

## GALDOSIAN BIBLIOGRAPHIES

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The sudden appearance in the spring of 1999 of Jerónimo Herrera Navarro's mammoth new bibliography of critical studies on Galdós's work was a spectacular surprise, not only because of its bulkiness and apparent comprehensiveness, but also because no advance notice of its preparation, let alone its publication, had percolated to general Galdosian circles, as far as can be ascertained. Because this Galdosian event of the year raises so many questions of general interest, it is perhaps appropriate to discuss them first in the context of previously published Galdosian bibliographies.

One's first spontaneous reaction to Herrera's volume might be to question its opportuneness. Do Galdosistas need another large tome for the shelf when annual up-dates on recent articles and books appear almost regularly in the scholarly compilations of *The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies*, *MLA Bibliography*, *Revista de Literatura* and the *Boletín* of the *Asociación Internacional de Galdosistas*, for example? The question is even more relevant, given the fact that an increasing number of articles these days deliberately shy away from any in-depth review of previous criticism in their respective area of study. At most, a dutiful citation of recent work by friends of the same critical persuasion will be included. Very rare are those exponents of the opposite approach to scholarship—Ribbans (1993, 1997) is one notable example who comes to mind—which is founded on a thorough knowledge of previous criticism in the field and uses it to highlight the scholar's conformity or disagreement. In fact, however, does one need to rely on bibliographies to write a successful study of Galdós's work? José F. Montesinos certainly did not think so, as he made very clear at the end of the second volume of his extensive publication:

quiero quede muy claro, al poner término a este volumen, que mi propósito ha sido hacer una especie de digesto de la obra de Galdós, pero no del galdosianismo. Sobre las novelas estudiadas aquí existe una disforme bibliografía de la que he prescindido deliberadamente y a la que me refiero en contadísimos casos en que la acquiescencia o el disentimiento me obligan a ello. Proceder de otro modo sería condenarme a no acabar nunca. (2: 273)

Ironically, this so-called "digest" has become an indispensable part of the Galdós critical cannon, cited in numerous studies even thirty years after its publication. However, committed Galdós scholars, like those in other fields, need to consult bibliographies as the starting point from which they can review other people's ideas and interpretations of the same primary text(s) and on which then to construct their own ideas, with due public acknowledgement of the debt. The prospective author of any piece of scholarly writing ought to be fully aware of the relevant publications in the field, if her/his own endeavours of the same kind are to have some validity and not to make unfounded claims of originality.

Until the late sixties, students of Galdós's work could consult, besides most of the

annual compilations noted above, the bibliography to be found in the latest printing of Sainz de Robles's original 1941-42 Aguilar edition of the *Obras completas*. As with the latter, our indebtedness to Sainz de Robles for this bibliographical service, despite its limitations, has to be recognized. This form of bibliography—a check-list in article form of pertinent publications—is, obviously, the simplest and easiest kind to assemble and to consult. It occupies an honourable place amongst the more extensive and more substantial tomes that constitute the Galdosian bibliographical corpus, as the listings of García Lorenzo and Van Ree at different times in the last thirty years have shown.

None the less, the need for some sort of guidance about the content of individual studies beyond the title is always felt by researchers in order to shorten the length of the search period. In the case of Galdós, the need is particularly acute, given the volume and diversity of his output. A response to this need was provided in the late 1960s by the appearance of Sackett's book-long, annotated bibliography, whose precise and concise summary of the contents of books and articles, provided, for the most part, a solid, second layer of support and direction for the researcher. His desire to serve the Galdós scholar was made abundantly clear in his Introduction:

A desire to collect and examine the largest possible portion of the literary criticism of the non-historical novels of Pérez Galdós has led to the compilation of this annotated bibliography; the desire to assist scholars in the increasingly difficult task of appraising a growing list of Galdosian studies has led to its publication. (ix)

At the same time, these remarks indicate the two weaknesses of Sackett's and subsequent bibliographies of this kind and length. First, his compilation was deliberately selective (as the title indicated), only covering Galdós's social novels, and secondly, within these self-imposed limits, it faced the almost impossible task of including all relevant publications, given the extent of Galdós criticism, even at that time. This boom in publications on Galdós, or, in the recent terminology of Herrerra, "la galdosmanía" (13), that has occurred since the appearance of Sackett's 1968 work and which shows no sign of abatement a third of a century later, has, ironically, become the albatross around the neck of aspiring Galdosian bibliographers. Not surprisingly, most preface their work with a frank admission of their inability to cover all fields of Galdosian criticism. Percival (1985) lamented with understandable desperation: "It would be a Sisyphean labour to take into account all the critical writings devoted to Galdós" (vii).

However, whereas Woodbridge (1975) limited his compilation to studies published in the previous 25 to 40 years, Percival's bibliography attempted to cover all areas of Galdosian criticism: from its earliest manifestations in Galdós's own lifetime right up to the 1980s. Because it is a reasoned commentary, it can rightly be acclaimed as the most solid, comprehensive, book-length bibliography so far published. It is intended to be read from cover to cover as an account of the dominant trends in five major areas of Galdosian criticism: Galdós's life; the different methods of literary history applied to his work; the major subjects treated; critical studies on his novels; and then those on his other work. However, Percival's unique contribution to Galdosian bibliography has two significant drawbacks

that militate against its ready use by the Galdós scholar. First, the typeface and cramped lines of print make it almost impossible for the reader to locate with any speed a particular work or critic. To do this, the reader has to simultaneously consult the General Index for the author's name and then search the bibliographical information that is packaged into 137 pages of notes. Fortunately, these have headers referring back to the pages on which the respective studies have been discussed; otherwise, the reader wanting to quickly consult a specific item is faced by an insurmountable task. (The Selected Bibliography at the end of the volume is basically reserved for works on literary criticism in general or the art of fiction.) In other words, the volume also has the function of a bibliographical tool, as Percival stated in his Introduction: "The twofold purpose of this study is to give a reasoned account of the vast body of Galdosian criticism and to provide a general bibliographical guide for use with other bibliographies devoted to specific aspects of the Spanish author and his writings" (vii). None the less the book falls between these two stools, for not only can Percival not accord all the studies he chooses equal attention in his assessment of the respective trends—a number are just packed into paragraphs with no comment whatsoever—but neither can the volume function as a viable research tool without long delays and searches.

Both Percival and Woodbridge felt the need to update their original compilations. The latter printed a supplement (1981), the former included his at the end of his original text, which was a revised Ph. D. thesis, as well as in a later article (1991). This challenge of trying to keep up to date with the majority of, if not all, studies on Galdós, was also felt in the sixties, as the Galdós boom got under way, by Varey, who concentrated on giving an overview of the content and direction of recent publications, a perspective that this reviewer also adopted in the 1980s solely in relation to books.

A truly comprehensive catalogue that was to embrace not only the critical studies and any publication on and about Galdós up to 1965, but, more interestingly, the various editions and translations of his work, was undertaken by Hernández Suárez. Unfortunately, only the second part of that mammoth undertaking appeared in print, in 1972. It is a testimony to the relative comprehensiveness and legibility of that volume, with its pleasing typeface, generous use of space and incorporation of publication data, that no attempt to replace it or even update it had been undertaken until Herrera's recent publication. It is to be regretted that the first, and more substantial part of Hernández Suárez's project was never published as the editor of *Anales Galdosianos* at the time had envisaged (3: 191).

However, a foretaste of what that compilation might have been like was provided by Hernández Suárez's mainly annual bibliographical contributions to *Anales Galdosianos* between 1968 and 1974. With their comprehensive inclusion of practically everything printed each year on and about Galdós and his works (with notes clarifying the content of a number of items) as well as other aspects of nineteenth-century Spanish society and literature, they raise a problem that all Galdós bibliographers have had or will have to face: even within a prescribed limit of a chronological period or a thematic/genre division of Galdós's work, is it always advisable or necessary to include articles that are manifestly of an ephemeral or insignificant nature, like a short announcement of a Galdós congress in a local newspaper, or a brief book review/summary in an obscure journal? Even doctoral disserta-

tions are not an essential item for inclusion, when they are largely inaccessible outside their countries of origin or have been subsequently published in book form. Woodbridge (1975), forever on the defensive in his Introduction, accurately noted, "All items that could be included in a bibliography are not of equal value" (ix). The question of the bibliographer's subjectivity is, of course, the issue: would his exclusions, as well as inclusions, correspond to those of other Galdós scholars? Obviously not all the time, but, having first made the decision not to compile a comprehensive bibliography of Galdós criticism and editions, then, surely, the author should be free to exercise her/his own critical judgement on what should be included within the stated parameters and stand by those choices. Unfortunately, this is not always the final result, for bibliographers sense that their selections are always going to be questioned by other scholars, and, consequently, they try to meet such criticism by erring on the side of comprehensiveness.

Once the problem of selectivity has been solved satisfactorily, the next to present itself is that of annotation, which gives the bibliographer another opportunity to help and guide the researcher. In many respects, Sackett's 1968 collection was the perfect model in this regard, for for the majority of entries that had them, Sackett confined himself to pithy, concise summaries of their subject matter, without offering critical comment. He repeated the same formula in his 1982 survey of critical works on Galdós's theatre, albeit in slightly more verbose form. Woodbridge (1975, 1981) chose to guide the researcher in a different way: by expanding Sackett's brand of summary annotation to include quotations from the article or book about its author's aims or conclusions, and at times, by adding his own evaluation of them. Helpful though this approach was and still is, Woodbridge (1975) was again very much aware of the distortions that such annotations—or any, for that matter—could introduce into the reader's mind about the value of the entry, for he stated bluntly: "The length of the annotation has little to do with the the over-all quality of the entry" (ix), or, he could have added, with the length to which a particular point in it is treated.

Two other formatting utensils remain with which the bibliographer can further guide his/her researcher-reader through the labyrinth of Galdosian criticism. First, he/she can arrange his/her entries into chapters of specific subjects. They should not be too numerous, otherwise the compilation becomes exceedingly fragmented. Sackett (1968) chose the simplest form of division: he just had two sections, one for books, the other for articles. Woodbridge (1975 and 1981) opted for a wider panorama of chapter divisions, predominantly devoted to Galdós's corpus of works. Within these respective chapters, which, of course, constitute the bulk of the bibliography along with the obligatory chapters on biography and previous bibliographies, sub-sections had to be devoted to the individual works by Galdós. In addition, Woodbridge was able to include interesting chapters on such topics as "general studies, special topics, linguistic studies, stylistic studies," albeit somewhat incongruously inserted between the chapters covering Galdós's own publications. Percival (1985) was much more sparing in his number of chapters, as we have noted above, but the absence within them of any sub-heading for the particular work or topic discussed only increased the sense of impenetrability that this particular research tool offers the eye at every turn of the page, in my humble opinion.

The final device that the bibliographer has at her or his hands is, of course, the

apparatus of end indices. Given the particular nature of any bibliographic work in book form, they are vitally important, and the more the bibliographer provides, the better it is for the researcher whose first movement is instinctively directed towards the end of the tome. Three types of indices automatically suggest themselves: one for authors of the critical studies, another for subjects treated, and a third for references to Galdós's individual works, arranged in alphabetical order. Such was Woodbridge's preferred methodology, and it proved very effective. Again Sackett's solution to this problem (1968) was simple, partly because he had limited himself to a single division of the critical material into books and articles and had arranged both sets of entries alphabetically. Consequently, he only had to provide a subject index, which, nevertheless, managed to include a listing of Galdós's novels by individual title. Percival's preference was somewhat similar: his first index included the titles of Galdós's works along with Galdosian characters cited. The second was a general index, largely consisting of proper names of literary critics (Galdós's contemporaries or otherwise), historical figures or other writers from many centuries. Yet, at the same time, he fashions within it a subject index as well, with entries interspersed with the proper names. There can be no doubt that the most problematic of all the indices, whether separate or combined, is the subject index. Whilst its flexibility can lead to a very useful diversity of content, its comprehensiveness will largely depend on the degree to which the compiler has read the material included. Of particular difficulty in this regard is the problem offered by general, book-length studies of Galdós's work. Since they necessarily range far and wide, it would seem a pointless exercise to index all the subject matter they discuss. The task is much easier for the bibliographer when pigeonholing individual articles or monographic book-length studies.

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The value of Herrera's recent publication must be assessed in the light of the foregoing remarks. Given the fact that the last substantial book-long bibliography was Percival's reasoned one in 1985, there is some truth to Labandeira Fernández's remarks in his "Prólogo" that this new bibliography by Herrera is fulfilling a need that has been noted for some time. Indeed, the appearance of the bibliography was timely, since the flood of Galdós studies has not abated since 1985; on the contrary, it seems to have gathered even more pace. Appearing just before the close of the twentieth century, Herrera's publication, it could be reasonably claimed, brings together all the contents of the bibliographies discussed above, that is, collecting, as far as was humanly possible, all of the critical studies published between 1870 and 1996, his cut-off date. This procedure is quite natural and acceptable, for, as Woodbridge acknowledged (1975: vii), "Bibliographers build upon each other's work," and Herrera has made his own personal contribution to the general bibliographical data bank by tabulating the studies that have appeared since 1985. Herrera's compendium thus allows researchers to start the new century with one composite base as opposed to several fragmented and incomplete sources. In fact, he has gone much further than previous bibliographers, searching for items in all sorts of other bibliographies to be found in major publications and even library holdings in North America and Europe, as

well as computer data bases. It is true to say that in sheer physical size and in the number of entries (almost 6600) this bibliography far exceeds those that have appeared hitherto. Printed in bold type that is soothing to the eyes (especially old ones), the volume also has generous amounts of blank space that contributes enormously to its legibility. Furthermore, although the title leads one to expect that, like its predecessors discussed above, Herrera's work is selective, being confined to a listing of works of criticism, the author has cleverly inserted at the end of his "Introducción" a listing of the various editions and translations of Galdós's writings, including a fair number of the newspaper articles, in an updating of Hernández Suárez's pioneer compilation (1972). This is no small appendix, running to almost sixty pages (19-80) and necessitating an index of its own, which, appearing in the middle of the book, is somewhat disconcerting for the casual flicker of the page. He modestly excuses this addition: "Aunque no es objeto de esta *Bibliografía* hemos considerado de interés reproducir en esta *Introducción* las principales ediciones y traducciones de las **obras de Galdós**, por orden cronológico de publicación" (19). Consequently, Herrera's work is even more comprehensive than the title would suggest. As a check-list of editions and translations as well as of critical studies on all aspects of Galdós's work, it can be said to have superseded all the previous bibliographies, deliberately partial in their selectiveness. Accordingly, it can be said to constitute a unique contribution to Galdosian bibliography. The only price to be paid for such lavishness of attention, it seems, is the absence of any kind of annotation about the contents of the entries. Perhaps an attempt in this direction would have been advisable as a crowning mark of achievement. Using abbreviations for journal or collection titles would have also freed up valuable space for such an exercise.

The "Índice general" at the beginning of the volume appropriately allows the reader to survey the structure of Herrera's approach. There are eight major chapters dealing with "referencias generales; biografía; valoración crítica de su obra; estudios de sus obras; adaptaciones de sus obras; homenajes, aniversarios y congresos; difusión de su obra en otros países; epistolario." Not all of these chapters are equal in length or even desirable. On the other hand, in the third chapter—the second most substantial in the volume (with 134 pages), "valoración crítica de sus obras"—Herrera is able to introduce a good number of subdivisions: for example, one is on literary sources, whilst another is on Galdós's own literary criticism. The longest and most important chapter, with 169 pages, is the fourth, devoted to the studies of individual works by Galdós, arranged, as the entries themselves in the corresponding sections, in chronological, rather than alphabetical order. This is a justifiable methodology, but it also converts two end indices ("Índice de nombres" and "Índice de obras") into indispensable tools for anyone consulting the book. Unfortunately, their usefulness has been complicated, if not diminished, by the inclusion of references to people other than the critics and of citations of works by other authors, respectively. For example, the wisdom of including *Peñas arriba* in the "Índice de obras" because it appears in the title of a 1973 number of a local Las Palmas newspaper is highly questionable. The same criterion seems to have dictated certain entries in the "Índice de materias" and the "Índice de personajes." For example, María Remedios is only accorded one entry reference because her name figures in the title of the study in question, whereas she also figures prominently in other studies on *Doña Perfecta*. This raises questions about the bibliographer's familiarity with the content of the works he includes.

Herrera maintains that he has consulted almost all of his entries, but a fuller acquaintance would have enabled him to enrich and enlarge, for example, the all-important "Índice de materias," some of whose entry references (e.g. Ávila and El País Vasco) are of dubious usefulness, to say the least, especially when, once more, they appear in the listing because they have surfaced in the title of a single article. The listing of cross-references after individual novels or subject sub-sections is useful, but not absolutely necessary, as they are repeated in the "Índice de obras" at the back of the book.

If he has wisely omitted references to general literatures of history or reviews of editions and studies, Herrera has found space for some pieces of passing, marginal interest, if not use, to the researcher, particularly in Chapters V to VIII, on, respectively, theatrical and cinematographic adaptations; homages, conferences and anniversaries; and Galdós's diffusion in other countries.

Herrera is humble enough to admit in his "Introducción," that, like any bibliography, his will undoubtedly contain errors and omissions. A quick spot-check produced the following: *La de Bringas* was not published before *Tormento* so should appear after it. Dionisio Gamallo Fierros is given two entries in the "Índice de nombres" because his patronymic is, erroneously, given two forms. If full bibliographical information is generally given, some times it is not: viz. entry 4132: the Maravall Homenaje. A non-existent Carmen Gullón is invented as the author of a study that should have been attributed to Germán Gullón. Angel del Río's "A Note on *Misericordia*" is given the same pagination as McKendree Petty's "Introducción" to the same edition, in successive entries that unnecessarily reproduce a welter of bibliographical detail.

As Labandeira Fernández sententiously comments in his "Prólogo," "Una bibliografía, en el mismo momento de nacer, ya se ha quedado desfasada" (11) and such is the fate that will eventually befall Herrera's. It may have gathered together all of the preceding material available in the other bibliographies, but it will not replace them, nor will it be totally replaced in turn by subsequent compilations. It will be usefully consulted by current researchers primarily for its entry accessibility, its legibility, and its updating of the critical output since Percival's 1985 publication. Its principal predecessors will continue to be consulted especially for their annotations and comments that offer the researcher another level of guidance.

Herrera's volume has all the physical appearances of the ideal, definitive Galdosian bibliography, yet that volume or, rather, volumes, is still to be compiled. It will have to be the work of a team of Galdós scholars who have fully read the material they are handling and can select, arrange, annotate and index it according to the generally accepted needs of their colleagues. Even then, updated supplements—perhaps every ten years—would still be necessary. Such a collective enterprise would entail a fair distribution of labour among the contributors. Herrera, like Percival, Sackett and Woodbridge before him, has to be congratulated most heartily by Galdós scholars for undertaking such a daunting task all by himself.

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