THE TREATMENT OF AVARICE, RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE, AND PSEUDOMYSTICISM IN THE NOVELAS CONTEMPORANEAS OF BENITO PEREZ GALDOS

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By

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CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY OF BENITO PEREZ GALDOS

Benito Pérez Galdós was born in a small town, Las Palmas, in the Canary Islands in 1843. His father was a colonel in the local militia and had very little influence on his son's life. His mother, Mamá Dolores, was a domineering person. It is of interest to note that Benito bore a much more striking resemblance to her than to his father. She was a daughter of an officer of the Inquisition, and was of Basque descent. The house on 33 Calle del Cano was Mama Dolores' exclusive domain from 1823 to April 12, 1887, the date of her death. Benito grew up in a very rigid and stern home atmosphere, for his mother feared that the boy might develop traits that would prevent his becoming a worth-while person. There was a pronounced preoccupation with orthodox piety and religious activity in the Galdós' home. His mother loved him so much that she came to regard him as a sacred symbol of family unity, and was determined to control rigidly the direction which his life was to take.

About 1863 she persuaded her son to go to Madrid to study law. Seven years later, she learned that Benito had disregarded his law studies and had been struggling to become a journalist. Galdós' slight regard for the legal profession
is shown in his novel Dona Perfecta, where he gives an unflattering description of the law and the people who live by it.

Benito's infancy had been a period of trial for the entire family. He was not a very healthy child, and required constant care. To his playmates he was a timid, sickly, and ungainly little boy who could be easily victimized. It puzzled them that a boy who appeared to be so meek and humble at times showed himself to be bolder and more daring than his companions. He delighted in hearing his father's vivid accounts of the heroic struggle in Spain for national independence. To his childish mind Napoleon was something of a bandit who tried to take away something that his mother and father prized highly. Dr. Chonon Berkowitz, late professor of Spanish in the University of Wisconsin, writes that:

Galdós was:

A child who loved to explore the city proper, especially the public market and the San Telmo church with its fascinating collection of miniature boats. Benito Pérez found the highways and mountain trails around Las Palmas more attractive and, from the standpoint of a truant, much safer than the town streets. Much that Galdós observed and reflected on during his pleasant ramblings he undoubtedly stowed away in his memory for future use. Music, drawing, painting, architecture, literature—these were Galdós' artistic media during his student days, as indeed they were destined to be throughout his career. And he used them to transmute his sensations into their intellectual and spiritual essence.¹

Among his classmates he was known as an avid reader, and it is commonly believed that he knew by heart large portions of *Don Quijote*. At the University he studied a great deal of both Latin literature and history. While at school he found living quarters in the *Calle de las Fuentes*, where he could see the life of the picturesque *Barrios Bajos*. There he began to meditate upon the reasons for Spain's backwardness, for its poverty, and political instability. He began to write essays on political questions such as the one entitled *Le expulsión de los Moros*.

Later, he made two trips to Paris to gratify his curiosity about life outside of Spain. There he had the opportunity of going about the city, of admiring its monuments and its cosmopolitan populace, and especially of browsing the bookstalls along the Seine. Upon his return to Madrid, Galdos decided to become a novelist and for the next two years he spent long hours working on his first novel and at the same time writing articles for *La Nación*. While serving his literary apprenticeship in Madrid, he continued to read voraciously, especially from his private library of the novels of Balzac and Dickens. He had a large collection of the latter's works in both English and French. Other volumes in his library contained the works of George Sand, Victor Hugo, Herbert Spencer, Shakespeare, Goethe and Schiller. He also had a large collection of Greek and Roman literature in translation. At the University Galdos
became interested in ancient literature. Dr. J. Warshaw, professor of Romance Languages at the University of Missouri, states:

Without much question, the most lasting influence on Galdós, from the intellectual point of view, was that of English books and English thought. He was a lifelong admirer of Dickens in particular, of Scott, and of other English writers, and in his library at Santander, Dickens and Scott occupied places of honor. As Clarín aptly remarks, "Galdós, a mi juicio, iría a la Gran Bretaña por costumbres, política y hombres . . . pero no por mujeres."2

It is only natural that Galdós' preoccupation with the political, economical, and social problems of Spain should cause him to reflect this in his literary activity. His first work, La fontana de oro, was a historical novel that dealt with events during the reign of the bigoted Ferdinand VII. It was published in 1870, but attracted little attention.

Somewhere between June, 1866, and the fall of 1867 he wrote La sombra, a work in which he attempted to present in unified form many of the ideas with which he had concerned himself as a journalist. In research for these two novels Galdós learned the peculiar nature of the Spanish struggle for liberalism. In his preparation for writing El audaz he became aware of the forces responsible for Spanish absolutism. Dr. H. Chonon Berkowitz expresses the following opinion regarding these concepts:

The two works made him realize that human institutions are fundamentally only concepts and abstractions, and that the basic reality of society is the individual. Like some of the more advanced thinkers of his time he came to believe that social reforms cannot be brought about by revolutionary changes in institutions, but only by a spiritual and intellectual re-orientation of human beings.\

So enthusiastic was the reception of his third novel, Trafalgar, that he conceived the happy idea of writing a series based upon the history of Spain in the nineteenth century. By 1879 Galdós had finished two series of these novels under the title of Episodios nacionales, consisting of twenty volumes, ten in each series. In 1898, he again took up the Episodios and, before his death in 1920, added three more series of twenty-six volumes. These Episodios were indeed popular. In them, Galdós proved his rare ability to blend historical events with the novelist's imagination in such a way as not to distort history while making historical documents live. In addition, he wrote them in a manner that offended no one, although they painted a very revealing picture of Spanish society during the nineteenth century. The following criticism is made of the Episodios nacionales by Salvador de Madariaga:

They are indeed an imposing work. All this romantic material of the nineteenth century is turned to account, from Trafalgar (the title of the first episode) to the beginnings of the

3Berkowitz, op. cit., p. 92.
present reign. In these forty-six volumes, many of which are admirable, and none of which can be passed over, Galdós gave us the history of Spain as seen from the drawing-room of contemporaries, not from the study of the historian. Apart from their merit, the Episodios nacionales have been one of the most important elements in the formation of a Spanish national consciousness. Galdós was and is the most widely read of Spanish writers. His influence as an educator of the Spanish mind is incalculable.  

During the writing of the first series of the Episodios, Galdós conceived the idea of using the same type of novel to depict contemporary conditions. It was upon this type of novel that his chief claim to literary fame came to rest. The contemporary novel was not a romance, but a picture of real life presented in a conscientiously observant and impartial way. In 1870 Galdós had written an essay entitled Observaciones sobre la novela contemporánea de España. It is more than an abstract dissertation. It may well have been his announcement of a series of novels in which he would deal with various phases of modern life such as religious intolerance, vanity, fanaticism and pseudomythicism. In order to describe his own method, Galdós wrote:

Pero no he querido contravenir la ley que desde el principio me impuse, y fué contar llanamente mis prosaicas aventuras... que en nada se diferencian de las que llenan y constituyen la vida de otros hombres y no aspiran a producir más efectos que los que produce, sin propósitos de mover el animo del lector con rebuscados espantos,

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sorpresas y burladeros de pensamientos y de frase, haciendo que las cosas parezcan de un modo y luego resultan de otro . . . . Bien quisiera, repito, que en este campo de la fresca verdad nacieran todas estas hierbas, que son del ferraje de que se apacientan los necios; pero no puede ser, y lo escrito está.

Galdós' decision to turn to the contemporary scene secured for him prestige and leadership in the new literary movement. He became very popular with an enormous number of readers. In March, 1876, Doña Perfecta appeared. With its publication by the Guirnalda press, Galdós inaugurated the series which he called Novelas contemporáneas. Despite the fact that Doña Perfecta was not very enthusiastically received, Galdós proceeded with the writing of his next novel Gloria. The symbolism, violence and tumult of the first novel yielded in Gloria to analysis, reason, and philosophic reflection. Gloria made Galdós famous among Spanish intellectual circles, and was his first step toward recognition outside of Spain. He felt reassured with regard to his stature as a novelist and proceeded with the other contemporary novels: Marianela, La familia de León Roch, La desheredada, Angel Guerra, Lo prohibido, La de Bringas, Fortunata y Jacinta, and Realidad. As a result of the literary fame which Galdós enjoyed as the author of the Novelas contemporáneas he was elected to membership in the Academia Real in June, 1889.

5 Benito Pérez Galdós, Obras completas, IV (Madrid, 1941), 1901.
As a person Galdós was not easy to know. He was reserved, shy, and modest. He found it very difficult to speak in public. He was considered an eccentric by many of his friends, largely perhaps because he avoided literacy circles and felt most at home with children and people of the middle class. Galdós never married. His sister lived with him in Madrid and kept his books. Yet such was his popularity that a monument was erected to him in Madrid during his lifetime. Near the end of his life, he became blind, and King Alfonso himself led a list of subscribers to a national collection which enabled Galdós to live a comfortable life until he died on January 4, 1920, at the age of seventy-six. He was accorded a splendid state funeral which was attended by prominent officials as well as by influential members of the literacy circles. His death was mourned in the entire Spanish-speaking world.

There is a large diversity of critical opinion regarding the current popularity of Galdós. Salvador de Madariaga, in his book Galdós y la generación del 98 writes:

Why Europe and America should remain ignorant of one of the greatest creative artists the white race has produced is a mystery which, of course, like all mysteries outside of theology, admits the curious and inquisitive into its secluded privacy. Spain has not produced a greater novelist since Cervantes.6

6 José A. Balseiro, Novelistas españoles modernos (New York, 1933), p. 151.
Antonio Espina in his book *Spain* reflects a diametrically opposite position:

Galdós en literatura fue una "enorme mediana," como dijo Clarín de Canovas del Castillo. La menudencia cotidiana no le deja desplazarse a la universalidad del sentimiento o de las ideas. Cuando quiso dibujar caracteres extremos lo hizo en línea recta, despegándolos del suelo y rodeándolos de falsas atmósferas pseudofilosóficas o históricas. Caracteres cuya misión era más que vivir por cuenta propia, parece ser la de representar el papel que previamente les ha designado el novelista.\(^7\)

\(^7\)Ibid.
CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENTS IN SPAIN DURING THE LIFE OF GALDOS

The contemporary period in Spain dates roughly from 1888. From the time of Philip II, Spain had been in a state of continuous decline. Some effort was made by Philip IV to explain the poverty and depopulation of the country. Dr. R. Trevor Davies comments on this subject in the following manner:

The establishing of the Royal Council caused the sons of peasants to flock to the schools in order to gain acceptance among the educated classes. A large number of these aspiring students failed to qualify for the priesthood, or for any of the learned professions, becoming, in consequence, beggars, vagrants, and criminals, while many of those who became priests were forced by poverty into dishonorable practices. The public suffered in consequence from lack of laborers and artisans.¹

It was a matter of historical record that, despite all the measures taken against it, many clergymen of nineteenth-century Spain were wealthy and very powerful due to their dishonest activities. Many writers, historians and novelists attributed Spain's decadence to the excessively numerous clergy composed of men inadequately prepared from the standpoint of religion, education and vocation. Large numbers of

the priests inherited their positions; others were transferred from the army. Little seminary training was available. Some priests received only five hundred pesetas a month, a most inadequate sum. Inevitably, they were tempted to find ways to improve their lot. Eugene Savaiano quotes Professor Rafael Altaaira of the University of Oviedo as follows:

> The organization of the Church was employed to retard rather than stimulate progress in good government and material prosperity. The Church blocked all attempts at philosophical and scientific progress. It also failed to assume leadership in the field of education and material improvement, despite its favorable position to do so.²

Since the clergy exercised such a tremendous influence in Spain, it was only natural that the masses should be as fanatical, as bigoted, as intolerant and as opposed to progress as were their guides and counsellors in matters of morals, ethics, and religion.

During those days a new philosophy or philosophical spirit developed among Spanish people, mainly in Madrid. In it all truths were put to the test of rational examination. El libre pensamiento or freethinking became the gospel of its followers. This new philosophy of freethinking was named Krausism after its leading exponent, the German philosopher and educator Krause. It explained the creation of the world

in scientific terms that conformed with the latest advances of geology. Walter Pattison describes it as follows:

It called men to live nobly and simply, dedicating their lives to the service and enlightenment of their fellows; it held out hopes of social reforms and a betterment of man's terrestrial lot; it concerned itself above all with religion, advocating a pruning from existing religions of man-made rules, with a corresponding return to the essential religious spirit, fundamentally the same in all cults. Thus tolerance was one of its cardinal beliefs.  

Many of the established dogmas of the church were opposed by this new philosophy, such as asceticism, monastic seclusion, celibacy of the clergy, and persecution of dissenters. Probably one of the best descriptions of the philosophy in Spain was given by Clarín:

La filosofía en España era en rigor planta exótica; puede decirse que la trajo consigo de Alemania el ilustre Sanz del Río . . . . La filosofía del siglo entró en España con la influencia importada por el filósofo citado. Cuando ya mundo corrían con más crédito que los sistemas de los grandes filósofos idealistas de Alemania las derivaciones de la izquierda hegeliana y el positivismo francés y el inglés, en España la escuela Krausista prosperaba, y con riguroso método, gran pureza de miras y parsimoniosa investigación, iba propagando un espíritu filosófico, de cuya fecundidad en buenas obras y buenos pensamientos no pueden tener exacta idea los contemporáneos, ni aun los que más de cerca y más imparcialmente estudien este influjo, insensible para los observadores poco atentos.  

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Another school of philosophy that exerted great influence on Spanish thinkers was that of positivism as propounded by Auguste Comte, although its principles had been voiced ever since early Greek times. This theory of positivism began to be known in Spain around 1875, largely due to publicity it received from the debates of the Ateneo. Comte's theory divided the development of mankind into three stages: the theological, the metaphysical, and finally the positivistic. Magazines began to carry articles on positivism and reviews of books on the subject. Clarín offers a further revealing comment upon the enthusiasm aroused by the positivism:

The new philosophy appealed to the Spanish novelist because of its renunciation of metaphysics, or in other words, its emphasis on reality with a corresponding denial of the value of imaginative speculation.  

According to this philosophy, the first level of man's thinking about the causes of things led him to seek in mythology and theology the answers to his speculations. The second stage based its theory on highly fanciful imagination of metaphysics. The third stage, the positivistic, rejected all theological and supernatural speculations as to the cause of things. It held that all facts could be explained through scientific and natural phenomena. It attacked the old ways by confronting them with realism. In religion, its believers felt that goodness is God and that human beings are all parts

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5Ibid., p. 116.
of the infinite body which is God. The liberalism of the
Krausistas combined with the positivism of Comte produced
a synthesis which may best be described as a kind of humani-
tarianism. This humanitarianism found sympathetic response
among many contemporary philosophers. They were mainly con-
cerned with the victims of social injustice and the responsi-
bilities of the rich toward the poor. They considered that
society as a whole was guilty of various kinds of oppression
of the underprivileged classes. Specifically, society was
held responsible, in a large degree, for the degradation of
the poor. At this time the most serious social problem was
that of poverty and the attitude of the wealthy toward the
poor.

With regard to the artistic and aesthetic tendencies of
the latter part of the nineteenth century in Spain, the best
representatives of the new spirit are to be found in the
loosely-related group of intellectuals and artists known as
the Generation of 1898. The generation of 1898 was char-
acterized mainly by the two elements of Naturalism and
Modernism. Dr. Kessel Schwartz, of Louisiana State University,
comments upon Naturalism as:

A period when the novelist began what he termed
his experimental novel, and, as though he were
examining human beings with a microscope under
laboratory conditions, he sought to analyze the
effects of alcohol, heredity, and other factors.
This new movement, Naturalism, preached a de-
terministic philosophy. The individual could
not help himself, and thus, said many naturalistic
writers, society should be reformed. Even when an individual's actions seemed voluntary, they were merely the results of heredity and environment. To prove their contentions, writers of the school of Naturalism described low social classes, sensuality, and alcoholism. This extreme nonspiritual approach emphasized the primitive, beastial, and erotic qualities of life, at times verging on the pathological and pornographic.\(^6\)

The late nineteenth century saw Spanish society as quite complacent and simple. As a rule, people were resigned to the stagnation and lack of social progress that afflicted the country. But beneath this superficial tranquility Spain suffered increasingly from the decadence which had developed since the seventeenth century. During the last decade of the nineteenth century the cultural characteristics of the country were slowly changing. The previously mentioned Generation of 1898 was in effect a very heterogeneous group of intellectuals, statesmen, artists, and educators who had become intensely concerned with the decadence of Spain which had been increasingly manifest after Spain's inglorious defeat in the war with the United States. These men were united in their desire to break with the recent past, to analyze their culture and destiny, and diagnose the sickness that had led their nation on a downward path. They realized that in spite of all new discoveries in the sciences, the philosophical problems of life were not even close to solution.

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The philosophical and aesthetic movement created by the Generation of 1898 is commonly called Modernism. Dr. Schwartz describes this movement in the following manner:

Modernism, too, was born as a negation and reaction against preceding literature, and Frederico de Onís sees it as the Spanish form of the crisis in letters which led to the dissolution of the nineteenth century. It has been defined in terms of cosmopolitanism, aestheticism, exoticism, romanticism, individualism, amoralism, and many others. For some it is an outgrowth of French Symbolism. The movement was a pessimistic and negative one at first, and later it grew in acceptance. They declared that Spain was decadent and needed to change for the better. Most of its writers were divided into two groups, the idealistic and the materialistic. The former believed that by resurrecting the true spirit of Spain, to be found in El Greco, Don Quijote, and elsewhere, Spain might find her way back and go on to greater glories. The other group felt that Spain's salvation lay rather in copying the rest of Europe. They had no ready-made answers, but they knew how to ask the proper questions.7

The period from about 1905 up to the present has been defined by many as that of Ultra-Modernism. It consists essentially of a great variety of movements of which some have enjoyed varying degrees of popularity, but most of which have tended to disappear quickly. Due to their great variety and frequently opposing points of view, they are rather difficult to describe or define specifically:

Creacionismo was a poetic doctrine elaborated by Vicente Huidobro, a Chilean poet, in 1916, stressing the importance of creative art. Dadaismo, initiated by Rumanian Tristan Tzara in 1916, made of nonsense an end in itself in its attempts to shatter all connection with the past.

7Ibid., p. 38.
Disgusted with the disappearance of their rational world they deliberately attempted to create a kind of infantile movement which had to die of its own incoherence. Existentialism, a movement generally recognized as of French origin, preached that existence precedes essence, that man, unlike an inanimate object, creates his own essence through the use of his own will power. Man is faced with various boundary situations in his relationship to others, and the final boundary which cannot be overcome is that of death. Finally, Tremendismo, a new kind of Naturalism that deals with situations and events which are truly terrible. It accents environment rather than heredity as the major factor of constant conflicts. It had its beginning after the Spanish Civil War partly because of the disillusion stemming from it in the early 1940's.

It is very difficult to decide if these movements succeeded in their attempts to save Spain. Most of them were concerned with bringing practical reforms to their country. Some were conservative and some were revolutionary, but all were united in their dislike of the corruption, decadence, and mediocrity they saw around them.

The realistic novel in Spain, to a certain extent an outgrowth of the cuadros de costumbres, was primarily concerned with varying aspects of regionalism. Such writers as Fernán Caballero, Juan Valera, Palacio Valdés, and Pardo Bazán had concentrated upon presenting literary pictures of the regions of Spain with which they were more intimately associated. In the case of Galdós, there appears a writer born outside of Continental Spain, and one who was to write about the nation and its people as a whole rather than from a regionalistic point of view.

CHAPTER III

THE PERSONAL SIDE OF GALDOS

In spite of the great renown which Benito Pérez Galdós enjoyed during his lifetime, he was personally a reticent and uncommunicative man. When questioned regarding his opinion on various subjects, he customarily reflected at considerable length before making a brief response. In order to know the man it is necessary to study his writings. In his determination to familiarize himself with as much of the varied life of Spain as possible, he cultivated the acquaintance of many different social types, visited civic institutions, churches, government offices, and even disreputable bars.

Galdós was particularly critical of the Spanish clergy, and was among the first of his generation to express anticlerical sentiments in his literary works. He censured what he considered the undesirable qualities of the clergy, and was specially critical of those clergymen who used their offices and positions to meddle in the political and sociological problems of his time. He had scant regard for members of the clergy who sought personal advancements or material gain. This attitude has been aptly described by Eugene Savaino as follows:

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He condemned the use of the confessional as a means of directing spiritual and moral control over women penitents. He was opposed to the clergymen who, as tertulianos, influenced all family decisions according to their own bigoted nature. As a result, spiritual progress was blocked. Galdós especially objected to the fanatical attitude of the clergy in its opposition to national and intellectual advances.¹

His religious ideas aroused great hostility toward him, especially in the instances when he portrayed the intolerance and bigotry of some of his fictional clergymen and ultra-conservative laymen.

After Spain was defeated in 1898 and was deprived of the last of her colonies, Galdós became the precursor of the so-called Generation of 1898. He wanted to cast aside pretense and superficial values in order to achieve social reforms.

According to A. F. G. Bell,

He introduced realism into his novels by writing of every-day life, by describing an obvious fact and at the same time revealing how it came to exist. He had shown himself to be an artist of great power and, even more, an analytical critic as well. He and his generation of 1898 were rebels, fervently opposed to many traditional values and eager for a new, more powerful Spain.²

In spite of Galdós' customary reticence at formal gatherings, he enthusiastically participated in the conversations in the coffee houses and other informal meeting places.


In such places as the Ateneó he was more likely to listen than to speak, but because of the variety of topics discussed in such groups, he kept himself well-informed concerning the matters of most current interest.

When the new philosophy of Krausism or freethinking began to take hold in Madrid, Galdós had the opportunity to observe a new type of religious spirit. He sent frequent articles to the progressive newspapers in which he criticized the absolute authority of the Church. Galdós believed that real religion was noble and was far different from the narrow fanaticism of individual sects. Religious fanaticism bred hatred and division instead of uniting men into one brotherhood. Joaquín Casalduero describes Galdós in the following manner:

Galdós supera la actitud española, adoptando el racionalismo europeo, con el cual buscaba lo que une a los hombres. No es suficiente que los hombres se toleren unos a otros; la misma idea de tolerancia, es degradante para la dignidad humana. Galdós no tardó en encontrar el tema de sus obras; la sociedad española. No va a la historia para huir de la realidad y el presente; por el contrario, lo que quiere es buscar las raíces de su época para comprender el presente.3

By the time Galdós began to write his contemporary novels, he already regarded himself as a realist. He questioned the value of writing with an overabundance of speculative imagination, since he felt that observation was of

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much greater value. To him realism was superior to superstitions and fantasy, no matter how engaging the latter might be. He felt that literary realism would eventually help solve Spain's most pressing problem at that time: social injustice. At this point the following question is suggested: How was Galdós able to achieve a realistic approach in his contemporary novels? The question is probably best answered with this question:

Galdós tenía una visión precisa del personaje. Apenas tomaba notas para escribirlas, pero solía dibujar los rostros y figuras de los seres imaginarios. Novelaba rápidamente porque la vena creadora descansaba sobre dos aptitudes admirables: memoria vivificante e imaginación transfiguradora. En el momento preciso los detalles emergían de la memoria, esa memoria donde desde la infancia se venía cimentando inmensa muchedumbre de recuerdos.*

CHAPTER IV
GALDOS' TREATMENT OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE AND PSEUDOMYSTICISM

Galdos was so preoccupied with spiritual questions that he passed much of his time in what he called *higiene espiritual*. He spent many hours listening to sermons, choirs, and organ music, and many more chatting with priests, friars, nuns, and beggars, whom he regarded as persons playing an important role in the arduous process of earning salvation. With this background Galdos began his anticlerical campaign by writing three novels which have been called *la trinidad impía*: *Doña Perfecta*, *Gloria*, and *La familia de León Roch*. The publication of *Doña Perfecta* aroused a great deal of protest in Spain. Readers found it difficult to believe that Galdos, a Catholic, would openly attack the religion he professed. As a matter of fact, he never directly renounced the Catholic faith. In all his works he upheld Christian ethics as the only solution to the problems of mankind. It was the non-religious aspects of Catholicism that he questioned. He was convinced that not only did the Church block all attempts at philosophical and scientific progress, but that it failed to assume leadership in the fields of education and material improvement, despite its favorable position to do so. He never condemned the basic dogma of Catholicism.
It may be assumed that his attitude is expressed in the words of Dr. Eugene Savaino:

Surely, if the Church and State could have compromised on the issue of distribution of wealth and other lay problems in Spain, the conflicts which made the clergy the object of ruthless assaults and verbal vituperations would have been avoided; it was because of the protection of canon law that they were so irreconcilably hostile to the advancement of modern civilization.¹

A more striking picture of Spanish intolerance was revealed in *Doña Perfecta*. Galdós was keenly aware of the conflict between traditionalism and progress, and *Doña Perfecta* is in effect an allegorical treatment of this problem. The action takes place in Orbajosa, a typical provincial town of Spain, socially backward, whose entire population is prejudiced against everything that signifies progress. The individual and collective attitude of the Orbajosans is one of ignorance, narrow regionalism, and blind obedience to the clergy. Into this atmosphere comes Pepe Rey, a well-educated young liberal, and somewhat impatient and tactless engineer. Galdós described him in the following manner:

> En la conversación sabía mostrar una elocuencia picante y discreta, emanada siempre del buen sentido y de la apreciación mesurada y justa de las cosas del mundo.²


²Benito Pérez Galdós, *Doña Perfecta* (Boston, 1940), p. 22.
This sophisticated and pragmatic liberal quickly falls into a trap set by a clergyman, the spiritual advisor of Doña Perfecta. Pepe is eagerly looking forward to his meeting with Doña Perfecta and her daughter but cannot escape a feeling of depression and foreboding occasioned by the gloomy appearance of the countryside, the dilapidated old houses, and the pale and hungry faces of beggars in the streets. Pepe is the son of Don Juan Rey, a celebrated Madrid lawyer, who is an ardent advocate of the advantages of country life. His long friendship with his sister-in-law, Doña Perfecta, and his desire to see his son established on the family estate have resulted in an agreement between him and Doña Perfecta to the effect that Pepe and Rosario are to marry.

Doña Perfecta is the central figure in the novel. She passes most of her time in the church and devotes a considerable part of her fortune to church-sponsored activities. She continuously seeks the advice of the village priest, Don Inocencio. Her objectives in life are worthy, but her standards are rigid and the means she uses to attain them are cruel. Doña Perfecta justifies her actions by saying:

Verdad es que si vamos a mirar atentamente las cosas, la fe peligra ahora más que antes. En Madrid, que es la corte de donde vienen leyes y mandarines, todo es látrocinio y farsa. Yo, querido sobrino, hablándote más sinceramente de lo que tú mereces, te confieso que sí, que en efecto, he empleado el engaño para conseguir lo que al mismo tiempo sería el mejor bien para ti y para mi hija.

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3Ibid., p. 93.
Doña Perfecta's eagerness to marry her daughter Rosario to Pepe begins to fade immediately when she realizes that the liberal and progressive prospective son-in-law is the very personification of all that she opposes. Convinced that she will never be able to force him to conform to her narrow pattern of prejudice, intolerance, and unquestioning reliance upon the direction of the conservative clergy, she begins to plan a campaign in which her own daughter will inevitably play the role of sacrificial victim of her own bigotry. The first signs of discord appear the night of Pepe Rey's arrival. It is immediately apparent that the main interest of the story is destined to lie in the conflict between the new order, symbolized by Pepe Rey, and the old, as personified by the canon together with Doña Perfecta and her associates. Many of Pepe's ironic comments convince his aunt that he is an atheist. The canon, with a provincial's keen sense of intellectual inferiority, is always on the watch for Pepe's heavy sarcasm. When Doña Perfecta is convinced that Pepe is determined to oppose the priest, Don Inocencio, she makes plans to drive him from Orbajosa. Her anger and frustration develop into fanatical hatred. She confines Rosario to her room, on the pretext that her daughter is ill, so that the girl may have no opportunity of conversing with her cousin. Pepe, lonely and frustrated in his attempts to see his cousin, continues to irritate various people with whom he comes in contact. He censures Don Cayetano's preoccupation with the past
and his lack of interest in the present. He is scornful of the narrowness and ignorance of the provincial citizens, and calls to their attention several examples of what he considers practically a form of fanaticism in their hostility to liberalism and progress. He is unjustly burdened with lawsuits, insulted at church, isolated from his beloved Rosario, and finally ordered to leave Doña Perfecta's house. Pepe, assured of Rosario's love, determines to marry her without his aunt's consent. On the night arranged for the elopement Pepe is murdered by the order of Doña Perfecta, and the shock of his death drives Rosario into hopeless insanity. Galdos concludes his novel with the following description of Doña Perfecta:

"La pobre madre halla consuelo a su dolor en la religión y en los ejercicios del culto, que practica cada vez con más ejemplaridad y edificación."

Although in most of the action in the novel, Doña Perfecta is the central figure, the real enemy is her spiritual advisor, Don Inocencio. His objective is to drive Pepe away in order to marry his nephew, Jacintito, to Rosario. It cannot be denied that Pepe is to a certain extent responsible for the opposition which he encounters in Orbajosa. He is tactless and impetuous and inevitably offends his listeners when he expresses his opinions on the hypocrisy and prejudice that he observes in Orbajosa.

In the figure of Pepe Rey, Galdós depicts some of his own ideals and aspirations. Pepe is constantly looking for ways by which improved living standards and moral perfection may be reached. Pepe Rey pronounces and exemplifies Galdós' declaration of faith in human progress through education, science and industrialism, rather than through dogmatism and resistance to progress.

Galdós' deep religious convictions and his genuine esteem for the Church were offended by much that he considered false piety and bad taste. When Pepe visits the cathedral, he finds so many evidences of superstition and ignorance that he cannot escape a feeling of revulsion. The images resemble painted dolls. The robes in which the images of the saints were draped inspire laughter instead of respect. The altar appears ridiculous with the garish decorations. A phrase of Pepe that aptly expresses Galdós' philosophy is his reply to Don Cayetano's question about superstitions:

El misticismo en religión, la rutina en la ciencia, el amaneramiento en las artes, caen como cayeron los dioses paganos, entre burlas. La gente de este país vive con la imaginación. El mundo de las ilusiones se viene abajo con estrépito. La fantasía, la terrible lógica, que era el ama de la casa, pasa a ser criada.

According to Galdós, his novel Gloria was the result of a sudden inspiration. One day in December, 1876, as he walked in the Puerta del Sol, the idea of the novel came to his mind.

5Ibid., p. 37.
The action of *Gloria* takes place in a fictitious town called *Ficobriga*. According to Galdós the place exists only in the mind of the Spanish people or as he calls it "*el mapa moral del país*.  

It is a little city inhabited by people who are pleasant, helpful, and courteous. Their only defect is that they are intolerant in religion. They belong to a reactionary group that sees progress as a force which will lead only to confusion and instability. They yearn for the good old days of absolute monarchy and a powerful Church.

In *Gloria*, the conservatism mentioned above inevitably results in a conflict between Christianity and Judaism. Gloria's family has made great efforts to bring her up in an environment of traditional Catholicism. Her father, Don Juan Crisístomo de Lantigua, is a devout Catholic who regards the Church as the absolute authority in matters of religion. He proposes to marry Gloria to Rafael del Horro, an active member of the Church, because the latter's views on marriage are strictly religious or as Don Juan phrases it:

 Una piadosa unión por toda la vida, un Sacramento instituido por Dios, el paso más difícil y más delicado de la existencia.

Although Gloria has promised to obey her father, she dreams that some day an ideal man will come into her life.

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One day, after a shipwreck, a young man of Anglo-German background is rescued and brought to Gloria's home. The "perfect man" of Gloria's dreams materializes in the person of Daniel Morton. After providing for his physical welfare, Gloria's parents decide to investigate the state of his soul. He always avoids their questions by saying that the only two religions he recognizes are the religion of the good and the religion of the wicked. The crisis in the relations between Gloria and Morton comes after his confession that he is a Jew. The tragic nature of this conflict develops when Don Juan de Lantigua, Gloria's father, learns of her love for Morton, and dies from the shock.

In the opening chapters of the second part Buenaventura and Serafina de Lantigua, brother and sister of Don Juan are presented. They still have hopes that the Jew will be converted. After futile efforts, Serafina tries to persuade Gloria to enter a convent, but it is unsuccessful. Morton is accused of interrupting a religious procession and is imprisoned. After his release, Gloria tries to persuade him to become a Christian but to no avail. He feels that to marry a Christian will be an act of betrayal of his ancestors. Meanwhile Teresa, Gloria's aunt, upon realizing the shame brought to the Antiguas by Gloria's love for the Jew, decides to make marriage between them impossible by circulating malicious gossip about the relationship between Gloria and Daniel. The result of Teresa's interference is that Gloria
and Daniel do indeed engage in an illicit relationship. When Gloria becomes aware that she is pregnant, she stops seeing Daniel. Gloria arranges to deliver the child in the house of a woman whom she has engaged to care for her baby. She has stopped seeing Daniel, and he is unaware of the existence of the child. One night Gloria confides to a trusted servant, Serafina, that she has had a child of whom Daniel is the father. Serafina reveals this to the people with whom Daniel is living, and he soon learns of it. He decides to accept Christianity, not because of having been converted, but because of his sense of obligation to Gloria. As he and Gloria are about to be married, Morton is accused of being a fugitive from prison in England. He is imprisoned and becomes insane, and dies two years later in an asylum. Due to her sense of shame and dishonor and to the impossibility of marriage to Daniel, Gloria becomes ill and soon dies.

In *Gloria*, Galdós manifests his trend toward *Krausismo*, based in the fundamental belief that all religions are based upon the same love of God, and that it is the responsibility of each individual to find his own salvation and religion. The beliefs of both the Jew Daniel Morton and the Catholic Gloria Lantigua are fundamentally the same; that is, their concept of God is the same. The conflict develops from the drastic dogma and rules with which man has encumbered the spirit of religion. Gloria attests to this by saying:
He aquí que ataja nuestros pasos y corta el hilo
de vida que nos une, no Dios, autor de los
corazones, de la virtud y el amor, sino los
hombres, que con sus disputas, sus rencores,
sus envidias, sus vanidades, han dividido las
creencias, destruyendo la obra de Jesús, que a
todos quiso reunirlos.  

In addition, Galdós also reveals his antipathy toward
hypocrisy in his treatment of the character of Don Buena-
ventura. This ostentatiously pious man lacks strength to
stand up for his own convictions. The only solution he
offers to the dilemma of Gloria and Daniel is that the Jew
should pretend to be converted and marry Gloria.

In Gloria Galdós cites more than forty quotations from
the Bible in defense of his thesis that true religion is not
a matter of dogma, ritual, or narrow restrictions, but rather
that the concept of God is universal and capable of encompass-
ing a diversity of traditions and customs. Daniel expresses
the author's philosophy in this remark to Gloria's mother:

No: yo adoro al Dios grande; al que dio los
mandamientos; al que en su grandeza nos exige
ofrendas de verdad, justicia y bondad, no
formas de culto idolátrico.  

La familia de Leon Roch presents a problem similar to
the one found in Gloria. In this novel the differences in
religious attitude result in conflict and unhappiness in the
marriage of Leon Roch and María. As in Gloria, the wife is
a devout and conservative Catholic, and the husband, Leon
Roch, is a liberal who subscribes to no particular creed or

8 Ibid., p. 551.  
9 Ibid., p. 657.
sect, except his own rather loosely defined ethical code. He is to a large extent a disciple of Krause, and his lack of sympathy with his wife inevitably results in their being incompatible.

María, the daughter of a wealthy family, exercises her piety in many forms. She spends several hours in the church each day, or engages in solitary meditation and prayer at home. For a brief period after their wedding she makes an attempt to be tolerant of her husband's unorthodox attitude and behavior, but soon begins to be obsessed with the idea of converting her "atheist" husband. Her persistence gradually alienates León, and his reaction to the unhappy state of affairs at home is to absent himself from the house on various pretexts. He meets Pepa, daughter of the Marques de Pucar, and finds in his association with her a source of relief. Pepa, although not a beautiful woman, has a pleasant and sympathetic disposition. León's wife, María, finally makes it clear to him that she will never be satisfied until she has converted him. By this time León begins to realize that all the members of María's family despise him. María's father, the Marqués de Tellería, is obsessed with the desire to achieve social status. It never occurs to him that anyone might attain a position of respectability without conforming rigidly to the restrictions of the Church. He is so extreme in his religious conservatism that he disapproves of
Leon's study of natural history. He is essentially an inoffensive man, but is completely lacking in initiative or individuality and is incapable of thinking for himself. He constantly yearns for what he calls los días de antaño. As the situation becomes increasingly unhappy, Leon and the Marques de Tellería have a rather heated discussion in which the Marqués advises his son-in-law to conform to all the religious tastes of his wife, even though he is really opposed to them. Leon now realizes the extent of his father-in-law's hypocrisy. He still tries to convince his wife that her piety and orthodoxy are unreasonable, but she defends herself with these words:

Quieres que yo renegue de Dios, y de su Iglesia, que me haga racionalista como tú; que lea en tus perversos libros llenos de mentiras; que crea en eso de los monos, en eso de la Nada-Dios, en esas tus herejías horribles.  

Leon now is convinced that a break with the family is inevitable, unless he is prepared to sacrifice his convictions.

María's brother, Leopoldo, confesses to Leon that the family is on the verge of financial ruin as a consequence of unwise expenditures to gratify their vanity. He explains the situation to Leon in these words:

Creo que mis padres tienen la culpa. Nuestra educación ha sido muy descuidada. Es tontería disimular que mi madre no ha sabido apartarse y apartarnos a tiempo del torbellino de la

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10 Benito Pérez Galdós, Obras completas, IV (Madrid, 1941), 805.
sociiedad sedienta de goces; ha vivido mas fuera de su casa dentro. ¿No es monstruoso que mi madre sostenga su casa en un pie de lujo que no nos corresponde? / Infame vanidad!*

Leon lends Leopoldo a large sum of money, and as a result he is able to establish himself to a certain extent in the good graces of the family. Leon finally agrees to accompany his wife to church, hoping that by doing this he may persuade her to exert herself more actively in saving their marriage, and free her from the continual interference of her family. She refuses to accept his condition and he decides to leave the house, but his departure is delayed by the illness of Maria's brother, Leopoldo. Leopoldo has become ill from the excesses of the false mysticism with which he is preoccupied. He has resolved to eat nothing in order to mortify his flesh. His fasting is continued to such lengths that he literally starves himself to death. Galdós describes him in the following manner:

Al caer en la cuenta de su distracción sentía inquietudes y un vivo enojo contra sí mismo. Los dolores físicos eran recibidos dentro con un jubilo delirante que tenía su vanidad y su sibaritismo. Y mutiló en su pensamiento y en su sentir todo lo que no fuera el ardiente prurito de salvarse.12

After his brother-in-law's death, Leon leaves his wife and subsequently encounters Pepa, unhappily married and with a daughter called Monica. Leon pays frequent visits to

11Ibid., p. 125.  
12Ibid., p. 239.
Pepa's house and grows very fond of her child. María becomes increasingly jealous and after a violent scene she becomes ill and dies. Her death, however, does not solve the problem for León, for Pepa's husband, who has deserted her, returns to his wife. Pepa tries to persuade León to ask her husband to divorce her, but León, in spite of his genuine affection for Pepa and her daughter, lacks the strength of will to confront the husband of his mistress. He leaves Pepa's house, and after writing her several letters to reassure himself of her well-being, he terminates his relationship with her.

In this novel Galdós portrays characters who are so absorbed with the outward appearance and religious ceremonies that they fail to distinguish between false mysticism and genuine piety. He does not attack the genuinely spiritual side of life, but he has scant regard for smugness and hypocrisy. Galdós regards all men as equal in the sight of God, regardless of race, color, and belief. The agnostic León sincerely loves his beautiful wife, and desires to save his marriage even at the cost of some of his convictions, but María's rigid intolerance and complete lack of sympathy with his vague humanitarianism result in an impossible domestic situation for both of them.

Galdós, indeed, believed in the equal rights of all human beings. He attacked intolerance based on emotion and prejudice. To him true religion was something to be practiced
in daily life. Leon Roch's particular beliefs, or lack of them, are not important. Galdós' message in the novel is that he had no sympathy toward discrimination, narrowness, or intolerance in general.

_Misericordia_ is one of Galdós' most widely-acclaimed novels. It deals with life in Madrid in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It is particularly concerned with the struggles of the lower classes at a time when they are the victims of intolerance and neglect by the capitalistic element of society.

The action concerns the vicissitudes of a formerly financially independent woman who has suffered reverses. Doña Francisco Juárez de Zapata is proud of all her past, but refuses to do anything about her present impoverished condition. She is reduced to the verge of starvation, but scorns the idea of working for a living. The central figure, however, is her old servant Benigna who remains loyal to her throughout her misfortunes, and is obliged to support her by begging in the streets.

Galdós reveals his humanitarianism in a very simple manner in _Misericordia_. The novel presents his vivid description of the conditions of a poverty-stricken class, as Benigna comes in contact with beggars like Frasquita, Paca, and Obdulia. Doña Francisco is a lady of quality who through reckless spending, has brought herself and her family to
starvation. Nina, her servant, pretends to be working for a priest and by begging is able to sustain the family. In the course of begging she meets a blind Mohammedan beggar and Nina, a Christian, ignores completely the religious beliefs that separate them. She finds great consolation in caring for Almudena, even after he appears to be a victim of leprosy.

In his portrayal of the character of Don Francisco Aponte, Galdos calls attention to one of the most prominent causes of social and economic backwardness in Spain at the time in which the action of the novel is presumed to occur. After inheriting his family state, Don Francisco has devoted his life to social activities, squandering his fortune in an attempt to keep up appearances. Now impoverished, his pride will not allow him to beg, and he would rather die than expose his real financial condition. Eventually Benigna brings him to live in Dona Francisca's house and sustains him in the same manner that she does her mistress.

In one of Nina's begging expeditions, she is arrested and taken to the workhouse. Shortly afterward, Dona Francisca, by a stroke of luck, inherits a large fortune and her social position is re-established. After Nina's release from the workhouse, she goes to visit her mistress. Dona Francisca, however, exhibits little gratitude, and dismisses her with a very small pension. The fact that Dona Francisca has regained a position in society has caused her to become selfish, bigoted, and intolerant. As Nina sees the sudden
change of Doña Francisca, she recognizes the materialism and greed of her former mistress, and in a moment of despair she cries out: "Afrenta de Dios es hacer bien." When Doña Francisca senses the harshness of Nina's words, she asks for forgiveness. However, the fact that Nina's friend, Almudena, is ill with leprosy and is known as merely a blind beggar makes the situation worse. Benigna complains of her mistress' refusal to shelter the blind beggar and reproaches her, saying:

A casa le traía, sí, señora, como traje a Frasquito Aponte, por caridad. ¿Si hubo misericordia con el otro, por qué no ha de haberla con éste? ¿O es que la caridad es una para el caballero de levita y otra para el pobre desnudo? Yo no lo entiendo así, yo no distingo. Por eso le traía; y si a él no se le admite, será lo mismo que si a mí no se me admitiera.

Doña Francisca, however, exhibits no gratitude, and Nina has to seek consolation in her devotion toward her old friend the blind beggar, Almudena. Nina shelters herself and the blind beggar, Almudena, under a bridge on the outskirts of town. She continues to support herself and her friend by begging.

In this novel Galdos calls particular attention to the plight of the poverty-stricken lower classes of Spanish society, and to the callous attitude of the government, the Church, and of the substantial element of society toward

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them. In the characterization of Don Frasquito, the novelist expresses this censure of false pride in people who feel that they have to keep up appearances, regardless of their financial status. Galdos does not even hesitate to attack the Church and the clergy, which by distributing alms to the poor seek only to satisfy their physical needs, instead of trying to bring them out of ignorance and superstition with education. The frequent imprisonment of beggars calls attention to the State's lack of any consistent program for improving or irre- radicating the miserable situation in which the beggars found themselves.

Benigna, in Misericordia, stands out as a woman who practices Christian charity in the truest sense. Although she is ignorant and superstitious, she is by far the most admirable character in the novel. Her self-sacrifice and devotion are rewarded in some cases with ingratitude and neglect. In his description of Don Francisco's false pride and Doña Francisca's selfishness and ingratitude, Galdos censures these evils by presenting them in vivid contrasts to the humanitarianism and Christian charity of the lowly Benigna.

In Angel Guerra Galdos brings into view two completely different lines of thought: first, that of Angel Guerra, as the central figure of a political movement trying to over- throw the government; second, that of Lere, as the repre- sentative of the ultrareligious movement, who later in the
novel changes her attitude, becoming more positivistic and democratic.

The action begins with a description of the Babel family. They have helped Angel very much in his desire to organize an attack upon the government. Guerra's objectives, although apparently good, are expressed in many different forms. He seems to be suffering from a delusion and obsession that eventually result in a type of fanaticism. He is constantly plagued with dreams of massacres and develops an agonizing fear of being arrested. His eagerness to help correct social injustices has led him into a desire to experiment with nebulous political theories.

Angel is attracted to his daughter's teacher Lere. His first marriage had been arranged by his mother and has resulted in unhappiness. Later, after the death of Angel's mother, his child became ill and died. Angel feels true passion toward Lere, but she refuses to marry him because she plans to enter a convent. Angel continues his attempts to persuade her, guaranteeing her complete freedom to work in all sorts of religious activities, but she still refuses. Failing to win Lere, his frustrated love takes a different direction. He suddenly develops an absorbing and anguished interest in religion. In his confession to the priest Casado, he describes in the following manner his attempts to resolve his doubts:
Tentaciones vagas de poner alguna mayor atención en el culto, casi, casi de practicarlo, y de cavilar en ello, buscando como una comunicación honda y clandestina con el mundo ultrasensible. Por de pronto reconocía que en el mundo de nuestras ideas hay zonas desconocidas, no exploradas, que a lo mejor se abren, convidando a lanzarse por ellas; caminos obscuros que se aclaran de improviso; atlántidas que, cuando menos se piensa, conducen a continentes nunca vistos antes, ni siquiera sonados.  

Eventually his physical love for Lere is transformed to spiritual love, and Guerra's constant preoccupation with spiritual problems causes him to have many visions. He conceives the idea of improving the conditions of humanity by following the teachings of Jesus. However, he still believes that science and politics help humanity. He calls his philosophy dominismo. The doministas believe that the best way to improve conditions in Spain is to follow Christ's teachings, but they make a concession to the fact that a man's first duty is to provide for his family. In addition to such family responsibilities, the adherents to this cult are expected to concern themselves with the sick and the poor. These modifications of the traditional teachings of the Church are unacceptable to the devout Lere and to the orthodox Don Juan Casado.

One day Angel is fatally wounded by a former associate who is trying to steal some of his property. Angel remains conscious for several hours, and at this time he convinces

14 Benito Pérez Galdós, Angel Guerra (Madrid, 1941), p. 1346.
himself that death offers the solution to his problem. Mistakenly, people have accused him of being a mystic. In his last words he thanks God for having brought him death, which he regards as a kind of door through which he can pass into the salvation he has been seeking. Some of his last words explain in a beautiful manner something of the nature of his dominismo:

De mi dominismo quimerico como las ilusiones y los entusiasmos de una criatura, queda una cosa que vale más que la vida misma: el amor...; el amor, si iniciado como sentimiento exclusivo y personal, extendido luego a toda la humanidad, a todo ser menesteroso y sin amparo. Me basta con esto.15

Angel Guerra reveals the ardent opposition of Galdos toward distorted religious practices and unhealthy mysticism. Galdos apparently conceived of religion as something of a mixture between the spiritual and the practical. He believed that the ills of humanity could be cured by translating the ideals of Christian love into action. Instead of trying to solve the problems of Spain either by applying the practices of traditional Christian charity as advocated by the Church, or by complete absorption in any form of pseudomysticism, Galdos presents in Angel Guerra a man who finally convinced himself that love for humanity expressed in a practical form is the real essence of Christian teachings. Galdos calls attention to the unfavorable aspects of false mysticism in

15Ibid., p. 1573.
portrayal of the confusion and spiritual torment of Angel Guerra while he attempts to force his own religious attitudes into conformity with the unquestioning orthodoxy of Leré and Don Juan Casado. In the words of his protagonist, Galdos expresses his sane and practicable religious attitude:

Mientras las ideas están despiertas en el cerebro, no hay que pensar en dormir. La vida no es fácil mas que para los tontos. Con tanta tutela y el mirame y no me toques del poder central, ¿qué resulta? Que los pueblos no se ejercitan, que no se educan, que se vuelven idiotas. Yo me río a carcajadas de los escrupulosos sociales y del, fariseísmo de todo ese vulgo tiránico y egoísta que quiere gobernarnos. En lo esencial quiero seguir fielmente la doctrina de Cristo. Amparar al desvalido, sea quien fuere; hacer bien a nuestros enemigos; emplear siempre el cariño y la persuasión, nunca la violencia; y reducir el culto a las formas más sencillas.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 1260, 1274, 1276, 1512.}

\textit{Fortunata y Jacinta} is generally regarded as Galdos' most significant work. It is a novel of immense proportions and the scope and complexity of the action is such that a detailed summary would be impracticable in view of the purposes of this investigation. In the interest of brevity, it has seemed advisable to quote directly the observations to be found in one of the most recent histories of Spanish literature. Dr. Schwartz and Dr. Chandler state:

In the novels of the contemporary period, Galdos deals with all aspects of life of all the social classes, and analyzes the vices of Spanish society. His masterpiece is \textit{Fortunata y Jacinta}, 1886-1887, in four volumes, which Menendez y
Pelayo claimed gave the "illusion of life itself, so completely have the characters and atmosphere been worked out." Basically the work is a contrast between two women, Jacinta, the wealthy middle-class wife, and Fortunata, the mistress of the lower-class. The principal parts of the novel consist of the varying relations between these two, though Galdós fills his book with a whole host of types, rich and poor, among them, the pathological Maxi, Fortunata's husband. Galdós was interested in mental illness and pathological types and shows a surprisingly modern knowledge of them. Jacinta is sweet, refined, and angelic, and Fortunata is generous and warmhearted but of stronger passions. Fortunata gives Juanito Santa Cruz the child that Jacinta would have liked to bear, again a favorite theme of Galdós that the common people are virile, whereas the upper classes are decadent and thin-blooded. Gerald Brenan claims the characters are drawn with perfect skill and that no writer except Tolstoy has shown such a deep and intimate understanding of women's characters and feelings. Maxi's philosophy once more sums up the conflict between the ideal and the real in his contention that spirit and thought cannot be stilled by physical limitations. 17

In spite of the great volume and immense scope of this masterpiece of Galdós, it does not offer any contribution of great significance to an understanding or analysis of the particular themes with which this investigation is concerned. A search for examples of preoccupation with avarice, religious intolerance, or pseudomysticism discloses that only the latter plays a role of relative significance in the novel. This element appears when Juanito Santa Cruz, realizing that his childless marriage is faced with the threat of dissolution or failure, attempts to rationalize or justify his wretched situation by becoming intensely, almost fanatically, interested

in his spiritual welfare. His own words make it evident that his apparently profound religious experiences were not so much a matter of genuine spiritual conviction as they were an attempt on his part to find or to create for himself a means of escape from his predicament:

Yo inventaba religiones; yo queria que todo el genero humano se matara; yo esperaba el Mesias. La encarnacion es un estado penitenciario o de prueba. La muerte, es la liberacion, el indulto, o sea la vida verdadera. Procuremos obtenerla pronto.18

Galdos' presentation of this attempt on the part of one of his protagonists to alleviate or to escape from his own responsibilities by seeking refuge in a kind of mysticism is not uncommon in several of his novels of the contemporary period. In the case of Juanito Santa Cruz, the superficiality of his religious feelings, and his failure to find in it what he was seeking are clear indications that his new piety and penitential attitude were at best manifestations of pseudomysticism. The author's own wholesome but not altogether orthodox attitude toward spiritual and ethical questions may be to some extent deduced from a critical comment of Federico de Onis with regard to this novel:

Si a mi me preguntasen que es lo que yo creo ser la esencia de la cultura espanola, trataria de buscar la contestacion precisamente en la tolerancia moral de Galdos: tolerancia moral que hace posible la profunda comprension estetica propia de lo que vagamente se llamó el realismo espanol y que permite ver en todo ser hermano, hasta en los mas bajos y miserables, la bella luz de la humanidad: esa

comprension estetica que adquiere sus formas supremas en la mas gabal expresion moderna en la obra de Galdos. 19

In Nazarín Galdos gives his personal view on how to fight religious intolerance. So far, all the novels already mentioned consisted of attacks upon religious extremism. However, in Nazarín and Halma Galdós turns from his lack of sympathy with supernaturalism to give us his prescription for social and religious regeneration. In Nazarín Galdós approaches the problem of intolerance from a different angle. He presents, in the person of the priest Nazarín, a figure who is at the beginning a man of unquestioned piety and sincerity of religious convictions. He is not, as was true of several of the previously mentioned adherents to pseudomysticism, a person who is seeking a solution to his problems by deliberately losing himself in religious activities and preoccupations.

The action of the novel is very simple, but it is enriched by moralizing statements made by Nazarín. This Catholic priest holds an interview with a reporter, in the course of which he is asked to express his opinion regarding his concept of Christianity as opposed to that of conventional teaching and practices. As he expresses his opinions, the reporter's friend, a columnist and editorial writer, is unsympathetic to Nazarín's ideas of making a practical

19 J. L. Sanchez, Galdós (Caracas, 1943), p. 35.
application of Christian principles. The reporter finds very much common sense in the priest's apparently idealistic theorizing. Nazarín's philosophy seems to be a combination of humanitarianism and positivism. In spite of the fact that he perceived the sincerity of Nazarín's ideas and their potential value as a regenerative force if put into practice, the reporter is experienced and realistic enough to realize that Nazarín's theories are not apt to be sympathetically received by the people. In all probability, in the reporter's opinion, Nazarín is likely to be regarded at best as a quixotic idealist with a vivid imagination, and at worst as an unprincipled scoundrel intent upon victimizing his gullible listeners. The truth is that Nazarín's ideas of Christianity go far beyond abstract discussion. Galdós created Nazarín with the purpose of presenting his ideas of common sense Christianity in the words and deeds of a truly dedicated individual.

Nazarín is not essentially a novel of action. The author's ideas are presented largely in the various comments and statements of belief by the priest Nazarín in the course of his travels about the country. It is possible to compile a list of such statements which in effect provide what might be termed the religious philosophy or articles of faith of the author's spokesman. The following representative quotations are listed without comment or translation in the
belief that they present an adequate summary of the theories and ideals of Nazarín:

"Bonita sociedad tendríamos si esas ideas de vanidad inventada por el egoísmo prevaleceraní (p. 20).

Crean ustedes que entre todo lo que se ha perdido, ninguna pérdida es tan lamentable como la de la paciencia (p. 25).

Su credo, en la relación social, es, según veo, la pasividad (p. 27).

Sobre que la opinión del mundo no significa nada para mí, no es bien que yo tome sus consejos (p. 66).

El mundo es muy malo, la humanidad inicua, traidora, y no hace más que pedir eternamente, que le suelten a Barrabás y que crucifiquen a Jesús (p. 69).

Cristo nos enseñó a padecer y aceptar con calma el sufrimiento de la maldad humana (p. 71).

¡Cuan hermosa la naturaleza, cuán fea la humanidad (p. 117).

La soledad es una gran maestra para el alma (p. 118).

La ira es daño gravísimo que sirve de cebo a los demás pecados, y priva al alma de la serenidad para vencer el mal (p. 121).

Sin el amor del prójimo, ignoro si siente usted el amor de Dios (p. 124).

La ciencia no resuelve ninguna cuestión de trascendencia en los problemas de nuestro destino (p. 140).

No basta predicar la doctrina de Cristo, sino darle existencia en la práctica (p. 168).

Para patentizar los beneficios de la humanidad, es indispensable ser humilde (p. 182).

Amad a Dios y al prójimo, acariciad en vuestras almas el sentimiento del tránsito a la otra vida (p. 197).
Soportemos la humillacion en silencio y consolemonos mirando a nuestras conciencias (P. 198).

El fin del hombre es vivir. No se vive sin comer. No se come sin trabajar (p. 199).

Los fingimientos de oración llevan el oficio satánico (p. 201).

Galdós has created a particularly effective agent for the expression of his ideas in the character of Nazarín. The latter is a simple and unpretentious priest whose motivation is a sincere love for humanity not colored by any ulterior designs or ambitions. He has no ambition to gain a more lucrative church office, or to enhance his reputation and prestige as a preacher. It is obvious from the statements of Nazarín that Galdós considered intolerance and ultraconservatism in religion as factors definitely detrimental to the current welfare and future progress of society. Galdós was passionately concerned for the oppressed, the meek, and the poverty-stricken. He insisted upon the right of each individual to his own religious beliefs and practices.

After Nazarín’s conversation with the reporter, he sets out to do all he can to help persons in need. In one of his charitable activities he meets Andara, a prostitute, and promises to help her by offering her an opportunity to give up her sinful life, with the assurance that he will be responsible for providing her with necessities from then on.

20 All direct quotations of the comments of Nazarín are taken from the edition of Nazarín, published by Editorial Losada, S. A., Buenos Aires, 1943.
Later he meets Beatriz, another woman of easy virtue, and in order to support and protect the two women he submits to the indignity of becoming an itinerant street beggar, accompanied by his two proteges. As a beggar Nazarín is still practicing all the Christian virtues. Upon seeing his indiscriminate charity, people began to question his morality and to regard him as a nuisance. He refuses to defend himself, and submits to the indignity of ecclesiastical censure. Finally, as a result of his unconventional behavior and his persistent public denunciation of hypocrisy and other forms of false piety, Nazarín is imprisoned without being informed of the specific charges against him. This conclusion to the activities of the simple idealist is the author's not very subtle manner of stating his belief that genuine Christian charity, if it happens to be somewhat unconventional, is likely to be unfavorably regarded.

In 1895, the year in which Nazarín was published, appeared a continuation of this novel entitled Hálma. The latter is not only a sequel but a complement to Nazarín. As in the case of Nazarín, the novel takes its name from that of the principal character. The Condesa de Halma is a noblewoman of deep religious convictions and strong social conscience. She has conceived a desire to establish a kind of benevolent-religious congregation of which the chief purpose would be aiding the needy and oppressed among the lower
classes. The apparent similarity of her charitable impulses to those of Nazarín, and her proposals for carrying out her designs lead her into an acquaintance and association with him. She secures Nazarín's release from prison when she learns that he is indeed an idealist who practices what he preaches. Doña Halma has been extremely unhappy since the death of her husband, and her interest in charitable activities of a religious nature has been aroused by her desire to free herself of a feeling of frustration and futility. Nazarín's ideas have already penetrated into the upper ranks of society, and when Doña Halma hears of his theories and activities she regards him as a kindred spirit. After Nazarín leaves the prison, the two discuss at great length their respective plans for aiding the unfortunate. In the course of these discussions Doña Halma reveals that she is motivated primarily by a desire to find or establish a kind of refuge in which she can live in an atmosphere free from sin and evil and devote herself to religious meditation. In this respect she finds herself at cross purposes with Nazarín, who does not seek to escape from life's problems, but rather to find at least a limited solution of them by actively seeking to remove or alleviate their causes. In spite of this diversity of opinion regarding the most effective manner of achieving their aims, Nazarín and Doña Halma are each attracted by the obvious sincerity and zeal of the other. At the beginning of her conversation with Nazarín, Doña Halma is conventional
in her thinking and is naturally somewhat surprised at the liberal and decidedly unorthodox sentiments expressed by Nazarín. She attempts to elicit from him a definite statement of his beliefs and Nazarín's response is best stated in the comment subsequently made by the Condesa:

Se mostró sorprendido y me dijo que sus actos son la expresión de sus ideas, y éstas le vienen de Dios; que no conoce la literatura rusa más que de oídas, y que siendo una, la humanidad, los sentimientos humanos, no están demarcados dentro de secciones geográficas, por medio de líneas que se llaman fronteras. Aseguré después que para él las ideas de nacionalidad, de raza, son secundarias, como lo es esa ampliación del sentimiento del hogar que llamamos patriotismo. Todo eso lo tiene nuestro don Nazario por caprichoso y convencional. El no mira más que a lo fundamental: la abnegación, el amor a la poesía, el desprecio de los bienes materiales, la paciencia, el sacrificio, y el perdonar los agravios.21

As Doña Halma, in the course of her discussion with Nazarín, becomes more familiar with his philosophy of active application of Christian precepts, she is convinced that her original plan to seek comfort and fulfillment in a life of contemplation and isolation is not the most effective solution to her problem. In spite of the opposition of some of her relatives and friends who regard her as a veritable saint, she abandons her original project and resolves to return to a normal manner of living. She eventually remarries, and it may be assumed that here Galdós is reiterating his belief that society in general benefits more from the actions of

truly charitable individuals in active life than from the meditations and prayers of real or would-be recluses and mystics.

The humanitarian philosophy of the author is further emphasized in this novel in the episodes dealing with the relations between Nazarín and the priest Manuel Flores. The latter is a wealthy man whose consuming ambition is to attain a high position in the Church. As a result of his associations with Nazarín he reaches the conclusion that in spite of the fact that he has achieved a reputation as an eloquent preacher, he has in effect always been a hypocrite. This realization of his failure as a man and as a priest is largely responsible for his subsequent illness and paralysis after an agonizing period of self-examination and remorse. At the point of death he confesses to Nazarín that his life has been a vain farce. Before dying, he receives this counsel from Nazarín:

Nada conseguirá usted por lo espiritual, por lo espiritual puro; todo lo tendrá usted por lo humano.22

It is apparent, as stated earlier, that the idealist Nazarín is the spokesman for the humanitarian ideals of the author. Galdós creates a situation of tragic irony by representing the visionary priest as a man who is persecuted and even considered insane because he insisted upon translating

22Ibid., p. 338.
into action the beliefs contained in his sermons. At first glance, Nazarín appears to be the antithesis of the popular conception of a mystic. But the fact is that in the true sense of the word he does possess the qualifications that entitle him to be considered a member of this infinitely varied congregation. A comprehensive analysis of the character of Nazarín appears in the conclusion reached by the priest Manuel Flores. After becoming acquainted with Nazarín, and realizing the depth and sincerity of the latter's commitments to his ideals of Christian charity, Flores made a comparative study of Nazarín and some of the Russian mystics. His impressions are expressed in the following translation from the critical work of Professor Berkowitz:

Let each one think whatever he pleases about this unfortunate Nazarín. You have asserted that he is a mystic. Nazarín's filiation, very clearly it is here in our own midst, in the land of saintliness and chivalry. You might call a mystic the politician who ventures out into the unknown; you might call a mystic a soldier whose only desire is to fight; you might call a mystic the priest who sacrifices everything for his spiritual ministry, and even you who wonder over the fields of ideas, worshipping a Dulcinea who does not exist, or looking for a beyond into the strange aberration of being mystics without being religious.23

In Tormento, Galdos gives us the history of an unfortunate and innocent girl as she is corrupted by the evils of society. The name of this girl is Amparo Sanchez. She is an orphan and

is obliged to earn her own living by working as a housekeeper for the Bringas family. Don Francisco de Bringas y Caballero is a fifty-year old man who has spent most of his life working in the court. He has no special ambition, no vices, and considers himself a moderate man. His wife, Doña Rosalía Pipaón, is a beautiful woman, much younger than Don Francisco. Her two absorbing interests in life are her ostentatious piety and the small allowance she receives from her husband's pension.

Doña Rosalía Bringas considers herself a superior being and constantly attempts to call attention to this superiority by sprinkling her conversation with Biblical quotations, many of which are by no means pertinent to the subjects under discussion. Her choice of quotations is not based on either logic or scholarship, but is obviously an attempt on her part to make her listeners believe that she is not only a very pious woman, but that she is also very learned. As a matter of fact, Galdós seems to expect the reader to classify her almost immediately as a hypocrite or false mystic. In addition to her constant emphasis upon her piety and preoccupation in general with spiritual matters, Doña Rosalía insists upon completely dominating her weak-willed husband. The latter would have been perfectly capable of handling his affairs and supervising the financial and domestic affairs of the family. His wife, however, refuses to grant him any responsibility in the administration of the household because her
sense of superiority leads her to believe that she alone is capable of defining and solving the problems that arise, regardless of their magnitude or insignificance.

The housekeeper Amparito presents a sharp contrast to the domineering Doña Rosalía. She is completely sincere in her devotion to the ideals of Christian charity, and she submits without complaint to the indignities and injustices of her mistress. Doña Rosalía's antipathy toward Amparo is occasioned by her jealousy of Amparito's genuine piety, and by her realization of her own unworthiness. Her reaction to this state of affairs is to abuse Amparito, whom she nicknames Tormento, with frequent insults and excessive demands with regard to her work. There is also a suggestion that Doña Rosalía suspects that her husband's kindness toward Amparito is due to something more than ordinary generosity and sympathy. One day, Agustín Caballero, a cousin of the Bringas family, arrives in Madrid from South America. He falls deeply in love with Amparo, because he admires her high moral qualities, her amiable disposition, and her obvious sincerity. Amparo, however, has not told anyone of an adventure she had as a girl. Just when it seems that she has found happiness with Agustín, she receives a passionate letter from her former lover, Pedro Polo. Polo is a dissolute priest who had seduced her when she was a mere girl. Amparo disregards his first letter, in which he begs her to return to him. However, motivated by fear of exposure and by her
misguided sympathy for the undeserving priest, she begins
to live a double life. She seeks to visit him each day in
order to care for him during an illness, the gravity of which
he greatly exaggerates, and to provide the companionship
which she senses the wretched man needs. In spite of Polo’s
frequent attempts to persuade her to become his mistress
again, Amparo is able to resist him. Failing in his efforts
to exploit Amparo as completely as he had planned, Polo com-
pels her to continue ministering to him by threatening to
commit suicide if she stops visiting him. Amparo lacks the
courage to tell the truth to Agustín, her fiancé. However,
she cannot persuade herself to break with him. Galdos de-
scribes her vacillation in this fashion:

Pero era tanta la debilidad de su carácter, que
ni la conciencia ni el afecto acertaban a
declararse, y el sí y el no, pasado un rato de
dolorosas tartamudeces, tornaban adentro. La
increíble fortuna no llevo al ánimo de Amparo
franca alegría, sino alternadas torturas de
esperanza y temor. 24

She is fearful of being exposed and attempts to poison
herself but is prevented by a servant who discovers her
intention and substitutes a harmless sedative for the potion
which Amparo planned to drink. Upon hearing of this incident,
Pedro Polo decides to leave her alone. Eventually, Agustín
comes to know of her relations with the priest, and, although
he is willing to pardon her, he acknowledges the impossibility

24Benito Pérez Galdós, Tormento (Buenos Aires, 1943),
p. 127.
of making her his wife. According to him, the only solution to the problem is to make her his mistress. She eventually consents, much to the displeasure of the Bringas family, and Agustín leaves the Bringas house to begin their illicit relationship in another section of the city.

In his portrayal of the intimate life of the household of Don Francisco Bringas, Galdós censures the large number of people who live pretending to be aristocrats, when they really belong to the middle class. They spend most of their lives trying to achieve titles that they do not deserve, even if in certain cases it means buying them.

Galdós was also harshly critical of many Spaniards that spent all their time bound to their offices. He attacked this empleo-mania because in effect these people were adherents to two religions; that of traditional Catholicism and a worship of class distinction. According to Galdós such people were interested in acquiring wealth, not for any charitable or productive purpose, but in order to enable them to secure acceptance in the higher social circles. Galdós describes this hypocrisy in the following manner:

"Este no va con los pobres y menguados Bringas, que por no bajar un ápice de la línea social en que estaban, sabían imponerse sacrificios domésticos muy dolorosos. Para este, Don Francisco suprimía el principio en las comidas durante tres meses."

25 Ibid., p. 44.
In Agustín, Galdós portrays a character who is essentially kind and forgiving. However, he is so profoundly influenced by the customs and traditions of the society in which he lives, and by his distorted sense of honor, that he cannot bring himself to marry Amparo. He feels a genuine affection for her, but such is his lack of strength of character that his only solution to their unhappy problem is to compromise the poor girl in the same type of unwholesome relationship as that in which Amparo and Pedro Polo had previously been involved.

In Pedro Polo, Galdós has presented an example of something relatively rare in Spanish literature. He portrays an unworthy priest who has sinned with full awareness of the enormity of his crime, but who lacks the religious conviction and strength of character to repent and make amends for the harm he has done to a trusting and impressionable girl. In spite of his inability to repent, he is so disturbed and oppressed by his guilt that he frequently entertains the idea of hanging himself after the fashion of Judas. Pedro Polo offers an analysis of his dilemma in the confession which he makes to Tormento, as he calls Amparo:

Y yo te hablare con franqueza. Mientras fui hipócrita y religioso histrion, no tuve ni pizca de fe. Allá, en las soledades del monte, estuve tentado de ahorrarme como Judas, porque yo también he vendido a Cristo. A veces me desprecio tanto, que digo: ¿No habrá un cualquiera, un desconocido, que al pasar junto a mí me abofetee? 26

26 Ibid., p. 163.
The dissolute priest was completely enslaved by his violent passion. He tried to break his bonds, but he did not have the strength. His religious vows were only superficial.

In *Tormento*, Galdos' denunciation of the middle class obsession with the material profit is a reflection of the author's belief that people should take pride in their work because of the real good which it accomplishes, and because he feels that the goals and ambitions of the Bringas family are based upon a set of false values.
CHAPTER V

GALDOS’ TREATMENT OF AVARICE

The four novels, Torquemada en la Hoguera, Torquemada en la Cruz, Torquemada en el Purgatorio, Torquemada y San Pedro, were enthusiastically received by the Spanish reading public. Galdós turned his talent from attacks upon clericalism, provincialism, and intolerance, to portray the spiritual evolution of a man whose avarice finally destroys him. As each novel develops, there is apparently a gradual spiritual change in the person of Don Francisco de Torquemada. However, it later appears that these changes are only pretenses on the part of the avaricious Torquemada in order to obtain even greater wealth.

In the first volume Torquemada is engaged in business as a small moneylender in a poor section of Madrid. He lives in a modest home, unmolested by the dreams of wealth. As his business increases, he is able to accumulate a considerable fortune by charging outrageous interest. When everything appears to be progressing smoothly, a series of unexpected events begin to occur which cause Torquemada to indulge in introspection and an attempt to analyze his own sentiments and define more clearly the meaning of his life. First comes the death of his wife, Dona Silva, who was probably the one...
whose constant interest in his affairs and whose keen business sense had restrained Torquemada from ruining himself financially as a result of careless business practices. Torquemada is shrewd and grasping enough to earn consistently high profits, but he is either unable or unwilling to keep accurate records and accounts. As a result, Torquemada becomes totally dependent upon his wife in matters of accounting and bookkeeping. Galdos describes her in the following manner:

No solo gobernaba la casa con magistral economía, sino que asesoraba a su pariente en los negocios difíciles, auxiliándole con sus luces y su experiencia para el préstamo. Ella defendiendo el centimo en casa para que no se fuera a la calle, y el barriendo para adentro a fin de traer todo lo que pasara, formaron un matrimonio sin desperdicio.¹

For a long time it seems that the moneylender will never recover from the loss of his wife. However, in time he finds consolation in his two children, especially in Valentín, who turns out to be a mathematical prodigy.

After the death of his wife, Don Francisco spends all his time looking for opportunities to acquire wealth. His economizing becomes so stringent that he avoids buying physical necessities. His obsession with money becomes so extreme that he even worries about the fact that his money is getting old while placed in a reputable bank.

¹Benito Pérez Galdós, Torquemada en la Hoguera (Buenos Aires, 1946), p. 12.
During the years preceding his wife's death, he had resolved to seek acceptance of the high social class and gradually attain his goal. He and his wife had agreed that the best way to gain this desired entry into high society would be for him to acquire a title by means of the outright purchase of a patent of nobility. With the death of his wife, Torquemada's determination to acquire a higher social standing begins to weaken. He is deterred by two considerations. First, he would have to pay a price for the title which seems exorbitant to him. Second, he knows that in order to associate with members of the aristocracy, he would find it necessary to submit himself to a rigorous and uncomfortable program of self-improvement designed to remedy the defects in his education and manners. In spite of his low social status, Torquemada feels nothing but contempt for the members of the aristocracy. His desire to mingle with them is based largely upon the idea that by so doing, he may find opportunities to increase his lending activities among the people who frequently find themselves obliged to borrow money in order to keep up appearances.

Torquemada continues to prosper in his relatively humble surroundings, comforting himself with the thought that he is actually much better off financially than the majority of the socially prominent people that he knows. About a year after the loss of his wife, Torquemada suffers a second misfortune. His favorite son Valentín falls seriously ill, and soon dies.
Shortly before Valentin's death, Torquemada begins to feel that his son's illness is some kind of divine punishment inflicted upon him because of his avarice and his exploitation of the helpless poor people who fall into his clutches. In an attempt to appease this divine displeasure he withdraws a large sum of money and begins to distribute it rather haphazardly among the needy whom he has victimized. He attempts to rationalize his fear of retribution by stating that he is at heart really a sincere humanitarian. As he states it,

Yo soy humano; yo compadezco a los desgraciados; yo les ayudo en lo que puedo, porque así nos lo manda la Humanidad.2

In spite of his prayers, the boy dies. After providing his dead son with a splendid funeral, Torquemada becomes for a time mentally unbalanced. He suffers from the delusion that his son will be reincarnated. At first he believes that Valentin will speak to him from a portrait, and that subsequently he will materialize in bodily form. This delusion is the product of the father's grief over the loss of his son and may be explained only by the speculation that since Torquemada does not in the real sense have any religious convictions, he in effect conceives in his tortured mind a kind of hope and faith that his son is not irrevocably lost to him. As long as Torquemada succeeds in deceiving himself with the false hope that in some fashion his son may be

2Ibid., p. 46.
restored to him he continues his charitable activities among the people who have been victims of his avarice. During this time he spends many hours in a kind of meditation and expectancy seated in front of the portrait of his dead son. This is as near to prayer as Torquemada is able to approach. In his inability to reconcile himself to the idea that his son is indeed dead, he seeks a sort of relief in an outburst of blasphemy:

¿Qué tiene que hacer Valentín en el cielo? . . . Dios. ¡Cuánta mentira, cuánto embuste! Que si cielo, que si infierno, que si Dios . . . . . Toda está mal, y el mundo es un asco, una grandísima porquería.3

In spite of his inability to accept as real the death of his son, Torquemada is not capable of persisting in his attempts at reformation as represented by his acts of charity. Seeking to occupy his mind and free himself from the constant preoccupation with his dead son, he resumes his former business practices and again becomes a moneylender who victimizes his clients. He increases interest rates and extends his activities among an even larger number of borrowers whose unhappy circumstances make them easy victims of his avaricious shrewdness. As a result of this his fortune increases while Torquemada himself withdraws deeper and deeper into his shell of avarice and complete lack of human sympathy.

3Ibid., p. 95.
In the part of the Torquemada series entitled Torquemada en la hoguera, Don Francisco begins to consider the possibility of a second marriage. Dona Lupe del Aguila, his old friend, had begged him before her death to marry one of herssisters. She knew that Torquemada was suffering from the loss of Valentín. Dona Lupe was aware of Torquemada's delusions with regard to the reincarnation of his son, and she felt that a wife might help to restore him to a more rational attitude. Torquemada and the members of the Aguila family had been friends for several years and during his period of intense grief after Valentín's death, Torquemada had frequently visited them in search of consolation and advice. This family was impoverished at the time of Torquemada's acquaintance with it, but it was known that in the past it had been quite distinguished. Knowing this, the class-conscious moneylender suffers from a feeling of inferiority in the presence of the Aguilas. He describes his feelings in these words:

Lo que digo, no tengo política; en viéndome delante de una persona principal, ya estoy hecho un zangano y no sé qué decir ni qué hacer con las manos.  

Don Francisco is conscious of his inadequacies, but his lust for money prevents him from acquiring any spiritual or cultural enlightenment which may have enabled him to associate

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more easily with the Aguilas. For him, there is no heaven, no Christ, no sincerity of actions. As he saw it, every human action was based on self-interest.

Eventually he decides to marry Fidela del Aguila. Although she does not love him, she knows that this is the only way to escape from poverty. He chooses her because she seems to be humble and not inclined to be a spendthrift. Fidela, however, is dominated by her strong-willed sister Cruz. Her plan is to allow Fidela to marry Torquemada and then rule her brother-in-law as she sees fit. After the wedding, his sister-in-law, Doña Cruz, moves into Torquemada's house with the intention of living at his expense. Her plan does not succeed too well at first, as the miserly money-lender is disposed to spend none of his ill-gotten gains on the genteel parasites. The result is that for some months after the wedding, Torquemada's wife and sister literally almost starve. Then with the birth of a son, Rafael, Torquemada begins to behave a little more generously. This improvement lasts until it becomes apparent that Rafael is not a second Valentín. The child's slowness, and other indications of which the anxious father is only too aware soon convince him that his second son is not destined to possess the intelligence and talents that in Valentín had been such a source of satisfaction to him. It is questionable whether at this time Torquemada is capable of the emotion of love, but at any rate he apparently feels little paternal affection
for the child of his second marriage. Marriage and fatherhood having failed to effect any significant change in the nature of Torquemada, he devotes himself with renewed vigor to the acquisition of wealth.

In *Torquemada en el purgatorio* it is revealed that Don Francisco is unable to cope with the ambition and determination of the two women in his household. His sister-in-law, Cruz, gradually assumes the responsibility for the administration of the house, and thus succeeds in improving the situation for herself and her sister. Even though Torquemada has been deeply disappointed in his son, he is resolved to make as much of a success as possible of his marriage. His wife, at the instigation of her sister Cruz, begins to urge him to seek a position in society to which his wealth entitles him. The unhappy Don Francisco is persuaded to spend increasingly large amounts of money until eventually his wife succeeds in persuading him to buy a title of Marques. The new title brings him nothing but dissatisfaction because of the constant demands which it made upon his money. In addition to this, he has not overcome his feeling of inferiority and sense of inadequacy in the presence of the members of the social class in which he has hoped to establish himself. Galdos describes his disturbed frame of mind in the course of the first conversation which the moneylender has with the priest whom Torquemada called San Pedro:
Contóle, pues, Torquemada, el conflicto en que se veía. El tener que hacerse de un palacio, y la mar de pinturas antiguas, diseminando el dinero, y privándose del gusto inefable de amontonar sus ganancias para poder reunir un capital fabuloso, que era su desideratum, su bello ideal, y su dogma.\(^5\)

This is the first mention in the series of the priest, Father Gamborena, who is to play a significant role in the attempted spiritual regeneration of Torquemada in the last of the four novels, Torquemada y San Pedro. Torquemada is attracted to Father Gamborena because in his disturbed state of mind he sees a pronounced physical resemblance of the priest to his own conception of Saint Peter. Even in matters concerning his spiritual welfare, Torquemada is unable to free himself from his preoccupation with money. Possibly due to the fact that he has succeeded in literally purchasing a title of nobility and nominal improvement in his social position, he conceives the idea of also purchasing his own salvation. He attempts to make large gifts of money to the Church, but since Father Gamborena is aware of his ulterior motives, the latter refuses to act as intermediary for him.

Torquemada y San Pedro deals with the final phase of Torquemada's spiritual evolution. Father Gamborena and Fidela devote themselves to the difficult task of making Don Francisco aware of the effects of his avarice and in so doing

they try to convert him to the sound ideals of a Christian man. There is little action in this last story; for the most part it is composed of conversations between Torquemada and the priest. Torquemada realizes that he is growing old and he becomes increasingly concerned with the necessity of putting his spiritual affairs into some kind of order before it is too late. He makes a special effort to obtain the counsel of Father Gamborena by inviting him to lunch. After Torquemada attempts unsuccessfully to convince Father Gamborena of his penitence and contrition, the priest continues to visit him in his home, hoping eventually to effect a genuine conversion. The only excuse that Torquemada can offer for his avarice and materialism is that everything that he had really valued had been destroyed with the death of his son Valentin. During one of the priest's visits, Torquemada suffers a stroke from which he knows that he will not recover. He becomes increasingly eager to assure himself of his soul's salvation, but since he is unable to feel genuine repentance, his only recourse, as he sees it, is to persist in his attempt to buy his salvation. He tries to persuade Father Gamborena to enter into a contract with him according to which the priest would give him a guarantee of salvation in return for a large sum of money which he is willing to give to the Church. Father Gamborena, of course, refuses to be a party to such an arrangement but the
tormented moneylender will not accept defeat. Even at the point of death he continues to attempt to discuss in detail the terms of the investment which he wishes to make in the salvation of his soul. The last word that he utters before dying is conversion. Upon hearing this word, Father Gamborena poses a question which challenges the reader to seek an answer: "¿Conversion? ¿Es la de su alma o la de la Deuda?"6

Galdos himself does not wish to answer the question either for the good Father Gamborena or for the reader, as is apparent from a perusal of the concluding words of the novel:

De esta duda, ni el mismo Gamborena, San Pedro de acá, con saber tanto, nos puede sacar. El profano, deteniéndose medroso ante el velo impenetrable que oculta el mas temido y al propio tiempo el mas hermoso misterio de la existencia humana, se abstiene de expresar un fallo que sería irrespetuoso, y se limita a decir:
--Bien pudo Torquemada salvarse.
--Bien pudo Torquemada condenarse.
Pero no afirma una cosa ni otra . . . ¡cuidado!7

6 Benito Pérez Galdós, Obras Completas, V (Madrid, 1941), p. 1226.
7 Ibid., p. 1227.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Gallos, through his characters of Gloria, Doña Perfecta, León Roch, Benigna, and Nazarin, criticized the undesirable qualities of the clergy and of many Spaniards that exhibited an almost fanatical attitude in religious matters. He did not openly renounce his Catholic faith, but he questioned the interpretation which many of the clergymen and professedly devout laymen placed upon certain aspects of the Catholic dogma and teachings. In Doña Perfecta Gallos presents a vivid picture of an entire town whose inhabitants are socially and economically backward, largely because of their ignorance and provincialism, and the blind obedience to a bigoted and uninformed clergy. In Gloria Gallos approaches the problem of religious intolerance from a different direction and concerns himself with the prejudice of ultraconservative Catholics toward Jews, especially in the matter of mixed marriages. La familia de León Roch presents an account of the difficulties encountered when the freethinker León Roch marries the ostentatiously pious and rather narrow-minded María. María's preoccupation with her fervent but ineffectual attempts to force her husband into the rigid mold of her own ultraconservative Catholicism results in the destruction of
their marriage. Galdós used his pen as a powerful instrument to fight superstition and ignorance. He saw the misery that Spain was suffering as a result of vanity, idleness, greed, inadequate education, unreasoning conservatism, and pious self-delusion. He questioned the right of the Church to make decisions in life's activities because it fostered mental laziness and lack of initiative that invariably led to stagnation. Galdós, through the characters of Pepe Rey and Nazarín, expressed some of his ideals and faith in human progress through education, science, and "action." Yet, Pepe's and Nazarín's ideals find nothing but criticism and scorn, that eventually lead to Pepe's death in Orbajosa and to disgrace for Nazarín. According to Galdós' own admission, he regarded his novels as a means of propaganda; and all of them are, in a sense, thesis novels. Dr. L. B. Walton comments upon this issue in the following manner:

What, in Galdós' case, was his purpose? It was, in the first instance, we venture to suggest, the diagnosing of the spiritual malady from which he conceived Spain to be suffering. Clericalism is attacked merely because, in the opinion of Galdós, it fosters a certain attitude of mind, and it is that attitude of mind against which his shafts of irony are really directed. The malady of Spain, like the mal du siècle as it shows itself in the individual, is, Galdós seems to indicate, the result either of sheer laziness, or the lack of will, or the misdirection of energy. Whether it takes the form of orthodox piety or of vague philosophizing, it is equally to be condemned; for it is invariably a means of self-deception.1

As a result of this fanatical attitude toward religion, many of the characters presented by Galdós engage in activities completely opposed to the definition of true mysticism. In *La familia de Leon Roch*, María's brother, Luis, refuses to eat any food of which he is especially fond because by bringing mortification to the flesh he hopes to obtain salvation. This infliction of physical suffering upon himself gives him an acute spiritual pleasure. Galdós ridicules these pseudomystics by describing how they spent countless hours in prayers, attending mass daily, confessing each week, strengthening their beliefs in self-punishment, suffering, even to the point of seeking death, but yet they were corrupt, had no initiative, and were intolerant of the poverty-stricken classes. This pseudomysticism is again presented by Galdós in *Fortunata y Jacinta* in the behavior of Maximiliano Rubín, who after developing a distaste for life because of his awareness of his own weakness, convinces himself that death would bring him the liberation from temptation and infallible means to spiritual salvation.

In *Nazarín*, the protagonist is a priest who personifies some of the author's ideas on what constitutes real Christianity. The result is the creation of an ironic situation in which a truly good and pious man sincerely tries to put into practice what has been preached in his religion for almost twenty centuries. *Nazarín* is a clergyman who has no
ambition for high ecclesiastical office, and whose activities are based upon his uncompromising interpretation of the ideals of Christian life. His attempts to help, either by word or deed, those who need it cause him to be regarded with suspicion and distaste by both clergymen and laymen. The account of his earnest but largely ineffectual efforts to put Christianity on a practical basis provides Galdo's with a means of presenting his message. Galdo's believed that Spain needed to return to the basic teachings of Christ, and to free itself from the hypocrisy, pseudomysticism, and intolerance which was so prevalent in Spain. Dr. L. B. Walton makes the following statement regarding Galdo's message in the novel Nazarín.

The key to individual, as to national health is--action. This must not, however, take the form of a vague physical unrest, a mere pointless hustle. Energy is a valuable commodity, and it must not be expended without circumspection. Do good works by all means--but first of all make certain that your "good" actions will not defeat their own ends. The time for showy heroics is now past. How, then, can the individual and the nation best utilize their energies? Galdo's offers an answer to this question in his introduction to Salaverría's Vieja España (1907) where he remarks: "The Spanish people retain the pattern of those virtues which gave it predominance in the age of heroic and glorious deed. But the heroic ages are gone and we have come to live a peaceful and industrious life, without swords and all the rest of the flummery of Mars."²

²Ibid., p. 224.
The *Torquemada* series of four titles is in reality a single novel. Galdós doubtless had his own reasons, financial or otherwise, for presenting the work in four volumes. It is a study of avarice as reflected in the unhappy life of the moneylender, Francisco de Torquemada. In the development of the novel, the author censures various defects in the social, economic, and spiritual activities of his contemporaries by presenting in a most unfavorable light such things as usury, class consciousness, and a preoccupation with the kind of religious practices which are designed not to provide an expression of genuine conviction, but rather merely to purchase present peace of mind and ultimate salvation. The author’s message is all the more effective because he portrays the moneylender not as a monster or a grotesque caricature, but as a tortured human being. Torquemada’s misguided efforts to console himself for the death of his son, his second marriage, his disappointment in his son Rafael, his frustration in his attempts to improve his social status, and finally, his efforts to buy his soul’s salvation, all result in an unanswered question. The reader is left to make his own decision concerning the validity of Torquemada’s death-bed conversion. There can, however, be no doubt about the sincerity of the author’s conviction in his attacks upon the above-mentioned problems.
A further example of the irony of Galdós is found in his portrayal of the character of Father Gamborena, the San Pedro of this novel. After presenting a number of clergymen as the personification of ignorance, bigotry, enemies of progress, and in some cases hypocritical aspirants to ecclesiastical office and authority, he finally offers the readers the picture of a priest como Dios manda. It may be assumed that the same and obviously sincere statements of this priest in the course of his conversation with Torquemada accurately reflect the religious convictions of the author who has been frequently described as an anti-clerical Catholic. The following examples provide evidence of this:

Con paciencia y valor que sólo da la fe, he sabido vencer (p. 20).

Las clases altas están profundamente dañadas en el corazón y en la inteligencia, porque han perdido la fe (p. 25).

La que tenga fe, sepa tenerla con simplicidad; sea como los niños para aprender la doctrina (p. 27).

Vivimos en tiempos de muchísima prosa, y de muchísima miseria por poquedad de ánimo (p. 66).

El odio de los miembros inferiores a la cabeza es achaque muy viejo en el cuerpo social (p. 69).

Para los que aman es el Cielo, y el Infierno los que aborrecen (p. 71).

El dinero se gana con la inteligencia, el Cielo se gana con las buenas acciones (p. 117).

La humillación es el antídoto de la soberbia, la abnegación, la generosidad la son del egoísmo (p. 118).

3All direct quotations of the comments of Father Gamborena are taken from the edition of Torquemada y San Pedro, published by Editorial Losada, S. A., Buenos Aires, 1946.
Due to the restricted scope of this investigation, it is not necessary to emphasize the point that much of the criticism made by Galdós in the *Novelas Contemporáneas* of the various defects in national and individual Spanish character of his time has been omitted. It is hoped, however, that adequate and convincing evidence has been offered of his awareness of the vitiating effects of religious intolerance, pseudomysticism, and avarice.
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