

IGNACIO JAVIER LÓPEZ. *Revolución, restauración y novela ideológica: "La novela de Luis" de S. de Villarminio*. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre, 2014. 276 pp.

*Revolución, restauración y novela ideológica: "La novela de Luis" de S. de Villarminio* forms part of Ignacio Javier López's ongoing recuperation of the *novela ideológica* of Restoration Spain, which includes his critical edition of Benito Pérez Galdós's *Gloria* (2011) and more recently, Pedro A. Alarcón's *El escándalo* (2012) and *El niño de la bola* (2013). *La novela de Luis*, authored by the pseudonymous S. de Villarminio, stands out as the most obscure of the four. While previous scholarship on the ideological novel has tended to focus on the works of Benito Pérez Galdós, as López observes, this study contributes a more nuanced understanding of the polemical literary landscape of 1875 Spain, the crucial year in which the failures of the First Republic culminate in the return of the Bourbon Monarchy. López's sustained historical engagement with this understudied genre opens up new lines of inquiry within literary criticism in relation to the political debates in the early years of the Restoration.

López organizes his book into two main sections. Part 1, "Revolución, restauración, y novela ideológica," is an extensive critical introduction that sets the historical stage of the novel. Part 2, "La novela de Luis," presents an annotated edition of the novel. The first sections details, "con la perspectiva del historiador, y no como filósofo," the political climate in which *La novela Luis* came into fruition (69). Here, López brings *La novela de Luis* into dialogue with some of the more well-known novels of the genre including Galdós's *Doña Perfecta*, and examines the relationship between *la novela ideológica*, *krausismo*, and the failures of revolutionary politics. López also attempts to ascertain the intellectual circle to which the author may have pertained and deduces that Villarminio was likely an academic who sought to promote "ideas renovadoras" including liberal Christianity (37). Given that the novel broaches the topic of ecclesiastical celibacy, López further speculates that Francisco José Barnés y Tomás, a recently secularized clergyman and professor of History at the University of Seville, could have been the author (37).

*La novela de Luis* critiques Spain's lack of religious tolerance, education, morality, and culture of decadence, and was, not surprisingly, the subject of one scathing review by Manuel de la Revilla, published in *El imparcial* in 1875 (reproduced in the book), which López caustically critiques. In this light, perhaps one of the most intriguing aspects of the novel is the author's desire for anonymity. López explains in his introduction that the novel appeared amidst not only the wake of a neo-

catholic movement, but also renewed attempts to limit academic freedom known as “la segunda cuestión universitaria” (the first attempt at censorship occurring under Návarez just prior to the revolution). The Royal Decree issued on February 26, 1875 – the same year in which *La novela de Luis* appeared – sought to silence dissident university professors who spoke critically of Catholic doctrine or whose teaching might “extraviar el espíritu dócil de la juventud” (34). Several scholars were jailed or exiled as a result of this decree, including none other than Giner de los Ríos, the leading exponent of Spanish krausist philosophy (36). López’s attentiveness to the repressive culture that strained academic and political freedom adds a refreshing take on the period, as the topic of censorship can easily disappear from view in the criticism that examines the Spanish novel post-1875. The novel from this era is often celebrated for its critical capacity, but these discussions could be further nuanced by examining censorship laws, questions of academic freedom, and authorship. López’s study emphasizes the power that the conservative turn in Spanish governance yielded on literary production and education following the failures of the bourgeois revolution and the *sexenio democrático*. Ultimately, López contends that Villarminio’s novel, alongside another unknown work of fiction – Gumersindo de Azcárate’s *Minuta de un testamento* – reveal that the ideological novel developed in direct response to the disillusionment of the philosophical idealism of the Krausists in the wake of the repressive reforms of the Bourbon Restoration (17).

The novel charts the coming of age story of the Luis Valdés, who in his travels to Germany, England, and France, grows disillusioned with his home country. He begins to speak critically of Spain in his letters to friends and loved ones and ultimately in his own fictional work: *La novela de Luis*. In Villarminio’s novel, Spain appears as an insular, retrograde nation. As the narrator remarks: “Un ferrocarril la enlaza ya con Francia y el resto de Europa, y esta facilidad de comunicación debe haberla acercado también intelectualmente a la civilización europea” (146). In response to the national disillusionment, according to López, the novel promotes the idea of “el nuevo hombre” embodied by the novel’s protagonist, Luis Valdés, who López likens to Pepe Rey, the protagonist of Galdós’s *Doña Perfecta* (70). Villarminio’s “new man,” is civilized, moral, and cultured – the product of urbanity (50). Most importantly, he espouses an ideal of self-betterment and acts to improve an imperfect world (52). López contends that such an ethos clearly resonates with the French concept *méliorisme*, a “teoría de la acción procedente del Siglo Ilustrado, que considera que el mundo es imperfecto, y que exige de la acción humana para corregirse” (68).

Ignacio Javier López's critical study of *La novela de Luis*, alongside his other recent works, complicates our existing understanding of the ideological novel. López notes that scholarly work on the ideological novel has been on the decline since the second half of the twentieth century, a trend he attributes to the relative inaccessibility of this particular genre of fiction, whose works have largely fallen out of circulation. In this light, López's historical excavation opens up the possibility for new critical discussions on the post-1875 novel and suggests further areas of research on this genre and the unsteady political terrain in which these novelists and academics leveled critiques on the failures of governmental politics.

JULIA H. CHANG  
*Brown University*

CLAIRE EMILIE MARTIN y MARÍA NELLY GOSWITZ, eds. *Retomando la palabra. Las pioneras del XIX en diálogo con la crítica contemporánea*. Madrid/Frankfurt: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2012. 323 pp.

Este libro ofrece un grato complemento a los estudios de la "crítica contemporánea" feminista. Así como indica el título, sus 15 ensayos de unas 20 páginas cada uno, de estudiosas y estudiosos reconocidos en el campo (Mary Berg, J-P Spicer-Escalante, María Cristina Arambel Guiñazú, Ana Peluffo, Fanny Arango-Keeth, Adriana Méndez Rodenas, la misma Claire Emilie Martin, entre otras), en efecto, dialogan, no sólo con los textos-temas de su estudio, sino también con otros trabajos críticos ya publicados, constituyendo de tal manera valiosos apoyos a los esfuerzos por hacer conocer y legitimar las escritoras del XIX. "Nuestro propósito", escriben las editoras al respecto, "es continuar este diálogo con la crítica mediante el proceso de recuperación textual de la experiencia femenina del XIX firmemente asentada en el devenir histórico" (11). Para tal fin también, en su "Introducción", las editoras mencionan una lista de sus antecesoras en el campo de la crítica del siglo XIX, y además ofrecen una bibliografía muy útil de tres páginas, de algunas de las obras fundamentales del estudio de las escritoras del siglo XIX, campo que, en verdad, tan sólo comienza sus publicaciones críticas y teóricas muy tarde con, por ejemplo, los trabajos de Jean Franco, Josefina Ludmer, Sara Castro-Klaren, Lucía Guerra Cunningham, Diane Marting y otras pioneras del campo, en los años ochenta del siglo XX.

El volumen abarca trabajos sobre escritoras bien conocidas y estudiadas, como Eduarda Mansilla, Clorinda Matto de Turner, Juana Manso, la condesa de Merlín, Soledad Acosta, Adela Zamudio, Mercedes