FETISHISM OF THE COMMODITY: GALDÓS'S INTERPRETATION OF THE CAPITALIST DISCOURSE OF THE BOURGEOISIE IN *FORTUNATA Y JACINTA*

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In *Fortunata y Jacinta*, one of the seemingly infinite strands of narrative development explores the role of capitalism as the authoritative and defining principle of the ruling class's social dominance. The celebrated bourgeois couple—Baldomero Santa Cruz and Barbarita Arnáiz—rules over Madrid's society as if their status were an inherent right, with this presumption especially characterizing Bárbara's social interactions. The presence of this power has not gone unrecognized. Julio Rodríguez Puértolas claims that Bárbara arrogates to herself an infallibility on a par with papal power (117). James Whiston attributes to her a striving for absolute authority, while Harriet Turner notes that this dominance takes the form of tyrannical rule over Jacinta.[1] It is apparent that Bárbara reigns over the lives of other characters with much power; however, this sense of inalienable right is not guaranteed by her class background. The fragility of social hegemony is clearly observed by Galdós as he depicts the rise and fall of families caused by the vicissitudes of the commercial market—those who were once the Morenos *ricos* had descended to the status of Morenos *pobres* (243).

In spite of the obvious function of economic factors in determining social supremacy, we must wonder how, in light of the unpredictability of capitalist cycles, the newly rich came to believe in their superiority as a natural phenomenon. Galdós explores the roots of the bourgeoisie's social behavior in the infamously long chapter II, aptly titled *Santa Cruz y Arnáiz, Vistazo histórico sobre el comercio matritense*, which brings to light the origins of the newly empowered class. Whiston explains that the attitude of social superiority characterizes the "longest episode in Volume I" in which predominates a "tendency of characters to see human relationships in a commercial [way]" (*Struggle* 80). An analysis of the upbringing of Barbarita Arnáiz exposes the flaws implicit in a socialization process within this transition from a religiously organized world to one governed by the demands of a market culture, in which social relations were defined in terms of commercial value that reduced individuals to social commodities.

To speak of the commodity as a nineteenth-century phenomenon is, of course, to speak of Karl Marx's critique of the exchange process inherent in the capitalist socio-economic structure. In Marx's work *Capital* (1867), he defines the commodity as "an object outside of us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another" (303). As the material element of capitalist society, the commodity makes concrete the abstract identification of social status. Marx attempted to demystify the power of the commodity by exposing the phenomenon that converts this material object into a social substance. The exchangeable product links producers and consumers through a mediated union by defining social identity in terms of the product's value; in other words, through a metonymic transfer the individual becomes an integrated component of the commodity.

Marx identified two elements that shape the composition of the commodity. The first distinguishes the utility of an object and its tangible worth, which he called 'use-value': "This property of a commodity is independent of the labour required to appropriate its useful qualities. With use-value, we always assume to be dealing with definite quantities, such as dozens of watches, yards of linen, or tons of iron. [...] Use-values become a reality only by use or consumption ...." (*Capital* 303). This, according to Marx, is the preliminary component required to stimulate the creation of the commodity; however, its exchange-value, which is contingent on the use-value and lacks the same material measurement of worth, completes its status and value as a commodity. As Marx stated, the use-value can be determined in specific quantities; however, the exchange-value "appears to be something accidental and purely relative [...]" (*Capital* 304). This market phenomenon is activated when an item is exchanged, thus creating a commodity whose value is intrinsically tied to the labor involved. However, it is possible to attribute a use-value to an object without creating a commodity:

> A thing can be a use-value, without having value. This is the case whenever its utility to man is not due to labour. [...] A thing can be useful, and the product of human labour, without being a commodity. Whoever directly satisfies his wants with the produce of his own labour, creates, indeed use-values, but no commodities. [...] To become a commodity a product must be transferred to another whom it will serve as a use-value, by means of an exchange. (*Capital* 307-08)

Therefore, the commercial evolution of an object to a commodity is realized through a social interaction; however, this process considerably alters the attitude toward the significance of the product as well as the measure of social status ascribed to the individual associated with the commodity. This specific organizing social principle defines the contours of the bourgeois identity as a merchant class.

The bourgeois socialization process was, in essence, a social system that replaced a religious fervor with a consumer-oriented one. In a community that is defined by its religious identity, the objects of worship contain a transcendental aspect, which Marx called fetishism. In a society governed by commercial laws, the intangible nature of the worth of a commodity incites a mystical treatment of the object; it appears to hold a power over the producer and consumer simulating a religious experience that has its "analogy, [in] the mist-enveloped regions of the religious-world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands" (*Capital* 321). A devaluing of the totality of the human experience is symptomatic in the privileging of the hand as a tool of market productions. The synechdocal significance of the hand for the whole underscores the value placed exclusively on the commercial world in which social interaction and worth relied exclusively on the act of exchange.

It is not surprising that Marx's critique of the capitalist system resonates in the narrative of *Fortunata y Jacinta*. The principal criticism presented by both Marx and Galdós

decried the bourgeois social process that conferred on the individual a constrictive identity in terms of a market value. As Puértolas points out, the new configuration of the social hierarchy replaced "el amor y la libertad naturales" with "la naturalidad burguesa, social, y sus normas" ("*Fortunata y Jacinta*" 193). The newly empowered class mystified the commodity as the unifying principle of the social matrix that qualified self-worth based on the value generated by the exchange process rather than through traditionally conceived personal ties. John Sinnigen adds that "La expansión del modo de producción capitalista conllevaba la generalización del mercado anónimo y la sustitución de relaciones económicas entre personas por relaciones entre cosas, lo que Marx describió como el fetichismo de la mercancía" (190). The pernicious effect of this transformation limited social identities to those expressed in terms of the market discourse in which the commodity determined individual value.

Why, however, is this relevant to the overall interpretation of the novel? We must first question why Galdós includes the temporally out-of-sync chapter II in the novel at all. The insidious impact of the bourgeois socialization process is fundamental to understanding the creation of the individual consciousness of the members of the privileged class; it is a defining principle that dictates social interactions and the education process of succeeding generations.[2] This narrative space dedicated to the formation of the new class's identity through its formative years contextualizes the ensuing social interactions informed by the interpretation of human value as social commodities.

In chapter II, part II, the focus of the narrative turns to Barbarita's childhood. Immediately after commenting on her birthplace, the narrator leads the reader away from the confines of the home by denigrating both the spatial and emotional images typically associated with this intimate space. The imagery of the home ceases to be the setting of familial love and warmth, portraying instead a hostile environment that oppresses the physical and emotional maturation of its inhabitants. The narrative presents a densely populated neighborhood teeming with "oprimidos edificios que parecen estuches o casas de muñecas" (126), hinting at the notion of overproduction as well as dehumanization. Likewise, the dubious structural integrity of the buildings of the Arnáiz's neighborhood conveys a sense of unreliability: "...se veían mezquinos arcos de fábrica para sostener el entramado de las escaleras, y abundaba tanto el yeso en la construcción como escaseaban el hierro y la madera"(126). If, as Eric Hobsbawm comments in *The Age of Revolution*, the economic strength of the newly formed western bourgeois capitalist society was measured by its ability to produce and sustain a substantial iron and steel industry (42), the flimsy building materials that form the foundation of the Spanish bourgeoisie's habitat may be seen as a fitting symbol of essential limitations in the infrastructure of the rising class itself. The degeneration was already apparent in the general failure to maintain, in working order, "[los] cerrojos imposibles de manejar y las vidrieras emplomadas..." (126). Moreover, the narrator's attitude toward this environment calls attention to the negative influence on the individual, of these living conditions, in which "las habitaciones parecían destinadas a la premeditación de algún crimen"(126).[3] This process that sees the *pañolería* replace the

home consequently depicts as a natural phenomenon Bárbara's social awakening as a product of the *pañolería*. However, careful scrutiny of the socialization process of the bourgeoisie immersed in this environment reveals an overall failure to adapt to the shifts in social identity paralleling the rise of a capitalist society.[4]

As a child entrenched in the ambience of her father's dry goods store, Barbarita's response to her environment makes evident the internalization of the processes that not only distort her conception of social relations, but also incite in her, as in her class, the fetishism of the commodity. Barbarita's senses are informed by the impressions of this comercial stimulus: "Creció Bárbara en una atmósfera saturada de olor de sándalo, y las fragancias orientales, juntamente con los vivos colores de la pañolería chinesca, dieron acento poderoso a las impresiones de su niñez" (126). Not only Bárbara's sensorial memories, but also her interpretation of reality is based on the commercial context of her childhood: "Las facultades de Bárbara se desarrollaron asociadas a la contemplación de estas cosas, y entre las primeras conquistas de sus sentidos, ninguna tan segura como la impresión de aquellas flores bordadas con luminosos torzales, y tan frescas que parecía cuajarse en ellas el rocío" (128). Through the use of such terms as "saturada," and "conquistas" the narrator implies that the influence of other socialization processes were subjugated to that of the commercial environment. There was no room for other experiences in Barbarita's upbringing, and the filter through which she interprets her world will be exclusively controlled by this milieu.

The vivid recollection of the objects virtually alive in her family's shop accentuates the character of the commodity as a social stimulus: "En días de gran venta cuando había muchas señoras en la tienda y los dependientes desplegaban sobre el mostrador centenares de pañuelos, la lóbrega tienda semejaba un jardín" (128). The contrast between the somber mood of the *pañolería* during periods in which there were limited sales and the almost festive spirit during moments of high customer volume emphasizes not the abundance of people, but rather the hyperbolic presence of *pañuelos*. In this distinction, the product is the true protagonist in the vivacity associated with social interaction. It is evident that what Bárbara remembers as inciting dramatic and endearing memories are fetishized objects and not the presence of other human beings. The conspicuous absence of human interaction between Bárbara and other people calls attention to the favored social position of the commodity over that of the individual. The people in the store serve one purpose, that of drawing out the commercial value implicit in the displayed items. This social act manifest in the exchange process triggers the identification of social worth through the value associated with the commodity, and only secondarily, extends to the producer and consumer a position in the social hierarchy. As Barbarita matured, her intense attraction to the inanimate objects in her father's store increased. Her skewed value system originates, in part, from her mother's behavior, indicating a process of generational influence. The objects arouse powerful emotions in Bárbara as she watches her mother's hands caress fans and other cloth items in order to display the qualities of the commodity: "Más adelante pudo la niña apreciar la belleza y variedad de los abanicos que había en la casa y que eran una de las principales riquezas de ella. Quedábase pasmada cuando veía los dedos de su mamá

sacándolos de las perfumadas cajas y abriéndolos como saben abrirlos los que comercian en este artículo..." (129). Within this context of commodity exchange, the human body ceases to contribute anything of worth beyond the limits of production or acquisition. The hand, specifically, attracts full attention as the human component of market relations; it produces, it displays, and it realizes the enactment of exchange through payment and delivery. The young Arnáiz girl reacts emotionally to the contact between the commodity and the hand; however, the link to other individuals is always mediated by objects.

Bárbara, as a child within the *pañolería*, lacks the economic power to establish a meaningful and worthy identity as consumer; nor is she capable of identifying with the producer, or in this case the vendor. Her mother, Asunción Trujillo, had also contributed to her devalued status by only allowing access to the items of lesser significance in the store: "Lo más que se le permitía era poner sobre el tablero de ajedrez que estaba en la vitrina de la ventana enrejada [...] todas las piezas de un juego, no de los más finos..." (129-30). By internalizing her lower status in relation to the material objects, Bárbara comes to understand her worth in this socio-economic environment as that equated to a commodity, the only possible role available to a non-producer or consumer. This becomes readily apparent through the depiction of the relationship between Bárbara and her mother. The narrative representation of Asunción limits the information to activities focused on the products in the shop, restricting the only physical contact between mother and daughter to an interaction imbued with commercial significance: "Barbarita abría cada ojo como los de un ternero cuando su mamá, *sentándola sobre el mostrador*, le enseñaba abanicos sin dejárselos tocar..." (emphasis mine) (129). Asunción Trujillo situates her daughter among the items on the counter, converting her into an object on display as well. As Marx had explained, the exchange-value of the commodity was measured by its relativity discernible through the comparison of two different products; Bárbara's placement on the counter established her social worth in terms of the other items exhibited. This metonymic characterization as a commodity in relation to the other items reveals the only portrayal of tenderness the mother extends to her child, disclosing the ways in which the market value conditioned social identity.

Human interaction limited to a commercialized context leaves young Bárbara privileging the inanimate object as she attempts to establish social relations. In two specific examples, the narrator alludes to a sense of great familial love and cherished memories while recalling figures from Barbarita's childhood, that, although they do not belong to the immediate family, appear to move within the inner circle of the family unit: "Como se recuerda a las personas más queridas de la familia, así vivieron y viven siempre con dulce memoria en la mente..." (126). Until this moment, it is understood that these individuals have formed part of Bárbara's childhood experiences and continue to live in her memory with equal importance; however, as the narrator continues, the horrifying reality of the identity of these endearing figures is exposed: "así vivieron y viven siempre con dulce memoria en la mente los dos maniquís del tamaño natural vestidos de mandarín que había en la tienda y en los cuales sus ojos aprendieron a ver" (127). Through the focalized

narrative, these two lifelike yet inanimate figures appear to displace the relation expected between parents and children. The life-size mannequins serve as two imitation parents occupying the memories of Barbarita's first emotional relationship: "La primera cosa que excitó la atención naciente de la niña, cuando estaba en brazos de su niñera, fueron estos dos pasmarotes de semblante lelo y desabrido, y sus magníficos trajes morados" (127). The inanimate objects that are dressed in the very cloth that gave her family social supremacy as merchants of dry goods evince more emotional response from the child than the real individuals present. As she maneuvers her own social position in this commercial world, Bárbara claims superiority in the hierarchical system as she gazes on these lifeless mannequins with their frozen look of fear and stupidity. In essence, she comes to understand that social dominance depends on the conquest, later to take shape as acquisition, of the inanimate object that transfers its worth to that of the consumer.

Bárbara's second fond memory of a childhood relationship exposes the grotesque nature of her confusion between the inanimate object and human worth: "También había por allí una persona a quien la niña miraba mucho, y que la miraba a ella con ojos dulces y cuajados de candoroso chino. Era el retrato de Ayún, de cuerpo entero y tamaño natural, dibujado y pintado con dureza, pero con gran expresión" (127). The narrator exposes, once again, Bárbara's misguided social filter that animates the inanimate object. She fetishizes the representative image of Ayún by imagining a shared experience of gazing upon one another. Likewise, her fusion of the representation of Ayún with that of a fully realized social being is evident in the use of "persona" to identify the status of this replica of life.

The portrait of Ayún represents a two-fold process of the impact of the fetishism of the commodity. On the one hand, the image is an imitation of life infused with value due to its material substance; on the other hand, Ayún symbolizes the power of the producer. The *mantón de manila*, created by Ayún, as well as contributing to the commercial success of the Arnáiz family, extends to the portrait an increased social value based on the economic worth associated with the image of producer. These experiences are at the root of Bárbara's inverted value system that has taught her to recognize in the inanimate object the means through which she must construct her own social worth.

The potent stimulus provoked by the commodity suggests an analogy with the mystical realm of the religious experience. As a child, Barbarita was deeply moved by the rituals of social behavior attributed to the commodity. Her mother substantiated this interpretation of the value of the commodity as a transcendental object through her reverence in handling the products in the store: "Por el respeto con que su mamá los cogía y los guardaba, creía Bárbarita que contenían algo así como el Viático para los enfermos, o lo que se da a las personas cuando comulgan" (129). In a sense, Barbarita experiences a mystical fever desiring union, not with God, but rather with the substituting icon embodied in the commodity: "Muchas noches se acostaba con fiebre porque no le habían dejado satisfacer su anhelo de coger para sí aquellas monerías" (129). In order to achieve "spiritual" fulfillment, Bárbara aligns her social activities to appease her desire for unity with this coveted object. Unlike the harmony implicit in the relationship between the divinity and the

believer, the commercial idol degrades by supplanting spiritual values with material ones. James Whiston comments that, "Although religious sentiment pervades the novel it makes no impact and is indistinguishable from materialistic or social concerns since characters use it for their own ends" ("Materialism" 71). This replacement system is devoid of any transcendental significance for the individual who is consequently reduced to either producer, consumer, or as we have seen, human commodity.

As Bárbara moves from the sheltered space of the *pañolería* to the social environment of her school years, the inculcated values of commercialization continue to inform the behavior of the young woman, expressing itself in a competitive relationship between her and her classmates. The complexity of relations increases as the young Arnáiz girl is now required to compare her worth to that of other merchants' daughters, Eulalia Muñoz and Castita Moreno. The social supremacy established in these new relationships depends on which of their fathers' respective shops possesses the material item with the highest value.

Each of the three girls—socialized within the context of this commercial world—understands the social position and worth of the individual through the value of the objects exhibited. In a contest of supremacy, the three girls display their objects according to the tenets of their class. Eulalia, Castita and Barbarita understand that a higher social value is attributed to the girl who proffers the most spectacular item. A comparison of the crucial moments of the girls' demonstrations of their social superiority expresses the underlying commercial values of the bourgeoisie. Eulalia presents her most revered item: "Pero lo que tenía en más estima, y por esto no lo sacaba sino en ciertos días, era su colección de etiquetas..." (131). The next girl, Castita, follows suit, presenting an item more intriguing than that of Eulalia: "La chiquilla de Moreno fundaba su vanidad en llevar papelejos con figuritas y letras de colores [...]. Los mostraba uno por uno, dejando para el final el gran efecto, que consistía en sacar de súbito el pañuelo y ponerlo en las narices de sus amigas, diciéndoles: *goled*" (131). Barbarita concludes the competition by triumphantly showing impressive and exotically scented pieces of paper from her father's store:

> Al día siguiente, Barbarita, que no quería dar su brazo a torcer, llevaba unos papelitos muy raros de pasta, todos llenos de garabatos chinescos. Despúes de darles mucha importancia, haciendo que lo enseñaba y volviéndolo a guardar, con lo cual la curiosidad de las otras llegaba al punto de la desazón nerviosa, de repente ponía el papel en las narices de sus amigas diciendo en tono triunfal: "¿Y eso?" Quedábanse Castita y Eulalia atontadas con el aroma asiático, vacilando entre la admiración y la envidia; pero al fin no tenían más remedio que humillar su soberbia ante el olorcillo aquel de la niña de Arnaiz.... (132)

The social hierarchy is established through the ability to display the most valued and coveted item; Bárbara's success consolidates her superior position among the three girls by means of the object. The key unifying link between these items that the young girls display is the possession of a rare, unattainable product that leaves the possible consumer, in this case, the friends, with a desire for more; each child comprehends that the underlying

mechanisms of market demands function by stimulating the need for acquisition of the valued product. The transaction between the girls thus parodies the market principles that underlie their class.

It is true that Barbara's infatuation with the object is, at times, attributed to her youthful innocence; the narrator describes the reaction to the commodity as possibly limited to childhood: "Ocuparon más adelante el primer lugar en el *tierno* corazón de la hija de D. Bonafacio Arnaiz y en sus *sueños inocentes*, otras preciocidades que la mamá solía mostrarle..." (emphasis mine) (129). However, the highly focalized narrative reveals that the reverence for the object did not disappear with adulthood; as the narrator states, "así vivieron y viven siempre con dulce memoria..." (126). In fact, Bárbara's affection for the coveted objects from the *pañolería* never diminishes. At a point when the narrator mentions Bárbara's need to confront the realities of adulthood while facing the difficulties following her father's death, she continues to treat the object with an unrestrained enthusiasm:

> Entonces pasaron por las manos de Barbarita todas las preciosidades que en su niñez le parecían juguetes y que le habían producido fiebre. A pesar de la edad y del juicio adquirido con ella, no vio nunca con indiferencia tales chucherías, y hoy mismo declara que cuando cae en sus manos alguno de aquellos delicados campanarios de marfil, le dan ganas de guardárselo en el seno y echar a correr. (136)

Her socialization process consisted of the immersion in a commercialized environment that not only animated the inanimate object, but also dictated the manner in which Bárbara interpreted the relations and social worth of individuals. Emblematic of her class, the behavior depicted in her childhood serves as an example of the consequences of the fetishism of the commodity.

As an adult, Bárbara's life is centered on acquisition and ownership; her movement within society emphasizes control and submission. As a result, Barbarita's influence as a role model for the next generation, Juanito and her niece/ daughter-in-law Jacinta, will cause inevitable immobility and sterility. Marx depicted the capitalist system as a voracious animal that destroys the intimate relations between individuals as social creatures. The consumer requires greater conquests in order to sustain social identity in the market culture; however, the unquenchable impetus to consume derives from a need to fill a void left by older social forms of self realization. This desperate need to consume, governed by the greater demands placed on the psyche of the consumer to acquire more as part of the construction of the self, is evident in Barbarita's daily indulgences in shopping: "Barbarita tenía la *chifladura* de las compras. Cultivaba el arte por el arte, es decir la compra por la compra. Adquiría por el simple placer de adquirir. [...] Había días de compras grandes y otros de menudencias; pero días sin comprar no los hubo" (256, 260). As she conquers the world of commodities, Bárbara seeks out new ways in which to appease her desire to consume. This leads to a breakdown of the borders dividing human worth from that of the value placed on the commodity. As a result, Bárbara sees in her future daughter-in-law a

highly valued commodity that had been placed in the public arena for acquisition.

Jacinta formed part of a household of many girls that seemed a burden to the family's financial health due to the social demands of presenting the young women as attractive and worthy mates for sons of well-to-do families. The girls' mother, Isabel Cordero, prepares them to be examined by the public, displaying her daughters as objects to be sold:

> Doña Isabel estaba siempre con cada ojo como un farol, y no las perdía de vista un momento. A esta fatiga ruda del espionaje materno uníase el trabajo de exhibir y airear el muestrario, por ver si caía algún parroquiano o por otro nombre, marido. Era forzoso *hacer el artículo*, y aquella gran mujer, *negociante en hijas*, no tenía más remedio que vestirse y concurrir con su género a tal o cual tertulia de amigas... (emphasis mine) (159-60).

Isabel Cordero designs the show window, and Bárbara goes shopping, considering Jacinta in the rhetorical terms of the market: "Barbarita, que la había criado, conocía bien sus notables *prendas* morales, los *tesoros* de su corazón amante, que *pagaba siempre con creces* el cariño que se le tenía y por todo esto se enorgullecía de su elección" (196). The focalized expression of Bárbara here describes Jacinta in terms of a material product. Once again Bárbara has acquired the most exotic object, which will soon be described as *la mona del cielo* among *madrileños* of all classes.

Harriet Turner explains the previous transaction as symptomatic of an underlying incestuous relationship between Bárbara and Juanito: "So it is Doña Bárbara, not Juanito nor the prospective daughter-in-law, who designs the role of wife, cutting out of whole cloth the pattern of "calza" and shaping *her pretty porcelain doll* to fit in" (9). In order to maintain the perversion, Bárbara strips the role of wife from Jacinta in subtle dehumanizing manners. Turner calls attention to the transformation of Jacinta into a doll-like creature, although, we must insist that this is not solely a result of Bárbara's disturbing role with her son, but also a manifestation of her entire life history, and of her class's values.

Soon after Jacinta enters Bárbara's world, a disturbing parallel arises that links Jacinta to her mother-in-law's beloved Chinese mannequins from the latter's childhood: "Por su talle delicado y su figura y cara porcelanescas, revelaba ser una de esas hermosas a quienes la Naturaleza concede poco tiempo de esplendor..." (195). Her porcelain figure and face appear very much to conform to the dolls and Chinese figures of Barbarita's childhood that she "embebecía contemplando aquellas figuras tan *monas*, que no le parecían personas, sino chinos, con las caras redondas y tersas como hojitas de rosa..." (129). In both cases, there is a reference to inanimate faces; the porcelain face of Jacinta is similar to the tight round faces of the figurines. There is also a reference to the ephemeral beauty suggested by the images of the figurines; however, it is to Jacinta that the short-lived beauty of the rose is metaphorically appropriate. In one instance, it is quite literal that Jacinta will age quickly and lose her youthful looks; on the other hand, it is a frightening foreshadowing of Barbarita's will over Jacinta's, which will transform the latter from a living, productive

human into an inanimate replica of one of Bárbara's childhood fetishes. It is also relevant to recognize the adjective assigned to both the figurines and Jacinta as *mona*. In Barbarita's language the distance between her daughter-in-law and her childhood fascination for life-like dolls is overcome; the "*figuras monas en los abanicos*" becomes the "*mona del cielo.*" Barbarita's project to marry her son to the *figura mona* holds within it the thrill of recapturing her childhood fetish.

Bárbara's formative years serve as the paradigm of the degraded social relations produced by the all-consuming capitalist system. Through the examination of Bárbara Arnáiz's upbringing, we witness a confusion of natural human relations with the imitation of life derived from the socialization process in the commercial environment of the *pañolería*. The object takes on a higher value in the market-based world, simultaneously dictating the social worth of the producer and buyer. Outside this matrix of commodity exchange social worth is non-existent, a theme which is manifest throughout the novel in the attempted silencing of those members who do not—and will not—participate in the market relations.

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NOTES

[1] These theories are developed in the respective articles by Whiston: "The Materialism of Life: Religion in *Fortunata y Jacinta*" and "The Struggle for Life in *Fortunata y Jacinta*" and Turner's "Lazos y tiranías familiares: una reevaluación de Jacinta."

[2] Stephen Gilman comments that the necessity of the long-winded recounting of the rise of the Santa Cruz family is predicated on the need to situate the characters in "his or her fictional and therefore believed-in present [in which he or she] copes with historical and social determinism" (*Galdós* 239).

[3] Geoffrey Ribbans comments on the relation of complicity between the members of the bourgeoisie and the narrator/ acquaintance of the upper class: "The narrator clearly functions within the world of the prosperous bourgeoisie and accepts its values without question" (92-3). He notes that "Galdós retains a strong mimetic thrust while casting doubt on the very values his narrator espouses" (104). We can assume, in this case, that the strong unity characterizing the relationship between the narrator and this class is not intended to present the bourgeoisie as the infallible social model.

[4] The childlike attitude of the characters is symptomatic of the arrested development of the bourgeoisie. However, as the narrator indicates through the use of the present tense, the animating of inanimate objects continues into the present of Bárbara's adulthood.

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