

EROTICIZING ISIDORA'S TRAFFIC JAM IN FORTUNATA'S DREAM (III, 7,4)

Vernon A. CHAMBERLIN
The University of Kansas

Fortunata y Jacinta contains a number of scenes in which Galdós depicts the sexual development of his heroine Fortunata, among which the erotic dream at the climax of volume three is probably the best-known example. Scholars are now in general agreement that this dream is an expression of the strong sexual desires which are propelling Fortunata toward a renewal of intimate relations with Juanito Santa Cruz. Steven Gilman, for example, in 1966 called our attention to a few details of Fortunata's "aggressively phallic dream" (I: 73, 81: n.10). Most recently in 1992 Mercedes López-Baralt has supplied a richness of interpretative details concerning this dream (141-45, 165-67).

One aspect of Fortunata's oneiric experience, however, which has escaped the attention of *galdosistas* is the fact that the central part of the dream is a traffic jam, and one which has several elements in common with the *lío de tráfico* experienced by Isidora Rufete in *La desheredada*, written six years earlier.¹ An examination of the similarities between the two sheds new light on Galdós's creative techniques, showing how Galdós utilizes many of the elements in Isidora's traffic jam and personalizes them for Fortunata's dream.

In *La desheredada* at the climax of volume one, Isidora Rufete is on the street the night of February 11, 1873, when she hears the news that the king has abdicated. Having just been rebuffed in her own claim to aristocracy by the Marquesa de Aransis, Isidora readily identifies with the royal family: "Ella también despreciaba una corona. También ella era una reina que se iba" (1056). Then, after observing a traffic jam, she decides to

¹ My article "A Further Consideration of Carnal Appetites in *Fortunata y Jacinta*" called attention to the traffic jam in *Fortunata y Jacinta*, but without comparing it to that of *La desheredada*.

go in a different direction, to surrender sexually to the politician Joaquín Pez, who has been trying to seduce her.

Isidora (in contrast to Fortunata) experiences her traffic jam when she is completely awake. Moreover, in the finished manuscript Isidora has no apparent erotic motivation, since Galdós deleted all sexual indications in the second and final version (Schnepf, 245-46). She seems to desire only social advancement and revenge: "[...] ella subiría por sus propias fuerzas, con la espada de la ley en la mano, a las alturas que le pertenecían. Si su abuela no quería admitirla de grado, ella [...] echaría a su abuela del trono" (1059).

The text of Isidora's experience on this night of national excitement is as follows:

A la entrada de la calle de la Montera la animación era, como siempre, excesiva. Es la desembocadura de un río de gente que se atraganta contenido por una marea humana que sube. A Isidora le gustaba aquella noche, sin saber por qué, el choque de las multitudes y aquel frotamiento de codos. Sus nervios saltaban, heridos por las mil impresiones repetidas del codazo, del roce, del empujón, de las cosas vistas y deseadas. El piso húmedo, untado de una especie de jabón negro, era resbaladizo; pero ella se sostenía bien, y en caso de apuro se colgaba del protector brazo de su padrino [José Relimpio]. El ruido era infernal. Subían los carros de la carne con las movibles cortinas de cuero chorreando sangre, y su enorme pesadez estremecía el suelo. Los carreteros apaleaban a las mulas. Bajaban coches de lujo cuyos cocheros gritaban para evitar el desorden y los atropellos. Deteníanse los vehículos atarugados, y la gente, refugiándose en las aceras, se estrujaba como en los días de pánico. La tienda del viejo Schropp detenía a los transeúntes. Como se acercaba Carnaval, todo era cosa de máscaras, disfraces, caretas. Estas llenaban los bordes de las ventanas y puertas, y la pared de la casa mostraba una fachada de muecas. Enfrente el escaparate del Marabini, lleno de magníficos brillantes, manifestaba al público, tentadoras riquezas.

--Dejemos esto, chica-- dijo don José a su ahijada, que miraba embebecida las joyas--. Esto no es para nosotros. (1056)²

Isidora does not get caught in the traffic jam, but decides to retrace her steps and go toward the Congreso. There she catches sight of Joaquín Pez, "[quien] se distinguía por su gabán claro." After following him past the spot where General Prim was assassinated, Isidora "[...] llegóse a él, se le colgó

² All citations are from Benito Pérez Galdós, *La desheredada, Obras completas*, IV, and page numbers are noted in the text.

del brazo. Hubo exclamaciones de sorpresa y alegría. Después siguieron juntos y se perdieron en la niebla" (1060).

In *Fortunata y Jacinta* Galdós's protagonist is likewise reunited with her lover after the traffic jam, both in her dream and in the physical reunion that occurs a few days later. Fortunata begins her problem-solving, wish-fulfilling dream with a flashback reference to the erotically charged *tienda de tubos*, where she had encountered Juanito Santa Cruz only a couple of days before. Then, after passing a dwarf (frequently symbolizing the gatekeeper of the unconscious [Cirlot, 91]), Fortunata experiences an intense emotional identification with some meat roasting over an open fire in a tavern as she passes by on the street. Then she stops, significantly in front of the Fiel Contraste (the Weights and Measures building), and listens to a hurdy-gurdy before she sees plenty to "weigh and measure" regarding her own personal situation:

Ocurre entonces una de estas obstrucciones que tan frecuentes son en las calles de Madrid. Sube un carromato de siete mulas ensartadas formando rosario. La delantera se insubordina, metiéndose en la acera, y las otras toman aquello por pretexto para no tirar más. El vehículo, cargado de pellejos de aceite, con un perro atado al eje, la sartén de las migas colgando por detrás, se planta a punto que llega por detrás el carro de la carne, con los cuartos de vaca chorreando sangre, y ambos carreteros empiezan a echar por aquellas bocas las finuras de costumbre. No hay medio de abrir paso, porque el rosario de mulas hace una curva, y dentro de ella es cogido un simón con dos señoras. Eramos pocos... A poco llega un coche con un caballero muy gordo. Que si pasas tú, que si te apartas, que sí y que no.

El carretero de la carne pone a Dios de vuelta y media. Palo a las mulas, que empiezan a respingar, y una de estas coces coge la portezuela del simón y la deshace... Gritos, leña y el carromatero empeñado en que la cosa se arregla poniendo a Dios, a la Virgen, a la Hostia y el Espíritu Santo que no hay por dónde cogerlos.

Y el pianito sigue tocando aires populares, que parecen encender con sus acentos de pelea la sangre de toda aquella chusma. Varias mujeres que tienen en la cuneta puestos ambulantes de pañuelos recogen a escape su comercio, y lo mismo los de la *gran liquidación por saldo, a real y medio la pieza*. Un individuo que sobre una mesilla de tijera exhibe el gran invento para cortar cristal tiene que salir a espetaperros; otro que vende los lápices más fuertes del mundo (como que da con ellos tremendos picotazos en la madera sin que se les rompa la punta) también recoge los bártulos, porque la mula delantera se le va encima. Fortunata mira todo esto y se ríe. El piso esta húmedo y los pies se resbalan. De repente, ¡ay! cree que le clavan un dardo. Bajando por la calle Imperial, en dirección al gran pelmazo de gente que se ha formado, viene Juanito Santa Cruz. [...] Como el pianito sigue tocando y los carreteros blasfemando, ambos tienen que alzar la voz para hacerse oír. Al mismo tiempo, Juan pone una cara muy afligida, y

llevándola dentro del portal del Fiel Contraste, le dice: [...] ¿No ves lo mal trajeado que estoy?

Fortunata le mira y siente un dolor tan vivo como si le dieran una puñalada. En efecto, la capa del señorito de Santa Cruz tiene un siete tremendo, y debajo de ella asoma la americana con los ribetes deshilachados, corbata mugrienta y el cuello de la camisa de dos semanas... Entonces ella se deja caer sobre él [...] con efusión cariñosa. (410)³

Let us now examine some common elements of the two traffic jams and see how Galdós has creatively changed these elements to be in consonance with the personality of Fortunata at a time of intense psycho-sexual pressures

1. Meat wagons and other trapped vehicles

Common to both novels is the vehicle for transporting meat.

In *Fortunata y Jacinta* Galdós personalizes the symbol by reducing the number of meat wagons to only one: "el carro de la carne, con los cuartos de vaca chorreando sangre" (410). As the study "A Further Consideration of Carnal Appetites in *Fortunata y Jacinta*" has demonstrated, Galdós plays with the literal and figurative meanings of *carne* as he weaves a sustained interplay of gastronomic and erotic appetites throughout the novel. Fortunata herself, long before the dream, had identified with the type of meat being transported. Reflecting on her own situation one night, she mused, "[...] me han llevado al casorio, como llevan una res al matadero, y cuando quise recordar, ya estaba degollada" (278). Within the dream itself, Fortunata has just identified with some meat being roasted over an open grill seen through the doorway of a tavern, experiencing "recuerdos que le sacan tiras del corazón" (409-10). A victim of male carnal appetites throughout the novel, Fortunata worked as a prostitute when things were especially bad. She always had to endure "hombres groseros, perversos o tramposos, *lo peor de cada casa*" (172). Certainly there is plenty in Fortunata's past experience that would cause

³ All citations are from Benito Pérez Galdós, *Fortunata y Jacinta, Obras completas*, V, and page numbers are noted in the text.

her in the dream to see herself as exploitable commercial *carne*--one of the options she may be forced to consider again.⁴

The other main vehicle appearing in Fortunata's dream, the *carromato* with its attached dog and skillet, is without prototype in Isidora Rufete's experience, but it may form a pair with the meat wagon as the representation of another of Fortunata's options--to stay in her unhappy relationship with Maxi. Certainly there are reasons for equating this vehicle with Fortunata's marriage. Significantly, the dog and the skillet are tied to, but not integrated into, the vehicle. Because of Maxi's impotence, Fortunata has never really been integrated into normal married life, and throughout the novel Fortunata has certainly, as the saying goes, had to "live a dog's life." Previous to the dream, first Juanito, then Feijoo, and finally Mauricia had used precisely this same metaphor with regard to Fortunata: "[...] la pobreza, la vida de perros [...] habíanle quitado gran parte de sus atractivos" (145); "Las personas como usted suelen pasar una vida de perros" (328); and "Buenas perradas te han jugado en esta vida" (379).

It is striking that the skillet is hanging attached to the back of the vehicle, for one would expect there would surely be room in a large *carromato* for a skillet. Thus one may hypothesize additional frustration for Fortunata since one of her delights is cooking for the men in her life (for example, Maxi [188-89] and Feijoo [335]) and here its symbol is relegated to an inferior, unimportant status. Moreover, on one level her satisfaction in gastronomical nurturing may be frustrated because the skillet is separated from the oil which would be necessary for cooking the *migas*. On a deeper, psycho-sexual level, the *sartén* (a feminine symbol according to Freud because of its roundness)⁵ is separated from the *aceite*, and thus it is one more of the many instances of the sexually and emotionally parched

⁴ In both Spanish and English the verb "to traffic" can have the meaning of participation in illegal or forbidden pursuits, including sexual activities such as prostitution. (In German the connection is even clearer, since the verb *verkehren* means both to traffic and to have sexual intercourse, and the noun *Verkehr* connotes both traffic and intercourse.)

⁵ The round instruments suggest the feminine most especially in contradistinction to elongated masculine symbols (Freud 354-56, et passim). For kitchen utensils and activities as feminine symbols, see 346, et *passim*.

Fortunata being unable to obtain the vital fluids she needs for her health and happiness.⁶

The presentation of this vehicle is indeed a negative, painful one, for it is pulled by "siete mulas ensartadas formando rosario,"--words capable of evoking the intensity of the seven sorrows of Mary, about which Fortunata would have been instructed in the Michaelas convent. A precedent for personalizing the seven sorrows of Mary had been given earlier by Guillermina Pacheco, when she said, "El día aquel fue día de prueba para mí. Era un viernes de Dolores, y las siete espadas [...] estaban clavadas aquí [en mi propio corazón]" (77). Mules, as had repeatedly been said of Maxi (226, 314), are incapable of reproducing offspring, thus recalling that a lack of children is another of Fortunata's sorrows (186). The lead mule "se insubordina", reminding the reader that outside the dream the impossible marriage is already making Maxi mentally ill and disruptive (390-93). Moreover, the mule refuses to continue pulling the vehicle, Maxi himself at a later juncture in the novel will use this same terminology to Fortunata: "Yo pienso mucho en esto, y me entregaría desde luego a la vida interior si no fuera porque está uno atado a un carro de afectos, del cual hay que tirar" (417). This image of the insubordination of the physical self is repeated later when Juan Pablo tries to make his brother believe that Fortunata has died. Maxi responds, "De modo que yo me puedo volver a casar". But the narrator adds: "Al decir esto se insubordinaba; no quería ir por la acera, sino por el empedrado, dando manotadas y tropezando con algunos transeúntes" (479).

The third vehicle caught in the traffic jam (the second one with no prototype in *La desheredada*) is a "simón que baja con dos señoras" (410). This vehicle is quite appropriate in Fortunata's dream, because she had earlier--in a moment of great emotional stress--seen Jacinta and Guillermina in a carriage (385). Moreover, she already desires to be like Jacinta, to have an emotional closeness with her, and in a symbolic sense, to travel as her companion

The fourth and last vehicle in the *embotellamiento* parallels the second element seen in Isidora Rufete's traffic jam. Instead of generic "coches de

⁶ For additional details, see Chamberlin 1982.

lujo", in *Fortunata y Jacinta's* dream Galdós again (as he had done with the meat wagons) converts these vehicles to the singular: "un coche de lujo con un caballero muy gordo" (410). The occupant, as described, may suggest phallic tumescence--something much desired by the frustrated Fortunata. It is not this "caballero muy gordo," however, who penetrates (literally kicks in) the "portezuela" of the women's carriage, but ironically one of the mules. After the dream Fortunata must wait some days before Juanito comes in a "simón" and opens its "portezuela" to her, thus effecting closure on her dream problem.

Thus in Fortunata's dream Galdós has not only kept the two types of vehicles seen in *La desheredada's* traffic jam, but has also enriched his presentation by adding two additional types of vehicles in order to depict more fully the complex psycho-sexual impulses and problems experienced by Fortunata. Isidora's dilemma appears more immediately pragmatic, whereas Fortunata's dilemma is complex and in her life's trajectory without a satisfactory solution.⁷

2. Mules on the sidewalk

In both novels the mules attached to the vehicles react to the whippings by their drivers by coming up on the sidewalks and scattering pedestrians. In *La desheredada* the sidewalks are in front of elegant shops in central Madrid. In *Fortunata y Jacinta* the locale varies and includes the slums of south Madrid. In fact, the most intense and climactic oneiric action occurs among the sidewalk vendors on lower Toledo Street. The attentive reader remembers that during Jacinta's journey into the *barrios bajos* in volume one she made purchases there, also "en los bazares de *Liquidación por saldo, a real y medio la pieza*" (132). As mentioned before, the lead mule, who refuses to continue pulling the vehicle, is suggestive of Fortunata's husband and later in the dream confronts, almost gets on top of, the vendor of the strong-pointed pencils, causing Fortunata

⁷ The short-term solution occurs with Juanito's appearance near the end of the dream, announcing that he is aspiring to become a "cobrador del tranvía". Teaming up again with Juanito (the only man she has ever loved) would give Fortunata the means to speed right past the traffic jam, thus avoiding the two previously presented, equally unacceptable, alternatives for her life.

to laugh out loud. The fact that the impotent Maxi might try to mount someone would seem ridiculous to Fortunata. The aggression by the mule with the pencil vendor also reminds the reader that Maxi did--to his great detriment--pick a fight with Juanito at the climax of volume two, and that after his beating Maxi was labeled a "marica" by a passerby (287).

3. For-sale items that interest the protagonist

Isidora stopped in front of the show window of the Marabini store and "miraba embebecida las joyas" (1056). Fortunata, on the other hand, has deeper needs. She sees a sidewalk vendor "que [...] exhibe el gran invento para cortar el cristal" (410). This vendor has an instrument (probably of a phallic shape) for vigorously cutting through the most difficult of problems⁸. Then she sees another vendor who has what she needs: "los lápices más fuertes del mundo (como que da con ellos tremendos picotazos [...] sin que se les rompa la punta)." In both *La desheredada* and *Fortunata y Jacinta* the for-sale items that interest the protagonists confirm once again essential aspects of each woman's characterization and present desires.

4. Humidity and slipperiness underfoot

In *La desheredada* Isidora experiences early on a challenge in walking. The cause is one of prosaic realism, for the "piso húmedo, untado de una especie de jabón negro" seems to be caused primarily by horse and mule droppings, Ironically, in spite of the aristocratic ambitions filling Isidora's head, her feet must cope with everyday reality.

In *Fortunata y Jacinta* the protagonist experiences slippery going late in the dream, just before the appearance of Juanito Santa Cruz and just after she has seen all her problems and present options visualized. The dream suggests that her situation is complex and that any way she may proceed will be difficult, "slippery going". Moreover, the humidity is one more in a series of symbols (tubos, lápices, grifos, etc.), which form, as López Baralt

⁸ I am indebted to psychologist Douglas Witt for the insight that in women's dreams glass (as a displacement for ice, which is a congelation of moisture) often signifies sexual frustration (Personal conversations, Lawrence, Kansas, June 1994).

has said, "un ambiente seminal de humedad que anuncia la llegada de Juanito Santa Cruz" (143).

5. Stimulated protagonist

In *La desheredada* Isidora enjoys the stimulation not only of many things seen and desired, but also of the excitement and bustle of the crowd: "A Isidora le gustaba aquella noche, sin saber por qué, el choque de las multitudes y aquel frotamiento de codos. Sus nervios saltaban, heridos por las mil impresiones repetidas del codazo, del roce, del empujón, de las cosas vistas y deseadas" (1058). Then, after Isidora has left the traffic jam but is still following "la corriente" of the crowd, the narrator adds: "El contacto de la muchedumbre, aquel fluido magnético conductor de misteriosos apetitos, que se comunicaba de cuerpo a cuerpo por el roce de los hombros y brazos, entró en ella y la sacudió" (1059).

In *Fortunata y Jacinta* the main stimulus, in addition to what Fortunata sees and desires, is music. Just before seeing the traffic jam, she stops to listen to the "música muy preciosa" of a hurdy-gurdy. "Entrale ganas de bailar, y quizá baila algo, no está segura de ello". (One remembers that dancing is often considered a sublimation of the sex act.) Fortunata's feelings appear to be included as well in one of the two additional references to music: "Y el pianito sigue tocando aires populares, que parecen encender con sus acentos de pelea la sangre de toda aquella chusma" (410). Confirmation that this type of popular music stimulates Fortunata in her ordinary life occurs in the following volume, when she expresses her lack of understanding and appreciation of formal, socially acceptable, drawing-room music: "Cualquier tonadilla de los pianitos de ruedas que van por la calle le gustaba y le conmovía más" (424). Clearly, she prefers the beat of the streets.

In addition, in *La desheredada* the narrator reports a generalized "ruido [...] infernal", whose only specific detail is that some of the vehicle drivers are shouting (1058). In *Fortunata y Jacinta* the drivers also shout, but now they are blaspheming, evoking the names of God, the Virgin, the Host, and the Holy Ghost. The fact that none of the names evoked can dissolve the traffic jam underscores its seriousness, just as none of the

religious concepts taught to Fortunata in the convent can now help her solve her personal problems. Concurrent with the blaspheming, the music of the hurdy-gurdy (stimulating Fortunata's passionate desires) is quite prominent. Near the end of the dream, "Como el pianito sigue tocando y los carreteros blasfemando"(410), Fortunata and Juanito have to raise their voices to hear each other. Once again, with the sound effects, Galdós has elaborated upon the bare bones of an item in *La desheredada's* traffic jam, personalizing and intensifying it in *Fortunata y Jacinta*.

6. Distinctive garb of the desired lover

In *La desheredada* Joaquín Pez "se distinguía por su gabán claro" (1060) a distinctive clothing mentioned three times before Isidora overtakes and joins Pez. In *Fortunata y Jacinta* Juanito Santa Cruz appears in the dream climactically with, as Fortunata perceives, very erotic particulars of dress. The tear in his cape is a phallic "siete tremendo", followed by post-coital masculine and feminine symbols: "corbata mugrienta⁹ y el cuello de la camisa de dos semanas" (410). After perceiving these items, Fortunata throws herself enthusiastically upon Juanito.

Significantly, the two *líos de tráfico* have many elements in common, with each one creatively elaborated and expanded in *Fortunata y Jacinta* to aid in the presentation of the protagonist at a critical juncture in the novel. Because there are so many common elements, one may reasonably assume that Galdós remembered that he already had a successful formula for depicting, at the climax of a volume, a female protagonist's movement toward sexual union with the man who would set her up as his mistress. Certainly it would be efficient to use this pattern again. Now, however, Galdós, at the height of his creative powers in his best-known novel, was not merely presenting a realistic description of a traffic jam as seen by an objective, naturalist observer. Instead, in *Fortunata y Jacinta* he was presenting in his principal characters the dynamics of the human life

⁹ For the special appropriateness of the necktie as a masculine symbol, see Freud 356.

cycle¹⁰. Therefore, he chose to work creatively with a metaphorical traffic jam--an emotional, psycho-sexual one--which he presented as impeding the libidinal flow of his protagonist's desires. At a time when more and more scholars are pointing out the influence of *La desheredada* on *Fortunata y Jacinta*¹¹, this added example can explain why Galdós, elaborating, expanding, and eroticizing his 1881 formula, created Fortunata's very complex dream in a final version even on a first draft and needed only to change on his final manuscript the tense of his verbs from past to present tense for greater vividness¹².

WORKS CITED

CHAMBERLIN, Vernon A., *Galdós and Beethoven: Fortunata y Jacinta. A Symphonic Novel*, London, Tamesis, 1977.

----, "Poor Maxi's Windmill: Aquatic Symbolism in *Fortunata y Jacinta*." *Hispanic Review* 20 (1982), pp. 427-437.

----, "A Further Consideration of Carnal Appetites in *Fortunata y Jacinta*." *Anales Galdosianos* 20.2 (1985), pp. 51-59.

CIRLOT, J. E., *A Dictionary of Symbols*, Trans. Jack Sage, New York, Philosophical Library, 1971.

FREUD, Sigmund, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Trans. James Strachey, London, Allen and Unwin, 1954.

¹⁰ For details, see Chamberlin, *Galdós and Beethoven: Fortunata y Jacinta. A Symphonic Novel*, 25 et passim.

¹¹ See, for example, Gilman (1981) 84-129, Germán Gullón 39, Ricardo Gullón 88-89, and Shoemaker II, 165.

¹² For the importance of this change, see López-Baralt. Linda Willem also discusses this change in her forthcoming book on narrative-voice techniques in the early contemporary novels of Galdós. It is a pleasure to thank Professor Willem for allowing me to read her study in manuscript form.

- GILMAN, Stephen, "The Birth of Fortunata", *Anales Galdosianos* 1.1 (1966), pp. 71-83.
----, *Galdós and the Art of the European Novel: 1867-1887*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1981.
- GULLÓN, Germán, "Originalidad y sentido de *La desheredada*." *Anales Galdosianos* 17 (1982), pp. 39-50.
- GULLÓN, Ricardo, *Galdós. novelista moderno*, Madrid, Gredos, 1966.
- LÓPEZ-BARALT, Mercedes, *La gestación de Fortunata y Jacinta: Galdós y la novela como re-escritura*. Río Piedras, Puerto Rico, Ediciones Huracán, 1992.
- PÉREZ GALDÓS, Benito, *La desheredada*, ed. F.C. Sainz de Robles, 4th ed., vol. 4 of *Obras completas*, 6 vols, Madrid, Aguilar, 1958-66.
----, *Fortunata y Jacinta*. ed. F.C. Sainz de Robles, 3rd ed., vol. 5 of *Obras completas*, 6 vols, Madrid, Aguilar, 1958-66.
- SCHNEPF, Michael A, "Galdós's *La desheredada* Manuscript: A Note on the Creation of Isidora Rufete", *Romance Notes* 31, (1993), pp. 245-50.
- SCHOEMAKER, William H: *The Novelistic Art of Galdós*, vol 2, Valencia, Albatros Hispanófila, 1980.