



## ARISTOPHANES' *THE BIRDS* AND THE ORNITHOLOGICAL TOUR DE FORCE IN *FORTUNATA Y JACINTA*



OUR studies have called attention to the use of bird imagery in *Fortunata y Jacinta*. This matter was first discussed as a tangential issue in the polemical exchange between Stephen Gilman and Carlos Blanco-Aguinaga ("The Birth of Fortunata" and "On 'The Birth of Fortunata,'" *AGald*, 1 [1966], 71-83; and 3 [1968], 13-24, respectively).

Then Roger L. Utt and Agnes Moncy Gullón focused more directly on the question of the bird imagery itself, showing its extensiveness and tracing it throughout the novel as a (leit)motif ("El pájaro voló: observaciones sobre un leitmotif en *Fortunata y Jacinta*" and "The Bird Motif and the Introductory Motif: Structure in *Fortunata y Jacinta*," both in *AGald*, 9 [1974], 37-50; and 51-75, respectively).

To date, however, the importance of Aristophanes' comedy *The Birds* as a creative stimulus for all this ornithological imagery has not been explored. In fact, the only mention of intertextuality between *The Birds* and *Fortunata y Jacinta* is the conjecture (initiated by Gilman and rejected by Blanco-Aguinaga) that an echo of the birth of Eros from an egg may be perceived at the beginning of the Juanito Santa Cruz/*Fortunata* relationship, as *Fortunata* makes her first appearance in the novel holding a broken egg. Gilman says, "[Although] there is no overt reference to the well-known description of the birth of Eros in *The Birds*, . . . we can speculate . . . on the coincidence revealed."<sup>1</sup> More helpful still is Gilman's footnote: "Galdós surely read Federico Baráibar y Zumárraga's

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Gilman, "The Birth of Fortunata," *AGald*, 1 (1966), 79.

first complete translation of Aristophanes published in 1880 [sic] in the widely circulated 'Biblioteca Clásica.'"<sup>2</sup> Inspired by this suggestion, the present study will seek to demonstrate that Galdós utilized Aristophanes' play as a point of departure for the creation of a delightfully humorous parodic substructure, which he wove into the narrative fabric of his great novel.

After *La desheredada* (1881), Galdós moved progressively away from the tenets of naturalism. As part of this process he markedly undercut and deflated the seriousness of his animal imagery. This may be seen, for example, in *Lo prohibido* (1885) and *Miau* (1888), the former written just before and the latter just after *Fortunata y Jacinta*. Alfred Rodríguez has recently demonstrated that *Lo prohibido*, including its excessive animal imagery, is a parody on the naturalist novel.<sup>3</sup> In *Miau* it is the narrator himself who very early on signals the reader that the animal imagery is not to be considered serious, threatening, or deterministic as in a French naturalistic novel, when he says, "[A Luisito] le surgió . . . la idea de que las tres mujeres eran gatos en dos pies y vestidos de gente, como lo que hay en la obra *Los animales pintados por sí mismos*."<sup>4</sup>

Zola himself had said, "Donner une place importante aux animaux dans les romans. Créer quelques bêtes, chiens, chats, oiseaux."<sup>5</sup> In *Fortunata y Jacinta* Galdós followed Zola's suggestion concerning birds and, in fact, made it the main animalistic image system running throughout the novel. The choice of bird-human comparisons gave Galdós a particular advantage: he not only could provide the heavy dose of animal imagery expected in a realistic-naturalistic novel of the 1880s, but he could also, at the same time, undercut it and provide a good deal of humor for his reader by establishing an intertextuality with the best-known fictional work concerning birds, Aristophanes' famous comedy of 414 B.C.

In *The Birds*, one of the major concerns of the winged population is that man has always been its greatest enemy, destroyer, and devourer. This same idea is also prominent early on in *Fortunata*

<sup>2</sup> Gilman, "The Birth of *Fortunata*," p. 83, n. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred and Luz María Rodríguez, "*Lo prohibido*, ¿una parodia galdosiana?," *BHS*, 60 (1983), 51-59.

<sup>4</sup> Benito Pérez Galdós, *Miau*, in *Obras completas* (Madrid, 1961), v, 554.

<sup>5</sup> Henri Massis, *Comment Émile Zola composait ses romans* (Paris, 1906), cited by Gilman, p. 82, n. 26.

*y Jacinta*, most notably in the poultry shop scene (which is about as naturalistic as most readers care to experience):

La voracidad del hombre no tiene límites, y sacrifica a su apetito no sólo las presentes sino las futuras generaciones gallináceas. A la derecha, en la prolongación de aquella cuadra lóbrega, un sicario manchado de sangre daba garrote a las aves. Retorcía los pescuezos con esa presteza y donaire que da el hábito, y apenas soltaba una víctima y la entregaba agonizante a las desplumadoras, cogía otra para hacerle la misma caricia. Jaulones enormes había por todas partes, llenos de pollos y gallos, los cuales asomaban la cabeza roja por entre las cañas, sedientos y fatigados, para respirar un poco de aire, . . . [Además había] el olor de corral, . . . y el ruido de alas, picotazos y cacareo de tanta víctima.<sup>6</sup>

In the above quotation Galdós, following Aristophanes, not only emphasizes man's insatiable appetite for birds (as seen from the birds' point of view), but also uses in the same paragraph the exact title of the 1881 translation of Aristophanes' comedy: *las aves*. At the end of the poultry-shop scene *Fortunata* herself is called an "ave" (p. 152).

A further example of intertextuality between *Fortunata y Jacinta* and *The Birds* may be seen in the following quotations, as both authors return to the theme of man's ravenous mistreatment of the birds—but now in a more jocular tone. The text of Aristophanes reads:

They kill you whenever they can . . .  
the hunters are lying in wait  
with traps and nooses and nets  
and little limed twigs and bait.  
And when you're taken, they sell you  
as tiny *hors d'oeuvres* for a lunch.  
And you're not even sold alone,  
but lumped and bought by the bunch.

and [men] pinch your breast and your rump,  
to see if your fleshies are firm  
and your little bodies are plump.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Benito Pérez Galdós, *Fortunata y Jacinta*, ed. Pedro Ortiz Armengol (Madrid, 1979), pp. 150-51. Subsequent references are from this edition.

<sup>7</sup> Aristophanes, *The Birds*, trans. William Arrowsmith (New York, 1961), p. 55. I have purposefully chosen this lively translation over the very pedestrian and unimaginative Baráibar y Zumarraga translation (whose text follows this note). It is impossible at present to determine whether Galdós worked from the 1881 Spanish

Galdós recounts Juanito and Jacinta travelling on their honeymoon:

Jacinta se reía de la danza de los algarrobos, y de ver los pájaros posados en fila en los alambres telegráficos. "—Míralos, míralos allí. ¡Valientes pícaros! Se burlan del tren y de nosotros." . . .

Pasaban estaciones, y la fonda no parecía. Por fin, en no sé cuál apareció una mujer, que tenía delante una mesilla con licores, rosquillas, pasteles adornados con hormigas y unos . . . ¿qué era aquello?—¡Pájaros fritos!—gritó Jacinta a punto que Juan bajaba del vagón—. "Tráete una docena . . . No . . ., oye, dos docenas."

Y otra vez el tren en marcha. Ambas se colocaron rodillas con rodillas, poniendo en medio el papel grasiento que contenía aquel *montón de cadáveres* fritos, y empezaron a comer con la prisa que su mucha hambre les daba.

—¡Ay, qué ricos están! Mira qué pechuga . . . Este para ti, que está muy gordito.

—No, para ti, para ti.

La mano de ella era tenedor para la boca de él, y viceversa. Jacinta decía que en su vida había hecho una comida que más le supiese.

—Este sí que está de buen año . . . ¡pobre ángel! El infeliz estaría ayer con sus compañeros posado en el alambre, tan contento, tan guapote, viendo pasar el tren y diciendo: "Allá van esos brutos . . .", hasta que vino el más bruto de todos, un cazador y . . . ¡prum! . . . Todo para que nosotros nos regaláramos hoy. Y a fe que están sabrosos. Me ha gustado este almuerzo. (pp. 176-77)<sup>8</sup>

In the above Galdosian text the words "*montón de cadáveres*" recall the point of view and naturalistic vein of the already-mentioned poultry shop scene. Both Galdós and Aristophanes not only mention the idea of birds being sold in bunches, but also stress the role of the hunter. Although Galdós here has the hunter shooting the birds (for Juanito's delectation), in an earlier chapter he had Juanito

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translation, the original Greek, one of the many good French or Latin translations, or some combination of these. In all probability Galdós had read *The Birds* long before 1881. In *Doña Perfecta* (1876), for example, he has a playful passage (in chapter eight) where he speaks of "la ruidosa república de pajarillos" and calls the birds "tunantes" (cf. "república de pájaros" and Jacinta's calling the birds "pícaros" in *Fortunata y Jacinta*, pp. 870 and 176). Baráibar's translation reads: "Hoy infinitos cazadores os tienden lazos y preparan contra vosotros varetas, cepos, hilos, redes y pihuelas; hoy os venden á granel después de cogidos, y ¡oh colmo de ignominial los compradores os tantean para ver si estáis gordos" (*Comedias de Aristophanes*, ed. Luis Navarro [Madrid, 1881], II, 243).

<sup>8</sup> Juanito and Jacinta also delight in eating birds after their return (p. 232).

hunting birds in the manner of Aristophanes, "con red o liga" (p. 129).

Yet another example of intertextuality is derived from the scene in Aristophanes' comedy in which one character mentions that the greatest ancient Greek kings acknowledged the antiquity and power of their feathered friends by having their scepters tipped with the figure of a bird.<sup>9</sup> Thereupon another character replies that even at the present time one may see other important personages on the Greek stage indicate their power and prestige by means of a scepter topped with the figure of a bird. At the climax of the play, one of the two men adventuring in the land of the birds persuades Zeus to give back his own scepter to the birds, thereby restoring the latter to their former status as rulers.<sup>10</sup> In Galdós' novel a parodic version of this regal tradition is depicted. When Juanito Santa Cruz returns from his honeymoon, he (and Jacinta) give Plácido Estupiñá, whom Galdós has repeatedly compared to a magpie—"un bastón que tenía por puño la cabeza de una cotorra" (p. 190). Then, in volume four, after he has become the landlord of the building in which Fortunata lives, Plácido, now called "Estupiñá el Grande" (p. 910), calls on his tenants sovereign-like, "con gesto displicente, las cejas algo fruncidas, mostrando en una mano el bastón cuyo puño era una cabeza de cotorra" (p. 833), "mostraba el bastón, como si fuera un bastón de autoridad" (p. 834).<sup>11</sup>

Many an educated reader of Galdós' time must have experienced an additional dimension of pleasure from recognizing that such inherently comic scenes and images as those cited above are not only entertaining in their own right but also constitute an intertextuality with Aristophanes' *The Birds*. In effect, Galdós was inviting his readers to participate in an elitist game—one that would recall and recreate the great fun of Aristophanes' bawdy comedy.

Galdós' ideal reader would have also perceived a similarity between the opening situation in *The Birds* and an important plot development in Galdós' chapters three, four, and five of book one. In Aristophanes' play, two men of the capital, in need of a change,

<sup>9</sup> Aristophanes, *The Birds*, p. 54 (Baráibar's translation, p. 242).

<sup>10</sup> Aristophanes, *The Birds*, p. 127 (Baráibar, pp. 303-05).

<sup>11</sup> Plácido also looks at his tenants "del modo más autoritario" and speaks to them "en tono de déspota asiático" (p. 833). For an earlier glimpse of the "despotismo . . . [de] Estupiñá el Grande," see p. 206.

decide to go to the land of the birds. The rest of the comedy flows from this original decision and all subsequent action takes place in the realm of the birds (especially in a new city built at the suggestion of the two men, located between earth and heaven, and called Cloud Cuckooland). In the realm of the birds, men are repeatedly aroused sexually by the female birds, and mating between the birds and their former enemies does take place.<sup>12</sup>

In Galdós' parody of the opening situation in Aristophanes' comedy, two young *señoritos* also go adventuring in the land of the birds, that is, in the area of the poultry shops bordering Madrid's Plaza Mayor. Galdós is here documenting a well-known fact that this was the area at that time where the upper-class *señoritos* found their "chicks"—young proletarian girls to be exploited for sexual pleasures.<sup>13</sup>

Aristophanes had said of his men in birdland:

Their motive is Love.  
Love is the burden of all their words.  
Love of your life  
and Love of you,  
to live with you  
in Love always.

But one of the birds replies: "Is *that* what they say? / But what is the gist of their scheme?"<sup>14</sup>

Indeed the birds have good reason to be wary, for as William Arrowsmith says of Pisthetarius, the more important of the two men in *The Birds*: "Lustiness . . . chicanery, rascality, and innovative intelligence—these are his nature."<sup>15</sup> This character ultimately fulfills the bird's greatest fear, as he roasts some of them (just the "jailbirds") as part of the festivities on his wedding day.

In Galdós' novel the motive of the young *señoritos* in birdland may also be said to be love—but of a narrower sort. They are in-

<sup>12</sup> For example, Tereus (the Hoopoe) is married to a nightingale (Aristophanes, p. 32 [Baráibar, pp. 222-23]).

<sup>13</sup> Carlos Clavería, *Estudio sobre los gitanismos del español*, RFE, Anejo 53 (Madrid, 1951), pp. 38-42. The wealthy *señoritos*, like Juanito, also participated enthusiastically in the *flamenguismo* of this district.

<sup>14</sup> This quote and previous from Aristophanes, *The Birds*, p. 47 (Baráibar, p. 236).

<sup>15</sup> William Arrowsmith, "Aristophanes' Birds: The Fantasy Politics of Eros," *Arion*, 1 (1973), 129.

terested only in selfish sexual pleasures. In order to obtain these, Juanito also swears eternal love, but the gist of his scheme is only self gratification. He subsequently abandons Fortunata when he learns that she is pregnant. Juanito, like Pisthetarius, delights in the eating of birds (on his honeymoon, but not his wedding day). He is also every bit as deceitful and lustful as Aristophanes' protagonist. On one occasion—immediately after comparing Fortunata to a tender, loving bird—Juanito confesses his own villainy:

El pueblo es muy inocente, es tonto de remate, todo se lo cree con tal que se lo digan con palabras finas . . . La engañé, la *garfiñé* su honor, y tan tranquilo. Los hombres, digo, los señoritos, somos unos miserables. (p. 183)

In Aristophanes' play, the men are led to the land of the birds by two feathered guides, one of which is a *koloios*, usually translated into English as jay or jackdaw. More vivid for the present-day reader is William Arrowsmith's translation of this bird as magpie. Perhaps Arrowsmith's 1961 translation parallels the creative process earlier employed by Galdós. In any case, the "bird" which serves to put Juanito into contact with Fortunata is also a magpie. Plácido Estupiñá looks like a magpie, chatters incessantly like a magpie, and even carries the nickname of "Rossini," whom many a reader (especially in the 1880s when the Italian master was all the rage in Spain) would recognize as the composer of "The Thieving Magpie."<sup>16</sup> (In the final chapter of the novel this character—still compared to a magpie—is repeatedly accused of stealing Fortunata's child, pp. 923, 925.) Galdós' magpie, as we might expect, also lives in volume one's land of the birds, that is, in the area of the poultry shops adjoining the Plaza Mayor. In fact his apartment is in the same building complex as the poultry shop where Fortunata works, and Galdós says of Plácido's "nest," several "flights" up:<sup>17</sup> "No existen en Madrid alturas mayores" (p. 148).

The importance of Plácido as a conduit to birds that can be exploited by *señorito* Juanito is noted early on. When Juanito is still a "polluelo con ínfulas de hombre" (p. 146), Plácido takes him on "excursiones por el campo . . . para cazar pájaros con red o

<sup>16</sup> Galdós discussed this work, *La garza ladra*, briefly in an article of November 14, 1867 (cf. Leo J. Hoar, Jr., *Benito Pérez Galdós y la Revista del Movimiento Intelectual de Europa* [Madrid, 1968], p. 248).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Agnes Moncy Gullón, "The Bird Motif and the Introductory Motif," *AGald*, 9 (1974), 56.

liga" (p. 129). Later Plácido's role in the discovery of Fortunata is recalled by Juanito on his honeymoon (after he has had too much to drink):

Érase una vez . . . un caballero anciano muy parecido a una cotorra y llamado Estupiñá, el cual enfermó y . . . cosa natural, sus amigos fueron a verle . . ., y uno de estos amigos, al subir la escalera de piedra, encontró a una mujer que estaba comiendo un huevo crudo (p. 166).

Plácido's resemblance to a magpie is so pronounced that he good-naturedly accepts and treasures Juanito's gift of the already-mentioned magpie-tipped cane. The important part that such playful bird references have in Galdós' art may be seen in the fact that the giving of the cane occurs as a final one-sentence paragraph, effecting closure not only on chapter five, but also, on the entire first half of volume one.

In Aristophanes' play, men living in the land of the birds begin, in humorous ways, to take on characteristics of the feathered population. Some of Galdós' characters follow suit, as may be seen in the narrator's description of Plácido Estupiñá: "La edad iba dando al perfil de Estupiñá un cierto parentesco con el de las cotorras" (p. 147). Also, except for a last-minute intervention by his mother, Juanito Santa Cruz would have a tailor make him, for his nightly adventures in birdland, "esos pantalones ajustados con los cuales las piernas de los hombres parecen zancas de cigüeña" (p. 156).

As men continue to stay in the land of the birds in the Greek comedy, they may grow feathers and are sometimes a humorous sight before the growth is complete, or when they are molting. The aesthetics of realism do not allow Galdós to make similar depictions; but he may be echoing a similar idea, as he keeps insisting in the early chapters of volume one that his characters are in a bird environment. For example, both Juanito and Plácido find "muchos días . . . pegadas a las botas, plumas de diferentes aves" (p. 150). Also taking on feathers—and certainly a humorous sight—is the paramour of Fortunata's aunt: "Una tarde salió el picador de entre un montón de banastas donde estaba durmiendo la siesta, todo lleno de plumas, y llegándose a mí [dice Juanito], me echó la zarpa" (p. 167).

It is apparent that chapters three, four, and five of volume one clearly designate the area around the Plaza Mayor as a bird en-



vironment, the thick fortress-like walls rising from the Cava de San Miguel capable of recalling the walled city built by the men and the birds in Aristophanes' play. It is from this environment that Juanito soon extracts Fortunata and places her in "otro nido, en la [calle de] Concepción Jerónima" (p. 168). Subsequently, as Agnes Moncy Gullón has demonstrated, playful bird references and human-bird comparisons continue outside this environment in other, later, chapters of volume one.<sup>18</sup>

Having clearly established an intertextual relationship with *The Birds* in the early chapters of volume one, Galdós continues to reward the perceptive reader with an ornithological tour de force which extends throughout the rest of the novel, keeping ever the same playful spirit that had produced in Aristophanes' comedy such delightful parodies, puns, and ornithological slang expressions. Whereas Aristophanes had created one land of the birds from which his men never returned, Galdós moves his characters (especially Fortunata) in and out of multiple bird environments as he goes about presenting his vast panorama of life in nineteenth-century Madrid.

Still almost entirely overlooked is the fact that the second volume of Galdós' masterpiece also places much of its early action in a land of the birds: "en aquella parte del barrio de Salamanca que llaman *Pajaritos*" (p. 345). Completely free, of course, to locate his action in any part of Madrid, Galdós now purposefully chooses this district in order to effect a playful parallel with book one. The early misadventures of the second male protagonist also begin in a land of the birds: in Pajaritos. (The name of this district derives from the time when there was a "conato de la calle que se había llamado 'de Pajaritos' porque unos pasos más arriba estuvo la finca de ese nombre.")<sup>19</sup> Although real-life birds play no part now as Galdós' plot unfolds, the Pajaritos neighborhood provides a suitably humorous background for the introduction of important characters. Maxi Rubín, for example, is so frail and bird-like that this is a proper environment from which to have him come forth into greater

<sup>18</sup> Moncy Gullón, "The Bird Motif . . .," pp. 56-63.

<sup>19</sup> Pedro Ortiz Armengol, "Adición III: Geografía y escenarios," *Fortunata y Jacinta*, by Pérez Galdós, p. 86.

Madrid.<sup>20</sup> Also living in Pajaritos is Doña Lupe, "*la de los pavos*." Significantly she has no real *pavos*. (She inherited the nickname from her husband, "*el de los pavos*.") Instead she is cursed with the burden of three "turkeys"—stupid losers all: her nephews Maxi, Juan Pablo, and Nicolás Rubín.<sup>21</sup> But Galdós' playfulness based on the word *pavo* does not end here; he subsequently repeats a turkey-based slang expression used in volume one (p. 160). This occurs as our author echoes aspects of Juanito's original behavior with bird-like Fortunata:

Últimamente vivía [un amigo de Maxi] con una tal Feliciano, . . . dándose importancia con ello, como si el *entretener* mujeres fuese una carrera en que había que matricularse para ganar título de hombre hecho y derecho . . . Destrozaba la guitarra y hacía . . . el rito de perdido . . . [pero] aquello no era más que una prolongación viciosa de la *edad de pavo*. (p. 349)

The neighborhood (San Antón) in which the above action takes place—and where Maxi has now installed Fortunata—is also a market area containing poultry shops. Prominent among those living in the same tenement house as Fortunata, are *hueveras*, women having the same occupation as Fortunata's aunt in volume one.

After thus creating a second land of the birds, so to speak, and recalling some of the situation and action of volume one, Galdós waits until chapter five (still book two) to place Fortunata playfully in another bird environment: "las Filomenas," her living group within the Micaelas convent. All the women in this group are, like Fortunata, "sujetas a corrección" (p. 452). The ideal is to re-educate and elevate them to the level of the "nightingale"—significantly one of the lovelier, sweeter birds making an important appearance (with a flute solo) in Aristophanes' play.<sup>22</sup> Fortunata, it will be remembered, was first compared to a *gallina* in her initial appearance in the novel and this is a step in her metaphoric elevation and evolution.

<sup>20</sup> Speaking of Maxi's marital inadequacies (and Fortunata's psycho-sexual frustration), the narrator says, "Maximiliano se desnudaba para acostarse. Al quitarse el chaleco, salían de las boca-mangas los hombros, como alones de un ave flaca que no tiene nada que comer" (p. 687). For additional Maxi-bird comparisons, see Moncy Gullón, "The Bird Motif . . ." p. 69.

<sup>21</sup> The stupidity of the turkey is proverbial. (Over a period of many years, I have asked my students: "Where are Doña Lupe's *pavos*?" Usually one or two will reply, "They are her nephews.")

<sup>22</sup> Aristophanes, *The Birds*, pp. 32-33, 64-65 (Baráibar, pp. 223-24, 250-51).

In volume three, Galdós has Fortunata live near the La Paloma church. She goes to Mass there (p. 611) and also prays to the Virgen de la Paloma (p. 724). This act recalls and underlines Fortunata's progression to the status of "paloma" in volume one:

Pasó su niñez cuidando . . . las gallinas. Después criaba los palomos a sus pechos. Como los palomos no comen sino del pico de la madre, Fortunata se los metía en el seno . . . Después cogía en la boca un buche de agua y algunos granos de algarroba, y metiéndose el pico en la boca . . . les daba de comer . . . Era la paloma madre de los tiernos pichoncitos . . . Luego les daba su calor natural . . ., los arrullaba, les hacía *rorrooó* . . ., les cantaba canciones de nodriza. (p. 183)

Creative as Galdós' bird environments are in volumes two and three (and successful in keeping bird-based his *ave* from volume one), he ultimately returns to the novel's original realm of the birds as the proper setting for the climactic moments of the novel. Agnes Moncy Gullón has correctly noted that volume four again has a density of bird imagery approaching that of volume one.<sup>23</sup> She does not, however, mention the important fact that this occurs because we are back in the original bird environment (adjoining the Plaza Mayor). Thus, in the second half of book four, Fortunata again lives in her aunt's apartment overlooking the Plaza Mayor. Repeatedly she passes the "portal de la pollería" on the stairway where she first met Juanito. Her landlord is now Plácido Estupiñá, "[con] su perfil de cotorra" (p. 827), repeatedly seen "cotorreando" with one of the tenants (p. 908). As already noted, "Estupiñá el Grande" (p. 910), like the great kings mentioned in Aristophanes' play, now brandishes his bird-tipped scepter, "[aquel] bastón cuyo puño era una cabeza de cotorra" (p. 833). In addition to echoing ornithological references originally seen in book one, our ever-playful author also strengthens the notion of a bird environment by having important scenes now take place in the nearby "café de Gallo." First, however, as Galdós goes about multiplying his ornithological references, he has Fortunata look out her window repeatedly and see Maxi or his brother going "al café de Gallo" (pp. 828, 837, 847).<sup>24</sup> This is also the same café from which Fortunata's uncle will later return "con una botella de cerveza y detrás el mozo de Gallo con un *grande* de limón, ponchera y copas"

<sup>23</sup> Moncy Gullón, "The Bird Motif . . .," pp. 63-68.

<sup>24</sup> Gallo's establishment receives only passing mention in volume one (p. 207).

(p. 901). El café de Gallo is definitely an establishment which caters to the lower economic classes (members of which have repeatedly been compared to poultry in this novel);<sup>25</sup> and it is in Gallo's establishment that bird-like Maxi Rubín becomes acquainted with José Ido del Sagrario, "que tenía la cara granulosa y el pescuezo como el de un pavo" (p. 846).<sup>26</sup> Galdós himself recalls in "Memorias de un desmemoriado" that during the creation of *Fortunata y Jacinta* he spent "largas horas en el café del [sic] Gallo donde me entretenía oyendo las conversaciones de los trajinantes y abastecedores de los mercados de aves."<sup>27</sup>

Significantly it is in this original bird environment—the same as in volume one, where a *pollo* seduced a *gallina*—that Fortunata gives birth to the long-desired Santa Cruz heir. As in volume one also, Galdós introduces real birds which serve as background for plot events. However, whereas in volume one the birds were victims about to be exploited for the pleasures of men (as was Fortunata), here the emphasis is on domesticated reproduction. Although still caged and in the aviary of Doña Desdémona (the wife of Fortunata's obstetrician), the birds become quite happy when fed and watered, "poniéndose todos a piar y cantar a un tiempo" (p. 853). In this "república de pájaros" (p. 870), there is a great variety of birds: "pericos" (p. 852), "canarias en cría, un jilguero . . . y otras curiosidades ornitológicas de que tenía llena la casa" (p. 849). It is from here, surrounded by the birds in her aviary, that Doña Desdémona sends the following coded message to Doña Lupe, "*la de los pavos*": "La pájara mala sacó pollo esta mañana . . . Un polluelo hermosísimo" (p. 860).

Only after Fortunata has fulfilled this psycho-biological imperative and given birth to her *polluelo* does Galdós at last introduce real birds which are not captives of men—and this on the day that

<sup>25</sup> Juan Pablo Rubín's mistress, Refugio, "estaba aquel invierno muy mal de ropa, y no iba al café del Siglo, sino al de Gallo . . . porque la sociedad modesta que frecuentaba aquel establecimiento permitía presentarse en él de trapillo o con mantón y pañuelo a la cabeza" (p. 845).

<sup>26</sup> In volume one when Ido had eaten meat "[sin] muelas . . . como los pavos, . . . las carúnculas del cuello se le inyectaban de tal modo que casi eclipsaba el rojo de la corbata. Parecía un pavo cuando la excitación de la pelea con otro pavo le convierte en animal feroz" (pp. 236-37).

<sup>27</sup> Benito Pérez Galdós, "Memorias de un desmemoriado," in *Obras completas* (Madrid, 1951), vi, 1663.

Fortunata dies. As she begins to realize her fate, Galdós provides his last bird references concerning Fortunata in the form of orchestrated sound effects which accompany her demise: "[Ella] oyó el piar de los pajarillos que tenían su cuartel general en los árboles de la Plaza Mayor y en las crines de bronce del caballo de Felipe III" (p. 919). Then, as her condition worsens, "el piar de los pájaros también se precipitaba en aquel sombrío confín . . . [uniéndose con] los chillidos con que Juan Evaristo [el polluelo] pedía su biberón" (p. 921).

As Fortunata is dying, "mientras la personalidad física se extinguía, la moral . . . se determinaba con desusado vigor y fortaleza" (p. 921), and Fortunata decides to give her child to her long-suffering and sterile rival Jacinta. Appreciation by Jacinta and praise from Guillermina Pacheco ("Ha sido un rasgo feliz y cristiano," p. 926) strengthens Fortunata's belief that this action constitutes her very own personal "llave de la puerta del Cielo, . . . [sin] Sacramentos" (p. 922).

"Entonces resplandió en la cara de la infeliz señora de Rubín algo que parecía . . . religioso éxtasis" (p. 927); and as she dies, she repeatedly says she is an angel. This last step—to the highest of all winged creatures—climaxes the metaphorical transformations which have paralleled her spiritual growth throughout the novel. Having started her fictional life as a wild, beautiful, but very earthy *gallina*, Fortunata becomes a tender *paloma*, and then a sensitive *filomena*; Galdós subsequently emphasizes the *paloma* association when Fortunata lives near the La Paloma church. Her final evolution to angel (accompanied by bird song) seems a conscious artistic progression and may be one of the reasons why Galdós chose bird imagery to be a continuum throughout his masterpiece.<sup>28</sup>

After her death, Fortunata's *polluelo* is welcomed into the Santa Cruz family and becomes, in Galdós' final bird reference of the entire novel, Jacinta's long desired "canario de alcoba" (p. 930), "por ley de la naturaleza . . . único heredero directo de [esa] poderosa y acaudalada familia" (p. 861).

<sup>28</sup> An alternate reading (suggested by one of my students) is that Galdós is still being humorous: the novel-long "bird" now mistakenly believes she is an angel. (Cf. Carlos Blanco-Aguinaga's insistence that Fortunata is *trastornada* and hallucinating ["On 'The Birth of Fortunata,'" *AGald*, 3 (1968), 21].)

The great variety of bird references in *Fortunata y Jacinta* constitutes a metaphorical substructure integral to the novel's plot, characterization, and rich comic tone, comprising as well a parodic tour de force. Previous critics have tended to consider Galdós' bird-based puns, colloquial expressions, and slang as irrelevant to, or detracting from, a more important system of bird-human, *personaje*-based comparisons. Roger Utt (in a footnote) raises the question of the artistic relevancy of these ornithological word plays:

Reconocemos el carácter puramente coloquial de tales vocablos. Pero cabe preguntarse sin caer en sofismas, ¿a qué se debe la insistencia, por parte de un autor que no compone al azar, en precisamente *estos* términos y no en otros que quizás fuesen tan o más adecuados? ¿Qué impulso artístico—consciente o inconsciente—[los] determina?<sup>29</sup>

Our answer is that Galdós' word play is part of the same system as the bird-human comparisons and that Galdós (who excelled as a student of Greek)<sup>30</sup> is successfully following the example of Aristophanes in his primarily comic use of multifaceted bird-based references. The majority of them occur in light, playful passages (the most notable exception being the naturalistic scene in the poultry shop). Even before getting to Juanito's adventures in bird-land—and subsequent echoes of Aristophanes' play—Galdós sets a decidedly playful tone in his chapter-long presentation of Plácido Estupiñá as the magpie-like "Rossini." Throughout all four volumes of the novel, we are amused not only by characters who look and act like birds, but also by clever bird-based word play—from the first "canario de alcoba" reference in chapter two of book one (p. 135) until its final appearance in the last chapter of book four (p. 930). Thus, a young dandy with a fever is designated as a *pollo asado* (p. 243), adolescence becomes *la edad de pavo* (pp. 160, 349), Fortunata lives on Ave María street,<sup>31</sup> "*la de los pavos*" has no real

<sup>29</sup> Roger L. Utt, "El pájaro voló: Observaciones sobre un leitmotif," *AGald*, 9 (1974), 50, n. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Galdós received the grade of "excellent" for both years of Greek at the Colegio de San Agustín and also on his examination for the degree Bachiller en Artes. (Cf. H. Chonon Berkowitz, *Pérez Galdós: Spanish Liberal Crusader* [Madison, 1948], p. 464.)

<sup>31</sup> Fortunata is also pregnant and her impotent husband says of the forthcoming "Mesías" (p. 817), "lo anunciará una estrella que ha de aparecer por Occidente y los Cielos y la tierra sonará con himnos de alegría" (p. 818).

pavos, and "Rossini" is repeatedly seen "cotorreando" (p. 908), to cite a few examples.<sup>32</sup>

Blanco-Aguinaga, after correctly pointing out that Galdós is depicting a *nivelización de clases sociales* in the *pollo-gallina* (Juanito-Fortunata) mating, says further: "In most languages ornithological references are . . . [almost] unavoidable when one is concerned with the role played by birth . . . and sex."<sup>33</sup> This was especially true in ancient Greece, where birds themselves were an important erotic symbol.<sup>34</sup> Thus it seems highly unlikely that Galdós, who so loved the classics, could have thought of mating, reproduction and ornithology without recalling Aristophanes' comedy (recently translated into Spanish) and its multifaceted bird-based humor.

It has been repeatedly demonstrated elsewhere that Galdós often had at least one other literary work in mind as he wrote a novel. He would engage in a dialogue with that work and use it as a point of departure for his own creativity.<sup>35</sup> In the case of the bird references, which are programmatic and run throughout his masterpiece, that other work was Aristophanes' *The Birds*. It not only allowed Galdós to entertain the well-educated reader with recognizable scenes and situations recalling the great fun of Aristophanes' comedy, but it also served as an inspiration for Don Benito's own playful tone and many clever bird-based innovations—the

<sup>32</sup> Going beyond Aristophanes' pattern, Galdós on one occasion (p. 300) even has a hurdy-gurdy playing a then-popular "tonadilla de la Mascota" (an 1880 operetta by Edmon Audran), which many readers would have recognized and Galdós elsewhere specifies as "aquellos de *yo tus pavos cuidaré*," (*Lo prohibido*, in *Obras completas* [Madrid, 1954], IV, 1773). For more details concerning this very popular operetta, see Pedro Ortiz Armengol, "Notas," *Fortunata y Jacinta*, by Pérez Galdós, p. 995, n. 193.

<sup>33</sup> Blanco-Aguinaga, "On 'The Birth of Fortunata,'" p. 20. Although Juanito is never described as looking like a bird, the designation of *pollo* (mating with a *gallina*) allows Galdós to keep his species straight. Our author was still sensitive enough to the aesthetics of naturalism (in a novel where he repeatedly uses the word *especie* [pp. 610, 617, 685]) and speaks of a naturalist engaged in observations (p. 224) to want to keep his biological reproductions viable. Otherwise we might witness a disaster, as in the *Torquemada* series (1891-1895), where the male protagonist, a "feroz hormiga," "jabalí," etc., mates with a female Águila and produces a monster.

<sup>34</sup> William Arrowsmith, "Aristophanes' Birds . . .," pp. 119-67.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen Gilman, "Novel and Society: *Doña Perfecta*," *AGald*, 11 (1976), 15; and Vernon A. Chamberlin, "*Doña Perfecta*: Galdós' Reply to *Pepita Jiménez*," *AGald*, 15 (1980), 11-21.

number and likes of which are seen in no other Galdosian novel. At the same time, it also provided a means of delineating stages in the protagonist's spiritual development, even as Galdós was posing as a naturalist and providing the type and amount of imagery demanded by that school. For the reader who looks beneath this surface naturalism—and perceives the intertextuality with Aristophanes' famous comedy—there is a reward of enhanced reading pleasure, and a greater appreciation of Galdós' own creative playfulness.

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