FEIJOO: POLICEMAN, INVENTOR, EGOTIST, FAILURE? *

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Peter Goldman had the excellent idea, stemming from Galdós sessions at Kentucky and the Modern Language Association in 1977, of bringing together four differing «readings» of a specific chapter of *Fortunata y Jacinta.*[1] The nucleus consists of two articles by Carlos Blanco Aguinaga and John Kronik, followed by a critique by Peter Bly, to which the editor has added a fourth essay. A Dedicatory refers to the debt incurred to «a fifth reader,» Stephen Gilman: *Galdosistas* mourn his recent passing and the valuable contribution he might have offered to the present debate, all the more so since Blanco's study forms part of a well-known, long-running, and central dispute with Gilman between a historicist approach and a symbolical-mythological interpretation.[2]

The chapter is not randomly selected; it is the one (III, iv) that deals with the «curso de filosofía práctica» that Feijoo gives to Fortunata and which raises a series of questions that concern the whole book, especially the crucial issue of our interpretation of Fortunata. The four substantial essays offer four different slants on the question, all of value, but none is, or would claim to be, definitive. In considering them, I shall take into account the presentation of this character in the early manuscript version of the novel.[3]

How should we interpret Feijoo's character? Is he a liberal, caught by contradictions in his desires for freedom of action but inevitably an agent of the establishment, as Blanco sees him? A character who, more thoroughly than others—Maxi, Doña Lupe, Mauricia, etc.—seeks to mould Fortunata as he wants her, in Kronik's view, as part of a self-creating narrative process? A self-centered old philanderer, once a swashbuckling colonel and now a political pedlar (Bly), or a genuine well-wisher of Fortunata's who fails in the attempts to transform her (Goldman)? Perhaps the Alpha version will give us some clues.[4]

In this much more schematic version the bare bones of the story are already present. There is no doubt that the character's initial motivation is sexual gratification (see the passage quoted below), though the paternal aspect is there from the start («D. Evaristo no le hacía el amor por lo tierno, sino por lo paternal»). It is not an abrupt decline in health that makes him change roles but a less specific desire to look after himself («Yo no estoy ya para fiestas. Tengo que retirarme, para cuidar de mis últimos años»). He is, in fact, younger than in the published version (60, not 69), though when For-

* What set out to be a review-article of Peter B. Goldman, ed., *Conflicting Realities: Four Readings of a Chapter by Pérez Galdós* (Fortuna y Jacinta, *Part III, Chapter IV*) (London: Tamesis, 1984), turned into a further reading—a fifth—of the Feijoo chapter and as such is incorporated into this section of critical studies. [Ed. note.]

tunata wants to consult him later we are told he has died. Galdós subsequently opted for a more gradual decline and placed his death, appropriately, as Kronik notes (67), at the end of the novel, when his funeral cortege, unnoticed by Maxi and Segismundo, enters the cemetery a week after Fortunata's death. His decision to work towards a reconciliation of Fortunata with Maxi is called «una cosa muy original» and explained because he was «tan buena persona.» Lavish praise is bestowed on his actions, with a moral reservation but no trace of irony: «La verdad es que Fort. estaba agradecidísima. De todos los queridos era el que se había portado mejor con ella. Era un verdadero ángel tutelar, hombre recto, frío, desinteresado, y que *una vez satisfechos sus apetitos corporales*, era como un santo, un sabio y un padre de ella» (my italics). The passage is similar to but more eulogistic than a paragraph in the final version: «Teníale ella por la persona más decente que había tratado en su vida» (III, iv, 3; 101).[5] Alpha has comparable praise, with a parallel reservation, when the reconciliation takes place: «es forzoso convenir en que, *cualesquiera* [sic] *que sea el valer moral de este personaje* en el caso concreto de la reconciliación se portó como un hombre de bien, inspirado en móviles de justicia y bondad.» Uncharacteristically, Don Evaristo wants to celebrate the event by giving «un gran banquete a que asistiese toda la familia.» Galdós did well to eliminate this flamboyant gesture. These passages demonstrate that at this stage, at least, Galdós viewed his creation favorably, perhaps making it unlikely that he was as hostile towards the finished character as Bly contends.

The reader may note that Fortunata's lover has no professional military career, although the name given to him, Evaristo San Martín, may recall the progressive general of the 1854 revolution, Evaristo San Miguel, as well as the liberator of Argentina, José de San Martín.[6] He is thus not identified initially with the eighteenth-century monk Fray Benito Jerónimo Feijoo, though the Benedictine's common-sense philosophy no doubt motivated the subsequent change. Some Galician-Leonese connections, like the nieces from Astorga, were added to correspond to the new name (see Bly 79-80 for further possible links).

«San Martín» is, however, well-off and a good friend of Don Baldomero's; in his earlier years he had courted Doña Bárbara, not, allegedly, as in the published text, Doña Lupe. Doña Lupe, for her part, «prestaba a putas,» so dropping a rung or two on the social scale. Thus, in the final version Galdós has defined more precisely Feijoo's standing and by lowering it slightly has made him more accessible to a broader range of acquaintances. Blanco calls him a petty bourgeois who has contacts with the upper bourgeoisie (29), but his military rank of colonel would seem to place him potentially higher on the social scale. He moves in the same circles as Villalonga and is at the fringes of the Santa Cruz world, though it is significant that, when he is breaking his relationship with Fortunata, Juanito, for his own purposes, scornfully rejects any link with such acquaintances of Juan Pablo. Altogether, it is clear that Feijoo is not concerned to claim an exalted station but on the contrary seeks an *aurea mediocritas*. Significantly, while he belongs as of right to the upper echelons of the café society, he prefers not to exercise

his privileges; in this he is the opposite of Basilio de la Caña, who takes a seat on the divan to which he is not entitled.

Also absent in Alpha is a chequered past life of overseas service and exotic love affairs. And, although he is sceptical, realistic, and discreet, there is no sign as yet of a fully worked-out practical philosophy. Surprisingly, the reader learns that he had a family and lost it and is now «solo, con criados, aburrido y deseando acabar de una vez»—a revelation which undermines the case for seeing Feijoo as autobiographical. His counsel to Fortunata to rejoin her husband explicitly echoes Juanito's: «La idea que había expuesto sin éxito Juanito, la exponía ahora con éxito aquel señor tan sesudo y listo.» This similarity has been percipiently noted by Goldman, who, in a phrase that unconsciously echoes the manuscript, remarks: «To be noted is the fact that the same advice elicits distinct reactions from the same person» (104). Don Evaristo is not associated at this stage with any historical events or parallels; the return of Fortunata to Maxi is called a «reconciliación,» not a «restauración.»

For a consideration of the socio-political dimension, Carlos Blanco Aguinaga provides the starting point, since his overriding concern is historical.[7] He sets out «to show how history determines the structure of Galdós's texts» (15) so as to produce a «correct» reading; he brusquely rejects as *incorrect readings* «all interpretations based on its triangular structures» (associated with Ricardo Gullón, but see also Boring 13-16) and no doubt also the «formal mathematical abstractions» (17), which refer to Agnes Gullón (65-75). He further attacks the «liberal-bourgeois notion of pluralism, intrinsically confusing, [which] causes havoc when applied to any task that is scientific or tries to be scientific» (38). Kronik takes particular issue with Blanco's assertion that there is a «correct» reading of the text (here I fully agree with him; what a chilling word «correct»—so insistently repeated—is!) and quotes Norman Holland to the effect that «one cannot posit even for highly trained readers a 'correct' response in any given reader's mind to something definitively 'in' the text» (42-43).

At the same time I share Blanco's concern with history. He is right to rehearse—as has been done before—close analogical relationships between public history and private life. The «great example» (16) of the animated discussion between Villalonga and Juanito in which Fortunata's return and Pavía's coup d'état are so skilfully intertwined may deserve even closer attention (Ribbans, «Contemporary History» 100-02; Bly, *Galdós's Novel* 93-94); and it is odd that he omits altogether one of the most important associations, the death of Doña Isabel Cordero, businesswoman and prolific mother, at the date (December 1870) of two crucial events, one private, one political: the engagement of Juanito and Jacinta and the assassination of Prim. Blanco is right, too, in viewing history as more than «merely a context, a background within or against which the truly important events take place: the development of private lives, of universal, eternal problems and passions» (17), but he falls into the opposite extreme when he insists that the richness of the work has its basis in «the class relationships established between the various pairs of opposites. This relationship is *the only necessary and adequate element* of the novel's non-triangular structure insofar as in Spain at that

historical time it was the cardinal factor above all others» (19; my italics). In my view the class relationships are indeed crucial to the structure of the novel, but they do not produce the rigid deterministic pattern indicated in this passage.[8] A further factor, as Bly has pointed out (90), is the use of political vocabulary—«pronunciarse,» «cese,» etc.—in these human relations: «The overall result,» Bly claims, «is that if fiction is upgraded, history is downgraded.» Bly further makes a parallel—about which I am more doubtful—between Basilio de la Caña's rise to prosperity with the Restoration and Feijoo's program for Fortunata: «this sartorial/political change parallels that of Fortunata's life» (89).

Moreover, while there is no doubt that Galdós was acutely aware of class distinctions (even the tenement slums of Mira el Río Alta in part 1 have their «capas,» just as the café society of part 3 has its hierarchies), it is by no means clear that Galdós thought in terms of class struggle; rather, he saw society as a constant jockeying for position in a state of perpetual fluidity. Class barriers cannot be denied or stormed, of course: witness Fortunata's «idea blanca» in Las Micaelas and later her frenzied desire to assault the Santa Cruz's home, as Blanco indicates (19-20, 28). Blanco's point about the condescending attitude to Adoración and the strictly limited openings offered to her is also well taken, though the phrase «authoritarian appropriation of other people's property» (27) has an odd ring about it. Yet a gradual but constant infiltration towards higher social status (though a few fall back) does take place. The prime example, sustained in a succession of novels, is of course Torquemada, perceptively studied elsewhere by Blanco («Historia»); but *Fortunata y Jacinta* offers many examples: apart from the two senior Rubín brothers, there are the social ambitions of Torquemada's associate Doña Lupe and the business success of Aurora.

Another factor to be taken into account is Fortunata's increasing absorption into the middle class. Blanco hardly admits this development and, insofar as he does, he sees it as part of «her forced submission» (15) to the order imposed by the ruling class. Goldman, on the other hand, emphasizes the «aburguesamiento» of Fortunata to the extent that he considers her «irredeemably bourgeois» (95). He even plots her progress from «a member of its lower orders» to «intermediate to upper middle class» (113)—for me a palpable exaggeration. «Instead of subverting the order of the middle classes,» he claims, «she *becomes* middle class» (98). As will be apparent, I have serious reservations about the aim here assumed of «subverting the middle classes» as well as about the degree of Fortunata's «aburguesamiento.»

There is no doubt that she is considerably influenced, especially in social conduct, by her experience in Las Micaelas, by Maxi and Doña Lupe, as well as by Feijoo. Her marriage brings her physically into the lower middle class. For one thing, from then on she has or could have a servant. In mind and spirit, however, things are not so clear. While she is living with Maxi, she is able, *though with difficulty*, to hold her own in the society of Doña Casta and her family. The passages Goldman quotes are most persuasive of *a measure* of «aburguesamiento.» Only a measure, though, for in each of these quotations some reservation, of expression or tone, is suggested: «conozco que, *aunque poco*, algo se me ha pegado el señorío» (IV, iii, 7; 396); «Indudablemente

la joven se había *adecentado* mucho y adquirido hábitos de señora, porque la vivienda aquella se le representaba inferior a su categoría, a sus hábitos y a sus gustos» (IV, iii, 7; 397); «*Por más que digan*, yo me he afinado *algo*...» (IV, iv, 1; 409); [earlier to Juanito] «¿Lo dices porque me he civilizado algo? *¡Quiá! No lo creas*...» (II, vii, 6; 690; all italics mine). Another graphic example occurs when Severiana refuses to allow the «señorita» to sweep the staircase outside the apartment where Mauricia is dying, but she, having made breakfast for the workmen, meditates: «Si es lo que a mí me gusta, ser obrera, mujer de un trabajador honradote que me quiera... No le des vueltas, chica; pueblo naciste y pueblo serás toda tu vida. La cabra tira al monte, y se te despega el señorío, créetelo, se te despega...» (III, vi, 5; 205; see Goldman, «Feijoo and Mr. Singer» 110-11). If it is difficult to sustain Fortunata as a pure member of the proletariat deluded into subservience to the ruling class, so is it difficult to see her as a fully fledged member of the bourgeoisie, sharing its values and, in Goldman's words, «already socialized, corrupted by what perforce must be called bourgeois sentimentality» (130). In my view, it is much less than that: a stage in a process of assimilation, part of the «dichosa reconciliación de las clases sociales,» which is steady, if limited and partial. Besides, the assimilation is only skin-deep, merely «pegarse el señorío,» «adecentarse,» «civilizarse,» for instinctively she retains her primitive ideas intact. It is a mistake, therefore, to see her as shedding her essential popular qualities. Juanito and Feijoo, the one negatively, the other positively, bring strong evidence that she has not, just as the way in which these qualities now irritate the fickle Juanito and enchant Feijoo provides an interesting contrast between the two men. There is no doubt, moreover, that at moments of crisis, as we shall see, the example of Mauricia rises up in her mind and specifically popular reactions take over.

Let us now turn to Feijoo himself. For Blanco, «The decisive part of the 'curso'... is undoubtedly the apparent submission to the established norms of social behaviour» (29), while the financial provision Feijoo made for Fortunata offered «*the possibility of economic independence* [and] some hopes for... future freedom» (30). This independence she momentarily asserts by leaving Maxi and returning to La Cava de San Miguel—a «true gesture of emancipation»—but then she throws away her chance with the «rasgo» of attacking Aurora and finally by giving away her child to Jacinta and her bonds to Guillermina. Thus «she has joined the flock. Not only has she internalized the essential features of the ruling ideology, but she has also been the producer of a new Dauphin..., to maintain the class order» (32). This interpretation takes no account of the fact that on her deathbed Fortunata's priorities inevitably change; her initial idea is not, as I see it, replaced by a contradictory one, as Blanco asserts. Rather, she makes a generous gesture, consistent with her instincts, which fits the circumstances: Jacinta's yearning for a child, the continuity of the Santa Cruz line, the interests of the baby, and, not least, the maintenance of her dignity as the mother of the family heir. For someone who does not think in terms of the class struggle—for Fortunata, as for

Galdós—the reconciliation, even though posthumous, of Fortunata with Jacinta is not an empty concept. I therefore agree with Stephen Gilman that «despite the gift of an heir, the end of the novel is not a triumph for the bourgeoisie» (*Galdós* 338). Her bequeathing of the bonds Feijoo had given her to Guillermina instead of to Ballester, to whom she has promised assistance and who has lost his job on her account, raises interesting questions. Blanco sees in this gift, as in the handing over of the baby, the «servile meekness» of a Fortunata won over to due deference to the ruling class. In my opinion, it forms part of her naive sense of dignity in dealing in terms of (imagined) equality with her «amigas,» Jacinta and Guillermina. At the same time, the monetary gift constitutes a final ironic example of the unfairness of life, one which emphasizes Segismundo's disinterested sacrifice.

Although Blanco virtually treats Feijoo as one more instrument to reduce Fortunata to social conformity, he does not, surprisingly enough, link the retired colonel with the political environment of the time and refers only incidentally to his description of himself as «progresista desengañado.» Feijoo is intimately related to the specific ideology, not just of the ruling class Blanco so frequently refers to, but of the distinctive elements that gave rise to the Restoration. The context of the phrase I have just quoted («progresista desengañado») is of crucial importance. Whereas in the Alpha version «San Martín» is introduced abruptly as an aspirant lover of Fortunata's («Hacia el fin de setiembre, se vio asediada por un caballero, ya de alguna edad...»), in the final version Feijoo appears unobtrusively in the first section of part 3, chapter 1, as a «contertulio» of Juan Pablo Rubín. The only thing we are told about him is that «era profundamente escéptico, y tomaba a broma todas las cosas de la política» (III, i, 1; 14). Then follows the much quoted passage in which the narrator speaks of «la relajación de los caracteres».

> Esto de que todo el mundo sea amigo particular de todo el mundo es síntoma de que las ideas van siendo tan sólo un pretexto para conquistar o defender el pan. Existe una confabulación tácita (no tan escondida que no se encuentre a poco que se rasque en los políticos), por la cual se establece el turno en el dominio. En esto consiste que no hay aspiración, por extraviada que sea, que no se tenga por probable; en esto consiste la inseguridad, única cosa que es constante entre nosotros, la ayuda masónica que se prestan todos los partidos desde el clerical al anarquista, lo mismo dándose una credencial vergonzante en tiempo de paces, que otorgándose perdones e indultos en las guerras y revoluciones. Hay algo de seguros mutuos contra el castigo, razón por la cual se miran los hechos de fuerza como la cosa más natural del mundo. La moral política es como una capa con tantos remiendos, que no se sabe ya cuál es el paño primitivo.

This passage is immediately followed by the conversation with Juan Pablo Rubín in which the phrase previously cited is used:

> Hablando de esto, Feijoo y Rubín achacaban la relajación de los caracteres a los desengaños.
>
> —Yo —decía Feijoo—, soy progresista desengañado, y usted tradicionalista arrepentido. Tenemos algo de común: el creer que todo esto es comedia y que sólo se trata de saber a quién le toca mamar y a quién no. (III, i, 1; 15)

Only at the beginning of the second section of the chapter does the reader learn more about Feijoo, when he is introduced with a sort of narrator's

cough to draw attention to his importance: «Don Evaristo González Feijoo merece algo más que una mención en este relato.»

Our first acquaintance with him, then, is as a friend of Juan Pablo Rubín, a habitué of the cafés with their ludicrous philosophical discussions and political intrigue. Moreover, he is evidently to be related to the immediately preceding passage about the mutual support system of contemporary politics: phoney friendships, securing one's daily bread, «el turno pacífico»—an insurance policy with sinecures and pardons for everyone, a moral philosophy of shreds and patches. And in Feijoo's words, for disillusioned individuals from either extreme of the political spectrum, the only real question is material advantage at its most basic level: «a quién le toca mamar y a quién no.» Equally clearly, as I have argued elsewhere («The *Restauración*»; see also Bly, *Galdós's Novel* 86-87), this support system is a description of the political atmosphere which is to bring about, within a very short time, the Restoration. When he tells Fortunata that «Entre una sociedad sin principios y una sociedad sin formas, no sé yo con cuál me quedaría» (III, iv, 9; 143), Feijoo is describing precisely the dilemma of his time: the «sociedad sin formas» of the Revolutionary years or the «sociedad sin principios» of the Restoration. It is easy for the modern reader to underestimate the degree of disgust with politics prevalent in the Spain of the 1870s, especially after the two regimes —the constitutional monarchy of Amadeo and the Federal Republic—engendered by the *Gloriosa*, itself the focus of such ingenuous faith in political solutions and euphoric hopes and aspirations, had failed to produce a stable system. [9]

Carlos Blanco, viewing the whole situation in terms of social conflict, speaks of a «contradiction for liberal Feijoo: ...this concept of liberty is relegated to a secret interior, or its purity is betrayed by deceitful external behaviour» (29). But Feijoo is an *ex*-liberal; he has seen that the system works on an arbitrary basis, favoring some and prejudicing others, and his concern is how to make one's way decorously in this imperfect world. He himself is neither a product nor a representative of the Restoration settlement. [10] He is, rather, a man who has learnt from long experience (he speaks of his past «locuras») to live with the vagaries of the political systems, and, to that extent, he typifies the attitudes that make the Restoration so irresistible. In a world of solemn farce which masks self-interest and degraded values, he seeks to salvage individuals who attract him and to subvert that world by adopting its methods for his own purposes. As Engler noted (quoted by Goldman 129), his perspective is «the most comprehensive and all inclusive vision of reality. Only his interpretation allows for the accommodation of passion and reason, instinct and decorum, spirit and flesh, individual and society. His observations most clearly and explicitly represent the norms of the novel which the narrator only implies» (126). I would add that the narrative norms of the novel refer to no objective ethical standard but are the norms of contemporary society.

Of the two rules by which Feijoo regulates his conduct, the one that refers to social and political behavior is hypocritical and conformist because this is what contemporary standards demand. In personal relationships, however, he does not preach hypocrisy but advocates and exemplifies sincerity,

tolerance, and kindness, even though in sexual relations permanent fidelity is not to be expected. (Here, and only here, the sixty-nine-year-old retired colonel may reflect the beliefs of the forty-three-year-old Galdós [Nimetz 195].) It is curious to notice that in the Alpha version, while «San Martín» fully expects Fortunata to betray him («pegármela») if and when Juanito returns, she protests her complete faithfulness: «Pues mira tú viejo, creerás una cosa que te voy a decir... te asombrarás. Pues no te la voy a pegar. Te has portado tan bien, que voy a ser para ti una esposa fiel.» In the published text this has become much more realistic: a scarcely credible assertion of loyalty by Fortunata and a complete lack of confidence by Feijoo: «Y ella declaraba, con su sinceridad de siempre, que, en efecto, le conservaba ley al maldito autor de sus desgracias... No lo podía remediar; pero si la buscaba otra vez, ya sabría ella resistir y darle con toda la fuerza de su honradez en los hocicos, para que no volviera a ser pillo. Al oír esto, Feijoo se mostraba benévolamente incrédulo...» (III, iv, 3; 102). Honest individual relationships are held up against hypocritical social standards. Fortunata fully understands and accepts this, though paradoxically the guiding principle of her life—her enduring love for Juanito—is an example of the very fidelity decried by her preceptor.

In the world at large, however, the fact remains that Feijoo moves comfortably in a sphere of hollow pretensions and unprincipled intrigue. The supreme example is of course Don Basilio de la Caña, whose rise in self-importance with the Restoration Bly (89) and Goldman (108) chronicle. A lesser case is his «contertulio Pater,» the chaplain of Feijoo's old regiment, who is given the political post of fixing local elections in Almería by Villalonga. This chicanery reaches its culmination in part 4, when Juan Pablo is made Governor of Villalonga's home province; the sufferer is Refugio, who is cast aside in the interests of propriety (IV, v, 6; 447-48).

Feijoo supports his friends simply because they are his friends, and he is, in Bly's words, an «expert manipulator of the patronage system» (88). He has lent considerable sums to the shiftless Juan Pablo, among others, and secured for him an «enchufe» from Villalonga at the beginning of the Restoration; but he is unsuccessful in lobbying for the pathetic Villaamil, possibly because he put less effort into it. On Fortunata's behalf he harasses Villalonga concerning the worthless Rubín brothers, whose merits he praises without the least regard for the truth. Denying, for instance, that he is protecting the family, he declares: «Sólo me intereso por las personas de mérito,» and then describes the gluttonous Nicolás as «un cleriguito de las mejores condiciones... un cura apreciabilísimo, un santo varón... Como que *ayuna todos los días*» (III, iv, 10; 148; my italics).[11] Doña Lupe reacts unfavorably to this appointment, and even the naive Fortunata, under the influence of Feijoo, is aware of how unfairly the system works. «Si no hubiera sido por mi maldad,» she muses, «¡cuándo habría sido canónigo este tonto de capirote, ordinario y hediondo!» (III, vi, 7; 215). The paradox is that it is the retired colonel who has perpetrated this particular injustice on her behalf. All these actions are both typical of the Restoration as Galdós sees it and pernicious in their effects. They represent an abandonment of communal principle for the protection of selected individuals.

Feijoo's political scepticism reflects a widespread attitude, one which is not infrequent in Galdós. José María Bueno de Guzmán in *Lo prohibido* and Don Carlos de Cisneros in *La incógnita* share his views, the former cynically exploiting the situation for his own advantage, the latter not allowing his corrosive disgust with the patronage system to prevent him from participating in it. The later *Episodios* that deal with the Restoration or the lead-up to it also provide clear parallels to Feijoo's political attitude. One such case is Vicente Halconero. In a much more political setting, Halconero, who is generally regarded as reflecting Galdós's own experiences, emerges to social consciousness with the *Gloriosa.* After flirting with federalism, he readily adapts himself to the Restoration, as a liberal «diputado» with prospects of becoming a marquis (Pérez Galdós, *Obras* 957). Segismundo García Fajardo has a more radical evolution and finally comes to terms, quite cynically, with Restoration society: he becomes reconciled with his scheming and opportunist mother, agrees to a marriage of convenience, as his uncle Beramendi had done years earlier, and admits that «he cambiado mi rebeldía por un epicureísmo que me asegure el regalo y el reposo del presente y el porvenir» (Pérez Galdós, *Obras* 1396).

John Kronik argues a persuasive case for viewing *Fortunata y Jacinta* as a self-reflexive novel and Feijoo as a reworking of material, a «fabricator» of Fortunata. Before considering this essential aspect of his essay, let us first, for the sake of continuity, consider his approach to history. Kronik sets out from the basis that «A history, the chronological record of human events, exists out there, beyond the novel; another history exists within the text: the illusion of history that narrative spins» (41). He goes on to affirm that «the historical context that exists beyond the text is momentarily dislodged by structures and patterns within the novel that govern its reading. The text becomes its own context» (45-46). My objection lies with the word «dislodged»: «supplemented,» «overlaid,» yes, but «dislodged» for me implies an undue displacement of every reader's awareness, direct or assumed, of the history outside the text. Something similar occurs, later, when Kronik argues, rightly, that the technique of intertwining of historical and fictional motifs allows two approaches: «1) the fictional creatures are living in a real historical circumstance and therefore are—or seem—real; 2) the historical circumstance is replanted into a fictional context and therefore becomes itself a part of that fiction.» However, he takes the second category unduly far when he argues that «the historical can readily become the stuff of fiction, at which point it no longer is history and cannot be treated as such. In *Fortunata y Jacinta* a group of café patrons talking about Sagasta is a group of characters talking about a character named Sagasta» (54). In my view, the «Sagasta» who is a character in the novel is indeed fictional in his specific dealing within the novel—with Basilio de la Caña, for instance—but his presence in the novel is completely motivated by the outside existence of a politician of that name who happened to be involved in important political decisions at that time. If he were simply a Pérez or Martínez, the effect would be entirely different. In other words, the dimension of the figures outside the text so stressed by Blanco cannot be ignored for a full understanding of the novel, while at the same time the subordination of every character within the narrative to its

internal structural imperatives is also evident. In this respect I am in full agreement with Bly's common-sense eclecticism: «if we choose to examine part 3, chapter 4, first as self-contained unit, we discover that the pre-eminence claimed for the Marxist or Semiotic perspective is unfounded; that instead an interdependence of both perspectives is the only possible approach..., just as the chapter itself... has later to be linked with its companions in the rest of the novel» (73).

Now, for the question of the self-reflexive nature of the novel and, more concretely, of the «fabrication» of Fortunata. On the general issue, Kronik, who has most cogently tackled the problems of self-reflexive techniques in Galdós's novels in other studies, [12] clearly establishes the ambivalent nature of the narrator, «unnamed but existent, distant but involved, limited but all-knowing» (45). He then proceeds to give a masterly account of the complex role of the narrator in a given passage—Juanito's reaction to his mother's choice of a bride for him (I, iv, 2; 193)—uncovering no fewer than six levels of meaning (48). All this seems to me excellent: a first-rate contribution to our understanding of the narrative texture of the novel. From this he goes on to claim that the context of the chapter—the larger text, the book—«suggests a reading of Feijoo's 'curso' as an act of artistic creation. In other words, the story of the special affiliation between Feijoo and Fortunata is the portrayal of the creation of Fortunata by Feijoo» (55). As justification for this approach, Kronik adduces examples of the undoubted impressionability of Fortunata, carefully citing at least a half dozen characters—Maxi, «the most avid,» Nicolás, Doña Lupe, Mauricia, Guillermina, Segismundo—who «take an active part in the fabrication of Fortunata» (56). «Each of these characters,» he concludes, «steps in to fill the vacuum left by the narrator who in advancing remarkably little information about Fortunata has relegated to others the task of defining identity where apparent mystery prevails» (57). Kronik proceeds to link the alleged fabrication with the metaphor of the «pueblo» as «cantera» from which truths, ideas, beauty can be hewn.

That remarkably little direct information is provided by the narrator is not in doubt, as there is no question but that Fortunata is highly impressionable to those around her. She herself compares herself to a «veleta,» a «tío vivo,» a «muñeca,» and even to an animal being taken to the slaughterhouse; and Kronik plots very well the pressures to which she is subject. Feijoo, too, is undoubtedly the most pervasive influence on her. But do other characters, Feijoo among them, have the function of *defining identity*, and does this amount to a creative act, a «fabrication»? This is where my doubts arise.

Perhaps the most important structural decision Galdós made in his construction of the novel was to defer any direct revealing of Fortunata's character until the second part and even then to let it emerge piecemeal. The process is made more subtle by the fact that alongside the reader's discovery of Fortunata's essential personality («lo que me sale de *entre mí*,» as she puts it) comes the development of that personality under the pressures from other characters already referred to. But it should be emphasized that she is not a blank sheet, like—say—Augusto Pérez in *Niebla*, to whom the self-creative approach is eminently applicable. From the moment in which we see her directly in part 2, she has, amid all her bewilderment and lack of confidence,

two fixed convictions which will never leave her: that she will always love Juanito and never love anyone else and that love is no sin. These basic beliefs are quickly extended to the idea of having a child by Juanito: first, to swap a «nene pequeño» for «el nene grande» and, later, to assert her primary moral right to Juanito and her superiority over Jacinta. Moreover, these convictions are in place before she meets Feijoo and will survive his course of instruction. It is not a case, therefore, of «fabrication» but of reshaping, remodeling, substantial no doubt, but not of erecting a complete edifice. Kronik describes admirably, in fact, how her behavior is characterized as «an unbroken see-sawing between obeisance and deliverance» (71). At one moment she loses composure and reproaches herself; at another she openly rebels, again followed by self-reproach; at yet another she has learnt the lesson well. Finally, «a sense of autonomy takes possession of her» when she finally elaborates «su idea». As Kronik has said earlier, this is a «third possibility—inconformity engaged in without decorum, that is, full autonomy»: one which «does not fall within Feijoo's venue» (69). All this is admirably described, but it does not seem to me compatible with the reiterated idea of her as his creation.

Far more than the other «readers,» Peter Bly takes a highly unfavorable view of Feijoo's association with Fortunata. He argues that Galdós projects onto it «a decidedly ironic and disparaging light» which brings «into serious doubt the efficacy and wisdom of the whole enterprise» (74). He indicates what he sees as the self-interested nature of the affair, aimed at Feijoo's sexual gratification, something that links with the early manuscript version. We may add that there is evidence of deliberate pursuit on his part. From the text it emerges that he is one of the many who accost her in the Puerta del Sol («Un individuo de los que la siguieron...» [85]) and remind her with a shudder—most opportunely—of her days of street prostitution. I see in this sequence the further strong probability that he was deliberately following her. The parallel with a casual sexual encounter is reinforced when Fortunata mechanically gets into a cab with him. The narrator comments: «Alguna vez había hecho lo mismo con un cualquiera encontrado en la calle» (86). At least her experience with Feijoo is better than that, and it strengthens his claim to offer the only viable solution.

Bly notes some examples of possible irony, such as Feijoo's pretensions to medical knowledge, as well as his self-appointed role as preceptor (77-78), and the theatrical nature of some of the imagery used. Above all, he sees the practical lessons as being at odds with Fortunata's interests and needs: «Feijoo is imposing what he feels should be Fortunata's role in society: that of a domesticated wife. It is certainly not Fortunata's real 'molde' or one that suits her for long. Fortunata is not really free to shape her own mould» (82). This claim in particular I would contest: I think the evidence of Fortunata's urge towards uncomplicated domesticity—shown even in this chapter when she is cleaning her apartment before Feijoo has ventured to make his proposal—is irrefutable. Yet, although I believe he goes too far, Bly provides a healthy reaction against too uncritical an attitude towards a highly complex character. Certainly, Feijoo is not exempt from Galdós's all-pervading irony. The basic situation, after all, has something slightly comic

about it: the apparently well-preserved elderly man who enters upon an affair with a strikingly beautiful and experienced young woman and brings to it such enthusiasm that he only regrets not having had this opportunity twenty years earlier. The result is that he suffers a rapid physical decline and she blooms as never before. The stories of his adventures, both military and amatory, are highly colored and cast ironic light on his current predicament of biting off more than he can chew in his old age. Perhaps they are exaggerated (the narrator, by asserting improbably their literal truth, actually casts doubt upon it: «nada refería Feijoo que no fuese verdad, porque ni siquiera recargaba sus cuadros y retratos del natural» [III, iv, 8; 108]); perhaps, too, the prosaic reality was that he paid court to Doña Lupe, before or after she had one of her breasts amputated, as Fortunata saucily inquires (III, iv, 8; 130). In particular, his argument that sexual attraction is destined to perpetuate the species, propounded rather grotesquely from his sickbed, is somewhat incongruous coming from a childless philanderer (Bly 83). His persistent staring at Refugio's missing tooth, which so embarrasses her, reminds us of his own human frailty and is possibly «an ironic reprise in miniature» (Bly 86), though I do not think we can go so far as to discern laughter at «his own unrealistic philosophy and its implementation.» We may recall furthermore that his protégée's overwhelming urge to have another child by Juanito runs counter to any possibility of fulfilling the aim of a tranquil respectability, or pseudo-respectability, with Maxi. Yet, I have no doubt that the reader is meant to view him, in human terms, in an essentially favorable light. The valedictory comment that reflects Fortunata's attitude when she visits the now senile old man for the last time demonstrates this clearly:

> Salió, pues, Fortunata de la triste visita con la impresión de haber perdido para siempre aquel grande y útil amigo, el hombre mejor que ella tratara en su vida y seguramente también el más práctico, el más sabio y el que mejores consejos daba. Verdad que ella hizo tanto caso de estos consejos como de las coplas de Calaínos; pero no dejaba de conocer que eran excelentes, y que debió al pie de la letra seguirlos. (IV, iii, 6; 393-94)

Finally, Peter Goldman raises many questions in his wide-ranging essay, which offers much excellent fare. He has, for instance, a profound appreciation of Feijoo's objectives and emphasizes, against Bly, that Feijoo «is the only one among all her friends and lovers who truly knows and loves her for what she is» (115). He may be overlooking Ballester, but the basic argument is sound. The elderly philosopher aims to make Fortunata autonomous, not subservient (127); as Montesinos said, «El quiere enseñar a su chulita a ser libre, no a ser hipócrita» (266-67). Goldman plots a careful parallel between various encounters on stairways—Juanito/Fortunata; Maxi/Fortunata; Juanito/Feijoo—and follows this with a subtle comparison between Don Evaristo and Juanito (114-17). He makes illuminating remarks about the «extremely dense, interconnecting nexus of relationships which build out of each other, including across sexual lines» (119), and which go beyond the mere contrasting pairs and triangles haggled over by Blanco and Gullón and perceptively extended by Boring. Thus we have in «open-ended, dynamic tension ...a vital chain of actuations, encounters, contemplations and reactions; all lead us with the characters along a dialectic of life» (120-21). I share his

sense of the ambiguity of Galdós's novels, proposed in an excellent earlier study («Galdós and the Politics of Reconciliation»), though I would not tie it so closely to the Hegelian dialectic. He is persuasive about the two-pronged nature of Fortunata's final acts, which bring both aesthetic redemption and social effacement, and the double effect, passionate and destructive, of Feijoo's love. As he says, «Ambiguity ... is an acceptance of and testimonial to the rich complexity of life» (125).

Nonetheless, I have profound disagreements with him on several counts. Two I have already mentioned: the question of Fortunata's «aburguesamiento» and the urge towards revolution displayed by Feijoo and Fortunata. On first count, while I attribute Fortunata's penchant for losing her composure to unsuppressed popular feelings, Goldman sees such conduct as a sign of incorporation into the bourgeoisie. On the second, if it is true, as I think it is, that Feijoo wishes to stimulate «a desire that she be able to live her own life in society, if necessary by subverting it» (98), then to equate this silent subversion unqualifiedly with being «revolutionary» (95) is misleading. Still more doubtful is the emphasis placed on Fortunata's destructive qualities. The ironic contrast that emerges between the declining Feijoo and the blooming Fortunata may be physical cause and effect, as Galdós hints by juxtaposing them, but it is inherent in their age-differentiated love affair and not a question of «unpremeditated domination» (100). Nor, in my reading, is she dangerous as a result of «her contradictory powers and possibilities, powers which are simultaneously creative and destructive, voluntary and unconscious» (101), let alone an *exterminating angel* (124).

Goldman also exaggerates, as I see it, the effect of Feijoo's lessons. He claims that Fortunata, under Feijoo's wing, undergoes not merely a transformation but a rebirth (103), with important, indeed essential, consequential changes: sharper mental faculties, a newborn social understanding. So far so good, but this reasoning leads him to a curious affirmation: «If nothing has changed truly in Spanish society, *the character and personality of Fortunata, her inner self, are totally different* though hidden behind *an outer self which,* more developed and polished, *is nevertheless the same*» (107; my italics). It is a statement which I would turn upside down, since I believe that, on the contrary, her inner self is essentially the same, despite a more developed and polished exterior. Similarly, when he perceptively draws attention to Don Basilio de la Caña's physical and sartorial transformation (107-08), which though highly visible is only skin deep, Goldman finds a contrast with Fortunata whereas I find a possible similarity.

Another bone of contention is over effect. Goldman interprets Feijoo's efforts as doomed to failure from the start: «Fortunata is beyond his reach; he cannot help her because she is *a priori* a weapon disarmed» (98) Although ultimately there is some truth in this assertion—Fortunata cannot kick over the traces of her essential nature and beliefs; as Ricardo Gullón says, «la pasión vence la cordura» (*Técnicas* 191)—it is not in my opinion correct at the time in that it eliminates what we may call the operating freedom the characters exercise in the course of the action. For this reason I hesitate to call what was a reasonable objective offering a legitimate option a failure. The term «failed revolution» compounds the error.

One must consider what, as I see them, are Feijoo's real achievements. Fascinated by her popular charms, he rescues Fortunata, when she is at her lowest ebb, from an inevitable reversion to prostitution. He provides her with a period of respite and tranquility which enables her to regain her self-confidence and self-respect and to flourish physically. He instills into her a distinction between public and private morality and, by deprecating envious gossip and in particular slander of Jacinta, he inculcates a degree of objectivity. She gains the capacity to deal with situations, such as relations with Doña Lupe, that do not arise directly from her irresistible love. In addition, as Blanco emphasizes, Feijoo provides the wherewithal for a measure of independence. In conducting the negotiations for the reconciliation, he displays consummate skill (visible already in the Alpha version) by allaying, or at any rate defusing, the suspicions of Juan Pablo and Doña Lupe about his personal involvement with Fortunata.

The most important thing, of course, is that the episode gives Fortunata a second chance to follow the option of respectability through the reconciliation with Maxi. It even stimulates what Goldman calls a «dialectical mental process of associative thought» (105) into a more appreciative view of him and his relatives (III, iv, 7; 121-22). The crucial element is the much more «practical» corollary, expressed with curious bashfulness and hesitation, that if she must seek outside sexual relationships she should be discreet about them. It is a policy which, despite Goldman's reservations, has a reasonable chance of success, though the snag is obvious, and Don Evaristo knows it: Fortunata does not want, and cannot envisage, sexual fulfilment from anyone but Juanito, against whom Feijoo delivers a final emphatic warning (III, iv, 10; 144). And Juanito is too irresponsible, too callous to keep away. Even though a discreet affair with Juanito is not impossible, another obstacle looms on the horizon: Fortunata's own «pícara idea.»

The crunch comes with the revelation by Maxi of Aurora's treachery. This turn imposes an intolerable burden that Fortunata's superficially acquired discretion—or partial «aburguesamiento»—is unable to bear. What she cannot do, in the ultimate instance, is to control her primitive emotions at a moment when all her passionate feellings—jealous love for Juanito, admiration and respect for Jacinta, pride in her «idea» incarnated in her baby—converge in outrage at Aurora's triple betrayal: as Juanito's new lover, as Jacinta's calumniator, and as the impugner of Juan Evaristo's paternity in her slander that Segismundo is the father. With her assault on Aurora and her fatal hemorrhage, «descomponerse» turns into a tragic play on the two facets, mental and physical, of its meaning. The decision to attack Aurora is her own, though she reverts to her «condiciones de origen, mujer del pueblo.» The same impulse leads to her frenzied incitement of Maxi to kill the new lovers. Could we envisage her doing anything else? As we have been told so often, «la cabra tira al monte.» Feijoo's counsels simply cannot hold firm in such circumstances. According to Goldman, her action is the result of her being too self-centered, a sentimental bourgeoise, an «apasionada.» For my part, I see no reason for conceiving it in these terms: it is a spectacularly individual «rasgo,» a facet of the old Fortunata she is unable to overcome. Goldman also follows Maxi's argument, very dubious in my view, that with her action

she made Aurora into an attractive victim in Juanito's eyes (IV, vi, 9; 495). As for her battle with Aurora, Goldman declares that «in purely biological terms it is wasteful, ethically it is unnecessary» (98). That is part of a perfectly legitimate interpretation of *Fortunata y Jacinta* as a «terribly depressing novel» (142) and hence leans, as does Bly («Fortunata» 45), towards the tragic interpretation propounded by Anthony Zahareas. John Sinnigen, taking a much more constructive view of the denouement, considers that Fortunata «achieves self-fulfillment through a negation of bourgeois conventions» (65). My conclusion is closer to Sinnigen's than to Goldman's. Despite its tragic consequences, Fortunata's «rasgo» is, within the structure of the novel, an action that is socially, ethically, and artistically fitting: it resolves the conflicts present throughout the novel and strengthens the moral ties between the two eponymic heroines as well as shaking the complacency of the bourgeoisie. On this issue Harriet Turner strikes a balanced note: «Something is gained in the recognition of the good; much is lost when that good finds no place in the actual world» (76).

The examination of a single chapter in a series of close readings has given remarkably positive results. The divergent attitudes displayed have in many respects proved complementary rather than contradictory. They are not and cannot be exhaustive but are, in Bly's appropriate phrase, «ripples on the pond» (or, alternatively, «echoes,» but not perhaps both). My personal conclusion stimulated by these readings is that Feijoo must be firmly placed within the specific socio-political setting of his epoch—which is the run-up period to the Restoration—and at the same time he should be viewed within the structural framework of the narrative, which implies full awareness of its self-reflexive associations, though not to the extent of denying the latent autonomy of action of the heroine. No less important are the interrelations with other characters and recurrent themes and the dynamic tension and ambiguity thus produced. Externally, for the reader, Feijoo's «curso» brings into focus new perspectives regarding society, morality, and writing itself. Internally, for Fortunata, the episode opens up fresh possibilities of escape from the dilemma that has afflicted her since her first meeting with Juanito. Although given her essential nature the conflict can ultimately only be resolved with her death, she gains in awareness and understanding as a result of Feijoo's teaching. While the tragic outcome, which represents Fortunata's innermost impulses as impervious to prudent, practical counsel, has a certain social, ethical, and artistic appropriateness, the alternative path, exemplified by Feijoo, even though rejected, deserves due recognition. It is fitting, therefore, as John Kronik has indicated (72), that Fortunata's baby, who exemplifies both the struggle and the reconciliation of the two opposing heroines, should bear Evaristo as his second given name.

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NOTES

[1] The individual essays are: Carlos Blanco Aguinaga, «Having No Option: The Restoration of Order and the Education of Fortunata» 13-38; John W. Kronik, «Feijoo and the Fabrication of Fortunata» 39-72; Peter A. Bly, «Ripples on the Pond: Interdependent Approaches to the Galdós Chapter» 73-94; Peter B. Goldman, «Feijoo and the Failed Revolution: A Dialectical Inquiry into *Fortunata y Jacinta* and the Poetics of Ambiguity» 95-145. Also published independently: Carlos Blanco Aguinaga, «Entrar por el aro: restauración del 'orden' y educación de Fortunata,» *La historia y el texto literario* (Madrid: Nuestra Cultura, 1978) 49-94; and John W. Kronik, «Galdosian Reflections: Feijoo and the Fabrication of Fortunata,» *MLN* 97 (1982): 272-310.

[2] The essential texts are Gilman, «The Birth of Fortunata» and *Galdós and the Art of the European Novel*; Blanco Aguinaga, «On 'The Birth of Fortunata'» and the present essay. I have in press a detailed study of this polemic: «Social Document or Narrative Discourse? Some Comments on Recent Aspects of Galdós Criticism,» to appear in a collection of Galdós studies edited by Anthony H. Clarke, the result of a colloquium held in Birmingham in August 1986.

[3] The manuscript is in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The unpublished PhD dissertation of Diane Beth Hyman, «The *Fortunata y Jacinta* Manuscript of Benito Pérez Galdós» (1972), reproduces the first manuscript version, which she calls the Alpha text. I have consulted both the manuscript and Hyman's thesis. I quote from the manuscript by permission of the Houghton Library and wish to acknowledge Hyman's pioneer work in transcribing the text.

[4] Although two pages of the manuscript are missing, it is possible to glean a reasonably complete picture of the original conception of the character.

[5] All references to *Fortunata y Jacinta* are to Caudet's edition. Part, chapter, section, and page numbers are given to facilitate consultation. Parts 1 and 2 are contained in vol. 1, Parts 3 and 4 in vol. 2.

[6] In the manuscript he is called «Jiménez» at least twice, no doubt an early version of the first surname, «González.»

[7] A few minor matters: 1) it does not seem to me justified to say that the narrator calls Villalonga his «buddy» («compinche») (16) when the use of the term, like «amigote» or «tocayo/a» applied to Jacinta, clearly reflects the relationship between the interlocutors; the general contention is valid, however, for the narrator and Villalonga are called «amigos» on the first page of the novel; 2) there is an evident confusion between the second and third affairs with Juanito (30); 3) sixty-six individuals, most of them sergeants, not forty (see Jover 371; *pace* Carr 297), were executed after the insurrection at the San Gil barracks in 1866 (21).

[8] There is further discussion of determinism in my essay indicated in note 2 and in Whiston, «Determinism.»

[9] Jover calls it «uno de los más generosos y sostenidos intentos de rectificar la historia sociopolítica de nuestro país» (356). López-Morillas speaks of «la casi total identificación de las formas de la vida colectiva con las fórmulas políticas» (232).

[10] Here perhaps I may remove a misunderstanding: when I said in 1970 that his attitudes «typify the moral climate which leads to the *Restauración*...» («Contemporary History» 108-09), I was not implying, as Goldman interprets the statement (96-97), that his views were shallow or hypocritical or that his morality was that of Restoration society.

[11] Most ironically, Nicolás reciprocates in a ludicrous characterization, as Whiston indicates («The Materialism» 72): «Don Evaristo es un cristiano rancio, y... cuando le administraron, recibió al Señor con una edificación y una santidad tan grandes, que todos los concurrentes al acto lloraban a moco y baba» (III, v, 1; 154).

[12] On *El amigo Manso*, on *Misericordia*, and in another study of *Fortunata y Jacinta*.

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