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## RODRIGO SORIANO AND GALDOS: AN UNCHARTED FRIENDSHIP

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Since the appearance in 1948 of H. Chonon Berkowitz's pioneering *Pérez Galdós: Spanish Liberal Crusader*, researchers have slowly been adding new facts to our knowledge of Galdós's life. But measured against major gaps in Berkowitz's information and questionable assumptions he made about Galdós, progress since 1948 towards compiling a reliable and comprehensive corpus of biographical information has been disappointing.

A few significant Galdosian documents have appeared. Certain letters in *Cartas del archivo de Galdós*<sup>1</sup> have clarified a number of relationships between the novelist and other literary figures. Carmen Bravo Villasante's slender edition of Emilia Pardo Bazán's *Cartas a Benito Pérez Galdós (1889-1890)*,<sup>2</sup> discloses facts about the two writers' liaison and even about the genesis of several works. But in the more than three decades since Berkowitz's study appeared, few new letters by Galdós himself have been edited, nor have the contents of important letters in private hands been disseminated.<sup>3</sup> On a somewhat different level, Galdosistas have corrected several false assumptions about the novelist, such as the long prevalent belief that he knew English well.

There has also been one major biographical effort, Benito Madariaga's *Pérez Galdós, Biografía Santanderina*.<sup>4</sup> Madariaga recreates Galdós's life at the Santander chalet where the novelist spent his summers. We now know considerably more about how Galdós lived at «San Quintín» and even about what he wrote there.

Despite such contributions, knowledge about Galdós has not grown sufficiently since the appearance of Berkowitz's work to permit the writing of a genuinely new and authoritative biography of

Spain's greatest modern novelist. Eventually, the task must be undertaken, for a biography of the level of excellence that typifies life-studies of great English and French authors who were Galdós's contemporaries would benefit every area of Galdosian studies.

Admittedly, Galdós's penchant for privacy, even reclusiveness, has created serious obstacles for biographers. But unused sources of information exist. Among these are several of Galdós's lesser known friendships. As they are explored, new facts about Galdós should emerge and perhaps with them some new insights into his personality. Wanting to add a few new facts to our information about Galdós, I present here a sketch of his friendship with Rodrigo Soriano.

It is a commentary on the course of twentieth-century Spanish history that a man of Rodrigo Soriano's achievements is so little known today. Often referred to or mentioned briefly in studies on other writers, journalists, and politicians, Soriano himself has become a shadowy figure. The woefully inadequate sketch of Soriano in the *Enciclopedia Espasa-Calpe* is probably the single best source of information on him. It is therefore necessary to explain who Rodrigo Soriano was before discussing his friendship with Galdós.

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Rodrigo Soriano Barroeta Aldámar was born in San Sebastián in 1868 and died in Santiago, Chile, in 1944. There was a period, approximately 1900-1920, when he was one of the most controversial political figures in Spain. He was especially known for having introduced into the Spanish Cortes, where for many years he was a deputy, a rapier sharp and very direct style of oratory. «Azorín» captures for us the atmosphere one day in the Cortes in 1904 as Soriano prepares to speak:

El señor Soriano se levanta de su escaño. La Cámara se recoge ansiosa; las tribunas están repletas...El señor Soriano va a hablar. ¿Qué va a decir el señor Soriano? ¿qué hórridos anatemas y desaforados denuestos

saldrán durante esta tarde de sus labios?'

Soriano's father, D. Benito Soriano Murillo, a painter born in Mallorca, became «sub-director» of the Prado, as well as professor and «individuo de mérito» of the Real Academia de San Fernando. Rodrigo met many artists through his father and quickly acquired an understanding of painting. This led in 1892, at the age of twenty-four, to his being named art critic of the influential conservative Madrid daily *La Epoca*, where he had begun to collaborate the previous year. In 1921, he was to write *Darío de Regoyos (historia de una rebeldía)*, a work reflective of these early years, when he became a companion of the eccentric painter Regoyos, and one of his few early defenders. Soriano's book, praised by Unamuno and many others, remains a standard work on the impressionist painter.

From his mother's family, Soriano was heir to a distinguished Basque lineage and the title of «Caballero» of the Order of Santiago. He also inherited a fortune large enough to allow him to indulge his taste for travel, the arts, a gracious lifestyle, and the founding of several newspapers.

Soriano, while on vacation in northern Spain, served as Zola's guide during the Frenchman's 1891 visit to Spain.<sup>6</sup> He subsequently visited Zola at least four times in France, where he also introduced Blasco Ibáñez to the French novelist.

What was to characterize Soriano's long political life, sporadic shifts in the direction of ever more liberal or radical positions, is foreshadowed by his art criticism in *La Epoca* between 1892 and 1898, his last year of collaboration in that newspaper. For Soriano championed innovative or technically revolutionary painters over the favorites of Madrid art establishment.

Spain's military defeat in 1898 made Soriano identify openly with regenerationist forces. He was a major figure, if not the major one behind the founding in 1898 of the influential weekly *Vida Nueva*, to which writers and thinkers identified with the Generation of 1898 contributed articles. From 1896 to 1900 Soriano was also a critic for the influential *El Imparcial*; he wrote frequently in *Los Lunes de El Imparcial*, its literary supplement.

During his lifetime Soriano published more than twenty books, several of them quite prophetic with regard to subsequent events of Spanish history. But here, in addition to his book on Darío de Regoyos, only two merit mention. *Moros y cristianos*

(1894) is an account of Soriano's observations and experiences during a Spanish peace mission to Morocco. The work, which became very popular in its day, had a marked influence on Galdós's *Misericordia. Grandes y chicos*, n.d. [1899] contains incisive sketches of Spanish and French writers and artists whom Soriano knew, interviewed, or admired.

Soriano's most significant contributions, however, were political and journalistic. One can not hope to convey an accurate impression of their importance in these few pages. The following selected events may, nonetheless, capture something of the flavor of the life of the man who was the author of these events.

Soriano became the bosom companion of Blasco Ibáñez, to whose native Valencia he went in 1899 to coedit and modernize Blasco's daily *El Pueblo*. From 1901 to 1903 he served along with Blasco as a Republican deputy to the Cortes in Madrid. It was their teamwork that made Valencia the most powerful center of radical Republicanism in Spain. And Soriano, even more than Blasco, became famous for the shocking accusations he made against the government in the Cortes.

But in 1903 the two writer-politicians broke with each other. Soriano then founded in Valencia *El Radical*, a paper he used to combat the Blasquistas. He also founded and headed a local «Radical» Republican party, under whose banner he continued to be reelected deputy until 1909, when he left Valencia.

In 1909-1910 Soriano, now very much a fringe Republican, became one of the founders in Madrid of the «Conjunción Republicano-Socialista,» which was created largely in response to the events of the «Semana trágica» of July, 1909. As the «Conjunción» took shape, Soriano was to form within it a type of triumvirate with his old friend Galdós and his new friend Pablo Iglesias, head of the Spanish Socialists. The three companions traveled to various cities and towns giving radical speeches. It was also during this period, in 1911, that Soriano, now a Republican deputy from Madrid, presented, several years after the event, the opposition brief against the government's handling of the infamous Ferrer case.

In 1906 Soriano had founded in Madrid the independent Republican daily *España Nueva*.<sup>7</sup> Its political orientation changed frequently before it finally ceased publication in 1921. For a period of time it achieved a daily circulation of 70,000 copies, and its excellent editorial staff exercised considerable influence on public

opinion in Madrid. Because of what Soriano wrote in *España Nueva* and said in the Cortes, he frequently became involved in questions of honor. These led to many duels with military officers and with other politicians. One of these was with his former friend Blasco Ibáñez. Another took place with a young Primo de Rivera, visibly suffering the effects of a hangover at the time of the duel. Soriano dramatically spared his opponent's life. Years later, in 1923, Soriano's sharp words in the Ateneo against the now dictator Primo de Rivera, won him swift passage to the island of Fuerteventura, where he was Unamuno's companion in exile. In 1924, Unamuno and Soriano «escaped» together aboard the French vessel «L'Aiglon,» thus negating the effect of the military Directory's pardon.<sup>8</sup>

Soriano's subsequent activities in France, his trip to the Soviet Union and travel through much of South America, are reflected in numerous newspaper articles, in books, and in his unfinished and unpublished memoirs. From such documents it is possible to reconstruct his life upon returning to Spain in 1931, after eight years of exile. He wins election to the «Cortes Constituyentes» of the new Republic as an unaffiliated deputy from Málaga. When he runs for reelection to the Cortes in November, 1933, however, he is defeated. Within a few weeks of Soriano's defeat, Niceto Alcalá-Zamora (perhaps at the behest of Soriano's erstwhile friend Alejandro Lerroux) names him ambassador to Chile. On assuming his post in Santiago in February 1934, Soriano does not realize that he will never again see Spain. Nor does he suspect that he is beginning what is the noblest period of his life.

There is evidence in Soriano's diplomatic file at the Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores in Madrid and in private papers in Santiago, Chile, that Soriano, realizing from the course of the Civil War in Spain that the Republic was doomed, secretly obtained a substantial contribution for the presidential campaign of his friend D. Pedro Aguirre Cerda of the Chilean Popular Front. For were either of Aguirre's opponents to win, the entry of Spanish political refugees would be problematical. In October 1938 Aguirre Cerda triumphed in a very close election. It would be foolish to claim here that Soriano's contribution was a decisive factor in the campaign. But Aguirre and Soriano remained very close friends. Both worked to win admittance of Spanish refugees to Chile in the face of strong opposition from other quarters. Soriano, no longer ambassador after the fall of the Spanish Republic, defended in eloquent letters

to the press the refugees who had come, he asserted, not to seek charity, but to enrich economically and culturally their new homeland. With his own personal fortune completely gone by the early thirties, Soriano, after losing his position as ambassador, supported himself and his family by writing articles for periodicals in Argentina and Chile.<sup>9</sup>

During the World War, Soriano was to become increasingly estranged from the more moderate elements among the Spanish Republicans in Chile. Ideologically, he was once again moving towards the radical left.

In addition to Aguirre Cerdá (who died in November, 1941), Soriano numbered among his many Chilean friends, Pablo Neruda. Their first contact may have come in late 1938 or early 1939, towards the end of the Spanish Civil War. Aguirre Cerda had appointed Neruda special consul in France for Spanish emigration to Chile, a problem that simultaneously concerned Soriano in Santiago. Even after the Spanish Republic fell, Soriano helped, through his prestige as ex-ambassador and his excellent Chilean contacts, any Spanish citizen, of any political persuasion, who sought his assistance. In subsequent years, according to conversations I have had with Soriano's daughter, Dolores Soriano Martí de Aguirrebeña, Neruda was from time to time a guest at her father's house. It was the Chilean poet who eulogized Soriano at his funeral on December 5, 1944, two days after the ex-ambassador died of a heart attack at the age of seventy-six.

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In his biography of Galdós, Berkowitz mentions Soriano twice. In 1901 Soriano and Blasco Ibáñez requested Galdós's permission to use *Electra* as propaganda in their Valencian parliamentary campaign. And in 1906, Soriano and Luis Morote, both Republican deputies, unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the Cortes to sponsor a tribute to Galdós.

In the Galdós-Soriano friendship, however, these were minor events. This is demonstrated by what Soriano wrote in newspapers, magazines, books, unfinished memoirs in the possession of his

daughter, and in approximately sixty letters sent by Soriano to Galdós.<sup>10</sup>

It is uncertain where and when the two men first met. It was probably in Madrid, where Soriano, well connected socially and professionally, became art critic at *La Epoca* in 1892. Occasionally he also published literary sketches and literary criticism in *La Epoca*, several years before his literary criticism began to appear on a regular basis in *El Imparcial*. Given these professional interests, it would have been natural for Soriano to meet Galdós either by requesting an interview or through one of their common friends.

The earliest document attesting to an acquaintanceship is a letter from July, 1895, from Soriano to Galdós. In it Soriano, summing in San Sebastian, acknowledges receipt of *Nazarín* and reiterates an invitation to his «querido amigo y maestro» to come spend time with him at his «Villa Aldámar,» where he promises Galdós «un país muy novelable». Subsequent correspondence suggests that Soriano and Galdós regularly exchanged copies of their works.

For clarity, I shall structure this preliminary sketch of their friendship as follows: I. Soriano's assistance to Galdós as an author; II. Soriano, Galdós, and *Vida Nueva*; III. joint political activities; IV. other aspects of the relationship.

## I

Galdós must have realized that his well connected friend was a good source of needed information and that he was always willing to be of service. A case in point is Blasco Ibáñez's review of *Misericordia* in his Valencian daily *El Pueblo* (12 May 1897). Blasco relates how Galdós documented himself for *Misericordia* by visiting the Madrid slums:

Galdós ha pasado semanas enteras visitando de día y por la noche tales lugares, unas veces acompañado por individuos de la policía y las más guiado por Rodrigo Soriano, el joven escritor que, rico y perteneciente a alta clase social, desciende a lo más hondo, interesado por la miseria, para estudiarla de cerca.

Not only did Soriano guide Galdós physically through the Madrid slums, but one of Soriano's own works guided his writing of parts of *Misericordia*. This is the point to draw attention to an exceptionally fine piece of detective work by Vernon A. Chamberlin. Finding a copy of Soriano's *Moros y cristianos* (1894) dedicated to Galdós «en prueba de verdadero cariño y de admiración», but with knowledge of little more than a slight acquaintanceship on the part of the authors, Chamberlin, through close reading and analysis, demonstrates that speech patterns of Galdós's protagonist Almudena are modeled on Soriano's version of the Spanish of a Marrakesh Jew, information he acquired during his 1893-94 travels to Morocco. Chamberlin, author of previous sensitive studies on Galdós, also points out other elements of *Moros y cristianos* that reappear in *Misericordia*, and shows us in what ways Galdós imaginatively incorporates them into the novel. The strange speech of Almudena, principal vehicle of his characterization, has attracted much critical attention. But now, after Chamberlin's study, «The importance of Rodrigo Soriano's *Moros y cristianos* in the creation of *Misericordia*,» *Anales Galdosianos*, 1978, the analysis of Almudena and his language need no longer start with speculation about Old Spanish or Galdós's creative imagination. Thanks to Chamberlin's article its starting point will be an indisputably concrete literary source: *Moros y cristianos*.<sup>11</sup>

There were other times when Soriano proffered his help or Galdós sought it. In a letter of June, 1899, Soriano, in apparent reference to an earlier letter from Galdós, replies: «Efectivamente tengo datos sobre Montes de Oca que le mandaré a Vd. muy pronto.»<sup>12</sup> In another note, undated, but probably written about 1900, Soriano informs his friend that «El General Borbón, hijo del infante D. Enrique y poseedor de sus secretos, le citará uno de estos días y tendrá sumo gusto en comunicarle las noticias que desea para su libro.» One must presume that Soriano made other appointments for Galdós to meet prominent persons he wished to interview. On 17 June, 1902, Soriano, now Blasco's fellow deputy from Valencia, informs Galdós that he is sending «el número que contiene los datos del Cura Merino.» On 17 August, 1906, Soriano announces to Galdós that he has discovered historical documents that will be useful for his *Reina de los tristes destinos*:<sup>13</sup>

Hace días, por conductos secretos y misteriosos que la

misteriosa política proporciona, he podido conseguir y tener en mis manos, el archivo completo del General Narvaez. Lo tengo en mi casa guardado en tres enormes cajones y se compone de más de ¡8000! documentos, toda la historia de España en el siglo XIX...Baste decir a Vd. que en el primer cajón encuentro cartas *originales y estupendas* de Godoy, O'Donnell, el Duque de Rivas, Cortina, Montpensier, Sor Patrocinio (las de ésta revelan cosas monstruosas), en fin, Don Benito, es delirio.

The examples chosen reveal that Soriano was often aware of Galdós's writing plans and, ever solicitous, provided material Galdós requested as well as items he thought would be of interest. Doubtless most of their communication in this regard was oral. Soriano also, as Blasco's article, and several others not mentioned here reveal, accompanied the shy novelist to places he wished to visit, and established contacts with persons Galdós desired to meet. To what degree he may have discussed any works in progress, if at all, is unknown.

## II

The crucial role of the Madrid weekly *Vida Nueva* in the very early crystallization of regenerationist thought still remains to be studied. The first number of *Vida Nueva* appeared on 12 June 1898. The last number available at the Hemeroteca Municipal in Madrid, presumably the last published, is of 18 March 1900. As was often pointed out in *Vida Nueva*, it had, instead of «redactores,» «colaboradores,» who were individually responsible for their own contributions.

Officially *Vida Nueva* had no founder. However, Soriano's assertion, included in a number of his writings, that he founded it was not far from the truth. He was certainly a catalyst for getting together the persons who originally collaborated to create *Vida Nueva*. In the outline that was to have served as an aide-memoire for Soriano's writing his autobiography, he lists the following:

Fundación del semanario *Vida Nueva* con Eusebio Blasco, Pérez Galdós, Picón, Maeztu, Mariano de Cavia, Blasco Ibáñez. Lo fundo con acciones de a siete duros. Transcendencia de este semanario y su importancia. Reúne a la nueva generación, la llamada de 1898. Semanario de combate, el mejor publicado en España.

Interestingly enough, however, Galdós contributes only one original article, «Fumándose las colonias,» in the second number of *Vida Nueva*, 19 June 1898. Blasco Ibáñez was to write several articles for *Vida Nueva*, but Soriano, during the first fifteen month's of the weekly's existence contributed twenty-five signed articles and reviews, which was more than any other single person contributed to *Vida Nueva*. It strongly suggests his key role in keeping the periodical alive, and it ceased only a few months after Soriano's final contribution appeared in it.

There is little doubt that Soriano induced Blasco Ibáñez to support *Vida Nueva*; it seems likely that he persuaded his friend Galdós to collaborate, initially at least, and to lend the prestige of his name as one of the «colaboradores» of the publication.

Many years later Soriano recalls, on writing his never finished memoirs, that:

Fue *Vida Nueva*, el semanario rebelde, pleno de inquietudes, desbordante de espíritu juvenil, aurora de los nuevos tiempos como su título bien decía...Pronto, sin saber cómo, por arte de magia, se reunieron las primeras firmas de España...La ilustre redacción era cenáculo bohemio. Cada redactor puso—¡siete duros!—para empezar. Y no hizo falta más porque el semanario, al primer número cubrió gastos y ganó algún dinero.

Soriano then recalls the atmosphere at what was probably one of the original group's first organizational meetings, and shows the shy Galdós in the background:

Allí el numen de Cavia y sus orgías vinícolas competían, en ingenio y desorden, con los caprichos de Eusebio Blasco y el silencioso D. Benito, cartujo abrumado por la charla encendiada de Blasco Ibáñez que llegara de

Valencia y asombrara a Madrid con sus modales toscos, su barba y su melena de conspirador y sus tartarinescas fantasías... Soriano, el Benjamín de la casa, el alma juvenil que lo alegraba todo.

Limitations of space prevent full documentation of Soriano's prodding of Galdós so that he would write articles for *Vida Nueva* and publish in it segments of yet unpublished *Episodios nacionales*. At times Soriano refused Galdós's offers to print in *Vida Nueva* previously published material, insisting that his friend contribute original material, such as his «Fumándose las colonias.» Writing as *de facto* editor, Soriano cajoles on August 1898: «¡Siempre aguardando sus artículos para *Vida Nueva!* Nos hacen mucha falta.» In October 1898 he writes: «En cuanto a la colaboración en *Vida Nueva* ya sabe que puede hacer lo que quiera». Later that same month Soriano refers to a soon-to-be published «episodio:» «¿Quiere Vd. autorizarme para publicar en el próximo número de *Vida Nueva* algún fragmento de *Mendizabal?*»

On one occasion, Soriano, having heard nothing from Galdós in many months (a common occurrence for correspondents of the time jealous D. Benito) scolds his friend:

La escribí a Vd. varias veces y no me contestó...Insertamos en *Vida Nueva* los anuncios de sus libros y tampoco logramos sacarle de su mutismo...¿tan malo y olvidadizo es el mundo que un año de separación acaba con las amistades al parecer más duraderas? No lo creo así pero mi franqueza me obliga a decir lo que siento...(June, 1899).

The letter had its effect and Galdós responded immediately from Santander, where he had been staying.

In short, Soriano was a major force not only in creating *Vida Nueva* but in keeping it alive by writing articles himself and soliciting them, unsuccessfully in the case of his friend Galdós, from others.

## III

The political collaboration of Galdós and Soriano can only be sketched briefly. To understand it properly would first require resolving the much debated questions of Galdós's ideological oscillation in his later years and the depth and nature of his political commitment. In 1907 Galdós was elected a Republican deputy to the Cortes from Madrid. In 1910, largely because of his enormous popularity as a novelist and dramatist, he became titular head of a new Republican-Socialist coalition. Increasing blindness and his own disillusionment with the «lack of ideals» in Spanish politics are reasons for his abandoning politics a few years later.

The political events in Barcelona in July, 1909, and the government's repressive response, not only created a national crisis, but led to the new political alliance. Late in the summer of 1909, Galdós, Soriano, and several other prominent Republicans signed a strong anti-government manifesto that was the seed of the new coalition.

When it emerged, it bore the name «Conjunción republicano-socialista» and presented a united front, for electoral purposes mainly. In Madrid, in 1910, all of the «Conjunción's» candidates, which included the Socialist Pablo Iglesias, Soriano, and Galdós, as the head of the ticket, were elected to the Cortes.

What interests us here is the connection of Galdós and Soriano. The fact that these two, along with Pablo Iglesias, traveled to various parts of Spain on a tour of political propaganda, is given little coverage in the literature on the «Conjunción.» It must be traced in such papers as Soriano's own Madrid daily, *España Nueva*, and the Socialists' official paper, *El Socialista*. From 1910 to 1912 the friendship between Soriano and Iglesias was a close one and it outlasted the demise of the «Conjunción.» For a while Galdós, too, was directly involved. He appeared at banquets, meetings, and rallies of the «Conjunción». As time passed, however, he must have grown steadily less committed to it. At times, Soriano, according to his unfinished autobiography, would write short, fiery political speeches which Galdós would then read as his own. The complete itinerary of these political travels would have to be established through careful study of the more radical newspapers. *El Socialista*, 13 May, 1910, tells of a Valencian meeting of the «Conjunción»: «Presidió el mitín el consecuente

federal Sr. Montañés, quien hizo la presentación de Soriano, Iglesias y Galdós, de los que dijo constituían el triunvirato que ha de dar al trasto con la Monarquía». More than a year later, 21 September 1911, members of the «Conjunción's» executive committee (Galdós, Soriano, and Iglesias included) met in Santander to draft a statement of censure against the government's recent anti-strike actions. It is probably to these periods (and also to the summer of 1910, and the victory of the entire ticket in Madrid) that Soriano is referring in his autobiography: «En San Quintín, la finca de Galdós en Santander, y durante el verano, don Benito, don Pablo y don Rodrigo celebran sensacionales reuniones, acudiendo a ellas representantes de la prensa madrileña...»

This period of Galdós peak political activity remains to be studied, but even at this beginning stage of knowledge, it seems clear that his energetic, persuasive, and increasingly radical friend Soriano did more than write a few political speeches for him. It seems likely that he also exerted some degree of political influence on him as well.

#### IV

A strong personal relationship between Soriano and Galdós has already been suggested by the way Soriano helped Galdós obtain needed information, tried to involve him more fully in *Vida Nueva*, and collaborated with him and Pablo Iglesias in the «Conjunción.»

The closeness of the friendship, however, is better reflected by many small details in Soriano's memoirs, his letters, and in articles that appeared over a period of many years. For instance, Soriano, in his third-person autobiography, tells how he has written elsewhere about «la vida íntima de Galdós, su gran amigo a quien acompaña a Zaragoza en el apoteósico estreno de *Doña Perfecta*, y a quien defiende, luego, en sus privadas luchas contra editores». All of this is, indeed, confirmed elsewhere.

In his perceptive «Galdós en la Academia: Don Benito,» *Los Lunes de El Imparcial*, 22 February 1897, Soriano presents a fine contrast between the public and private Galdós and reveals a

number of facts about Galdós that were not widely known at the time he published the article. Even as late as 1943, in Chile, Soriano, in penning one of his final articles, also titled «Don Benito»<sup>14</sup> nostalgically recalls their shared love of music. Indeed, music was one of the things they had in common. Soriano, who had published a well received book on Wagner, attended musical recitals with Galdós and must have discussed music with him. Soriano, in his Chile article, poignantly evokes his nearly blind friend playing Schubert on the piano.

Letters convey other aspects of the closeness of the two men in earlier years: their grief over each other's personal and family tragedies; Soriano's attempts to help his friend when he required legal assistance; his encouraging Galdós to visit an ophthalmologist with a new technique for cataract removal. Shared experiences include their going to Cartagena to «apadrinar» their «torero» friend «Machaquito» at his wedding. They shared a trip to Andalucía with several other companions, and a visit to Valladolid, where Galdós wanted to study the temple of San Pablo. It was there that a French priest, horrified to find himself in the presence of the author of *Doña Perfecta*, is chastized by Soriano when he suggests that the astonished Galdós might wish to destroy the church with explosives.<sup>15</sup>

Soriano knew secrets about Galdós that he probably never committed to writing, or, if they were written down, have not yet come to light. Part of the outline to the never written memoirs suggests that he could have told us much that we would like to know:

Cómo era D. Benito. Almuerzo con él en el Inglés. Su gracejo en la intimidad. Divertida escena con su amiga chulona. Las cartas de Galdós. Paseos con él por los barrios bajos. En la Taberna de la Plaza Mayor que él describe en *Torquemada*. Curiosas anécdotas. Damos nuestros domicilios.<sup>16</sup> El misterioso nocturno de Galdós. Sus amores. La señora de Cámara. Pérez Editor. Las chulonas de Galdós...

In these few pages I have attempted to present the outline of Soriano's friendship with Galdós. Many details and much interpretation remain to be added elsewhere. It seems safe to assert, however, that Soriano was a good friend of Galdós and helped him

in a number of ways. Politically, he probably influenced Galdós during the novelist's more radical period, 1909-1912.

When the fascinating life-story of Soriano is made known and his works have been more carefully analyzed, it may be possible to know if any of them other than *Moros y cristianos* influenced Galdós's novels, and whether Soriano himself, through literary transfiguration, appears in any of Galdós's later novels or *Episodios nacionales*.<sup>17</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Edition by S. de la Nuez and J. Schraibman (Madrid, 1967)
2. Madrid, 1975.
3. S. Ortega's edition of *Cartas a Galdós* (Madrid, 1964) contains a number of letters from Galdós to Pérez de Ayala, plus many others sent to Galdós. But in general they reveal little that is new or significant.
4. Santander, 1979.
5. José Martínez Ruiz, *El Parlamentarismo español* (Barcelona, 1968), p. 74.
6. The articles in which Soriano tells of the days spent with Zola were first published in *La Época* in 1891, before appearing as the strangely titled book *Una conferencia con Emilio Zola* (Madrid, 1892).
7. In *España Nueva* (8 April 1907) there appears an interesting article «Galdós republicano,» which traces the novelist's conversion to Republicanism.
8. Victor Ouimette's «Unamuno and *Le Quotidien*,» *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, 2 (otoño, 1977) reveals new facts about the exile on Fuerteventura and the rescue of Unamuno and Soriano from that island.
9. The only property of value Soriano retained in Spain was a select collection of Spanish painting, which ranged from works of several Renaissance masters to contemporary paintings by Sorolla and Regoyos. After the Spanish Civil War, the paintings disappeared from the apartment in which they were housed and they are still being sought by Soriano's heirs.
10. The Casa-Museo Pérez Galdós in Las Palmas kindly made copies of these letters available. I also wish to thank Professor Vernon A. Chamberlin for his generous help in obtaining for me copies of the letters. At the time Professor Chamberlin wrote his own article on Galdós and Soriano (which I discuss

anon), he was aware of only three letters from Soriano to Galdós that were held by the Casa-Museo. The remaining letters turned up subsequent to that time.

11. Soriano's daughter possesses a collection of photographs—scenes of native people, towns, and cities—taken by her father during his Moroccan travels. There is a possibility that given Galdós's interest in the subject, he shared these photographs with his novelist friend.

12. An *Episodio nacional* of this title was published in 1900.

13. It was published in 1907 as *La de los tristes destinos*.

14. *Atenea*, 72 (May, 1943), 93-98.

15. See the article «Al pasar» in *La Libertad*, Madrid (17 November 1931).

16. This refers either to meetings of the «Conjunción» or those of the conspirators of the Portuguese Revolution, in which Soriano was involved to a considerable, and Galdós to a very minor, degree.

17. My historian colleague Fred Engel and I expect to complete this year our biography of Rodrigo Soriano.

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