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TITLE: The Fabricated Shopper: Trade Deficit as Allegory in Late-Nineteenth-Century Spain

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ABSTRACT: This article examines Benito Pérez Galdós' infamous female spendthrift in three of his contemporary novels: *La desheredada* (1881), *La de Bringas* (1884) and *Lo prohibido* (1884-85). It offers a new and innovative reading of this figure by showing how it functions as a trope for Spain's decadence and difference from other more "advanced" northern European nations, as understood by the Regenerationists. As I argue, anxieties about Spain's failure to be as economically-productive as these other countries were projected onto the female consumer because she was seen to engage in a type of consumerism that did not give rise to capital gain and economic growth.

KEYWORDS: *La desheredada* (1881), *La de Bringas* (1884), *Lo prohibido* (1884-85) female spendthrift, Regenerationists

RESUMEN: Este artículo analiza la tristemente célebre reputación de despilfarro femenina en tres de las novelas de Pérez Galdós: *La desheredada* (1881), *La de Bringas* (1884) y *Lo prohibido* (1884-85). Ofrece una lectura nueva e innovadora de esta figura al mostrar como representa una imagen de la decadencia española y su diferencia con respecto a otras naciones más "avanzadas" del norte de Europa, tal como lo entendían los regeneracionistas. Como pretendo argumentar, las preocupaciones ante el fracaso de España de ser económicamente tan productiva como esos otros países se proyectaron en la mujer consumidora porque se consideraba que contribuía a un tipo de consumismo que no daba lugar a una ganancia de capital ni a un crecimiento económico.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *La desheredada* (1881), *La de Bringas* (1884), *Lo prohibido* (1884-85), despilfarro femenino, los regeneracionistas

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The Fabricated Shopper: Trade Deficit as Allegory in Late-Nineteenth-Century Spain

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Benito Pérez Galdós' (1843-1920) contemporary novels feature women from the entire class spectrum who shop obsessively. These characters buy anything they can get their hands on: from knickknacks to furniture. More than just the sheer volume of their purchases, however, is the connection between this consumer behavior and other types of disorder. Rosalía de Bringas, for example,—protagonist and namesake of *La de Bringas* (1884)—longs to be part of the aristocratic clique of Isabel II's court. This leads her to buy, among other things, an outrageously expensive shawl, the cost of which represents one tenth of her husband's petty-bourgeois salary (Aldaraca 132-33). From this point onwards, Rosalía embarks on a downward slide as she resorts to everything from pawning off the family silver, to bedding Manuel Pez in a series of desperate attempts to rid herself of the debt.

This pattern of spiralling debt and desperate measures to rectify it is also all-too-familiar to the materialist women consumers in *La desheredada* (1881) and *Lo prohibido* (1884-85). *La desheredada's* working-class protagonist, Isidora, is depicted throughout the length of the novel trying to ratify her mistaken belief that she is of aristocratic stock. This motivation informs her consumer choices and, consequently, she accrues enormous debts, which can only be serviced through the money she earns as a prostitute. *Lo prohibido's* Eloísa, on the other hand, is introduced to the world of consumer delights by her cousin and lover, José María. Ultimately, however, her frenzied shopping not only bankrupts him but also her husband Carrillo.

The question I will address in this article is why Pérez Galdós' early novels show such a concern with women who feature so

extensively in this type of activity. This has been dealt with by a significant number of scholars who have taken a range of theoretical viewpoints, from feminist to socio-historical.¹ I will take add to this nexus of insightful scholarly criticism by examining why this out-of-control shopping occurs in novels that are also replete with references to Spain's, or more specifically Madrid's, failure to be economically productive. This concern with Spain's fiscal performance was of paramount interest to late-nineteenth-century Regenerationist movement and in analyzing the possible links between Spanish Regenerationism and Pérez Galdós' infamous female spendthrift, this article offers up a new interpretation of this well-known Galdosian figure.

Galdós' emphasis on how women shopping against the backdrop of the unproductive nation is made all the more interesting by the fact that this imbalance—especially the emphasis on consumerism—does not coincide with what social historians Luis Enrique Alonso and Fernando Conde tell us. For example, they say of turn-of-the-century Spain:

[a] principios de siglo se desarrolla en España un modelo social claro y explícitamente dualizado, que excluyendo del consumo a la inmensa mayoría de la población, permite, sin embargo, el desarrollo de un modelo de consumo de élite en la minoría más rica del país. (66)

To a lesser extent, the sense the novels give of Spain as fiscally unproductive also misrepresents what some economic historians write about this era. Citing revised Gross National Product estimates for these years, David Ringrose states: "These figures suggest that real income per capita rose some 60% from

1860 to 1910 and almost 80% between 1830 and 1910" (65). Ringrose's positive appraisal of economic performance in the nineteenth century supports his overarching thesis that the Spain of this time was not as economically backward as some historians and economists have led us to believe.² It is this gap between economic reality and its (mis)interpretations that this article deals with. The objective here is to demonstrate the allegorical nature of this "invented" trade deficit and how such analysis provides an alternative lens through which to view the infamous Galdosian female spendthrift.

In all three of the novels, Spain's inability to compete as an industrial producer is distinctly highlighted by the fact that most of what these women buy is imported from France. For example, in a chapter of *Lo prohibido* significantly entitled, "Mucho amor (¡Oh, París, París!), muchos números y la leyenda de las cuentas de vidrio", Eloísa and José María combine a major shopping spree with a romantic getaway in Paris. This reinforces the novel's image of Spain as a consuming force. This reliance on foreign markets for consumption also occurs in *La desheredada* and *La de Bringas*. Both novels feature import businesses, which sell the latest French fashions to Madrid's female consumers. The image of Spain as (passive) consumer in contrast to an industrious France is further reinforced by the fact that the success of these businesses is precarious because of the clients' informal attitudes to paying for their purchases. In *La de Bringas*, for example, the shop that Refugio sets up in her Madrid apartment with all the trendiest French *trapos* sent over to her by her sister, is a commercial failure because none of upper-class clients, who buy on credit, are able to settle their accounts: "¿Sabe usted que estoy vendiendo todo? Yo no sirvo para esto [...]. Desde que estoy en esto, no he hecho más que perder dinero: pocos pagan" (1660).

In much critical discussion of *La de Bringas*, Pérez Galdós' well documented interweaving of national history and fiction in his contemporary novels has generally resulted

in parallels being drawn between the novel's spendthrift protagonist Rosalía and Queen Isabel II.³ For the purposes of the current discussion on Spain's failure to be economically productive, analogies can also be drawn between Refugio and the Spanish Queen. Refugio starts to import clothes from France during one of the periods in the nineteenth century when tariffs on imports were at their lowest (Carreras 41). From this perspective, both the Queen, who is the figurehead for the government, and Refugio can be seen to play a part in opening up Spanish frontiers to foreign goods and in failing to protect the domestic market—the former through State policy and the latter through business dealings. The actions of both, therefore, contribute to Spain's inability to compete as an industrial producer, thereby rendering Spain outside of the scope of productivity in yet another way.

This sense of Spain's collective failure to be productive is also felt at an individual level in the fact that many of Galdós' characters lack any real desire to work. For example, Isidora, the protagonist of *La desheredada*, is described as a layabout who "consumes" more water in one day than what the entire family uses in three months:

Nos va a arruinar esa [...]. Dios me perdone el mal juicio; pero que acabará mal tu dischosa ahijadita. No le gusta trabajar, no hace más que emperifollarse, escribir cartas, pasear y lavarse. Eso sí; más agua gasta ella en un día que toda la familia en tres meses. (1018)

Similarly, in *Lo prohibido*, we can infer his sense of a lack of productivity through the sense that the novel's narrator/protagonist makes of his own "contradictory" behavior. Of mixed English and Spanish heritage, José María subscribes to the essentialising discourses on race, ethnicity and national identity of the time to explain the anomaly he perceives between his good head for business and the passionate side to his personality:⁴

La apreciación de los números despertaba en mí con fiera energía, proporcionada al largo tiempo de eclipse que había sufrido. En mí renacía de súbito el hijo de mi madre, el inglés, que llevaba en su cerebro, desde la cuna, gérmenes de la cantidad y los había cultivado más tarde en la práctica del comercio. Mi padre huía de mí como en el teatro echa a correr el diablo cuando se presenta el ángel. Y las benditas cifras, ahogadas temporalmente por la pasión, se sublevaban, vencían y se posesionaban de mí con un bullicio. (1744)

In José María's mind, the struggle between the economically savvy side of his personality and the hot-blooded passion he feels for Eloísa, represents a conflict between his English and Spanish heritage. By adhering to national stereotypes that construed Spain as the backward other of industrialized Europe, José María embodies this unproductive Spain. While at this particular stage of the novel this occurs symbolically, José María's supposition turns into self-fulfilling prophecy when at the novel's end his monumental fortune is shown to have all but disappeared. The recession of his wealth during the novel coincides with his return to Spain. If we follow his line of reasoning, the implication is therefore that the effects of environmental determinism in Madrid are too strong, even for the well-grounded fiscal principles of the English.

As one of Pérez Galdós' infamously unreliable narrators, it is never very clear, however, whether or not we are meant to take José María seriously. In addition to this, the novel, which narrates the psychological and physical degeneration of most of its characters, does not instill trust in these characters. Herein lies one of the keys to understanding the significance of José María's imaginings about nationality to the general question about the relationship between the Galdosian female spendthrift and the imbalance the novels present between production and consumerism.

Through the association of these national stereotypes with the untrustworthy José María, Pérez Galdós discredits them. At the heart of the conclusions José María reaches about the Spanish and the English are the two sides of the same coin that rendered Spain the "other" of countries like France and England. Either as a "bastion of intolerance, ignorance or bigotry" (Carr 1) or a celebration of virtues such as "austerity, liberty, spirituality and abnegation" (Boyd 113), Spain was positioned "outside" of the northern European "norm". Moving away from these ultimately negative constructions of Spain was one of the main aims of the Regenerationists, whose goal, as their name suggests, was the regeneration of the Spanish nation.

According to the more progressive Regenerationists, these national stereotypes, which became self-fulfilling prophecies, were responsible for Spain's "backwardness", one of the primary manifestations of which was the economic decline implied in Spain's inability to compete as an industrial producer. Identifying the presence of both these economic concerns and the myths tied up with them in Pérez Galdós' "spendthrift" novels is significant, in that it provides an alternative lens through which to consider the phenomena of his female consumers.

Pérez Galdós' novels from the 1880s are well-known for their contribution to the formation of late-nineteenth-century Spain's national identity (see Labanyi). Therefore, little has been said about the regeneration of national identity in these novels. This is because this movement of reform was traditionally associated with 1898. Recent critical enquiry, however, has seen a relocation of both the collective decadence thought to be a result of Spain's loss of its last colonies in that year and the Regenerationist attempts to counter this decline as far back as half-way through the nineteenth century. On this point, Noel Valis, for example, writes that:

It is customary, though not accurate, to credit the Generation of 1898 with

the discovery of Spain's decadence and the need for regeneration, but older members of the Restoration period were well aware of Spain's state of decay. (19)

Also discussing this issue is Raymond Carr who insists that the Regenerationist movement was "not novel in content" ("Liberalism and Reaction" 224)

This argument about the need to view the Restoration authors' contribution to discussions about the nation's decadence is also present in Romero Tobar's collection of edited essays *Hacia el 98: La crisis de fin de siglo y los escritores de la Restauración*. With specific reference to Pérez Galdós, Peter Bly, for example, writes that the array of unwell young people who appear in this writer's novels points to a negative forecast for turn-of-the-century Spain's future. Finally, in line with this shift, for example, María Ángeles Varela Olea's intention in her recent work on Pérez Galdós, is

ofrecer un panorama del corpus galdosiano completo, señalando lo que en cada obra haya de regeneracionismo y dando cuenta de la evolución e importancia que este contenido condiciona su manera de entender la literatura. (181)

Although the three novels under scrutiny in this article appear to deal primarily with economic decline (as is evident in their preoccupation with consumerism and production), I will show that this imbalance should be viewed as emblematic of a much wider decadence, for which the Galdosian female spendthrift stands as an allegory. The Regenerationist concern with Spain's lacklustre economic performance was just one manifestation of the overarching concern with the fact that Spain had not moved away from Old Regime social structures to the same extent as other northern European countries.

In order to view this inequality between consumerism and production as representative of Spain's "failure" to move "forward" it

is necessary to turn to the theories of luxury that were important to understandings of this concept in Spain. As scholars such as Bridget Aldaraca and Dorothea Heneghan have been careful to explain, there was a great deal of moralising in Spain prior to the nineteenth century about luxury, especially as it related to women. For example, in *La perfecta casada* (1583), Fray Luis de Leon censures women's passion for luxury and excessive adornment as causing lust and moral corruption. As Heneghan explains in her recent article on fashion in Pérez Galdós' novels, however, it was clear by the nineteenth century, that Spaniards writing about luxury saw this as an inevitable component of modern life:

The new attitude toward fashion and luxury, presented in these articles in the context of necessity and progress, clearly demonstrates that in nineteenth-century Spain, as modern forms of commerce and advertising were developing, fashion could no longer be easily condemned. (6)

For example, in his 1857 article, "El lujo" Fernando Garrido describes luxury as

una necesidad natural en todos los seres, es la consecuencia del irresistible encanto del que nacen las artes y las ciencias, padre de la industria, alma del progreso y de la civilización. (10)

Garrido's description here of the positive aspects of luxury can, of course, be compared to David Hume's and Adam Smith's groundbreaking discussion of luxury in the eighteenth century. According to David Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748) and Adam Smith's *Lectures on Jurisprudence* (1766), luxuries are positive because when they are not available, or not wanted, people produce no more than enough to live on and, therefore, a "habit of indolence naturally prevails" (Hume 131). When they are available, on the other hand, "man becomes a consuming animal with boundless appetites,

capable of driving the economy to new levels of prosperity” (Smith 209).

These ideas were familiar to Pérez Galdós and, whereas consumerism is fashioned as destructive in his early novels, in 1884 he stated that luxury was necessary for capitalist growth (Jagoe 153). This positive theory of luxury is also present in *La de Brindas*, as can be seen in La Marquesa de Tellería’s belief that Spain’s backwardness is due to the fact that money is left idle: “¡Qué atraso tan grande! Así está el país como está porque el capital no circula, porque todo el metálico está en las arcas, sin beneficio para nadie, ni para el que lo posee” (137). The Marquesa’s so-called concern with Spain’s backwardness is just a plea to have other characters from the novel lend her money to cover the debts she accumulates: “¿Por qué usted no le propone una cosa? Que me preste lo que necesito” (ibid). Also, contrasting with her positive theories of luxury is the fact that her spendthrift habits are shown to be connected to an Old Regime order that proves to be too strong a force to be definitively ousted by the 1868 revolutionaries in this novel.

The fact that consumerism fails to cause social change in Pérez Galdós’ novels also runs counter to the ideas of Hume and Smith. As they saw it, growing taste for luxury consumption was responsible for the decline in the power of the feudal nobility. According to Hume, in the absence of attractive manufactured goods, landlords had no incentive to sell the produce of their land because there was nothing for them to buy. Instead, they maintained large numbers of dependants who became beholden to them. When more refined tastes developed, together with the goods to gratify them, landlords moved to the towns in order to buy manufactured goods and other luxuries. This meant that their spending now supported independent merchants, artisans and the like and, in order to buy fashionable luxury goods, they came to focus more on maximizing rent rather than maintaining their hold-over tenants. This removal of feudal restraints on peasants, in turn, made agriculture

more productive which was, of course, one of the main prerequisites to industrialization.

As Hume and Smith saw it, desire for luxury goods causes greater levels of productivity which in turn generates economic growth and social and political progress in the form of the shift from an Old Regime to a New Regime order. However, in Pérez Galdós’ novels, in contrast, yearning for consumer items has no such effect. Instead, as we have seen, it is accompanied by an overwhelming sense of people being entirely unproductive. Because these same novels are plagued by an awareness of Spain’s inferiority to its more industrially-advanced neighbours, I would suggest that this all-consuming, non-productive characteristic is symbolic of the Spanish failure to industrialize and to oust its Old Regime. Against the backdrop of Spain’s modernization and the question of its national identity in relation to Europe, this can be seen as a push to have nineteenth-century Spaniards take stock of their country’s difference from countries like France and England.

Understanding the imbalance between consumerism and production in this way in turn offers an alternative interpretative framework with which to understand Pérez Galdós’ female spendthrifts. As mentioned at the outset of this article, a substantial amount of critical attention has been paid to the female consumers in his early contemporary novels. The most well-known and commonly cited of these interpretations is the one put forward by Aldaraca, who departs from the hypothesis that Pérez Galdós takes issue with contemporary constructs of femininity in these novels. Discussing the female spendthrift in *La de Brindas*, for example, Aldaraca makes the point that Rosalía’s consumer behavior provides her with a substitute for sexual satisfaction and a means of escaping from the domestic tyranny imposed upon her by her husband, Francisco.⁶ Writing about this, Aldaraca states:

El vestuario de Rosalía no es, sin embargo, una mera sustitución de la

satisfac[c]ión sexual. Sus galas representan la precaria autonomía que empieza a vivir a espaldas de su marido. (134)

As this reference to Rosalía's sexuality and the extent of her covert behavior suggest, Aldaraca's analysis departs from the notion that Pérez Galdós' fashioning of female consumerism serves to highlight the anomaly he perceives between the ideal of the "angel in the house" and the actual reality of late-nineteenth-century Spanish women's lives.

Another scholar who concentrates on Pérez Galdós' female consumers, Catherine Jagoe, also points to a gap between "ideal femininity" and his out-of-control female spendthrifts, writing that:

Despite the conventional portrayal of woman's appetites as modest, and altruistically directed towards husband, family, and the moral improvement of society, Galdós and other Spanish writers from the late eighteenth century on obsessively reproduced a female of rapacious materialistic desires, on her way down the slippery slope to immorality. (86)

In line with Jagoe and Aldaraca, I take into account the gap between ideal womanhood and Pérez Galdós' materialistic women. I do not, as is the case with Aldaraca, however, view this as representative of his challenge to gender discourses of this time; and, unlike Jagoe, I would suggest that it is as a result of these gender dictates, rather than in spite of them, that he fills the pages of these particular novels with female consumers.

The anomaly, central to Aldaraca's and Jagoe's comments, between ideal womanhood and Pérez Galdós' female spendthrifts is explained through reference to the public/private split that was common currency at the time of the novels' publication. At its most immediate level, Rosalía's consumer behavior, as described by Aldaraca, is driven by a desire to escape her husband's tight-fisted

management of the household budget. Because this "rebellion" results in Rosalía's entry into the world of business, both in spatial and behavioral terms, the wider dichotomy between public and private comes to the fore. This example of Rosalía is useful inasmuch as it serves to illustrate how all three of Pérez Galdós' consuming women transgress the spatial boundaries dictated by the gender discourses of the time.

These women's violation of these rules results primarily in the disarray of the domestic sphere, conforming to the contemporary belief that movement between the two spheres posed a threat to the function that each was meant to serve in society. At the most obvious level, their excessive spending causes spiraling debt and often means that daily necessities have to be sacrificed in favour of frivolous luxuries. In the case of Isidora from *La desheredada*, for example, Christmas dinner for her and her younger brother, for whom she acts as a guardian, is made up of nothing more than a few pieces of *turrón* while she draws of her dresser overflow with all the acquisitions from her latest shopping spree.

This scenario, familiar to all three women, is just one manifestation of the overarching supposition that their entry into the public realm of business as consumers occurs at the expense of their ability to function as wives and mothers. This failure is also symbolically present in the fact that Isidora's son is born with an over-sized head. It can also be observed in Isabel's nightmares, which replay the ups-and-downs of the Bringas' household, including references to her mother's shopping:

En esto, la pobre niña, llegando al periodo culminante de su delirio, sintió que dentro de su cuerpo se oprimían extraños objetos y personas. Todo lo tenía ella en sí misma, cual si se hubiera tragado medio mundo. En su estómago chiquito se asentaban, teñidos de repugnantes y espesos colores, obstruyéndola y apretándola horriblemente las entrañas, su papa, su mama, los vestidos de su mamá. (173)

In accordance with theories on racial degeneration circulating contemporaneously with these novels, Peter Bly suggests that the array of unhealthy young people like Isabel in Pérez Galdós' novels points to the negative forecast that he must have had for turn-of-the-century Spain as early as the 1880s:

A estos embriones de adultos, que serán los cuarentones y cincuentones de la década del Desastre, les toca representar la visión aún más perturbadora que presenta Galdós de sus compatriotas, pues son éstos los que llevan las señales más permanentes trágicas de los defectos espirituales de la generación de sus padres, señales exteriorizadas en enfermedades o fealdades físicas o morales. (124)

Following this line of argument corroborates the perspective taken in this article that Pérez Galdós' consuming women should be viewed in terms of the collective decadence which the Regenerationist spirit of reform attempted to counter. In the light of theories of racial degeneration, the examples of the disorder caused by these women's shopping and their inability to function as mothers are connected in a very literal sense with late-nineteenth-century Spanish decadence, in that their children represent Spain's glum future.

This connection can also be read in terms of the imbalance between production and consumerism, which, as already established, when viewed in conjunction with the ideas of eighteenth-century economic thinkers like Hume and Smith, can be understood as emblematic of Spain's failure to break away from Old Regime structures. Viewing Isidora's, Eloisa's, and Rosalía's shopping in this light requires further consideration of the incompatibility of female consumerism with women's lives as dictated by the public/private split. Although ideal womanhood in the nineteenth century was discussed in terms of space, this was partly a metaphorical construct. The dominant discourse was as concerned with the role of women within a

particular set of relations as it was with space in its literal sense. In spite of this figurative treatment of space, however, the fact that the model for approved femininity was viewed primarily through the apparatus of the public/private split meant that contradictions often surfaced between how women were expected to perform in their roles as wife and mother and what their metaphorical inclusion in the realm of the home allowed them to do.

One example of this particular tension resides in consumerism. As wives and mothers, women were required to provide food and clothing for their offspring and spouse. In addition to this, they were also in charge of the upkeep of their dwellings and the entertainment of family, friends and husbands' associates (to differing degrees, depending on their class status). Clearly, these activities relied on some sort of entry into the public world of shops and businesses, whether it be their own or via the servants under their charge. This transgression of boundaries was made worse in the case of consumerism because of the belief upheld in Roman, Greek and Christian traditions that this activity was capable of bringing ruin to humankind (Berry 45). Although from the late-seventeenth-century onwards people began to think positively about the "Appetites of Men" as "the main spur to Trade, or rather to Industry and Ingenuity" (North 14), this was only the case when consumerism was complicit with a greater disposition towards work.

For the female spendthrift whose place *per se* was the realm of the house—a sphere diametrically opposed to the public world of "work" and economic gain—this meant that the type of consumerism in which she partook would, by definition, be viewed as destructive, as was characteristic of Roman, Greek and Christian traditions. This was because as long as women consumed, such consumption would always be associated with a perceived imbalance between production and consumerism and, therefore, with a depletion

of resources. In the case of the three novels under analysis here, the fact that the images of Spain as unproductive and all-consuming can be seen as symbolic of Spain's laggard modernization means that the female shopper transgresses on two fronts, in that her shopping is not only economically "untenable" but also functions as an allegory of her country's decadence.

This connection between the female spendthrift and decline is present also in comments made by Pérez Galdós in his 1870 landmark essay "Observaciones sobre la novela contemporánea en España". In this article, commonly cited as representing both a manifesto for the Spanish realist novel and an infallible support of the bourgeoisie, Pérez Galdós points to "la vanidad en las mujeres, el lujo en el vestir" (244) as one of the main problems faced by "maridos trabajadores y modestos" (Ibid). This was one of the issues, according to Pérez Galdós, that needed to be dealt with in the contemporary novel because it was central to the lives of the new class of people and, as is now commonly accepted, to the national identity that this literature was concerned with shaping.

Precisely because the Spanish realist novel was a key element in the nation-building projects of the nineteenth century, there has been a tendency to ignore its other connection with national regeneration. As we have seen in this article, however, "vanidad en las mujeres" and "el lujo en el vestir" (Ibid) requires consideration not only with regard to the formation of the nation but also to its regeneration. The era of Spain's nation building was marked by an awareness of its difference/"backwardness" from those European countries at the "pinnacle" of industrialization and modernization. In the three "spendthrift" novels looked at in this article, this "lack" is symbolised by an imbalance between production and consumerism, which can be seen as a comment on both economic decline and Spain's failure to make the shift from an Old Regime to a New Regime order.

Because of the private/public split of the nineteenth-century, female consumerism was also "unproductive" and, therefore provided an ideal allegory for this overarching sense of national decadence.

Notes

¹The main feminist scholars to have addressed this issue are Bridget Aldaraca, Catherine Jagoe and Lou Charnon-Deutsch. Their work will be discussed at a later stage of this article. José Montesinos Fernández and Peter Bly have also made a significant contribution to this aspect of Pérez Galdós' opus, situating his female spendthrift within a socio-historical perspective.

²See, for example, Nicolás Sánchez Alboróz's *España hace un siglo: una economía dual*.

³Discussing this narrative technique, Bly writes that: "One of the principal ingredients of his new manner is undoubtedly the precise use of references, whether in single words, sentences or paragraphs, to events and leading characters of contemporary and Spanish political and military history" (Pérez Galdós' Novel x).

⁴William Greensdale writes about this discourse on national identity in nineteenth-century Europe: "Races [...] were placed, more pessimistically within a hierarchical typology of evolutionary development. In contrast to industrious 'historic races of northern Europe, certain races were cast as degenerate type" (21-22).

⁵The most well-known Regenerationist texts are: *Los males de la patria* (1890) by Lucas Mallada; *El delincuente español* (1898) by Rafael Salillas; *El desastre nacional y sus causas* (1899) by Damian Isern; *El problema nacional* (1899) by Macías Picavea; *¿Nos regeneramos?* by Alberto de Cologan y Cologan de Torre Hermosa; *Los desastres y la regeneración de España* (1899) by J. Rodríguez Martínez; *Las desdichas de la patria* (1899) by Vital Fité; *La moral de la derrota* (1900) by Luis Morote; *¿El pueblo español ha muerto?* (1900) by Enrique Mardrazo; *Oligarquía y caciquismo* (1901) by Joaquín Costa y Martínez.

⁶Another critic who examines the relationship between Rosalía and Francisco is Lou Charnon-Deutsch in "La de Bringas and the Politics of Domestic Power." In this article, Charnon-Deutsch charts Rosalía's rebellion and quest for independence in relation to the control Francisco wields regarding financial matters (11).

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