

The linguistic characterisation of Galdós's characters in his last play, *Santa Juana de Castilla*

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Abstract

In this work I propose to examine the linguistic characterisation of the characters in Galdós's last play, *Santa Juana de Castilla* (*Saint Joanna of Castile*, 1918). The analysis will show that in addition to the use of archaic language, the purpose of which may be to evoke the era, the linguistic style of the play is characterised by the use of colloquial forms or those that replicate spontaneous oral conversation. The oral and the colloquial contribute to the modernity of the work and also seem to be a kind of implicit criticism of the melodramatic elements of the drama. The linguistic style seen in the work is coherent with its interpretation as a reflection on the history of Spain and its future, and as a final synthesis of Galdosian thought. The analysis also reveals that Galdós upheld his intention to revitalise literary language through the spoken word until the very end.

KEYWORDS

character, Galdós, language, *Santa Juana de Castilla*

1 | INTRODUCTION

*Santa Juana de Castilla*¹. *Tragicomedia en tres actos* (*Saint Joanna of Castile: A Tragicomedy in Three Acts*) was first performed on 8th May 1918 at the Teatro de la Princesa (Princess Theatre, today known as the María Guerrero Theatre) by Margarita Xirgu's theatre company. The text was published that same year by the publishing house Hernando. As is widely known, it was the last work written and published by Benito Pérez Galdós² himself, because

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Antón Caballero (1921) was finished by the Álvarez Quintero brothers. It is the last of 21 theatrical works created by Galdós, if we exclude the three that have been preserved from his youth (*Quien mal hace, bien no esperere; El hombre fuerte; Un joven de provecho*). Galdós himself left us testimony of his early and lively interest in theatre in *Memorias de un desmemoriado* (Sainz de Robles, 1942, Vol. 6).³

Santa Juana de Castilla received very positive reviews, and can be considered as one of the writer's successes, as evidenced by Arturo Mori's article published in *El País* on 9th May 1918, entitled 'The triumphant old age of Pérez Galdós'. Particularly flattering was the review published by Pérez de Ayala (1918) in *El Sol*, who saw *Santa Juana de Castilla* not as a drama, but rather as 'the very quintessence of drama'.

Structurally, the play is divided into three acts of very different lengths. The first act contains 11 scenes and is the longest, because it introduces the dramatic action and sets the scene for the audience. With three scenes, the second act is the shortest. It depicts the Queen leaving confinement and meeting with the people. The third act has four scenes, and recreates the final moments of the Queen's life as we witness her death in the astonishing end scene.

In terms of content, the play is a historical drama that recreates the final days of Joanna I, the third daughter of the Catholic monarchs and Queen of Castile from 1,504 to 1,555; nominally from 1,506. However, she is a controversial historical figure, above all due to opinions about her mental state, which worsened towards the end of her life. In accordance with the thinking of the time, she was thus regarded as suspicious in religious matters. The Romantics created the myth of a lovesick queen whose husband's infidelities drove her to madness. Precursors to Galdós's work included the drama *Felipe el Hermoso* (1845) by Eusebio Asquerino and Gregorio Romero de Larrañaga, *Locura de amor* (1855) by Manuel Tamayo y Baus, and the opera *Doña Juana la loca* (1890) by Emilio Serrano. Nevertheless, Galdós broke with and went beyond such clichés. He presents Joanna I at all times as a sane woman, who at the end of the play is exonerated of any charge or suspicion of heresy by Francisco de Borja. And with regard to her ill-fated marriage and love affair, it should be noted that Philip I, the Handsome, is not even mentioned by name in the play, and is only alluded to on two occasions.⁴ Many clichés have not yet been overcome, and the historical figure undoubtedly needs a suitable historiographical review to analyse her contribution. In any case, and as pointed out by Jo Labanyi, modernising or updating the Galdosian perspective is not only historiographical,⁵ but also aesthetic:

By refining the figure of *Juana la Loca* [Joanna the Mad] of all melodrama, Galdós elevates the artistic category of his work but makes sentimental identification impossible. [...] the great novels of Galdós [...] are those of the 1880s, which combine the handling of melodramatic structures with a critical vision of them, allowing a response that is at once aesthetic and affective.

(Labanyi, 2001, 30)

2 | METHODOLOGY

As indicated in the title of this paper, to tackle this section we must address at least three issues. The first is *Santa Juana de Castilla*'s position in Galdós's production, particularly in his dramatic work. The second is related to the nature of what we call 'character', in particular the dramatic character. Finally, we must look at the studies on and clichés surrounding Galdosian language.

In my opinion, the first question we must ask ourselves in order to understand the position and significance of *Santa Juana de Castilla* in Galdós's literary output is: what exactly is this play? Indeed, what is the theme of *Santa Juana de Castilla*? It could be said that the central theme is truth in its different dimensions (madness/reality, personal opinion/public opinion, personal truth/revealed truth, institutionalised religion). It could also be argued that the theme is death (transcendence), to which the third act is devoted. Finally, the theme could be interpreted as being sacrifice (made by Joanna I), which is also a transcendental and capital theme in our civilisation.⁶ As we shall see, I believe there is another possibility that brings together and synthesises the previous themes. In order to become aware of it, it is necessary to take the whole of Galdós's production into account, particularly his dramatic work.

D. Thatcher Gies (1996) offers offers a good synthesis of the criticism on Galdosian theatre. He alludes to Sobejano, in whom he notices an early first defence of Galdós the playwright. And he adds that Sobejano examined Galdosian theatre as part of a continuous line that ran from the 'narrated novel' to drama (Gies (1996), 474). For Sobejano, Galdós's theatre can be divided into two groups: 'dramas of reconciliation' and 'dramas of separation', which would comprise four main thematic clusters: 'opposition to false honour, lies and hypocrisy; the elimination of fanatacism; power; and charity'. These interests combine realism, naturalism, social drama and contemporary drama.

Arana et al. (2015) have addressed this issue more recently. They highlighted that many critics claim that when transposing novels into theatre, Galdós did not know how to distinguish between the two genres, and thus applied many techniques used in novels to his theatre (p. 112). However, this is not the case with *Santa Juana de Castilla*, which is a genuine drama and not a transposition. Chronologically, these authors place Galdós, along with Echegaray and Dicenta, as part of the Restoration and at the end of nineteenth-century theatre. They interpret Galdós as one of the predominant figures of 'realist drama' (p. 119), and add that 'his dramas are fundamental for understanding aesthetic and personal evolution, and the new directions of theatre and Spanish society between 1890 and 1920'.

Meanwhile, Sara E. Schyfter (1984) has pointed out that of the 21 dramatic works written by Galdós, three are historical dramas with fictional protagonists: *Gerona* (1893), *La fiera* (1896) and *Sor Simona* (1915). But unlike these works, in *Santa Juana de Castilla* the central character is not fictional, but an important historical figure. She adds that the four plays also have female protagonists who are thought to be mad and 'perform' their madness in scenes of political and social disruption, because the women challenge the social order and the historical direction of Spain. She highlights that the central motif of *Santa Juana de Castilla* is history: time, the direction of the Spanish nation and the misrepresentation of the past (p. 53). Quoting Rodolfo Cardona (1977, 54) she states:

Galdós, feeling very deeply the arrival of this final collapse, looks nostalgically towards the dawn of this great empire from his perspective of 1918... It is as if, in this work, he were presenting us with a democratic alternative that Castile could have taken at a given moment in its history, but which it did not follow.

Finkenthal (1974, 133) had already highlighted the political and social aspect of Galdós's theatre and it seems appropriate to reproduce his distant yet lucid opinions:

There is one constant that appears throughout Galdós' dramatic production and is particularly evident in *Santa Juana*: the sense of social context and social obligation. Galdós launched the modern problem drama in Spain because he expressed the life of the individual not only in perennial human terms but also in his experience of being a Spaniard in contemporary society. The traditional clash of personalities, present in all of Galdós' theater, reaches its climax in *Santa Juana* and becomes an integral part of the struggle of Spaniards with Spanish tradition and Spanish realities. Galdós' final play, dealing with the problematic legacy of Spanish history, is one more vivid example of the author's brilliant talent. He combines the dramatist's intensity of insight with an unusually wide appreciation and knowledge of the innumerable economic, political, social, and sentimental factors that affect life in Spain. These qualities deployed in the vast imaginary world of the characters of the theater, combine to make his achievement remarkable in range and depth. The picture of Spanish society colored by Galdós' mighty imagination—just as mighty in the plays as in the novels—expresses both Galdós' exceptional personality as an artist and his admirable commitment to the real problems of Spain.

All of the above lead me to believe that the central theme of *Santa Juana de Castilla* is historical truth, the interpretation and narration of Spain's past. It is about reflection on historical truth as a possibility for transformation and change (or even regeneration),⁷ in this case through a female figure who subverts order, especially considering that her seeming madness is not real. As Guardiola (2018, 584) says of Benigna in *Misericordia*, 'the vitality of a single character is the core of a potential collective regeneration'. And it is for this reason that I also believe

Arencibia is correct when she states that this text 'will come to signify the singular finishing touch in Don Benito's production; a tight rounding off of ideas and personal concerns [...] it is, for Galdós, the ideal symbol; it is Castile and it is Spain' (Arencibia, 2020, 756).

As for the second matter, concerning the nature of the literary character, we can adopt a narratological perspective or, in our case, situate ourselves before the theatrical character. This is not without issue, as the defining features of the theatrical character form a problematic category that is subject to debate,⁸ particularly in recent times, in which the theatrical character is shown as a discontinuous and faltering configuration. The principle of the character's identity is subverted, giving way to a multiple and fragmented image. But Galdosian characters are situated within the framework of the Post-Romantic concept (psychological complexity, coherence and consistency), which then leads to nineteenth-century realism. In this context, I consider the linguistic characterisation of the character, whether autonomous or heteronomous, to be very important, as both types are found in *Santa Juana de Castilla*,⁹ even if the former predominates. Thus, at least from a theoretical point of view, I believe that the objective of this work is coherent with the very nature of the play, which does not mean that we place ourselves within the perspective of an exclusively and naïvely linguistic and textual character model, as we have just seen. But it seems to me appropriate to show, beyond the semiotic or actantial perspective, how Galdós's characters function linguistically, which may even serve as a foundation for the other analyses.

Finally, in third place, we must deal with the question of Galdosian language, which is no simple matter. First of all, it should be mentioned that language has been studied much more in Galdós's novelistic production than in his dramatic work, perhaps concurrent with the neglect of part of his theatrical work. Secondly, it is important to point out that his style is characterised by a taste for popular language, which, evidently, does not seem very appropriate from a strictly linguistic (or sociolinguistic) point of view. Because what is popular language? Is it that which is characterised by the presence of vulgarisms? In this case, we are talking about something else. 'Popular' refers to forms that have been passed down by oral, not written, tradition. In this regard, the adjective 'popular' is most accurate, because it refers to the colloquial level and spontaneous oral discourse or conversation. Indeed, in my opinion this is the most salient feature of linguistic characterisation in *Santa Juana de Castilla*, although certainly not the only one. But the confusion between the vulgar and the *familiar*, or their assimilation, is not infrequent, as can be seen in Alcalá (1993, 22). Meanwhile, Martinell (1993) notes that Galdós uses a series of well-known resources (analogy, paronomasia, malapropism and popular etymology) to characterise the defective, insecure and imprecise speech of uneducated speakers, often for comical purposes. Without denying the comic effect (after all, *Santa Juana de Castilla* is labelled a 'tragicomedy'), I believe that what characterises the play's language is the presence of colloquial language and elements of spontaneous oral conversation, notwithstanding the fact that we also find vulgarisms and an abundance of archaisms. She herself (Martinell, 1993, 222) highlights those who have referred to the popular tone of Galdós's language (G. Andrade, J. J. Alfieri, Lassaletta,¹⁰ Tomás Navarro Tomás, J. de Onís) and those who have highlighted the conscientious use of a linguistic style as way to configure personality (S. Bacarisse, V. A. Chamberlin, H. B. Hall, D. Lida, R. Ricard, D. Rogers, A. Sánchez-Barbudo, S. Sobejano, W. H. Shoemaker). She adds that another very important aspect is the speech of characters affected by certain disorders, or those exalted or immersed in critical situations. However, we find no linguistic trait in *Santa Juana de Castilla* that reveals the Queen's supposed madness; on the contrary, and in accordance with Galdós's intention to revise the historiographical cliché, Doña Joanna speaks and behaves like a sane person at all times. However, Don Benito's interest in medical terms can be noted (for example *podagra* (podagra; Galdós, 1918, 17), sometimes even very specialised ones (*vejigaciones* (vesications, p. 68). In any case, what is clear to anyone is that for Galdós, the characters' speech is an important factor in characterisation, as Samper and Henández (1993) have noted.

Linguistic analysis of *Santa Juana de Castilla* presents two types of problem for researchers, neither of which is easy to overcome. The first consists of the difficulty of assigning linguistic use or phenomenon to a single category. This is the case, for example, of the term *ansí* (thus; Galdós, 1918, 47),¹¹ which is an archaic usage but also a dialect term from Aragon and other areas. Something similar happens with the term *dispertado* (awakened, p. 7), which for Alvar Ezquerro (2011) is a dialect word from Madrid, but which was an antiquated word in Galdós's time

according to the data in the *Diccionario histórico de la lengua española*¹² (RAE, 2013–). So, are we looking at a dialect word, an archaic usage or a vulgarism? The latter option must be ruled out, although an average speaker with no specific linguistic knowledge can easily mistake an archaism for a vulgarism, as often happens in dialectal speech. In this case, it is perhaps more prudent to state that it is an antiquated term preserved in the dialectal domain used to characterise the rustic, familiar speech of Mogica.

The stylistic evaluation of a particular use is not always clear. This is the case, for example, with the adjective *mesmo* (same; Galdós, 1918, 49), noted by Alvar (1999, 336) as an archaism in Canarian Spanish. Nevertheless, I consider it to be used to characterise the familiar and rustic speech of Poca Misa, and not to evoke a bygone era, as is the case with the many other archaisms that are abundant in the work. In any case, I believe we can establish that non-standardised, uneducated and non-formal uses are employed by the author to define the characters, or to evoke the atmosphere of the era, as we will see below.

Santa Juana de Castilla was published by the publishing house Hernando in the year that it was premiered. It was also published in instalments in the newspaper *El Sol* from late May 1918.¹³ The autographed manuscript of the work has not been preserved, and, in any case, it would not be a true autograph but rather an idiograph, because at that time Galdós's sight was already very poor and he dictated his works, which naturally greatly relativises the value of this supposed autograph. And, for various reasons, it is highly unlikely that this idiograph will ever appear.

First of all, it should be noted that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, dramatic works were printed shortly after being premiered. The manuscript was first sent to the censor, and it was not common for it to be transmitted.

Furthermore, we have the testimony of Galdós himself who, in a letter dated 25th May 1918, complained to Pérez de Ayala that *El Sol* took a long time to publish the work and that he did not keep a copy, because the newspaper had the only one (Ortiz-Armengol, 1996, 795–796). This was stated by Galdós 17 days after the play was premiered.

Finally, we must remember that *El Sol* was seized by La Falange at the end of the Civil War, and the newspaper *Arriba* was printed there. It is therefore very unlikely that any of Galdós's documents relating to *El Sol* have been preserved.

There are few differences between Hernando's text (as used for our analysis) and that of *El Sol*, and they are limited to the arrangement of the annotations, some punctuation and variations of a few words. I believe that Hernando's edition is more accurate, while that of *El Sol* has been modernised to make it more accessible to the average newspaper reader. We will therefore take Hernando's 1918 edition as our first edition, on which all subsequent editions are based. Special mention should be made of the publishing house Aguilar which, as of 1941, published and reprinted the *Obras completas* of Galdós, under the care of Sáinz de Robles (1941), which constitutes 'the Galdosian vulgate of several generations' (Mainer, 2004, LXXVIII).¹⁴

The analytical method implemented is simple. We have selected the terms that do not strictly correspond to standard use of the language, or which deviate from the educated level or formal register common to literature and written language. However, it should be noted that the Spanish of 1918 is not the same as that of 2020, and it is therefore necessary to take into account how the terms of that period were labelled according to the linguistic attitudes and awareness of the time. For this purpose, the *Ortografía*, the *Diccionario* and the *Gramática* of the Real Academia Española (RAE, the Spanish Royal Academy) closest to 1918 were used. In addition to the Academy's current *Diccionario*, and in order to assess the evolutionary trend of a term, some historical works were also consulted, such as the *Diccionario histórico de la lengua española* (RAE, 2013–) and the *Nuevo tesoro lexicográfico de la lengua española* (NTLLE), which can be consulted on the RAE website. A specialist dictionary was consulted at times, such as Alvar's *Diccionario de madrileñismos*; the Canarian Academy of Language's *Basic Dictionary of Canarisms* (*Diccionario básico de canarismos de la Academia Canaria de la Lengua*); Herrera's *Textos médicos antiguos* or Martínez and Myre's *Dictionary of Locutions*. Naturally, for matters of morphosyntax, there has been plenty of consultation of manuals on the history of language and historical morphosyntax (Lapesa, Penny, Alvar & Pottier, 1987, C. García, Azofra, 2009). Consulting these, and other works, has provided a sufficient theoretical corpus for analysis, which always followed the same procedure: (1) classification of the identified lexical or morphosyntactic

phenomenon, (2) documentation of the phenomenon in dictionaries and grammar books contemporary at the time the work was published, and in other current ones, and (3) explanation of the stylistic motivation of the item where appropriate or significant.

Finally, it should be noted that although some morphosyntactic aspects (diminutives, vocatives, locutions) have also been taken into account, it is the lexical level of the text that has primarily been analysed. The matter of colloquial syntax, an area that has received less attention than the lexicon, awaits further investigation, although much progress has been made in recent decades. Nevertheless, I sense that the analysis of Galdós's colloquial syntax may have great surprises in store for us. The annotations, which present interesting peculiarities (the use of diminutives, inclusion of an annotation in a character's dialogue to indicate what the listener is doing), have not been examined.

3 | DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

If, as indicated, we stay with the non-standard and non-formal uses which do not belong to the educated level, in Act I archaisms (or archaic usage) predominate and, to an equal extent, colloquial expressions.

Archaic forms, which are abundant in the first scenes, contribute to evoking the atmosphere of the era, which is the mid-sixteenth century, corresponding to the final years of Joanna I of Castile. Let us look at some examples.

Agora (now; Galdós, 1918, 7), which was already antiquated in Galdós's time; *dispertado* (awakened; p. 7), included by Alvar (2001, 173) in his *Diccionario de madrileñismos*, but which nevertheless seems antiquated if we consult the *Diccionario histórico de la lengua española* (RAE, 2013–), in which it is documented from 1,550 to 1883 and only once after that in 1969; *inficionada* (infested; Galdós, 1918, 8), which was little used at the time of the play's release, and has an archaic character; *obscura* (dark; p. 12), an antiquated etymological spelling that did not follow the academic norms of the time [Ortografía of 1815, XIII–XIV]¹⁵; *cirimonias* (ceremonies; p. 13), marked as outdated in the *Diccionario usual* of 1817 [203], consulted in the NTLLE; *podagra* (gout suffered in the feet; p. 17), documented by Herrera (1996) in the fifteenth century in the *Suma de la flor de la cirugía*, a work attributed to Fernando de Córdoba of which a manuscript is preserved in the National Library (MSS 3338); *yantar* (to eat; p. 28), already in disuse by 1914 according to the *Diccionario académico usual* [1059].

Archaic expressions can also be detected at the morphosyntactic level. This is the case of pronouns in the enclitic position with verbs that are not in the infinitive, gerund or imperative which coincide with the subjunctive, a typical feature of medieval Spanish that lasted until the seventeenth century according to Ralph Penny (2005, 163). However, it has also been argued (Arencibia, 1987, 143) that Galdós's preference for the enclitic position is a stylistic trait. Another less doubtful example is *rato ha* (some time ago; Galdós, 1918, 7), because the form *ha* (third person singular) deferred to a time complement is a remnant of the use of *haber* (to have, usually an auxiliary verb in modern usage) as an impersonal with time complements, documented in the fifteenth century. This usage is still preserved in parts of America, although with the spelling *a* (Lapesa, 2000, 826–827). We can also point out *hemos de medir* (we must be measured; Galdós, 1918, 11), an obligatory periphrasis typical of medieval Spanish (Lapesa, 2000, 2.882–883). Finally, it is necessary to refer to the second person personal pronoun *vos* (you; Galdós, 1918, *passim*), which alternated with the form *os* until 1,525. *Vos* was ultimately replaced by *os*, making it antiquated for the characters of the period (García Gallarín, 2018, 439) as Queen Joanna died in 1555.

But, as mentioned, these examples of usage go hand in hand with colloquial expressions, as the following examples show. *Hogaño* (current, contemporary; Galdós, 1918, 8) is marked as 'familiar' in the Academy's *Diccionario usual* of 1914; *hasta dejárselo de sobra* (something that is abundant; p. 10) is a modern locution in the language, although it can be found a little earlier, in Torres Villarroel's *Historia de historias* (Torres, 1796, 252), and it seems to me to have a colloquial character; *de su natural* (by its nature; Galdós, 1918, 10) seems to me to be an adjective locution used as an adverbial one. Also of a colloquial character is ¡*Chitón!* (Be quiet!; p. 11), a colloquial interjection according to the *Diccionario usual* of 1914 [318]; *como a una madre* (like a mother; p. 10) is a comparison with undeniably popular roots; *fachendosa* (vain; p. 12) was a colloquial adjective according to the *Diccionario usual* of

1914 [465]; although Galdós's taste for the diminutive is well known, *Infantita* (the diminutive of the title 'Infanta'; p. 24) is certainly an example of colloquial tone; *amostazado* (angry, ashamed; p. 37) was colloquial according to the *Diccionario usual* of 1914 [64]; and the same can be said of *ganapanes* (a rude, coarse man; p. 37), from the same dictionary [502]. The use of the obligatory periphrasis of medieval Spanish in Marisancha's following dialogue deserves special mention: *¿Cómo he de acordarme, señora, si en ese tiempo yo no no había nacido todavía?* (How am I supposed to remember, madam, if at that time I had not yet been born? [this translation is for the purposes of indicating the semantics of the original only]; p. 33).

There is also an abundance of archaic and colloquial usage in the second act. However, as it is in this part that the Queen emerges from her confinement and meets the people, vulgarisms also abound. As dialogue takes centre stage in this act, turns of phrase and forms typical of spontaneous oral conversation appear. As will be noted, the linguistic style of this part is consistent with the previous act and, as has just been highlighted, with the dramatic structure of the play itself. We will examine it here.

Archaic uses: *agora* (now; Galdós, 1918, 43); *aquestos* (those; p. 44); *así* (thus; p. 47); *ya era yo casado* (already was I married; p. 44); *roña* (pettiness; p. 48); *mesmo* (same; p. 49), an archaism belonging to Canarian Spanish (Alvar, 1999, 336); *luengos* (elongated; Galdós, 1918, 66); *antes que* instead of *antes de que* (before [the latter is correct modern usage]; p. 71); *emperadora* (empress; p. 57) is interpreted by the play's characters as vulgar, but the 1914 dictionary [401], in *NTLLE*, marks it as antiquated. The words *pechos* (tribute paid to the King), *alcabalas* (a type of sales tax), *foros* (fees), *gabelas* (a type of tax paid to the state) and *socaliñas* (trickery; p. 48), which are used by Poca Misa to refer to the amount of taxes that Castilian farmers had to pay, deserve special mention. These words were in use in the time of Queen Joanna I, and therefore Galdós's choice of meaning and antiquity is surprisingly apt.

Colloquial usages and forms: *de cabo a rabo* (from start to finish; Galdós, 1918, 46); *sigue... sigue* (on... go on [a colloquial interjection typical of spontaneous oral conversation]; p. 47); *¿Y los mellizos te viven?* (And the twins, are they alive? [this translation is for the purposes of indicating the semantics of the original only]; p. 48), where the pronoun is an ethical dative with a colloquial tone and common in oral language; *á lo que iba* (what I was going to say; p. 48), is a marker of textual continuity or of thematic progression that is colloquial in character and common in spoken language; *no tenemos más que el día y la noche* (all we have got is day and night; p. 48) is a colloquial locution; *zánganos* (drone; p. 48) has a metaphorical origin that confers a colloquial tone; the same can be said of *endibladadas* (devilish, harmful; p. 48), noted in the *Diccionario usual* of 1817 as metaphorical; *deslenguado* (foul-mouthed, rampant; p. 51) is figurative, and the dictionary of 1914 [355] notes the familiar character of other related words; *entre ceja y ceja* (between the eyebrows; p. 51) was a colloquial locution according to the *Diccionario usual* of 1914 [222], in *NTLLE*; *No, hijo, no tanto* (No son, not much; p. 52) is a colloquial vocative typical of the spoken language; *es de la piel del diblo* (lit. to be of the devil's skin, meaning to be very restless or naughty; p. 52) was a colloquial locution according to the *Diccionario usual* of 1914 [799]; *yo me lo guiso y yo me lo como* (I cook it, I eat it [referring to someone who will not listen to others]; p. 53) is a colloquial locution; *pica más alto que tú* (more ambitious than you; p. 53) was a colloquial locution according to the 1914 dictionary [796]; *fantasiosa* (vain, presumptuous; p. 61) was colloquial usage according to the *Diccionario usual* of 1914 [468]; *mangonear* (dominate, control; p. 61) was colloquial according to the 1914 dictionary [647], as can be said of *pécora* (bad person; p. 61) [*Diccionario usual* of 1914: 775]; *el que no trabaja no come* (he who does not work does not eat; p. 62) seems to be a colloquial locution despite its educated origin: 'The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat' (2 Thessalonians 3: 10); *no desbarres* (do not argue beyond reason; Galdós, 1918, 62) was figurative usage according to the 1914 dictionary [342]; in *hasta que no acabemos no comemos* (if we have not finished, we do not eat; p. 62), the first adverb of negation seems to have an expletive character, typical of spontaneous oral conversation; *Oye* (Hey; p. 63) is a colloquial interjection typical of spoken language; *esa... cabeza archiva* ([this... head] keeps, preserves; p. 66) is figurative in use, which seems more typical of the colloquial register than of the educated level.

As for vulgarisms, the following examples can be cited: *secanales* (Galdós, 1918, 46) does not appear in any of the dictionaries in the *NTLLE* and must be a vulgarism due to paronymic confusion with *secadal* (a dry place with no irrigation); *aluego* (later; p. 47) was a vulgarism according to the *Diccionario manual de la Academia* of 1927 (in

NTLLE); *alimañas* (vermin; p. 48) for 'Alemania' (Germany) is a vulgarism due to paronymic confusion and is a phenomenon close to popular etymology, belonging, although not exclusively, to the vulgar level; *dominanta* (bossy; p. 61) is a morphological vulgarism like *imperanta* (empress; p. 61).

In Act III we find language that could be considered closer to the standard. There are, however, some examples of archaic features and colloquial usage.

Archaic usage includes the word *vejigaciones* (vestications; Galdós, 1918, 68), which does not appear in any of the dictionaries contained in the NTLLE or in the *Diccionario histórico* (RAE, 2013–). M.^a Teresa Herrera (1996, 2.1626) documents it in the fifteenth century in Guido Cauliaco's *Tratado de cirugía* and in López Villalobos's *Sumario de Medicina; fuere* (Galdós, 1918, 69) is a future subjunctive form of the verb 'to be' belonging to antiquated language.

Colloquial usage includes *tecla* (topic, subject; Galdós, 1918, 68), which was familiar usage according to the 1914 dictionary [972–973]; *descansará ella y descansaremos todos* (she'll rest and we'll all rest; p. 69) is a colloquial expression; *han dado aquí en la flor* (they were in the habit of; p. 78) is a colloquial locution according to Martínez and Myre (2009, 192), not noted in the 1914 dictionary; *¡Hijo de mi alma!* (Child of my soul!) is a vocative from the colloquial register.

4 | CONCLUSIONS

This analysis shows that Galdós works with all registers and levels of language: the vulgar, the colloquial and the educated. He does not forego technicality (medicine), nor archaic terms, and his knowledge of the history of the language is precise yet broad, as shown by his use of certain lexical and morphosyntactic archaisms (including in the colloquial register) which contribute to creating the atmosphere of the period, in particular at the beginning of the play. But if one thing characterises the linguistic style of the drama, it is the use of colloquial forms typical of spontaneous spoken language, which is what makes it so familiar and modern. The use of colloquialisms is ostensible in the speeches of Queen Joanna I, who symbolises the history and people of Spain. Colloquial forms often contain idiomatic elements. Because of their idiomatic nature, these forms are close to the language's most pristine turns of phrase, which gives special elegance and dramatic vigour to the speeches of the play's most noble and tragic character, Queen Joanna I. At other times, characterisation is not simply unidirectional, as is the case with the servants, because certain terms (*agora, así, mesmo, emperadora*) may have an archaic but also a dialectal value, meaning they are characterised by rustic, antiquated speech. The popular characters are characterised by the use of vulgarisms, particularly noticeable with the character of Poca Misa in Act II. This means there are three levels of linguistic characterisation.

From a semiotic point of view, the abundance of colloquial usages is related to the play's central motif which, as noted at the beginning of this paper, is reflecting on the past and national history. In this regard, the people (and their way of speaking) are a central element, because spectators can identify with the characters (primarily, of course, including the Queen).

And on a formal level, in addition to contributing to characterisation, colloquialisms are an implicit critique of the melodramatic elements of drama. Accordingly, I believe they contribute to the configuration of Galdós's own dramatic model. In any case, our analysis reveals that Galdós upheld his intention to revitalise literary language through the spoken word to the end, as Lassaletta noted for Galdós's Contemporary Spanish Novels. And, naturally, this aim was consistent with his own linguistic ideas.

And indeed, our examination of *Santa Juana de Castilla* shows us that the style of this final work is consistent with the linguistic ideas exhibited by the author in a fragmentary way in various texts, as we will see below.

In 'Observaciones sobre la novela contemporánea en España' ('Observations on the contemporary novel in Spain'), which was published in the *Revista de España (Journal of Spain)* in 1870, and which Mainer (2004, xxvii) considers to be, 'without doubt, a foundational text', Galdós condemns all literary conventionalism imposed by trends, because it limited his view of a 'contemporary national society', and prevented a good 'novel of manners'

(Galdós, 1870, 162) from flourishing. For Don Benito, the 'modern novel of manners' had to portray the 'middle class' which, according to him, had become the protagonist of the 'political movement' (p. 167).

In this text, Galdós (1870, 169) praises the style of Ventura Ruiz Aguilera's *Proverbios ejemplares* because it contained a precious treasure of popular locutions which, with disgust, we see disappearing little by little from our literary language. It is important that the movement and the transformations of a language, which are indicated by the movement of life of the people, should not make us forget certain ways of speaking, which constitute one of the main treasures of our language.

For this reason, Galdós encourages Aguilera's use of 'sayings, proverbs and idioms', because this in itself would be enough to give his work the recognition it deserved.

A decade later, in the prologue to Pereda's *El sabor de la tierruca* (1882), Galdós again condemned conventionality and highlighted Pereda's renewal of language as a merit of his work, 'introducing popular language into literary language' (Galdós, 1882, viii). Don Benito laments that the literary language of the Spanish novel was so unprepared 'to assimilate the nuances of everyday conversation'. Galdós praises the fact that 'the vulgus is given a voice', but without descending into 'pedestrian baseness'. And he adds that Pereda makes 'sailors and peasants speak in a genuine, noble and elegant way'. Here it is worth remembering our observation on how the use of idiomatic expressions, which often contain very pristine turns of phrase, gave Galdós's style a singular elegance, particularly in the dialogue of the noble characters.

Some time later, in his acceptance speech at the Spanish Royal Academy in 1897, 'La sociedad presente como materia novelable' ('Current society as novel-worthy material'), Galdós praises the 'geniune diction' (Galdós & Menéndez Pelayo, 1897, 9) of his predecessor in the seat he was to occupy, León Galindo de Vera. He adds that the novel must reproduce 'language, which is the mark of the race' (p. 12). He then states that 'the vulgus' is the 'first and last matter of all artistic work because, as humanity, it gives us passions, characters, language' (p. 13). He points out that 'uniformity of diction' erases the differences of expression of social classes (p. 20), and insists that the social and political crisis of the time should be the subject to inspire the novel. He reiterates the need to overcome the 'mask' (p. 20) of all literary conventionality in order to reveal the true face of humanity, in what seems to me to be a conception of literary language that comes very close to the metaphysical.

Thus, I think it can be said, on the basis of his ideas about literary language, that Galdós's realism can only be considered a strict realism from a naïve point of view. And indeed, it is a realism that, in my opinion, begins as phenomenological, attentive to the lives of the characters who seem to be of flesh and blood, and ends up being transcendent, because it looks beyond, to the essence of human existence and nature. An examination of *Santa Juana de Castilla's* linguistic style (an abundance of colloquialisms and expressions of spontaneous conversation) at least does not refute this. This metaphysical dimension of Galdosian realism was also highlighted by Cardona (2011, 135) who appeals to the judgement of Luis Cernuda who, referring to the monologue of Mauricia la Dura when she steals the monstace in *Fortunata y Jacinta*, stated: 'In Galdós there is a transcendence of physical reality into metaphysics that is shared with only one other novelist [...] Dostoevsky'.¹⁶

For Cernuda (1994, 520), and regarding the cliché of the absence of style in Galdós's work, Galdós created 'a language that has no precedent in our literature' for his characters, one which nobody tried, or was able, to continue. He adds, 'Each character in his novels speaks to us themselves; it is direct and revealing language, familiar yet at the same time subtle'. Characters such as Mauricia la Dura, 'with their spontaneous discourse, bring the character to the reader in full, palpating way. Galdós introduces the colloquial style into our novel, the spoken style [...]'.¹⁷

And Cernuda himself (1994, 522–523) notes Galdós's complex attitude to reality in relation to some of Tito's reflections in *Amadeo I*:

Is everything I tell real, or do my dreams escape from my brain to my pen, and from pen to paper?
Are the amorous conquests [...] that serve as a plot for the historical warp real or imaginary? Do I believe them because I imagine them, and do I write them because I believe them?

By virtue of having mastered reality, Galdós already doubts it. But no modern Spanish writer knew and understood the physical and historical reality of his land as well as he did.

Tito's doubt is reminiscent of the old question of whether we believe in things because they exist or they exist because we believe in them.

I believe it would be difficult to deny the metaphysical roots of this doubt about the status of reality, revealing the modernity of the author's thinking. It seems to me that an understanding of the nature of Galdós's realist style is very important for a full assessment of the meaning and scope of his production. And for this, it is essential to elucidate its metaphysical dimension, a question that was raised some time ago, as we have seen, and which is nevertheless a matter that does not seem to have been concluded, and should be discussed again. I believe that Galdós's language, which is linked to the creation of characters and settings, is closely related to this aspect, as Cernuda noted. Otherwise, let us now recall Galdós's statement that 'the vulgus' is the 'first and last matter of all artistic work because, as humanity, it gives us passions, characters, *language*', taken from his acceptance speech at the Academy (my emphasis). Beyond this, I believe studying the nature of Galdosian realism may well shed light on the matter of literary realism in general, one of the most intricate and current issues in literary theory, as Darío Villanueva ([2004] 2020) notes.

Examining these texts and *Santa Juana de Castilla* reveals that Don Benito's ideas about the language of the novel also apply to his theatre, and that the supposed generic confusion when Galdós transposes novels to the theatre, as some have noted, is actually, at least linguistically, the expression of carefully considered, coherent literary intentions and ideas, as is to be expected of an author such as Galdós.

Beyond this, and in relation to our analysis of *Santa Juana de Castilla* and the ideas put forward in these texts, it seems unnecessary to add any further commentary to Galdós's words, because they are so beautiful, clear and well represented in *Santa Juana de Castilla* that any addition would be redundant.

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ENDNOTES

¹ This text is part of the project 'Escenario Galdós. textos, pensamiento y escenarios de Benito Pérez Galdós' (PROID2020010132), Canary Islands Agency for Research, Innovation and the Information Society.

² Pérez Galdós will be cited in bibliographical references as Galdós.

³ For the text of *Memorias de un desmemoriado*, see Menéndez Onrubia (2011).

⁴ The Queen refers to him as 'my husband' (Galdós, 1918, 23), and from a discursive point of view, I believe this removes any agentive traits from the character, meaning the identity of the Queen's character is reinforced.

⁵ Rodolfo Cardona (1977, 463) indicated that Galdós consulted Antonio Rodríguez Villa's *La reina doña Juana la Loca* (1892) at length. For historical sources on *Santa Juana de Castilla*, see also Sebastián de la Nuez Caballero (1994). More recently, on historical truth compared to aesthetic fact, see also Mora García (2000). For the myth of Queen Joanna in literature, see R. Martínez (2015, 121), who states that 'Galdós disregards previous hackneyed Romantic clichés to instead reflect on affording historical dignity' (p. 121).

⁶ We will interpret this as the possibility of achieving something better in the future by giving up something valuable in the present. As can be seen, the theme of sacrifice moves within the awareness of time, and therefore also within historical awareness. As Peterson (2018, 214–226) indicates, in our civilisation, sacrifice is also a religious matter. Work is one of the curses that God imposes on Adam's successors due to the original sin. Ultimately, and in a secularised context, sacrifice means giving more importance to what is meaningful than to immediate satisfaction. In the context of Galdós's work, I believe that this meaning cannot be anything other than historical significance: the common good, the benefit of all. In this case it is the sacrifice of Queen Joanna, represented by her silence, her confinement and her renunciation. It is as if Galdós had codified the drama of Spain's history, its past and its eventual future in *Santa Juana de Castilla*, although this is perhaps something of a reach.

⁷ Bermejo (1997) has also highlighted the social and transformative function of theatre according to Galdós. Estébanez (1997, 767), however, gives more importance to the moral and religious aspects, and speaks of *Santa Juana*

de Castilla as a 'Christian tragicomedy'. Amor del Olmo (2004, 152) also sees the sum of Galdós's religious ideals and vision of life in *Santa Juana de Castilla*. However, I believe that the religious is subordinate to the socio-political, because the drama of the Queen, in its essence and origin, is not religious, but rather social and political. Moreover, the religious approach in *Santa Juana de Castilla* is different from that of *Gloria*, as Domínguez (2009) has stated. Meanwhile, Luis Cernuda (1994, 519) has pointed out that Galdós soon understood that it was not possible to speak of progress in the 'petrified' Spain of his time. He therefore considered that the religious ideas of the 'modernised' Spanish tradition could be more useful, and that is why a large number of 'reformers, visionaries and madmen' appear in his work. The role of female figures in Galdós's theatre, and particularly in *Santa Juana de Castilla*, has been dealt with by Fierro (2009).

⁸ In this regard, see issue no. 2 (1998) of the journal *Theatralia* (and in particular González Maestro's, 1998 work on the dramatic character) which contains the proceedings of the Second International Congress on Theatre Theory, held at the University of Vigo on 7th and 8th May 1998.

⁹ Think, for example, of Veltenebros and Sanchico's characterisation of Poca Misa's way of speaking compared to the Queen's own silence on the matter in Act II, Scene I. Something similar occurs with the names of certain characters, which change throughout the play. This is the case, for example, of the denominational expressions used to refer to the queen, who is progressively *Her Highness, the Queen, Doña Joanna, Our Queen, lady, the Empress, Our Empress, our mother, Sovereign of Castile, Spain and the whole world, Holy Queen!*

¹⁰ Because of its subject matter, we must make special mention of the work of Lassaletta (1974), although we have only occasionally found the locutions in our analysis there, perhaps because it focuses on the works *Fortunata y Jacinta, Torquemada, Miau* and *Tristana*. Thus, it can be said that what Lassaletta noted regarding the colloquial language of the Galdosian novel, the intention to restore the vitality of the spoken word to literary language (pp. 254–255), can also be applied to his last play. For similar reasons, it is also worth highlighting the extensive and significant work of Rodríguez Marín (2005), who dedicates a section to Galdós, although his focus is also narrative production. For more on colloquial language in Galdós's work, see also the section on this topic by López Quero (in Zamorano, 2012).

¹¹ The examples given are always cited from Hernando's 1918 edition. The orthography of this edition has been respected in the transcription.

¹² It can be consulted online at <https://www.rae.es/dhle/>

¹³ These instalments can be consulted in the Digital Newspaper Archives of the National Library of Spain. Retrieved from <http://www.bne.es/es/Catalogos/HemerotecaDigital/>

¹⁴ In 2020, the Text Editing and Textual Analysis Division of the University Institute of Textual Analysis and Application (IATEX) of the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria produced a digital edition of *Santa Juana de Castilla* as part of a Proyecto Puente (Bridging Project) entitled 'The Theatre of Galdós. Views and Proposals', co-ordinated by Carmen Márquez-Montes (University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria), funded by the Cabildo de Gran Canaria and awarded in 2019 (CABILDO 2018–05). This edition follows Hernando's print edition, and can be found at https://santa_juana_de_castilla.iatext.ulpgc.es/. (Márquez-Montes & Perdomo-Batista, 2019)

¹⁵ The *Ortografía* of 1815, and the following dictionaries cited in this section: the *Diccionario usual* of 1817, the *Diccionario academico usual*, the *Diccionario usual* of 1914, and the *Diccionario manual de la Academia* of 1927, can all be consulted in the NTLLE on the RAE website at <https://www.rae.es/>. Page reference numbers for the dictionaries are given in square brackets.

¹⁶ Cardona himself adds that James Whinston did not share Cernuda's interpretation, because he did not find the scene transcendent. Cernuda's words come from an article published in 1954 under the title 'Galdós', in which the poet examined Don Benito's use of dialogue and monologue in his novels. Interpreting Galdós's work through a metaphysical key is also very evident in the beautiful and extensive poem that Cernuda dedicated to Galdós, *Bien está que fuera tu tierra*, included in *Desolación en la Quimera* (Cernuda, 1962). There Cernuda does not refer to language, but to the characters created by Galdós, described as 'more alive than other creatures'. In a recent work, García Montero (2020) offers details on Cernuda's text, although through a different perspective. Lorca and Aleixandre's appreciation of Galdós is also well known. Granados (1993) has looked at Galdós and the Generation of 1927.

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