proof of Ponte's luxurious habits when she remarks that he "...era un solterón que se daba buena vida" (Misericordia, p. 60). Galdós also has another reference to this weakness in the same novel on page 99.

El abuelo, p. 14. See also page 22.

V. Almirall, L' Espagne telle qu'elle est (Paris, 1887), p. 82.

Chaulié, in Revista contemporánea, XLI (1882), 315. Chaulié cites the figures issued by the Sociedad General de Higiene, which reports: "Esa mortalidad ordinaria en Madrid muy superior a la de casi todas las grandes poblaciones de Europa y América, elevándose cada año de 40 a 44 defunciones por 1,000 de habitantes."

Ibid., XLI, 316-321.

Ibid., XLI, 322.

Ibid., XLI, 323.

Enciclopedia universal ilustrada (Barcelona: J. Espasa 1907-1930/), XVII, 103.

Chaulié, in Revista contemporánea, XLI, 327.

Ibid., XLI, 338.

Arenal, La cuestión social, II, 297-298. In the novelas of Galdós there are many cases of the indolent government worker so strongly censured by Concepción Arenal. In La desheredada, for example, there are the sons of Don Manuel Pez, who are representative of this type of government employee in Galdosian society. Adolfito Pez
"...no iba a la oficina sino cuando le daba la gana...," and Antónito "...empleaba las horas de oficina en hacer revistas musicales para un periódico de teatros." Luis Pez went to the office "lo menos que podía," and as pointed out by Concepción Arenal, his presence was enough to assure his salary, for he "Bostezaba en la oficina, cobraba su sueldo, esperaba con ansía la hora y la calle" (La desheredada, I, 202-204).

104 La Familia de León Roch, I, 20-21.
105 Ibid., I, 93.
106 Ibid., I, 96.
107 Ibid., I, 124.
108 El amigo Manno, p. 128.
110 Ibid., II, 37.
111 Ibid., II, 53. There are also indications of Alejandro's weakness for luxury. For example, after receiving the money from his aunt, he goes on a spending spree (El doctor Centeno, I, 233-243). Other references to his luxurious habits are in volume II, 26, 91, 93.

112 Tormento, p. 194. The protests of Máximo Manso and Agustín Caballero against the Spanish custom of turning the night into day is later echoed by Tomás Orozco, who admonishes Federico Viera: "Cuidate, metete en tu casa. Detestable costumbre esta de hacer de la noche día!" (Realidad, p. 340).

113 Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 68.
114 El caballero encantado, p. 8.
115 Ibid., p. 9.
116 Ibid., p. 15.
117 Ibid., p. 65. Other references to the consequences of Don Carlos' craving for pleasures are on pages 30 and 32.

118 In the novelas of Galdós, in addition to the examples already presented, there are many more indications of luxury and corrupting pleasures to be found either in the activities of various characters or in the comments of the characters and in the observations of Galdós. These characters and comments are included in the following
references: (La familia de León Roch, I, 321), Joaquín Pez (La desheredada, II, 85), (El amigo Manso, p. 18), (Tormento, pp. 57, 156-160, 192), (La de Brinas, p. 277), (Lo prohibido, I, 20; II, 32, 89, 90-91, 106, 203), Saca-mantecas (Lo prohibido, I, 120), Gonzalo Torres (Lo prohibido, II, 95), Isidro Barragán (Lo prohibido, II, 66), Jacinto María Villalonga (Lo prohibido, II, 73), (Fortunata y Jacinta, I, 45, 48, 294; II, 105), wife of Moreno Vallejo (Fortunata y Jacinta, I, 297), wife of Nicolás Rubín (Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 8), Juan Pablo Rubín (Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 10, 117), Fortunata (Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 46-47), the Marqués de Casa-Bojo (Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 87), Víctor Cadalso (Múa, pp. 113, 144, 210, 250, 265), (La incógnita, pp. 65, 64), Federico and Joaquín Viera (La incógnita, p. 75), Federico Viera (Realidad, p. 123), José Amador (Realidad, pp. 120, 122, 284), (Torquemada en la hoguera, pp. 10, 15, 65, 68, 77), the Babel family (Ángel Guerra, I, 57), the Aguilá family (Torquemada en la cruz, pp. 153-154), Cruz del Aguilá (Torquemada en el purgatorio, pp. 123-129, 158-172; Torquemada y San Pedro, p. 88), José Antonio de Urrea (Halma, p. 50), (El abuelo, p. 22), Lucrecia, Condesa de Lain (El abuelo, p. 24), Sensén (El abuelo, pp. 18, 22), Zenón de Guátilarte (Casandra, pp. 39-40, 168), (La razón de la sinrazón, p. 44), Alejandro and Helena (La razón de la sinrazón, p. 44).

To this list should be added, perhaps, the names of five men who have squandered large sums of money on mistresses. It may be argued that these men are seeking to satisfy a need for sexual experience rather than searching for mere pleasure. However, it would seem obvious that such a need may be satisfied at less expense than that undergone by these men. Three of these individuals, Pepito Trastamara, Severiano, and Jacinto Villalonga, face financial ruin because they persist in enjoying the luxury of a mistress or mistresses. References to their fates are found in Lo prohibido, II, 73, 216, and 218. The fourth, José María Bueno de Guzmán, is not financially ruined, but his fortune is greatly reduced by his costly gifts to Eloisa (Lo prohibido, I, 90, 99, 115, 156). The fifth, Federico Viera, has seen the inheritance that his mother left him consumed by Leonor (Realidad, p. 122).

119 Papa Fúcar abandons her luxurious extravagances after she becomes a mother (La familia de León Roch, I, 321-322; II, 17); in his younger days Rafael Bueno de Guzmán was attracted by the desires for money, luxury, and social prestige, but in his old age he sees the folly of this way of life (Lo prohibido, II, 203-204); Don Carlos de Tarquis is cured of his passion for luxury and pleasure by the lessons and wise counsel given to him by La Madre in El caballero encantado.
CHAPTER IV

CURSILERÍA

The term cursilí receives various definitions in Spanish encyclopedias and dictionaries. For example, in Espasa the word is defined as follows: "Dícese de la persona que se cree fina y elegante sin serlo." The Casares Diccionario ideológico de la lengua española contains a somewhat similar explanation of the term: "Dícese de la persona que pretende ser fina y elegante sin conseguirlo." Saldías has also defined the expression in La desheredada, where he states that cursilería... "es un modo social propio de todas las clases, y que nace del prurito de competencia con la clase inmediatamente superior."1

In this study the term cursilería is meant to include social pretense, sham, and ostentation, since the focus of the analysis that is to follow will be upon the different manifestations of this violent craving to ascend the social ladder and to simulate a higher position in a society where appearance means everything.

It would seem evident that the mania for luxury and the craze for social ostentation are inseparably related. The expensive clothes, the costly entertainments and amusements, the rich household furnishings are eagerly sought not only for the material comforts that they provide but
also for the social prestige that they will bestow on those who can flaunt their ability to purchase such things. In other words, vanity is one of the roots from which grows the passion for luxury, and this same vanity is also one of the principal sources of the imperious desire to impress one's neighbors with one's social attainments.

Baudrillard, in his voluminous work on luxury, *Histoire du Luxe*, has found three reasons for the rise of luxury, and these are vanity, sensuality, and the instinct of adornment. The first sentiment is of the most interest for this study since, as stated before, vanity is the spur that drives individuals to social display and sham, and it is the cause of the folly and extravagance that frequently result from such pretensions. Baudrillard explains this first cause of luxury as follows: "Le premier principe du luxe se trouve, on est force de l'avouer, dans l'orgueil, ou dans cette nuance particuliére de l'orgueil, qu'on nomme l'amour propre ou la vanité.... Mais ce penchant se développe dans l'état social. L'homme veut donner de lui-même une idée avantageuse; il veut paraître, et même paraître plus que les autres, jaloux qu'on le distingue par tous les moyens, l'esprit, la naissance, la gloire, la puissance, la richesse." The latter is the most efficacious means by which one can establish his social position, for, continues Baudrillard, "La richesse est de toutes les supériorités la plus universellement appréciée, la plus visible, la moins aisée à contester. Nulle autre ne se traduit d'une manière
aussi éclatante par certains signes, lesquels ne sont autres que le luxe même.

"Le luxe est son emblème, et comme son enseigne aux yeux de la foule.

"Riche, on voudra paraître ce qu'on est, et même un peu au delà; pauvre, on voudra paraître ce qu'on n'est pas, c'est-à-dire riche, du moins dans une certaine mesure; cela n'est pas impossible, car si la richesse ne s'emprunte pas, les signes de la richesse s'empruntent et peuvent être imités.

"Telle est la nature de ces vanités inquiètes, ardents à la poursuite de ce bien idéal, l'opinion."3

Baudrillart realizes that vanity provides a fertile soil for the growth of luxury and ostentation in any society. Galdós is another who recognizes the far-reaching influence of this very human and very universal emotion, and he employs it as a prominent trait in the characters of his novels. In fact, the other two reasons given by Baudrillart for the rise of luxury, i.e., sensuality and the instinct of adornment, play no manifest part in the novels of Galdós. One may assume, of course, that the characters in Galdosian society derive a sensual pleasure from various luxuries and physical pleasures, as, for example, the delight that one obtains from good food; but Galdós does not stress sensuality as a motive for the luxury mania that dominates his characters. There are at times some indications that Isidora Rufete is motivated by
sensuality, and on one occasion, that of the purchase of the manteleta, there is evidence that Rosalía de Bringas is moved by a keen sensual pleasure. However, in the study of luxury in the lives of Galdós' characters, sensuality is merely implied or inferable while vanity is emphasized again and again as a motivating force.

Early in his career Galdós indicates the vital role of vanity in his society. In his article, "Observaciones sobre la novela contemporánea en España," in which he discusses the Proverbios of Aguilera, Galdós comments at some length on a vice which he believes is quite widespread in his society. After having praised the accuracy of the social picture sketched by Aguilera and after having observed that the vices and virtues depicted are "éstos de por aca," Galdós continues: "Los vicios, decíamos, son de los que andan sueltos por estas tierras, hallándose por lo general en gran predicamiento y teniendo mucho dominio entre nosotros. La vanidad, por ejemplo, tiene en los Proverbios un punto tan importante como en la vida: aquí se halla en todas partes, todos la tenemos en mayor o menor grado, y casi puede asegurarse que este vicio es uno de los que más participación tienen en el movimiento moderno."

Galdós seems to feel that the present century has brought new ideas of human dignity and personal merit, an increasing participation of more and more people in public life, and an assurance of general esteem and appreciation if it is deserved. These are the reasons, says Galdós,
that "...todos queramos ser algo superior a los demás, distinguiéndonos de cualquier modo."

"Somos muy vanidosos," Galdós concedes, but, he adds, "este vicio es una pequeña sombra proyectada por las grandes excelencias de nuestra época. Todos los grandes progresos traen su cortejo de pequeñas flaquezas. La participación de todos en la vida pública, la seguridad que tiene el individuo de influir personalmente en la suerte de la sociedad, esto que es la mayor de las conquistas; ¿no ha de ser causa de que todos nos creamos ya con un pie en el templo de la fama, y de que tengamos ambición, a veces infundada, y de que procuremos, en cuanto nos sea posible, intervenir más que los demás, hacer prevalecer nuestra opinión, y rodear de todo el prestigio posible a nuestra querida persona?" Galdós seems unperturbed by this vice, however, for once again he remarks, "Esto es un pequeño mal que va fatalmente unido al resultado de un inmenso bien."  

It is evident, then, that Galdós is well aware of the extensive domain of this vice, vanity, and that he recognizes it as an important cause of the pretense that is invading his society. His attitude toward this social tendency is interesting, however, since obviously he does not view it as a matter of grave import in 1870. Yet as one studies the various problems that beset Galdosian society in the novelas, it becomes evident that the craving for social ostentation, like the longing for luxury, preoccupies Galdós. Thus it is that some nine years later,
in La familia de León Roch, the first of his novels of Madrid life, there are to be found characters who are destroying themselves as a result of their mad desire to apparent; and two years later, in La desheredada, there are frequent references to this mania, both by Galdós and by his characters. Furthermore, in the majority of the novelas that follow La desheredada one may find the problem of cursilería appearing again and again. At times it plays only a minor role, but in some novelas it occupies an important position, and judging from the havoc that it causes in the lives of various characters, it seems probable that Galdós did not regard cursilería as a "pequeño mal" in later life.

It should be recognized that vanity is not, in itself, necessarily productive of evil. The final fruit of this feeling will depend largely upon the social medium in which it is nurtured. If the society esteems high ideals of character and contributions to group welfare, then vanity may lead to noble achievements as the individual seeks to establish a good opinion among his fellow men. Once again, attention may be directed to Laveleye's thoughts on this subject: "When public opinion bows only before virtue, vanity or self-love becomes a powerful stimulus for good. When, on the contrary, public opinion worships wealth, this sentiment urges men to luxury and corruption." And, one might add, it also urges men to ostentation, for in this way one can make a pretense of superiority, even though
this outward display of apparent affluence may conceal a shocking, tragic state of poverty and parasitism.

Unfortunately for Galdós' society, public opinion was worshipping the unholy trinity of money, luxury, and social position, as has been evidenced previously in the observations of Galdós and other writers of the period; and therefore this powerful sentiment of vanity, which Galdós has described as being one of the vices "...que más participación tienen en el movimiento moderno," was frequently the cause of the excesses and extravagances that so disrupted Spanish urban society during that period.

The undue expenditure of money for luxury and ostentation, which is a salient characteristic of the society in which Galdós lived, is a social phenomenon that is analyzed in The Theory of the Leisure Class, by Thorstein Veblen. This important work first appeared in 1899, and after being reprinted four times, it was revised in 1912. In the foreword to the book, Stuart Chase praises it as a classic of economic and social literature, and he summarizes briefly the thesis of the work: "People above the line of bare subsistence, in this age and all earlier ages, do not use the surplus, which society has given them, primarily for useful purposes. They do not seek to expand their own lives, to live more wisely, intelligently, understandingly, but to impress other people with the fact that they have a surplus. Ways and means for creating that impression are called by Veblen conspicuous consumption. They consist in spending
money, time, and effort quite uselessly in the pleasurable business of inflating the ego." 10

Veblen explains why it is that the code of conspicuous consumption affects all social classes from the highest to the lowest: "In modern civilized communities the lines of demarcation between social classes have grown vague and transient, and wherever this happens the norm of reputability imposed by the upper class extends its coercive influence with but slight hindrance down through the social structure to the lowest strata. The result is that the members of each stratum accept as their ideal of decency the scheme of life in vogue in the next higher stratum, and bend their energies to live up to that ideal. On pain of forfeiting their good name and their self-respect in case of failure, they must conform to the accepted code, at least in appearance." 11

The statement by Veblen that each class strives to imitate the pattern of life followed by those fortunate ones that perch on the rung above them coincides with Galdós' definition of cursilería which was phrased years before. 12 And again it is to be noted that it is vanity, or one's good name and self-respect, as Veblen calls it, that inspires each individual to strain to conform to the standard established by his social group.

Veblen and Baudrillart both agree that money is the best foundation upon which to build one's prestige in a community. Baudrillart believes that wealth is the most
appreciated of all the indications of superiority because it is the most obvious and apparent, and Veblen states that "The basis on which good repute in any highly organized industrial community ultimately rests is pecuniary strength; and the means of showing pecuniary strength, and so of gaining or retaining a good name, are leisure and a conspicuous consumption of goods. Accordingly, both of these methods are in vogue as far down the scale as it remains possible..." Veblen emphasizes that the need for some display of conspicuous consumption is so great that few, if any, will fail to indulge this hunger that is within them: "No class of society, not even the most abjectly poor, foregoes all customary conspicuous consumption. The last items of this category of consumption are not given up except under stress of the direst necessity. Very much of squalor and discomfort will be endured before the last trinquet or the last pretense of pecuniary decency is put away. There is no class and no country that has yielded so abjectly before the pressure of physical want as to deny themselves all gratification of this higher or spiritual need."\(^{13}\)

Inasmuch as Galdós' social novels have Madrid as their locale, for the most part, the attention of this study has been focused upon an urban society, and it is precisely in the urban community where conspicuous consumption is most manifest. Veblen explains the reason for this by pointing out that an urban existence frequently places one in contact with individuals who are not one's neighbors, at least
socially, and yet, says Veblen, "...their transient good opinion has a high degree of utility. The only practicable means of impressing one's pecuniary ability on these unsympathetic observers of one's everyday life is an unremitting demonstration of ability to pay." Furthermore, continues Veblen, the city dweller will frequently find himself in large gatherings of people, especially in such places as theaters, churches, ballrooms, shops, and the like, and "In order to impress these transient observers, and to retain one's self-complacency under their observation, the signature of one's pecuniary strength should be written in characters which he who runs may read." Because of these conditions, then, "Conspicuous consumption claims a relatively larger portion of the income of the urban than of the rural population, and the claim is more imperative. The result is that, in order to keep up a decent appearance, the former habitually live hand-to-mouth to a greater extent than the latter." 14

The desire to make a vain display through a wasteful, unnecessary expenditure of money has received the attentions of others in addition to Veblen. An English writer, Urwick, discusses this in his work, Luxury and Waste of Life. He remarks that "...one almost universal characteristic of the possession and expenditure of wealth is conspicuous waste" -- that is, an expenditure of which the chief object is to demonstrate the fact that the spender can really afford to live in style or throw money away.
This 'conspicuous waste' is reflected in the expenditure of every class except the very poorest -- reflected certainly in the habitual expenditure of any class in which the bogey of respectability or conventionality counts for anything."

These canons of expenditure and social conduct affect the various social classes in different ways, as Urwick points out: "The imbecility of the imitation of 'conspicuously wasteful expenditure' is shown in different ways in different classes. In the artisan class, by the pitifully unessential parlour which respectability demands; in the clerk class, there is added to this the black coat and 'white' shirt -- originally worn with the sole object of showing that the wearer was above working at all, and now pathetically clung to by those for whom dust and ink are the inseparable work-mates; and in the middle classes generally by the complicated paraphernalia of senseless lumber and litter in their houses or on their persons which are enjoined by the sacred duty of display."

The reference by Urwick to the black coat and white shirt of the clerk class recalls a somewhat similar statement made by Galdós long before in Lo prohibido. In this novela Galdós makes the observation that "...hasta los más necesitados y humildes se codéan aquí con los poderosos, con tal que sepan envolver su miseria en el paño negro de una levita." It would seem, then, that in both England and Spain the poorer classes cling to a garment that is for them a symbol of respectability, of conspicuous waste and
the ability to spend; and if they can display this unnecessary and, for them, expensive article of clothing, they can satisfy the feeling of self-pride or vanity that compels them to participate in what can only be, at times, a ludicrous and tragic masquerade.

The aspiration to emulate those who are socially superior is a tendency of every class in every society. Such terms as conspicuous consumption and conspicuous waste describe the most usual manifestation of this yearning for ostentation, for it is by means of the unwarranted expenditure of money on clothes, pleasures, and other material comforts that one may keep pace in this form of social competition. It would seem reasonable to assume that so long as the need for social display is tempered by the wisdom of common sense, it is not unduly harmful either to the individual or to his society. The same logic may be applied to the desire for a certain amount of luxury. However, both of these social needs must constantly be held in check by the tight reins of moderation and common sense, and once the reins are relaxed it becomes increasingly difficult to escape the dissipation and extravagance that usually follow in the path of these runaway passions. Under such circumstances luxury, conspicuous consumption, and pretense pose a definite threat to the well-being of any society, but the consequences of these social phenomena may be more or less devastating depending on the existing social environment.
In Spain during the nineteenth century everything seemed to facilitate the rapid growth of these evils. In order to indulge satisfactorily the passion for luxury and ostentation there must be an adequate amount of money available, and there should be an abundance of luxury articles on which to lavish this money. It has already been shown in the preceding chapter that the sudden influx of money from the sale of Church lands and the tide of new products that followed the technological advances of the industrial revolution coincided very closely, and thus these two prerequisites were very easily satisfied. Attention may be directed again to Oaldós' opinion of the influence of the new-found luxuries and their availability to all classes. Having discussed the reasons for the prevalence of vanity in his society and having observed that it is a "pequeño mal" which is an inevitable result of the great advances of the new century, he cites another example of an evil that is born of progress: "El gran progreso de la industria ha hecho que una infinidad de productos de arte, objetos bellos y de valor que estaban reservados a las clases altas y poderosas, le son hoy accesibles a todas las clases; y... la facilidad de la producción, el acierto con que se aplica el arte a la industria, ha dado oriéjen a las cosas elegantes que están al alcance de todos. Pues bien: no es extraño que esta maravilla realizada en nuestro siglo haya fomentado el vicio de la presunción, y que este mal se haya propagado, causando muchos grandes disturbios en el seño
de la familia. La vanidad en las mujeres, el lujo en el
vestir es hoy uno de los males de que más se preocupa la
categoría de los maridos trabajadores y modestos."17

A third factor that stimulated the spread of cursilería
through Spain at that time was the pronounced class change
that took place in Spanish society during the nineteenth
century. To appreciate the importance of this change, it
is advisable to study once again certain characteristics of
most civilized societies. It has already been demonstrated
that such noteworthy elements of social ostentation as con-
spicuous consumption or conspicuous waste are manifestations
that are to be found everywhere. One factor, and an ex-
tremely significant one it is, that encourages conspicuous
consumption among all classes is what Urwick terms the law
of example. He defines this factor, which he describes as
"...one of the most important, if not the most important,
in social life," as follows: "Every part of our conduct,
so far as noticed by others, has some effect upon them,
consciously or unconsciously, through the influence, for
the most part, of suggestion... But the influence may make
itself felt in two ways: our conduct may either appeal to
other people as something worth imitating, or repel them as
something to be avoided. Whether it will attract or repel,
will be imitated or avoided, depends very much more upon
their estimate of us than upon their estimate of the con-
duct considered in itself."
Urwick goes on to explain that our actions are more likely to be imitated if we occupy a place of distinction in the opinion of others than if we do not hold such a position. "Generally speaking," says Urwick, "prestige of any sort produces imitation, and the want of it, opposition. And this is the main reason why, almost universally, example in social life works from above downwards. The conduct of any upper class, whether the superiority is due to worth or to wealth, carries with it some prestige in the eyes of all 'lower' classes; and its example tends so far to be imitated. Members of these 'lower' classes may have strong opinions about the vices or immoralities of sections of the upper classes; but this will seldom prevent them from imitating, unconsciously perhaps, a great part of the standards and actions of the class condemned. Tradition, custom, the established social code, all combine to fortify the prestige of position and wealth...." 18

Veblen likewise recognizes that the upper class, or the wealthy leisure class as he prefers to call it, is generally responsible for the pattern of life that is followed by a community. He notes that it is a "...commonplace remark that each class envies and emulates the class next above it in the social scale, while it rarely compares itself with those below or with those who are considerably in advance. That is to say, in other words, our standard of decency in expenditure, as in other ends of emulation, is set by the usage of those next above us in reputation; until, in
this way, especially in any community where class distinctions are somewhat vague, all canons of reputation and decency, and all standards of consumption, are traced back by insensible gradations to the usages and habits of thought of the highest social and pecuniary class -- the wealthy leisure class." 19

The influence of the wealthy leisure class will be disseminated more quickly through all the lower classes if the social barriers have disappeared or have partially crumbled before the levelling waves of social and industrial progress. This obvious truth is emphasized above by Veblen, and it is also noted by Urwick, who says that "...the effect of the example of the 'upper' classes is important just in proportion to their proximity to the 'lower' classes, proximity implying simply the degree of ease with which ideas, standards, fashions, etc. are allowed to flow from one class to another. Where there are strict dividing lines between classes...there is little permeation of standards or fashions; but where the dividing lines are vague or faint, as is the case today,...the ideas, standards, and fashions all find their way rapidly downwards." 20

With these principles in mind, we may now examine briefly the social structure of nineteenth-century Spain, with special attention being given to that which Urwick calls the proximity of the upper classes to the lower classes and the law of example. It was stated in the introduction that quite early in the century the social
fabric of Spain began to undergo an alteration. First, the War of Independence weakened the old system of privileges and exclusion for the nobility, and new liberal ideas of human dignity and merit began to pervade Spanish society. The most important social change took place following the sale of the Church lands in 1836, for the new springs of wealth nurtured the rapid growth of the middle class. No longer was it necessary to be born into the privileged ranks of the upper class. Money and ability opened the doors to hitherto closed circles, and soon the princes of business and commerce were sharing, and even usurping, the lofty positions formerly held by old, aristocratic families. As the wealth of the Church and of many titled families poured into the eager hands of the lower classes, it quickly washed away the lines of social demarcation that had existed many years. Within a few decades the social ladder became crowded with the rapid going and coming of those who were ascending to new levels or descending to inferior stations. The restlessness that characterized much of Spanish urban society during the years that followed this notable event found an echo in the hearts of many of the people. Numerous examples of sudden wealth and quick flights to the Olympian heights of upper society aroused the desires of many individuals. The envy of the class above became more burning; the longing to equal it, at least in appearance, grew more intense. Appearances were of greater importance now, for one must display the symbols
of apparent financial and social success or forfeit one's place in the social competition.

In Galdós' novelas there are descriptions of the transformation which agitated that society and its people as a result of the new order that came into being. In El amigo Manso, Máximo Manso discourses at length on the changes in the structure of Spanish society: "Es evidente que la democracia social ha echado entre nosotros profundas raíces, y a nadie se le pregunta quién es ni de dónde ha salido para admitirlo en todas partes y festejarlo y aplaudirlo, siempre que tenga dinero o talento.... El dinero y el ingenio, substituidos a veces por sus similares, agio y travesura, han rotado aquí las barreras todas, estableciendo la confusión de clases en grado más alto y con aplicaciones más positivas que en los países europeos, donde la democracia, excluida de las costumbres, tiene representación en las leyes.... Las improvisaciones de fortuna y posición menudean; la tradición, quizás por haberse hecho odiosa con apelaciones a la fuerza, carece de prestigio; la libertad de pensamiento toma un vuelo extraordinario, y las energías fatales de la época, riqueza y talento, extienden su inmenso imperio." 21 In Fortunata y Jacinta, which has been described by Walton as "...a complete picture of Spain in her era of transition...." 22 Galdós speaks of "...aquel furor de modas que lo entraba a esta sociedad y el afán que todos los madrileños sentían de ser elegantes con seriedad." Also, ayuda Galdós, this period was the one "...en que la
clase media entrab de lleno en el ejercicci de sus funciones, apandando todos los empleos creados por el nuevo sistema político y administrativo, comprando a plazos todas las fincas que habían sido de la Iglesia, constituyéndose en propietaria del suelo y en usufructuaria del presupuesto, absorbiendo, en fin, los despojos del absolutismo y el clero, y fundando el imperio de la levita.
Claro es que la levita es el símbolo....”

The proximity of the upper class to the lower classes, which is described by Urwick as a necessity in order to insure the smooth flow of thoughts and canons of conduct down from one class to another, had become, then, an established fact in Spanish society. However, as one reads the scathing criticisms of the upper class, it becomes apparent that the lower classes would probably have fared better if they had not been contaminated by the habits of their social superiors. Lucas Mallada, who is a veritable scourge of his society and its failings, reproves the upper classes on various occasions. At one point he says that “...las altas clases sociales no deben amularse precisamente cuando podrían hacer grandes y oportunos servicios a la Nación. Sufriendo ésta, como sufre, y con evidentes peligros de alteraciones, capaces, sin duda, de perjudicar en alto grado a la aristocracia, si ésta ama de veras la Monarquía, evite el ejemplo de que el Estado más pobre de Europa tenga la capital más arrogante y fastuosa; abandone la molicia y el cansancio que tantas fiestas y tanto lujo producen....”
On this same occasion, Ballada criticizes the rich landowners and the "...vida ociosa, disipada y sedienta de vanas y divertidas noveladas..." which they lead in the city. 25

It was inevitable that those born in the upper social spheres should set a bad example for the rest of society since their training and education encouraged the frivolous, wasteful existence that characterized their lives. Antonio Sánchez-Pérez, teacher, mathematician, writer, and newspaperman, describes the type of young man that emerges from this environment, and the finished product does not appear to be one that will contribute to the betterment of his society. The young man's education has provided him with a "Desconocimiento absoluto y completo de la ciencia; antipatía invencible, cuando no aversión y odio profundo a todo estudio serio; decidida afición a los caballos, a los toros, al juego y a la vida de disipación en que se consumen, sin provecho para nadie y con honda perturbación para todos, el vigor y la inteligencia de la primera juventud. Ese es, por regla general, el término de este sistema de educación. Jugar fuerte, mantener queridas y exhibirlas, cortejar bailarinas, guiar tilduris, frecuentar salones de baile o garitos de la alta sociedad, ir y venir del Casino a la Castellana, del Real a la recepción, de la recepción al baile, apostar en el Hipódromo, tomar pastelillos en Lhardy, comer en el Veloz, aburrirse en casi todas partes, y hastiarse de su inutilidad y mortificar con ella a los otros; tal suele ser la existencia estéril del que nace en dorada cuna,
en las condiciones más favorables para ser dichoso y para contribuir al bien general."

Another who has censured the worthlessness of the upper classes is John Chamberlain, a stranger who spent several years in Spain and who wrote of some of the evils that were retarding the country at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Among these evils is the aristocracy, which "...no estudia y no trabaja," Chamberlain adds that "Los hijos de los ricos ingresan en los colegios de los jesuítas; algunos, muy pocos, en colegios extranjeros. Salen del colegio y se consagran al amor y al vicio la mayor parte. Aun los jóvenes modelos pasan el tiempo en la ociosidad, sin ocuparse siquiera de la administración de sus haciendas. Los que siguen una carrera se hacen abogados sin estudiar, por tener la vanidad de ostentar un título académico. Luego se casan, y durante el resto de sus días no consagran su actividad a empresa alguna. Los pocos que se dedican a la política procuran ser diputados, lo mismo que procuraron conseguir el título de abogado, por vanidad." 27

Berkowitz, in his book, Pérez Galdós, makes several observations about the society of that period. At one point he remarks that "In the absence of a carefully coordinated protest, Spanish society was acquiring layer upon layer of the fat of degeneracy. Both private and public morals were characterized by a laxity born of a childish desire for display rather than a new standard of right and
wrong. The señorito and his inane forbears, governed by a perverted sense of freedom and privilege, often set the pace and gave the tone." Berkowitz speaks disparagingly of the señoritos, saying that "They were foppish, empty-headed university graduates.... Vain about their appearance and manners -- these were their only values in life...." As for the upper class in general, Berkowitz remarks that "...high society under the Restoration so distorted the norms of Spanish life as to retard progress...."

There can be little doubt that Galdós condemns the dissolute, degenerate elements of the upper class, for many of his novelas are filled with reprehensible types taken from this group; and there are innumerable derogatory references to the practices of this worthless class. Galdós, as well as other far-seeing Spaniards, realized that the extravagant, illogical conduct of many of those who occupied positions of prestige was serving as a fatal lure for the lesser ones who stumbled eagerly after them to self-destruction. In 1862, while still a youth, Galdós wrote a satirical little poem mocking the señorito. This poem, entitled "El pollo," is quoted by Berkowitz, who feels it is significant "...because it already expresses so clearly Galdós' disapproval of the 'señorito,' a social type with whom he was always out of sympathy." León Roch serves as one of the spokesmen for Galdós in his criticisms of the aristocracy, and this worthy young
man certainly does not trouble to conceal his contempt for the class in which he lives. He states that the vanity of his father is the reason for his living in a sphere which he describes as one ". . . de pura fórmula cuando no de corrupción...."32 León, in a bitter denunciation, continues: "Mi padre, que ganó una fortuna con el sudor de su frente en el rincón de una chocolatería, quiso hacer de mí un ser infinitamente distinguido y aristocrático, tal como él lo concebía en su errado criterio, y me dijo: "Sé marqués, gasta mucho, revienta caballos, guía coches, seduce casadas, ten queridas, enlázate con una familia noble, sé ministro, haz ruido, pon tu nombre sobre todos los nombres." Sus palabras no eran estas; pero su intención sí.33

In order that one may observe the harmful effects produced among the members of the lower ranks by the dissipations of the upper class, Galdós narrates some of the foolish actions of Mariano Rufete, the poor, misguided brother of Isidora. In order to supplement his meager funds, Mariano "...había contraído el vicio del juego.... Cuando ganaba se permitía lujos desenfrenados, como ir al teatro de la Infantil...convidarse a chuletas con tomate en cualquier taberna, ir a los bailes vespertinos de criadas y costureras, donde danzaba y hacía conquistas. Cuando las ganancias habían sido por ventura fenomenales, alquilaba un jamolgo.... Para que esta parodia vil y nauseabunda de las disipaciones de la clase superior fuese más completa,
tenía sus pequeñas deudas con el mozo del café y con los amigos."

One of the most forceful criticisms of the señorito class, a class that disturbs both the society of Spain and that of the novelas, is embodied in the person of Juanito Santa Cruz, the self-centered, pampered profligate of Fortunata y Jacinta. Gameo y de Laiglesia describes this character as a "verdadero spécimen del señorito rico; desocupado; egoísta; sólo atento a satisfacer sus pasiones y sus caprichos sea como sea.... La profusión con que esta especie dañina se ha criado en nuestra sociedad, ha causado muchos males, sembrado muchos odios, siendo causa de prejuicios que no es tan hacedero derrocar, y es una de las razones por las cuales debemos desejar que imperie la norma común del trabajo como medio legal de vida."35

Galdós never ceases to reprove the harmful conduct of the upper classes, and in one of his last works, El caballero encantado, there is to be found evidence of his concern over this evil that was weakening his society. Tarsis is pictured as an example of the worst element in the higher social circles, and La Madre punishes him for his wrongdoings, explaining that "Verdades hay clarísimas, que vosotros, los caballeretes ricos, no aprendéis hasta que esas verdades os duelen.... Todo lo mereces, Tarsis.... Pensando sólo en ti mismo y ávido de goces, no has tenido consideración de tus pobres esclavos."36
It is evident, then, that many in the upper class displayed to the envious eyes of those in the lesser social spheres a life of indolence and extravagance, extravagance in dress, in manners, in food, in entertainments and pleasures, in everything that proclaimed the spender to be the proud possessor of wealth and position. For these misguided individuals the stimulus for all endeavor seemed to spring from the desire to indulge the craving for physical pleasure and to satisfy the need for ostentation. That the lower classes did not spurn these standards of conduct is evidenced in the observations of various writers. Chaulie speaks of the craving for display in his society, and he feels that this yearning is a strong one: "Muchas son las exigencias sociales, pero es mucho mayor el ansia de fausto superficial, aun a costa de crear posiciones falsas que al derrumbarse arrastran consigo el brillo efímero, que tantos desvelos costó sostener, como desesperación causa al desvanecero." Hallada refers to those who, "...con recursos poco superiores a los de un obrero, pretenden hacer ostentaciones de príncipes y de grandes personajes en las villas y ciudades." One of the reasons for this folly that blinds its victims to all sense of proportion and judgment is the exaggerated importance given to appearance: "La estúpida fatuidad a que nos hemos acostumbrado de juzgar al próximo por su parte exterior, el loco empeño tan general de competir en lujo y en boato con la aristocracia o con los acusadalados burgueses...obligaron a muchas familias a vivir
al día o con el deplorable sistema de trampa adelante, siguiendo el mal ejemplo hasta las clases más humildes, y desde las ciudades más populosas hasta las más apartadas aldeas. "38 Angel del Río sums up Spanish life during this period very well in one sentence: "Mediocridad en la realidad y énfasis en la apariencia, he aquí la contradicción interna de la vida española en los años de la Restauración,"39 while Berkowitz remarks that many Spanish people "...were animated by a vain ambition for distinction in wealth, dress, manners, and social position."40

The behavior of the upper class, therefore, left an indelible impression on the life of the lower classes. Some eagerly accepted the standards of prodigality and ostentation and devoted all their energies to emulating these harmful practices. Others who possessed clearer judgment and more moderation were often forced into the new channel of life because, as Veblen has pointed out, failure to conform, at least to some extent, would have entailed a loss of position and a consequent blow to one's self-esteem.

Another factor that encouraged the mania of cursilería in Spanish society may be called, for want of a better term, the feeling of hidalguía that apparently dwells in the hearts of so many Spaniards above the line of laborers and farmers. It is a form of vanity that seems to manifest itself in various ways. The individual may attach exaggerated importance to any ties or relationship with the nobility. Furthermore, regardless of how tenuous and how remote these
bonds may be, they are considered to be capable of bestowing prestige upon the fortunate individual who can claim such a relationship. Eugenio Selle finds this obsession with noble descent to be a widespread characteristic of the Spanish people, as is evident in the following observation: "Pero hablad de escudos y linajes en el solar de España y no hallaréis villano por los cuatro costados que no cite parentescos y entronques en probanza de hidalguía y limpieza de sangre." Havelock Ellis also considers this to be a defect that is apt to afflict the Spanish people, especially the educated middle-class Spaniard, and he describes it as "the mania of noble descent."

During the Restoration the nobility craze seems to have become particularly severe, due probably to the fact that in this century it was possible to demonstrate one's hidalguía by something more tangible than mere boasts of noble descent. A title and a niche in the ranks of the aristocracy were now attainable if one had been fortunate enough to ride the tide of swelling fortunes into a position of prominence. Berkowitz states that "Those seeking social honors and titles of distinction had a veritable heyday under the restored monarchy. The ranks of Spain's old aristocracy of blood were swelled by recruits from the numerous slave-trafficking Indígenas, enriched merchants, and successful stock-market speculators. King Amadeo had elevated many of them to the topmost rung of the ladder of nobility -- and Alfonso XII was not to be outdone by
his predecessor."43. It is not surprising to learn that the same lack of moderation that characterized the luxury and pleasures of that society also typified the quest for titles and other similar concrete proofs of one's hidalgía. Indicative of this immoderation is the report of Berkowitz that "Spain's public figures sought and grabbed decorations and titles with an avidity that bordered on farcical delirium."44

If one is unable to claim the distinction of noble descent or a title, he may manifest his hidalgía by showing an aristocratic disdain for any manner of work that is considered to be degrading, such as manual labor or any useful trade. Now this scorn of labor, which is in itself one expression of social pretense, is a sentiment that has exerted considerable force in earlier societies, and it still exerts some of its former influence among present-day groups. Veblen recognizes this social feeling, and he discusses it on various occasions. He explains, for example, that "The archaic theoretical distinction between the base and the honourable in the manner of a man's life retains very much of its ancient force even today. So much so that there are few of the better class who are not possessed of an instinctive repugnance for the vulgar forms of labor."45 And on another occasion Veblen states that "This pervading sense of the indignity of the slightest manual labor is familiar to all civilized peoples as well as to peoples of a less advanced pecuniary culture."46
It has been observed that the social environment of a particular period will undoubtedly encourage or moderate the desire for luxury and for social ostentation. Likewise, it would seem logical to assume that some societies will regard those who perform labor with less respect than will others. In our own society, for example, there are thousands who gain a livelihood through some form of labor, and they do not feel themselves to be dishonored, nor are they and their occupations regarded with scorn by others in our society. It is true that unskilled labor that involves distasteful or menial tasks will repel the majority of our members, but, on the other hand, the skilled laborer has won a respected position in our society; and, with the exception of a small minority who cling to the outmoded prejudices against a gainful and useful labor, his occupation does not draw a contemptuous glance from others.

In Spanish urban society of the nineteenth century, however, the stigma attached to labor seemed to continue with undiminished vigor. Concepción Arenal criticizes this attitude of her fellow countrymen when she remarks that "La vanidad quita también brazos e inteligencias al trabajo, más o menos, según los países; el nuestro no es de los que menos. Hay personas que, habiendo tenido una regular posición, se creen robajados dedicándose a ciertos trabajos, aun cuando las honraría mucho más que el pan debido a la limosna.... En España queda mucho que hacer en este sentido, porque es grande el poder de la preocupación,
reforzada por la pereza.... ¡Cuánto más noble y más digna es la blusa del obrero, que la levita mugrienta del pobre que lo es por no sacrificar sus vanidades de señor!  

Juan Valera is another who has made a keen diagnosis of this failing of the Spanish people, but, as can be seen in the following quotation, he seems to have regarded the problem as a difficult one to solve: "Ya lo hemos dicho: sobramos las nueve décimas partes de los señores de levita que hay en España. Pero ¿de qué suerte disminuir esta clase media? Tal vez convendría que los exámenes fuesen muy rigurosas en los Institutos y Universidades, a fin de que los chicos de cortos alcances o poco estudiosos se desesperasen y se dedicasen a alguna faena mecánica; pero si consideramos que en España presumimos casi todos de hidalgos, se verá que esto es imposible."  

José María Salaverría, a contemporary of the generation of '93, also refers to this manifestation of hidalguía, and he speaks of the "...conflicto horrendo, que consiste en ocultar la miseria con actitudes de hidalgo. Los pueblos y las ciudades están llenos de familias que viven con un presupuesto de 30 a 50 duros mensuales. Como la hidalguía impide «rebajarse», nadie trata de ampliar el esfuerzo para sobrepasar el presupuesto." So extensive is this feeling among the Spanish people that Salaverría declares that "...no hay en Europa otra raza que tenga los ridículos prejuicios que tiene la raza hispánica. El ejemplar de la clase media pobre, que corresponde al tipo
del hidalgo español, es desconocido en Europa. El orgullo, mezclado con la pereza, y acaso con la ignorancia, hace de la mitad de los españoles candidatos seguros del hambre.\textsuperscript{50}

The preceding discussion of the Spaniard's deep-rooted disdain of labor and of his abnormal interest in noble descent and titles and honors has been designed to show that psychologically he would be inclined to ostentation if social conditions made it possible. These characteristics are manifestations of a fierce self-pride, of an acute awareness of position. It is only natural that in the superficial, pretentious life of the latter nineteenth century this feeling would drive many people to any extreme and to any sacrifice in order to save face. Failure to follow the pattern of unrestrained luxury, pleasure, and display would have posed a serious threat to one's hidalguía, and for many Spaniards such a fate was unthinkable.

The problem of cursilería occupies a very prominent place in the novelas of Galdós, and rightly so, since it would seem evident from the preceding comments of these various writers that this tendency had taken deep root in the Spanish soil. An attempt has been made to show that not one but various causes made the spread of cursilería inevitable. New wealth, new luxuries, the disappearance of class barriers, the ill-advised standards of irresponsible elements of the upper class, and the hidalguía of the average Spaniard combined into an irresistible force that affected nearly every level of society. One cannot escape
the conclusion that fate was very unkind to nineteenth-century Spain. In addition to overwhelming the country with wars, political strife, and economic crises, it delivered the tormented nation into the power of a disastrous coincidence that found all of these happenings descending upon a bewildered and weakened society that could not hope to resist.

Galdós was well aware of the mad scramble for titles, and in one of his early novels, *La familia de León Roch*, there is a mocking reference to this craze. The Marqués de Púcar describes this custom as "esa ridículo hoy tan en boga," and he cynically remarks that "Pronto llegaremos a un tiempo en que, cuando recibamos el diploma, tendremos vergüenza de dar un doblón de propina al portero que nos lo traiga...porque también él será Marqués."52

This desire for a title is, as a rule, a less harmful manifestation of *cursilería* than certain other practices which are engaged in by many families in Madrid society. Gustavo, oldest son of the Tellerías, tells León Roch that he doesn't know what it is to live "...en una casa donde todo se debe, desde las alfombras hasta el pan de cada día...." Also, he says that León has no idea "...de las farsas que se ven obligadas a representar cada día personas cuyo nombre solo parece debiera ser emblema de respeto y formalidad." Continuing his remarks on the ridiculous deception practiced by such individuals, Gustavo tells León: "Tú que tienes fortuna y modestia, la cual es como segunda
fortuna que beneficia a la primera, no conoces las ansias de este vivir en plena comedia entre el humo de la vanidad y sobre las escasas de la escasez."

The unhappy Gustavo has had the opportunity to observe firsthand the painful consequences of this living "entre el humo de la vanidad y sobre las escasas de la escasez," for this phrase depicts the existence of the Marqués and Marquesa de Tellería and of their son, Leopoldo. 53

Cursilería was so widespread in Galdós' Spain that one might well term it a chronic infection whose virus plagued much of the Spanish urban population of that period. Augusto Miquis, a promising young medical student, describes some of the symptoms and results of this malady. While strolling with Isidora Rufete and observing the throng of people who are riding and walking along the avenue in the late afternoon, young Augusto explains: "Aquí en días de fiesta, verás a todas las clases sociales. Vienden a observarse, a medirse, y a ver las respectivas distancias que hay entre cada una, para asaltarse. El caso es subir al escalón inmediato. Verás muchas familias elegantes que no tienen que comer. Verás gente dominguera que es la fina crema de la cursilería, reventando por parecer otra cosa.... Verás hasta las patronas de huéspedes disfrazadas de personas, y las costureras queriendo pasar por señoritas. Todos se codean y se toleran todos, porque reina la igualdad. No hay ya envidia de nombres ilustres, sino de comodidades. Como cada cual tiene ganas rabiosas de alcanzar una
posición superior, principia por aparentarla. Las improvisaciones estimulan el apetito. Lo que no se tiene se pide, y no hay un solo número uno que no quiera elevarse a la categoría de dos. El dos se quiere hacer pasar por tres; el tres hace creer que es cuatro; el cuatro dice: «Si yo soy cinco», y así sucesivamente."

Isidora pays little heed to these remarks of Augusto; but it is no wonder, for she herself is by that time hopelessly infected with the germ of cursilería. Although Isidora presents several of the symptoms of this affliction, the most noticeable one is the manía nobiliaria, for she has an obsession that she is the daughter of a marquesa. Her every endeavor is directed toward establishing her claim to this position, and her vain pursuit of this chimera is a contributing cause to her ultimate downfall. The fault is not wholly hers, however. The false ideas of noble birth had been sown by her father, Tomás Rufete, and their extensive growth was due to the folly of her benefactor, el Canónigo, who encouraged her dreams of a superior station in that society. Isidora recalls that el Canónigo, "...enganado por Rufete, había representado con ella la comedia funesta que tan desgraciada la había hecho. ¡Cuántas veces en las noches del invierno él la embelesaba diciéndole que sería marquesa, que tendría palacio, coches, lacayos, lujo sin fin, y riquezas semejantes a las de las mil y una noches! El la había enseñado a no trabajar, a esperar lo todo de una herencia, a soñar con grandezas locas, a
enamorarse de fantasmas. Había llenado la cabeza de
frivolidades, había educado en la contemplación mental de
un orden de vida muy superior a su verdadero estado. 56

Obviously, it would be difficult for anyone in any
society to withstand completely the lure of such a beautiful
dream, but when it is remembered that Isidora was living in
a society that attached great importance to a rank among
the aristocrats, who, in previous times, had dwelled in
lofty and envied seclusion, it is understandable that this
rather unstable girl would yield to her environment. Conse-
quently, it would seem that society must bear a large share
of the responsibility for the fall of this deluded girl.
As one reads about the fever for noble rank attacking
supposedly balanced and normal individuals, and as one
realizes that the social atmosphere must have been heavy
with the vaporings of those who were seeking or had obtained
these coveted positions, it becomes more evident that a cer-
tain degree of mental unbalance, such as that exhibited by
Isidora, might well manifest itself in an abnormal interest
in things aristocratic due to the stimulus of the social
environment. 57 This is also the stand taken by Carlos
Rovetta, who, while not discounting the influence of heredi-
ty in the case of Isidora, says: "Mayor es la parte de los
otros factores -- el medio y la educación -- en el desequi-
librio que hace posible la caída de Isidora..." 58

In La desheredada Galdós does not limit his study of
the effects of cursilería to Isidora. 59 There are others
who exhibit the various symptoms of the mania, a fact which has led Leopoldo Alas to say this of the work: "De paso, el autor nos presenta el cuadro general de una sociedad, muy parecida a la nuestra, en que el arroyo quiere ser Guadalquivir, y el Guadalquivir ser mar; y como todo el mundo aspira al empleo inmediato superior, resulta un conjunto de trampas, miserias y bajezas."60

It has already been shown that Isidora's brother, Mariano, indulges every desire for luxury and for ostentation whenever chance grants him a little good fortune in gambling.61 Both Isidora and Mariano are but following the footsteps of their father, Tomás Rufete, who suffered from an insatiable hunger to make a display. Isidora herself states that in the periods when her father's political party was in power they lived very well: "En aquella época Rufete puso nuestra casa con mucho lujo, con un lujo... ¡Dios de mi vida! Cómo el no tenía más idea que aparentar, aparentar, y ser persona notable."62

Melchor Relimpio, the young man with many projects for a quick ascent to wealthy heights, suffers as he attempts to comply with the fatuous formula of appearance and pretense which governs his society. Very shortly after leaving the university, Melchor has made the bitter discovery that the distance between reality and appearance is a painful leap. Because of this, says Galdós, "El joven se desesperaba, viendo la desproporción grande entre su posición real y la artificial, que se había creado con
amistades de chicos pudientes, con la necesidad de vestir bien y sus eternas pretensiones, fomentadas sin cesar por toda la familia." The years pass, and Melchor is forced to continue the masquerade as are others in his society. The only alternative in that society is tantamount to loss of one's prestige and self-esteem. There is no escape. Melchor "...no era rico, pero era preciso parecerlo; es decir, vestirse como los ricos, tratar con ricos." Such an existence elicits the following thought from Galdós:

"Es cruel eso de que todos seamos distintos por la fortuna y tengamos que ser iguales por la ropa. El inventor de las levitas sembró la desesperación en el linaje humano." Poverty cannot destroy the tough fiber of cursilería unless it be of the most abject kind. Cursilería is oblivious to such realities as want, privation, and low social station. Dreams, not realities, are its food, as is evidenced in the cases of Emilia and Leonor Relimpio, who, "Con ser tipos perfectos de la miseria disimulada,... se habrían horrorizado de que se les propusiera casarse con un hábil mecánico, con un rico tendero o con un propietario de aldea." Their mother, Doña Laura, shares the same exalted idea of superiority: "Doña Laura misma, hecha ya al vivir miserable, barnizado y compuesto para que no lo pareciese, no pensaba en alianzas denigrantes. Sus ilusiones eran que Emilia se casase con un médico.... En cuanto a Leonor,...le vendría bien un oficial de Estado Mayor, de Ingenieros, o cosa así."
The Relimpio family provides an illuminating example of the ridiculous prejudice against a useful labor or trade. Moved by the strong feeling of hidalguía that rules so many in their society, the members of this family live in their wretched state of dissimulated poverty and scorn those who earn a comfortable living with their hands. Thus, as indicated above, Doña Laura and her daughters would not think of a union with "un hábil mecánico" or "un rico tendero." Furthermore, she and her husband, José, as well as Melchor, scornfully reject the suggestion of Doña Laura's brother, an "afamado ortopédico" who "ha labrado una fortuna en su taller," that Melchor enter his shop and learn the trade; "Melchor ortopedista, arreglador de jorobas, corrector de hernias, fabricante de muletas y aparatos tan feos!... Vamos, vamos, esto era monstruoso."66

Galdós' graphic description of this type of life that is built on sham and sacrifice because of the dictates of a warped sense of values also draws the attention of Leopoldo Alas. He remarks that "Otro aspecto de la miseria que en la desheredada está profundamente estudiado y maravillosamente descrito es la miseria disimulada...esa miseria que... es la más terrible.... Esta clase de miseria alcanza a muchas clases...el afán de parecer más de lo que se es, engendra en nuestra sociedad una miseria que es casi universal."67

One cannot imagine the family of Manuel José Ramón del Poz ever pausing in the wild scramble to climb higher and
higher to new social heights or ever neglecting any opportunity for display. It may be well to follow the suggestion of Galdós, who says: "Introduzcámonos en el hogar Pez.... Los tiempos eran prósperos. Tocaba entonces estar arriba.... De situación tan bella procedía en todos aquel deseo febril de goces y el delirio de llamar la atención, de parecer mucho más de lo que realmente eran. La señora de Pez ya no aspiraba simplemente a que sus hijas casasen con hombres ricos y decentes. No; sus yernos habían de ser millonarios, y además duques, o cuando menos marqueses; ellas mismas (dañadas ya sus inocentes almas por la fatuidad) habían hecho suyas las ideas de su endiosada mamá, y aun iban más lejos, y soñaban con príncipes, ¿por qué no con reyes?" 68

At least one member of the Pez family, Joaquín, is eventually forced by the painful realities of poverty and indebtedness into a temporary state of regret which causes him to censure the vain, superficial life in which he has been reared. He blames his present wretched condition on the "perversa educación" which he has received, and he asks: "¿Por qué desde niño me enseñaban a competir con los hijos de los grandees de España?" Recognizing the results of such training, he adds: "Estas son las consecuencias. Me criaron en la vanidad, y la vanidad me conduce a este fin desastroso." 69 Joaquín then places his finger squarely on the source of the misfortune that has overwhelmed Isidora and him and thousands like them: "Tú, como yo," thinks
Joaquín as he prepares to write to Isidora, "fuiste educada en la idea de igualar a los superiores." 70

One of the most disagreeable aspects of the desire for ostentation is seen in the spectacle of a social dreg, such as Gaitica, making a ludicrous pretense of affluence and position, when in reality his background and moral character are such that he can only be regarded as a social outcast. However, this merely emphasizes the fact that cursilería is like a noxious vine which entwines its tendrils around every social class. Like Mariano Rufete, Gaitica never overlooks the opportunity for a brief appearance in the social sun whenever his luck has provided him with the means for doing so. On one occasion Mariano sees Gaitica, and he exclaims in amazement: "¡Eh!...¿quién es aquel que va a caballo? ¡No es Gaitica? El mismo, un chulo vestido de persona decente. Y saluda a dos que van en coche. Todo porque estos días ha ganado al juego muchos miles." 71

The manía nobiliaría is clearly revealed in Doña Cándida's aristocratic pretensions and in José María Manso's exaggerated interest in titles. Máximo Manso reports that Doña Cándida, widow of García Grande, had such a craving to join the growing ranks of the new nobility "...que mientras vivió García Grande no dejó de atosigarel para que se proporcionase un título." However, her plans for this bit of display are thwarted by her husband, who "...se mantuvo firme en esto y conservando hacia la aristocracia el respeto
que se ha perdido desde que han empezado a entrar en ella a gran número de ricos; no quiso adquirir título...."72

As for Máximo's brother, José María, he is dazzled by the glitter of titles, for "...quería, ante todo, ver en su salón gente con título, aunque éste fuese pontifício...."73

Apparentely José María's wish is easily fulfilled, as Máximo observes that his brother "...vio con gozo que entraban títulos en sus salones...."74 It soon becomes apparent that the mania of nobility has a firm grasp on the will of José María, for one morning Máximo reports the following discovery: "Y aquella misma mañana observé en el despacho otros indicios de demencia que me dieron mucha tristeza, porque ya no me quedaba duda de que el mal de José María era fulminante y de que pronto se perdería la esperanza de su remedio. Sobre la mesa había muestras de garabatos heráldicos hechos en distintos colores." This tends to confirm certain rumors that Máximo has heard, and he asks his brother if it is true that he is going to receive a title. José María does not deny it, but he does disclaim any interest, saying that it is the desire of others. Following this conversation, Máximo says: "Pronto sería yo hermano de un marqués de Casa-Manso o cosa tal. En verdad, esto me era de todo punto indiferente, y no debía preocupar-me de semejante cosa; pero pensaba en ella porque venía a confirmar el diagnóstico que hice de la creciente locura de mi hermano. Lo del título era un fenómeno infalible en el proceso psicológico, en la evolución mental de sus vanidades.
José reproduce en su desenvolvimiento personal la serie de fenómenos generales que caracterizan a estas oligarquías eclecticas, producto de un estado de crisis intelectual y política que eslabona el mundo destruido con el que se está elaborando."75

In the society depicted by Galdós in the novelas, the Bringas family is representative of the Spanish middle clase, the class which Arroyo describes as "...esa triste burguesía española, sin independencia económica, dependiente siempre su vida de otras vidas; pobre clase cobarde, humillada ante los de arriba y desdénosa de los de abajo. Víctima de todos, de su vanidad y de su abulia, y de esa cosa terrible que es «el quiero y no puedo»."76 The domestic trials and tribulations of Don Francisco Bringas and his wife, Rosalía, are set forth by Galdós in the novelas, Tormento and La de Bringas. In the opinion of Balseiro, "Lo más valioso de Tormento es la presentación del hogar de don Francisco Bringas y de su mujer Rosalía Pipaón. Así como el de Pez -- en La desheredada -- sirvióle a Galdós para censurar la leremeanía de sus contemporáneos, éste le viene a sus anchas para presentar el cuadro de los que, sin medios económicos suficientes, pretenden vivir con un pie en el mundo de la aristocracia y con otro en el de la clase media."77

It is, perhaps, in the middle class where the seeds of cursilería have been sown in the greatest number, and it is here that they display their most vigorous growth. This is
probably due to the greater sensitivity of the members of this group to every vibration of thought, dress, and conduct that emanates from above. The need to maintain a false show is greater here than in the lower classes, and furthermore the middle class naturally possesses more means to carry on the social comedy than do those below. Among the members of Galdosian middle class society, none reveals better indoctrination in the ways of cursilería than does Rosalía although, like any true cursí, she would recoil with horror and indignation upon being labeled as such. She is, as Camero y de Laiglesia has pointed out, "...el arquetipo de las mujeres de esa clase social [la pequeña burguesía], que no se resigna a la modestia de su condición, ni a la exigüidad de los medios materiales de que dispone para vivir; ansía que los demás crean que ocupa un puesto en plano superior al que le corresponde." 78

Rosalía exhibits several of the symptoms of cursilería. One that is quite in evidence is the nobility mania: "Su flaco era cierta manía nobiliaria, pues aunque los Pipaones no descendían de Inigo Arista, el apellido materno de Rosalía, Calderón de la Barca, la autorizaba en cierto modo para construir, aunque sólo fuese con la fantasía, un frondosísimo árbol genealógico." 79 This feeling of hidalguía includes not only a pride in her forbears but also a strong yearning to join the bureaucratic family that dwells in the Palacio, a residence that she regards with reverence and admiration. Rosalía's conceited pride in her ancestry and
her acquaintanceships with those living in the Palace provide her with a foundation from which her cursi spirit soars toward the upper reaches of the social world. Such a lofty flight is really unwarranted, however, for Galdós remarks that "La posición social de Rosalía Pipión de la Barca de Bringas no era, a pesar de su contacto con Palacio y con familias de viso, la más a propósito para fomentar en ella pretensiones aristocráticas de alto vuelo...." Such a consideration never deters the cursis, whose self-pride, or vanity, blinds them to unpleasant realities, and this proves to be the case with Rosalía, who "...tenía un orgulloso cursi, que le inspiraba a menudo, con ahuecamiento de nariz, evocaciones declamatorias de los méritos y calidad de sus antepasados. Gustaba asimismo de nombrar títulos, de describir uniformes palaciegos, y de encarecer sus buenas relaciones." 80

Imbued with a false idea of her value and social position, the pretentious Rosalía never misses an opportunity to demonstrate her supposed superiority to Amparo and Refugio, two distant relatives whose poverty causes them to depend on the Bringas household for some measure of assistance. Rosalía is guilty of the same error that is committed by so many of those who are afflicted with the fever of cursilería. She lacks the intuitive feeling of nobility that enables those of high position, both in fact as well as in appearance, to treat the lower classes in a tactful manner that does not lower their own position nor wound the
inferior with a sense of his inadequacy. This haughty and sometimes cruel treatment of the girls "...pinta a la señora de Bringas, y da completa idea de su limitada inteli-
gencia, así como de su perversa educación moral, vicio histo-
tónico y castizo, pues no lo anula, ni aun lo disimula, el barniz de urbanidad con que resplandecen, a la luz de las relaciones superficiales, muchas personas de elevita y mantilla." 81 This characteristic failing of the cursi is readily understandable. The struggle to climb the social ladder is a bitter, hazardous one, and a subconscious awareness of one's limitations and a fear of falling behind in the race to ascend probably cause the cursi to attempt to magnify the alarmingly short distance that separates him from those whom he scorns. Once an upward step has been made, one cannot slip backward, nor can one permit any suggestion of equality with a lesser rank. This attitude is manifested in Rosalía's irritation at the suggestion of her cousin, Agustín Caballero, that she appear at a public function with the humble Amparo: "La idea sola de presentarse en el teatro con la chica de Sánchez, cuyo humilde guardarropa era incompatible con toda exhibición mundana, puso a la señora de Bringas en un estado de vivísima irri-
tación. Ni comprendía que a su primo se le ocurriera tal dislate. Bastaba esta salida de tono, si no hubiera otras, para que Caballero mereciera la borla de doctor en ignoran-
cia social." 82
A cursi such as Rosalía thoroughly enjoys the artificial life of that society with its titled people and its superficial appearance of wealth and prosperity: "A Rosalía le gustaba, sobre todas las cosas, figurar, verse entre personas tituladas o notables por su posición política y riqueza aparente o real; ir a donde hubiese animación, bulla, trato falaz y cortesano, alardos de bienestar, aunque, como en el caso suyo, estos alardes fueran esforzados disimulos de la vergonzante miseria de nuestras clases burocráticas." Such appearances are difficult for the Bringas, however, if they involve the theater. The salary of Francisco does not permit such luxuries, and, as has been observed, the economy-minded government employee does not indulge his or Rosalía's desire for luxury or ostentation if it will bleed unduly their somewhat anemic savings. The truth is that "...los Bringas iban al teatro, digámoslo clarito, de limosna. Aquellos esclavos de la áurea miseria no se permitían tales lujos sino cuando está o la otra amiga de Rosalía les mandaba las butacas de turno, por no poder ir aquella noche...." Don Francisco and Rosalía are able, therefore, to present themselves in society and to maintain an appearance, as do others, that belies their true condition. Their deception is based on nothing more serious than accepting the charitable gift of tickets from friends. This innocent misrepresentation is not typical, however, of many of the families that are guilty of ostentation in this society.
For these families, the pretense and show are based on more censurable practices, and Galdós explains this distinctive aspect of his society as follows: "El desnivel chocante que se observa hoy entre las aparencias fastuosas de muchas familias y su presupuesto oficial, emana quizás de un sistema económico menos inocente que la maña y el arte ahorrativo del angelico Thiers y que la habilidad de Rosalía para explotar sus relaciones. Hoy el parasitismo tiene otro carácter y causas más dañadas y vergonzosas. Existen todavía ejemplos como el de Bringas, pero son los menos. No se trate de probar que la mucha economía y un poco de adulación hacen tales prodigos, porque nadie lo creerá. Cuando algún extranjero, desconocedor de nuestras costumbres públicas y privadas, admirá en los teatros a tantas personas que revelan en su cara desdenosa una gran posición, a tantas damas lujosamente adornadas; cuando oye decir que a la mayor parte de estas familias no se les conoce más renta que un triste y deslucido sueldo, queda sentado un principio económico de nuestra exclusiva pertenencia, al cual se ha de aplicar pronto una voz puramente española, como el vocablo pronunciamiento, que está dando la vuelta al mundo y anda ya por los antípodas."

One who is not deceived by this veneer of well-being that the Bringas family displays to society is Refugio, the poverty-stricken young girl who has felt the heavy-handed charity of her relative, Rosalía. Differing from her meek sister, Amparo, Refugio has rebelled against the affectation
and haughty manner of Rosalía and has broken off all contact with the Bringas family. She berates Amparo for her servile role in the household of Francisco and Rosalía, and she angrily says: "Humillate más, sérveles, arrastrate a los pies de la fantasmona; limpiele la baba a los niños. ¿Qué esperas? Tonta, tontaina, si en aquella casa no hay más que miseria, una miseria mal charolada.... Parecen gente, ¿y qué son? unos pobretones como nosotros. Quítales aquel barniz, quitales las relaciones, ¿y qué les queda? hambre, cursilería. Van de gorra a los teatros, recogen los pedazos de tela que tiran en Palacio; piden limosna con buenas formas.... No, lo que es yo no les adulto. En mí no machaca la señora doña Rosalía, con sus humos de marquesa." 86

Rosalía's cursilería manifests itself not only in her manía nobiliaria and in her craving to mingle with the upper set at social functions but also in her passion for clothes, a weakness previously studied in the chapter on luxury. It is not surprising that Rosalía and other cursas of that society should attach such an importance to elegant clothing, for not only does their fine attire satisfy a yearning for luxury, but, equally important, it furnishes a marvellous means of displaying to one's society an apparent indication of wealth and higher social position. Veblen recognizes that dress is one of the most necessary elements of conspicuous consumption, and he states that "it is especially the rule of the conspicuous waste of goods that finds expression in dress,...expenditure on dress has this advantage
over most other methods, that our apparel is always in evidence and affords an indication of our pecuniary standing to all observers at the first glance. It is also true that admitted expenditure for display is more obviously present, and is, perhaps, more universally practiced in the matter of dress than in any other line of consumption. 87

Veblen has pointed out that the members of every class will endure sacrifices of varying degree in order to permit themselves some amount of conspicuous consumption. This is especially true in the matter of dress, for Veblen observes that "It is true of dress in even a higher degree than of most other items of consumption, that people will undergo a very considerable degree of privation in the comforts or the necessaries of life in order to afford what is considered a decent amount of wasteful consumption...." 88 If this is characteristic of any civilized urban society, one may well imagino the situation that would exist in a society, such as the one being studied, where the importance of appearance, display, and all forms of conspicuous consumption has been magnified beyond all bounds of moderation and reason.

Rosalía could corroborate the accuracy of Veblen's statement concerning the willingness of people to squander on clothes the money that has been accumulated through the sacrifice of other comforts or necessities. On one occasion she buys for her children various foolish articles, such as "...unos cuellitos, un arreglo de sombrero, medias azules, guantes encarnados, una gorra de marino, que decía en
Rosalía has made these purchases because "No le gustaba componerse ella sola, sino que tenía vanidad en emperejilar bien a sus hijos para que alternaran dignamente con los niños de otras familias de la ciudad." At least her vanity is not selfish. However, this attempt at display consumes "...seiscientos reales, los cuales no hubieran podido reunirse en su bolsillo sin substituir, durante larga temporada, el principio de falda de ternera por un plato de sesos altos, que se ponían un día sí y otro no, alternando con tortilla de escabeche."99

In her unending struggle to appear to advantage in all social contacts, Rosalía must always contend with the cautious economy of her husband. For her this is a particularly burdensome cross to bear, because there is no doubt in her mind that "...ella tenía que alternar con las personas de más viso, con títulos y con la misma Reina; y Bringas, no viendo las cosas más que con ojos de miseria, se empeñaba en reducirla al vestido de merino y a cuatro harapos anticuados y feos."90 Rosalía has to resort to every stratagem in order to circumvent the restrictions that are placed upon her by Francisco's vigilant administration of the family funds, and such an existence of deception and worry is "una vida de martirio" for her. However, her philosophy and that of her society leave her no choice: "...juzgaba que su decoro y el contacto con altas personas le imponían deberes ineludibles; creía que ella y los niños no debían hacer mal
papel en las casas adonde iban, ni le gustaba que las amigas la mirasen de reojo y cuchichearan entre sí, observando en ella una falda de taracea o una prenda cursi y anticuada.  

Certain members of Galdosian society successfully resist the craze that compels so many to sample every pleasure and every material comfort that surround them. Such an individual is Rosalía's husband, Don Francisco, who, as we have seen, has remained firm as a rock before the waves of luxury that are breaking over his society. Nevertheless, this bastion of moderation and common sense cannot withstand the pressure of his environment when it is a question of creating a false appearance. Even Francisco recognizes that there is no choice, that the dictates of his ostentatious society must be obeyed. Thus, "En el verano del 65, recién abierto el ferrocarril del Norte, la familia no considero decoroso dejar de ir a San Sebastián." Such a step is a necessity, and in order to fulfill this obligation, sacrifices are accepted as a matter of course. Consequently, "Para esto, don Francisco suprimió el principio en las comidas durante tres meses, y el viaje se realizó en Agosto, por supuesto consiguiendo billetes gratuitos. Por no poder sostener dos criadas, el santo varón se embatunaba todas las mañanas sus propias botas, y aun es fama que se atrevió a componerlas alguna vez.... Las comidas eran por lo general de una escasez calagurritana, por cuyo motivo estaban los chicos tan pálidos y desmedrados."
It is evident, then, that the omnipotent cursilería may even relegate the basic needs, such as food, to a position of secondary importance. Don Francisco does not shackle himself with the chains of indebtedness, nor does he engage in the shameful practice of begging money from friends or of employing corrupt business methods, as is the case with some individuals, in order to maintain the family’s position in the social hierarchy. Yet it is apparent that he will not hesitate to jeopardize his and his wife’s health and, even worse, the health of his children, in order to provide money for the display that he and his society consider normal and necessary.

In this penetrating analysis of a family of the middle class, the class which he has called "nuestra bonachona media clase, toda necesidades y pretensiones," Galdós gives additional evidence of the ridiculous, harmful, sacrifices that are made in order to satisfy the desire to aparentar. The reason for another drastic reduction in expenditures for necessities is not a vacation trip but a dance at the Palace. Bringas and his wife feel that it is indispensable to attend the dance, so once again the long-suffering family pays a painful tribute to this tyrannical passion for pretense: "...con valeroso rigor Bringas echó abajo partidas afectas a la misma exigencia vital, y la familia fue condenada a no tener en sus yantares, durante un mes, más que lo preciso para no morirse de hambre. Y como él no podía ya presentarse decorosamente con el gabán
de seis años, hubo de encargarse uno valiéndose de un sastrer que le debía favores y que se lo hacía por el coste del paño. Se corrieron las órdenes para que los chicos tiraran hasta febrero con los zapatos que tenían, y quedaron suprimidas la luz del recibimiento, la propina del sereno y otras cosas."94

Apparently the Bringas are at times successful in their attempts to construct an imposing facade which will conceal the ordinary reality that lies behind, for Doctor Golflín, the celebrated eye specialist who is treating Francisco, considers them to be persons of means. He bases this opinion on the usual visual signs of affluence and well-being: he has seen Francisco and Rosalía many times at the theater and at public functions, and he has observed that both are well-dressed; he has also seen Rosalía in a coach with the Marquesa de Tellería or the Marquesa de Fúcar; and, furthermore, Doctor Golflín believes that he has encountered the enterprising wife of Don Francisco "...en alguna reunión elegante, compitiendo en galas y en tissura con las personas de más alta alcurnia...." The naive doctor is misled by such an outward display, and consequently he believes that his patient is a man "...de rentas, o por lo menos, uno de esos funcionarios que saben extraer de la política el jugo que en vano quieren otros sacar de la dura y seca materia del trabajo." Galdós hastens to explain, however, that the good doctor's illusion is due to the fact that "...era un poco inocente en cosas del mundo,
y como había pasado la mayor parte de su vida en el extranjero, conocía mal nuestras costumbres y esta especialidad del vivir madrileño, que en otra parte se llamarían misterios, pero que aquí no son misterio para nadie."

One of the most damning indictments of that society and its hypocritical pretense comes from the lips of Refugio Sánchez Emperador. Through a chain of unhappy circumstances, Rosalía is forced to turn to this girl, whom she has always scorned as one far beneath her, for financial assistance; and Refugio, realizing that her snobbish relative has been delivered into her hands, is quick to flay the society of which Rosalía is so typical a representative. After relating her difficulties in collecting money from women who have purchased clothing from her small establishment, Refugio exclaims: "¡Ay!, que Madrid éste; todo apariencia. Dice un caballero que yo conozco que esto es un Carnaval de todos los días, en que los pobres se visten de ricos. Y aquí, salvo media docena, todos son pobres. Pacha, señora, y nada más que facha." Warming to her task, Refugio then describes the deception of many members of that society: "Esta gente no entiende de comodidades dentro de casa. Viven en la calle, y por vestirse bien y poder ir al teatro, hay familia que se mantiene todo el año con tortilla de patatas.... Conozco señoras de empleados que están cesantes la mitad del año, y da gusto verlas tan guapetonas. Parecen duquesas, y los niños principitos. ¿Cómo es eso? Yo no lo sé. Dice un caballero que yo.
Refugio is loath to abandon this lecture on the failings of the *cursia* in her society, and, referring to another of the many gentlemen that she seems to know, she continues: "Un caballero, amigo mío...me ha dicho que aquí todo es pobretería; que aquí no hay aristocracia verdadera, y que la gran mayoría de los que pasan por ricos y calaveras no son más que unos cursia." A final and telling blow is given to the badly lacerated ego of Rosalía when Refugio adds: "Pues no quiero hablar de los que viven de gorra, como muchitos a quienes yo conozco, que van a los teatros con billetes regalados, que viajan gratis, y hasta se ponen vestidos usados ya por otras personas.... ¡Todo por aparentar!"  

In an article entitled "Galdós and Abnormal Psychology," Leota W. Elliott and F. M. Kercheville discuss certain Galdosian characters who, in their opinion, exhibit symptoms which, while not pathological in nature, are indicative of mental unbalance. The authors continue by saying that "In the cases of Isidora Rufete (La desheredada) and Rosalía de Bríngas (La de Bríngas), the unbalance takes the form of mild 'delusions of grandeur' in that they both suffer from an obsession to be persons of importance in the social scheme. They consider themselves worthy of a far more elevated station in life than their background
and character justify, and spend their entire lives in a fruitless effort to satisfy their passion for social prominence." In the case of Isidora, it must be admitted that there is some justification for describing her as a victim of mental unbalance. In support of this position one may advance the argument that her father died in an insane asylum, and, furthermore, some of her actions, such as her foolish purchases and her obstinate refusal to abandon her false claim of noble descent, suggest a certain lack of mental stability. However, the observations of Galdós and the comments of other writers would seem to indicate that Isidora's society is a basic cause of her unbalance. Her environment, her education, the philosophy of her society: all encourage these delusions of grandeur, delusions that might well have withered and died in a society that did not place such stress on social position and ostentation.

As for Rosalía, it is even more difficult, it would seem, to ascribe her actions to mental unbalance. The preceding analysis of this widespread phenomenon, cursilería, has contained references by various observers of the social scene to the unbridled luxury and display which troubled that society. These observations also included comments about the well-developed self-pride of the Spaniard, the feeling of hidalguía, as it was termed, which causes so many to boast of noble descent, to seek titles, and to aspire to everything that will enhance their social prestige and self-esteem. Galdós has recognized these
characteristic weaknesses of his society, and the pages of his novelas are crowded with the disciples of this ill-advised way of life. If Rosalía's passion for social prominence is evidence of an obsession, then it is a reflection of the obsession that gripped her society. She, and thousands like her, have succumbed to a social ill that drives its victims to constantly greater efforts to equal and excel, at least in appearance, the members of their own class and the one above. An isolated study of Rosalía might justify the diagnosis of mental unbalance, but as one views the urban society of Spain at that time and as one analyzes the many characters in the novelas, it becomes increasingly evident that Rosalía is but one of many such cases. Her pretense and her unfounded aspirations are in perfect accord with the distorted philosophy that ruled so many at that time. It is not a case, then, of individual unbalance but rather of group unbalance; and fortunate, indeed, is the one who can escape its effects.

It is evident that luxury and cursilería frequently travel hand in hand as they wend their disrupting way through Spanish society. If an individual falls prey to one of these maladies, it often happens that his will is powerless to resist the onslaught of the other. Thus we have seen that Isidora Rufete and Rosalía de Bringas desire both luxury and social prestige, and Eloísa Bueno de Guzmán is another who joins the ranks of these unfortunates. Her cousin, José María, is quite blunt in diagnosing this mania
to *aparentar*, which, along with the passion for luxury, completely destroys Eloisa. Having witnessed the role that Eloisa is playing, Jose María does not hesitate to apply to her the label most dreaded by all these aspirants to lofty social heights: "...se sacrificaba mi prima a una etiqueta que no vacilo en llamar *curse*, pues era una mala imitación de la ceremoniosa, natural y no estudiada etiqueta de las pocas grandes casas que tenemos..." Y se gastaba tontamente su caudal, aparentando un bienestar que no poseía, ostentando un lujo prestado y mentiroso; "Y todo por tener una corte de aduladores y parásitos! ¡Comedia, o mejor, aristocrático sainete! Yo lo presenciaba aquellos días, y aún no me daba cuenta, por la embriaguez que narcotizaba mi espíritu, de lo absurdo, de lo peligroso, de lo inútil que era." 99

The Marqués de Fúcar, a constant attendant at Eloisa's weekly dinners, realizes that this wild extravagance, this foolish "aristocrático sainete" is not an unusual case. To the outside observer it might appear to be another case of mental unbalance, the aberration of one who has delusions of grandeur, but to the knowing eye of the Marqués de Fúcar it reveals itself as further evidence of a widespread evil. His shrewd interpretation of the true source of the problem has been quoted before, but attention is again called to his remarks on the folly of Eloisa and her husband: "No podía ser de otra manera," explains the Marqués. "Esta gente no ha podido apartarse de la corriente general, y
gasta el doble o el triple de lo que tiene. Es el eterno quiero y no puedo, el lema de Madrid, que no sé como no lo graban en el escudo, para explicar la postura del oso, sí, del pobre oso que quiere comerselos madroños, y por más que se estira, no puede, ¿qué ha de poder?

Additional proof of the unlimited aspirations of Eloísa is provided by the sharp tongue of Sacamanecas, who chatters to José María de Eloísa's rashness and extravagance. He describes the luxury that reigns in her home and adds: "Hija por lo grande está próxima... Siempre que se habla de casas, para ella no hay más que la de Fernán-Nuñez. Es su ilusión. Asegura que se pone mala cuando la ve, y que sueña con tener aquella estufa, el Oteló, las latanías plantadas en el suelo, la escalera de nogal, la galería, los cuadros y tapices, la montura de Almanzor y la Flora de Casado. Patrañas, querido. Estas mujeres son el diablo con nervios." Sacamanecas then shifts his attack from Eloísa to the pretentious society in which they live: "¡Qué Madrid éste! Todo es una figuración. Vaya usted entre bastidores si quiere ver cosas buenas. La mayoría de las casas en que dan fiestas están devoradas por los prestamistas. En otras no se come más que el día en que hay convidados."

Such cynical remarks about the sham and deception that were practiced by so many, raise the question of the value of such pretense. Apparently many people of that society were not deceived by such practices, and they readily
perceived the ugly faces of indebtedness and privation beneath the showy masks of wealth and plenty. And yet the masquerade continued with an insistence that at times seems almost fanatical. The explanation of this apparent inconsistency would seem to be that social pressure allowed no other choice. In other words, it evidently was considered better, or perhaps one should say it was considered necessary, to live the lie to the end. By doing this one was conforming to the accepted code of the group, and at the same time there was always the hope that the false front which was bravely presented to society might deceive someone. On the other hand, the acceptance of the unpleasant fact that indigence had become one's constant companion and the abandonment of all attempts at ostentation would result in an inevitable loss of social prestige and a serious blow to one's self-esteem. Apparently, then, the knowing smiles and the cynical comments which greeted such pretense were considered to be preferable to the irreparable harm that would befall one's hidalguía in the event of a failure to conform to the standard. Ironically, those who mocked the antics of their social-climbing friends were themselves often guilty of the same failing. Thus, for example, Refugio tells Rosalía de Bringas that the Marquesa de Tellería said that she, Rosalía, "...era ¡una cursi!" 102 Yet the Marquesa herself has gone to Refugio requesting a loan so that she, an impoverished aristocrat, may continue to emulate the real aristocrats of blood and money. "¿En...
qué país del mundo," asks Refugio, "se ve que una señora con título, como la Tellería, ande pidiendo mil reales prestados, como me los ha pedido a mí?"

It is true, as Veblen has pointed out, that there will be an effort made by the majority of the members of any society to enhance their prestige through a certain amount of pretense or conspicuous waste. However, in some societies the code of ostentation seems to be more mandatory than in others. In our own society, for example, the depression of the thirties found many families forgoing any attempt to create a false show, and whatever money fell into their hands was employed in bolstering the family budget rather than the family ego. However, such conduct was more readily condoned by our society, in which a man of humble means and station has always been more favorably regarded by his group. On the other hand, a different philosophy seems to have prevailed in Galdós' society. He refers constantly to families who have suffered financial disaster as bad as any experienced by American families in the depression, and yet there is no attempt made by them to restrain their desire for luxury and show. Every unwary peseta that strays into their hands is immediately sacrificed on the altars of luxury and cursilería. There is no effort made to save. One is led to the conclusion, then, that the social environment of that period had instilled in the people a feeling that such ostentation was a necessary part of their lives, just as in Sparta, for example, the citizens were imbued with a set of
rigorous principles that led them to regard self-sacrifice, discipline, and indifference to physical hardship as accepted standards of conduct.

An interesting psychological insight into the reasoning that leads people to the worship of ostentation is provided by Rafael Bueno de Guzmán, father of Eloísa. His confession to José María would probably raise an echo in the hearts of many in that society whose unquenchable thirst for luxury and display has eventually left them with only the bitter taste of frustration and penury. Rafael explains to José María the dire results of this passion in his own case:

"Yo era entonces dandy, y te lo diré en confianza, uno de los más tontos de aquella hornada. Mi sueño era que a mi mujercita le citaran los periódicos que hablan de bailes y recepciones, y que nos cayera mucho dinero por herencia o por negocios, para hacernos marqueses, dar bailes, tés, y mister bulla.... ¡Trabaje usted para esto! Los cuartos no parecen...afanes, quiero y no puedo, espíritu de imitación, y estirémonos mucho para llegar, sin llegar nunca....

¡Ay, qué vida, hijo; qué brega! ¡Hemos llegado a viejos, fatigados de tanto estirón, sin una peseta! Mi mujer no ve estas cosas; yo sí: he abierto los ojos, ¡a buenas horas! y ella continúa tan tope como siempre." 104

In Misau Galdós presents more examples of those who exhaust their energies as they desperately strain with outstretched fingers for the next rung of the ladder. There is Victor Cadalso, who lives in a constant state of
agitation, "...porque toda la vida se la llevaba pensando en riquezas que no tenía, en honores y poder que deseaba, en mujeres hermosas, cuyas seducciones no le eran desconocidas, en damas elegantes y de alta alcurnia que con ardentísima curiosidad anhelaba tratar y poseer, y esta aspiración a los supremos goces de la vida le traía siempre intranquilo, vigilante y en acecho. Devorado por el ansia de introducirse en las clases superiores de la sociedad, creía tener ya en las manos un cabo y el primer nudo de la cuerda por donde otros menos audaces habían logrado subir." 105

The lack of these much sought after delights does not oblige Victor to languish in the wings of the social stage, however. He, like thousands of others, can assume the role of a man of wealth and importance if he can but don the costume that represents such a position. Such a prerequisite is promptly satisfied by the avid claimants to social fame, as has been seen. Though they may have scarcely left the dingy room that proclaims their poverty and though their bodies and their pocketbooks may be lamentably undernourished, they still manage to appear in the proper garb that will gain for them, however briefly, some share of the public spotlight. Victor succeeds admirably in this endeavor, it would seem, for one night he is observed at the opera, "en la segunda fila de butacas," in all his glory: " estaba de frac, tan elegante como el primero." Such a spectacle evokes from Galdós this comment: "¿Qué cosas hay
en la vida! ¿Quién había de decir que aquel hombre parecía a un duque, aquel apuesto joven que charlaba desenfadadamente con su vecino de butaca, el Ministro de Italia, era un empleado obscuro y cesante, alojado en la casa de la pobreza, en cuartucho humilde, guardando su ropa en un baúl!" The sight of this elegant display also gives rise to some pointed remarks by Doña Pura de Villaamil, who happens to be at the opera. Upon seeing Victor, she exclaims:

"¿No es aquél Victor?... ¡Buen charol se está dando!...

Si le conocieran... Parece un potentado! ¿Cuánto hay de esto en Madrid! Yo no sé cómo se la compone. El buena ropa, el butacas en todos los teatros, el cigarros magníficos. Mira, mira con qué desparpajo habla. ¡Pobre señor, qué papas le estará encajando! Y esos extranjeros son tan inocentes, que todo se lo creerá."

The censure of Victor emphasizes the statement previously made that those who criticize are frequently guilty of equally foolish attempts at ostentation. Just as Victor causes Doña Pura to rail against such deception, so does she, in turn, provoke the scorn of her neighbor, Paca, with her unwise aspirations. As Paca watches young Luis depart on another errand in quest of a loan for his cesante grandfather, Ramón Villaamil, she feels certain that Doña Pura and her sister and daughter will not allow their straitened circumstances to curtail their social activities: "Y de seguro que esta noche las tres lambionas se irán también de pindongueo al teatro y vendrán a las tantas de la noche."
Worse still is the fact that they owe everyone. Continuing to voice her disapproval of such actions, Paca says: "Pues si esas muñequitas supieran arreglarse y pusieran todos los días, si a mano viene, una cazuela de patatas.... Pero, Dios nos libré.... ¡Patatas ellas! Pobrecitas! El día que les cae algo, aunque sea de limosna, ya las tienes dándose la gran vida y echando la casa por la ventana. Eso sí, en arreglar los trapitos para suponer no hay quien les gane."¹⁰⁷

For the final evidence of Doña Pura's ruinous ambition to aparentar, it is necessary to turn once again to the one who has suffered the disastrous consequences of her endless pretense. In the last few minutes of his life, poor Don Ramón bitterly remarks: "Con Pura no hay dinero que alcance; ni la paga de un director. El maldito suponer, el trapito, las visitas, el teatro, los perendengues y el morro siempre estirado para fingir dignidad de personas encumbradas, nos perdieron."¹⁰³

In every group there are, of course, those who seem to stay immovable before all the changing currents of their society. In the novelas there are, to be sure, sober, industrious people who are not swept along by the tides of luxury and ostentation. A pillar that has stood fast for many years in the midst of these social eddies is Francisco Torquemada, who has remained strongly anchored on the firm foundation of his avarice. After many years of squeezing every peseta possible from those about him, Torquemada
finally accepts the fact that he is a wealthy man, and this
knowledge makes him more receptive to the emanations from
the upper classes. After all, if Francisco Bringas, who is
frugality personified, has found it necessary to pay heed
to the peremptory demands of his society in order to main-
tain his position, Francisco Torquemada cannot hope to re-
main aloof. As long as the usurer has been content to
dwell on the lower levels of his society, he has been able
to avoid the tribute exacted of those in the middle and
upper levels. However, now that he is resting comfortably
on his bed of money, Torquemada glances curiously about him,
and he realizes that "...las circunstancias habían cambiado
para él con el fabuloso aumento de riqueza; se sentía vaga-
mente ascendido a una categoría social superior; llegaban a
su nariz tuños de grandeza y de caballería, quiere decirse,
de caballerosidad.... Imposible afianzarse en aquel estado
superior sin que sus costumbres varieran, y sin dar un poco
de mano a todas aquellas artes innobles de la tacañería."109

It is not to be supposed that one such as Torquemada
will be guilty of the rash indiscretions committed by others
of his society. His fondness for riches will not allow him
to squander money recklessly in an effort to elevate himself
suddenly by means of a great display. The change is a gradu-
al one, a change that is artfully described by Galdós, who
depicts for us the response of this crude product of the
lower classes to the pressures of his new social sphere.
In Torquemada one sees a manifestation of the cursilería
that has enveloped that society, but this manifestation is not really a morbid one as it is in the cases of some of the characters studied. One might say that it is a benign infection that follows a rather mild course, even though it has some of the symptoms found in the more serious cases. Once the spark of hidalguía has been kindled within Torquemada, or as Galdós describes it, "...desde que esta idea de la caballería se le metió entre ceja y ceja,"\textsuperscript{110} the change is inevitable. Patterning himself on José Ruiz Donoso, "persona muy conocida en Madrid, de edad madura, buena presencia, respirando respetabilidad, modales de príncipe, pocas palabras, acciones hidalgas sin afectación,"\textsuperscript{111} Torquemada begins his upward flight. Galdós explains that "En sus ratos de desvelo, no pensaba don Francisco más que en el sastrería a que había de encargar una levita herméticamente cerrada, como la de Donoso, en el sombrero que le decoraría la cabeza, y en otras cosas pertinentes a la vestimenta. ¡Oh! sin pérdida de tiempo había que declarar la guerra a la facha innoble, al vestir sucio y ordinario! Bastantes años llevaba ya de adefesio. La sociedad fina le reclamaba como a un desertor, y allá se iba derecho, con botas de carbón, y todo lo demás que le correspondía."\textsuperscript{112}

It is natural that Torquemada would concern himself first with clothes, for he accomplishes two things by renovating his appearance. First, he is more in step, socially, with those whose ranks he longs to join; and, equally
important, he declares the robust health of his finances through this display of conspicuous consumption in dress that has been discussed by Veblen. However, Torquemada's efforts do not end here. He may be a neophyte in the science of social climbing, but he does not neglect any foothold that may help him to scale the desired heights. Not only does he emulate the dress of his model, Donoso, but he also eagerly picks up certain figures of speech that are casually tossed off by his ideal. Already Francisco "...sabía decir ad hoc...partiendo del principio, admitiendo la hipótesis, en la generalidad de los casos; y, por último, gran conquista era aquello de llamar a todas las cosas el elemento tal, el elemento cual."\(^{113}\)

So delighted is Torquemada with his first steps upward that he quickly falls into the error that stamps every cursi for what he is. No matter how slight the ascent may be, it is almost invariably magnified by the self-esteem of the cursi. He now scorns those whom he imagines to be beneath him, even though the mud of his former low level may still be clinging to his shoes. Acutely caste conscious now, Francisco goes out and notices that "Todas las personas de su conocimiento que aquel día vio, parecieronle de una tosquedad intolerable. Algunas le daban asco. El café del Gallo y el de las Naranjas, adonde tuvo que ir en persecución de un infeliz deudor, parecieronle indecorosos. Amigos encontró que no andaban a cuatro pies por especial gracia de Dios, y los había que le apestaban. 'Atrás, ralea
indecents -- se decía -- huyendo del trato de los que fueron sus iguales, y refugiándose en su casa, donde al menos tenía la compañía de sus pensamientos, que eran unos pensamientos muy guapos, de levita y sombrero de copa, graves, sonrientes, y con tufillo de agua de colonia."

Even his own flesh and blood cannot escape a slight singeing from the flame of hidalguía that is burning brightly within him, for Torquemada "Recibió a su hija con cierto despego aquel día, diciéndole: "¡Pero qué facha te traes! Hasta me parece que hueles mal. Eres muy ordinaria, y tu marido el cursi más grande que conozco, uno de nuestros primeros cursis."114 How quickly and thoughtlessly Torquemada, like the Marquesa de Tellería, casts the disparaging term, cursi, at others. He, and many others like him, cannot comprehend that it is really his own image that he mocks.

Although there can be no doubt that Francisco is by now thoroughly impregnated with the cursilería doctrine, he never commits the folly of plunging recklessly into depths that might swallow him, as do others in his society, who are anxious to make a big splash in the social pool. Of course, Galdós, skilled artist that he was, must have realized that any sudden and extravagant expenditures by this niggardly usurer would have seemed wholly out of character and would have diminished the effectiveness of this study of the metamorphosis of Torquemada. The ascent of this star in the social sky is no meteoric flash. Rather is it a slow,
steady rise until ultimately the new body becomes a star of the first magnitude. As Galdós carefully analyzes the transformation in Torquemada, he once again stresses the cursias disdain for his former station by describing the finality with which Francisco now turns the pages of the first chapter of his life: "...don Francisco iba dando de lado a sus tradicionales relaciones, y ya no podía disimular el despego que le inspiraban sus amigos del café del Gallo, y de diversas tiendas y almacenes de la calle de Toledo, despego que para algunos era antipatía más o menos declarada, y para otros aversión. Alguien encontraba natural que don Francisco quisiera pintarla, posyendo como poseía, más que muchos que en Madrid iban desempeñando las calles en carretelas no pagadas, o que vivían de la farsa y del enredo.... Al fin, hacía lo que todos; después de chupar a los pobres, hasta dejarles sin sangre, levantaba el vuelo hacia las viviendas de los ricos."115

An interesting contrast is provided in the studies of Torquemada and the other cursias of Galdosian society. Torquemada not only aspires; he achieves, and finally he attains the very pinnacles of social prestige, the heights that remain forever nebulous and beyond the reach of the other social climbers. However, Galdós makes it evident that Torquemada is always a man of modest aspirations, even though he does arrive at the upper levels of society. The sumptuous palace in which he eventually lives, the office of diputado, and the title of marqués are not a demonstration
of his passion for ostentation but rather an expression of
the will of his sister-in-law, Cruz del Aguila. Torquemada's cursilería would content itself with a con-
tempt of former associates, a display of respectable dress
and correctness of speech, and an acceptance by polite
society. The important thing is that Don Francisco does
attain all of this and far more, and he does not harm him-
self because of an unrestrained desire to appearar. In
contrast, the other cursis in Galdosian society invariably
suffer frustration and disappointment as a result of their
unreasonable pretensions, and occasionally they are de-
stroyed in the wreckage of their shattered dreams of social
prestige.

Galdós never ceases to call attention to the display
and pretense that he observes about him, and at the end of
his novelistic career he is still striving to tear away the
mask that so many in his society persist in wearing. In
Casandra, Alfonso speaks out against the deception that re-
sults from the cursilería mania: "Vivimos en un mundo de
ficciones, en un armadijo de noblezas figuradas y de dis-
tinciones mentirosas. Los ricos aparehtan mayor riqueza,
y los de un mediano pasar decoramos con talco nuestra
medianía para parecer opulentos. Todo en nuestra vida es
ilusorio, teatral y fantástico.... Ningún noble empobre-
cido tiene arranque para irse a labrar las tierras vírgenes
de América, ni virtud para esconder su pobreza en un rincón
campesino, entre villanos y animales. Ese valor lo tendré
yo, yo, Alfonso de la Cerda. No quiero vivir más tiempo engañando al mundo y engañándome a mí mismo."\textsuperscript{117}

In Galdós' last novel, \textit{La razón de la sinrazón}, the disillusioned Alejandro exclaims bitterly: "En mis tristes insomnios he visto claro que, hallándose nuestra sociedad fundada en la mentira o en las ficciones inveteradas, es locura mantenerse dentro de la razón y de lo que llamamos deberes...."\textsuperscript{118} Also, in the same novel, Atenaída cynically observes that "En la mascarada social la mentira se disfraza de verdad con arte diabólico, y nos engaña a todos y triunfa."\textsuperscript{119}

In the preceding discussion of the social phenomena called \textit{parrillera} -- this exaggerated pretense and display of superior wealth and position, this illogical emulation of and competition with the class above -- it has been pointed out that this problem and that of luxury are closely related since both frequently obey the dictates of a very strong emotion: vanity. The comments of Veblen and Urwick have indicated that social ostentation and the emulation of the upper classes are universal social practices. However, it was stressed that due to an unfortunate coincidence of more money and more luxuries, pronounced changes in the Spanish social structure, and the Spaniard's self-pride, or \textit{hidalguía}, the desire for display and imitation became excessive and affected all levels of society.

Various writers, such as Chaulié, Mallada, Arenal, Selle's, Valera, Salaverría, del Río, and Berkowitz, have described
the vanity, the pretense, the sham that ruled the lives of many in that society. Their observations corroborate the picture that Galdós has painted of the manifestations and consequences of cursilería. The study of the cases taken from Galdosian society reveals that the passion for ostentation shackles its victims to a tyrannical code that magnifies the importance of social position; encourages exaggerated dreams of wealth, titles, and prestige; produces the harmful imitation of the upper class with its dissipated señoritos; and fosters the scorn of useful labor, a labor that might actually bring to the deluded followers of this code the very luxury and display that they so eagerly seek. It has been observed that all too frequently the same individual who becomes a prey of the craving for luxuries also falls an easy victim to the desire for pretense and ostentation. Furthermore, it has been seen that cursilería, like luxury, can be not only an evil in itself, but it can lead to the same frustration and maladjustment, the same poverty, poor health, suicide, and immorality that follow in the wake of the devastating passion for luxuries.
NOTES

1 La desheredada, I, 201.

2 H. Baudrillart, Histoire du Luxe privé et public depuis l'antiquité jusqu'à nos jours (Paris, 1878), I, 4-7.

3 Ibid., I, 4-5.

4 La desheredada, I, 266-267; II, 176, 254.

5 Le de Br Ingas, p. 57.

6 Galdós, in Revista de España, XV (1870), 170.

7 Lavelaya, Luxury, p. 8.

8 See page 154.

9 Stuart Chase, Introduction to The Theory of the Leisure Class, by Thorstein Veblen (New York, 1931), p. XII.

10 Ibid., p. XIV.


12 See page 151.

13 Veblen, pp. 84-85.

14 Ibid., p. 87.


16 Lo prohibido, I, 20.

17 Galdós, in Revista de España, XV (1870), 170.

18 Urwick, pp. 34-35.

19 Veblen, pp. 103-104.

20 Urwick, pp. 35-36.
21 El amigo Manso, p. 51.
23 Fortunata y Jacinta, I, 43.
25 Ibid., p. 40.
28 Berkowitz, Pérez Galdós, p. 147.
29 Ibid., p. 122.
30 Loc. cit.
31 H. Chonon Berkowitz, "The Youthful Writings of Pérez Galdós," Hispanic Review, I (1933), 98. Berkowitz states that the poem "...was reproduced, without acknowledgment of source, in the special edition of La Voz Obrera, published in Las Palmas...the week of January 4-10, 1931" (p. 97, note 23).
32 La familia de León Roch, I, 63.
33 Ibid., I, 64.
34 La desheredada, II, 63.
35 Emilio Gamero y de Laiglesia, Galdós y su obra (Madrid, 1934), II, 171.
36 El caballero encantado, p. 65.
37 Chaulié, in Revista contemporánea, LXI (1882), 325-326.
38 Mallada, Los males, p. 176.
39 Angel del Río, Introducción, Torquemada en la hoguera, by Benito Pérez Galdós (New York, 1932), p. XXIX.
40 Berkowitz, Pérez Galdós, p. 147.
41. Eugenio Sellés, La política de capa y espada (Madrid, 1914), p. LIII. This work was first published in 1876.


43. Berkowitz, Pérez Galdós, p. 122.

44. Ibid., p. 126.


46. Ibid., p. 42.

47. Arenal, La cuestión social, II, 119-120.

48. Valera, in Revista de España, LI (1876), 179.


50. Ibid., p. 110.

51. La familia de León Roch, I, 31.

52. Ibid., I, 30. Two characters in La familia de León Roch have had or have aspirations to a title. They are José Roch, father of León (I, 29-30, 64), and Don Joaquín Onésimo (I, 50).

53. Ibid., I, 126-127.

54. References to the pretense and sham of these three characters are found in La familia de León Roch, I, 13, 124, 125, 175, 177, 185, 263, 356-355; II, 34. There is also evidence of the Marquesa's illogical ostentation and the mental torment that results from it in La de Bringas, pp. 76-77, 98, 123, 131, 134-135, 138.

55. La desheredada, I, 90.

56. Ibid., II, 230.

57. Doña Catalina, wife and mother of the infamous Babeles, is another whose obsession with noble descent may have been aggravated by the philosophy of the society in which she lived. This poor woman "...mostró una lamentable propensión a chiflarse, lo que ocurría en ocasiones de disgusto grave o de altercado, es decir, casi todos los días del año." On such occasions, "...doña Catalina saltaba con su manía nobiliaria, echando con gritos desaforados el
siquiente pregón: "Yo soy descendiente de Reyes; yo me llamo doña Catalina de Alencastre, y mi tía está encerrada en la capilla de Reyes Nuevos..." (Angel Guerra, I, 48-50). Doña Catalina gives frequent evidence of this delusion of noble rank (Angel Guerra, I, 54, 64, 247-250; II, 117, 133-135; III, 10-11, 140-142, 144-145).


59 Other indications of cursilería in the study of Isidora: La desheredada, I, 56, 58-59, 62, 77-78, 89, 94-95, 153, 155, 191; II, 47, 179.

60 Leopoldo Alas, Obras completas (Madrid, 1912), I, 110.

61 See pages 173 and 174.

62 La desheredada, I, 31. See also pages 26-27.

63 Ibid., I, 160.

64 Ibid., I, 161-162.

65 Ibid., I, 157. See also page 156.

66 Ibid., I, 159-160. Eventually Emilia Relimpio abandons her pretense and her desires to appear as a noble person. She marries the son of the ortopedista and finds peace and contentment (Ibid., II, 15, 142).

67 Alas, Obras completas, I, 102.

68 La desheredada, I, 200-201. For further comment on the daughters of Pez, see volume II, page 142. Also see El amigo Manso, page 117, for additional remarks on the pretentiousness of the Pez family.

69 Ibid., II, 179.

70 Loc. cit.

71 Ibid., II, 213. See also pages 215 and 240.

72 El amigo Manso, pp. 33-34. Doña Cándida frequently gives indications of the sham and pretense that characterize her life (Ibid., pp. 55, 70-72, 280, 289-291, 317). For further evidence see La de Bringas, pp. 26-28, 32-33, 103-104.

73 Ibid., p. 76. See also page 75.
74. Ibid., p. 81.
75. Ibid., p.
78. Gamero y de Laiglesia, Galdós y su obra, II, 110.
79. Tormento, p. 17.
80. Ibid., pp. 30-31.
81. Ibid., p. 32.
82. Ibid., pp. 43-44.
83. Ibid., p. 56.
84. Loc. cit.
85. Ibid., p. 57.
86. Ibid., p. 77.
88. Ibid., p. 168.
89. La de Bringas, pp. 60-61.
90. Ibid., pp. 88-89.
91. Loc. cit. There are many more indications of Rosalía’s curial spirit, her pretense, her warped sense of values which esteems only that which is superficial and pretentious (Tormento, pp. 18, 47, 144; La de Bringas, pp. 33, 34, 50, 179, 209, 228, 231, 232, 235, 237).
92. Tormento, pp. 57-58.
93. Torquemada en la hoguera, p. 18.
94. Tormento, p. 184. See also pages 211 and 212.
95. La de Bringas, p. 190. See also page 192.
96. Ibid., pp. 276-277.
97. Ibid., pp. 279-280.
Lo prohibido, I, 121. See also volume I, page 97, for another comment by José María.

100 *Ibid.*, I, 123.
102 *La de Aringas*, p. 287.
104 *Lo prohibido*, II, 204.
105 *Misa*, p. 113.
108 *Ibid.*, pp. 414-415. Other comments concerning Doña Pura's foolish attempts to suponer are found on pages 136 and 209. See also pages 169 and 261.

109 *Torquemada en la cruz*, p. 41.
113 *Loc. cit.*

115 *Ibid.*, p. 72. Other references to Torquemada's social pretenses are found in *Torquemada en la cruz*, pp. 114, 116, 143, 156; and in *Torquemada en el purgatorio*, pp. 8, 16.

116 Torquemada is an unwilling victim of the widespread mania for titles. Despite his objections, it is the wish of Cruz that Don Francisco ascend the social ladder still higher, for she, "...en sus altos designios, había resuelto añadir al escudo de los Torquemadas los sapos y culebras del marquesado de San Eloy..." (*Torquemada en el purgatorio*, p. 111). Differing from many of the members of his society, Torquemada has not provided a fertile soil for the growth of the seeds of *hidalguía*. With true
understanding and humility he asks, as many others should have asked: "...meterse a mí, tan humilde, en las altas esferas.... Mire usted que yo Marqués! ¿Y a santo de qué viene ese título?" (Ibid., p. 119). Exposing, then, the sham and folly that so frequently tarnish the shields of many of the members of the present hodgepodge aristocracy, Torquemada continues: "Y ahora me quieren meter a mí en las galeras: San Eloy... oh, qué marqueses somos!... De mucho nos valdría si no tuviéramos con qué poner un puchero, como ciertos y determinados títulos que viven de trampas" (Ibid., p. 120). However, this realistic attitude does not save Torquemada from becoming an innocent victim of the popular craze that was sweeping over his society, and within a short time he is laboring under the title and obligations of the Marques of San Eloy.

118 La razón de la sinrazón, p. 40.
119 Ibid., p. 66.
120 There are many more characters and references throughout the novels that pertain to the study of cursilería in addition to those already presented. These are: Juan Amerillo and his wife, Teresita (Gloria, II, 20, 22, 140-141, 142), (La desheredada I, 31, 86-87, 156, 157), (El amigo Kanso, p. 140), Francisco de Paula de la Costa (El amigo Kanso, pp. 77-78), Doña Javiera Rico (El amigo Kanso, pp. 50, 54, 55, 267, 295, 297, 310-311), Irene (El amigo Kanso, p. 325), Leopoldo Montes (El doctor Centeno, II, 11, 22, 35, 72), (Tormento, pp. 39, 144, 159-160, 162), (La de Bringas, pp. 217, 245-246), General Minio (La de Bringas, p. 34), (Lo prohibido, I, 20, 131; II, 92, 203), los de Casa Bojío (Lo prohibido, II, 90), Gonzalo Torres (Lo prohibido, II, 118, 194, 207), Bárbara de Barragán (Lo prohibido, II, 96-97, 118), (Fortunata y Jacinta, I, 40, 43, 49, 294; II, 105), Doña Lupe de Jauregúi (Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 149; III, 144, 162-163, 181; Torquemada en la Cruz, p. 21), the Marques of Casa Bojío (Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 87), Paquita Morejón (Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 227-228), Doña Silvia de Torquemada (Fortunata y Jacinta, II, 227), (Hiau, pp. 166, 261), Abellarda Villasamil (Hiau, p. 169), (Realidad, p. 132), (Torquemada en la hoguera, p. 65), Aristides Babel (Angel Guerra, I, 52), José María Cruz (La loca de la casa, p. 153), Cruz del Aguilà (Torquemada en el purgatorio, pp. 74, 77, 101-102, 111, 115, 122-129, 169-172; Torquemada y San Pedro, pp. 36, 88-90), the Marquesa de San Salomó (Lo prohibido, I, 97; Hiau, p. 146), Farquín Ponte Delgado (Misericordia, p. 93), Doña Francisca Juárez de Zapata (Misericordia, pp. 44, 61), Senén (El abuelo, pp. 17-18, 22, 56),
Doña Vicenta de Monedero (El abuelo, pp. 53, 54, 59), Zenón de Guíllarte (Casandra, 40, 170-171), and (El caballero encantado, p. 31).

It may be held that Federico Viera, a leading character in La incógnita and in Realidad, is guilty of social pretense in his attempts to appear in society and to mask his poverty. However, his pretense is quite modest. He does not attempt to deny nor conceal his poverty from his friends, all of whom are acquainted with his wretched state. He is warmly welcomed in his social set, and there are no sly remarks about any sham on his part. It would seem that Federico is merely trying to clothe his poverty with dignity, not with pretense.
CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE FUNCTION OF THE
THREE PROBLEMS IN THE NOVELS OF CALDÓS

In the three preceding chapters the focus has been more on the social aspects of money, luxury, and curasilería. Having examined, then, the social manifestations of these three problems, attention will now be directed toward the literary function of these factors in Caldós' novelas. The first step in such an analysis will be to present, in chronological order, a short discussion of each novel. In each discussion there will be a brief summary of the work, an examination of the part that the three problems play in the novel, and a reference to other social material that is present.

La fontana de oro (1870) and El audaz (1871), the first two works that appear in the Novelas de la primera época, are politico-historical novels that describe aspects and events of Spanish life in the years 1804 to 1824. Since the problems that constitute the subject matter of this research have their roots in the great industrial, economic, and social changes that began to occur in Spain a decade or more after 1824, these two novels lie outside the scope of the present study.
The next novel, _Doña Perfecta_ (1876), deals with the dramatic conflict between tradition and religious fanaticism, on the one hand, and the progress and enlightenment found in new currents of modern thought. The religious fanaticism is personified by _Doña Perfecta_, _Don Inocencio_, and the intolerant provincials of the town of _Orbajosa_. The new order is represented by _Pepe Rey_, a young engineer who meets defeat and tragic death in his attempts to conquer the implacable bigotry that surrounds him in _Orbajosa_. Being concerned primarily with the harmful consequences of religious fanaticism and the undue interference on the part of the clergy in domestic affairs, the novel touches only lightly upon social problems.

_Money, luxury, and cursilería_ are not found in this novel. It is true that _María Remedios_, the niece of _Don Inocencio_, is obsessed with the desire to see her son married to _Rosario_, daughter of _Doña Perfecta_. In this way she would see her son ascend the social scale through a union with the first family of _Orbajosa_. However, a knowledge of her character would seem to make evident that this desire for social eminence for her son is motivated by a fierce passion, a mother's love that seeks the best for her son. It is not due to a desire for ostentation nor to a craving to rise socially merely for the sake of attaining a higher social position.

With regard to other social problems, there are brief references to the banditry and _caciquismo_ in the rural
areas, and to poverty and begging.

_Gloria_ (1877) presents the tragic story of two young people, Gloria Lantigua and Daniel Morton, who are drawn to one another by a deep and lasting love and yet are forever separated by the formidable barrier of religion. She is a Catholic, and he is a Jew; and such is the strength of their religious training and beliefs that neither can abjure his faith. Thus, in spite of their profound love and respect for one another, they are unable to surmount this obstacle that has been raised, not by God, but by the prejudice of men. Once again the religious problem completely overshadows all others.

Money is not treated in this novel, but there is one brief reference to the problem of luxury, and two minor characters, Juan Amarillo and his wife, Teresita, reveal symptoms of _cursi lería_. Otherwise the only additional problem of note is that of poverty, which is occasionally evidenced in a minor character.

_Marianela_ (1878) describes the idyllic existence of two young people: Pablo Penaguillas, who has been endowed with every gift of nature but that of sight, and Marianela, whose spiritual beauty is confined within a pitiful, ugly body. Although Pablo is the son of a wealthy man and Marianela is a poor orphan, they are both happy together until Pablo receives the blessing of sight as a result of an operation. At this point reality intrudes into their world of illusion, and as a result Pablo marries his
beautiful cousin and Marianela dies of a broken heart.

Although this novel is often described as a lyric interlude in Galdós' thesis novels, it does contain more social problems than any of the preceding works. While luxury and cursilería do not appear, the problem of money is evident in the greed of Señana, the ruler of the Centeno household in which Marianela lives. Other social problems are found in the picture that Galdós draws of the home life of Marianela and the Centeno family. They concern such social ills as neglected and abused children, child labor, poor health, illiteracy and ignorance, illegitimacy, bad housing, and the indifference of society to the miserable state of beings like Marianela.

La familia de León Roch (1879), like its predecessors, Doña Perfecta and Gloria, is a thesis novel. It relates the dramatic conflict that arises from the incompatibility between a man and his wife: León Roch and María Egipciaca Sudre. León Roch is a scientist, an intellectual, and María is, or soon becomes, a religious fanatic due to the influence of her brother, Luis Gonzaga, a religious ascetic, and her confessor, Father Paolletti. The misguided religious fervor of María raises an insurmountable barrier between her and León Roch, and it leads to separation and to tragedy.

With the appearance of La familia de León Roch, Galdós presents the first of many novels that picture with realistic detail the life of the various social classes of Madrid society, and it is in this extensive panorama that one will
note the sudden importance of the problems of money, luxury, and cursilería. In *La familia de León Roch* the focus is primarily on the subject of religion, of course, but as a background for this study of the religious problem and the analyses of character, Saldós depicts numerous social problems, especially those involving the upper class of Madrid society. For the first time Saldós devotes considerable attention to the undesirable and harmful consequences that follow the worship of money, luxury, and social ostentation; and all three factors constitute a significant element of the social atmosphere. Although they do not affect the lives of the two leading characters, León and his wife, they do play an important role in the lives of certain individuals closely associated with them. The Marqués and Marquesa de Tellería and their son, Leopoldo, have brought ruin to themselves and to their family because of their persistent attempts to live luxuriously and pretentiously. Furthermore, their indulgence of these passions leads to a conflict with their son-in-law, León, when the latter refuses to foster their ill-advised way of life with his money.

Nearly everyone with whom León Roch comes in contact seems to follow the dictates of the passion for money, luxuries, or ostentation. In addition to the Tellerías there are Pepa Fúcar, León's former sweetheart, José Roch, León's father, and various acquaintances: Federico Cimarra, Joaquín Onésimo, and the Marqués de Fúcar.
Other social evils that appear in this novel are: social corruption, governmental inefficiency and corruption, the dissolute upper class, idleness, the inadequate and misdirected training of the young, social parasitism, and gambling.

La desheredada (1881) is a study of a young woman, Isidora Rufete, who is dominated by three obsessions: (1) a belief in her noble birth, which she tenaciously attempts to prove in a long and involved law suit; (2) a misguided love for Joaquín Pez, a dissolute member of the wealthy upper class; and (3) a craving for luxury, which lures her into a deepening morass of indebtedness and moral and social transgressions. Her inability to dominate these passions plunges her into a wretched existence of bitter disappointment, frustration, scarcity, and degradation.

This novel of character and social observation is one of the most important for the present investigation because the problems of money, luxury, and cursilería occupy dominant positions. They exercise a determining influence on the course and outcome of the plot, and they are frequently the motivating force of the thoughts and actions of both the principal characters and the minor ones. Every member of the Rufete family -- Isidora, her father, Tomás, and her brother, Mariano -- is ruled by the desire for money, luxury, or ostentation. The same is true of the family of Don Manuel Pez, of Isidora's lover, Joaquín Pez, and of the
other men with whom Isidora lives: Sánchez Botín, Melchor Relimpio, and Cañita. Foolish pride and pretense also rule the thoughts of the three women of the Relimpio family -- Doña Laura, Leonora, and Emilia -- with whom Isidora lives for a time.

In addition to the vivid picture of the evils of money, luxury, and cursilería, Galdós also criticizes the practices followed by certain governmental employees and the dissipation and parasitism of the impoverished upper class. Cesantía, idleness, and scorn of useful labor are occasionally in evidence, while such widespread social maladies as insanity, poverty, children without parental care, neglected children, child labor, delinquency and crime, alcoholism, ignorance, poor health, homeless men, bad housing, illegitimacy, old age, and gambling afflict some of the many characters in this novel.

El amigo Manso (1882) has as its principal theme the study of Máximo Manso, a quiet, scholarly professor of philosophy who relates the story. The peaceful routine of Manso's life is disturbed by two important events: the arrival in Madrid of his brother and family, recently returned from Cuba; and the growing passion he feels for Irene, a girl much younger than he, whom he eventually loses to his young disciple and friend, Manolo Peña.

In this novel Galdós once again focuses his attention on the middle and wealthy upper class life of Madrid society. The roles of money, luxury, and cursilería are
not as notable in El amigo Manso since these factors do not affect the plot nor the lives of the main characters. However, just as in La familia de León Roch, the three problems form an important element of the social atmosphere, and they vitally affect the lives of several important secondary characters who are closely related with the principal figures of the novel. Doña Cándida's earlier life of luxury and ostentation have reduced her to a penniless state, and her constant craving for money and luxuries and her ridiculous pretense are a source of unpleasantness and annoyance for Irene and Máximo Manso. Doña Javiera, Manso's neighbor and the mother of Manolo Peña, cannot resist paying some tribute to the reigning passion for luxury and ostentation, and the same is true of Máximo's brother, José María, and his family. Other characters whose desires for money, luxury, and cursilería form a part of the social background are: Irene, the Marquesa de Tellería, Manuel Pez and his family, and García Grande.

Another typically Spanish problem that appears is that of the impoverished, parasitic member of the upper class. Class change, poverty, and the child without parental care are other problems that affect various characters.

The most noteworthy features of El doctor Centeno (1883) are the psychological analyses of character and the vivid portrayal of student and lower class life in the Madrid of the early 1860's. The first volume is chiefly concerned with the life and activities of Felipe Centeno,
a destitute youth who has run away from home, and Don Pedro Polo y Cortés, a priest and teacher, under whom Felipe serves as servant and pupil. The second volume is devoted primarily to a study of Alejandro Miquís, a young law student, would-be dramatist, and abúlico, who befriends Felipe and takes him as a servant. Unable to govern his passions and his imagination, Alejandro dissipates an inheritance and his physical strength until he dies, in the midst of abject poverty, a victim of tuberculosis. Throughout good fortune and bad, Felipe remains constant and is at Alejandro's side at his death.

Although other social problems, such as poverty, bad housing, poor health, and unemployment, are of more importance in this novel, money, and especially luxury, influence the life of one of the main characters, Alejandro Miquís; and they help to shape the tragic destiny of this young man. However, it would seem that Galdós is not primarily concerned with depicting the evils of money and luxury in the case of Alejandro. He does indicate clearly that young Miquís is preoccupied with money and with the desire to satisfy his yearning for luxuries and pleasures; yet he does not constantly stress these weaknesses as he does, for example, in the cases of Isidora Rufete and Eloísa Bueno de Guzmán. More emphasis is placed on Alejandro's abulia, generosity, and fanciful imagination as the reasons for his ultimate downfall. One may conclude, then, that money and luxury, while significant factors, do
not dominate the life of Alejandro to the extent that the other traits do.

Cursilería plays no part in El doctor Centeno and is observed only briefly in the case of a minor character, Leopoldo Montes.

Other social problems in this novel are that of education, which is treated rather extensively, and those of social parasitism, the child without parental care, illiteracy and ignorance, idleness, and insanity, which are of lesser importance.

The novel Tormento (1884) consists principally of two elements: the delineation of four characters—Amparo Sánchez y Emperador, Rosalía de Bringas, Agustín Caballero, and Pedro Polo; and the observation of the life of a social group: the bureaucratic class. The story deals with the love of a wealthy indiano, Agustín Caballero, for an unfortunate orphan girl, Amparo. The latter has been guilty of an illicit love affair with the priest, Pedro Polo, and now her lack of will does not permit her to confess her mistake to Agustín. When the latter learns of her misdeed, all hopes of a marriage are destroyed, but Caballero's passion continues undiminished, and he takes Amparo with him as his mistress.

Cursilería is the most noteworthy of the three problems in Tormento. Although Galdós does not use it as a dominating force in the plot, since cursilería is not essential to the love affair between Agustín and Amparo, he does
employ it as a salient feature in the delineation of a character and a social class. The need for social pretense is revealed as a dominating force in the life of Rosalía de Bringas, one of Galdós' best creations, and in the life of the bureaucratic family, as typified by the activities of the Bringas household.

Luxury is a factor in the life of Rosalía in only a few instances. Money does not enter into the novel openly, although one is aware that Rosalía must always be longing for this item which is so necessary for pretense and luxury.

Other problems included in Tormento are those of poverty and the unhappy lot of the poorly-paid government employee.

In La de Bringas (1884) Galdós completes the analysis of Rosalía de Bringas which was begun in Tormento. In the latter novel, Galdós reveals one aspect of the vanity of this woman of the lower middle class: the cursilería which manifests itself in ridiculous pretensions and hypocritical displays. In La de Bringas Galdós analyzes the other facet of her vanity: the passion for clothes which causes her to violate secretly her husband's strict rules of economy and leads her into a series of trying and humiliating situations involving debts and implacable usurers.

La de Bringas is a study of the effects of luxury and cursilería, and both problems are dominating elements in the character analyses and in the development and outcome of the story. The passion for luxury and ostentation
imperiously directs the thoughts and actions not only of Rosalía, the principal character, but also of two other important figures, the Marquesa de Tellería and Doña Cándida. In addition to providing the motive for the plot and for the character studies, the two subjects also furnish Galdós abundant material for frequent comments and observations.

As in Tormento, the money problem is implied, but it is never openly presented. That is, Rosalía and the Marquesa de Tellería are always trying to devise ways of getting money, but in their case Galdós does not stress the desire for or preoccupation with money; rather he focuses attention on their luxury and social pretense. The money problem is indicated briefly, however, in a reference to corrupt practices in government by Manuel Péz.

The only other problems that appear in La de Bringas are those of the government employee, poverty, and upper class indebtedness and parasitism.

The next novel, Lo prohibido (1884-1885), is related by the principal character, José María Bueno de Guzmán, and it is, for the most part, an account of his relations with his three married cousins: María Juana, Eloísa, and Camila. The first volume of this two-volume work deals with the illicit love affair between José María and Eloísa. The second volume is principally concerned with the frenzied passion of José María for Camila, who, unlike her two sisters, successfully thwarts every attempt of her neurotic
cousin to seduce her.

In *Lo prohibido* Galdós presents his most extensive and penetrating study of the problems of money, luxury, and cursilería. In this novel, which pictures the pretentious upper middle class and the idle rich, Galdós does not focus attention on only one or two of the problems, as is the case in some of the preceding novels, but rather on all three; and he shows the manifestations and effects of an avid desire for money, of ridiculous luxury, and of social ostentation. These three evils far overshadow all other social problems that are present, and the atmosphere of the whole novel is pervaded by their influence. More characters are affected by them than in any other novel, and frequently the craving for these things is more severe, more morbid. Not only is one of the principal characters, Eloísa, doomed to a tragic fate because of her passion for money, luxury, and ostentation, but numerous other figures are harmed, or have been harmed, because of the dominance of one or more of these cravings in their lives. Many relatives, friends, and acquaintances of Eloísa and of José María, who himself is somewhat carried away by the widely prevalent desires for more money and luxury, are affected by the materialistic philosophy of their society. These characters are: Rafael Bueno de Guzmán and his wife Pilar, Raimundo Bueno de Guzmán, Sánchez Botín, Gonzalo Torres, Villalonga, Severiano, Trastámara, Saca-mantecas, the Casa-Bojío family, and Isidro Barragán and his wife Bárbara.
In addition to these major social problems, Galdós depicts certain evils that are to be found in government and politics and in the impoverished, dissipated members of the upper class. Also, there are characters who display the harmful effects of their fantasía, or unbridled imagination, their idleness, their parasitism, and their abulia.

Lo prohibido marks a climax in Galdós' study of money, luxury, and cursilería, and never again do all three problems share such outstanding roles in one novel; nor, for that matter, does any one problem reveal the dominance displayed in this novel.

Fortunata y Jacinta (1886-1887) tells the story of two women both of whom love the same man. The one woman, Fortunata, is a girl of the lower classes, poor and uneducated, while the other woman, Jacinta, is a member of the well-to-do middle class. Juanito Santa Cruz, the spoiled and self-centered son of a wealthy commercial family, is the object of the love of these two women, who are diametrically opposite in temperament and environment. Juanito, although married to Jacinta, continues to enjoy an occasional illicit love affair with Fortunata, whom he had seduced before his marriage to Jacinta. Fortunata never conquers or loses her passion for Juanito, even after she marries the neurotic Maximiliano Rubín, and she is ever ready to forsake her unfortunate husband whenever Juanito beckons. Ultimately the novel ends tragically. Fortunata dies, after having given to the childless Jacinta a son
that has resulted from her union with Juanito, and Maximiliano is confined to an insane asylum.

As a background for these character studies, Galdós has drawn an excellent panoramic view of Madrid society in the years from 1868 to 1875, and there are, of course, many social problems to be found in the pages of this work. Money, luxury, and cursilería are factors in this novel, but not to the extent observed in the novels immediately preceding this one; for no character taking an active part in the story is ruined by any of these evils, and none of them affects the outcome of the story. As in other novels, Galdós uses the three for setting, employing them to add to the reality of the social picture. Several characters give evidence of an undue desire for money, luxury, or social pretense; but with the exception of two, Doña Lupe de Jáuregui and Juan Pablo Rubín, all are very minor characters, often appearing in name only and having no relationship with the principal figures. These characters whose activities form a part of the social background are: Casta Moreno de Samaniego, Jacinto Villalonga, Joaquín Pez, Rubio, Arias Ortiz, Gienfuegos, the Marqués de Casa Boyío, the wife of Nicolás Rubín, the wife of Moreno Vallejo, Paquita Morejón, and Doña Silvia de Torquemada.

Other problems included by Galdós in this picture of Madrid society are ignorance, idleness, alcoholism, poverty and bad housing, illegitimacy, neglected children, cesantía, empleomanía, and upper class dissipation.
In the novel Minau (1888) Galdós depicts the bitter struggle for existence by the Villaamil family, whose head, Don Ramón, is now suffering a prolonged and painful cesantía after a lifetime of service in the government. In addition to describing the unhappy domestic life of the Villaamil family, made worse by the return of the unscrupulous son-in-law, Victor Cadalso, Galdós also includes some excellent sketches of the bureaucracy of that time. Eventually Don Ramón loses all hope of being named to some governmental position, and rather than continue to suffer the frustrations of his hopes, the shame of soliciting money from friends, and the mismanagement of his pretentious, luxury-conscious wife, he chooses to end his life with a bullet.

In Minau Galdós displays a renewed interest in the problems of money, luxury, and cursilería, an interest which does not approach that displayed three years earlier in Lo prohibido, but one which nevertheless causes him to use these factors prominently in the story and character analyses. While the focus is primarily on the tragedy of cesantía and the resulting poverty, the two phenomena of luxury and cursilería occupy roles that are almost as important, and their influence is almost as harmful. They are motivating factors in the action since they contribute to Don Ramón's growing despair and suicide, and they are essential traits in the analysis of Doña Pura de Villaamil and Victor Cadalso.
The problem of money is not as significant as those of luxury and cursilería. Whereas the latter two play a decisive role in the novel, the money problem is more secondary in nature. It does not influence the main plot, but it is evidenced in the activities of Victor Cadalso, in the descriptions of corrupt practices in government, and in the picture of tolerance, indifference, and even approval of such attempts to acquire money.

Aside from the evils of money, luxury, and cursilería, the problems of cesantía and empleomanía, and other weaknesses of the Spanish bureaucracy, the only other social ill in this novel is poverty.

A series of letters which Manolo Infante sends to his friend, Equis, in Orbajosa, make up the novel La incógnita (1889). The letters contain Infante’s observations of the social class in which he lives—the wealthy upper class—and his impressions of his friends and acquaintances and of the various events that he witnesses. Many of the letters deal with Infante’s unrequited love for his cousin, Augusta, wife of Tomás Orozco, and with his ruminations on the identity of her supposed secret lover. The mysterious death of Federico Viera, a close friend of Infante and of the Orozcos, greatly disturbs the social circle in which Infante travels, and in the wake of his death Augusta’s name is frequently mentioned. However, nothing concrete is known, and the death is officially called a suicide.
Realidad (1889) is a novel in dialogue form which deals with the same incidents that are presented in La Incógnita. In the latter novel, the reader is given an impression of the events through the eyes and thoughts of Manolo Infante, while in Realidad he witnesses the innermost thoughts of the various characters, especially those of Tomás Orozco, Augusta, and Federico Viera, an impoverished youth of a formerly well-to-do family. Realidad is essentially a psychological study, and it is concerned with moral and ethical problems that are bound up in Viera's secret love affair with the wife of his friend and would-be protector, Tomás Orozco. Eventually Federico Viera chooses suicide as an escape from his inner struggles and frustrations.

These two novels lack the many social problems that are frequently found in the preceding novels. Although the problems of money, luxury, and cursilería appear infrequently, there is brief evidence that one major character, Federico Viera, has been harmed by the consequences of a childhood spent in luxury and of an inheritance squandered on a woman. Otherwise these factors affect the lives of only a few minor characters: José Orozco, Joaquín Viera, Aguado, and José Amador.

Other social ills that appear are concerned with such social, moral, or ethical problems as parasitism, abulia, upper-class immorality, dissipation, indebtedness, and the unfortunate results of gambling and of the sudden
fall from the wealthy upper class to the impoverished lower class.

In the short novel Torquemada en la hoguera (1889) Galdós turns his attention to Francisco Torquemada, the usurer who has appeared briefly in several of the preceding novels. He relates Torquemada's gradual rise from the lower class, his growing wealth as a result of his merciless dealings with his debtors, and the death of his wife. Much of the contents are devoted to an account of the illness and death of Torquemada's precocious young son, Valentín, and of the usurer's frantic attempts to ward off this cruel blow through belated acts of charity and kindness toward those unfortunates whom he has so ruthlessly pursued.

Although money is not an important factor in the plot or outcome of this short novel, it is a significant factor in the character delineation of Torquemada, whose selfish love of money is exceeded only by the fervent worship of his son Valentín.

Luxury and cursilería are employed by Galdós as social background once again, being found in a few descriptions of various types who fall into the clutches of Torquemada because of their extravagance and pretense.

The social problem that is, perhaps, the most prominent in this novel is poverty. Begging, bad housing, and poor health are also to be observed in a few instances.
The novel *Angel Guerra* (1890-1891) is a psychological study of a young man, Angel Guerra, and the spiritual metamorphosis which he undergoes as a result of his profound love for Lere, a young woman who feels called by God to a life of religious devotion, charity, and self-sacrifice. Unable to approach Lere through the physical side of love and marriage, Guerra attempts to approach her, if possible, through the religious and spiritual side. Not only does he embrace the Catholic religion and ritual fervently, but also he decides to become a priest, and he dreams of founding a charitable religious establishment. It is only when he is dying that Guerra realizes that his dreams of an ecclesiastical life are not the consequences of a true religious fervor, but rather are they the result of his attempts to approach the beloved person who has captivated his spirit.

The religious and spiritual elements of *Angel Guerra* are the significant features of this novel, but there are social problems that afflict certain characters in this work. Luxury is not a factor in the plot nor in the character studies, but money and *cursilería*, although of less importance than such social ills as poverty, parasitism, alcoholism, and old age, do affect several of the secondary figures. The characters who are concerned with these problems are all members of the Babel family, a family with which the leading character, Angel Guerra, has rather frequent contact, for Dulcehombre, one-time mistress
of Angel, is also a member of the Babel family. Doña Catalina de Babel is obsessed with a manía nobiliaria, and the men of the family, Simón García, Aristides, and Fausto, are frequently led into crime and graft because of their desire for money although Caldó seems to imply at times that the real cause of these evil activities is poverty rather than a passion for money. Another social evil in the novel, prostitution, is in this case directly attributable to poverty.

Tristana (1892) tells the story of a young girl of twenty years of age who, after the death of her parents, comes under the protection of Don Lope Garrido, an incorrigible Don Juan, who seduces her. One day Tristana meets Horacio Díaz, a young painter, and the two fall in love. Their idyll eventually ends on a note of disillusionment, and Tristana, who has suffered the loss of a leg because of a malignancy, remains under the care of Don Lope.

In this novel Caldó turns away almost completely from the field of social problems. Money, luxury, and cursilería have no role in the novel, and about the only problem present is that of the unfortunate lot of the young woman in that society who has no parents and no honorable means of a respectable livelihood. In addition there are a few indications of the perennial problem of poverty and the tragedy that may result from widowhood.

La loca de la casa (1892) is another novel written in dialogue form with four acts. Victoria, the daughter of
Don Juan Moncada, decides to sacrifice her plans to enter a convent in order to save her father from financial ruin. She accomplishes this by marrying José María Cruz, the son of a former cartwright on the Moncada estate. Cruz has become extremely wealthy through years of hard work, and he is insensible to all feelings other than the desire to acquire money, but eventually his love for Victoria makes him amenable to his wife's suggestions of charity and compassion for others.

Although luxury is not a factor in this novel and oursilería appears only once in a statement by Cruz, money does constitute something of a problem since José María Cruz, one of the principal characters, is dominated by a desire to acquire more and more wealth. This desire leads to a conflict which is resolved in the end, when Cruz modifies his adamant attitude on this question. The role of money, then, is important, but it would seem that in this case its function is different from that observed in La desheredada, Lo prohibido, and other novels of that period. In the earlier novels one feels that Galdós is attempting to point out a social weakness. The characters in these novels who desire money are usually depicted as unscrupulous business men or governmental employees and officials, or else they are portrayed as abúlicos and dreamers who long for quick, easy wealth merely to gratify their craving for senseless luxuries and frivolous pleasures, and all the while they lack the will and the practical sense necessary
to achieve their goal. Such is not the case with José María Cruz. He has amassed his fortune by hard work; there is no indication that his craving for money has ever involved dishonest means; and he does not squander his money foolishly on the luxuries that his society offers him. In this character, then, Galdós is not endeavoring to criticize a social evil, but rather is he using Cruz's aggressive avarice to help convey the impression of the man of brute force, the self-made man; and this creation of his provides much of the dramatic conflict in this dialogue novel.

La loca de la casa presents very few social problems. However, in addition to the money problem, there is another important one that affects José María Cruz: that of class change. His rise from the ranks of the poor to a position of great wealth is a central element of the plot, and it also results in conflict. Otherwise the only other social problem in evidence is found in a few references to the indebtedness and indigence that befall an impoverished aristocratic family that once knew better days.

In Torquemada en la cruz (1893) Galdós continues the account of the gradual social ascent of Francisco Torquemada, the moneylender. Torquemada becomes acquainted with an impoverished aristocratic family consisting of two sisters, Cruz and Fidela del Aguila, and a brother, Rafael. Don Francisco attempts to emulate the polite speech and good manners displayed by the family and by their close friend and adviser, José Ruiz Donoso. Eventually Torquemada
marries the younger sister, Fidela, a step that is bitterly opposed by Rafael but is reluctantly accepted by the two sisters as a means of escaping the poverty that is overwhelming them.

Under the dominating hand of his sister-in-law, Cruz del Aguila, Torquemada continues to climb the social ladder in *Torquemada en el purgatorio* (1894), and in this novel the metamorphosis of the usurer is striking. He is a recognized leader in the business world; he becomes a member of the senate and a marqués; and he is honored by a banquet. Yet despite the good fortune that surrounds him, Torquemada is unhappy because Cruz insists on an expensive social display befitting their position, whereas Don Francisco seeks only to economize and to amass great wealth.

*Torquemada y San Pedro* (1895) brings to a close the life of Don Francisco. Although Torquemada is now enjoying the greatest financial and social success, he is extremely discontented because of his domination by Cruz, and his unhappiness is greatly increased by the knowledge that his recently born son is an idiot. Following the death of Fidela, Torquemada suffers a rapid physical decline, and Father Gamborena, the spiritual adviser for the family, does his best to prepare Don Francisco for his approaching death. However, it is difficult for the priest to combat Torquemada’s deep-rooted avarice, and at his death Gamborena cannot be sure that Torquemada has conquered his passion for money.
In the Torquemada series of four volumes, money, luxury, and cursilería occupy roles of varying importance. As previously mentioned, in the first and shortest work, Torquemada en la hoguera, money is a factor in the portrayal of Torquemada's character, while luxury and cursilería serve as part of the social setting but do not play an important part in the novel. However, money, preceded by poverty, no doubt has served to harden the heart and to materialize Torquemada's character.¹

Of the three factors, cursilería is the most important in Torquemada en la cruz, for it enters actively in the plot and in the character study of Torquemada. Many of the latter's actions obey the impulse to climb to a higher position in society; also there is a reference to the social pretense of Doña Lupe de Jáuregui, who played a prominent role in Fortunata y Jacinta. Money and luxury, while not influencing the present course of events in the story, have been important determining factors in the past history of the Agüilla family; and the desire for these two has been the cause of its downfall.

The desire for money, luxury, and ostentation are responsible for many of the actions of Torquemada, Fidela, and Cruz del Agüilla, who are the principal characters in Torquemada en el purgatorio. In this way, then, the three problems figure importantly in the novel; yet they fail to constitute a real social problem, as is true in the earlier novels, because they do not lead to serious social
However, it should be pointed out that there is a clash between Torquemada's avarice and Cruz del Aguila's wish for luxury and ostentation, and the result is domestic strife. Actually, this is the principal function, it would seem, of money, luxury, and cursilería in *Torquemada en el purgatorio*; to emphasize and contrast the basic traits of character of the two leading figures, Torquemada and Cruz, and to display these traits in the frequent domestic skirmishes that take place. The money problem is also present in the case of the unscrupulous Juan Gualberto Serrano, a minor character who is a friend of Torquemada.

Again in *Torquemada y San Pedro* Galdós uses the desire for money to depict Torquemada's character, but there is no evidence that he is concerned here with any social implications. Also, luxury and ostentation figure briefly in the activities of Cruz del Aguila.

Considering the *Torquemada* series as a whole, especially the last three novels, one finds that money, luxury, and cursilería have a more important function, perhaps, than in any novel since *Miau*. As said before, one senses that the role of these three problems is no longer the same as in such novels as *Miau*, *Lo prohibido*, and *La desheredada*. More than ever now, Galdós seems to be interested in presenting character studies in which the desire for these things constitutes a salient feature. It is recognized that in the earlier novels he is also analyzing characters who
reveal the same desires, but there is a striking difference. In the earlier novels the characters are never in control of these passions, and the consequences are almost always serious, even fatal. In other words, Galdós allows these problems to overwhelm the victims, thereby illustrating the folly of such conduct. The feeling of social criticism is strong. Society is being asked to take heed. In the Torquemada series the emphasis is no longer on the social consequences of such acts but on the careful delineation of character. The artist is now focusing his attention on his work as a piece of art rather than as a vehicle for a social message. In both the earlier novels, then, and in this series, the three problems may, at times, have significant roles, but the function of these factors has changed.

The Torquemada novels do not contain many other social problems, but there is one that plays an important part in the series, and it is that of class change. This social problem involves Torquemada, of course, in his phenomenal rise from the depths to the heights of society. Class change is also evident in Torquemada en la cruz in the tragic consequences that follow the sudden fall of the wealthy, aristocratic Aguila family, with the resultant poverty, shame, and despair.

Nazario Zaharín, the protagonist of the novel Nazarín (1895), is a Catholic priest who tries to put into practical application the humanitarian precepts of Christianity.
He aids a prostitute, Andara, who is hiding because of an altercation, and as a result of this kind act his innocence is questioned by both the law and the Church. Nazarín determines to leave Madrid and to travel about the country practicing the Christian teachings of charity, humility, and self-sacrifice. He is accompanied by Andara and another woman, Beatriz, both of whom regard him as their master and teacher. Their good works and their wanderings are interrupted by the civil guard, and all are returned to Madrid under arrest.

The problems of money, luxury, and curasillería do not appear in this novel, but poverty, bad housing, poor health, begging, ignorance, and crime are witnessed as the reader follows Nazarín's wanderings.

In the novel Halma (1895) Galdós once again presents a character who feels attracted to a life of Christian charity and humanitarianism tinged with mysticism. Having suffered many sorrows in her earlier life, including the loss of her husband, Doña Catalina, Condesa de Halma-Lautenberg, decides to devote herself to a life of contemplation and good works, and she establishes a colony for the poor and needy. To this colony she brings Nazarín, who has been acquitted of all charges brought against him. Nazarín tells Doña Catalina that she can best achieve her noble goal of aiding the poor by abandoning the state of spiritual isolation in which she lives and by seeking the company of one who can help her. In accordance with his
advice, she marries her cousin, José Antonio de Urrea.

There are few social problems in this novel. Galdós indicates very briefly that José Antonio, who lives the life of a social parasite before he meets Doña Catalina, has certain luxurious habits and wild schemes for money. There is also an equally brief reference to the pretense of the Marquesa de San Salomé, a minor character. The only other problems that appear to any degree are those of poverty and social parasitism.

Misericordia (1897) presents a painfully impressive picture of poverty and begging in Madrid. The principal character is Benigna, a servant and friend of Doña Francisca Juárez de Zapata. Benigna must resort to begging in order to support Doña Francisca, who has descended from the upper middle class to the most oppressive poverty because of her luxurious, extravagant habits. When fate re-establishes the fortunes of Doña Francisca and Benigna finds herself replaced in the guidance of the household by Juliana, daughter-in-law of Doña Francisca, she goes to care for her blind beggar friend, Almudena.

Although the outstanding problems in Misericordia are poverty and such associated evils as bad housing, begging, ignorance, homeless men, and poor health, nevertheless luxury and cursilería are quite important, and they are a significant factor in the lives of two of the leading figures, Doña Francisca Juárez de Zapata and Prasquito Ponte Delgado. Luxury is actually not an active problem.
in the novel, but it is certainly noteworthy and significant as a fundamental premise or pre-condition since Galdós makes it evident that the present lamentable state of Doña Francisca and Ponte Delgado is due in large part to luxurious habits. Ostentation and pretense have also contributed to the fall of these two unfortunates. Differing from luxury, however, cursileria is also an active problem in the novel since Doña Francisca's pride and pretentiousness in the midst of her extreme poverty make Benigna's task of supporting her more difficult. Consequently, Benigna must conceal her begging from her mistress, who would not countenance such an action even though the few coins thus acquired are all that assure Doña Francisca of a bare existence.

The problem of luxury is also evidenced briefly in the extravagance of Doña Francisca's daughter, Obdulia. Money plays no part in the novel and is found only in the case of one very minor character, Carlos Moreno Trujillo.

Galdós once again returns to the novel in dialogue form in El abuelo (1897). The central figure is Don Rodrigo, the Conde de Albrit, an impoverished nobleman who has lost practically everything except his strong passion for family honor. Knowing that one of his two granddaughters is illegitimate, he seeks to discover the true daughter of his deceased son. In the end, Don Rodrigo's firm convictions about family honor and noble blood are shaken when he discovers that Dolly, the granddaughter who displays
the really noble traits of character, is the illegitimate child. He realizes then that true nobility comes from the spirit, and he and Dolly remain together.

In this work the problem of luxury has a function similar to that in Misericordia. It does not perform an active role in the actual novel, but it is, once again, a fundamental pre-condition, for the principal character, Don Rodrigo, owes his present state of poverty to the indulgence of the desire for luxury. In both Misericordia and El abuelo, then, the problem of luxury is brief in its appearance but important in its influence. Otherwise the desires for money, luxury, and ostentation are not significant factors in the plot development nor in the analyses of the principal characters, but they are noteworthy traits in some of the minor characters with whom Don Rodrigo is associated: Senén, Lucrecia, and Doña Vicenta de Monedero.

The pronounced class change that has taken place in Don Rodrigo's life results in some social problems that are important in El abuelo. These are: Don Rodrigo's growing poverty, made worse by his old age and increasing blindness, and the mental agitation resulting from his inability to adapt to his present low social position.

In the novel Casandra (1905), also in dialogue form, Galdós presents a figure that has appeared in several of his works: the strong-willed woman whose actions are controlled by a powerful religious fervor. Doña Juana Samaniego, the Marquessa de Tobalina, is a wealthy widow.
who dominates and directs the lives of many of her relatives, all of whom live in hopes of an inheritance that will benefit them. Doña Juana's domestic tyranny is cut short by Casandra, a woman of equally strong will who lives with Rogelio, the illegitimate son of the Marqués de Tobalina. Casandra sees her happy life with Rogelio and her children threatened by the meddling of Doña Juana, and in a moment of anger she kills her.

Money assumes an important function in Casandra, and indirectly it is the cause of the most dramatic event in the novel: the murder of Doña Juana. Rogelio is dominated by the passion for money, and this longing makes him easily susceptible to Doña Juana's suggestions that he leave Casandra and that he hand the children over to others who will educate them properly. Casandra's fear of this eventuality and her resentment cause her to kill Doña Juana.
Thus it is evident that money is a significant factor in this novel although it would seem that Galdós is not primarily concerned here with depicting the evils of money but rather with showing the harmful results of misdirected religious zeal. The problem of money is also revealed briefly in the description of the life of Hilario de Berzosa, Marqués de Tobalina, a minor character who appears in name only.

Luxury and cursilería play only a very small part in the novel, being found in the activities of a minor character, Zenón de Guillarte. Other social problems do
not enter into the plot or character studies to any noticeable degree although one may discern some indication of the problems of illegitimacy and social parasitism.

*El caballero encantado* (1908) is a tale of fantasy and of supernatural happenings. The central figure, Don Carlos de Tarasía, the Marqués de Mudarra, is a dissolute young señorito whose only goal in life is to indulge his desires for luxury and pleasure and to acquire the money that will make possible this extravagant way of life. Because of his selfish, wasteful habits, he is changed into a humble laborer named Gil. La Madre, a personification of Spain, explains to Don Carlos that she is responsible for this act of enchantment, the purpose of which is to teach him through work and suffering to know the error of his ways. After a series of adventures, travels, and hardships, Don Carlos is returned to society in his original state, having now been cured of his harmful practices.

*Cursilería* is not a factor in the novel, but money and luxury have very important but brief roles. Although these two problems appear only in the opening pages of the novel, they are responsible for the enchantment and the fantastic adventures that befall Don Carlos during his period of punishment by La Madre. It is significant, it would seem, that Cálleo chooses these two evils, rather than others, as the cause of Don Carlos' punishment.

In the first part of the novel, in which there is displayed the false, extravagant life of certain members of
the wealthy upper class, and in the many observations made by La Madre throughout the novel Galdós reveals some of the ills that plague Spain. Among these are the dissipation, parasitism, indebtedness, idleness, and abulia of the upper class, and the casiquismo, poverty, poor health, latifundio, and migration of population in the rural areas.

Galdós calls his last novel, La razón de la sinrazón (1915), a "fábula teatral," and supernatural beings take part in it just as they do in El caballero encantado. The essential idea is the struggle of truth against the empire of the lie, or sinrazón, and the eventual triumph of the former.

Cursiléría does not appear in this work, and there are but a few references to money and luxury, neither of which has any function. One such reference reveals that Alejandro, one of the main characters, and his wife, Helena, now deceased, enjoyed a certain amount of luxury in their former life together. This novel contains very little evidence of any social problems, although there are criticisms of the hypocrisy and fraud that prevail in society and government.

From the preceding survey, it is evident that the three problems appear more extensively or exercise a more important function in some novels than in others. Furthermore, this variation in the intensity with which Galdós studies these problems is not characterized by a constantly fluctuating attitude on the part of the author in which the
periods of concentration tend to be repeated at intervals throughout the forty-year span. Rather is there one definite stage that far overshadows all others, and if one were to construct a graph of the over-all picture, it would reveal the following features: (1) an initial span of three novels -- Doña Perfecta, Gloria, and Marianela -- covering three years, 1876 to 1878, in which there is scarcely any attention directed toward these topics; (2) an indication of growing concern over these problems with the appearance of La familia de León Roch (1879), followed by a period extending from the year, 1881, in which La desheredada appeared, to 1888, in which Niau was published, wherein Galdós analyzes more intently than in any other period of his career the manifestations and consequences of the exaggerated desire for money, luxury, and ostentation; and (5) a marked decrease in concentration with the appearance of La incógnita in 1889. During the remaining years until 1915, the date of La razón de la sinrazón, there are occasional novels, such as the Torquemada series and Misericordia, in which one may observe more frequent evidence of one or more of the three problems than is to be found in the other novels of the later years. However, there is never again a definite period of concentration similar to that of 1881 to 1888.

There are, it would seem, several significant facts to be obtained from the over-all picture of the novels and the function performed by money, luxury, and cursilería in
these works. First, it is noteworthy that Galdo's has included some references to, or some indication of, one or more of these themes in nearly every novel; and at the end of his career money and luxury are important factors in El caballero encantado. It is true that in some of these novels there are but one or two references, but in well over half of the works studied one or more of the topics is prominent in the plot, the character studies, or the setting. That is, the evidence is not limited to one or two comments of no consequence but is found in recurring references or in situations in which the topic is definitely apparent. Furthermore, while the role of the problem is not always significant in those novels in which it is prominent, it may be said that in one third of the novels one or more of the three problems performs an important or even a dominating function in the plot or character analyses. All of this would seem to indicate that these three subjects occupy an important position in the thoughts of Galdo's. His interest in them and his concern about them cause him to introduce and to employ them over and over again in his novels.

Another notable fact is that Galdo's has shown such a concentrated interest in money, luxury, and cursilería during the years from 1881 to 1888, an interest which surpasses in intensity that which is displayed in subsequent novels. One is naturally led to inquire into the reasons that caused Galdo's to focus his attention upon these.
problems during this period. The most plausible answer is found in the fact that the novels from 1881 to 1888 are the most realistic and naturalistic of any of his works. In the three novels that studied the religious problem — Doña Perfecta, Gloria, and La familia de León Roch — and in the so-called lyric interlude, Mariana, there are realistic traits, to be sure, just as there are in almost every Galdosian novel; but it is not until La desheredada, published in 1881, that Galdós begins his penetrating study of Madrid society, a study that is characterized by the accurate and frequently detailed reproduction of language, local scenes, dress, customs, and manners. After 1888, Galdós turns more to novels which reveal a greater preoccupation with matters of the spirit, although, as mentioned above, there is usually a vein of realism running through all of his works.3

As Galdós reacts, then, to the environment about him, accumulating a vast store of details and examining the interrelations of Madrid society and its members, he begins to paint the vivid scenes of various phases and levels of the world in which he lives. It is noteworthy, therefore, that money, luxury, and cursilería are salient features of this complete, realistic picture of the era that he seeks to draw. Not only are they important features in the novels of the period from 1881 to 1888, but in three of the eight works that comprise the group — La desheredada, La de Brinzas, and Lo prohibido — one or more of the
problems constitutes a dominating element in the work.
Furthermore, in a fourth novel, Miano, it may be said that
luxury and social pretense reveal an importance almost
equal to that of cesantía in their influence upon the char-
acters, the action, and the outcome. The fact that Galdós
allows these problems to be of paramount importance in one
half of the novels of this period would seem to indicate
the extensive domain of these social evils and to provide
further evidence of the serious concern with which Galdós
views them. After 1888, Galdós turns away, to some extent,
from his investigations of Spanish society and its problems,
and his novels no longer abound in the minute observations
of the various social media of Madrid. Instead they fre-
quently reveal a spiritual upsurge and a probing of the
problems of the mind and soul. However, it is interesting
to note that when Galdós returns to vivid, realistic detail,
as in Misericordia, a work that is especially striking be-
cause of its descriptions of Madrid's lower classes, the
problems of luxury and social pretense have a brief but
important function.

It has been mentioned previously that in La desheredada
and Lo prohibido Galdós has provided a more extensive study
of all three problems than in any other novel. This gives
rise to another interesting and significant fact, for these
two novels contain greater evidence of a naturalistic
tendency than do any of the others in the realistic,
naturalistic period. Not only do they reveal such
naturalistic traits as the detailed description of persons, places, and things, but they also display an interest in the aspects of physical and mental disease; and they emphasize to some extent the deterministic factors of heredity and environment. It is this last characteristic that is of special interest to this investigation since in these two novels one feels that Galdós is stressing more than elsewhere the influence of heredity or environment in the susceptibility of certain characters to the lure of money, luxury, and ostentation. For example, Isidora Rufete's psychotic father, Tomás Rufete, indulged his appetite for luxury when he could, and he "...no tenía más idea que aparentar, aparentar, y ser persona notable." Isidora's benefactor, el tío Canónigo, reared her in an atmosphere that fostered ideas of luxury and pretense. Joaquín Pez laments the training his parents have given him, a training that encourages him to live beyond his means, and he realizes that both he and Isidora have been imbued with the idea of equaling those who occupy a superior social position.

In lo prohibido there are also indications of the influence of environment upon the characters. José María speaks of the desire for wealth, the "si yo fuera rica," an expression which forms a part of the atmosphere that all breathe and which springs from the lips of his cousin, Eloisa. The Marques de Fucar explains that Eloisa and her husband have been unable to free themselves from the
general current of their society, and consequently they are spending twice and even three times the amount of their income. Eloísa reminds José María that part of her passion for luxury has been with her since her birth but that another part has been instilled by friends and by him. Eloísa's father, Don Rafael, confesses that in the early years of his marriage he and his wife squandered their money in a futile effort at pretense and imitation. He also declares that his wife has scattered his savings in the many pleasure and luxury marts of "esta pequeña Bebel."

If, then, it is Galdós' intention in these two novels to follow somewhat the deterministic philosophy of naturalism and to show the effects of heredity or environment or both on the lives of some of his characters, it is significant, it would seem, that from among the many social problems he should choose the evils of money, luxury, and cursilería to demonstrate the workings of this law. Once again, this fact would indicate the importance that Galdós attaches to these social phenomena.

In contrasting the roles of money, luxury, and cursilería in the earlier novels, that is, the novels that appeared in the years 1879 to 1880, and in the novels of the Torquemada series, attention was called to the social criticism that is present. No analysis of the literary function of these three subjects in Galdós' novelas would be complete without a discussion of this most important topic of social
criticism, which will constitute the final phase of this chapter.

Galdós' treatment of the problems of money, luxury, and cursilería is detailed and thorough. The study includes different types of individuals who are representative of various social levels. The analyses of the many cases that are involved reveal the aspects and results of the unrestrained passion for these three things. Everything contributes to a social picture that is impressive in its realism and in its exactitude; but it should be noted that this realistic presentation is not the coldly dispassionate, objective description of the detached observer. Galdós can never stand aloof from the social ills that surround him, nor can he remain indifferent when confronted with the illogical doctrines that govern the lives of many in his society. Berkowitz indicates this fundamental trait in Galdós when he states that "...it is neither in technique nor in style but in content that Galdós the journalist has survived in Galdós the novelist and dramatist.... As in later years, his fundamental preoccupation is with the distortion of values, with the distressing distance which separates things as they are from things as they ought to be in accordance with the dictates of justice and the rules of logic."¹²

Because of his preoccupation with his society's rash disregard of the most basic rules of logic and common sense, Galdós cannot treat with complete objectivity these problems
whose prevalence and disrupting effects have caused them to be viewed with grave concern by various social writers of the period. Rather does he approach these evils with the attitude of a teacher or a moralist who seeks to awaken his society to the dangers inherent in the philosophy that places money, luxury, and ostentation above all other values. This critical, educational aspect of Galdós' writing has been noted by various writers: Keniston has said that "Galdós was never one who looked upon his art as a light or frivolous pastime. He felt called to be a teacher."13 Barja points out that Galdós understands the novel "...no como pasatiempo, sino como obra de educación y de propaganda de ideas...."14 A more recent writer, Gerald Brenan, observes that "Fundamentally...his [Galdós'] attitude to the world is that of a moralist. The plots of his books nearly always consist in his taking a man or a woman who has a particular vice or weakness and showing how this weakness leads to his downfall."15

Galdós himself has revealed that he regards his novelistic endeavors as educational. Luis Antón del Olmet and Arturo García Carrafa quote Galdós as follows: "Creo que la literatura debe ser enseñanza, ejemplo;"16 and Arturo Capdevila quotes this selection from La primera república, which he calls "La misión galdosiana": "Al retirarme, vi en mi mente con absoluta claridad que mi papel en el mundo no era determinar los acontecimientos, sino observarlos y
con vulgar manera describirlos para que de ellos pudieran sacar alguna enseñanza los venideros hombres.”

In the study of these three topics and their role in the novelas, one constantly perceives evidence of Galdós the moralist. One indication is to be found in the innumerable critical observations made either by Galdós himself or by his characters in which there is a censure of the individual and the society that surrenders blindly to the consuming passion for money, luxuries, and ostentation. To designate every one of the many critical comments would be prolix and wearisome, and a few examples may suffice to show the nature of these remarks. On the subject of money and its related evils there is the passage in Marianela wherein Galdós observes that “Hay en nuestras sociedades enemigos muy espantosos; a saber: la especulación, el agio, la metalización del hombre culto, el negocio....” However, warns Galdós, “...sobre estos descuella el monstruo que a callada destroza más que ninguno: la codicia del aldeano.”

In contrast to the serious tone that characterizes the previous passage, there is the satirical description of the opulence displayed by the Pez family, an opulence that can only be made possible by the unscrupulous activities of Don Manuel Pez. Having pointed out the obvious incongruity between the luxury and display of the Peces and the salary of Don Manuel and his sons, Galdós concludes by saying: “...estos rompecabezas...han llegado a parecer cosa natural
y corriente. Familiarizada la sociedad con su lepra, ya ni siquiera se rasca, porque ya no le escuece.

Another passage that contains a sharp rebuke is found in El amigo M�naco. M�ximo M�naco describes the dishonest and unscrupulous Federico Cimarra as "...de estos que no hablan nunca, pero que saben intrigar por setenta, y afectando independencia, andan a caza de todo negocio no limpio. Constituyen estos, antes que una clase, una determinaci�n cancerosa, que secretamente se difunde por todo el cuerpo de la patria, desde la última aldea hasta los Cuerpos Colegisladores."

A most graphic criticism of the exaggerated desire for wealth that dominates the thoughts of many in that society is found in the remark of Jos� Mar�a Bueno de Guzm�n:

"El 'si yo fuera rico,' esa expresi�n, esa queja universal que sale de los labios de toda persona de nuestros d�as (y de estos alientos se forma la atm�sfera moral que respiramos)...."

Excessive luxury and pleasures are frequently the subject of censure by Galdos or his characters. La familia de Le�n Roch contains many such criticisms, one of them being the indignant speech of Gustavo, the oldest son of the Telleri�as: "¿No es horrible ver a mi hermano corrido por el vicio, encenagado en la frivolidad corruptora que envilece a tantos individuos, no dire de nuestra clase por- que no es exclusiva de ella esta ignominia, sino de todas las clases?"
Máximo Manso, who frequently seems to serve as a spokesman for Galdós, criticizes the widespread luxury that is corrupting his society and its people: "El lujo es lo que antes se llamaba el demonio, la serpiente, el ángel caído; porque el lujo fue también querubín, fue arte, generosidad, realeza, y ahora es un maleficio mesocrático, al alcance de la burguesía, pues con la industria y las máquinas se ha puesto en condiciones perfectas para corromper a todo el género humano sin distinción de clases."23

Lo prohibido is another novel that is filled with disapproving observations about the luxurious habits of Madrid society and its people. Rafael Bueno de Guzmán is among those who censure this foolish waste as he explains to his nephew, José María, that due to his wife, his savings have been swallowed up in "...los teatros de esta pequeña Babel,...sus tiendas,...sus increíbles y desproporcionados lujos...." In this lack of will that permits such extravagance lies a serious moral weakness, which is described as "...el mal madrileño; esta indolencia, esta enervación que nos lleva a ser tolerantes con las infracciones de toda ley, así moral como económica, y a no ocuparnos de nada grave, con tal que no nos falte el teatrito o la tertulia para pasar el rato de noche, el carrujito para zarandearnos, la buena ropa para pintarla por ahí, los trapitos de novedad para que a nuestras mujeres y a nuestras hijas les llamen elegantes y distinguidos...."24
In the novel *El caballero encantado* Don Carlos de Tarsis, after his enchantment by La Madre, says to the latter that he realizes that this act of hers is not designed to harm him but rather to help him since it is a form "de enseñanza o castigo" for his "enormes desaciertos." The lesson which La Madre, or Galdós, would like to give to Don Carlos and the "caballeros ricos" like him is a realization of the wrong they are committing when they squander their wealth "en los ocios de la Corte." In the punishment of Don Carlos, who is "ávido de goces" and who thinks only of himself, Galdós hopes to convey a lesson to those who follow this misguided way of life.  

The pretense and ostentation that seem to constitute such a necessary part of the life of many Spaniards receive the same continual barrage of criticism as does luxury. As in the case of money and luxury, the novel *La familia de León Roch* provides several passages in which the censure of the widespread curaslería reveals a noticeable tendency to moralize. Once again it is the eldest son of the Tellerías, Gustavo, who delivers the attack during a lengthy conversation with León Roch. While denouncing the ridiculous luxury and display of his family, Gustavo remarks that León cannot comprehend "ciertas interioridades vergonzosas," nor can he know "...lo que es vivir en una casa donde todo se debe, desde las alfombras hasta el pan de cada día,..." Neither can León have any idea "...de las farsas que se ven obligadas a representar cada día personas cuyo nombre solo
Another shame that León will never experience is "...esa agonía profunda en que se ven personas decentísimas por carecer en un momento crítico de cantidades que no quitarían el sueño a un jornalero." Gustavo completes his revealing picture of the miserable existence of the slaves to ostentation by telling León that because of his fortune and his modest aspirations he cannot know "...las ansias de este vivir en plena comedia entre el humo de la vanidad y sobre las ascuas de la escasez." 26

Throughout La familia de León Roch the social criticism has the indignant tone of the moral crusader who looks with a stern, unsmiling face on those who follow the creed of money, luxury, and display. In pleasant contrast is La desheredada, the successor to La familia de León Roch. The heavy bludgeon of righteous indignation is now laid aside for the light, keen dart of satire and humor. The moral lesson in La desheredada is presented just as frequently and as forcefully, but it is now clothed in the delightful wit and irony which Galdós wields with the skill of a born master. One example of this has been seen in the ingenious sketches that Galdós makes of the graft, luxury, and show of the Facos. 27 The description by the young medical student, Augusto Miquis, of the cursilería that rules his society is another example of Galdós' clever use of the subtle rebuke. 28
As said before, one of the most serious charges of cursilería is leveled against Madrid society by Refugio Sánchez Emperador. She scornfully exclaims: "Ay!, qué Madrid éste; todo apariencia." She then repeats the observation of one of her many male acquaintances that "...esto es un Carnaval de todos los días, en que los pobres se visten de ricos." This apparent well-being is all "facha ...y nada más que facha," says Refugio. As an example of this false show, Refugio cites the case of a family who "...por vestirse bien y poder ir al teatro...se mantiene todo el año con tortillas de patatas." Furthermore she knows of "...señoras de empleados que están cesantes la mitad del año, y da gusto verlas tan guapetonas. Parecen duquesas, y los niños principitos."29 Once again Refugio refers to another gentleman friend who has said "...que aquí no hay aristocracia verdadera, y que la gran mayoría de los que pasan por ricos y calaveras no son más que unos cursis."30

This social criticism by Refugio is of interest not only because of the light it throws upon the misguided practices of many members of that society but also because it may tend to furnish some insight into Galdós' attitude toward society and its problems. The fact that Galdós chooses Refugio, a girl who has not shown any great concern for certain moral laws or standards of convention and propriety, to denounce the cursilería that surrounds her would seem to be significant. One may assume, perhaps, that
Galdós feels that this girl, while guilty of immoral relations with men, is less worthy of censure than those who resort to sham and hypocrisy, at the cost of their own well-being and that of others, for the sole purpose of playing a false role in their society. Their life is built on a lie, and the endless attempts to maintain this lie can bring serious consequences in its wake. For that reason, perhaps, Galdós has Refugio condemn those who are guilty of such activities, while at the same time he allows her to express pride in her own honesty and sincerity: "Grandísimas," thinks Refugio, "yo no engaño a nadie; yo vivo de mi trabajo. Pero vosotras engañáis a medio mundo, y queréis hacer vestidos de seda con el pan del pobre." 31 Again when Refugio speaks of those who owe their ostentation to the fact that they "viven de gorra," she says proudly: "Cuando veo a estos tales, me pongo yo muy huesca, porque no debo a nadie, y si lo debo lo pago, vivo de mi trabajo, y nadie tiene que ver con mis acciones, y lo primero que digo es que no engaño a nadie, que el que no me quiera así que me deje...." 32

While on the subject of social criticism by one who is a moral transgressor, it is noteworthy that Galdós has also used a character of unsound mind to criticize the mania of the social climber. In La desheredada, Canencia, an inmate of the insane asylum, Leganés, makes this sage observation to Isidora Rufete: "Hija mía...una de las enfermedades del alma que más individuos trae a estas casas es la ambición,
el afán de engrandecimiento, la envidia que los bajos tienen de los altos, y eso de querer subir atropellando a los que están arriba, no por la escalera del mérito y del trabajo, sino por la escala suelta de la intriga, o de la violencia, como si dijéramos, empujando, empujando."

As one weighs the wisdom contained in the remarks of Canencia, one is inclined to ask: Who is more insane, Canencia or those who scurry around outside the walls of Leganés in a senseless effort to climb higher and higher, regardless of the cost? A comparison between Canencia and other members of the society depicted in the novelas leaves little doubt as to Galdós' answer, as the former can easily discern the inevitable consequences of curarelía, this "enfermedad del alma" that claim so many. On the other hand the very society that has pronounced Canencia mentally unfit to continue as an active member is itself revealing definite symptoms of a lack of balance, symptoms that it continues to ignore in spite of the threat that they pose to the society's welfare.

In one of his last novels, Casandra, Galdós criticizes the fictitious existence of his society in a passage which, in its indignation and its moralizing, is reminiscent of those found in La familia de León Roch, written some twenty-six years before. Alfonso de la Cerda bitterly declares: "Vivimos en un mundo de ficciones, en un armadío de noblezas figuradas y de distinciones mentirosas. Los ricos aparentan mayor riqueza, y los de un mediano pasar decoramos
con talco nuestra medianía para parecer opulentos. Todo en nuestra vida es ilusorio, teatral y fantástico."\(^{34}\)

It is not only in the use of such outspoken criticisms as those cited that Galdós seeks to inculcate in his society the moral and ethical concepts that he feels should prevail in the proper approach to the problems of money, luxury, and cursilería. Galdós the moralist is also discerned in the implied criticism that is contained in the treatment of the characters who indulge without restraint or discretion their craving for these things. Those who are guilty of committing the most serious breaches in the bonds of logic and good sense are not allowed to continue their extravagant, frivolous way unpunished. They are threatened or overwhelmed with various economic and personal troubles. The follies and unhappy fate of the Tellerías, the Rufetes, Joaquín Pez, Doña Cándida de García Grande, Rosalía de Bringas, Eloísa Bueno de Guzmán and her mother, Doña Pilar, Doña Pura de Villamil, Doña Francisca Juárez de Zapata, Frasquito Ponte Delgado, Don Carlos de Tarsis, and many others are clearly exposed so that all may see and profit from the moral lesson that is contained in the story of their fall. These characters are the victims and the symbols of social ills, and through these symbols Galdós attacks and tries to correct obvious weaknesses of his society. Actually, Galdós the moralist is criticizing these individuals and the society for the things they do not do as well as for the things they do. That is, he is
criticizing these people, who, having the choice of a right and wrong path of conduct, do not select a mode of life that conforms to sound moral and ethical principles.

This investigation has recognized and stressed on previous occasions the fact that the individual's choice of a right and wrong path of conduct is greatly influenced by his highly materialistic environment. Likewise, it would seem quite evident from the comments that have been quoted that Galdós lays a share of the blame for the wrong choice at the door of his money-worshipping, luxury-loving, ostentatious society. However, a study of Galdosian society in its entirety shows that, in the eyes of Galdós, considerations of environment and heredity are not enough to exonerate completely those who are guilty of wrong conduct. As proof of this, there are the examples of such characters as León Roch, Augusto Miquis, Máximo Manso, Agustín Caballero, Francisco Bringas, Ramón Villaamil, to name a few, who have been exposed to the same social atmosphere that proves so harmful to the others. They, like the others, have had the choice of two roads of conduct, but, unlike the others, they have elected to follow the path of right and reason. Also, it is noteworthy that the social environment, although it is ringing with the clamor for more money, luxuries, and ostentation, cannot completely drown out the voice of conscience that protests the unreasoning acceptance of the materialistic doctrine. Isidora Rufete and Eloísa Bueno de Guzmán, despite their
abject surrender to the passion for luxuries and display, are aware that their way of life is not the right one. Sometimes they express a regret and a determination to mend their ways. Thus, it would seem that Galdós is showing that when one possesses the knowledge of right conduct, one also possesses the choice, and the failure to exercise this choice properly cannot be blamed altogether on outside forces. Another indication of Galdós' belief that the individual is guilty is his remark in Misericordia. After describing the ruin that has befallen Doña Francisca and observing that there are numerous cases of such tumbles to adversity, especially in Madrid, he remarks: "Bien miradas estas cosas y el subir y bajar de las personas en la vida social, resulta gran tontería echar al destino la culpa de lo que es obra exclusiva de los propios caracteres y temperamentos...."36

Although Galdós speaks of such a catastrophe as "obra exclusiva de los propios caracteres y temperamentos," it has been evident on other occasions that he has indicated the influence of environment in the misfortunes that follow the unwise indulgence of the passion for good living. Thus, for example, the Marqués de Fúcar explains the debacle of Eloísa and her husband by saying that "No podía ser de otra manera. Esta gente no ha podido apartarse de la corriente general, y gasta el doble o el triple de lo que tiene."37 Also, José María Bueno de Guzmán says that the expression, "si yo fuera rica," is a universal complaint that everyone
utters and that from this remark "...se forma la atmósfera moral que respiramos." The survey of Galdosian society leads to the conclusion that it is really the interaction between a luxury-minded, pretentious society and certain temperaments that produces these disasters.

As stated above (pages 266 to 269), Galdós demonstrates great concern over the problems of money, luxury, and cursilería throughout his novelistic career. Furthermore, there is no evidence that he ever wavers in his attitude toward these evils, for whenever any of them appears, whether it be in a dominant role or in a minor role, it is almost invariably censured by Galdós. This tenacity of purpose and opinion is a noteworthy feature of Galdós' treatment of these problems. One might expect that Galdós would reveal, as many writers do, a perfectly natural tendency to alter somewhat his attitude during the span of almost forty years covered by the novelas. However, such a change is not evidenced in the study of money, luxury, and cursilería.

It should be pointed out again that in 1870, before he had begun to create the masterful social panorama embodied in the novelas contemporáneas, Galdós seems to have regarded with a calm, tolerant eye the vanity that is so characteristic of his society, the vanity that inspires much of the excessive luxury and ostentation. At that time the young journalist had been living in Madrid only some eight years, and, while he recognized the existence of such evils as unrestrained luxury and ostentation in his society, he did
not fully appreciate, perhaps, the pernicious aspects of these social maladies. At first glance these problems may have appeared to be nothing more than superficial sores on the social body, but further examination was to reveal to him the really malignant nature of these widespread ills.

As Galdós became more experienced in the analysis of social problems, he could not fail to observe the disastrous complications that often resulted from misdirected, unrestrained vanity. The luxury and ostentation were, in themselves, less serious than the many social problems, such as poverty, malnutrition, poor health, suicide, and immorality, that might result from the endless attempts to compete with those higher in the social scale. Therefore, when Galdós is ready to begin his study of Madrid society, the unconcern of 1870 has been replaced by an attitude of outspoken criticism that remains fixed and unrelenting during his entire career. This concern is reflected in such probing studies of the problems as are found in La desheredada, Tormento, La de Brinas, and Lo prohibido.

Galdós' growing awareness of the mania of luxury and cursilería would seem to be evidenced in the fact that within a four-year span he wrote these four novels in which these evils play a dominant role. Perhaps one might term La desheredada, Tormento-La de Brinas, and Lo prohibido a trilogy since each one contains a careful examination of the nature and the effects of luxury and cursilería on various social classes.
Galdós the moralist does not categorically condemn all attempts to acquire wealth and to enjoy luxuries and social display, provided that such manifestations are tempered by reason and are in harmony with reality. For those of his society who feel compelled to ascend to new heights, Galdós offers, as a guide, the wise little moral that he appends to La desheredada: "Si sentís anhelo de llegar a una difícil y escabrosa altura, no os fiéis de las alas postizas. Procuro escharlas naturales, y en caso de que no lo consigáis, pues hay infinitos ejemplos que confirmán la negativa, lo mejor, creáme, lo mejor será que toméis una escalera." However, Galdós is disturbed by the tragic spectacle furnished by those misguided souls who feel compelled to lead lives that are totally incompatible with their abilities, their meager incomes, and their modest stations in life. Instead of following his suggestions and climbing step by step, if it be necessary, they soar forth in a vain attempt to reach the "difícil y escabrosa altura," entrusting their fate to nothing more substantial than fantasy and overweening vanity. It is the senseless disregard of right conduct, the shameful waste and display, that Galdós censures, and he never relents in his attacks upon the fictitious, extravagant existence that characterizes the lives of so many in his society. It must have distressed and exasperated him greatly to see these people dreaming of easy money, indulging in extravagant luxuries, and striving to create a false impression of wealth and
position at the very moment that they were being engulfed in a morass of indebtedness and poverty.

The passion for money, luxury, and cursilería can be a serious social affliction if it succeeds in destroying with its poison the will and the judgment of an individual or a society, and the antidote to this poison may at times be difficult to find. Seldom does a social problem offer a single, simple solution, for almost invariably its roots are inextricably entwined with those of other problems. This is, of course, true of money, luxury, and cursilería, all of which have many moral and ethical ramifications.

Nevertheless, in the dedication to La desheredada Galdós prescribes a remedy for these and other social ills which he diagnoses as being "...algunas dolencias sociales, nacidas de la falta de nutrición y del poco uso que se viene haciendo de los benéficos reconstituyentes llamados Aritmética, Lógica, Moral y Sentido Común." The cure for these maladies is not to be found in the hands of "...los curanderos y droguistas que, llamándose filósofos y políticos,...recetan uno y otro día." No, the remedy lies in the hands of the "maestros de escuela," who are, or ought to be, says Galdós, the "verdaderos médicos."

Only through education, then, can one hope to modify the distorted philosophy that makes a religion of money, luxury, and social position, and it is this guiding principle that has influenced much of the social criticism that is found in the novelas of Galdós. With wise precepts and
instructive examples, with detailed observations, with biting satire and righteous indignation, he attacks these problems in an effort to alleviate the ills that plague his distressed society, a society which, in the words of Alas, is "...anémico y lleno de drogas, con que en vano procura remediar males secretos apostosos."42
NOTES

1 The same is true, perhaps, of the avaricious Cruz of La loca de la casa.

2 The novels included in this period are: La desheredada, 2 volumes (1881), El amigo Manso (1882), El doctor Contencio, 2 volumes (1883), Tormento (1884), La de Eringas (1884), Lo prohibido, 2 volumes (1884-1885), Fortunata y Jacinta, 4 volumes (1886), and Misu (1888). This does not mean that every novel in this group is of marked importance. Likewise, in some of the novels, one or even two of the problems may be relatively unimportant. However, when considered as a whole, these eight works are clearly revealed as a definite group in which the concentration is more evident than in any other period.

5 Joaquín Casalduero groups Galdós' works into the following classifications:

(1) Período, 1867-79. Período histórico (1867-74).
    Subperíodo abstracto (1875-79).

    Subperíodo del conflicto entre la materia y el espíritu (1886-92).

(3) Período, 1892-1907. Período espiritualista (1892-97).
    Tercera serie de Episódicos, 1898-1900. Subperíodo de la libertad (1901-07).

(4) Período, 1908-1918. Período mitológico (1908-12).
    Subperíodo extratemporal (1913-18).

(Joaquín Casalduero, Vida y obra de Galdós, Buenos Aires (1943), p. 42.)

A comparison between Casalduero's grouping and that based on the intensity of Galdós' study of money, luxury, and cursilería reveals that the period from 1881 to 1888, during which the concentration on the three problems is the greatest, coincides with the second period of Casalduero's classification. Actually, it bridges the two groupings in the second period, including the six novels of the "período naturalistas" and two novels of the "subperíodo del conflicto entre la materia y el espíritu," but it does not extend as late as the end of Casalduero's period.

4 La desheredada, I, 31.
5 Ibid., II, 230.
6 Ibid., II, 179.
7 Lo prohibido, I, 22.
8 Ibid., I, 123.
9 Ibid., II, 12.
10 Ibid., II, 204.
11 Ibid., II, 203.


13 Hayward Keniston, "Galdós, Interpreter of Life," Hispania, III (1920), 205.

14 Barja, Libros y autores modernos, pp. 357-359.


16 Luis Antón del Olmet y Arturo García Carraffa, Los grandes españoles, Galdós (Madrid, 1912), p. 93.


18 Marianela, p. 35. See page 55 of this work for a more complete quotation of this passage.

19 La desheredada, I, 200.
20 El amigo Manso, p. 80.
21 Lo prohibido, I, 22.
22 La familia de León Roch, I, 124.
23 El amigo Manso, p. 144.
24 Lo prohibido, II, 203.
25 El caballero encañado, p. 65.
26 La familia de León Roch, I, 126-127.
27 See pages 57-58 and 189.
28 See pages 183-184.
29 La de Bringas, pp. 276-277.
30 Ibid., p. 280.
31 Ibid., p. 277.
32 Ibid., p. 280.
33 La desheredada, I, 31.
34 Casandra, p. 153.
35 See La desheredada, II, 34-36, 264; and Lo prohibido, I, 75, 101, 151, 196-197; II, 8, 12, 71. These are not the only ones who indicate that they know their choice is wrong, yet do nothing to correct their conduct. See the Marqués de Telloría (La familia de León Roch, I, 177, 358, 363), Joaquín Pez (La desheredada, II, 85, 165, 179), Alejandro Miquis (El doctor centeno, II, 50-52, 56), and Rosalía de Bringas (La de Bringas, p. 101).
36 Misericordia, p. 43.
37 Lo prohibido, I, 123.
38 Ibid., I, 22.
39 See page 155.
40 La desheredada, II, 282.
41 Ibid., Dedication.
42 Alas, Obras completas, I, 139.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The present study of the problems of money, luxury, and cursilería in the novels of Galdós has revealed three aspects of the great Spanish writer: (1) Galdós the analyst of social problems, (2) Galdós the novelist, and (3) Galdós the moralist.

As the careful, inquisitive diagnostician of the ills of his society, a society troubled by the recurrent storms of political, economic, and social turbulence, Galdós has examined minutely the symptoms, manifestations, and results of the three closely interrelated social maladies: money, luxury, and cursilería. His examination is a thorough one, and it includes various types of individuals from every social level in Spanish urban society. These case studies have shown the impact of these three social phenomena on the lives of the individuals analyzed and on the society in which they live, and they have provided evidence of the disrupting effects, the physical and moral harm, and the host of social problems that follow in the wake of the unchecked passion for money, luxuries, and ostentation.

The money problem, which has its roots in the sale of the Church lands in 1836 and the resultant flow of new wealth, disturbs and undermines Galdosian society just as
it did Spanish society. The growing fortunes that rose from the vagaries of the stock market, the profitable and often unscrupulous transactions that resulted from the tragedy of a civil war and a bankrupt treasury, and the sudden wealth that sprang from dubious business and governmental practices placed money in a pre-eminent position in the eyes of Spanish society and created the era of the princes of wealth. The inevitable consequences of such conditions have been demonstrated in the novels of Galdós: an avid longing for and an excessive preoccupation with money, this passion, when unrestrained, often leads to fanciful schemes of quick wealth, schemes which frequently render the individual unfit for any useful, productive role in society. The magnetic appeal of wealth also leads to graft and corruption and a callous indifference and disregard on the part of society toward evidence of such dishonesty. At times the dishonest seem to be rewarded and admired while the honest are frustrated and mocked as a result of the pernicious influence of the philosophy that the end justifies the means where money is concerned.

In this study it has been seen that money also aggravated the luxury problem, for the new wealth from the sale of the Church lands made possible the increased consumption of luxury articles that resulted from the technological progress of the industrial revolution. This unfortunate coincidence was further worsened by the lack of moderation with which the new materialistic existence was received by
Spanish urban society. The luxurious extravagance of the upper class was emulated, as far as possible, by the lower classes. Furthermore, the political, economic, and social instability of the century probably encouraged many members of Galdós' society to enjoy every luxury and pleasure with no regard for the future which seemed to promise very little.

While still a youthful journalist and novelist, Galdós perceived the social effects of industrial progress and the resultant immoderate luxury, and within a short time after beginning the social panorama that is contained in the novelas contemporáneas, he began a detailed study of this widespread evil. With an impressive number of examples and observations he has revealed the insidious nature of this passion which corrupts individuals from every social level and inflicts upon both them and ultimately upon their society incalculable harm.

Those in Galdosian society who indulge their craving for luxuries have revealed either an ignorance of or a blind indifference to the many indications which herald the catastrophe that is threatening to overwhelm them, and frequently they seem ready to make any sacrifice in order to satisfy their appetites. Their frenzy for luxurious living also drives them in full pursuit of every diversion, and all too frequently the financial harm that results from such immoderation is accompanied by the physical harm that may result from constant late hours and dissipation.
It has been stressed that luxury and cursilería are inseparably related, as both of these social phenomena obey the dictates of a very human and universal trait: vanity. Baudrillard has indicated vanity as a principal cause of luxury, the other two being sensuality and the instinct of adornment; and Veblen and Urwick have both analyzed under the terms "conspicuous consumption" and "conspicuous waste" the vanity-inspired ostentation and pretense that characterize nearly every civilized society to some extent. Before the studies of any of these men had appeared, however, Galdós had recognized vanity as a powerful influence in his society, an influence that was responsible for much of the luxury and pretense that ruled the lives of so many. Furthermore, the examination of the novelas has disclosed that Galdós frequently cites vanity as a cause of the luxury that characterizes the lives of many individuals in Galdosian society, while the other two causes described by Baudrillard, sensuality and the instinct of adornment, have no manifest function in Galdós' works and are merely implied as factors.

It has been indicated that cursilería was fostered in Spain by many of the same conditions that encouraged the spread of its twin evil, luxury: the additional wealth that resulted from the sale of the Church lands; more luxuries following the industrial revolution; and the pronounced class change in which the weakening of social barriers made the lower classes more susceptible to the harmful influence of the extravagant, ostentatious señorito
element of the upper class. It has been stressed also that the average Spaniard would be inclined to ostentation because of his strongly developed feeling of self-pride or hidalguía, a form of vanity that seemed to emphasize the importance of social position, titles, and relationships with the nobility, and that encouraged the scorn of manual or useful labor.

In the portrayal of the problem of cursilería, as in that of luxury, Galdós has provided many cases for study which show the force and effect of the imperious need for ostentation and pretense in the various social levels. The examination of these cases has shown the waste and display of the dissolute elements of the upper class: the señorítos; the fallen aristocrats, impoverished, parasitic, but always pretentious; and the wealthy newcomers who scatter the recently acquired wealth that will give them the social status, the titles, and the prestige that is so eagerly coveted by all. There is the middle class, sensitive to the harmful influence that emanates from the upper class, eager to emulate the extravagant display, but often frustrated by the lack of money. In the lower classes Galdós has indicated what is, perhaps, the most pitiable type among the gallery of cursis: the wretch who suffers the agony of the pobreza vergonzante. This unfortunate tenaciously conforms to the fatuous code that requires a hypocritical pretense of well-being, regardless of the
privatization and physical suffering that such a sacrifice actually entails.

Galdós' study of the *cursí* has also revealed the consequences of the deep-rooted feeling of *hidalguía*, which exalts ties with the nobility, exaggerates the importance of titles, and spurns the thought of any trade or craft, regardless of its promise of a comfortable and honest living. Likewise he has furnished an insight into the intensity of the social competition that leads the climber to mock the efforts of other *cursí* such as he, to overestimate his own social importance, and to disdain those who dwell on the level of his former social station.

It has been evident from the study of luxury and *cursilería* in Galdós' novels that the individual who succumbs to the passion for one very easily becomes a ready victim of the other. Furthermore, Galdós has provided convincing evidence that these two problems are not only evils in themselves but are the source of many personal and social troubles. Thus, those who overindulge their craving for luxury and display are frequently forced to suffer the torment of unsatisfied desires, instability, lack of security, privation, physical and moral harm, degradation, and despair; and society finds the universal problems of immorality, corruption, prostitution, poverty, bad housing, malnutrition, poor health, and suicide considerably aggravated.
The realistic picture which Galdós presents has been corroborated by the observations of various writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who describe and censure the excessive desire for money, luxuries, and ostentation. The vehemence of their charges and the serious tone of their revelations would seem to indicate that Galdós has not exaggerated unduly the extensive domain of these evils in his society. The novelas of Galdós and the observations of these writers combine to form a startling and thought-provoking disclosure of the personal and social ruin that may result when the unrestrained passion for these social phenomena is allowed to run unchecked.

The survey of the novelas has shown that Galdós has included some references to or some indications of money, luxury, and cursilería in nearly every work. As the novelist, Galdós has assigned roles of varying importance to these three problems, giving them a more extensive treatment and a more significant function in some novels than in others. In a few novels money, luxury, and cursilería are of no consequence, but in over one half of his works Galdós has given these problems some prominence in the plot, character studies, or setting. Although their role in some novels of this group is not always functionally significant, in one third of the novels one or more of the problems is an important factor in the social setting and in the description of the thoughts and activities of
leading and secondary figures. Furthermore, it has been seen that in four novels, La desheredada, La de Bringas, Lo prohibido, and Miau, one or more of the three factors occupies a dominating position in the work, being constantly interwoven by the author into the strands of the plot and into the character pattern of the leading and secondary characters. The prominence and the repeated appearance of money, luxury, and cursilería in the novels have been considered indicative of the important position that these problems occupy in the thoughts of Galdós.

The period from 1881, the date of La desheredada, to 1889, the date of Miau, has been the most interesting and significant phase of Galdós' career with regard to this investigation. The eight novels that fall within this period have revealed a more concentrated interest in money, luxury, and cursilería than is to be found in any other phase of Galdós' career. It has been indicated also that these eight novels are among the most realistic and naturalistic that Galdós has written; and it has been thought significant that in La desheredada and Lo prohibido, the two novels in which Galdós seems to emphasize more clearly the factors of heredity and environment, he has chosen money, luxury, and cursilería to demonstrate the deterministic philosophy of naturalism.

As a moralist, Galdós strives to hold up to his society a mirror in which they may see the image of their misconduct,
their extravagance, their foolish masquerade. Through the realistic detail that fills the pages of the novelas there constantly appears the warning finger of the teacher who indicates the consequences of the wrong choice of conduct. The moral lesson is openly expressed at times in the critical comments either of Galdós or of his spokesmen. On other occasions the lesson is implied in the treatment of those who indulge their appetites for money, luxury, and ostentation and are punished with frustration, with despair, and with many of the social afflictions that lie in wait for those who do not make the proper choice that is dictated by right and reason.

This study of the novelas has shown that Galdós considers both the individual and society responsible for the catastrophes that result from the exaggerated passion for money, luxuries, and display. When studied individually, the characters have frequently revealed certain moral, mental, and emotional weaknesses that might well be considered the cause of their downfall. However, the picture of Spanish urban society as drawn by Galdós and other writers of the period has disclosed a very unhealthy social environment, and it has been observed that it is the interaction of the materialistic, pretentious society and the unthinking, unstable individual that produces the tragedies that occur in the novelas.

It has been evident that Galdós never varies in his attitude toward these three problems. When Galdós begins
his study of Madrid society with La familia de León Roch, it is obvious that he is already highly critical of the evil trinity of money, luxury, and ostentation that rules his society; and this attitude remains fixed throughout his remarkably long career, for whenever any of these problems is in any way prominent in his novels, it is almost invariably censured. The manner and degree of the censure may vary, being indignant and bitter at times, satirical and humorous on other occasions, but the position of the author continues unchanged. This steadfastness of purpose has been a noteworthy feature of Galdós' treatment of money, luxury, and cursilería, especially when considered in the light of the lengthy span of years covered by his novels.

As the sociologist and the moralist, Galdós has readily perceived that money, luxury, and cursilería are social maladies that are sapping the vigor and strength of his society, just as they have undermined other societies in both modern and ancient times. With his keen understanding of the problems, Galdós has recognized that the cure for these social ills lies not in the hands of politicians or economists or philosophers but rather in the hands of the teachers. Education is the only agent that can effectively combat these chronic infections, and this Galdós offers to his society in the pages of his novelas as he seeks to alleviate these evils that have so sorely afflicted his society.
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