The Animals We Are: Images of Bestial Reduction in *La Regenta* (1885) and *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1887)

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Animals are frequently used and abused in Spanish literature simply to point out how beastly we human beings can be to one other. It should come as no surprise that Spain's two most famous meganovels of the nineteenth century usually compare the main characters with animals in order to describe character traits by ironically reducing human behavior to a survival of the fittest. The third chapter of Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) sounds the clarion note for the battle of beings in Spanish naturalism: "But the struggle almost invariably will be most severe between the individuals of the same species, for they frequent the same districts, require the same food, and are exposed to the same dangers" (126). Juan Oleza, editor of an edition of *La Regenta*, indicates that Clarín shared Gustave Flaubert's obsession with "la bêtise humaine" (qtd. in Clarín 2: 66). *La Regenta* herself feels that ordinary believers are part of the "bestialidad humana" (2: 492). Therefore, an otherwise sympathetic figure like Frígilis, the naturalist friend of el Regente, Víctor Quintanar, characterizes Víctor's chances of marrying la Regenta, Ana Ozores, by converting her into a fish to be caught with the right bait: "[. . .] la chica picará más pronto [. . .] ya verá usted como pica [. . .]" (1: 309). Frígilis (Tomás Crespo) is a naturalist, not in the literary sense, but as a student of natural history as was Darwin. One character refers to his "decantado darwinismo" (2: 216); another, to his idea that our grandfathers descended from monkeys (2: 176). Ironically, Frígilis, having helped Víctor fish for a wife, also appears as the hunting friend who makes him choose the hunt in preference to the marriage bed (1: 231).

If Frígilis is the instigator of his friend Víctor's fishing, the same scene is repeated in Chapter VIII when Visitación spurs the hopes of the Casino President, Alvaro Mesía, her former seducer. She is supposed to be Ana's best friend, but Alvaro understands that "Visitación quería precipitar a la

Regenta en el agujero negro donde habían caído ella y tantas otras" (2: 410). So she, self-described as a mocking bird or "urraca" (1: 397), is a fallen woman wanting to see another fall and she expresses it by telling Mesía: "--Ella tragar [. . .] ya tragó el anzuelo", but she warns him by saying "puedes marcharte con una tajada y dejar el pez en el agua" (1: 413). In the same conversation she later affirms that Ana is "enamorada" (1: 414). Finally Clarín rounds off the conversion of the protagonist into a fish by exclaiming to Mesía as he watches Ana disappearing down the street: "--¡Cómetela [. . .]!" (1: 417). She is future food for the "lascivia" (1: 416) with which he has just been looking at her, while even the widow Obdulia "devoraba a la Regenta con los ojos de pies a cabeza" (1: 416).

Galdós' novel, *Fortunata y Jacinta*, published two years after Clarín's, is in many ways a response to his younger Zamoran-born Asturian friend's achievement by presenting a slightly kinder view of human nature, but nonetheless with the inevitable animalistic comparisons and suggested devourings which abound in both novels and seem to be characteristic of Spanish naturalism. The image of taking the bait again comes from the almost saintly founder, Guillermina Pacheco, who uses the image, "Veremos si pica [. . .]" (2: 245), referring to the exploratory question, to see if Fortunata has married Maximiliano Rubín in order to be able to sin freely with another whom she thinks her rightful husband, Juanito Santa Cruz. La Regenta is a fish caught in a marriage of convenience without expressly thinking of another, while Fortunata is a fish of her own conscience caught in the moral error of accepting a marriage of convenience expressly to be with another. Galdós enrichens the transgression of female desire. Meanwhile, the Canary Island novelist also uses the angling image to illustrate the vain hopes of the druggist Segismundo Ballester who comforts the needs of his own self-worth by recommending the fisherman's wait for a Fortunata whom he will never harvest: "Imita a los pescadores de caña; espera, espera, que al fin ella picará" (2: 324).

One might say that "picar" is simply a colloquial expression in Spanish but the fact that Clarín uses it to reduce the personality of his protagonist to a woman who will serve her basic instincts is really part of a silent dialogue of language games between the two novelist friends. In *La de Bringas*, published in 1884, the year before Clarín's novel came out, Galdós, has his greedy protagonist, Rosalía Pipaón de la Barca, wife of Francisco Bringas, declare, after having been duped into a sexual favor

without pay by Manuel Pez, that she will not fish for such small fry: "Hacía el propósito de no volver a pescar alimañas de tan poca sustancia, y se figuraba estar tendiendo sus redes en mares anchos y batidos, por cuyas aguas cruzaban gallardos tiburones, pomposos ballenatos y peces de verdadero fuste" (296). The irony of the situation is that she has taken the bait offered by a man named Pez. It is most likely that Clarín knew of this usage and had then a linguistic precedent for making his protagonist decide to marry, at the instigation of her aunt doña Anuncia who wants to unburden herself of an economic charge, a man she did not truly love. After all, Rosalía de Bringas takes the bait in hopes of receiving money just as Ana is thinking of status and wealth when she nonetheless asks herself: "--¿No es una temeridad casarse sin amor?" (1: 310). And we can say that Fortunata takes the bait of marriage to Maximiliano Rubín, if not exactly for money, yes for the social prestige that will serve as a front for her real interest in Juanito Santa Cruz. This crass fishing image is used by both novelists to indicate social or financial sustenance their protagonists mean to obtain and it seems evident to me that they were mutually aware of each other's usage of such a context in their novels of the 1880's.

Galdós again resorts to the imagery of fishing for a mate in *Miau*, published in 1888, one year after *Fortunata y Jacinta*. This time the image is used by Víctor Cadalso to insinuate his unhealthy false jealousy regarding his sister-in-law Adelarda's pretender, Ponce. To this gentleman he declares, with sardonic defeatist detachment: "Yo daría sangre de las venas por echar mi anzuelo en el mar de la vida, con el cebo de una declaración amorosa, y pescar una Abelarda. Es una ambición que me curaría de las demás" (175). Víctor's future successes as a career public servant show up the perpetual yearnings of Ramón Villaamil for an advancement he will never see. But, most ironically of all, it is not Adelarda who will be fished for, but she who fishes for a husband whom she refers to as a fan, "un abanico", for he is only "un recurso" and she marries "por colocarse, por tener posición y nombre, y salir de aquella estrechez insorportable de su hogar" (171). Fishing, then, for both novelists is part of the instrumentalization of one character of another in fruitless, failed relationships or barren marriages, an institution Galdós clearly views pessimistically.

Comparisons with animals in both novels graphically clarify human emotion. The Magistral, Fermín de Pas, in the final unforgettable scene

of Clarín's novel, cannot hear the murmuring of la Regenta's litany of sins to be pardoned because he, in his wounded, leonine pride, is too busy listening to "los rugidos de su pasión que vociferaban dentro" (2: 596). And Fortunata, somehow a more legitimate cat than Fermín, when she wants to protect her interest in Juanito from Jacinta, swings her hips "como los tigres que van a dar el salto" (2: 252). Guillermina, founder of an orphanage, begins this scene by offering Fortunata the "anzuelo de la respuesta", that she married because "el matrimonio le permitiera pecar libremente [. . .] con el que usted quería" (2: 245), with Juanito. This manipulation of the other backfires on the founder when she discovers that Fortunata considers Santa Cruz "mi verdadero marido" (2: 246) because of their child so she sees her marriage as a theatrical "engaño" (2: 246). Clarín's Magistral prefigures Fortunata's unorthodox sense of true marriage when Clarín has him think of himself as Ana's true husband, "Él, él era el marido [. . .]," not the deceived Víctor (2: 557). Galdós, then, unlike Clarín, does not portray his female protagonist duped or enticed by the offer of matrimonial bait as was la Regenta but rather making her decision knowing her real husband in love is another. She is no fish of innocence or appetite as is la Regenta.

After Clarín's use of "picar" with respect to Ana Ozores' ingenuousness, it would seem that such fishing had been codified as manipulation for Galdós as well. So we find Nicolas Rubín, the priest brother of Maxi, taking up such imagery again and thinking of Fortunata as a fish: "Tomaba en serio su oficio de pescador de gente, y la verdad, nunca se le había presentado un pez como aquél" (1: 561). What begins as a Christian image of conversion ends as image of bagging a potential trophy. When he speaks to Fortunata about true love being only spiritual, he declares that an interest in physical characteristics is "propio de hembras salvajes" (1: 561). But, of course, Fortunata is a female animal and a wild one at that. Galdós also has the sententious Nicolas speak to her about the connection between love and physical beauty and what he considers a false Greek "naturalismo pagano" (1: 565). In the context of the naturalist novel of the 1880s and Pardo Bazán's treatment of this subject in *La cuestión palpitante* (1883), she cites a translation of *Une page d'amour* because there Emile Zola declares that his naturalist agenda is to "mostrar y poner de realce la bestia humana" (qtd. in Pardo Bazán 147)—, Galdós may be treating naturalism somewhat ironically as an already ancient tradition of natural instinct in the context of then current criticism of deca-

dence and determinism in the naturalistic European novel. If the character of Isidora Rufete in *La desheredada* marked the beginning of the Spanish naturalist novel, Galdós, by the time he is portraying Fortunata, is no longer portraying a woman of humble origins ruined by a middle-class lover and her own aristocratic pretentions till she degenerates into prostitution, but another humble woman who, in her raw animal nature, hangs on to her bond with the middle-class lover until she earns, during her prostitution, a sense of her own identity, respectability and spiritual redemption in her capacity to leave behind the fruit of her love in the form of a child.

Galdós attenuates any moral degradation in Fortunata's prostitution by having her live with the retired military officer, Evaristo González Feijoo, who acts as her "protector" (2: 102). In spite of referring to her as "chulita" (2: 102), he espouses the idea that no act based on love is a sin: "[. . .] ni me ha entrado nunca en la cabeza que sea pecado, ni delito, ni siquiera falta, ningún hecho derivado del amor verdadero" (2: 103). This is not only his reason for not marrying but a cause for his later saying "el casarse es estúpido" (2: 113) and the condition of love is its "no duración" (2: 114). His opportunistic relationship with Fortunata does not make him "cynical" as Jagoe claims (110). Clearly, Galdós must have us link Feijoo's idea of true love and its excused acts with Fortunata's vehement attachment to Juanito Santa Cruz, "el único hombre a quien había querido de verdad" (1: 483). When Maxi is thinking of marrying her, the narrator has her, like Feijoo, justifying love as free of sin: "[. . .] nada que se relacionase con el amor era pecado" (1: 482). So we learn she does not feel love for her older friend and almost mentor, Feijoo, but respect and affection as the "persona más decente" (2: 101) in her life, and it is he who encourages her to return to her husband, Maxi (2: 117). While Isidora in *La desheredada* is left steadily more alone in her social descent, in the case of Feijoo, as Jagoe points out, "Galdós absolves Fortunata of moral blame for taking yet another lover, by stressing the harsh economic reason for her conduct, just as he did for the eponymous heroine of *Tormento*" (110). Possibly the coincidence of her funeral being followed by Feijoo's only emphasizes the linkage of their idea of true love. Maxi no longer fears infidelity since it is "un rozamiento con las fuerzas de la Naturaleza" (2: 540) and Fortunata embodies this animal force.

Likewise, it is possible that don Benito learned from the final scene of Fermín as lion to create another scene almost as powerful with his protagonist as tiger. We should remember that la Regenta likes to lie on a tiger rug, a symbol of the animal passion that is lacking in her marriage to the judge: "Después de abandonar todas las prendas que no habían de acompañarla en el lecho, quedó sobre la piel de tigre, hundiendo los pies desnudos, pequeños y rollizos en la espesura de las manchas pardas" (1: 217). Clarín refers to her looking like "una impúdica modelo" and he insinuates her illicit desires by declaring: "Nunca había creído ella que tal abandono fuese material de confesión" (1: 217). Therefore one might say that Galdós decided to portray his protagonist as truly tigerlike to exploit feline ferocity, this time, in female form in Fortunata's confrontation with Jacinta. Galdós had used the tiger simile previously in *La desheredada* (1881) when Juan Bou, the Catalán printer, whose offer of marriage is not taken up by Isidora Rufete, later criticizes her to her brother, Mariano, himself an animal type. Bou claims that Isidora "Es un tigre para el bolsillo ajeno. Quien ve aquella cara, ¿cómo ha de sospechar lo que hay dentro? Quien ve aquellos ojos divinos, donde tiene su madriguera los ángeles, ¿cómo ha de pensar que estos ángeles son una cuadrilla de secuestradores?" (413). But if this is an earlier negative version of the supposedly angelic woman as tiger, Fortunata as a tiger is really a symbol of popular ferocity, a phenomenon of nature who upsets the middle or comfortable class virtues of Jacinta as well as the limited morality of the founder, Guillermina. Into Guillermina's mouth Galdós fantasizes that she would say: "Usted no tiene sentido moral [. . .] porque es anterior a la civilización; usted es una salvaje y pertenece de lleno a los pueblos primitivos" (2: 251). If Fermín in *La Regenta* is a lion of wrath, Fortunata, apart from being referred to as a tiger by the narrator of Galdós' novel, also names herself as a lion, not of anger but of love, in a conversation with the retired military man, Evaristo Feijoo: "¡Qué indecente he sido! Todo por querer más de lo que es debido, por querer como una leona" (2: 91).

Nonetheless Fortunata comes out of her meeting with Jacinta triumphant. In this battle for survival of the fittest, Jacinta has only "la rabia de paloma" (2: 252), a bird that can be easy prey, while Fortunata is described with what we can only call bestial enhancement, her waving hips like those of tigers about to spring. And when she goes home, Galdós continues the image, referring to a "rugido" that she lets out and her "revolcarse como las fieras heridas" (2: 254). It is the behavior of raw sexual femaleness, an alpha female protecting her animal rights. Maybe,

at bottom, Galdós, who never married, and who had numerous mistresses as Catherine Jagoe points out (*Ambiguous Angels* 201), admired most this class of femininity with an animal instinct as it was what he intimately knew. So Jagoe should not be thinking that "The middle-class narrator is unable to resolve the mixture of fear and attraction which he feels towards Fortunata" (114) in the scene when she explains to Guillermina her natural wifely relationship with Juanito.

The suggestion of a bourgeois narrator through epithets such as "la prójima" (2: 247) represent a reflection of middle-class values of the time and not a final, personal narrative judgement, either by the narrator or by the intervening omniscient author. Galdós' "indirect free style" admits an intentional blurring between narrator and author—one does not know which of the two is speaking—as well as between the narrator and the expression of characters' thoughts construed by that narrator. Regarding the "estilo indirecto libre" which eliminates introductory verbs and relative conjunctions, Fernando Lázaro describes the author—and, we might say, the authorial voice or narrator—blending with his character "como si lo conociera íntimamente, como si no fueran una invención suya aquellos pensamientos o aquellas palabras, como si el personaje y el autor se fundieran en una sola persona." For Lázaro, the two cannot be strictly separated: "De tal modo se confunden, que es difícil separar la parte que corresponda al personaje de lo que corresponde al escritor" (248). The eight men Fortunata lived with a month or more, according to her confession to Maxi's priest brother Nicolás, remain offset by her expression of true love for Juanito (1: 563). Galdós' narrator presents Fortunata's intention as quite as important as her acts. And it is he who will resolve in her mind the moral characters of Mauricia and Guillermina, and, finally, his protagonists, Fortunata and Jacinta, in a dialectical synthesis so that both women grow spiritually at the novel's end. Galdós' progressive beliefs become part of the narrator's perspective.

Galdós lived imaginatively, and so intellectually, beyond the middle class. Both Isidora Rufete and Fortunata are tigers, Fortunata being one who protects her sense of an identity of belonging to a man, even if he is not worthy of the attention and she is not physically faithful to the commitment of her feeling. In Fortunata's declaration that a wife who cannot bear children is not a wife, Jagoe describes "the narrator's unsettling technique of conflicting narrative judgements," in this case "Fortunata's apostolic inspiration and criminal audacity" (114). However, though the narrator says she has "la inspiración de un apóstol y la audacia criminal de un anarquista" (2: 247), Galdós clearly enjoys uniting opposites to enhance his lower-class heroine. She has the boldness but is no criminal. So she had earlier imagined the evil of Mauricia transformed into the incarnation of good, in animal terms, into a butterfly eaten by the religious rat Guillermina: "¡Cosa más rara! ¡El mal extremado refundiéndose así y reviviendo en el bien más puro! [. . .]" (2: 237). With this Hegelian synthesis of good and evil (one should remember that Juan Pablo Rubín in the café had referred to Doña Nieves' use of the idea as "*hegeliana*" [2: 44]), Galdós means to gain our reader's sympathy for a morally imperfect character with her own ideal, angelic in her imperfection. In a symbolic semi-embrace she gives Guillermina, she recognizes that "La mirada sola de la virgen y fundadora parecía extraerle la representación ideal que de su sus propias acciones y sentimientos tenía aquella infeliz en su espíritu, como la tenemos todos [. . .], and the narrator goes on to say in the same sentence that such a representation grows light or dark according to the case at hand, but in this one the ideal representation "resplandecía como un foco de luz" (2: 233). This light of the ideal is what later shines in her when the narrator refers to apostolic inspiration: in her features "se incendió una luz vivísima. Fue como una aureaola de inspiración que le envolvía toda la cara" (2: 247). This is no irresolute middle-class narrator, but Galdós idealizing his transgressor of the middle-class morality that probably did not suit him either. Fortunata's semi-embrace of Guillermina is echoed finally in the novelist-narrator's imagined embrace between his character opposites, for he speaks of the "fraternidad" (2: 531) between Fortunata y Jacinta, and surmises that, with death between them, "bien podría ser que las dos mujeres se miraran de orilla a orilla, con intención y deseos de darse un abrazo" (2: 532). Surely Galdós wants morality in relationships rewritten to take in the heart's desire of Fortunata, her offering of her child as a redeeming grace and Jacinta's sense of charity as a bonding force beyond the binds of matrimony.

Nor is this the only reference to Fortunata as catlike. When she and Juanito are talking about their relationship, Santa Cruz exclaims: "¿Y si tu marido descubriera esto y me quisiera matar?" (1: 693). To this Fortunata responds with an answer that characterizes her feline nature as well as her natural superiority over her husband who is conceived as mere prey: "—¡Ay! No me lo digas [. . .] ni en broma me lo digas. Me tiraba a él como una leona y le destrozaba [. . .] ¿Ves cómo se coge un lan-

gostino y se le arrancan las patas, y se le retuerce el corpacho y se le saca lo que tiene dentro? Pues así" (1: 693-694). And Fortunata again becomes a ferocious cat when she attacks Aurora in her office since she has been having a relationship with Juanito. The narrator declares she is withheld "Gracias que las oficialas sujetaron a la fiera en el momento en que clavaba sus garras en el pelo de la víctima [. . .]" (2: 480). Previously, the narrator has emphasized Fortunata's strength as a bestial devourer by describing her false kindness to Aurora as "la cruel suavidad con que algunas fieras lamen a la víctima antes de devorarla" (2: 479). And when she dares her weak husband to shoot Aurora and her lover, Galdós again demonstrates her sense of domination over him by showing her "comiéndoselo con los ojos" (2: 497). In an article on *Miau*, the novel published one year after *Fortunata y Jacinta*, Vernon A. Chamberlin points out that in the first or alpha version of *Miau*, Galdós omitted animal imagery almost completely, but in the second beta manuscript he developed it systematically "not only to effect irony and humor, but also to sharpen interpersonal conflicts and enhance the emotional participation of the reader" (302). Evidently the animal comparisons were a consciously crafted embellishment to round out the characters in his novels of the 1880s while they may also reflect a raw Darwinian sense of the fittest surviving. In the context of Maxi's propensity to swallow the stories that Fortunata tells him since his aunt doña Lupe reproaches him with "Tienes buenas tragaderas" (1: 535), Hazel Gold remarks that "The continued use of a culinary lexicon and metaphors of hunger, eating, and satiety further reinforces the connection between inner and outer narrative frames" (63), but it is important to stress that the devouring of one character by another forms part of the animal world of human relationships that Galdós emphasizes in his novel. It is Maxi, the madly spiritual cuckolded husband of Fortunata, who tells his wife that, after she has given birth, they will have to kill their animal selves: "[. . .] tú y yo habremos cumplido nuestra misión, y nos liberaremos matando nuestras bestias" (2: 382).

Galdós uses the tiger image again when he refers to Fortunata's husband, but this time the comparison is by contrast. Maximiliano Rubín follows Aurora, one of Juanito Santa Cruz's lovers, and then watches him walk up Magdalena street. He wants to cry out that Juanito is "Ratero de mi honor" and make him pay, so Galdós embellishes his anger by adding the bestial note: "Creía que se le afilaban las uñas haciéndose como garras de tigre" (2: 437). But, of course, after we are told he might "cayese sobre la presa", he is saved by logic and says to himself, revealing his fundamental weakness and only the wishful thinking of being a tiger like his wife: "Soy mucho más débil, y me destrozará [. . .] Un revólver, un rifle es lo que yo necesito" (2: 437). Galdós emphasizes the irony of this untigerly man getting ready to arm himself with the pistol he will never use.

Perhaps Maxmiliano Rubín is a dry run for Galdós' next tiger character, Ramón Villaamil, the perpetual cesante who ends up using his pistol to kill himself. He is first described with his ferocious eyes that seem those of a "tigre viejo y tísico" (44) and Galdós enjoys playing with the sufferings of the old beast. So when his professional ambition is once more frustrated his face takes on the "ferocidad sanguinaria en las ocasiones aflictivas, y aquel bendito, incapaz de matar una mosca, cuando le amargaba una pesadumbre parecía tener entre los dientes carne humana cruda, sazonada con acíbar en vez de sal" (60). This ferociously expressionist effect, however, is annulled by the self-destructive autophagy of what his sister-in-law, doña Pura, and his daughter, Adelarda, see when they read "en su cara de tigre caduco y veterano la pena que interiormente le devoraba" (60). The only time this animal can really roar is when Villaamil sees that the household is going to lose the grandson that he really loves to the plans of Víctor to leave the boy with his aunt, so don Ramón imitates a saint in agony: "simulando la figura de San Andrés clavando en las aspas, y rugía con toda la fuerza de sus pulmones: "--¡Que se lo lleve [. . .]!" He then exclaims against the mad, cowardly women who have surrounded him and asks: "¿no sabéis que *Morimos* [. . .] *Inmolados* [. . .] *Al* [. . .] *Ultraje*?" (327). This acrostic adds up not to a sustained roar, but rather to a symbolic meow of this endearingly frustrated character.

Maybe in *Miau* we have the clue to Galdós' attitude towards Darwin in the character of the portero Mendizábal, whom don Benito describes as "el hombre gorila, aquel monstruo cuyas enormes manos tocarían el suelo a poco que la cintura se doblase, aquel tipo de transición zoológica en cuyo cráneo parecían verse demonstradas las audaces hipótesis de Darwin" (128). Bold Darwin might have been, but the Canary Island novelist is too spiritual and too uncomfortable with such a crude animal origin. So Villaamil, on his last magnificent afternoon of wines and taverns and evening death, spends part of his time escaping from the monkey man Mendizábel converted into a spy and, at the same time, a Judas

monster guilty of despotism and reactionary politics, the outreach of the traditional that has been choking him to death. Galdós makes the portero caretaker the jailer of his protagonist, a sociological monkey who has been protecting the stifling system of repression in 19th century Spanish society:

> Vete al cuerno, grandísimo reaccionario, que lo que
> es a mí no me encadenas tú [. . .] Me f[r]u[s]tro
> en tu absolutismo y en tu inquisición. Jeríngate, animal,
> carca y liberticida, que yo soy libre y liberal y demócrata,
> y anarquista y petrolero, y hago mi santísima voluntad [. . .]" (367)

This may also be a cry against the reductionist sense of man interpreted as merely a beast that climbed down from the Darwinian tree of time without a soul.

With respect to the numerous devourings that both novels include, Clarín portrays a sickly Ana who is made to eat all she can by her doctor and aunt. Leopoldo Alas indicates she is being prepared for the sacrifice: "Querían engordarla como una vaca que ha de ir al mercado. Era preciso devorar, aunque costase un poco de llanto al principio el pasar los bocados" (1: 287). Who then is going to eat the sacrificial cow? Why her future husband, for Quintanar is first described as "un caballero que se la comía con los ojos" (1: 307). Clarín is taking advantage of slightly vulgar colloquial expressions to emphasize the rapacity of the world he describes. But whereas the judge is ready to devour his pretended in his amorous zeal, Fortunata, remembering the mysterious attraction of Mauricia la Dura, her spiritual advisor in the reformatory, finally feels her presence inside her as though she had gulped her down: "Sentíala dentro de sí, como si se la hubiera tragado, cual si la hubiera tomado en comunión" (2: 236). To the notion of a loving devouring, Galdós adds the Christian element of a Eucharistic consuming of what is for his protagonist a divine, if we may think, flawed creature. These contrasts were surely intended by the Canary Island novelist and form part of the animal-eat-animal context of the Spanish version of the naturalistic novel.

Perhaps what we are really dealing with regarding animals in these two novels is the "esperpento" (2: 222) that Jacinta notes in a tree, but this time, the somewhat twisted tree of human conduct. Spanish medieval literature had its translation of Aesop. The Spanish nineteenth century novel has these two fables of human creatures to show us what a predominantly rural society can learn from wildlife with a grotesque twist.

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