

## **When Words Become Art: Sketches from the Galley Proofs of Benito Pérez Galdós's *Fortunata y Jacinta***

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As one combs through the galley proofs (*Galeradas*) of Pérez Galdós's *Fortunata y Jacinta*, the author's painstaking linguistic polishing is certainly one element that draws critical attention. But the most eye-catching aspect is, without any doubt, the artwork that adorns many of these typed pages.<sup>1</sup> Although there is a degree of subjectivity involved in any such conclusion, one might argue that the more than two dozen sketches of human subjects offer researchers the best example of Galdós's artistic potential found in either the extant galley proofs or the original manuscripts.<sup>2</sup> That said, the goals of this essay are threefold. First, this essay forms part of an ongoing project aimed at publishing as much of Galdós's manuscript and galley proof artwork as possible so that other critics can take the investigation to another level. Second, we attempt to establish, when possible, connections between the graphic and the lexical, that is to say, a link between the drawings and the characters that appear in *Fortunata y Jacinta*. Third, we hope to contextualize and place this artwork in the larger context of all the extant Galdosian galley proofs and original manuscripts.

A brief review of the novelist's own observations about his artwork along with an all-important assertion by a respected *Galdosista* will help to establish both a context and a justification for what is argued in this essay. In 1914, Galdós surprised both readers and researchers with his revelation that he had actually sketched the plethora of characters that make his novels so rich. "Para escribir," he explained to José María Carretero, "me resulta un complemento porque antes de crear literariamente los personajes de mis obras, los dibujo con lápiz, para tenerlos delante mientras hablo de ellos [. . .]. Tengo dibujados en lápiz a todos los personajes que he creado" (Carretero 10). In 2001, the critic with probably the most comprehensive understanding of the graphic component in Galdós purposefully called attention to this very marginalia. Writes Stephen Miller:

Más significantes son algunos de los abundantes dibujos que adornan las páginas manuscritas de las novelas galdosianas. No se estudian aquí por requerir un tiempo y acceso a los manuscritos que yo no tengo. Pero la cita

galdosiana dada arriba de la entrevista de 1914 con Carretero, indica la relevancia de la investigación gráfica de los manuscritos de las novelas galdosianas. (*Galdós Gráfico* 13)

Galdós admittedly made these manuscript sketches *a priori* and used them, ekphrastically, as models in the creation of his *personajes*. With the drawings in the galley proofs, however, Galdós essentially reverses the process (or perhaps he completes it) and uses the now existing textual characters (by his own admission, based on his own earlier sketches) to (re)create these memorable characters. Inasmuch as the sketches found in the galley proofs of *Fortunata y Jacinta* and those of other novels are the result of at least two previous creative stages—one graphic and one textual—it is hardly surprising that they are by and large slightly more sophisticated and complete than the artwork found in the manuscripts.

The first drawing studied in this essay is unique for several reasons. To begin with, we have in figure #1 not just a bust or a face in profile (the most prevalent type of sketch in both the manuscripts and the galley proofs), but rather the complete, head-to-toe figure of a man walking with a cane. This in itself is a rarity within the Galdosian graphic component. We see sketches of this type in only a few galley proofs (*Narváez*, *Torquemada en el purgatorio*, *Aita Tettauen*, and *La de los tristes destinos*). In the manuscripts, full-figure sketches are even more infrequent. Only “Celín” contains an extremely small drawing of an aging couple in an embrace. The portrayal of the man with cane, the top hat, and the somewhat odd looking footwear is even more atypical in that it appears that Galdós is struggling to project the impression of motion.<sup>3</sup>



Figure #1



Figure #2

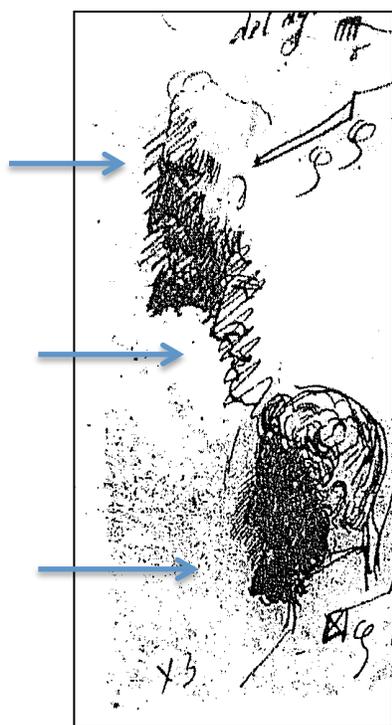
Figure #1 appears on page 100 of the galley proofs that corresponds to page 114 of volume II of the published novel. In regard to the textual situation, Fortunata's elderly protector, Evaristo Feijoo, expresses his delight with his friend's healthy appetite. But the sketch has nothing to do with this pair of lovers. It appears, instead, to be a rather clever rendering of Jacinta's admirer, Moreno Isla: “Vestía el caballero Americana oscura y pantalón de cuadros, sombrero de copa, y los indispensables botines blancos cubriendo las botas holgadísimas, con suelas de un dedo de grueso” (333, vol. II).<sup>4</sup>

Figure #2, located on the same galley proof page, likewise presents few problems with respect to identification. The exaggeratedly curled hair and the slightly impish grin point directly to Fortunata's would be lover, Segismundo Ballester:

Ballester ostentaba aquel día zapatillas nuevas, estrenaba traje de lanilla de los más baratos, y se había ido a la peluquería, donde después de cardarle la cabellera, se la había rizado con tenacillas. (313, vol. II)

Al ofrecerle una silla, Ballester parecía poner especial cuidado en dar a conocer sus botas nuevas, resplandecientes; en que Fortunata admirase su levita y su cabellera rizada a fuego, la cual despedía fuerte olor a heliotropo. (322, vol. II)

The next set of drawings (figures # 3-8) represents a genuinely unique occurrence within the context of all the extant galley proofs and original manuscripts.<sup>5</sup>



Figures #3-5

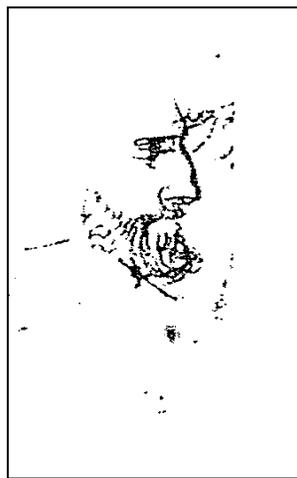
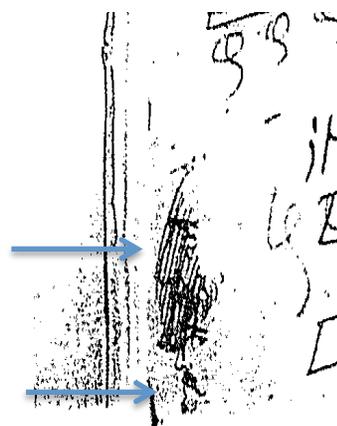


Figure #6



Figures #7-8

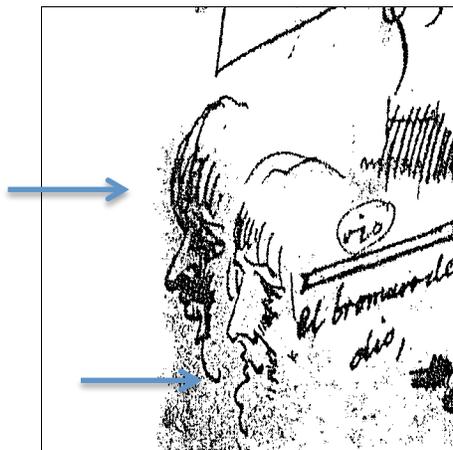
To begin with, groupings of three comparable to the one seen in figures #3-5 are quite rare. Only in the galley proofs of *Aita Tettauen*, *La de los tristes destinos*, and *España trágica* do we find anything similar. And in those proofs the sketches are spaced differently and seem more in tune with caricature than with realistic portrayal. But what makes these six sketches even more impressive, however, is that one might argue that they are slightly different versions of the same character. And if this is indeed the case, it is the only occasion in either the galley proofs or the original manuscripts that Galdós dedicates this degree of graphic attention to a single character.

Figures #3-5 are positioned on page 97 of the galley proofs in a section that corresponds textually with the Santa Cruz honeymoon on page 212 of volume I of *Fortunata y Jacinta*. Figures #6-8 are found on page 92 of the galley proofs in a section that matches up textually with a series of shared intimacies between Fortunata and the retired coronel, Feijoo, on page 108 of volume II. The identity of the handsome subject in the drawings is not easy to establish even though several names quickly come to mind: Joaquín Pez, Melchor Relimpio, Jacinto María Villalonga, Federico Ruiz, and even Juan Pablo Rubín. It seems rather improbable, however, that Galdós would dedicate so much graphic energy to secondary characters of this ilk. Given the cast of *Fortunata y Jacinta*, the most likely candidate, therefore, is Juanito Santa Cruz, Fortunata's handsome but morally shallow lover. But here too there are obstacles in the identification process. Ironically, the novel contains surprisingly few references to Juanito's actual physical appearance. Early in the work, he is described as "buen parecido," "simpático," and as one of "estos hombres que se recomiendan con su figura" (109, vol. I). Later in part I, Estupiñá admires his "guapeza," his "elegancia" and his "juventud" (186, vol. I). Even Santa Cruz's own narcissistic comments about his physical characteristics are somewhat vague: "¡Qué guapo soy! ...Tengo la gran figura, visto bien, y en modales y en el trato me parece....que somos algo" (288, vol. I).<sup>6</sup> The reader has enough information –i.e., that he is 31 years old in 1876 and that he has enjoyed noteworthy success with the opposite sex– to assume that he is indeed handsome, but without additional knowledge about his facial structure, beard, hair, nose, eyes, etc., any kind of definitive link to the sketches remains somewhat problematic.<sup>7</sup>

Figures #9-11 show that the novelist's graphic interest was not limited to just his more physically attractive characters. Though positioned on different pages of the galley proofs, all three sketches seem to deal with the same not so esthetically pleasing subject.



Figure #9



Figures #10-11

Several figures from the text of *Fortunata y Jacinta* immediately come to mind: Francisco de Torquemada, Maximiliano Rubín, Quevedo, and José Ido de Sagrario. The emaciated physiques of both Ido and Maxi, however, quickly eliminate them as possible models for the drawings. Torquemada seems a more likely candidate, but his "bigote and perilla" (523, vol. II) exclude him as well. Perhaps the one character that does bare at least a

tangential resemblance to the sketches is Quevedo, one of the three priests who form part of Nicolás Rubín's *tertulia*. Galdós's description is not flattering: "[...] feo como un susto, picado de viruelas, de mirada aviesa y con una cara de secuestrador que daría espanto al infeliz que se la encontrase en mitad de un camino solitario" (30, vol. II). But the match between the lexical and the graphic is by no means perfect, and the selection of Quevedo leaves room for doubt.<sup>8</sup>

The identification process with other drawings from the galley proofs turns out to be even more problematic and suggests that we occasionally need to look outside the textual boundaries in order to identify the subject of the sketches.

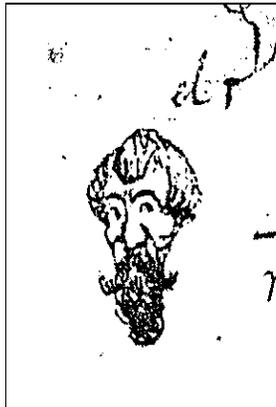


Figure #12

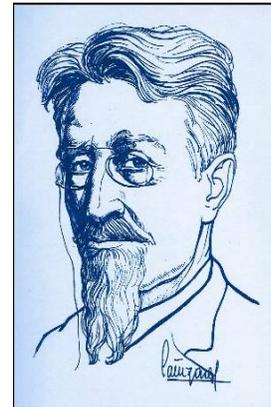


Fig. #13 J.M. Pereda

The position of figure #12, located on page 27 of the galley proofs, corresponds textually to Galdós lengthy genealogy of the Santa Cruz family on page 243 of volume I. One might logically surmise that this drawing is a representation of Fortunata's arms dealing lover, described by Villalonga in the following terms: "Tiene acento catalán, gasta bigote y perilla...cincuenta años...bastante antipático. Pues verás; como Joaquín y yo la mirábamos tanto, el tío aquel se escamaba" (435, vol. I). It is more probable, however, that this beard and goatee belong instead to Galdós's longtime friend and colleague, José María de Pereda. The sketch carries a hint of caricature and is less flattering than the writer from Santander perhaps might have wanted, but the similarities between Galdós's drawing and the actual person are undeniable.<sup>9</sup>

The galley proofs also feature two curious sketches that one can see quite clearly on the original page, but which, regrettably, are difficult to see when scanned or copied into a document. The first (figures #14 and #15) is located on the same page as figures #1-2 and appears to be a relatively young woman gazing to the left of the observer. Her hair appears to be haphazardly piled atop her head with a rebellious strand dangling down her prominent forehead. One would say that her nose tends towards the classical and that her chin is strong. Her lips are pursed and serious. What little we see of her neck seems delicate yet strong. The overall impression of the drawing is definitely that of an attractive although slightly masculine looking woman. These physical traits point to only one character: Mauricia "la Dura." Galdós's description of her in *Las Micaelas* follows the graphic version quite closely:

Aquella mujer singularísima, bella, y varonil tenía el pelo corto y lo llevaba siempre mal peinado y peor sujeto. Cuando se agitaba mucho trabajando, las melenas se le soltaban, llegándole hasta los hombros, y entonces la semejanza con el precoz caudillo de Italia y Egipto era perfecta.

Porque ejercían indecible fascinación sobre el observador aquellas cejas rectas y prominentes, los ojos grandes y febriles, escondidos como en acecho bajo la concavidad frontal, la pupila inquieta y ávida, mucho hueso en los pómulos, poca carne en las mejillas, la quijada robusta, la nariz romana, la boca acentuada terminando en flexiones enérgicas, y la expresión, en fin, soñadora y melancólica. (607-608, vol. I)

As is readily apparent, these physical traits are difficult to see in this scanned version, but fortunately Galdós reproduced virtually the same sketch in his *Álbum Arquitectónico* (56). Seen side by side—the drawing from the original page of the galley proofs (Figure #14) and the young woman from the *Álbum Arquitectónico* (Figure #16)—the similarities are striking.<sup>10</sup>



Figure #14

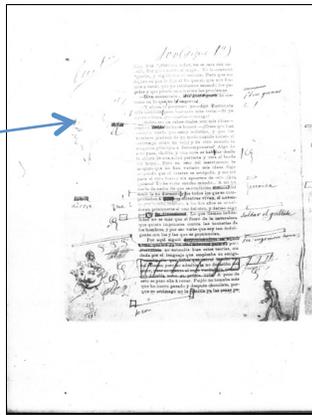


Figure #15



Fig. #16 *Álbum Arq.*

A second sketch that loses clarity when scanned is located on page 77 of the galley proofs. Its position corresponds textually to Jacinta's strange dream as she listens to Wagner in the theater on page 291 of vol. I. The figure in the drawings (#17-18) seems to be that of an animal, probably a lion or conceivably a dog, standing on his hind legs and perhaps brandishing some kind of stick or wand. A tail is visible in the overall view of the galley proof page. What one sees quite clearly in the original but not at all in either figure #17 or #18 is what seems to be a large penis next to the animal's right leg.

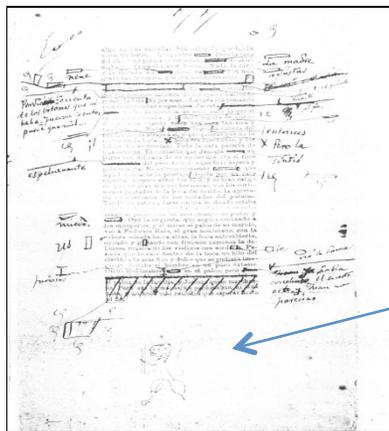


Figure #17

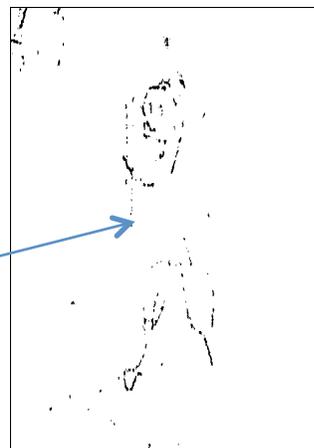


Figure #18

One is tempted to search for some form of connection between the sexualized lion/dog and Jacinta's erotic dream, but this peculiar drawing probably best fits into two different contexts. The first deals with Galdós's penchant for slightly risqué sketches (Schnepf "X-Rated"). We know, for instance, that in the manuscript of *Bárbara* there is an unambiguous sketch of a nude woman on hands and knees with a penis clearly visible near her exposed buttocks (29). And in the manuscript of *El caballero encantado* we find an even more explicit drawing of a completely naked woman in a prone position with her legs spread apart (no page). That said, this sketch of the well-endowed lion could very well be a variant of this specific graphic tendency.

We must also keep in mind, however, that Galdós had a long history of drawing lions on hind legs as well as in other guises that dates back to the novelist's albums that Stephen Miller has studied and analyzed with such success. The second edition of the illustrated *Episodios Nacionales*, published in 1887, has a very prominent lion on the cover, and both the *Álbum Arquitectónico* (64) and the *Álbum Zoológico* (29) contain examples of Galdós's passion for this graphic topic.<sup>11</sup> It is also important to note that the manuscript of *La desheredada* contains a variety of lions sketched in various poses (i.e., pages 57, 69, 115).

The galley proofs of *Fortunata y Jacinta* contain other impressive drawings. The elegant nautical artwork perhaps connects to Pereda and Santander (figure #13), but it also falls in line with Galdós's long term fascination with seagoing vessels of all kinds.<sup>12</sup> In two of his albums, *Gran Teatro de la Pescadería* (85) and *Álbum Marítimo* (11, 15, 17, 20) we see various examples of this career-long interest in boats.

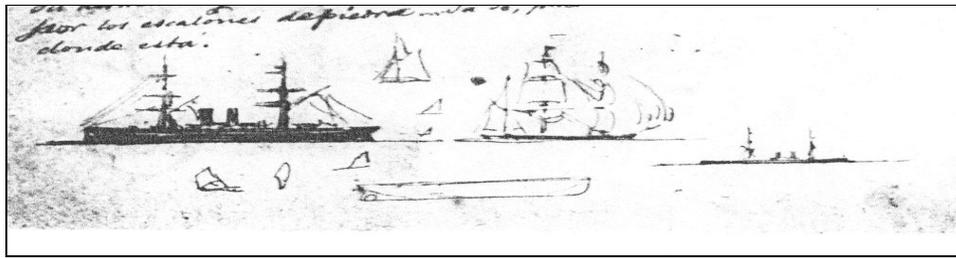


Figure #19

In conclusion, the intriguing array of sketches found in the galley proofs of Galdós's masterpiece, *Fortunata y Jacinta*, affords researchers an intimate look at the novelist's creative process. In a few instances, they actually reveal how Galdós viewed his creations—Ballester, Moreno Isla, Mauricia to name just three—*a posteriori*, or rather, subsequent to their lexical births. The overall body of sketches in these pages also helps to reinforce what we know about Galdós's graphic tendencies in all the extant original manuscripts and galley proofs. We are aware, for example, that as an artist Galdós was most comfortable with his subject facing to his left. The sketches in the galley proofs of *Fortunata y Jacinta* certainly bear out this tendency. Similarly, there is a surprising scarcity of female subjects in both the manuscript and galley proof drawings. When one brings to mind the many great Galdosian figures—from Doña Perfecta to Amparo to Benina—this odd and inexplicable gap becomes even more bewildering. In *Fortunata y Jacinta*, a novel dominated by female characters, only the somewhat masculine image of Mauricia la Dura finds its way into the galley proof artwork. Figures #12 and #19—Pereda and the nautical image—also serve as a reminder to researchers that occasionally we must look beyond the text in order to identify Galdós's sketches. And the oddly sexualized lion demonstrates once again that occasionally a fondness for a different brand of artwork caused the novelist to drift away from the task at hand. Finally, now that they have access to these absorbing sketches from the galley proofs of *Fortunata y Jacinta*, future researchers will undoubtedly see new and more complex connections between the lexical and the graphic and as a result our understanding of how don Benito planned, sketched, and composed will continue to develop.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> If we look at the entirety of artwork in both the original manuscripts and the galley proofs we see that in 1886-1887 Galdós was beginning another fecund period of graphic representation. Only in the years surrounding the creation of *La desheredada* (1881) did he dedicate more time to his sketches.
- <sup>2</sup> In regard to the galley proofs, only those of *Tristana* and *La de los tristes destinos* contain artwork comparable in quantity and quality to what one finds in *Fortunata y Jacinta*. With respect to the sketches found in the original manuscripts, one has to take into account the first versions of *La desheredada*, *El doctor Centeno*, and *Tormento*. All three manuscripts feature impressive arrays of drawings (Schnepf “The Galdós Sketches”).
- <sup>3</sup> I agree with Miller when he argues that Galdós had certain difficulties when it came to creating the sensation of movement in his sketches (*Galdós Gráfico* 211). Don Benito was a talented but in some ways limited *dibujante*.
- <sup>4</sup> When Moreno Isla first appears in the novel, he is described as both “alto” and “delgado,” two characteristics found in the drawings (272, vol. I).
- <sup>5</sup> A brief explanation of our approach to figures #3-5; #7-8; and #10-11 will help make this essay more reader friendly. We are looking at each drawing of a human head as a separate entity and have indicated them with arrows. On a slightly different note, figure #14 is an enlarged version of figure #15. And figure #18 is a slightly enlarged version of figure #17.
- <sup>6</sup> Years later in the galley proofs of *España sin rey*, we find the sketch of another handsome young man (135), surprisingly similar to the semblance that we see in figures #3-8. This gives rise to the speculation that Galdós recycled his artwork and/or that he had a career-long graphic vision of certain types.
- <sup>7</sup> There remains one intriguing but difficult to prove option that could establish an important link between the graphic components of the original manuscripts and the galley proofs. Galdós was correcting at least some of the galley proofs of *Fortunata y Jacinta* as late as June, 1887. He published *Miau* in early 1888. It is not inconceivable that by mid-1887 the novelist already had the characters of *Miau* pretty well in mind. We know, in fact, that Ramón Villamil actually first appears in part III of *Fortunata y Jacinta*. If Galdós had other characters in mind as well, it is not inconceivable that figures #3-8 are a graphic rendering of the handsome seducer, Víctor Cadalso. His description in *Miau* fits well with the sketches:

La frente pálida tenía el corte y el bruñido que en escultura sirve para expresar nobleza. Esta nobleza es el resultado del equilibrio de piezas cranianas y de la perfecta armonía de líneas. El cuello robusto, el pelo algo desordenado y de azabache, la barba oscura también y corta, completaban la hermosa lámina de aquel busto más italiano que español. La talla era mediana, el cuerpo tan bien proporcionado y airoso como la cabeza; la edad debía de andar entre los treinta y tres o los treinta y cinco. (62)

- <sup>8</sup> Figure #9 is found on page 73 of the galley proofs. The position corresponds textually to Fortunata’s infidelities shortly after her marriage to Maxi on pages 696-97 of volume

I. We find figures #10-11 on page 34 of the galley proofs when Maxi is beginning his search for Fortunata on page 399 of volume II.

- <sup>9</sup> Pereda was born in 1833 and would have been in his mid-fifties more or less when Galdós was composing *Fortunata y Jacinta*. The age of the man in the sketch seems to range between 50 and 60. In Galdós's *Álbum Marítimo* (54), we find a slightly more flattering sketch of José María at approximately the same age. The point here is that Galdós seems to have enjoyed creating graphic versions of his friend.
- <sup>10</sup> Miller reminds the reader that the background for this *Álbum Arquitectónico* is Santander circa 1892, that is to say, after the publication of *Fortunata y Jacinta* (*Galdós Gráfico* 112).
- <sup>11</sup> Miller dedicates an entire section to the importance of lions in Galdós's graphic repertoire (*Galdós Gráfico* 241-49).
- <sup>12</sup> Figure #19 is found on page 86 of the galley proofs near to Maxi's homicidal ravings in regard to Fortunata on page 428 of volume II.

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