The protagonist-narrator format of *El amigo Manso* and *Lo prohibido* sets these novels apart from the ones surrounding them. This is an uncommon form of narration for Galdós, who rarely used it after completing the first series of *Episodios nacionales*. The comments he made in the epilogue to the first edition of *La batalla de los Arapiles* explain why:

Ya que hablo de mis culpas, no ocultaré la principal en estos diez libros, fruto de dos años de incesante trabajo, y es que con mi habitual imprevisión adopté la forma autobiográfica la cual, si bien no carece de encanto, tiene grandísimos inconvenientes para una narración larga, y no puede de modo alguno sostenerse en el género novelesco-histórico, donde la acción y trama se construyen con multitud de sucesos que no debe alterar la fantasía, y con personajes de existencia real. Únanse a esto las escenas y tipos que el novelista tiene que sacar de sus propios talleres; establezcase la necesidad de que los acontecimientos históricos ocurridos en los palacios, en los campos de batalla, en las asambleas, en los clubs, en mil sitios diversos y de no libre elección para el autor, han de pasar ante los ojos de un solo personaje, narrador obligado e indispensable de tan diversos hechos en periodo de tiempo larguísimos y en diferentes ocasiones y lugares, y se comprenderá que la forma autobiográfica es un obstáculo constante en la libertad del novelista y a la puntualidad del historiador.¹

¹ Alan E. Smith, “El epílogo a la primera edición de *La batalla de los Arapiles*,“ *Anales Galdosianos* 17 (1982): 106-07. In the 1885 second prologue to the illustrat-
Indeed, since a protagonist-narrator must operate within the novelistic world with the same limitations that actual people have in the real world, in order to acquire information such a narrator must either witness an event first hand or somehow learn about it from secondary sources. Consequently, for Gabriel Araceli to be able to relate the history of Spain from an autobiographical position in the first series of *Episodios nacionales*, Galdós needed to change his physical location on a regular basis and give him ready access to a wide variety of characters whose knowledge of events could supplement Gabriel's personal experience. Galdós provided Gabriel with occupations – servant and soldier – that granted him a large measure of mobility. Gabriel's employers brought him into situations that normally would have been barred to him, such as the world of the theater and the court at El Escorial. Similarly, his service in several different fighting units took him to battle sites all over Spain. But even the most creative plotting strategy would not allow Gabriel to be present at events occurring simultaneously in different places. Therefore, he had to rely on other characters for information. Indeed, the lengthy eyewitness account of the siege of Gerona was told to Gabriel (and the reader) by an intradiegetic narrator, Andrés Marijuán, because Gabriel had been fighting in Zaragoza at that time. In this way Galdós was able to record both of these important military campaigns rather than having to choose between them. Throughout the series Gabriel's fellow characters served as his informants for events he missed because he had been absent, unconscious, or asleep. But when it was not plausible for a character to volunteer information willingly, Galdós resorted to such clichéd contrivances as having Gabriel hide behind curtains in order to overhear conversations without being detected. To further fill in missing details, Gabriel also availed himself of letters, newspapers, and other written sources of information.

Thanks to this constant scurrying about, Gabriel was able to abide by all of the rules of first-person autobiographical narration, not once overstepping the rigid boundaries that define the role of a protagonist-narrator. But Galdós understandably tired of the Herculean efforts necessary to sustain this limited narrative stance over
the course of a ten novel series. Therefore, in the second series he adopted the pose of an omniscient narrator. Nevertheless, he did use individual protagonist-narrators for three of its novels: Juan Bragas de Pipaón in *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* and *La segunda casaca*, and Genara de Baraona in *Los cien mil hijos de San Luis*. But in each case, the omniscient narrator of the second series intrudes on these personal accounts to provide information beyond the scope of the limited protagonist-narrators. In this way Galdós was able to combine what he called the "encanto" of first-person narration while recouping some of the "libertad" that such a format denied him in the first series. When Galdós next returned to the autobiographical format in *El amigo Manso* and *Lo prohibido*, he had devised new methods of freeing himself somewhat from the restrictions inherent in that form of narration. By examining these two contemporary novels in light of the protagonist-narrated episodios that preceded them, we can better appreciate the subtlety with which Galdós handles his narrators, Máximo Manso and José María Bueno de Guzmán, and the stories they tell.

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*El amigo Manso* begins with Manso's open acknowledgment of himself as a fictional construct. "Yo no existo," he declares, going on to explain that he is an artistic fabrication of human thought. He is an idea, which by the end of chapter 1 has been transformed into a literary entity by the author in a magical display of burnt paper and spilled ink. As a result, at the beginning of chapter 2 he declares, "Yo soy Máximo Manso," in an assertion of his new status:

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he is now the protagonist of his own story. At the end of the novel, when he has fulfilled his function, his character dies, and in the last chapter he is reinstated within his original realm of non-existence. In effect, the first and last chapters of this novel serve as a frame for the forty-eight chapter embedded story about Manso’s friendships, family entanglements, and unrequited love. This frame is totally detachable from the story it contains, and without it the embedded story would have conformed completely to the conventions of autobiographical fiction. With the self-referential frame, however, the novel brings those conventions to the attention of the reader. The story within a story format exposes the conventional differences between omniscient and limited narration which the reader normally accepts without question but now must contend with in order to reconcile the two separate positions that Manso occupies in the text.

When Manso is in the frame, he enjoys the “godlike vantage point beyond time and place,” which Friedman associates with editorial omniscience. Although he speaks to the reader with the “yo” form of address, he is not subject to the limitations of first-person narration. He is able to enter the minds of his characters at will, and his privileged knowledge surpasses even that of the author who, as Harriet Turner has observed, “is hardly more than a scribe” recording the story Manso dictates to him. Once Manso leaves the frame and enters the story, however, the situation drastically changes. As with all protagonist-narrators, Manso is both the teller of the story and one of the characters in it. As such, he is subject to all of the constraints of his fellow characters. His knowledge of events is derived completely from his personal experience and through the information that other characters give him. He can’t be in more than one place at the same time. He has no powers beyond those of his five senses, and even they are subject to the normal physical boundaries. Finally, he cannot enter the minds of the other characters to read their thoughts and, therefore, he is only able to speculate on their motivations by piecing together evidence gathered from their words or actions. This last limitation is the single

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most important feature which distinguishes first-person narration from omniscient narration. Galdós calls the reader’s attention to this convention by juxtaposing the all-knowing Manso in the frame against the all too fallible Manso in the embedded story.

Manso’s limitations while functioning within the embedded story have caused a great deal of critical confusion concerning his status vis à vis Wayne Booth’s concept of narrator reliability. This is due to the common error of equating omniscient privilege with reliability, and a single point of view with unreliability, as seen in Kay Engler’s insistence that “unreliability is inherent in the ‘first-person’ narrator, an inevitable consequence of the choice of that form of narration.” While it is true that some of Galdós’s protagonist-narrators are unreliable, one needs only to cite Gabriel Araceli as an example to the contrary. Early in the series Gabriel develops an honor code grounded in such values as personal responsibility, tolerance and respect for others, honesty, and loyalty to both his country and his fellow man. His youth and inexperience at times cause him to lose sight of these concepts, but he always returns to them as the core of his value system. Because these values are in accord with those advocated by the implied author, by critical consensus Gabriel is considered to be the portavoz for the entire first series of episodios. A parallel situation occurs with the highly principled but socially inept Máximo Manso. Eamonn Rodgers classifies Manso as unreliable because “[f]or most of the narrative, he is ignorant of certain facts which affect him personally, and his assumptions about human nature are mistaken.” But once again these characteristics are merely the consequence of his status as a protagonist-narrator. The number of limitations under which a narrator must labor is not an issue in determining his reliability. Rather, it is a matter of the norms and values he upholds. This aspect of a narrator’s persona cuts across the boundaries between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrators. Each individual narrator has the capacity for reliability or unreliability regardless of the narrative format chosen by the author. Booth is very clear on this point:

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If the reason for discussing point of view is to find how it relates to literary effects, then surely the moral and intellectual qualities of a narrator are more important to our judgment than whether he is referred to as "I" or "he," or whether he is privileged or limited... For lack of better terms, I have called a narrator reliable when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not.7 Booth goes on to state that reliable narrators are those "who, however human and limited and bewildered, earn our basic trust and approval" (274).

Thus, when Booth speaks of the norms and values of the text, he is not referring to the norms and values held by the characters within the novelistic world, but rather, he is speaking of the norms and values projected as desirable by the implied author. These norms and values represent the implied author's social, political, religious, and ethical attitudes and assumptions. The narrator who upholds the attitudes and assumptions of the implied author is reliable, the narrator who does not is unreliable. In the case of El amigo Manso, the implied author's high principles are in direct opposition to the shallow and self-serving values embraced by Restoration society. By condemning those characters who perpetuate the corruption and vanity of his society, Manso aligns himself with the implied author. Therefore, he is a reliable narrator. Nevertheless, this reliability only pertains to the ideological realm. It does not endow him with any privileges normally denied a protagonist-narrator. Manso still retains all of the limitations associated with first-person narration. Harriet Turner's statement that Manso "is reliable and unreliable at the same time" is an attempt to reconcile Manso's moral and ethical worthiness with the practical restrictions imposed upon him by his protagonist-narrator status.8 Indeed, out of ignorance of the facts he jumps to wrong conclusions, is misled by appearances, and overlooks what is important while focusing on...
the trivial. But these misinterpretations do not render him unreliable in Booth’s sense of the term because they do not negate Manso’s support of the implied author’s social, political, religious, and ethical attitudes or assumptions. The reader can rely on Manso to be a trustworthy guide throughout the ideological world of the novel. But at the same time, we are aware that Manso is surrounded by characters who lead him to draw false conclusions because they keep secrets from him.

Manso’s limited point of view as a protagonist-narrator within the embedded story forms the basis for the irony which permeates the novel. This irony has two layers. The first results from the interaction between the frame and the story it contains. The privileges which Manso enjoys within the frame are denied him in the interior tale. Consequently, Manso in the frame can look down upon his interior counterpart from a superior position. The entire novel is Manso’s self-revealing and intentionally ironic portrait of himself – as both a character and as a limited narrator – given from the higher perspective of editorial omniscience. This leads to the second layer of irony, which involves the relationship between the reader and Manso. Because we can view Manso as merely one of the many characters operating in the embedded story, we are able to take a global perspective of the situations in which he participates. Thus, we perceive interrelationships and patterns which Manso misses because of his limited perspective. The inferences we draw as a consequence allow us to decipher what is happening long before Manso does. Both these levels of irony work in conjunction to create not only a complex characterization of Manso but also an elaborately constructed method of conveying his fictional autobiography.

As a character within the story, Manso is restricted to a single point of view. But that perspective has many dimensions: percep-
tual (through his physical senses); conceptual (through his attitudes/world view); and interested (through the personal stake he has in the situation). His conceptual point of view is basically in agreement with the values of the implied author. He does, however, exhibit the same over reliance on logic and reason that typifies León Roch’s characterization. Eamonn Rodgers has pointed out that “the Krausist emphasis on the discipline of reason could lead to an over-valuing of the intellect,” thereby negating in practice what Krausism advocated in theory: “the harmonious balance between intellect, appetite, feeling, and imagination” (86). This is indeed what happens to Manso. He filters all of life through the prism of reason, but in the process he is unable to make the imaginative leaps that would tie together the data he collects. Furthermore, as Denah Lida has noted, Manso insists on defining his romantic feelings within the boundaries of logic, thereby ignoring Sanz’s warnings that sentiments are not reducible to analysis. Manso’s conviction in the primacy of reason over all else is evident in chapter 2, where he says “Constantemente me congratulo de este mi carácter templado, de la condición subalterna de mi imagi-
nación, de mi espíritu observador y práctico, que me permite tomar las cosas como son realmente, no equivocarme jamás respecto a su verdadero tamaño, medida y peso, y tener siempre bien tirantes las riendas de mí mismo” (ch. 2). This turns out to be the most ironic statement in the novel because Manso’s blind adherence to reason and logic has a distorting rather than clarifying effect on both his perceptual and interest perspectives. Consequently, Manso is often unaware of the underlying importance of the events occurring around him.

His attempt to understand what in fact is happening under the surface of these events constitutes what John Rutherford calls the novel’s enigma, which is solved through a series of questions concerning Irene that are posed by Manso and the reader throughout the course of the narration. As new evidence comes to light, certain questions are answered, and these have an impact on Manso’s previous assumptions. In Iserian terms, gaps occur in the text due to

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the secrecy of Irene, Manolo, José María, and doña Cándida. In order to fill those gaps, Manso (and the reader) must undergo an inferential process of connecting existing information in a meaningful way. Because of Manso’s status as a character within the story, his ability to pull together the various pieces of this novelistic puzzle is more restricted than that of the reader. Consequently, we realize aspects of the enigma before Manso does. More importantly, however, we also are able to see how Manso’s efforts are hampered by his love for Irene. In effect, his perceptual perspective (what he sees and hears) is filtered through his interest perspective (focused upon Irene as the object of his affections), causing him to evaluate all of Irene’s actions as if they were directly related to himself. This situation is further compounded by Manso’s conceptual perspective—dominated by reason—which in turn serves as the filter for his interest perspective. An example will help clarify this process.

Manso is a 35 year old bachelor who has never had a romantic relationship. Suddenly he finds himself smitten by Irene, a young woman of 19. Why? First, it is because she is beautiful, and Manso’s mind recently has been filled with “ideas sobre lo bello” since he is in the process of writing a prologue to Hegel’s *Sistema de Bellas Artes* in Spanish translation. Second, Irene’s quiet demeanor and job as a governess has led Manso to assume that she is as captivated by learning and as uninterested in high society as he is. Therefore, he endows her with all of the virtues he desires in a woman and dubs her a “mujer-razón.” That is, his interest perspective has been influenced by his conceptual perspective. Once this interest perspective has been thus engaged, it in turn begins to affect Manso’s perceptual perspective. At the height of his infatuation with Irene, he has two conversations with her where he simply does not listen to what she is saying. But the reader does, and this contributes to the dramatic irony that characterizes the relationship between Manso and the reader. In chapter 16, while discussing her duties as a governess to José María’s young children, Irene tells Manso that she is tired of “dando lecciones de lo que no entiendo bien.” Manso is not taken aback by this confession indicating Irene’s inability to grasp simple elementary school material. Rather, he interprets her dissatisfaction as stemming from boredom due to being overqualified for her position: “Usted se aburre, ¿no es verdad? Usted es demasiado inteligente, demasiado bella, para vivir asalariada.” This response indicates Manso’s conceptual perspec-
tive's preoccupation with beauty and intelligence, which obscures his perceptual perspective's processing of Irene's words. Similarly, in chapter 18 Manso is surprised to find Irene still up during one of José María's late night parties. When he tells doña Jesusa that such behavior "es contrario a sus costumbres," the old woman tells him that, on the contrary, "[a]gunos ratos se va al corredor a ver un poquito de la sala." When Manso and doña Jesusa are joined by Irene moments later, "[s]u fisonomía revelaba gozo y estaba menos pálida. Parecía agitada, con mucho brillo en los ojos y algo de ardor en las mejillas." She sums up her impression of the party by saying: "¡Qué lujo, qué trajes! Es cosa que deslumbra..." Despite all this evidence indicating Irene's fascination with the glamour and glitter of Madrid's social set, Manso insists on forcing what he hears and sees into the confines of his conceptual view of Irene, saying to her: "ni a usted ni a mí nos agrada esto. Por fortuna, estamos conformados de manera que no echamos de menos estos ruidosos y brillantes placeres, y preferimos los goces tranquilos de la vida doméstica, el modesto pan de cada día con su natural mixtura de pena y felicidad, siempre dentro del inalterable círculo del orden." Doña Jesusa is so impressed with Manso's rhetorical ability that she praises him profusely, with Irene shaking her head in agreement. But, as the text notes, Irene just gives her "aprobación a los elogios" that Jesusa showers on Manso. In no way does she indicate her agreement with the ideas he expressed. Her silence is taken by Manso as tacit approval, but the reader suspects otherwise.

Indeed, when we look back through the text for earlier conversations between Manso and Irene in order to see if our suspicions are valid, we find that very little of what they have said to each other is reproduced in dialogue form. Rather, their conversations are described to us by Manso. In chapter 14 we are told that Irene agreed with Manso's opinions concerning topics as varied as education, religion, bullfighting, and home decorating. And in chapter 15 he tells us how Irene's opinion matched his own with regard to theatrical performances with religious themes. Since their conversations are not recorded in direct speech, the reader wonders if Manso's recollections are entirely accurate. Perhaps, like the conversation at José María's party, Irene remains politely silent while Manso does all the talking. Indeed, in chapter 16 we see that Manso's tendency to read Irene's silence in his favor can lead him to ungrounded assumptions. In that chapter Manso asks Irene why
the light in her room had been on so late the night before. When she avoids answering him, Manso comes to the preposterous conclusion that this vital young woman had been secretly studying some of the long, dry, philosophical books that he had written! Clearly such a supposition is merely the fruit of Manso’s conceptual and interest perspectives distorting his perceptual perspective. Consequently, when we re-read Manso’s assertion that in Irene he has found the “mayor consonancia y parentesco entre su alma y la mía,” we suspect that he simply is projecting his own conceptual and interest perspectives onto her.

As the narrative progresses, our suspicions are born out. It is important to note, however, that the clouding of Manso’s vision due to his conceptual and interest perspectives is only partly responsible for Manso’s lack of understanding about what is occurring around him. Also to blame are his fellow characters who deliberately conceal information from him. As the secrets which have been hidden by Irene, Manolo, José María, and doña Cándida gradually are revealed to Manso, he is fully capable of readjusting his opinion of Irene. He finally realizes that Irene is merely what he calls a “mujer-mujer” instead of a “mujer-razón,” but he still continues to love her despite the imperfections he sees in her. That is, his interest perspective is still engaged, but it now has been liberated from the influence of his conceptual perspective. Since he no longer has to view Irene through his reason-centered conceptual perspective, he can simply love her for what she is: “una persona de esas que llamaríamos de distinción vulgar, una dama de tantas, hecha por el patron corriente, formada según el modelo de mediocridad en el gusto y hasta en la honradez, que constituye el relleno de la Sociedad actual” (ch. 42). Seven chapters later he again returns to this idea: “era como todas. Los tiempos, la raza, el ambiente, no se desmentía en ella.” Here Galdós uses Manso to introduce the formula of “race, milieu, et moment,” as one which is just as valid for middle- and upper-class society as it is for the urban or rural poor so favored by naturalistic writers. Manso’s desengaño concerning Irene allows him to place her, and his erstwhile student Manolo, within the larger context of Madrid during the Restoration. In the process, he realizes that his educational efforts are no match for the power exerted over the general populace by society. Debra Castillo has noted that the primary goal of Krausist pedagogy was to bring a
student “to a refined sense of moral and ethical considerations.” 14 But such a goal is not fully realizable within a shallow, selfish, vain, opportunistic society that rewards oratorical flourish over well-reasoned arguments. As Carlos Blanco Aguinaga remarks, Manso’s tutoring of Manolo has done little more than provide the veneer of sophistication that will allow him to rise within the social hierarchy. 15 Charles Steele sees El amigo Manso as Galdós’s critique of the Krausist school system which failed to take into consideration society at large when putting into practice its theories. 16 G. A. Davies agrees that Galdós is negatively commenting on the conflict between Krausist theory and practice, but he sees society as sharing some of the blame because educational reform can only work if individuals in society are willing to accept it. 17 Indeed, the indifference of Manso’s students to his lessons is graphically displayed at the end of the novel after Manso has returned to the frame. He dips into the minds of his former pupils – including Manolo – and finds precious little of what he taught them buried under the more recent layers of life experience. Manolo’s real school is the Congreso, where moral and ethical considerations are of little importance. Similarly, Irene’s formal schooling is wasted in her role as a society wife so occupied with fashion and parties that she never thinks to open a book. 18

Manso’s inability to win over his students to a more moral and ethical way of life does not negate the validity of the value system governing his own behavior, however. Striving for higher ideals is admirable whether or not they ultimately are attained, and Manso’s worthy attempt constitutes his superiority over those around him who merely pursue self-interested goals. Manso is an exaggerated version of León Roch, and like his predecessor, his single-minded

18 Although, as Catherine Jagoe, Ambiguous Angels: Gender in the Novels of Galdós (Berkeley: U of California P, 1994) points out, Krausists viewed the education of women merely as a “means to the real end of educating the future men of Spain, since mothers were inevitably the first educators of children” 100.
reliance on theoretical concepts blinds him to the truths around him and leads to his disillusionment. Manso in the frame can look down on the embedded story with a bemused comprehension of the human frailties that affect all the characters, including Manso. But of all the characters Manso is by far the least culpable because his shortsightedness comes from an excess of qualities that are good. He never acts in a mean-spirited or inconsiderate manner. Although he is blatantly deceived by Irene, he does not respond in kind. Rather, he selflessly works toward securing her future happiness. Manso stands with the implied author against the pettiness and triviality exhibited by the other characters. His honesty and generosity serve as a counterpoint to their “pasión exaltada, debilidad de espíritu y elasticidad de conciencia” (ch. 42). Harriet Turner likens him to a “médico que diagnostica los males de la sociedad, como lo fue Augusto Miquis de La desheredada.” Indeed, the similarity between these two characters is underscored by Augusto’s brief appearance in chapter 33, where he helps Manso to find a wet-nurse for Lica’s baby. Counted among Manso’s friends are men like himself – Augusto Miquis and León Roch – while he avoids the company of doña Cándida, Federico Cimarra, the marqués de Tellería, and Ramón María Pez. Manso’s reliability is thus reaffirmed through his personal relationships with characters from previous Galdosian novels. As Martha Krow-Lucal has noted, Galdós’s practice of using recurring characters enriches the reading experience because of the numerous associations that the reader can bring from past novels to the one at hand. His friendships serve as a form of shorthand to align Manso with other Galdosian characters who are critical of the shallow values prevalent in society at the time. But those readers of El amigo Manso who are unfamiliar with Galdós’s previous work are not at a disadvantage because Galdós clearly establishes the traits of all characters who are essential to the plot, whether or not they have appeared elsewhere before.

As we have seen in La desheredada, Fortunata y Jacinta, and the Centeno-Tormento-Bringas trilogy, this characterization is usually


accomplished in Galdós's third-person narratives through direct commentary coupled with more subtle means of developing character, such as the granting or withholding of interior views. In first-person narratives, however, only the protagonist-narrator is permitted interior views. Consequently, in El amigo Manso, all characters other than Manso automatically receive an exterior treatment. In addition to what the narrator says about them, they reveal themselves through their words and actions. Although direct speech, in the form of dialogues, is the most common way of communicating the characters' words to the reader, other ways can be employed for their connotative effects. In El amigo Manso, Galdós frequently uses free indirect speech with doña Cándida and Lica. As we have seen in Galdós's other novels, the overall effect of this technique is mimicry, and as such it exaggerates the tone of the original. Therefore, doña Cándida's pretentiousness and Lica's flightiness become more apparent when what they say is rendered in speech that is free and indirect rather than tagged and direct. Of course, the free indirect aspect of this technique also carries with it the double-voicing that is so effective for ironic purposes. In protagonist-narrated texts such as this one, the double-voicing is particularly powerful because the narrator is also a character, and therefore has a more easily identifiable persona than the typical heterodiegetic chronicler-narrator. In El amigo Manso the solid, no-nonsense, logical approach that Manso applies to life contrasts sharply with the way doña Cándida and Lica deal with the world. Consequently, when free indirect speech is used to capture these characters' spoken words, Manso's implicit reaction to what they say is also present.

Throughout the novel Manso's silent censure of doña Cándida's numerous untruths is conveyed in this way. A particularly effective use of free indirect speech with this character is found in the second and third paragraphs of chapter 48, where doña Cándida is lamenting to Lica the loss of Irene's company due to her upcoming marriage to Manolo. Like Manso, we know the truth about her relationship with Irene and about her counterfeit wealth. Therefore, we join Manso in appreciating the irony in doña Cándida's self-sacrificing tone and feigned concern for Irene's welfare:

¿Qué sería de ella ya, a su edad, privada de la dulce compañía de su queridísima sobrina..., única persona que de los García Grande quedaba ya en el mundo? Pero el Señor sabía lo que se
hacia al quitarle aquel gusto, aquel apoyo moral... Nacemos para
padecer, y padeciendo morimos... Por supuesto, ella sabía domi-
nar su pena y aun atenuarla, considerando la buena suerte de la
chica. ¡Oh!, sí, lo principal era que Irene se casara bien, aunque
su tía se muriera de dolor al perder la compañía...

and in her mock indignation at being linked to a socially inferior
family:

¡ay!, la carne, la carne... Irene se casaba con uno de los tres ene-
migos del alma. No se puede una acostumbrar a ciertas cosas,
por más que hablen de las luces del siglo, de la igualdad y de la
aristocracia del talento... Ella transigía con el chico; pero con la
mamá... ¡imposible! ¡Si al menos no fuera tan ordinaria...!

and in the specious generosity of sharing her possessions with the
couple:

¿Para qué quería nada ella ya?... Maravillas tenía aun en sus
cofres, que harían gran papel en la casa de los jóvenes esposos...
Y el sobrante de sus rentas..., también para ellos.

The falsehood and hypocrisy of each of doña Cándida’s statements
is intensified because the reader is in agreement with the disdainful
double-voicing provided by Manso in this free indirect speech pas-
sage. Throughout the novel this narrative device is used to implicit-
ly reinforce the explicit condemnation of doña Cándida which
Manso expresses in his narrative commentary.

But not all free indirect speech is critical in nature. For ex-
ample, Galdós uses this technique to place Lica’s chatty, colloquial
manner of expressing herself in contrast to Manso’s formal lan-
guage and careful delivery. Thus, by juxtaposing Lica’s emotional
outbursts against Manso’s more reasoned and cautious reactions,
this technique points out the different temperaments of these two
characters. A good example is found in chapter 21, where Lica is
complaining to Manso about the bad habits José María has ac-
quired due to his association with Federico Cimarra and those of
his ilk:

Ya no le valía quejarse y llorar, porque él no hacía maldito caso
de sus quejas ni de sus lágrimas. Se había vuelto muy guachinan-
go, muy pillo, y siempre encontraba palabras para escaparse y aun para probar que no rompía un plato. Tenía olvidada a su mujer, olvidados a sus hijos: todo el santo día se lo pasaba en la calle, y, por la noche, salía después de la reunión y ya no se le veía hasta el día siguiente a la hora de almorzar. Marido y mujer sólo cambiaban algunas palabras tocante a la invitación, al té, a la comida, y pare usted de contar...

Esto podría pasar si no hubiera otras cosas peores, faltas graves. José María estaba echado a perder; la compañía y el trato de Cimarra le habían enciguatado; se había corrompido como la fruta sana al contacto de la podrida... Ya no le quedaba duda a la pobrecita de la atroz infidelidad de su esposo. Ella se sentía tan afrontada, que sólo de pensarlo se le salían los colores a la cara, y no encontraba palabras para contarlo... Pero a mí podría decírmelo todo. Sí; revolviendo una mañana los bolsillos de la ropa de José María, había encontrado una carta de una sinvergüenz... ¡Una carta pidiéndole dinero!... Se volvía loca pensando que la plata de sus hijos iba a manos de una...

Pero a la infeliz esposa no le importaba la plata, sino la sinvergüenz... ¡Ay! Estaba bramando. Con ser ella una persona decente, si cogiera delante a la bribona que le robaba a su marido, le había de dar una buena soba y un par de galletas bien dadas. ¡Ay qué Madrid, qué Madrid éste! Vale más andar en comisión por el monte, vivir en un bohío, comer vianda, jufía y naranjas cañelas, que peinar a la moda, arrastrar cola, hablar fino y comer con ministros... Mejor estaba ella en su bendita tierra que en Madrid. Allí era reina y señora del pueblo; aquí no le hacían caso más que los que venían a comerle los codos, y después de vivir a su costa se burlaban de ella. Luego esta vida, Señor, esta vida en que todo es forzarse una, fingir y ponerse en tormento para hacer todo a la moda de acá, y tener que olvidar las palabras cubanas para saber otras, y aprender a saludar, a recibir, a mil tontadas y boberías... No, no; esto no iba con ella. Si José no se enmendaría, ella se plantaba de un salto en su tierra, llevándose a sus hijos.

Lica’s free indirect speech continues through the end of the chapter. She is so upset that her sentences tumble over each other without being completed, and Manso finds himself in the position of having to calm her down even though he suspects that her anger is justified. Although Lica is disorganized, flighty, and capricious at times, she is not a bad character. She has what Manso describes as
an "alma bondadosa," and he genuinely likes her, especially since she shares Manso's scorn for the empty values of high society. Therefore, the content of Lica's conversation is not criticized. Rather, it is her speaking style that is highlighted for comic effect. In this, and all of Lica's free indirect speech passages, double-voicing is used to mildly poke fun at Lica's effusiveness while also registering Manso's exasperation over having to deal with Lica's spontaneous intrusions into his orderly life.

A type of double-voicing also exists between the two Manso's in the text — his frame persona and his story persona — due to the novel's self-referential premise. In the novel's first chapter the author asks the omniscient Manso in the frame to tell his story. He complies, but in the telling, his limited story persona takes over. Manso's story persona speaks, but the presence of his frame persona is still felt. In effect, all of Manso's narration within the story functions as if it were a first-person variation of free indirect speech. Consequently, it all carries with it the double-voicing that combines the story persona's words with the frame persona's implied commentary. From his privileged position in the frame, Manso can look down upon his limited self in the story with an indulgent superiority, watching himself become enmeshed in petty intrigues that he doesn't fully understand, and seeing his vain attempts to reconcile his reason-centered philosophy of life with his love for Irene and his feelings of jealousy toward José María and Manolo. What Manso in the frame presents to the author (and the reader) is an intentionally ironic self-portrait of his limited self, as seen from his privileged position of editorial omniscience.

The protagonist-narrator within the story presents the events from his point of view as they occurred. This is a standard convention of autobiographical fiction which, despite its retrospective nature, does not require the narrator to reveal the outcome of events until the end of the narrative. Manso in the embedded story knows that he will lose Irene to Manolo, but he withholds that information because to do otherwise would ruin the suspense for the reader. As the protagonist-narrator he controls the order of the narrative, but Manso in the frame still retains his editorial function and briefly intrudes three times on that narrative. These more or less evenly spaced interruptions remind the reader of his hidden presence behind the protagonist-narrator's words. Two of these interruptions merely point to the then/now difference in the times of reference
between the story persona and the frame persona: the declaration in chapter 15 that “aun hoy” he recalls the strong smell of coffee that always permeated José María’s house; and the assertion in chapter 39 that “aun hoy” he finds it unusual that his appetite was not adversely affected by the news of Irene’s love for Manolo. The intrusion of Manso’s frame persona at the opening of chapter 14 is different, however, because it seems to indicate a lack of omniscience on his part. He asks if his “propósito” (i.e. marriage to Irene) “¿Nació del sentimiento o de la razón? Hoy mismo no lo sé, aunque trato de sondear el problema, ayudado de la serenidad de espíritu de que disfruto en este momento.” But how can Manso’s frame persona not know the answer to this question, especially in light of the desengaño his story persona eventually undergoes? Here Manso is simply resorting to the temporary suspension of privilege common to editorial omniscience. Like the typical Galdosian chronicler-narrator, Manso feigns ignorance as a ruse to make himself appear more objective about the facts he does divulge. Despite his pretense of limitation, his omniscient privileges remain in tact, allowing him to end the novel with a catalog summarizing the thoughts of the story’s characters. His superiority vis-à-vis his story persona is blatantly stated in the concluding paragraph of the novel where he likens himself to an adult who looks with disdain upon the toys he cherished in childhood.

In El amigo Manso Galdós used an innovative structuring device to liberate himself to some degree from the constraints associated with autobiographical fiction. He created a dual-layered narrative in which the limited protagonist-narrator (standard to the genre) must operate within a frame narrated through editorial omniscience. The resulting irony stems from the conventional restrictions imposed upon Manso’s story persona. His total misreading of various situations within the story is due to his status as a character, who like all characters, is bound by a single point of view and vulnerable to misperceptions. All protagonist-narrators are burdened by such limitations. Manso just displays them to a greater degree, and in the process, underscores the conventional underpinnings of

21 It is interesting to note, however, that Manso’s question juxtaposes “sentimiento” with “razón” but does not choose between them, thereby indicating that Manso’s conceptual and interest perspectives were so enmeshed at that point in the story that it was impossible to separate them.
this form of narration. In this novel Galdós bends the rules without entirely breaking them. Although in the frame Manso oversteps the limitations normally assigned to a narrator of autobiographical fiction, Manso in the story conforms completely to the conventions of that genre. This bit of anti-realistic experimentation exists at the periphery of the text, never once invading the basic story. Yet, the ironic possibilities resulting from the nested structure allowed Galdós to create a richer novel than had he written it completely within the typical protagonist-narrator format seen in the early Episodios nacionales.

* * *

In his next protagonist-narrated novel, Lo prohibido, Galdós once again takes liberties with the conventional autobiographical format, thereby expanding the creative possibilities of that genre. The text supposedly consists of the memoirs of the wealthy José María Bueno de Guzmán, covering the period of September 1880 through November 1884 – from his early retirement at the age of 36 until his death. They document his romantic entanglements with his three married cousins: Eloísa, his spendthrift mistress; Camila, who steadfastly resists his advances; and María Juana, whose openness to seduction is never pursued fully. The memoirs originally began as a pleasant way for José María to spend a two week period in San Sebastián while waiting for Camila and her husband to meet him there on vacation, and his stated purpose for writing the memoirs was to help him clarify his thoughts and to provide a guide for other men of the world who may find themselves in the similar position of having to juggle various women. This premise, however, is not explained until the fourth chapter of the second volume – over half the way through the lengthy novel – when the chronology of the story reaches the day on which José María begins his writing. Robert Ricard has commented on the rigidly chronological progression of the events of the novel, which he sees as the salient feature of Lo prohibido.22 However, this uninterrupted linear progression only applies to the order of the story, not to the order of the discourse recording those events. The memoirs are not presented as

José María's on-going project, but rather, they are reserved for his isolated periods of free time. This results in four distinct segments which are written during separate time periods and which do not correspond to the formal chapter divisions:

1st SEGMENT:
narrator's NOW: Summer 1883  
story NOW: 1880 – Spring 1883

2nd SEGMENT:
narrator's NOW: Semana Santa 1884  
story NOW: Spring 1883 – Semana Santa 1884

3rd SEGMENT (Ida del Sagrario as amanuensis):
narrator's NOW: July & August 1884  
story NOW: Semana Santa – August 1884

4th SEGMENT:
narrator's NOW: November 1884  
story NOW: August-November 1884

The disparity between the time of the writing and the time of the events serves to underscore the dual function of the protagonist-narrator: José María's role as a character within the story, and his status as the narrator of the discourse. Moreover, as we shall see, the focus on José María's act of writing the memoirs in stages not concurrent with the action of the story establishes the illusion that he is also the actual author of the text.

In the first segment, written in the summer of 1883, José María tells us that he had intended to relate the events starting in 1880 through his present. However, his writing is interrupted by the arrival of Camila and her husband in mid-August, and he is only able to cover the material through the Spring of 1883 – up to the death of Eloisa's husband but not including José María's falling out with Eloisa nor his infatuation with Camila. That is, the story NOW (the present of the events of the story) does not reach the narrator's NOW (the narrator's present at the time of writing). José María's time-frame as a character is explicitly shown to be different from
his time-frame as a narrator. Furthermore, he continues to participate in events even though he has not yet recorded them in his narrative. Thus, José María appears to have an existence separate from the narration itself; that is, he seems to have a life in the real world which he will eventually get around to narrating in the text.

This illusion is reinforced by the mention of José María’s subsequent writing periods. In volume 2, chapter 8, section 1 José María tells the reader that he resumed his writing during the Semana Santa of 1884, and that during a period of some four or five days he managed to bring the memoirs up to date, relating the events between Eloisa’s husband’s death and Eloisa’s disfiguring illness. He says: “Aquí di punto, esperando los nuevos sucesos para calcarlos en el papel en cuanto ellos salieran de las nieblas del tiempo.” That is, the story NOW has finally caught up to the narrator’s NOW, and consequently, José María had to wait for more adventures so as to have more material to narrate. This strongly suggests that he has a life in the outside world and that his interaction with other real people constitutes the experiences from which he draws to write his memoirs.

The next addition to the memoirs occurs in July and August of 1884 and relates the events leading up to and including José María’s accident and financial ruin. Due to his illness, José María uses a recurring Galdosian character, Ido del Sagrario, as his amanuensis. José María’s impaired verbal ability forces him to rely on Ido to read his thoughts and fill in the narrative from sketchy details, an arrangement which works out well since José María tells us that “con sólo mirarme adivinábame los pensamientos. Tal traza al fin se daba, que contándole yo un caso en dos docenas de palabras, lo ponía en escritura con tanta propiedad, exactitud y colorido, que no lo hiciera mejor yo mismo, narrador y agente al propio tiempo de los sucesos” (vol. 2, ch. 11, sec. 1). Ido’s previous appearance in El doctor Centeno and Tormento, however, immediately causes the reader to associate this character with the type of writing found in the popular serialized novel. The reader suspects that Ido will incorporate folletinesque elements – melodrama, suspense, formulaic plotlines, romanticized characters – into the portion of the memoirs he writes. In response to our worries, José María assures us that he has held a tight reign on Ido’s literary imagination, thereby curtailing Ido’s inclination to fabricate scenes. José María’s power of veto makes him appear to be the ultimate authority for what was or was
not included in the memoirs. Thus, the illusion that José María is the author of his own autobiography is further solidified since the events contained in the text are presented as ones which actually occurred, as opposed to those which Ido wanted to invent. Though a fictional narrative, Lo prohibido takes on the guise of narrated fact; the fictional narrator, José María, is projected into the role of an actual author; and the fictional characters appear to populate the real world in which José María lives.

In the fourth and final segment José María adds information concerning the period between August and November 1884: the recouping of José María’s finances and the birth of Camila’s twins. More importantly, José looks over the memoirs to make sure that Ido did not falsify aspects of his life and to see that the names have been sufficiently disguised so as to be unrecognizable. Stating that the names have been changed reinforces the illusion that the characters are real people whose identity needs to be hidden in order to protect their privacy. Also, rechecking the content of the manuscript for Ido’s untruths gives additional credence to José María’s contention that the events narrated are facts documenting actual occurrences. The novel closes with an explicit reference to José María’s manuscript being under consideration by a publisher who not only recognizes José María’s claim to authorship but also promises to honor his request that it not be printed until after he

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23 In “Creative Asynchrony: The Moral Dynamism of Lo prohibido,” Crítica Hispánica 13 (1991): 47-48; and “The Unfinished Anagnorisis: the Illness and Death of José María Bueno de Guzmán in Galdós’ Lo prohibido,” Galdós’ House of Fiction, ed. A. H. Clarke and Eamonn Rodgers (Llangrannog: Dolphin, 1991) 129-30, Eamonn Rodgers describes José María’s manuscript as having only three phases of composition. To do this, Rodgers collapses the fourth segment of the manuscript into the third. However, volume 2, chapter 11, section 1 of Lo prohibido clearly states that José María spent July and August of 1884 dictating to Ido his “prosaicas aventuras en Madrid desde el otoño de 80 al verano del 84.” Since the events of the story continued until November of 1884, they could only have been added when José María returned to his manuscript soon after the birth of Camila’s baby. José María was fully capable of writing, as he himself admits when speaking of his decision to hire Ido as his amanuensis for the third segment: “No me era difícil escribir, pues mi mano derecha conservaba expedita; pero se cansaba pronto y los trazos no eran muy correctos.” Ido simply served as an expedient method of recording the large volume of material covered in the third segment. Since José María did not suffer a relapse between August and November of 1884, we can assume that his writing ability had not worsened. Therefore, he easily could have written the extremely brief fourth section of his manuscript, covering only two major events during a three month period.
dies. His status as author fully secured, he can leave his manuscript in the hands of his publisher and calmly await his own death.

Unlike Máximo Manso, who achieves authorial independence by recognizing his fictionality, José María Bueno de Guzmán gains autonomy by establishing himself as a nonfictional person who physically wrote a book about his life which was published posthumously and which the flesh-and-blood reader is holding in his or her hands. Both Manso and José María are aware of their roles as narrators and focus reader attention on the conventions associated with first-person narration. But whereas Manso reveals in his fictional status, José María rejects it entirely. José María’s authorial autonomy, though illusory, gains credibility through the segmented memoir format of the text which seems to endow him with a life outside the narration as well as within it.

José María also differs from Máximo Manso in terms of his reliability as a narrator. In Lo prohibido Galdós once again exposes the morally decadent lifestyle of Restoration high society, but this time he does so through the unreliable narration of one of its proponents rather than the reliable narration of one of its detractors. José María belongs to Spain’s *nouveau riche* upper middle class eager to take on the material trappings of the declining aristocracy. Affectation and social climbing are its hallmarks, and its members abide by a code of ethics which José Montesinos calls an elastic morality based on a relativistic justification of reprehensible behavior.²⁴ For José María money and sexual conquest – usually presented in tandem – define his world and color each of his personal relationships. He describes the daily life of a segment of society that holds values which in the main are even more decadent than his own, yet he generally accepts the validity of that way of life and restricts his criticism to the extreme manifestations that it produces, such as Eloísa’s chronically extravagant spending. He not only condones but perpetuates the shallow and immoral behavior of his social circle by participating in its financial indulgences and adulterous activities. When he measures his own worth against the depravity and corruption of his peers, he hypocritically finds himself to be somewhat culpable but on the whole more decent than they. Indeed, the memoirs represent his rationalization of a lifestyle that the implied author condemns for its waste of human potential.

Why does Galdós use an unreliable narrator in *Lo prohibido*? What effects are achieved through unreliable narration that could not be derived from reliable narration? The answer to these questions rests on the relationship that exists between the narrator, the narratee, the implied author, and the implied reader. Reliable narrators serve as advocates for the implied author's social, political, religious, or ethical attitudes and assumptions. Since the narrator is the reader's primary link to the story, reliable narration is a highly effective manner of influencing the reader's response in favor of the implied author's norms and values. Nevertheless, when prudently used, unreliable narration can produce an even stronger impression on the reader. Rather than propose attitudes for the reader to accept, unreliable narration offers ones that must be violently rejected. Unreliable narrators are powerful tools for censuring entire value systems because the reader is asked to disagree with the narrator's total outlook on life. This process actively engages us in the moral and ideological world of the text as we endeavor to reconstrcut the social, political, religious, or ethical attitudes indirectly proposed by the implied author. This is an ironic form of narration because the reader must call into question the narrator's world view based on a secret communication between the implied reader and the implied author.

Seymour Chatman uses the following chart to represent this process, with the broken line indicating the secret ironic message about the narrator's unreliability: 25

![Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

The narratee is the fictional entity to whom the narrator speaks. As Gerald Prince has noted, both narrators and narratees can possess specific traits and adhere to specific ideological positions. 26 In the

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narrative transaction cited by Chatman above, the narrator and the narratee share a set of norms and values which are at odds with the norms and values of the implied author. Thus, while the narrator tells the story to the narratee, the implied reader can stand with the implied author in judgment of the attitudes or assumptions expressed by the narrator and accepted by the narratee. Since neither the narrator nor the narratee is aware of being assessed in this manner, the situation is inherently ironic and the narrator is being ironized in the act of narrating.

This process is clearly seen in Galdós's first example of unreliable narration: Juan Bragas's autobiographical account in Memorias de un cortesano de 1815 and La segunda casaca. In these episodios Galdós levels biting criticism at the corruption of Fernando VII's government by documenting Juan Bragas's rise to power through political opportunism. Since Galdós had never before created a narrator whose values were in direct opposition to those of the implied author, he took care to firmly establish Bragas's unreliability for the reader. He did this by making our initial introduction to Bragas occur in the episodio immediately preceding Memorias de un cortesano de 1815. As a minor character in El equipaje del Rey José, Bragas displays cynical and self-serving behavior in clear contrast to the sincerity, loyalty, and honor exhibited by the protagonist of the second series, Salvador Monsalud. By delineating Bragas's negative traits in this way, Galdós warned the reader to distrust the opinions put forth by Bragas as the protagonist-narrator of the next two episodios. Galdós further solidified Bragas's status as an unreliable narrator by creating a confrontation scene between Bragas and Gabriel Araceli in chapter 22 of Memorias de un cortesano de 1815. Having proved his reliability in the first series, Gabriel can authoritatively speak against "la bajeza, la adulación, la falsedad, la doblez, la vil codicia, la envidia, la crueldad" which are hallmarks of the corrupt reign that Bragas glorifies. The reader thus becomes aligned with Gabriel (and the implied author) against Bragas and all he stands for. As Bragas speaks to his narratee, all of his statements become subject to our censure. Since Bragas views Fernando VII's return to power as the end of a godless liberal tyranny and the re-establishment of the legitimate absolute monarchy, the terminology he uses to describe events arouses the reader's indignation and creates a more violent reaction than would have been possible had a reliable narrator related the same events in a tone critical to the
crown. Also, by presupposing that the narratee will condone his unscrupulous behavior, Bragas is revealing the depth of the political corruption and its all-pervasive quality in a way that a sermonizing reliable narrator could not achieve. The freedom which Bragas feels in expressing his opinions to his like-minded narratee is ironically overturned by the undetected presence of the implied reader. Bragas assumes that his opinions will go unchallenged, and it is this wrong assumption that is responsible for the impact of his unreliable narration. All of his judgments undergo an inversion by the reader, who knows that everything lauded is to be condemned and everything criticized is to be praised.

José María Bueno de Guzmán similarly writes for a narratee who shares his overall value system. Indeed, he often comments on how typical of his socio-economic class he is, and how helpful his memoirs may be for other men dealing with the same problems and complications he has lived through. From the very onset of the novel, the implied reader begins to question, evaluate, and reject the value system that José María holds. How does the reader come to realize José María’s unreliability? He had not appeared in any previous novels, so he cannot be immediately identified as an untrustworthy character. Neither is there a scene where a reliable narrator from a previous novel—such as Manso—explicitly reproaches José María for his unethical lifestyle. These tactics from Galdós’s first unreliable narrative are no longer necessary in Lo prohibido because Galdós’s literary reputation had become so well established by 1884 that the reader soon recognizes José María as a member of the decadent and morally impoverished high society that had so often been criticized before. Galdós merely needed to provide a list of José María’s friends and business acquaintances—Jacinto Villalonga, el marqués de Fúcar, Federico Cimarra, Gonzalo Torres, Gustavo Tellería—to reassure us that our negative assessment of José María is valid. Because we are quick to perceive José María’s lack of reliability, we are able to judge the inappropriateness of his attitudes on a continuous basis throughout the novel. This results in what Wayne Booth calls a secret collusion between the reader and the implied author, working together to agree on the standard of values by which the narrator is found to be sorely deficient (304). Due to this partnership between the implied reader and the implied author, the narrator soon becomes the butt of an ironic portrait as he reveals his biases and justifies his faults in his own words.
So evident is José María's unreliability that no scholar has declared that this narrator is a spokesman for the implied author. Nevertheless, Arthur Terry has noted that José María's reliability does increase toward the end of the novel. How is this shift possible? Again, it is necessary to keep in mind the narrative premise of the text. During the entire first volume José María conforms to the standard expectations of a fictional protagonist-narrator. Since the text is presented as his memoirs, the reader assumes that they are being written from the globally retrospective point of view associated with that genre. Suddenly in the second volume — hundreds of pages into the novel — this narrative convention is subverted. We learn that the text was composed in various stages, and therefore it combines elements of both a diary and a memoir. Generally the narrator of a memoir is in command of all the facts, and consequently is aware of how the events interrelate and how the various situations eventually were resolved. José María does not have the benefit of such global hindsight. Because his memoirs are a collection of four separately written segments, certain portions were penned before he knew the final outcome of the events. Like a diary, the text is a collection of discrete units; however, the time span covered in each unit is greater than normally found in diary notations. The overall format, then, allows José María more retrospective knowledge than a daily diary, but less than a true memoir. If we examine the individually written segments in terms of narrator reliability, we find that in the first two segments José María clearly holds values contrary to those of the implied author, while in the last two segments his materialism and hedonism abate. Thus, the narrator displays an abrupt shift toward greater reliability between the second and third segments. This phenomenon is made possible by the hybrid quality of the text which incorporates aspects of both the diary and the memoir genres. If the text were just a daily diary, it would show a gradual movement away from unreliability as José María slowly comes to realizations affecting his ongoing conceptual outlook. If the text were a true memoir, José María's reliability would remain constant since he would be writing from a single conceptual perspective. It is the segmentation of the text into individually written parts which permits this sudden change in his

reliability status since José María's world view is altered by the events occurring during the several months between the writing of the second and third segments. This period is one of personal crisis affecting all aspects of his life—monetary, social, and physical. He is financially ruined, Camila and Constantino withdraw their valued friendship, and he is partially paralyzed due to an accident. It is well within the bounds of verisimilitude for José María to indulge in introspective examination during his convalescence, with the resulting insights bringing about a degree of character growth that would narrow the gap somewhat between his values and those of the implied author. The third and fourth segments, comprising the last three chapters of the novel, reflect this alteration in José María's conceptual perspective.

The segmented nature of the memoirs also permits the introduction of a further complication which has a bearing on José María's reliability—Ido del Sagrario as the amanuensis of the third segment. Since Ido must divine José María's thoughts and all details of the events from the very broad outline dictated to him, he goes beyond the passive role of scribe and becomes a collaborative narrator of the third segment. Despite José María's repeated assurances that he has held Ido's imagination in check and that he allowed no falsification of the facts, the reader is reluctant to discount Ido's contribution to the text. After all, this segment represents Ido's interpretation of events as conveyed to him “en dos docenas de palabras.” José María did not actually think or say the words recorded in the text, but rather, he merely approved them as written. Given Ido's tendency to romanticize situations, the reader wonders to what degree Ido embellished the truth. Even if we accept José María's contention that Ido did not alter the content of the memoirs, we cannot ignore that he left his mark on their style. In addition to the numerous literary, classical, historical, and Biblical allusions noted by Kay Engler (166), Ido's influence is discernible in the subtle shift in narrative voice techniques in this segment. Above all, there is a decided increase in the number and length of interior views. During the first two segments José María's direct thoughts are brief, infrequent, and merely reaffirm his negative characterization because they record his adulterous intentions and the schemes he devises to achieve his sexual conquests. In the third segment, however, José María's direct thoughts occur more often, are more extensive, and take on a new tone as he questions the validity of his
long-held values and recognizes the desirability of the pure and innocent love between Camila and Constantino. Free indirect thoughts, absent in the other segments, are introduced here to further convey José María’s inner turmoil. His interiorizations somewhat temper the previous negative portrayal of him and elicit a certain amount of reader sympathy and compassion for his plight. This effect is largely attributable to Ido’s rendering of José María’s story content in a more intimate style. As Booth has observed, the sustained use of a sympathetic inside view is one of the most successful devices for inducing a parallel response in the reader, and as such it is a particularly effective means of reducing the emotional distance between the reader and a morally deficient character (243-49). Although the reader is only receiving Ido’s version of José María’s thoughts, the stylistic presentation gives us the impression that we have direct access to José María’s consciousness. Thanks to the many direct and free indirect thought passages, we feel that we are experiencing José María’s moral transformation first hand. But despite the first person reference, this material is mediated through Ido. The difference in the discursive devices employed here is acceptable and plausible due to the segmentation of the memoirs into discretely written units, with Ido in control of the third one. The brief fourth section, in which José María again takes charge of the narration, returns to the discursive orientation found in the first two segments, relying heavily on dialogue and direct narrative commentary.

Ido’s considerable role in the production of the third segment calls into question the depth of José María’s moral conversion. Though it is fully possible that José María did in fact learn the error of his ways, the reader is somewhat uneasy with his embrace of the implied author’s values at the close of the novel — a reversal more suited to the folletén so favored by Ido del Sagrario. That this change occurs at the very point where Ido takes charge of the narr-

rative is further disquieting. As Michael Nimetz states, "one has the nagging sensation that these so-called 'prosáicas aventuras' are in some way a product of Ido del Sagrario's fecund imagination. . . . Apparently, José María's document is true; in reality, it might well be romanticized." In this segment Ido fleshes out the insights that José María achieved through crisis-caused introspection, and he conveys them to us in imaginary interior views. That is, not only are we reading Ido's interpretation of José María's feelings, but we are reading them in a stylistic medium that typically is used to evoke an empathetic response in the audience. Since José María affirms the validity of the content of the segment, we can accept that he did experience some change in his world view. However, the extent of his repentance may have been exaggerated. Whereas the segmented nature of the narrative permits an altered world view to appear suddenly in the third section, Ido's dominion over that portion of the memoirs casts into doubt the degree to which José María actually has aligned himself with the implied author's values. In short, a change may well have taken place, but was it as spectacular as presented? Once again Ido has been used by Galdós – albeit in a more subtle way – to make the reader aware of the conventions of popular fiction. In addition to the criticism of the *novela por entregas* implied in José María’s rejection of Ido’s fanciful and romantic episodes for the memoirs, Galdós introduces an element of doubt that José María’s efforts to control Ido’s literary inclinations were completely successful. These clashes between Ido and José María ask the reader to mentally juxtapose the conventions of the serialized “novela de impresiones y movimiento” against those of the realistic novel, thereby making it clear that these two forms of literature are philosophically at odds with each other.}


30 James Whiston and Eamonn Rodgers both cite José María’s treatment of Eloisa at the close of the novel as evidence that his moral conversion was not complete. See James Whiston, “Ironía y psicología en *Lo prohibido* de Galdós,” *Romance Quarterly* 37 (1990): 203-04; and Rodgers, “Creative Asynchrony” 53-54; “Unfinished Anagnorisis” 139-40.

31 Galdós uses the term “novela de impresiones y movimiento” in his 1870 essay “Observaciones sobre la novela contemporánea en España,” to refer to the kind of non-realistic literature written by Ido. Galdós criticizes these novels for failing to represent contemporary Spanish middle-class society. He also comments on the serialization process itself, stating that it is an excellent way to reach readers of
In summary, Lo prohibido is stated as being composed of memoirs written in segments during four separate time periods. This narrative premise grants the protagonist-narrator a degree of flexibility normally denied him. By allowing discrepancies between the story order of the events and the discourse order of the segments, and by focusing reader attention on the act of writing, the narrator is able to assert his independence from the narrative and attain the illusion of authorship. In addition, the time which elapses between the writing of the segments accounts for the seemingly abrupt change in the narrator’s reliability in the last chapters of the novel. Finally, Galdós capitalizes on the reader’s expectations of Ido del Sagrario in order to reinforce the illusion of José María’s autonomy as well as to undermine the impact of his moral conversion at the end of the novel, resulting in the reader’s renewed awareness of the differences between the realistic novel and popular fiction.

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In El amigo Manso and Lo prohibido Galdós used his protagonist-narrators to comment upon the superficiality, depravity, hypocrisy, and self-interest that permeated the middle and upper levels of Restoration society. In the first of these novels, however, the social atmosphere serves merely as a backdrop for Manso’s personal story. Consequently, Galdós could employ a reliable narrator to periodically express overt criticism of the corruption and selfishness around him, while primarily exemplifying the values of the implied author through his virtuous conduct. Such a narrator might have appeared overly preachy, however, in a novel entirely dedicated to exposing the baseness of Restoration society. Therefore, for Lo prohibido Galdós turned to a form of narration that allowed him to fuse the novel’s content with its style. As the novel’s unreliable narrator, José María personifies all that is wrong with the world in which he lives. The reader’s rejection of him, and all that he stands for, is achieved without the use of sermons or speeches by a portavoz of the implied author. With a reliable narrator, Lo prohibido
could have fallen into the mold of a thesis novel. Instead, it is a masterfully sustained piece of social satire.

Both these novels also display Galdós's versatility and imagination when dealing with narrative conventions. Rather than simply abandoning the autobiographical format because of its inherent limitations, Galdós chose to revitalize it by exploring its structural possibilities. By creating Máximo Manso's nested narratives and José María Bueno de Guzmán's segmented narrative, Galdós dynamically altered a conventionally static genre style. Furthermore, by tapping into the ironic potential of protagonist-narration, he fully engaged the reader's inferential abilities within these structural modifications. As a result, both El amigo Manso and Lo prohibido display a complexity that belies their roots in autobiographical fiction.