THE CONTROL OF PROSTITUTION AND FILTH IN *FORTUNATA Y JACINTA*: THE PANOPTIC STRATEGY IN THE CONVENT OF LAS MICAELAS

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The convent of Las Micaelas in *Fortunata y Jacinta*, an institution for the rehabilitation of prostitutes, is part of the network of control mechanisms implemented in Restoration Spain designed to maintain a social order perceived to be under threat.[1] The development of capitalism in Spain brought with it a series of conflicts that crystallized at the time of the Restoration. Some of these conflicts were related to public health, to the geographical proximity of the working classes to the middle classes, and to prostitution, as well as to the need for a skilled work-force and for a programme of regulation and "fixing" of the floating population. The emergence of these conflicts resulted in a series of disciplinary strategies aimed at neutralizing the dangers posed by those sectors of the population which threatened the social norm and the capitalist order, and which were consequently categorized by dominant groups as "abnormal" or "deviant" (Varela 210-11). Systems of disciplinary control instituted by governments, with the support of social élites, depend for their efficiency on the surveillance and moralization of deviant, or potentially deviant, groups, such as prostitutes. Foucault has viewed this process of surveillance as "panoptic," referring to the prison scheme drawn up by the moral philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, in his "Panopticon; or, the Inspection-House" (1791). The convent of Las Micaelas constitutes an example of a panoptic institution aimed at the control of what was perceived as "deviant femininity," which constituted a danger, not only to respectable morality, but also to public health. This study will examine how the elements of panopticism work within the institution of the convent, concentrating on how the disciplinary mechanisms of control were deployed and resisted. Tsuchiya has already observed the parallel between Las Micaelas and Bentham's panopticon. However, her study, taking as a point of departure Foucault's theory that power does not emanate from a single central site but from a multiplicity of "local centers," focusses on the spread of the disciplinary mechanisms thoughout the entire social body, the family in particular, rather than on a detailed analysis of the functioning of the panoptic scheme within the enclosed institution of Las Micaelas.

In this essay, the notion of control, and similarly the idea that control is inevitably resisted, will be analysed, not just from a Foucauldian perspective, but also within the wider historical and theoretical framework of arguments for and against the dominant ideology thesis as applied to nineteenth-century class relations. According to this thesis, the class that controls the means of economic production also controls the means of ideological production. Thus, the ideas and values of ruling élites become the ruling ideology which dominates a particular historical period. In the case of the nineteenth century, this supposes that the ideas of the bourgeoisie were installed as the "dominant ideology," which was then disseminated downwards to other social groups.[2] I shall discuss in some detail how the debates on discipline and control

dramatized in *Fortunata y Jacinta* relate to the contemporary cultural debates on public hygiene, class, and gender that emerged in Restoration Spain, as elsewhere. My stress will be on the ways in which working-class prostitutes were categorized as "deviant" and in need of moral reform by associating them with filth and infection (both physical and moral). I hope to show how Galdós's representation of these contemporary discourses often subverts them through the use of narrative point of view and of verbal and situational irony. The establishment of a historical and theoretical framework enables the reader to appreciate the significance of Galdós's critical focus and personal contribution to such discourses. I hope to build on Tsuchiya's analysis of notions of control and resistance in the novel with reference to contemporary debates on domesticity and femininity by setting my discussion within a wider, alternative theoretical framework. This will also allow me to add to Jagoe's detailed examination of Fortunata's challenge to the bourgeois ideology of domesticity, middle-class morality, and gender roles, as well as her subversion of the idea of true womanhood (*Ambiguous Angels* 102-19, and "The Subversive Angel"). Although I shall concentrate on the convent of Las Micaelas as a panoptic institution, with specific reference to the characters of Mauricia and Fortunata, I shall also briefly trace these two characters' later trajectories in the novel, in order to show how the Las Micaelas episode fits with the novel's overall denunciation of bourgeois attempts at imposing "hygienic" and domestic values on working-class prostitutes.

In order to appreciate the role of Las Micaelas as an instrument of control, and similarly Galdós's attitude towards bourgeois control strategies, it is necessary to start by analysing contemporary debates on domesticity and public hygiene and coverage of ideas on social regulation, as well as more recent discussions on discipline and control. Following a Foucauldian approach, we can argue that the convent of Las Micaelas, and the régime implemented in it, sought to categorize deviant femininity, to separate it from respectable femininity, and ultimately, to restore it to the norm of behaviour through a process of surveillance and indoctrination. The definition and categorization of respectable and non-respectable forms of femininity has to be seen within the wider process of the formation of the ideology of domesticity, resulting from the division of social space into two differentiated spheres —the private and the public— which, as Aldaraca (43-66) and Jagoe (*Ambiguous Angels* 13-41) have shown, in Spain took place from mid-nineteeth-century onwards. The separation of work and home led to the emergence of a new system of gender relations, in which the home was defined as an exclusively feminine domain. The role of women as guarantors of order within the home was fundamental in a world where urbanization and industrialization were perceived by sections of the bourgeoisie as having a potentially disintegrating effect on the family, the domestic unit and the maintenance of domestic order being considered as the basis of social stability. In this ideological context, domesticity, marriage, and motherhood were constructed by the bourgeoisie as the norm of behaviour, any digression from this norm, usually represented by the sexual waywardness of the undeserving working-class woman, being categorized as abnormal, unnatural or deviant, thereby initiating a process of reform (Nead 32-39).[3] In this way, the lower classes became the target of the bourgeoisie's project of moralization. Working-class prostitutes attracted special attention in this regard. Prostitution had reached threatening proportions in Spain in the last third of the century. This phenomenon had particular importance in Madrid where, as a result of the growth of the city in the second half of the century, it reached much higher levels than in other Spanish cities (Cuevas 164).

The middle-class discourse on domesticity intersected with, and was reinforced by, that on public health, which gained unprecedented emphasis as a result of the pressures of urban and industrial expansion. The working classes in general, and prostitutes in particular, came to be associated with filth, which, in turn, became a metaphor for contagion, immorality, and all sorts of social disorder. This view was strengthened by the outbreaks of cholera in nineteenth-century Spain (the last took place in 1885, the year before the first part of *Fortunata y Jacinta* was published), which brought filth and disease into even closer association with the working classes, whose unhygienic and immoral habits —neglect of cleanliness and idleness— were believed to have generated the epidemics. It was, therefore, proposed that the imposition of habits of cleanliness could strengthen moral character, enabling the working classes to combat what was perceived as innate moral weaknesses, the assumption being, as Corbin has pointed out, that "a crowd with a liking for cleanliness soon has a liking for order and discipline" (*The Foul* 157). The hygienic discourse was constructed around a series of polarities or oppositions —largely established, in the same way as the discourse on domesticity, in terms of class— which were essential to its regulatory aims. As Mort has observed:

> In the discourse of the urban poor, reformers constructed the sexual through the class-related polarities which were central to their programme: physical health/non-health, virtue/vice, cleanliness/filth, morality/depravity, civilization/animality. The binary oppositions were organized in such a way that each polarity functioned to reinforce the other. Bourgeois cleanliness was impossible without the image of proletarian filth, middle class propriety could not be defined without the corresponding representations of working class animality, and so on. (41)

It is significant that Galdós was an active but partially critical contributor to contemporary debates on public health and the control of "filth." The first volume of *Cronicón* (1883-86) contains several articles on the cholera epidemic of 1885 in which Galdós criticizes the inefficiency and lack of humanity of the sanitary precautions taken by the authorities to control the epidemic, such as the establishment of sanitary cordons and "lazaretos." By rejecting this system of isolation, or "categorization," Galdós was also refusing to comply with the authorities' discourse on "filth" control.

The dominant images of prostitution that emerged during this period associated the prostitute with filth in the streets, with decomposing animal waste, and with drains. These were believed, at a time when the miasmatic theory of disease diffusion still carried considerable weight, to be the source of the miasma, or smells, which polluted the atmosphere and generated disease (Nead 121; Corbin, "Commercial Sexuality" 210-12). The prostitute was seen as an agent of putrefaction, literally and figuratively; she was perceived, as Corbin has observed, as "a putrid woman," whose body smelt bad ("Commercial Sexuality" 210). In view of this threat, the need arose, especially in the second half of the century, to keep prostitution under continual surveillance and control through the deployment of a series of disciplinary strategies. It should be noted that the system of images constructed around prostitution in public health discourses constituted in itself an instrument of power and control, in the sense that discourses generate a body of knowledge which gives those who produce it the power to deploy a series of mecha-

nisms of control. Amongst these was the legal regulation of prostitution, which took shape in the "reglamento" of 1865 implemented in Madrid: an initiative which served as a model for various "reglamentos" which came into force in other Spanish cities (Cuevas 164). Another manifestation of the need to control prostitution was the creation of institutions for the rehabilitation of prostitutes. The convent of Las Micaelas in *Fortunata y Jacinta* is one such institution.[4] The nuns in Las Micaelas set out to fight against physical and moral filth through the implementation of a surveillance programme of work based on cleanliness, a programme aimed at the restoration of the prostitute to the norm of domesticity and femininity.

Within this ideological framework, the convent of Las Micaelas can be seen as representing the possibility of "recycling" those sectors of society perceived as "waste," rendering them, ultimately, useful to society. As Nead (121) has observed, during this period filth and waste were not only considered as a public health hazard but also as part of a system of retrieval, conversion, and exchange. In the same way that waste could be retrieved and converted into productive capital, it was also possible to reclaim the prostitute and make her useful by bringing her back into the accepted economic and sexual orders. In this sense, both rubbish and the prostitute can be considered to be outside and inside the respectable economic system: that is, moving across economic categories.

Before analysing the various strategies for the regulation of prostitution which are deployed in the novel, it is necessary to examine in detail, by reference to Bentham's original essay, "Panopticon, or the Inspection-House," how the disciplinary elements of his panopticon scheme work. This will be supported by discussion of Foucault's analysis of the panopticon and his theories concerning discipline, power, and control. In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault observes that in the early nineteenth century mental coercion, the subjection of the individual to an expert system of constant supervision and regulation, replaced physical punishment as the major characteristic of penal repression. Foucault argues that this shift in the concept of punishment was aimed not so much at leniency and humanity as at greater efficiency in penal practices. He portrays Bentham's panopticon scheme as a model for this new mode of disciplinary power. Crucially, Foucault is eager to demonstrate how the surveillance and disciplinary elements of Bentham's plan could be transferred to the wider social domain. He illustrates how the disciplinary aspects of panopticism operate in the context of a plague-stricken town, in which its inhabitants have been subjected to quarantine regulations and to the whole series of control measures that these entail —spatial partitioning, constant inspection, and the regulation of movement, or "fixing" of individuals— in order to avoid, not only contagion, but also the rebellious, criminal or disorderly behaviour that the threat of death could generate. For supervision and control to operate at their maximum efficiency, says Foucault, the labelling of people in broad categories such as "mad / sane," "dangerous / harmless," "normal / abnormal" is not sufficient, as the category classed as abnormal or deviant constitutes a "dangerous mixture" in itself. Hence, further classifications become necessary. The social management of the plague served as a model for disciplinary projects based on the construction of multiple segregations which counteracted the confusion and disorder created by the "mixing together" of "deviant" citizens.[5]

Bentham's panopticon prison is the architectural projection of this strategy. It was designed as a circular building with a central tower from which a view could be commanded of

the prisoners' cells, distributed around the periphery of the building, Each cell constituted a "spatial unit" in which each prisoner was "perfectly individualized and constantly visible" (Foucault, *Discipline* 200). The placing of individuals in their own individual spaces ensured that no communication between them was possible. The panopticon's aim was to individualize, thereby reducing collectivity and interpersonal exchanges, as an antidote to the perception of the lower classes as the threatening "masses."[6] Supervision was the pivotal aspect of this disciplinary project. The main feature of the panopticon's architecture was that, although prisoners could be constantly observed in their cells, screening devices ensured that they could never see the centrally sited superintendent. It was, thus, impossible for them to know whether at any given moment they were being watched. This placed the responsibility of discipline on the inmates themselves, guaranteeing order through a system of subtle coercion.

In Bentham's scheme the prison population was highly segmented. Divisions were established according to the type of offence committed and also between young and old, male and female, the violent and the quiet, and, most interestingly, between "decent" and "dissolute" females.[7] Once this main classification had been constructed, Bentham (72) went on to propose a system of "mitigated seclusion," according to which the prisoners would be allowed to form small groups of two, three or, at the maximum, four during the hours of work, having to separate again during the hours of rest. Each group would have to be under constant surveillance to avoid "all means of intoxication." Bentham placed great emphasis on the way these groups were to be formed. Factors such as age and character would be taken into consideration. Furthermore, in this system of regulation by selection, each group would be "assorted" by the inspector in such a way that prisoners "may be checks upon one another [...] with regard to any forbidden enterprise" (76). Discipline would be ensured to a large degree by reciprocal surveillance, or self-policing.

The key feature of panoptic supervision was the coupling of surveillance with the notion of improvement. The panopticon exercised a "reformatory" power. Its role was not simply to protect society from those who threatened it, but also to rehabilitate morally the offender, so as to render her/him useful, especially in economic terms, to society. But, for an individual to be improved, it was necessary to obtain her/his submission. In this sense, the training of individuals to accept docility and obedience through repetitive work became a major objective of the plan.

The great advantage of the panopticon project, Bentham argued (40), was its application to any sort of institution in which a particular form of behaviour had to be imposed. Furthermore, the disciplinary techniques and methods of surveillance could work beyond the walls of institutions, propagating themselves throughout the whole of the social body. In this propagation, according to Foucault, lay the main distinction between the older, limited systems of surveillance and control and those ushered in by the science and reasoning of the Enlightenment (*Discipline* 209-10).

The convent of Las Micaelas is but one example in a long tradition of institutions for the rehabilitation of prostitutes that are conceived and organized according to the principles of the panopticon scheme.[8] This reforming institution provides an illustration of, on the one hand, the segregation or categorization of respectable femininity, which remains outside the walls of the convent, and, on the other, deviant femininity, which is contained within them.[9] The wall

of the new church, which is being built at the time of Fortunata's admittance into the convent, can be seen as a symbol of the need to keep both groups apart. The fact that the narrator describes the wall in the process of being built may be connected with his desire to draw the reader's attention to this segregational policy. The physical boundary established by the wall is reinforced by the rituals of the institution. When entering Las Micaelas, the women enter another world, one governed by a whole set of different rules which symbolize their social exclusion from the outside world. The wall establishes a physical, but also a visual division between the two worlds.[10] The narrator describes how the wall gets higher and higher every day and emphasizes the visual aspect of this separation: "Cada día, la creciente masa de ladrillos tapaba una línea de paisaje; parecía que los albañiles, al poner cada hilada, no construían sino que borraban" (1: 448). Whereas the boundaries that mark off the normal from the deviant become more visible and obvious, the outside world becomes invisible to the women. This "visual confinement" reinforces both the physical enclosure to which the women are submitted and their isolation from the respectable world outside the convent. In the same way, the interior of the convent is hidden to people on the outside. Maxi observes how the growing mass of bricks prevents him from seeing what is happening inside. In this respect, Cohen has pointed out that

> The segregated and insulated nineteenth century institutions made the actual business of deviancy control invisible, but its boundaries visible. That is to say, what went on inside these places was supposed to be unknown. Institutions like prisons gradually became wrapped with an impenetrable veil of secrecy. Segregation came to mean insulation and invisibility. This was the transition which Foucault charted — from the visible, public spectacle (torture, execution, humiliation) to the more discreet form of penitentiary discipline. (57)

The narrator establishes a comparison between the growing row of bricks and a veil used for covering naked flesh: "Cada hilada de ladrillos iba tapando discretamente aquella interesante parte de la interioridad monjil, como la ropa que se extiende para velar las carnes descubiertas" (1: 429). Prostitution needs to be kept away from the public eye, in the same way that naked flesh is veiled. However, the humorous reference to the interior of the convent as "aquella interesante parte de la interioridad monjil" suggests the author's desire to ridicule contemporary attempts at "insulation" and at making the control of deviancy "invisible."

The invisibility of the convent's interior clearly suggests middle-class anxieties about the "visibility" of prostitution and the threat posed by the mixing of the respectable and non-respectable classes. William Acton, a mid-nineteenth-century authority on prostitution, expressed this fear of the visibility of vice and the resulting collapse of sexual categories:

> Vice does not hide itself, it throngs our streets, intrudes into our parks and theatres, and other places of resort, bringing to the foolish temptation and knowledge of sin to the innocent; it invades the very sanctuary of home, destroying conjugal happiness. (Quoted in Nead 115)

The rising wall, which acts as a barrier for hiding vice, can also be seen as symbolic of fears related to prevalent contemporary views on miasmas and infection, including venereal diseases. In the same way that rubbish needed to be contained and hidden away in refuse dumps to prevent infection,[11] so the prostitute, another "visible" cause of miasma from a pre-Pasteurian perspective (Nead 121), needed to be contained and hidden away from the public eye. As Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet, the public health expert and champion of regulation in mid-century France, wrote:

> Prostitutes are as inevitable in an agglomeration of men as sewers, cesspits and garbage dumps; civil authority should conduct itself in the same manner in regard to the one as to the other: its duty is to survey them, to attenuate by every possible means the detriments inherent to them, and for that purpose to hide them, to relegate them to the most obscure corners, in a word, to render their presence as inconspicuous as possible. (Quoted in Bernheimer 16)

The regulation of prostitution involved placing the prostitute under the gaze of power at the same time as keeping her invisible from the "healthy" elements of the population. In Spain, one of the main aims of the "reglamento" of 1865 was to preserve public decorum by forbidding prostitutes to appear in public places "en horas de afluencia" or to stand at the door or at the balconies of the brothel (Scanlon 109-10). The hygienist, Santero, writing in 1885, advised that the "casas de prostitución" should be situated in secluded areas (2: 488). Moreover, prostitution, and particularly unregulated prostitution —it has to be remembered that Fortunata and Mauricia are occasional, and therefore clandestine, prostitutes— was believed to involve, not only a risk of syphilis, or physical contagion, but also one of moral contagion or, as Corbin has pointed out, the spread of erotic behaviour throughout the social body as a whole (*Women* 22, 24). This sparked fears about the integrity of bourgeois women. Such views led to the need to isolate and keep under control what in the hygienic discourse of the period appeared to be a serious threat of physical and moral infection.

Once deviant femininity is categorized and isolated, a whole programme of supervision and discipline is put into operation. But, for surveillance to be effective, it becomes necessary to establish a system of further divisions and classifications. When describing the inside of Las Micaelas, one of the first things that the narrator points out is the division of the "recogidas" into two groups: "las Filomenas" and "las Josefinas." The first group was formed by "fallen" women, whereas the second was made up of young girls who had been taken to the convent by their parents (or often by their stepmothers) in order to be educated. These groups needed to be kept separate so as to prevent the flow of bad influences, or "intoxication," as Bentham puts it. Galdós emphasizes that there is no communication whatsoever between the two groups of women. They live in different sections of the building and their timetables for eating and recreation are different. The deviant group needs to be kept apart to ensure that no contact is established and that there are no "leakages" into the more "respectable group" of young girls. This ensures that the two different categories do not break down.

Once this main binary division has been established, further separations will be needed within each of the above groups so that effective surveillance can be exercised. Galdós points

out the severity employed by the nuns to prevent small groups from forming during the hours of labour. This is necessary to ensure discipline and efficiency at work, which could otherwise be disturbed by the women engaging in conversation and forming alliances. When groups form at other times, the nuns not only take great care to ensure that the right relationships are established, but also use the better-behaved women as "checks" on those they consider "suspicious":

Mucho rigor y vigilancia desplegaban las madres en lo tocante a las relaciones entre las llamadas arrepentidas, ya fuesen Filomenas o Josefinas. Eran centinelas sagaces de las amistades que se pudieran entablar y de las parejas que formara la simpatía. A las prójimas antiguas y ya conocidas y probadas por su sumisión, se las mandaba acompañar a las nuevas y sospechosas. Había algunas a quienes no se permitía hablar con sus compañeras sino en el corro principal en las horas de recreo. (1: 434-35)

This system of classification and surveillance is not dissimilar from that proposed by Bentham in his "Panopticon."

Furthermore, as discussed earlier, surveillance goes hand in hand with the notion of reformation. The women in Las Micaelas are subjected to a programme of physical and moral discipline aimed at their rehabilitation as "normal" members of society. Life in the convent is dominated by all sorts of timetables, schedules and regulations. Discipline extends to all areas of everyday life. The narrator describes, rather humorously however, the strict rules of surveillance and discipline imposed by the nuns:

A las cinco de la mañana ya entraba Sor Antonia en los dormitorios tocando una campana que les desgarraba los oídos a las pobres durmientes. El madrugar era uno de los mejores medios de disciplina y educación empleados por las madres, y el velar a altas horas de la noche una mala costumbre que combatían con ahínco, como cosa igualmente nociva para el alma y para el cuerpo. Por eso la monja que estaba de guardia pasaba revista a los dormitorios a diferentes horas de la noche, y como sorprendiese murmullos de secreto, imponía severísimos castigos. (1: 434)

The image of the nun walking into the women's dormitory sounding a shrill, piercing bell, and the humorous and empathetic description of the women as "las pobres durmientes" counteract the seriousness of the nuns' attempts at implementing a regimented system of discipline. The narrator does not seem to be taking this "disciplinary régime" very seriously. Indeed, he goes on to show that the system of surveillance is flouted. Thus, in spite of the nuns' efforts to avoid any kind of "intoxication" between the women in the convent, this control mechanism is undermined by the great influence that Mauricia has on Fortunata, both in the convent and in the rest of the novel, an influence which, ironically, has more of an effect on her future behaviour than bourgeois indoctrination. It is also ironic that, despite all the surveillance exercised by the nuns, Mauricia will manage to "steal" Sor Marcela's brandy bottle and become literally "intoxicated." Here, the use of irony enables the author to criticize, even ridicule, the nuns' disciplinary tactics and, therefore, to subvert contemporary ideas on control.

The major instrument of discipline employed in Las Micaelas is work. According to bourgeois thinking, work enforced habits of self-discipline and perseverance and taught submission to order, since it set a pattern of behaviour and implied an adjustment to certain routines and rhythms.[12] Work was believed to make people more docile and easily "trained," more adaptable to the rules of behaviour that are imposed on them. Ultimately, work made people productive. As such, it became associated with virtue, whereas idleness was perceived as the source of all vices, as it implied non-productive time in which evil could flourish. The self-disciplinary habits generated by repetitive work helped individuals to improve themselves, to become self-sufficient and independent.[13] Individual improvement, or "self-help," would in turn result in national and social progress. The inculcation of virtuous habits associated with work was particularly important in connection with prostitutes, since these were usually typed as "naturally" idle and lazy by the majority of Spanish public health experts of the period, idleness and aversion to work being cited as the main causes leading to prostitution. Bernaldo de Quirós and Llanas Aguilaneido, for example, stated that: "Todos los autores que han estudiado a las mujeres dedicadas a este triste oficio, afirman que los hábitos psicológicos habituales en ellas son la pereza, el ocio, el horror a toda clase de trabajo metódico y continuado, la apatía más completa" (59).

But what was the relevance of the work ethic to women in a society where they were relegated to the domestic sphere? The programme of work implemented in Las Micaelas was based on domestic training, as was also the case with other institutions such as women's asylums (Showalter 82-84). It provided a strategy for the regulation of sexuality, in the sense that it was designed to educate the prostitutes into accepted feminine roles and, in particular, to train them in the skills and routines of domestic service.[14] The range of household routines imposed by the nuns entailed the practice of those virtues advocated by the bourgeoisie —including order, discipline, cleanliness, and punctuality— all of which could be transferred to the female sphere of the domestic environment. Through the undertaking of these domestic duties the prostitute could recover her "lost" femininity and be "restored," after leaving the institution, to the family unit and to traditional domestic life. This is a reflection of the contradictions inherent in bourgeois discourse, as it implies that there was a stage where the prostitute was "good" before becoming "fallen," thus undermining the idea of the "innate" immorality and irreligiosity often attributed to the poor in general, and to prostitutes in particular, by contemporary social commentators, who often ignored the economic conditions in which they lived. The tasks that the women have to carry out in Las Micaelas are very much the same as those that they were expected to undertake in contemporary asylums: cleaning, laundry, and needlework. As in asylums of the time, the nuns in Las Micaelas employ a régime of work —very often hard and unnecessary work— in order to keep the women's minds free from "temptations." It was believed that work had the virtue of occupying the mind, thereby diverting it from any potentially disruptive and disquieting thoughts. As Galdós points out in his description of the daily régime in Las Micaelas, "Los trabajos eran diversos y en ocasiones rudos. Ponían las maestras especial cuidado en desbastar aquellas naturalezas enviciadas o fogosas, mortificando las carnes y ennobleciendo los espíritus con el cansancio" (1: 434). Laundry work in particular was believed to have important therapeutic benefits, as the aggressiveness and intensity of physical labour involved in this activity could serve as an outlet for nervous energy (Showalter 83). In

Las Micaelas, the symbolism of cleaning linen, especially bed linen, is significant from the perspective of the restoration of prostitutes to the accepted feminine norm. It is also significant that the narrator draws a parallel between the nuns' "polishing" of the "reclusas" and the cleaning tasks carried out by the women, which mainly revolve around polishing.[15] Ironically, the polishing activities forced on the women are depicted as the most futile.

In the chapter, "Las Micaelas por fuera," the narrator, when describing the buildings occupied by the new religious orders, comments on the bad taste of the architecture. However, this is immediately contrasted with the clean atmosphere that one could breathe in them. The new architectural style might have been "deplorable" and "cursi" but, as the narrator points out humorously, "despide olor de aseo y tiene el decoro de los sitios en que anda mucho la *santidad* de la escoba, del agua y del jabón" (1: 422; my emphasis). Cleanliness overrides any concern for architectural form. When describing the convent of Las Micaelas in particular, the narrator contrasts once again, in an ironic tone, "la pulcritud y la inocencia artística de las *excelentes* señoras que componían la comunidad" (1: 423; my emphasis). In portraying the inside of the convent, the narrator notes that "las paredes estaban estucadas [...] porque éste es un género de decoración barato [...] y sumamente favorable a la limpieza" (1: 423). The use of plaster is significant, as it was considered to be an effective agent against infection. Plaster made walls waterproof, thus preventing the absorption of humidity and the subsequent miasmatic impregnation of the walls (Santero 1: 536; 2: 140, 392; Corbin, *The Foul* 25, 91).

The narrator portrays this zeal for cleanliness on which the regeneration of the women is based as exaggerated, even fanatical:

> Sor Natividad [...] [era] tan celosa por el aseo del convento, que lo tenía siempre como tacita de plata, y en viendo ella una mota, un poco de polvo o cualquier suciedad, ya estaba desatinada y fuera de sí, poniendo el grito en el cielo como si se tratara de una gran calamidad caída sobre el mundo, otro *pecado original* o cosa así. Apóstol fanático de la limpieza, a la que seguía sus doctrinas la agasajaba y mimaba mucho, arrojando tremendos anatemas sobre las que prevaricaban, aunque sólo fuera *venialmente*, en aquella moral cerrada del aseo [...] —Si no tenéis alma, ni un adarme de gracia de Dios— les decía—, y *no os habéis de condenar por malas, sino por puercas.* (1: 435; my emphasis)

Although throughout this extract an association is established between physical uncleanliness and sin, between filth and immorality, these associations cannot be taken seriously, for several reasons. First, the character through whom the associations are drawn is portrayed as fanatical; hence, her perspective cannot be trusted. Second, the humorous tone adopted by the narrator immediately invites the reader to dismiss such associations. Finally, the information is presented from the point of view of a bourgeois character (the narrator points out Sor Natividad's high-class origins [1: 418]), which allows the author to disengage himself from it.

In one scene in Las Micaelas, Fortunata and, particularly, Mauricia are associated with both immorality and filth. While the two women are washing clothes, they are interrupted by a nun in the middle of a conversation in which Mauricia is tempting her friend to take Juanito away from Jacinta. The "supervising" gaze of the nun forces them to stop talking and carry on with their work. At this moment the narrator observes:

Mauricia dio salida al agua sucia, y Fortunata abrió el grifo para que se llenara la artesa con el agua limpia del depósito de palastro. Creeríase que aquello simbolizaba la necesidad de llevar pensamientos claros al diálogo un tanto impuro de las dos amigas. (1: 460)

Here, the association is made not as much with the dirty water itself, but with the process of draining it away. A common image during this period associated the prostitute with drains and sewers, that is to say, with the action of draining away filth, rather than with filth itself (Corbin, "Commercial Sexuality" 211). This image also has its roots in pre-Pasteurian beliefs, mythologies indeed, connected with the diffusion of disease. At a time when the germ theory of disease still had to be demonstrated, not only filth, but damp also, was believed to be amongst the possible causes of disease (Corbin, *The Foul* 32-33, 91-92; Howe 186). Washing with too much water was believed to be dangerous, as it was associated with dampness and putrid stagnation. It is important to note here that the cleaning régime implemented in Las Micaelas is mainly based on the elimination of dirt through polishing, scrubbing and brushing rather than washing. If water inspired distrust, it was movement (the circulation of water) which was considered salubrious, since it was believed that things which were in circulation could not become corrupted; hence the importance attached to the elimination of filth through drainage (Santero 2: 190-91, 473-74; Corbin, *The Foul* 32-33, 91-92). In the same way that drains and sewers were used to eliminate waste and filth in an attempt to prevent infection, the prostitute also became visualized as a "human sewer" that society could use in order to eliminate its excess of seminal fluid, its excess of male desire (Corbin, "Commercial Sexuality" 211; Bernheimer 15-16).[16] In the scene in Las Micaelas, as Mauricia is draining the dirty water away, she is being observed by the "supervising" nun, who, as the narrator points out, does not leave her and Fortunata alone and wants to see how they rinse the clothes. The association between prostitution and drains is seen, once more, from the perspective of a representative of the bourgeoisie.

Perhaps the most prominent images of prostitution and filth are presented by the narrator towards the end of the chapter, when it becomes clear that the disturbing and disruptive Mauricia, the character through whom these associations are established, is beyond the nuns' control (Fuentes Peris 72-73). In the first of these images the drunken Mauricia, after claiming to have seen the Virgin (1: 469), takes refuge on a pile of compost in the convent's vegetable garden. This image symbolizes the link between organic and moral decay, a common association drawn during this period. Acton commented: "as a heap of rubbish will ferment, so surely will a number of unvirtuous women deteriorate" (quoted in Nead 121). Mauricia's drunken state reinforces not only the immorality but also the animality and savagery which were often associated with the working classes. In "Las Micaelas por dentro" Mauricia is frequently described as a "fiera" ready to attack (on several occasions in the novel Fortunata is herself referred to as a "fiera"). Often Mauricia has to be tied like an animal and even locked up in a cage, like an animal in the zoo. Her foul language and harsh manners reinforce her savagery and animality. Also, in keeping with contemporary thought, Mauricia's unruly behaviour is often associated with lunacy. The image of Mauricia sitting on top of the pile of refuse represents all the moral failings that the bourgeoisie bestowed upon the undisciplined working classes: immorality, filth, animality, madness, and drunkenness are set in stark contrast to civilization, cleanliness, temperance, domesticity, and passivity.

However, the above image is presented in the novel as a bourgeois ideological construction and, therefore, as biased and unreliable. Again it is Sor Natividad, a representative of Establishment views, who observes that Mauricia's place is with the rubbish. Thus, when she finds out that Mauricia has taken refuge on top of the dungheap, she exclaims, "Ya..., en la basura. [...] Es su sitio" (1: 477). Further, this image is contradictory and ambiguous, since manure is also symbolic of growth ("compost" being technically the opposite of "decomposition") and can, therefore, represent the dual properties of fertility and decay. It has been observed that the use of such ambiguous images by Galdós allows him to undermine the mainly bourgeois point of view of the narrator (see, for example, Whiston 79 and Ribbans 39-40).

The image of Mauricia sitting on the manure heap also symbolises her rebellion against the controlling power of the bourgeoisie. While sitting on the manure, Mauricia is shown throwing filth at one of the "reclusas" when the latter orders her, on behalf of the nuns, to come down from the dungheap and join the other women: an act which, like her constant use of foul language, becomes symbolic of her rejection of discipline and, in particular, of bourgeois hygienic discourse. Corbin has noted the masses' reluctance to accept the reformers' discourse on public health and their "loyalty," in effect, to filth (*The Foul* 214-15). He observes, for example, how throwing excrement was a feature of the Shrovetide Carnival. Another aspect of this loyalty to filth, he notes, was reflected in their persistent use of foul language. By "throwing filth and its verbal equivalent," as Corbin puts it, Mauricia is reacting against a capitalist society which, after having condemned the working classes to live in filth, blames them for their own condition, categorizing them as innately "unhygienic" and in need of discipline and control. Social historians have shown how some disciplinary practices generated self-assertive and even rebellious reactions from the working classes, rather than the expected submission and obedience. In this respect, Foucault has also observed that wherever there is power, there is also resistance, coming from, or existing within, the system of power relations (*The History* 95-96). Later Fortunata will, of course, also reaffirm her own system of values as a reaction to the controlling influence and coercion from the bourgeoisie. In this respect, Marxist ideology concerning the imposition downwards of the values and ideas of a dominant class might be considered as too simplistic an interpretation. Moreover, this ideology does not leave any room for the possibility that certain values traditionally regarded as the preserve of the bourgeoisie, such as respectability, cleanliness, and hard work, already existed in the working classes without any imposition from above. Both Fortunata and Mauricia are shown to be hard-working women in the novel, and, when secluded in the convent, they are shown to enjoy the cleaning tasks imposed by the nuns. The reform programme instituted in the convent may, from this perspective, be seen as redundant. Similarly, the novel shows that Fortunata has an autonomous sense of sexual morality ("honradez") independent of any imposition from above.

When the uncontrollable Mauricia is thrown out of the convent, she becomes once more associated with rubbish in a scene where she is followed by a gang of street sweepers (1: 483-84). Interestingly, this was the very image émployed by the mid-nineteenth-century social surveyor, Henry Mayhew, when describing vagrants, whom he associates not only with street sweepings, but also with manure. Like prostitutes, vagrants were perceived as a "pestilence," both physical and moral.[17] Mayhew described vagrants as: "A vast heap of social refuse —the mere human street-sweepings [...]— that is destined, as soon as the spring returns, to be strewn far

and near over the land, and serve as manure to the future crime-crop of the country" (quoted in Himmelfarb 340). Prostitution can, indeed, be seen as a kind of vagrancy. In *Fortunata y Jacinta* Mauricia is often seen wandering the streets. She is, in fact, a "corredora de prendas."[18] In the novel it is not clear where she lives after leaving the convent. Like vagrants, she does not seem to be "fixed" in any particular place. When she is finally thrown out of the convent, she exclaims: "¡Ay, mi querida calle de mi alma!" (1: 483). In Mauricia's case the irony is that it is her respectable job as a "corredora de prendas" which sends her into the streets and into contact with the dangers of the public sphere.[19]

Bourgeois society, after having used Mauricia for its own "reforming" purposes, has to dispose of her, unable to deal with her disruptive and ungovernable behaviour. It is significant that, after her expulsion from the convent, she becomes associated with organic residuum. Mauricia can be seen as representing "residual" rather than "recyclable" matter. As a "residual deviant," she needs to be segregated from the group of "deserving" or hopeful women. Mauricia's regression to immorality and animality serves to expose the failures of the panoptic strategy implemented in Las Micaelas. Galdós's setting up of a panoptic institution in the novel allows him to denounce and, to an extent, ridicule the bourgeois attempt to impose domestic and hygienic values on a social group, in this case working-class prostitutes, considered to be a threat to respectable femininity and public health and, therefore, to the stability of the society of the day.

Even if the nuns' inability to reform Mauricia's behaviour results in her expulsion from the convent, when she is approaching her death, and is, consequently, more malleable and easily influenced, the bourgeoisie goes back to her in a last attempt to restore her to the accepted norm of behaviour. The episode of Mauricia's death can be seen as an extension of the cleansing project undertaken in Las Micaelas. In this episode the images of physical and moral filth abound, with the narrator drawing constant parallels between the two. Guillermina's obsession with cleaning Severiana's house, particularly Mauricia's room, and her insistence that the entrance to the building should be properly swept, are symbolic of her attempts to "purify" Mauricia. The elimination of physical filth, as much as that of moral and "verbal" filth —notably Guillermina's attempts to "cleanse" Mauricia's foul language— is, once more, an essential part of Mauricia's reform. However, in spite of the efforts to control her behaviour, Mauricia's repentance, internalization of bourgeois hygienic discourse and submission to discipline is presented ambiguously throughout the chapter. Mauricia's actions and words often seem prompted by external coercion and fear rather than being a genuine act of repentance. Also, although she overtly admits that she has repented of her sins, she repeats and maintains to the very end the idea that Fortunata's love for Juanito is not a sin (2: 720). Mauricia defends her right to have an idea of her own and, like Fortunata just before her death, she is convinced of its validity as a means of attaining salvation, even if it does not conform to bourgeois canons. The uncertainty of her repentance is reinforced by the fact that Mauricia's fear of using "filthy" language seems to fade as the episode of her death progresses. Ironically, it is shortly after having been administered the sacraments that she begins to behave in a rebellious and disorderly way, her violent fits becoming more frequent and her language more aggressive and "filthy." During the mental convulsions that she suffers both in the convent and when she is nearing death, Mauricia is identified by the narrator with everything that represents the antithesis of the hygienic and

domestic values propounded by the nuns in Las Micaelas.

Mauricia's expulsion from the convent and her death later in the novel symbolize the need to discard from society those members of the population who are beyond bourgeois control. Through Mauricia's rebellion Galdós shows how bourgeois attempts at control were resisted by the working classes or, in other words, how the bourgeoisie did not always succeed in imposing its values on its social subordinates. Her expulsion from the convent and eventual death in no way detract from the value or efficacy of her rebellion.[20]

But what of Fortunata? In the section of the novel dealing with Las Micaelas, she is depicted as generally responsive to the régime of discipline and control. But the fact that she shifts from passive to active character after her stay in Las Micaelas, ultimately becoming a figure capable of challenging bourgeois moral values, proves the precariousness of her "reform." As the narrator comments: "las ideas tan trabajosamente construidas en las Micaelas se desquiciaron de repente" (1: 494). In fact, her stay in the reformatory serves chiefly to introduce her to the unreformable Mauricia, who will prove a lasting influence on her. Indeed, it could be argued that the moral indoctrination that Fortunata receives in the convent generates in her a subversive reaction which leads her to develop an autonomous identity. For, as noted above, the exercise of control can be counterproductive, generating self-assertive reactions from the working classes rather than the submission and passivity expected of them. Jagoe has shown how Fortunata subverts and redefines the meaning of middle-class values related to gender roles in order to suit her own needs (*Ambiguous Angels* 102-19, and "The Subversive Angel"). The fact that she can develop her own idea of "honradez" in an autonomous way is a sign that she already has a value system, independent of the morality of those attempting to coerce her culturally. We have seen how, in Las Micaelas, she was shown already to possess the domestic values, and particularly the delight in physical labour and cleanliness, which the nuns tried to instil in her. With respect to sexual morality, Fortunata never fully understands or apprehends the meaning of bourgeois terms such as "honradez" because she attaches a different meaning to them in keeping with her own value system, that is, a non-institutionalized conception of respectability, marriage, and motherhood.What bourgeois indoctrination does in her case is create confusion in her mind: thus, her constant questioning of the bourgeois concept of "honradez" and her obsession with it. In effect, bourgeois indoctrination eventually triggers "pre-existing" ideas and values, thereby stimulating and accelerating the process of autonomous development. As a number of social historians have shown (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner; Thompson), the working classes were not simply helpless and naïve victims of bourgeois coercion. Similarly, Fortunata is not a mere receptacle of a "colonising" bourgeois ideology.

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NOTES

[1] A first, abbreviated version of this study was given at the 4th Hispanic Studies Postgraduate Conference, Nottingham, 5 January 1996.

[2] For a discussion of the principles and weaknesses of the dominant ideology thesis, see Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner.

[3] This does not imply, Nead argues, that there was a single and unified code of respectable morality against which all the other deviant categories were set and defined. Indeed, definitions of sexuality within middle-class discourses were often inconsistent and contradictory, mainly because of the problems posed by the uncertain nature of female sexuality. This lack of coherence resulted in the bourgeois categorization of respectable and non-respectable behaviour in terms of class, as a way of creating a sense of a unified and coherent class identity.

[4] The fictional convent of Las Micaelas was, in fact, based on a real institution of the same name. Scanlon (113-14) has observed that in 1880 there was a total of ten institutions for the reclamation of prostitutes in the main Spanish cities, of which Las Micaelas was the best known. It is ironic that these institutions were accused of actually increasing prostitution. As the inmates were being exploited and used as cheap labour, this forced into prostitution many female home-workers who were unable to compete with the cheaper prices that this brought.

[5] The use by Foucault of the model of the plague is significant to this discussion, in view of the association established between prostitution, filth, infection and the 1885 cholera epidemic in Madrid.

[6] Galdós was clearly aware of the new developments in prison architecture and organization. In an article of 1884 for the Buenos Aires newspaper, *La Prensa*, he wrote about the replacement of the old prison of El Saladero in Madrid by a new cellular prison, the Cárcel Modelo, built that same year and later to appear in his novel, *Nazarín*. This prison was built in the radial form of the panopticon —thus its nickname, "el Abanico" (Trinidad Fernández 130), as it is referred to in *Nazarín* (169). It had a central "rotonda" from which prisoners in their individual cells could be constantly observed. After deploring the architectural defects, living conditions, and organization of El Saladero, including the "mixing together" of prisoners with wildly differing kinds of offences, Galdós praises the new prison as a paradigm of the efficiency, practicality, and greater humanity of the new scientific system of prison administration (Shoemaker 46-47).

[7] See the panopticon plan given at the beginning of Bowring's edition.

[8] Nash has observed that the Magdalen Charity, the first institution set up in England, in 1758, for the reform of penitent prostitutes, anticipated the technology of social engineering used in nineteenth-century, state-run prisons and similar institutions. It is significant that an institution for the reclamation of prostitutes should have pre-dated the panoptic formula that was to be refined, from the 1780s onwards, by a number of theorists of penology and which was also used by Bentham in the planning of his model prison. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the description of the disciplinary programme implemented in the Magdalen bears a striking resemblance to the one established in Las Micaelas.

[9] Although some bourgeois women, such as Doña Manolita, are also confined in Las Micaelas because of "sexual sins" (1: 450), the main aim of this institution was the control of working-class women, as these represented the real threat to society.

[10] Tsuchiya (61-62) has also observed the physical and visual barrier that the half-constructed wall creates between the outside and inside worlds.

[11] For the obsession with the problem of refuse dumps during the first part of the nineteenth century, see Corbin ("Commercial Sexuality" 214).

[12] Álvarez-Uría (169) has pointed out that prisons and asylums, two major manifestations of nineteenth-century bourgeois control of deviancy, also founded their "imperio del orden" on work.

[13] The fact that the working classes could become self-sufficient, however, can also be regarded as being a threat to the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, since the main outlet that women had in the labour market

was domestic service, it can be argued that this constituted a compromise, in the sense that servants could be regarded as self-sufficient and, at the same time, dependent on their bourgeois masters.

[14] It is ironic that the convent trains the women to be servants when a large proportion of women who fell into prostitution, as contemporary commentators observed, were domestic servants who had been seduced by their masters. See, for example, Eslava (78-79).

[15] Bentham observed that "moral purity and physical are spoken in the same language." Cleanliness, he wrote, was an "antidote against sloth, and keeps alive the idea of decent restraint and the habit of circumspection" (158). The link established between cleanliness and morality made physical cleanliness a core objective of reforming institutions.

[16] The Spanish hygienist, Pulido, observed in 1876 that Saint Augustine compared prostitution with "esas cloacas construidas en los más suntuosos palacios para recoger los productos corrompidos y asegurar la salubridad del aire" (116). For an analysis of the cloacal imagery of infection, filth, and decay in relation to the female body, and prostitution in particular, as well as other dark and threatening aspects of nineteenth-century urban life, such as the presence of public refuse and stench, the regular recurrence of epidemics, the squalor of the poor, mendicity, madness, and criminality, see Valis's study of *La Regenta*.

[17] As noted by Himmelfarb (340), they were carriers of "tramp-fever," a similar disease to typhoid and cholera.

[18] Labanyi (Chapter 6) has observed that the verb "correr" is used in the novel to signify both financial and sexual expenditure.

[19] Significantly, Mauricia is never explicitly referred to as a prostitute in the novel. The only reference that the narrator makes to her prostitution is during Mauricia's and Fortunata's first encounter in Las Micaelas, in which Mauricia tells Fortunata that they have already met once before in "la casa de la Paca" (1: 436). Fortunata's clarification that she had only been there twice out of financial need (1: 439) makes the reader assume that they are talking about a "casa de citas" or a clandestine brothel. It can be argued that it was Mauricia's association with the street, her "verbal filth" and her alcoholic "intoxication" which provided sufficient grounds to construct her as a prostitute in society's eyes.

[20] This point is also made by Tsuchiya (63-68). In her analysis of *La desheredada*, Sieburth (39-40) has interpreted Isidora's final choice of prostitution as her —and the author's— rebellion against bourgeois disciplinary strategies. As a prostitute, Isidora, in effect, becomes the owner of the means of production and thus independent of bourgeois control, an independence that she would have lost, had she become a working woman or a bourgeois wife, these being her two remaining options. More than this, as a carrier of syphilis and a destroyer of bourgeois fortunes and inheritances, the prostitute represented a force beyond bourgeois control and a danger to its social dominance.

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