



THE IMPORTANCE OF GOETHE'S *DIE WAHLVERWANDTSCHAFTEN* IN THE CREATION OF GALDÓS' *FORTUNATA Y JACINTA**



HE influence in Galdós' works of Germany's most celebrated author—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)—has been generally well documented.¹ However, to date, no sustained study has specifically explored Goethe's influence on Galdós' four-volume masterpiece of Spanish realism, *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1886-87), despite the fact that in this novel Galdós refers explicitly not only to Goethe, but also to his novel *Werther* and the drama *Faust*.² These works, however, are not as important to the matter of Goethe's influence on *Fortunata y Jacinta* as is a novel that Galdós does not mention; *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (1809), considered even today one of the great love stories of modern Europe. Although Galdós does not allude directly to *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, the basic premise of Goethe's novel is clearly a major concern of *Fortunata y Jacinta* also, namely the conflict between the laws of nature and the laws of society in the pursuit of love. This mutual theme is succinctly expressed as one of the principal characters in Galdós' novel finds herself "en presencia de aquel terrible antagonismo entre el corazón y las leyes divinas y humanas, problema insoluble"

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¹ Walter T. Pattison, *Benito Pérez Galdós and the Creative Process* (Minneapolis, 1954), pp. 9-10, 13-14, 16, 19-20, 118-23, 133-35.

² Benito Pérez Galdós, *Fortunata y Jacinta* (Madrid, 1979), pp. 371-72. All subsequent references are to this edition and will be noted in the text.

(p. 702). That Galdós was familiar with Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* is without doubt; he specifically mentions the novel in his *Torquemada en el purgatorio* (1891)³ and possessed his own copy of its French translation *Las afinidades electivas* (Paris, 1872),⁴ which he probably first read soon after its publication when the importation of foreign books was allowed in the early 1870s following Spain's *Revolución Gloriosa*. In *Fortunata y Jacinta* Galdós depicts university students reading Shakespeare, Heine, and Goethe behind the pages of their organic chemistry books (p. 371). Galdós himself—like one of his characters in *España trágica*—"devoró a Goethe y Schiller."⁵ Textual evidence suggests that Galdós remembered his reading of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* when he set about to depict determinism in love as one part of his vast panorama of the human life cycle in *Fortunata y Jacinta*. The purpose of the present study, then, is to show how Galdós created characters, themes, and plot developments similar to those in Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* when writing *Fortunata y Jacinta* (especially as he moved beyond his first, or alpha, version in the writing of his second, or beta, and final manuscript, where he mentions Goethe); and subsequently, to indicate how Galdós differs from the German master in his treatment of these similar aspects.

The plot of Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* proceeds from a central discussion early in the novel engaged in by the baron, his wife, and a friend concerning chemical reactions—in particular, the elective affinities, or relative mutual attractions of certain elements and the consequent formation, dissolution, or re-formation of chemical compounds. When the wife has trouble understanding these concepts, they are explained to her by means of an analogy to interpersonal human relationships; that is to say, if one introduces a third person into an intimate relationship between two people, it is possible that the established couple's bonds of affection may be loosened, and even severed, by the intrusion. Moreover, the addition of a fourth person might lead to the formation of two entirely new couples.

The analogy explained above is subsequently acted out in the lives of the novel's four principal characters. The baron, Edward,

³ *Obras completas* (Madrid, 1950), v, 1043.

⁴ H. Chonon Berkowitz, *La biblioteca de Benito Pérez Galdós* (Las Palmas, 1951), p. 173.

⁵ *Obras completas* (Madrid, 1951), III, 873.

has invited his friend, the Captain, to reside for a time with him and his wife in their castle. In turn, the wife, Charlotte, invites her niece, Ottilie, to stay with them. With the intrusion of first the Captain and then Ottilie into the couple's relationship, the affection between Edward and Charlotte lessens. Each then falls irresistibly in love with the newcomer, who reciprocates the passion. Unlike the re-formation of chemical compounds, however, in the end two new unions or marriages are not formed; instead, the lovers' mutual attractions are counteracted and ultimately neutralized by the laws of society and religion.

The principal conflict of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, between the elemental forces of nature and the ethical and moral laws of society in the matter of love, is also a major consideration in Galdós' *Fortunata y Jacinta*. As one of Galdós' characters says, "Los sexos se buscan y las uniones se verifican por elección fatal, superior y extraña a todos los artificios de la Sociedad" (p. 617). Galdós lays the foundation for the development of this conflict in his alpha manuscript. Like Goethe, Galdós characterizes his feminine protagonist (Fortunata) as fated to love only one man to whom marriage is impossible, the already married Juanito Santa Cruz. As the wife of Santa Cruz (Jacinta) tells Fortunata, "La ley y la religión le han hecho mi marido y esto no tiene remedio. Esto no se puede deshacer . . . [Vd. tiene que conformarse] con las leyes divinas y humanas."⁶

In the revised and expanded beta manuscript, Galdós gives even greater emphasis to the conflict between natural and societal laws. More important, he does so by adopting a technique used also by Goethe in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*: the introduction of two antithetical characters, one of whom champions established social convention, the other of whom challenges it. Like Goethe, Galdós creates a marriage counselor (Father Nicolás Rubín) who intransigently upholds the sanctioned marriage laws. As in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, the insensitivity of this character contributes to the early death of the young female protagonist in Galdós' novel. In addition, just as Goethe introduces a character (the Count) to rebut the conventional views of his marriage counselor (Mittler), so Galdós in Volume III of his novel introduces Evaristo Feijoo,

⁶ Benito Pérez Galdós, [Alpha] Manuscript of *Fortunata y Jacinta* (Widner Library, Harvard University), p. 819. Galdós did not keep this quotation when writing beta.

whose views serve to rebut those expressed by Father Rubín in Volume II. In both novels, the rebutting character demonstrates in his own life one possible way of circumventing society's laws concerning marriage (although in neither novel is this solution permitted to the principal victims of those laws).

Both Goethe's marriage counselor, Mittler, and Galdós' Father Rubín have clerical associations; Mittler, however, is an ex-clergyman. Characterized as a "crotchety little man,"⁷ "a strange man" (p. 17), whose greatest pride is that none of his parishioners had ever become divorced, the counselor is nevertheless deemed so incompetent in his service that others think he must have come to his calling only because of his name: Mittler (mediator or, in this case, meddler). Garrulous and egocentric, Mittler lacks completely the ability to listen sympathetically or to empathize with those he counsels:

He always allowed himself to get out of hand as soon as he found an opportunity to argue about subjects to which he attached great importance. He lived much in himself and whenever he was with others . . . his tongue loosened, . . . his speech rolled on and on without any consideration—wounding or healing, useful or harmful, according to circumstances. (p. 294)

Completely oblivious to the fact that irresistible forces are working in the lives of the four principal characters, and that his own views are inappropriate, Mittler obtusely extols to them the conventional virtues of idealized marital life:

Marriage is the foundation of all moral society . . . the Alpha and Omega of all civilization. It makes the savage gentle; and the gentility of the most civilized finds its highest expression in marriage. It must be indissoluble because it brings with it such an abundance of happiness . . . that no married couple can calculate their debt to each other. It is an infinite debt and can only be paid in eternity. (pp. 79-80)

Thus, Mittler insists that "There is no plausible reason for divorce" (p. 80). Ultimately, one of Mittler's insensitive pronouncements concerning sex and marriage precipitates the death of the novel's feminine protagonist, Otilie.

⁷ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Elective Affinities*, trans. Elizabeth Mayer and Louise Bogan (Chicago, 1963), p. 79. All subsequent references are to this edition and will be noted in the text.

Almost immediately after Mittler's Alpha and Omega homily, the Count provides a counterstatement. Having recently obtained a divorce and planning marriage to another woman (the Baroness), the worldly Count retorts goodnaturedly:

One of my friends . . . maintained that every marriage should be contracted only for five years. It is, he said, a fine, odd, and sacred number and a period just long enough in which to get to know each other, have a child or two, quarrel, and—the best part!—become reconciled again . . . [Furthermore,] a marriage should be declared indissoluble only if both parties, or at least one of them, had been married twice before, for such persons have conclusively demonstrated that they regard marriage as indispensable. (pp. 83-84)

In *Fortunata y Jacinta*, Galdós presents two similarly polar characters in separate volumes of the four-volume novel. However, in order to create a Spanish marriage counselor paralleling Goethe's insensitive Mittler, Galdós first had to discard the kindly, understanding cleric he had depicted initially in his alpha manuscript. In the alpha version, the priest, named Anacleto, astutely realizes that Fortunata will never be happy with her betrothed, and he therefore sincerely tries to dissuade her from her forthcoming marriage to him. Only when she insists that she has no alternative except prostitution does Anacleto agree to help her achieve her matrimonial goal.⁸

In the beta manuscript, Galdós creates the character of Father Nicolás Rubín, who is in many respects the antithesis of the alpha priest and the counterpart of Goethe's Mittler. Unlike Goethe, however, who makes his marriage counselor an ex-clergyman, Galdós has no such compunctions about clearly designating his character's clerical status. Being both a realist and an anti-cleric, Galdós makes Father Rubín such a negative exemplum of clerical incompetence that he serves as the target of an aggressive attack by Galdós on the whole notion of a celibate clergy dominating married life.

Ridicule is Galdós' primary mode of depicting Father Rubín; repugnance is his main aim. By means of such methods, Galdós (like Goethe before him) keeps the reader distanced emotionally and ideationally from his marriage counselor, so that one embraces

⁸ Even in alpha, Galdós appears not to have decided on the final name for this priest, for he twice calls him Aniceto ([Alpha] Manuscript, pp. 561, 788).

neither the man's personality nor his ideas. Galdós introduces Father Rubín in a scathingly satirical description of his offensively hirsute physiognomy that is designed to discredit the priest's ideas as well as his appearance:

Su fisonomía no era agradable, distinguiéndose por lo peluda . . . Se afeitaba hoy, y mañana tenía toda la cara negra. Recién afeitado, sus mandíbulas eran de color pizarra. El vello le crecía en las manos y brazos como la yerba en un fértil campo, y por las orejas y narices le asomaban espesos mechones. Diríase que eran las ideas, que cansadas de la oscuridad del cerebro se asomaban por los balcones de la nariz y de las orejas a ver lo que pasaba en el mundo." (p. 415)⁹

A subsequent description of Father Rubín, made from Fortunata's point of view during the interview in which he counsels her regarding matrimony, is equally repugnant and demeaning:

[Ella] se desilusionó . . . al ver aquella figura tosca de cura de pueblo, aquellas barbas mal rapadas y la abundancia de vello negro que parecía cultivado para formar cosecha. La cara era desagradable, la boca grande y muy separada de la nariz corva y chica; la frente espaciosa, pero sin nobleza; el cuerpo fornido, las manos largas, negras y poco familiarizadas con el jabón; la tez morena, áspera y aceitosa. El ropaje negro del cura revelaba desaseo. (p. 420)

Moreover, he is said to have a pronounced body odor and is given to belching.

Worst of all, Father Rubín is depicted by Galdós as emotionally "frigidísimo . . . [y] glacial" (pp. 424-25) toward the concerns of love and passions: "Entendía tanto de amor como de herrar mosquitos" (p. 473). "Era quizás la persona más inepta para el oficio a que se dedicaba . . . [y] había hecho inmensos daños a la humanidad . . . [ignorando por completo] la máquina admirable de las pasiones" (p. 425).

Unlike the priest in the alpha manuscript, who understood the intensity of Fortunata's passion and the irresistibility of physical attraction, Father Rubín believes that sensual desire is but a pagan idea and that the only love in a Christian marriage is "espiritual o sea en las simpatías de alma con alma . . . Todo lo demás es obra de la imaginación, la loca de la casa" (p. 425). In fact, during his

⁹ The alpha priest, Anacleto, is completely different in this respect: "Apenas necesitaba afeitarse para tener la cara sin pelos" (p. 542).

marital counseling of Fortunata, Father Rubín never truly considers Fortunata's feelings at all; rather, he self-indulgently contemplates what her marriage, if successfully realized, will do for his own prestige. Thus "hinchado de vanidad" (p. 422), Father Rubín egotistically leads Fortunata into a nineteenth-century Spanish no-divorce matrimony with his own brother (Maxi), a frail idealist who turns out to be incapable of even physically consummating the marriage.¹⁰

The rebuttal to Father Rubín's dogmatic marital doctrine comes in Volume III of Galdós' novel, when the elderly Evaristo Feijoo becomes Fortunata's protector after her marriage has failed and she has been abandoned by Juanito. The liberal philosophy expounded by Feijoo is diametrically opposed to Father Rubín's dogmatic doctrine. The experienced Feijoo tells Fortunata:

El casarse [como lo hiciste] es estúpido . . . Yo he visto mucho mundo . . . A mí no me la da nadie. Sé que es condición precisa del amor la no duración, y que de todos los que se comprometen a adorarse mientras vivan, el noventa por ciento, créetelo, a los dos años se consideran prisioneros el uno del otro, y darían algo por soltar el grillete. Lo que llaman infidelidad no es más que el fuero de la naturaleza que quiere imponerse contra el despotismo social. (p. 617)

In fact, Feijoo's rebuttal evolves into an argument for a naturalistic determinism in love that is as fully dogmatic as had been Father Rubín's theological defense of marriage:

El amor es la reclamación de la especie que quiere perpetuarse, y al estímulo de esta necesidad tan conservadora como el comer, los sexos se buscan y las uniones se verifican por elección fatal, superior y extraña a todos los artificios de la Sociedad. Mirarse un hombre y una mujer. ¿Qué es? La exigencia de la especie que pide un nuevo ser, y este nuevo ser reclama de sus probables padres que le den vida. Todo lo demás es música; fatuidad y palabrería de los que han querido hacer una Sociedad en sus gabinetes, fuera de las bases inmortales de la naturaleza. (p. 617)

¹⁰ In the alpha manuscript, Galdós repeatedly says Maxi is impotent (pp. 823, 824, 826, 827) and that "desde que se unió con su mujer no ha podido consumir el matrimonio" (p. 824). In beta, Galdós is much more sophisticated and playful in communicating this information. For details, see Vernon A. Chamberlin, "Poor Maxi's Windmill: Aquatic Symbolism in *Fortunata y Jacinta*," *HR*, 50 (1982), 427-37.

Feijoo concludes that all the social laws and penal codes concerning love are but “un fárrago de tonterías inventadas por los feos, los mamarrachos y los sabios estúpidos que jamás han obtenido de una hembra el más ligero favorcito” (pp. 617-18).

Feijoo's definition of love as a biological necessity that must be fulfilled—a union controlled by “elección fatal”—recalls the explanation given in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* of love as an inevitable chemical reaction, the result of an “elective affinity” or mutually irresistible attraction between two elements. At the same time, Feijoo's depiction of the lawmakers who punish those so fated to love as “los feos . . . que jamás han obtenido de una hembra el más ligero favorcito” brings to mind the unattractive image of the authoritarian Father Rubín, himself described in Volume II as “feo” as well as sexually “frigidísimo.” Although he is asexual, Father Rubín is nevertheless a sensualist—his vice is depicted as gluttony rather than lust:

La carne que a él le tentaba era otra, la de ternera por ejemplo, y la de cerdo más, en buenas magras, chuletas riñonadas o solomillo bien puesto con guisantes. Más pronto se le iban los ojos detrás de un jamón que de una cadera, por suculenta que ésta fuese, y la mejor *falda* para él era la que da nombre al guisado. (p. 424)

In light of Feijoo's comment that sex is a need as basic as eating, Father Rubín's preference for food over females is made to seem grotesque. By depicting Father Rubín's perverse dissociation of two basic human needs, Galdós again emphasizes the inappropriateness of celibate clergy dominating marital life.

In the beta manuscript, Galdós not only created both an incompetent marriage counselor and an adversary similar to Goethe's philosophical antagonists, but also made changes in his feminine protagonist (*Fortunata*) that make her more like Goethe's (*Otilie*). Thus, the feminine protagonist in both *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* and *Fortunata y Jacinta* is depicted as the principal victim of the conflict between the laws of nature and the conventions of society. She is, in Galdós' words, caught in the “terrible antagonismo entre el corazón y las leyes divinas y humanas” (p. 702). More specifically, both Goethe's *Otilie* and Galdós' *Fortunata* are destined by forces beyond their control to love only one man; in each case, that man is spoiled, immature, and already married. Because marriage to this man is impossible, the final outcome in each work is the sac-

rificial death of the young woman who loves him. Her death marks the climax of each novel, and her burial constitutes an important part of its dénouement. Furthermore, before her demise, each protagonist undergoes a spiritualization—an apotheosis—and each is compared to an angel. Significantly, none of these attributes or events occur in Galdós' characterization of his feminine protagonist in his alpha manuscript, strongly suggesting that they were consciously constructed changes, inspired by Goethe's characterization of his own feminine protagonist in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*.

Another similarity between *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* and *Fortunata y Jacinta* is that late in each novel the author complicates his plot by including the birth of a child. In *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, the mother of the child is the legitimate wife, Charlotte, and the biological father is her husband, the baron, Edward. However, at the moment of conception Charlotte fantasizes about the Captain, even as Edward fantasizes about making love to Otilie. As a result, the baby's features resemble those of Otilie and the Captain, rather than Charlotte's and Edward's. The conception of the child in this novel, then, represents a "fantastic" form of double adultery. Although all four principal characters realize their "infidelity," the birth of the child nevertheless bring Charlotte and Otilie closer together, and Otilie often cares for the child as if it were, in truth, her own. Tragically, however, Otilie causes the death of the child through its accidental drowning. Both women perceive the death of the innocent child as divine punishment for their respective transgressions: Charlotte believes it occurred because she had not relinquished her husband to Otilie; Otilie, on the other hand, believes that it is a fearful sign that she committed a sin by loving a man who is already married. Of the two women, Otilie has the strongest reaction: losing all desire to live and insisting that Charlotte and Edward remain together, Otilie secretly starves herself to death.

In Galdós' novel the particular circumstances of the child's conception and birth are quite different from those developed in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. Although in both novels the child is "fathered" by the immature, married male with whom the unmarried female protagonist is in love, in Galdós' novel, the adultery is real, not fantasized. Thus, the biological mother of the child in Galdós' novel is the unmarried outsider, Fortunata (comparable to Otilie in Goethe's novel) rather than the married Jacinta (comparable

to Goethe's Charlotte). Moreover, in Galdós' novel the baby is a positive symbol and does not die. As in Goethe's novel, however, its birth brings the two female "rivals" closer together. In fact, as part of her apotheosis Fortunata wills the child to her rival, Jacinta.

Through Fortunata's sacrificial gesture, Galdós dramatizes one of his persistent social concerns: the need for the lives of the effete upper classes (represented by the childless marriage of Jacinta and Juanito) to receive infusions of new vitality from marriages and liaisons with the lower classes or *pueblo* (characterized by Fortunata) who personify the fertilizing forces of elemental nature. Thus, Fortunata's adultery with Juanito and her gift of new life to Jacinta transcends the personal histories of the novel's characters to reflect the advent of an important democratic philosophy in nineteenth-century Spanish society whose growth (and resistance) Galdós perceived and recorded in many of his realistic novels and plays.

Fundamental differences between Goethe's and Galdós' treatments of the conflict between nature and society are occasioned not only because of the inherent distinctions in the creative talents of the two great novelists, but also because their respective works were written seventy-seven years apart and reflect very different, even antithetical, literary aesthetics. Because *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* is essentially romantic and tragic in mode, whereas *Fortunata y Jacinta* is realistic, even naturalistic in parts, the feminine protagonists of these respective works respond in quite different ways to their similar circumstances.

In the manner of the doomed heroine of romantic tragedy, Goethe's Otilie reacts passionately and melodramatically to the instinctual forces which determine her fate. One critic has said of Otilie,

Ihr Schicksal ist die Natur, der sie naeher steht als andere Menschen. Sie erkennt ueberhaupt nicht die Gefahr der Liebe, die sie zu Eduard treibt. Denn Lieben ist ihr Gesetz, wie es der Blume Gesetz ist, ihre Bluete zu entfalten. Sie traegt ihr Schicksal in sich, und es entwickelt sich mit der gleichen Notwendigkeit wie die Entwicklung der Lebenwesen in der Natur.¹¹

Her fate is nature, to which she is closer than other human beings. She does not perceive at all the danger of the love which drives her to Edward.

¹¹ André François-Poncet, *Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften: Versuch eines kritischen Kommentars* (Mainz, 1951), pp. 216-17.

For love is her law, just as the law of the flower is to unfold her blossoms. She carries her fate in herself, and it develops with the same imperative as the essence of life in nature.

The innocent Otilie attempts to dissociate herself from her instinctual drives by attributing them to a "hostile demon, who has gained power over me" (p. 288) and an "ominous Destiny determined to persecute us" (p. 274). Having no hope for union with her beloved in this world, the suffering Otilie seeks death; her lover soon joins her and is buried by her side. In typical romantic fashion, however, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* concludes with an image of the lovers' ultimate transcendence of the earthly strife and their heavenly reunion. "Thus the lovers rest side by side. Peace hovers over their burial place; gay and kindred images of angels look on them from the vaulting; and what a happy moment it will be when, one day, they will waken together once more" (p. 305).

In contrast to Goethe's "frail and rarified" romantic heroine,¹² Galdós' Fortunata is a vital, earthy woman who accepts her full range of emotions, including her sexual impulses. Unlike Otilie, who considers herself at odds with the forces of nature, Fortunata feels herself completely in tune with the cosmos, especially with regard to her passion for Juanito. According to nature's laws, then, if not those of society, Fortunata believes that she, rather than Jacinta, is the true wife of Juanito Santa Cruz:

A mí me había dado palabra de casamiento. . . . Y me la había dado antes de casarse. . . . Y yo había tenido un niño. . . . Y a mí me parecía que estábamos atados para siempre. (p. 713)

To Fortunata, the fact that Jacinta is sterile and childless is unnatural and thus confirms her belief in her own natural right to Juanito:

Esposa que no tiene hijos, no es tal esposa. . . . *no tiene hijos*. . . . la esposa que no da hijos no vale. . . . Sin nosotras, las que las damos, se acabaría el mundo. (p. 714)

Unlike the one-dimensional Otilie, Fortunata is a dynamically developing character. As such, she is endowed with realistic insights

¹² Victor Lange, Introd., *Elective Affinities*, by Goethe, p. xiii. For a detailed study of Otilie, see H. G. Barnes, *Goethe's "Die Wahlverwandtschaften": A Literary Interpretation* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 123-60.

into her complex problem. A fine illustration of this occurs when Fortunata prays to be allowed to have the man she asserts should be hers and she imagines the other side of her argument in the reply of the Host:

No me pidas imposibles. ¿Crees que estamos aquí para mandar, verbi gracia, que se altere la ley de la sociedad sólo porque a una marmotona como tú se le antoja? El hombre que me pides es un señor de muchas campanillas y tú una pobre muchacha. ¿Te parece fácil que Yo haga casar a los señoritos con las criadas o que a las muchachas del pueblo las convierta en señoras? ¡Qué cosas se os ocurren, hijas! Y además, tonta, ¿no ves que es casado, casado por mi religión y en mis altares? ¡Y con quién! con uno de mis ángeles hembras. ¿Te parece que no hay más que enviudar a un hombre para satisfacer el antojito de una corrida como tú? . . . Y supón que la traigo, supón que se queda viudo. ¡Bah! ¿Crees que se va a casar contigo? Sí, para ti estaba. ¡Pues no se casaría si te hubieras conservado honrada, cuanti más, sozona, habiéndote echado tan a perder! (p. 474)

Thus, instead of having only a vague notion of what the female protagonist thinks and feels, as we do with Ottilie (whose self-revelation is confined to obscure notations in her diary), in Galdós' novel the reader shares all the complexities and ambiguities of Fortunata's conflict, being privy to her reveries and self-castigation as well as her dreams of self-justification. Finally, unlike Ottilie, Fortunata would never consider starving herself to death; as a vital, passionate representative of the *pueblo* class, she wants only to live, especially for the sake of her child. Thus, although Fortunata, like Ottilie, dies at the end of the novel, her demise derives from realistic complications of childbirth, rather than from romantic self-destruction. In fact, the cause of her death serves to indicate further the vitality of her life-force. Fortunata refuses to remain passively in bed after the birth of her child; imprudently she gets up too soon, engages in a lusty fight with yet another rival for Juanito and, as a result, dies from hemorrhaging.

As has been shown, then, in the creation of his panoramic novel of the human life cycle, Galdós borrowed character types, plot techniques, and themes from Goethe's romantic *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* and transformed them to his own realistic aesthetic. Already in alpha, Galdós set down *Die Wahlverwandtschaften's* main theme of the conflict between the laws of nature and the conventions of society and outlined a plot with some similarities to Goethe's work. Then, in beta, he made more detailed parallels

of theme, plot complications, and focus during the novel's climax and dénouement. Like Goethe, Galdós revealed in his novel his belief that society's laws concerning marriage were often completely unjust and that the clergy (represented by Goethe's Mittler and Galdós' Father Rubín) was largely responsible. Both authors presented ways to solve or mitigate the social and religious constraints on love and marriage in their respective eras and cultures. In *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, the Count and his beloved, the Baroness, circumvent social scandal by meeting discreetly at vacation resorts and at the home of friends until they are able to obtain divorces and remarry. In nineteenth-century Spain, however, there was no divorce; the best way for illicit lovers to evade social censure, as proposed by Galdós' Evaristo Feijoo, was ostensibly to acquiesce to society's laws, pretend to obey them, but live as closely in tune with one's own feelings and needs as possible (pp. 637-38). Finally, both authors were keenly aware of the special vulnerability of young single women who fell in love with already married men, especially with regard to the social and religious strictures placed on mating and reproduction in their respective cultures. Thus, Galdós, like Goethe, made his female protagonist a fated victim of the conflict between natural passion and social restriction: a woman destined to love (but) the one man she could not marry. In this respect, Galdós found in Goethe's romantic Otilie a prototype for his own more earthy but equally vulnerable Fortunata. Following Goethe, Galdós focused the climax and dénouement of his novel on his protagonist's struggle with this insoluble problem and her sacrificial death. Finally, although Goethe had made the conflict between the laws of nature and those of society the main theme of his short novel of "romantic fate," Galdós chose to treat this conflict as one strand in the vast tapestry of human life presented in his *Fortunata y Jacinta*, albeit a major thread which he skillfully wove throughout all four volumes of his realistic masterpiece.

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