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Beyond Bricks and Mortar: The Use of the City Setting in Fortunata y Jacinta and in Bleak House

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Beyond Bricks and Mortar:
The Use of the City Setting in *Fortunata y Jacinta* and in *Bleak House*

Claire G. Merrill

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of the
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Introduction

Benito Pérez Galdós and Charles Dickens were prolific writers, widely read in their native countries of Spain and England during their lifetimes, and remain popular today. Each, early in his career, spent some time as a journalist, perhaps enhancing or perhaps acquiring an appreciation for history and social problems. *Bleak House*, Dickens's ninth novel, was published in twenty monthly installments between March 1852 and September 1853. Thirty years later, Pérez Galdós published *Fortunata y Jacinta*, his eighth novel. An avid reader of foreign novels, notably the works of Dickens, Pérez Galdós himself said that he considered Dickens his most well-loved teacher and was proud to be called the Spanish Dickens.

The great cities of Madrid and London and their sprawling physical existence in the middle of the 19th century are vividly rendered in *Fortunata y Jacinta* and in *Bleak House*. Both novels are long and complex, featuring hundreds of characters and plots intertwined with a vast number of sub-plots— fitting for the 19th century when the capital cities of Europe were complicated places of wealth, privilege, and seemingly endless poverty and corruption. Innumerable characters reinforce the large scale of the cities; at the same time, the reader ponders how the authors could possibly connect all of the characters into comprehensible stories.

The city settings provide Dickens and Pérez Galdós with particular opportunities to explore many facets of human nature. In Madrid and London, characters are able to be anonymous, a feature which leads to individuals being introspective, which is crucial to the character development and plots of both novels. A compilation of social worlds, with poverty existing side by side with wealth, cities afford a coexistence that heightens expectations of social mobility, but cities also provide opportunities for social slumming— causing a variety of conflicts between characters. The possibilities for characters' placement and movements through the cities are infinite.

The cities' twists and turns pull the reader in countless directions, the setting maneuvering the reader through the social scenes which are the heart of the novels and of 19th century Madrid and London. And ultimately, the authors establish cohesive narration in large part by their impressive use of the city.

I would like in this essay to explore the use of the city settings in *Bleak House* and *Fortunata y Jacinta*— the intimate interior spaces and the public exterior venues enlivened, elucidated, placed in the background, and propelled to the forefront by the authors, who carefully select and craft the locales in which societies at large and individual characters live, locations that actively drive the narratives. How do Pérez Galdós and Dickens depict Madrid and London, their complex interiors and streets? In what ways do characters inhabit and move

through these spaces? And, what do we learn from the settings in *Fortunata y Jacinta* and in *Bleak House*, and from tracing the evolving relationships that the characters maintain with their city environments?

Summaries of the Novels

A brief outline of each of the novels will present the complexity without, hopefully, undermining the sheer fun— the subtle (and not-so-subtle) humor, the layered character development, and the thoughtful social observations that Pérez Galdós and Dickens bestow to us in their works.

Bleak House

Set in London, *Bleak House* centers around an interminable court case concerning a testator who supposedly made several wills, all of them different. *Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce* draws together a disparate group of characters: Ada Clare and Richard Carstone, two young wards whose inheritance is gradually being devoured by legal costs, Esther Summerson, a ward of the court, whose parentage is a source of deepening mystery and the principal plot-driver, Tulkinghorn, a menacing lawyer, Bucket, a determined investigator, John Jarndyce, guardian of Richard and Ada and relative of the man named in the case, to name a few. The story is told alternately by the novel's heroine, Esther Summerson, and an omniscient narrator.

Dickens' plot moves quickly, and he starts off the novel with intrigue and scandal. Lady Dedlock, a member of high-society married to Sir Leicester Dedlock, had a lover, Captain Hawdon, or Nemo, before she married her husband- and (unknown to Hawdon) a child, Esther Summerson. Esther is, as

the novel opens, brought to London to be under the guardianship of John Jarndyce; she moves into Bleak House, living with Mr. Jarndyce and his two wards, Richard Carstone and Ada Clare. Richard and Ada soon fall in love, but Mr. Jarndyce stipulates that Richard must choose a profession before they marry.

Meanwhile, the intrigue surrounding Lady Dedlock continues as she becomes aware of the proximity of Nemo, Esther's father, and Esther herself—both of whom she had presumed dead. Nemo dies before they meet, but the scandal does not remain hidden, as Tulkinghorn investigates Lady Dedlock's past. Esther faces her own problems, her beauty disfigured after a terrible illness. Richard fails at a series of professions, has squandered money, is in poor health, and has nonetheless married Ada. Esther also gets a taste of romance when Doctor Woodcourt, who knew Esther prior to her illness, returns from abroad and expresses interest despite her disfigurement. Esther, however, has already agreed to marry John Jarndyce.

Investigating Lady Dedlock's past, Tulkinghorn unearths the truth; confronted by Tulkinghorn, Lady Dedlock takes flight. Inspector Bucket searches for her, having enlisted Esther's assistance. They eventually find Lady Dedlock, dead at the cemetery where Nemo is buried, where Esther despairs over the loss of the mother she never knew.

By the end of the novel, Jarndyce accepts that he should not marry Esther, freeing her to become engaged to Woodcourt. The legal case is finally brought to a conclusion- and though a new will was found which would leave most of the Jarndyce estate to Richard and Ada, attendant costs have consumed the funds. Richard, sick, dies, Jarndyce takes in Ada and her child, and Esther and Woodcourt marry. This cheerful ending contrasts with the sad conclusion of another plot in the novel, where an obedient young street urchin, Jo, is cast off from society and dies. Various concerned and helpful individuals are unable to overcome his mournful existence in London.

Fortunata y Jacinta

Fortunata y Jacinta, set in Madrid, follows a few generations of the Santa Cruz family, centering on the destructive jealousy of two women who love the same man, Juanito Santa Cruz: one his wife, Jacinta, of his same elevated social class, the other his mistress, Fortunata. Fortunata, a lower-class woman, struggles against Jacinta. Both find themselves in unhappy marriages, Jacinta from jealousy and childlessness, while Fortunata from malaise, having married Maxi, an assistant in a pharmacy, for convenience.

Juanito, the son of a wealthy family, is drawn to Fortunata when he is a young man. Soon after their first chance encounter, however, Juanito tires of Fortunata and disappears from her life. Relieved, Juanito's mother arranges for

him to marry his cousin, Jacinta. During their honeymoon, he reveals his past indiscretions, his time spent in the poor neighborhoods of Madrid— indiscreetly mentioning Fortunata.

Years pass, with Juanito and Jacinta in a marriage that has— for her— the sadness of being childless. Her feverish desire to have a child leads to the discovery that Juanito might have had a son with Fortunata, which sends Jacinta in search of this child. Aided by a family friend, Guillermina, a guiding force for social reform, she soon finds out that her husband is not the father.

Meanwhile, Fortunata has been supported by a series of men. Once, while at a friend's house, she meets Maxi, described as chronically weak and completely devoid of physical charm, who immediately falls in love with the beautiful young woman. She becomes his mistress, then his wife, following a period in a convent to improve her suitability as a bride, since Maxi's family had previously deemed her socially unacceptable.

In spite of Fortunata's intentions to conform to a solid, respectable life, she requires little persuasion to resume an affair with Juanito, who aggressively pursues her affections. This attachment to her first love creates problems for both married couples. Fortunata and Juanito have a series of affairs that continue his pattern of interest then dismissal. The stress of these occurrences leads to mental instability in Maxi, significant unhappiness in Jacinta, and

jealousy in Fortunata. Juanito is content. To top it all off, Fortunata has Juanito's baby, and uncovers that Juanito is engaged in another affair. Fortunata leaves her husband, returns to the neighborhood where she grew up, then dies; she arranges for Jacinta to raise her son. Maxi is removed to an insane asylum.

Characters in an Urban Context

In *Bleak House* and *Fortunata y Jacinta*, the authors provide descriptions of the cities that establish locations often so realistic that it is possible to identify and stand in the exact spots in London and Madrid. We, too, can look up at the dome of Saint Paul's, as does the hapless waif Jo, viewing "the crowning confusion of the great, confused city" (Dickens, 315); we, too, find ourselves "en el centro de la Puerta del Sol" (*Fortunata y Jacinta*, 85, II)¹, without knowing how we arrived there, like the overwhelmed Fortunata. The settings serve to ground the novels in specific places, as well as in the 19th century. Yet Dickens and Pérez Galdós frequently amplify the novels' spaces in ways that carry them beyond geographic placement.

In his opening chapter, Dickens introduces a physical obstruction, one that is not a permanent fixture, to the city streets. "London." (13) begins *Bleak House*, followed by a seemingly dispassionate series of declarative statements about the city. The description continues in the second paragraph, with "Fog everywhere." (13). And, to emphasize the fog's ubiquitous nature, this reference is followed by no fewer than nine sentences and clauses which begin with "fog," declaring its specific presence in locations throughout the city. Having inserted the fog into

¹ "in the middle of the Puerta del Sol" (*Fortunata and Jacinta*, 482).

the city, Dickens proceeds to record its relationship to Londoners: "Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds" (13). The fog consumes the vision of the city for the collective, anonymous inhabitants, those who happen to be passing through the city, and who form the general society. All they see is "a nether sky of fog" which conceals the actual landscape of the city. The image of the people in the clouds further evokes their distance from the reality of London streets; even when firmly on a city structure, a bridge, they are only able to peep, obtaining a limited view. In this initial description of the city, Dickens interjects a powerful organic element that interferes with the ability of the characters to easily view the city.

Raymond Williams asserts in *The Country and the City* that often in Dickens "a way of life takes on physical shape" (156), and he asserts that the fog represents "the human and moral consequences of an indifferent and 'unnatural' society....the obscurity, the darkness, the fog that keeps us from seeing each other clearly and from seeing the relation between ourselves and our actions, ourselves and others" (156). Included prominently in the inaugural description of the city, the fog highlights one of *Bleak House's* principal themes, social responsibility. In the capital city teeming with people, Londoners are often

unaware or uncaring of others, an observation reinforced by the transformative fog that Dickens includes in his description.

Bleak House continues with a third person portrayal of London, revealing that “the dense fog is densest” (Dickens, 14) at the location of the court. “And hard by Temple Bar, in Lincoln’s Inn Hall, at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery” (14). Directly connecting the fog to the court provides information about the court beyond its physical location- “by the Temple Bar, in Lincoln’s Inn Hall;” the description, by the nature of the fog as previously presented, attaches social indifference, or interference in the connections between Londoners, to the Court of Chancery. Not only a facet of the Court, but the Lord High Chancellor is “at the heart” of the interference, its recirculating source.

Dickens, in *Bleak House*, introduces tangible dirt and grime, characterized in ways which transform the descriptions of the landscape into more expansive social commentary. Referring to general, not specifically-identified, characters in relation to the city, he also reflects on social responsibility and moral corruption. This is evident in the initial portrayal of the mass of London’s inhabitants, introducing the reader to the London atmosphere on the first page of the novel: “Foot passengers, jostling one another’s umbrellas, in a general infection of ill-temper, and losing their foot-hold at street corners, where tens of thousands

of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if the day ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest" (13). The physical city is established with the "street corners" and "city's pavement," but the anonymous collection of people who inhabit the space, the "foot passengers," are, at the outset, described as altering the city. Pedestrians' everyday actions are cast in banking terms, as they add "new deposits" that accumulate "at compound interest," an inevitable accumulation that is carried out in the background, without fanfare. The change that the people make to the city's pavement takes the form of physical dirt, a tenacious form which is described as slightly dangerous, on which "tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke." With every new layer of mud, the city becomes more difficult to navigate, yet the process is never arrested. As a group, the society continues a practice which invites ill temper and potential physical harm. This description provides information about more than the condition of the streets on a rainy day; each person is in some part responsible for the accumulation of the mud and the jostling. As Peltason remarks,

Between the will and the execution lies the whole impassable world of fog, mud, and bureaucratic entanglement that the justly famous first chapter of *Bleak House*, "In Chancery," puts before us. The inability of the

first Mr. Jarndyce to enforce his will through time and through the densely populated space of Dickens's imagined world is thus made an instance of the more general failure in this world of clean and effective human action. (671)

Dickens establishes a theme which he develops throughout the novel: the small influence of each individual which, while on its own would exert an insignificant change, upon joining a group creates significant detrimental action. Acting as a negligent collective, society allows dirt to accumulate.

Pérez Galdós, in *Fortunata y Jacinta*, provides passages where the narrator interjects straightforward evaluations into descriptions of the city, altering the basic physical descriptions with subjective judgments. The location of new convents in Madrid is extremely specific: "La planicie de Chamberí, desde los Pozos y Santa Bárbara hasta más allá de Cuatro Caminos, es el sitio preferido de las órdenes nuevas" (*Fortunata y Jacinta*, 591, I)². While Dickens influences the description of London by introducing fog to represent the inhabitants' inattention to their social responsibility, Pérez Galdós influences the portrayal of Madrid through direct observations. Criticism is overt, instead of additional elements acting as metaphors for commentary. Having situated the convents,

² "The flat part of Chamberí, from Los Pozos and Santa Barbara to beyond Cuatro Caminos, is where the new orders prefer to build" (330).

the style of their churches has “pretensiones de elegante” (592, I)³, an impression that the church hierarchy cares more about appearances than it does actual substance, a statement that may be debated. Contestable evaluation escalates; the style of the churches displays “la perversión del gusto en la decoración religiosa” (592, I)⁴. The critique of the facades forms part of the description, a direct commentary on the external showy attributes of the churches. Highlighting the shallow emphasis of religious officials underscores one of the novel’s themes— a prevalent general superficiality in the society.

In *Bleak House*, these amplified descriptions also reinforce and augment character development. Esther, the young, orphaned heroine of the novel and one of its narrators, is new to London and has no knowledge of her place in relation to the people she meets; the fog alerts the reader to the social differences that will play a central role in her upcoming experience with the city. Esther is initially confused by the London air, asking “whether there was a great fire anywhere? For the streets were so full of dense brown smoke that scarcely anything was to be seen” (Dickens, 42). The London atmosphere is novel to Esther, a sharp contrast to the unobscured rural environment familiar to her. Esther’s life in the country had previously awarded her clear vision, and she is

³ “attempt at elegance” (330)

⁴ “a perversion of taste in religious decoration” (331).

unused to the obstructions in the city. Esther, at this point in the novel a newcomer to London, remarks on the fog as an interference in a way that the long-term inhabitants do not. As Esther notices the fog, we appreciate that her character will most likely take an approach in her dealings with others that is uncommon, one that is not as accepting of distance and unconcern.

Richard's character in *Bleak House* evolves from a somewhat serious-minded young man anxious to make his way in the world through diligent work, a slave to the intricacies of the unresolved case of *Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce*. As one of the young wards of Chancery in the Jarndyce case, Richard anticipates receiving a financial settlement. Revealed as mired in the hopeless lawsuit, his ruin is characterized by his inability to choose and maintain a profession, as if a heavy cloud of fog has pervaded his judgment, rendering him incapable of making rational decisions. Richard says to Esther, "I have looked well into the papers, Esther – I have been deep in them for months" (371). His life paralleling the hopelessness of the case, Richard is unable to navigate a clear path to a productive life; Esther notes: "I thought how would this end, how could this end, when so soon and so surely all his manly qualities were touched by the fatal blight that ruined everything it rested on!" (373). Esther intimates that, as long as Richard remains in the city, he will be unable to think clearly. Chancery's fog parallels Richard's confusion, just as Esther's clear vision parallels her

imperviousness to the case. Mr. Guppy remarks to Esther about her invulnerability to the fog, "Not that it affects you, though...." (51). Esther avoids entanglement in the case by making different decisions, something that Richard does not do. The case corrupts and interferes, as Williams asserts in *The Country and the City*, with characters' ability to effectively evaluate their actions in parallel with the pervasive nature of the fog which emanates from the "unnatural court."

* * *

Projected Perception

Descriptions of the settings in *Fortunata y Jacinta* reveal the mental obstacles the characters encounter, and also how the characters frequently modify personal representations of their environment to conform to their own preoccupations. In "Setting in the Galdós Novel," Risley remarks on this connection between a character's surroundings and his or her inner thoughts: Benito Pérez Galdós's "narrative technique is centered in the realist 'formula' of 'ver por fuera, como espectáculo, y sentir por dentro, por dentro de los personajes'" (23)⁵. Ramos states that "la ciudad, además de los edificios y las

⁵ "see from outside, like a spectacle, and feel from within, from within the characters"

calles, funciona como un depósito para los pensamientos y las emociones de la gente que vive en ella" (22)⁶.

When Fortunata, a young woman of the lower classes, is persuaded to formalize her relationship with Maxi, a young man of a higher class who is studying pharmaceuticals, her feelings of hopelessness are underscored by an attendant physical darkness, as well as by barriers to other characters. Fortunata is confined to the convent at the suggestion of Maxi's brother so that she can become 'acceptable' for marriage: "Aquella idea de llevarla al convento como a una casa de purificación, parecióle a Maxi prueba estupenda del gran talento catequizador de su hermano....Tamizada por la religión, Fortunata volvería a la sociedad limpia de polvo y paja, y entonces ¿quién osaría dudar de su honorabilidad?" (*Fortunata y Jacinta*, 571, I)⁷ Fortunata muses about Juanito, the spoiled, only-child of a wealthy Madrid family, and the family life with him that she longs for, her sadness echoed in the color of the clouds outside: "Las recortadas nubes oscuras hacían figuras extrañas, acomodándose al

⁶ "the city, in addition to the buildings and the streets, serves as a repository for the thoughts and emotions of the people living in it."

⁷ "The plan of sending her to a convent to be purified struck Maxi as splendid proof of his brother's great catechizing talent....Sifted by religion, Fortunata would be screened into society free of her dust and straw. Who would dare to cast aspersions on her honor then?" (*Fortunata and Jacinta*, 318)

pensamiento o a la melancolía de los que las miraban” (619, I)⁸. But in spite of the dark clouds, that suggest a storm approaches, at night there is still a soft light that shines in the sky, introducing the glimmer of aspiration Fortunata retains: “cuando en las calles y en las casas era ya de noche, permanecía en aquella parte del cielo la claridad blanda” (619, I)⁹. The nature and placement of the clouds parallels her desire to escape from the confinement of the convent, thereby drawing attention to, and reinforcing, Fortunata’s inner thoughts.

Yet, as the passage continues, it subsequently reveals that Fortunata’s pleasing view will soon be obscured by the new church that is under construction.

Estas hermosuras se ocultarían completamente a la vista de *Filomenas y Josefinas* cuando estuviera concluida la iglesia en que se trabajaba constantemente. Cada día, la creciente masa de ladrillos tapaba una línea de paisaje. Parecía que los albañiles, al poner cada hilada, no construían, sino que borran. De abajo arriba, el panorama iba desapareciendo como un mundo que se anega. Hundiéronse las casas del paseo de Santa Engracia, el Depósito de aguas, después el cementerio. Cuando los ladrillos rozaban ya la bellísima línea del horizonte, aun sobresalían las lejanas torres de Humera y las puntas de los cipreses del Campo Santo. Llegó un día en que las recogidas se alzaban sobre las puntas de los pies o daban saltos para ver algo más y despedirse de aquellos amigos que se iban para siempre. Por fin la techumbre de la iglesia se lo tragó todo, y

⁸“The dark clouds cut strange figures that accommodated themselves to the melancholic, pensive imagination that noticed them” (351).

⁹ “when it was night in the streets and houses, a soft light shone on in that part of the sky” (351)

solo se pudo ver la claridad del crepúsculo, la cola del día arrastrada por el cielo. (619-620, I)¹⁰

Fortunata and the other occupants of the convent derive pleasure from the beauty of the outdoors, looking outside to find a refuge from the isolated life of the convent. Only outside of the walls lie the “hermosuras”¹¹ and the freedom that they bring. The church construction is couched in negative terms: “tapaba,” “borraban,” “iba desapareciendo,” “un mundo que se anega,” “hundiéronse las casas” (619, I)¹²; the women whose lives are purportedly in the process of being uplifted are characterized as inmates, in a projection of their intense sentiments of loss of freedom. As Fortunata’s previously-unfettered life is being curtailed by the tenets of the church, her unhappiness with this development is reflected in

¹⁰ “These beauties were to be completely excluded from the Filomenas’ and Josefinas’ view when the new church-which was being worked on constantly-was finished. Every day the growing mass of bricks covered up another thin layer of the landscape. With every row that was laid, it seemed as if the builders were erasing rather than adding. From the ground up, the panorama was gradually disappearing, like a world being flooded. The houses along Santa Engracia sank, then the reservoir, then the cemetery. When the bricks had grazed the lovely line of the horizon, the far-off towers of Húmera and the tops of the cypress trees in the cemetery still stood out. The day came when the inmates had to stand on tiptoe or jump up to see a bit more and say good-bye to those friends who were leaving for good. At last the roof of the church swallowed everything, and all that could be seen was the clear light of the sunset, the tail of the day being dragged away by the sky” (351).

¹¹ “beauties” (351)

¹² “covered up” , “erasing” , “disappearing” , “a world being flooded” , “the houses sank” (351)

the description. The convent, for Fortunata, obscures the comfort she derived from the freedom of her earlier life; her view of the surroundings communicates recognition that a respectable life with Maxi and his family will be, like her time in the convent, one of forced confinement.

While certain descriptions are indistinct, blurred by a character's lack of attention to detailed reality, the inexactitude actually serves to illuminate inner thoughts. Preoccupied, the characters fail to see accurately specific surrounding elements, representing their emotional distance from their immediate environment. Jacinta, in love with Juanito Santa Cruz, has recently become uncertain of his fidelity. Guillermina is a long-time friend of Juanito's family, and serves as a sort of mother and confidant to Jacinta. When Jacinta and Guillermina attempt to locate the child that they believe Fortunata had with Juanito, Jacinta is understandably distracted as she traverses a market street. Jacinta is described as: "tan pensativa, que la bulla de la calle de Toledo no la distrajo de la atención que a su propio interior prestaba" (316, I)¹³. Here, the character's removal is announced, and the activity in the street reduced to "la bulla," accentuated by the narrator's itemization of particular objects that appear as undifferentiated to Jacinta, "las baratijas, las banderetas, la loza ordinaria, las

¹³ "so rapt in her thoughts that the hubbub on Toledo Street didn't distract her from her inner world" (132).

puntillas, el cobre de Alcaraz.” The reader is specifically advised that, in contrast to the narrator’s concrete observations, “Recibía tan solo la imagen borrosa de los objetos diversos que iban pasando, y lo digo así, porque era como si ella estuviese parada y la pintoresca vía se corriese delante de ella como un telón” (316, I)¹⁴. Yet, the description of the market continues, shifting from the dispassionate concrete representation by the narrator, to an intensely personal depiction which reflects Jacinta’s emotions. This alteration is transparent, clearly differentiated from the previous description.

The subsequent passage reflects Jacinta’s anger, both with her husband and also with his mistress, as wares and vendors assault Jacinta’s senses. Long lists of items and people jumble together, in reflection of Jacinta’s unfocused thoughts. Jacinta’s “mareada vista” (317, I)¹⁵ colors the objects, causing certain objects to be exaggerated and imbued with her newfound awareness of Fortunata, her unfamiliarity with the woman’s social class, and her own feelings of social superiority. The cloths she passes are attached with “alfileres” the colors are “elementales” of the type that appeal to “los salvajes” (317,

¹⁴ “All that registered on her was a blurry image of the diverse objects that paraded past them; I say it this way because it was as though she were standing still and the picturesque route was being drawn past her like a curtain” (132).

¹⁵ “dizzy eyes” (133)

I)¹⁶. Associating these items with Fortunata heightens Jacinta's anger, as the descriptions become imbued with active verbs, "brillaba el naranjado" "que chilla" "que parece rasguñar a los ojos," and "que tiene la acidez del vinagre" (317, I)¹⁷. Further associating the descriptions with Fortunata is the introduction of *La Traviata*, with not only the parallel professional courtesan, but also the incorporation of her death, which is accentuated by the "cobalto, que infunde ideas de envenenamiento" (317, I)¹⁸. At this point, Jacinta has not seen Fortunata, but she is nonetheless fearful of her hold over Santa Cruz, Jacinta's fear influencing the way in which she sees her surroundings.

Confusion of the unknown reveals itself in the "seres humanos sin piernas ni cabeza" (318, I)¹⁹, and the invasively noxious mannequins that "parecían personajes de azufre" ²⁰. Jacinta's description expresses her sense of social superiority, as she refers to "un pueblo," translated in English as "these people" (318, I), and her fear that her forced association with the lower classes will

¹⁶ "common pins"; "basic"; "primitive people" (133)

¹⁷ "orange blazed out"; "screeching"; "scratching one's eyes"; "as bitter as vinegar" (133)

¹⁸ "cobalt blue, vaguely suggesting poison" (133)

¹⁹ "legless and headless human beings" (133)

²⁰ "looked like sulfur people" (133)

consume her, expressed as she views "las bocas de las tiendas, abiertas entre tanto colgajo" (317, I)²¹. Jacinta has arrived at her walk in the market filled with anger, provoked when, looking at her husband after hearing the news about his child, "Entrole de improviso a la pobrecita esposa una rabia....!" (308, I)²². With Santa Cruz, Jacinta constrains her actions and words; in the market, her fear and rage highlight her fear of the lower classes, of which Fortunata is a member, and connect by the color red, "el rojo abundaba tanto, que aquello parecía un pueblo que tiene la religión de la sangre" (318,I)²³. Jacinta's eyes are disconnected from a concrete view of her physical surroundings, as all she sees is colored by what lies within her, "el desquiciamiento que aquel condenado hombre había producido en su alma" (306, I)²⁴. The descriptions of the city market change to reflect Jacinta's mental state, incorporating her anger with Santa Cruz, and her animosity toward and fear of the unidentified mistress and her social milieu. We are back at the point when Jacinta has just found out about Fortunata's child, and

²¹ "The mouthlike openings of the stands-open spots in that ruffled façade of rags" (133)

²² "And the poor wife was suddenly caught off guard by *such* rage!" (127)

²³ "There was *so* much red everywhere that blood seemed to be the religion of these people" (133).

²⁴ "the turmoil that that cursed man had created in her soul" (126)

suspects that Juanito is its father. With this descriptive passage, Pérez Galdós conveys the extent of Jacinta's inner turmoil, the rage and confusion which she has yet to verbalize.

* * *

Homes Highlight Character Traits

Certain characters' private spaces reflect their individual characteristics, as the characters unconsciously influence their intimate environments. Williams introduces this topic by stating that "the most evident inhabitants of cities are buildings, and that there is at once a connection and a confusion between the shapes and appearances of buildings and the actual shapes and appearances of the people who live in them" (156). This applies to Mr. Tulkinghorn in *Bleak House*, Sir Leicester Dedlock's lawyer, whose influence originates from the secrets that he gleans from his employers- both overtly and covertly. The lack of bright light in Mr. Tulkinghorn's house parallels the confidential nature of his work, which entails his operating with stealth, hiding the truth, living in the shadows, and keeping the city's secrets. His house is lit by artificial light, "two candles in old-fashioned silver candlesticks," but they give "a very insufficient light to his large room" (Dickens, 159). Tulkinghorn's house is a magnet for dust and debris: "Plenty of dust comes in at Mr Tulkinghorn's windows, and plenty more has generated among his furniture and papers. It lies thick everywhere"

(352). The particles of dust parallel the bits and pieces of often-unsavory information that Tulkinghorn accumulates from and about his clients, including the Jarndyce case which has been stewing for years without resolution. Tulkinghorn, who deals both directly and indirectly with the case, has brought its stagnancy home. The amount of dust in his house continues to rise as he becomes increasingly involved with the case and actively seeks out unpleasant details. Interestingly, Tulkinghorn profits from secrets, living in a more refined way than other lawyers, increasing his own social standing. The amount of dust in Tulkinghorn's house continues to rise, as Dickens, through his descriptions, conveys the unpalatable nature of Tulkinghorn's work. The lawyer, an individual, contributing his personal amount of dust, recalls the compound interest that accumulates in London in the opening pages of *Bleak House*.

Another character in *Bleak House* whose home acts as a physical representation of his inner nature is Mr. Krook, a merchant who is the landlord of the house in which Nemo and Miss Flite live. He collects papers, notably papers about the Jarndyce case. Krook's house is one of the grimmest in all of London: "It is a small room, nearly black with soot, and grease, and dirt" (164). The dirtiness of the space is confined in a small area, the grime condensed, just as Krook's interests coalesce in the confines of Chancery. The disorganized shop reflects the disorder of the Court of Chancery, whose proceedings vary

drastically day to day and which elude resolution. The fact that Krook cannot read, yet continues to pore over the court documents compels a connection to the lack of intelligence of those who run the case as well as the illogicality of the lawsuit. The lawyers and judges might as well be illiterate like Krook, since they contribute nothing more than he does to the suit's progress. Miss Flite reveals that Krook's shop is indeed commonly referred to as the Court of Chancery and that Krook himself "is called among the neighbours the Lord Chancellor" (69). Hopelessness, lack of movement, the stagnant nature of the case, are reflected in the overwhelming grime of Krook's home. That Krook does not mind the dirt, even stating that: "I have a liking for rust and must and cobwebs" (70) illustrates his delight in the endless lawsuit. Krook's character is defined by his preoccupation with *Jarndyce*, an obsession which becomes clear to the reader through a close observation of his chosen surroundings.

Lady Dedlock's dispassion is mirrored in certain key descriptions of her home: the weather around Chesney Wold parallels her unhealthy weariness and lassitude. Lady Dedlock is the wealthy mistress of the estate named Chesney Wold. Though Chesney Wold is not a part of the city, its country setting demonstrates how Lady Dedlock carries her problems to all locations. Outside of Chesney Wold, "Mists hide in the avenues, veil the points of view, and move in funeral wise across the rising grounds. On all the house there is a cold, blank

smell, like the smell of the little church, though something dryer: suggesting that the dead and buried Dedlocks walk there, in the long nights, and leave the flavor of their graves behind them...." (458) The mist "veiling the points of view" mimics Lady Dedlock's indecision and fear of the future, now that Esther has re-entered her vision. The mists are hidden, not visible, in the avenues around Chesney Wold; the surrounding smells are those of the dead, just as Lady Dedlock's past filters into her present, disrupting her sense of security with the return of Esther. Lady Dedlock's insecurity with her present is represented in the description of her surroundings. In her discussion of Lady Dedlock, Alice Van Buren Kelley states in "The Bleak Houses of Bleak House" that "the rain of Chesney Wold, slowly rotting the outward show of that building in rhythm with the subtler decay within, is as characteristic of that estate as fog is of the legal one" (254). But Lady Dedlock herself is not aware of this connection, of the extent to which her home environment reflects her eroding emotional stability.

Van Buren Kelley asserts,

There is a gray cloud of decay, disease, sterility, and blindness hanging over this entire description. Trees are rotting even before they die; vases hold pools of water instead of flowers; the countryside is pock-marked with rain; and even the spiritual life which belongs in the church smells of death and breaks out in a sweat of disease. Those who live within the great house are limited in their vision by fog or total night and cannot see how the rain-soaked world about them reflects their own inward decay. (255)

Corruption and instabilities are augmented in descriptions of the characters' surroundings, the physical aspects of their residences informing our understanding of their lives. Environments serve almost as an extension of the characters, their relation to the city, and to their states of mind.

Lady Dedlock attempts to keep her emotions at bay and conceal her true feelings. Her desire to suppress her emotions and the truth slowly destroys her, and her reliance on Tulkinghorn to deal with her problems proves a mistake. Lady Dedlock's actions connect her houses to her in ways that provide clues to her character— a residence that also maintains appearances and attempts to retain superiority despite the unraveling relationships of its inhabitants. "Impassive, as behoves its high breeding, the Dedlock town-house stares at the other houses in the street of dismal grandeur, and gives no outward sign of anything going wrong within" (856). Though it is evident to the reader that Lady Dedlock is gradually becoming unnerved, this emotional decay is not evident to outside observers, who only see what Lady Dedlock chooses to project.

* * *

Imagined Obstacles

Pérez Galdós presents characters who are intricately tied to their environment; as William R. Risley states in "Setting in the Galdós Novel," "his

static settings (those depicted prior to a narrated action or dialogued scene) are a means of revealing and evaluating character; his dynamic ones (noted *during* action or dialogue) are not simply a stage but really a vibrant psychological and moral atmosphere essential to the advancement of the action as well as to the delineation of character" (27). Risley's statement of the "psychological and moral atmosphere" that is the setting reveals a crucial difference in the treatment of environment between Dickens and Pérez Galdós. Instead of encountering a physical obstruction, such as Dickens' fog, Pérez Galdós' characters occasionally create obstructions which mimic their personal fears.

At a point well into the second half of the *Fortunata y Jacinta*, Juanito has just advised Fortunata that he cannot see her any more, stating that "Las conveniencias sociales, nena mía, son más fuertes que nosotros" (*Fortunata y Jacinta*, 80, II)²⁵. Juanito knows that his social peers have been gossiping about his relationship with Fortunata, and that his separation from her is his only hope of maintaining his marriage to Jacinta. Devastated after this breakup, Fortunata is convinced that Jacinta has stolen Juanito from her, since Fortunata by this time is hopeful that she will have his child, and Jacinta is, at this point in her life, unlikely to have children. Fortunata ventures out of her house determined to

²⁵ "Social proprieties, my child, are stronger than we are" (478)

confront Jacinta. Walking at night, her mind racing, Fortunata interprets all that she sees in the city, especially darkness, as an obstruction, perceiving the city in a way that aligns with her fears.

Spying the door to the Santa Cruz residence incites a physical response in Fortunata— she abruptly stops her walk as if she had encountered a physical barrier. What she views creates an internal reaction: “Ver esto y pararse en firme, con cierta frialdad en el alma, y sintiendo el choque interior de toda velocidad bruscamente enfrentada, fue todo uno. Ver el portal fue para la prójima, como para el pájaro, que ciego y disparado vuela, topar violentamente contra un muro” (82-83, II)²⁶. At first her tumultuous mind leads her to race through the streets; she is caught short when she arrests her mind and considers more carefully what she should do. She has formed the obstruction in her mind, causing her to change her behavior. Fortunata then stands in the dark, projecting her thoughts on the people in the house. She imagines the lives within the house, the happiness that they are feeling, which only adds to her own pain. A personal imaginary barrier continues to manifest itself, as she establishes the physical distance between the Santa Cruz family and herself: they are inside, she

²⁶ “Seeing it and coming to a halt, with a certain chill in her soul as she felt her speed abruptly checked, were one and the same. Her seeing the door was like a bird flying blindly into a wall” (480).

is outside; they are in light, she is in darkness. Placing herself in darkness, she accepts her place as one who is apart from Juanito's other, family, life, and choosing to maintain the separation by staying in the dark on the streets, hidden from the people in the house. When she sees in reality that the inside of the house is dark, too— "Pero no vio nada. Todo cerrado; todo a oscuras" (83, II)²⁷— as opposed to the light interior which she imagined, her speculation deepens. With the darkness, Fortunata's imagination runs wild: "estarán ahí burlándose de mí, riéndose de la trastada que me han hecho" (83, II)²⁸. Fortunata's mind already running out of her control, consumed with jealousy that Juanito has chosen Jacinta over her, her body starts to become similarly uncontrolled, as she becomes physically incapable of leaving her spot outside of the house, even though she knows that she should. "Aunque en el pensamiento de Fortunata iba condensándose la imposibilidad de entrar, continuaba allí clavada sin saber por qué. No se podía marchar, aunque iba comprendiendo que la idea que a tal sitio la llevo era una locura, como las que se hacen en sueños"

²⁷ "But she didn't see anything. All the windows were closed and dark" (481).

²⁸ "they're probably all in there, making fun of me, laughing over what they've done to me" (481).

(84, II)²⁹. Fortunata recognizes that she has had an impression that comes to a person “en sueños,” a remark on the instinctive and consuming nature of her love for Juanito, and the disconnection between her body and mind.

Eventually her fear and panic lead her to move: “echó a correr y alejose a escape, sin atreverse ni siquiera a mirar hacía atras” (84, II)³⁰. But Fortunata has manufactured an emotional barrier which prevents her movement. “Dejándose llevar de sus propios pasos, se encontró sin saber cómo en el centro de la Puerta del Sol” (85, II)³¹. By escaping from the spot, even though she runs to “la Puerta del Sol,” Fortunata has placed herself in the darkness and prevented a possible sighting by Juanito. Foreseeing rejection by society, which Juanito warned about the night before, she prevents a confrontation. Fortunata moves through the city in accordance to her inner thoughts, in the process creating a physical boundary between her and Juanito. Her own fears prevent her from acting, her mind

²⁹ “Even though the impossibility of entering the house was solidifying in Fortunata’s mind she stayed on, nailed to the spot without understanding why. She couldn’t leave, although she was beginning to realize that the idea that had propelled her to the spot was crazy, like the ideas that come to us in dreams” (481).

³⁰ “broke into a run to escape without so much as daring to look back once” (482)

³¹ “Letting herself be carried along by her own steps, she somehow found herself in the middle of the Puerta del Sol” (482).

controlling her body, a different occurrence from her more-typical behavior, where her heart leads her into impulsive decisions.

Later, Fortunata, suffocating in her relationship with her husband Maxi, with whom she is incompatible, flees and finds refuge with Feijóo, an older man. “In the case of Fortunata, Feijóo understood the impossibility of living a life centered on Maxi, for this would leave her without any desire to live at all” (Goldman, 143). Feijóo places Fortunata in a house, removed from Maxi and, for the moment, free. Away from Maxi and hidden in a different section of the city, she nonetheless remains in Maxi’s thoughts. Maxi locates the house to which she has fled, planning to confront her, but finds himself frozen outside on the street, in a similar scene to when Fortunata stood gazing at the Santa Cruz house.

...tomó el camino de la calle de Tabernillas, más muerto que vivo, pensando lo que diría y lo que callaría, con la penita muy acentuada en la boca del estómago, lo mismo que cuando iba a examinarse. Al llegar y reconocer el número de la casa, entróle tal espanto, que se retiró, huyendo de la calle y del barrio....Al día siguiente hizo un segundo esfuerzo y pudo entrar en el portal; pero ante la vidriera que daba paso a la escalera, se detuvo. Le aterraba la idea de subir, y de su mente se había borrado todo lo que pensaba decirle. Aguardó un rato en espantosa lucha, hasta que le asaltaron ideas alarmantes como ésta: ‘Si ahora baja y me ve aquí...’ Y salió escapado por la calle adelante sin atreverse ni a mirar hacia atrás. (*Fortunata y Jacinta*, 160, II)³²

³² “...he headed for Tabernillas Street feeling more dead than alive and planning what he would say and what he would leave out; he felt as if he were about to take an exam-his stomach was full of butterflies. When he got there and saw the number of the house, he was overcome by such horror that he withdrew, fleeing from both street and neighborhood....The next day he tried again and got as far

Maxi leaves for the house determined to confront Fortunata, but when his emotions change once he arrives at the house and is faced with the reality of the confrontation, his intense love for Fortunata and sadness at their separation leaves him silent and incapable of action. Maxi is fearful of Fortunata, even though she is the one that he most desires to see. The artificial barriers preventing him from entering the building reveal Maxi's emotional turmoil and fear of confrontation.

* * *

Windows for Reflection and Evasion

Characters in both novels actively gaze out of windows in order to avoid reality. In some instances, this allows the characters to mentally escape while remaining physically present. Certain characters are extremely influenced by the environment outside, often surreptitiously gathering information, where others are unaffected by what they see outside of the windows, enmeshed in personal musings. The scenes at windows reveal truths about characters and expose their thoughts.

as the main door; but when he looked through the glass panes at the staircase he stopped. The idea of going up terrified him, obliterated everything he had planned to say. He hung on for a while, struggling terribly, until this thought alarmed him: 'If she comes out and finds me here.....' And he fled down the nearest street without even daring to look back" (536).

Features of the city not only inform the reader of characters' natures, but descriptions of crowded city streets seen from a distance accentuate unattainable desires and inexplicable problems. Window gazing provides an opportunity for characters to physically remain in their reality, while mentally escaping, the windows serving as gateways for thoughts to wander. The manner in which these passages unfold in both novels reveals that characters look out of the window to avoid thinking about their current situations, or when they find themselves overwhelmed. On her way to Las Micaelas, the convent, in order to be molded into an acceptable wife for Maxi, Fortunata is overcome by emotion: "La neófita miraba por la ventanilla, atraída vagamente y sin interés su atención por la gente que pasaba. Creeríase que miraba hacia fuera por no mirar hacia dentro" (595, I)³³. Fortunata looks out of the window of the carriage as an escape from her fears about being shut away from the active world while in the convent. But no details of her view are presented; she does not perceive the landscape, instead she looks "vagamente" out of the window. The character's desire to distance herself from reality by concentrating on the outside world through the

³³ "The neophyte looked out the cab window, her attention vaguely attracted by people passing by. One would have thought she was looking out to avoid looking in" (332)

window, by her inattention to the street scenes, actually serves to highlight her introspection and trepidation.

In *Bleak House*, Esther, when visiting Charley, the young girl who she discovers working hard to care for her younger siblings, finds it difficult to comprehend the difficult conditions. Esther's inner goodness leads her to sympathize with the struggles of others, unlike the general society that has chosen to ignore the plight of the orphans. Seeing "two silent tears" (Dickens, 247) fall down Charley's face leads Esther to reflect: "I stood at the window with Ada, pretending to look at the housetops, and the blackened stacks of chimneys, and the poor plants, and the birds in little cages belonging to the neighbours...." (247). Esther claims that she is 'pretending' to look, yet she actually does notice specific details pertaining to a variety of items. Through her observations, her empathy for Charley and her situation is communicated. Her descriptions of the view outside are inseparable from the image of Charley: Esther sees the blackened stacks of chimneys, dark, covered with dirt, over-worked, and used; the poor plants, suggesting lack of nourishment and neglect; the birds in little cages— 'little' implying that the cages leave them cramped and uncomfortable, in the way Charley and her siblings live together in a small room. Esther turns to the window as an escape from the painful view of the children, but the images outside only serve as an extension of her compassion for Charley.

Later in the novel, when Woodcourt, a kind, caring doctor, proposes to Esther, Esther again finds respite at the window: "He left me, and I stood at the dark window watching the street" (940). Just as before with Charley, Esther is overwhelmed by her desires and is struggling about what course her actions should take. The description of Esther in the "dark" window establishes her in contrast to the city street, which is presumably lit. This contrast reflects Esther's indecision, whether she should remain in the dark, accepting the home offered by Jarndyce, Esther's wealthy guardian who has offered her marriage, a home that would remove her from engaging with the city on her own terms, or whether she should consider a life chosen by herself, stepping outside of the darkened room, and marry Woodcourt.

Fortunata is most content indoors, away from the social pressures attendant to the city streets. Despite her aspirations, the young woman is destined to remain in her established social class— unwilling to assimilate into Maxi's social milieu, and unable to function in Juanito's. Esther's scenes at windows reflect the careful observation that is an important facet of her character, but also the freedom of choice available to her. Consistently observing and analyzing before taking action, Esther looks out of windows to review her situation and mentally wander, even while maintaining a foothold in reality. Both characters are unable to find escape from their interior thoughts, but

Esther's place in society gives her a chance to change her position in response to her thoughts, whereas Fortunata's does not. Fortunata's glances out of windows display her dissatisfaction with her reality, but her thoughts are fruitless when compared to Esther's ability to act.

Characters in Transition

Walking the Streets to Escape

The city streets prove a relief to certain characters, as they use movement through the city to restore their sanity, as a break from their everyday existence. Maxi, in *Fortunata y Jacinta* strides along the streets, preferring to evade rather than to confront his problems. He passes by vendors and pedestrians without engaging in conversation or even eye contact; as he looks at the shop windows, they are described generically instead of specifically, illustrating his impressions. The stimulating city encircles Maxi, but he elects to ignore it, his oblivion evidence of his disengagement with society. These walks through the city develop his character as disconnected from reality, and provide clues to the reader about his mental instability. He continues to believe that his marriage with Fortunata is tenable, even in the face of strong indications to the contrary.

Por esto le gustaba más, cuando el tiempo no era muy frío, vagar por las calles, embozadito en su pañosa, viendo escaparates y la gente que iba y venía, parándose en los corros en que cantaba un ciego, y mirando por las ventanas de los cafés. En estas excursiones podía muy bien emplear dos horas sin cansarse, y desde que se daba cuerda y cogía impulso, el cerebro se le iba calentando, calentando hasta llegar a una presión altísima en que el joven errante se figuraba estar persiguiendo aventuras y ser muy otro de lo que era. La calle con su bullicio y la diversidad de cosas que en ella se ven, ofrecía gran incentivo a aquella imaginación que al desarrollarse

tarde, solía desplegar los bríos de que dan muestra algunos enfermos graves. (460, I)³⁴

The reference to Maxi's mental deterioration as causing him to "se figuraba estar persiguiendo aventuras y ser muy otro de lo que era"³⁵ is a reference to *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, and a work with which Pérez Galdós was surely familiar. In the 17th century novel, Alonso Quijano creates imaginary quests for himself where he fights under the name Don Quixote. His journey reflects both his obsession with chivalric novels and his deteriorating mental state. Maxi, similarly, creates a world of the imagination, looking at nothing in particular, wandering without a specific physical destination.

Ido, a poor neighbor of the Santa Cruz family, who has been previously taunted by Juanito, takes to the streets for a different provocation, but with no less intensity. Concern about the potential discovery of a coin that Jacinta has

³⁴ "So he preferred, when the weather wasn't too cold, to wander through the streets wrapped warmly in his cloak, looking at shop windows and the people passing by, or to pause outside a courtyard to hear a blind man singing, to peer into café windows. He could last for two hours on these excursions without getting tired; from the moment he set out he felt transported, as if to a rarefied zone where he fancied he was seeking adventure and was quite different from his real self. With their hubbub and variety, the streets were a great incentive to that imagination that, having blossomed late, displayed the kind of energy found in seriously ill people...." (234-235).

³⁵ "he fancied he was seeking adventure and was quite different from his real self" (235)

unexpectedly given him causes a restless night, and by morning Ido is anxious to remove himself from the prying eyes of his family:

Echóse mi hombre a la calle, y tiró por la de Mira el Río baja, cuya cuesta es tan empinada que se necesita hacer algo de volatines para no ir rodando de cabeza por aquellos pedernales. Ido la bajó, casi como la bajan los chiquillos, de un aliento, y una vez en la explanada que llaman el *Mundo Nuevo*, su espíritu se espació, como pájaro lanzado a los aires. Empezó a dar resoplidos, cual si quisiera meter en sus pulmones más aire del que cabía, y sacudió el cuerpo como las gallinas. El picorcillo del sol le agradaba, y la contemplación de aquel cielo azul, de incomparable limpieza y diafanidad, daba alas a su alma voladora. (333-4, I)³⁶

The city street offers Ido freedom from scrutiny, an opportunity to express his inner nature, a place where his soul expands “como pájaro lanzado a los aires” (333, I)³⁷. His desire for “más aire del que cabía” (334, I)³⁸ in his lungs illuminates the extent to which he felt confined in his home. Describing him in the city, Pérez Galdós illuminates Ido’s admirable qualities; he is a “good man,” simple and pure “like a child,” who— when away from the directives of his wife— is

³⁶ “My good man charged into the street and headed for Mira el Rio Baja Street, which is so steep that one has to be a trapeze artist to keep from falling head first over the bumpy stones. Ido went down it almost like a child-in one breath-and once he reached the esplanade called “New World” his soul expanded like a bird taking off into the open sky. He started huffing and puffing as if he wanted to get more air than would fit in his lungs and he shook his body the way hens do. The slight prickling of the sun on his skin pleased him, and the contemplation of that blue sky, incomparably clean and clear, gave wings to his light soul” (145).

³⁷ “like a bird taking off into the open sky” (145)

³⁸ “more air than would fit” (145)

innocent and kind. Ido's relationship with the interior and exterior spaces of the city reveals his underlying honesty and good nature.

* * *

Walking the Streets to Appease the Mind

In *Bleak House*, movement is often a means, not as much to carry characters from one location to another, but for general character development and a way to drive the narrative. Characters reveal discontent as they pace the streets, highlighting their unease and restlessness. Mr. Weevle, a friend of Mr. Guppy's, is perturbed about living in the same room as the dead Nemo, worrying since he does not know the cause of death:

It is a close night, though the damp cold is searching too; and there is a laggard mist a little way up in the air. It is a fine steaming night to turn the slaughter-houses, the unwholesome trades, the sewerage, bad water, and burial grounds to account, and give the Registrar of Deaths some extra business. It may be something in the air – there is plenty in it – or it may be something in himself, that is in fault; but Mr Weevle, otherwise Jobling, is very ill at ease. He comes and goes, between his own room and the open street door, twenty times an hour. He has been doing so, ever since it fell dark. Since the Chancellor shut up his shop, which he did very early to-night, Mr Weevle has been down and up, and down and up (with a cheap tight velvet skull-cap on his head, making his whiskers look out of all proportion), oftener than before. (506)

On this night, outside of the buildings, the city is not only uncomfortably cold, damp and misty, it is also portrayed as threatening. Enumerating unsavory elements of the city without elaboration imbues them with a strength, a matter-

of-fact presence that reinforces them as a constant feature of London: “the slaughter-houses, the unwholesome trades, the sewerage, bad water, and” -the grim destination associated with each of these locations- “burial grounds.” This environment beyond his door connects to Weevle’s emotional state in the parallel “It may be something in the air ... or it may be something in himself,” a connection that intensifies with Weevle’s physical activity. “He comes and goes,” “has been down and up, and down and up,” the repetitious phrasing evoking his repetitive physical activity, as well as his unsettled emotional state. The “open street door,” the available access to and encroachment of the easy possibility of death, are conveyed by Weevle’s actions; his awareness of danger, the thought that even the walls of his home may not prevent danger from creeping into his life, moves him beyond a simple man in a “cheap” cap to a more complex character. He is indeed accurate in his feeling that death surrounds him, as Krook’s demise by spontaneous combustion is, quite literally, still in the air. Weevle’s expectations that a walk in the streets will appease his fears of death are, tellingly, arrested. Here, Weevle’s actions also alert the reader to the fluidity of the city, the impossibility of entirely segmenting its diverse elements, and portend the upcoming plot revelations that hinge on the mingling of seemingly-discrete social worlds.

Mr. Snagsby, another minor character entangled in *Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce*, grows increasingly troubled about his own connection to the late law writer, Nemo, and reveals his unease along with a certain satisfaction from walking through the streets. Snagsby owns a law-stationary business and has become intimately involved with Tulkinghorn's and Bucket's affairs.

It is no phenomenon that Mr Snagsby should be ill at ease too; for he always is so, more or less, under the oppressive influence of the secret that is upon him. Impelled by the mystery, of which he is a partaker, and yet in which he is not a sharer, Mr Snagsby haunts what seems to be its fountain-head—the rag and bottle shop in the court. It has an irresistible attraction for him. Even now coming round by the Sol's Arms with the intention of passing down the court, and out at the Chancery Lane end, and so terminating his unpremeditated after-supper stroll of ten minutes long from his own door and back again, Mr Snagsby approaches. (506)

Mr. Snagsby's walk informs us of the compelling undercurrent to his emotions, so intense that it propels him to the streets for the "unpremeditated" excursion. While denoted a "stroll," Snagsby's walk has a clear destination, even if he is unconscious of this; we are told that the rag and bottle shop holds "an irresistible attraction for him." We learn that Snagsby, who is described as haunting the shop, routinely visits the location, his "ill at ease," indefinable emotional state expressed through his unanticipated yet familiar route. Snagsby's character is confirmed as peripheral to the "mystery," piquing our curiosity with his movements which suggest, and lay the groundwork for, a possible turn in the plot.

* * *

Walking the Streets as a Sign of Docility

The way in which Esther moves through the streets of London for the first time demonstrates inexperience with the bustling city, certainly. At this point in the novel, it also establishes character traits— docility, and contentment in following directions. Later, her character will be somewhat different. Esther reveals that “a coach was waiting to take us round” (50) to her overnight stop; the following day she is again led by someone who is more familiar with the city. Miss Jellyby, a new friend of Esther’s and daughter of Mrs. Jellyby who spends her time writing letters to Africa, accompanies her on a walk, during which their conversation draws attention to Esther’s amiability, inexperience, and to her lack of assertion.

‘Where would you wish to go?’ she asked.
‘Anywhere, my dear,’ I replied.
‘Anywhere’s nowhere,’ said Miss Jellyby, stopping perversely.
‘Let us go somewhere at any rate,’ said I.
She then walked me on very fast. (65)

Esther, narrating, characterizes Miss Jellyby’s pause as “perverse,” an evaluation of obstinacy that exposes Esther as fully anticipating her subordinate role— “She...walked me on.” Anywhere, nowhere, somewhere— ostensibly specific destinations that are, as Miss Jellyby rightly points out, nebulous directions.

While it is clear to the reader that Esther's response reveals her curiosity and desire to explore the city and her willingness to please, the exchange— inadvertently on Esther's part— also illuminates the possible misfortune of lacking a destination. As Esther's character is developed, so too is Dickens alerting us to the importance of destination, of purpose, of self-direction.

Esther's initial walk through London also draws attention to the difference in society's treatment of characters of varied social classes. Esther— a member of a higher social class than Jo, a young, homeless boy who lives on the streets, working as a crossing sweeper— is provided with a guide, whereas poverty-stricken Jo is left to fend for himself. Although Miss Jellyby's discomfort with Esther's passivity is apparent as she proceeds "very fast," even without an obvious objective, Esther is nonetheless cared for and protected from potential peril. And, as Miss Jellyby points out, Esther has plenty of options.

* * *

Walking the Streets as a Sign of Distress

Pérez Galdós presents characters whose pacing through the streets expresses hopelessness, drawing attention to conflicts and emotional separations between characters. When Fortunata runs away from Maxi after an argument, Maxi follows her into the city streets, but instead of pursuing her until they meet, he equivocates and pauses. "Anduvo calles y más calles, retrocedió, dio vueltas

a ésta y la otra manzana....” (467, I)³⁹. Maxi’s backtracking and circular movements as he attempts to locate Fortunata in the city reveal the disengagement between the two characters; he quickly loses her when they are not confined to a defined interior space. Maxi’s walk also displays his own frustration in his relationship with Fortunata. “Se agitó tanto en aquel paseo vagabundo, que a las once ya no se podía tener en pie, y se arrimaba a las paredes para descansar un rato” (467-8, I)⁴⁰. Maxi physically stops, arresting his pursuit of Fortunata for the moment, his inability to navigate the city revealing his ineffective efforts to sustain his relationship with Fortunata.

As Ramos asserts in his discussion on urban spaces in modern Spanish literature, “La calle aparece en ocasiones como un espacio investido de la capacidad de cambiar a las personas, y se presenta como una fuerza narrativa” (30)⁴¹. Walking not as a means to escape, or to appease her mind, Jacinta’s travels exacerbate her inner turmoil and social dilemmas. Jacinta is distressed that she has not had any children with Juanito: “Nunca se había mostrado en su alma de

³⁹ “He walked down street after street, he backtracked, he went around one block after another....” (240).

⁴⁰ “He was so shaken by this wandering pursuit that by eleven o’clock he could barely stand up, and he leaned against a wall to rest” (240).

⁴¹ “The street appears on occasions as a place invested with the ability to change people, and is presented as a narrative force.”

un modo tan imperioso el deseo de tener hijos” (*Fortunata y Jacinta*, 253, I)⁴².

Overcome by her feelings, Jacinta is compelled to physical movement, to move through the city. As described earlier, Jacinta is again so preoccupied with her thoughts that she does not at first observe details of the people and streets she passes. When Jacinta does finally focus on her surroundings, the contrast is dramatic, unveiling the children around her, who seem to taunt her childless situation.

Cuando se halló cerca del fin de su viaje, la Delfina fijaba exclusivamente su atención en los chicos que iba encontrando. Pasmábase la señora de Santa Cruz de que hubiera tantísima madre por aquellos barrios, pues a cada paso tropezaba con una, con su crío en brazos, muy bien agasajado bajo el ala del mantón. A todos estos ciudadanos del porvenir no se les veía más que la cabeza por cima del hombro de su madre. Algunos iban vueltos hacia atrás, mostrando la carita redonda dentro del círculo del gorro y los ojuelos vivos, y se reían con los transeúntes. Otros tenían el semblante mal humorado, como personas que se llaman a engaño en los comienzos de la vida humana. También vio Jacinta no uno, sino dos y hasta tres, camino del cementerio. Suponíales muy tranquilos y de color de cera dentro de aquella caja que llevaba un tío cualquiera al hombro, como se lleva una escopeta. (318, I)⁴³

⁴² “Her desire to have children had never shown itself so imperiously before” (*Fortunata and Jacinta*, 90).

⁴³ “When she approached the end of her journey, the Dauphine centered her attention exclusively on the small children she came across. Señora Santa Cruz was astonished by the quantities of mothers there were in these neighborhoods; at every step she ran into one with a suckling in her arms, nicely tucked under her cloak. All that could be seen of these future citizens were their heads over their mothers’ shoulders. Some of them looked backward, showing their little round faces and lively eyes framed by bonnets, and laughed as if they were sharing a private joke with the passerby. Others looked disgruntled, like people who mistrust everything and everyone from the minute they’re born. Jacinta

While the streets have acted as a space for Jacinta to initially flee from her unhappiness, they become a place for her to revel in her feelings, and then to deepen her fears. The presence of so many children confronts Jacinta's lack of even one child. And the "end of her journey" is a dark, entirely hopeless destination replete with the multiple dead children. Jacinta is attracted to "little round faces," "lively eyes" and laughter, yet the introduction of the "still," "wax-colored" infants announces her final realization that she will never bear a child.

While Jacinta's excursion cements her unhappiness, Maxi's frequent walks help restore his sanity- even if only temporarily. When Maxi becomes consumed with thoughts of Fortunata during her absence, Juan Pablo, Maxi's brother and a priest, seeks to soothe Maxi with frequent outings:

Algunas tardes sacábale a paseo por las afueras, procurando entretener su imaginación con ideas y relatos placenteros, absolutamente contrarios al fárrago de disparates que el infeliz chico había tenido últimamente en su cerebro. A los quince días de este enérgico tratamiento, mejoró visiblemente, y su hermano y médico estaba muy satisfecho. Más de una vez se expresó Maxi durante el paseo como la persona más razonable. (399, II)⁴⁴

also saw not one but two or even three being taken in boxes to the cemetery. She imagined that they were very still and wax-colored in those boxes, carried by anyone at all, like shotguns" (133-134).

⁴⁴ "Some afternoons he took him for a walk in the outskirts and tried to entertain his imagination with pleasant thoughts and anecdotes that were absolutely unlike the medley of nonsense the poor boy had been storing in his brain recently. After two weeks of this energetic treatment Maxi improved visibly, so

While in the apartment he shared with Fortunata, and even in the surrounding streets, Maxi is unable to mentally control his depressed thoughts. However, “por las afueras” (399, II)⁴⁵ of the city, physically removed to an indeterminate location that is identified solely by its geographic distance from his home, Maxi is able to also distance himself from musing over his wife. The walks underscore the extent of Maxi’s distress.

Mauricia, an unsettled woman who Fortunata befriends at the convent, falls ill, and on the brink of death, becomes mentally unbalanced. She is ejected from the convent for her unruly actions; but the freedom of the streets comes as a relief to the recently-confined Mauricio, and she reacts to seeing them as if she has come home after a long absence: “Salió triunfante, echando a una parte y otra miradas de altivez y desprecio. Cuando vio la calle, sus ojos se iluminaron con fulgores de júbilo y gritó: ‘¡Ay, mi querida calle de mi alma!’ Extendió y cerró los brazos, cual si en ellos quisiera apretar amorosamente todo lo que veían sus ojos” (655, I)⁴⁶. The streets serve a similar purpose for Mauricio as they do for Maxi; in

his brother and doctor were highly satisfied. More than once on their walks, Maxi spoke like the sanest man in the world” (714).

⁴⁵ “in the outskirts” (714)

⁴⁶ “The madwoman left triumphantly, casting haughty, scornful looks in all directions. When she saw the street, her eyes lit up with joy and she cried, “Oh,

both of their cases, walking through the streets frequently appeases their minds; when in the streets, the characters do not feel as mad, though both are still perceived so by society. Pérez Galdós uses the city streets to demonstrate the characters' attempts to escape from the madness of their lives- some find this freedom, and others a means of meditation.

my ever-lovin' street!" She stretched luxuriantly and then clasped her arms as if she were trying to embrace all that her eyes could see" (378).

Boundaries in Action

Neighborhoods and Social Class

The ways in which Dickens's and Pérez Galdós's characters react to and navigate the cities reveal truths about their placement in the societies of London and Madrid, and about the prevailing social sentiments. Some characters are selective about which areas of the city they visit, while others rarely venture outside of their resident neighborhoods; characters' movements expose differing levels of social comfort and acceptance. Others lose their identity in the winding city streets, attempting to alter their status, like Fortunata, who could be respectable if she stays with Maxi, but who chooses love and Juanito instead, or characters who are born lost, like poor orphaned Charley and Jo in *Bleak House*, and the orphans and slum-dwellers in *Fortunata y Jacinta*. The welfare of characters is revealed through their relationship with the city streets. While all residents of the cities ostensibly have the ability to move, it is the way that they navigate that reveals social prejudices and distinctions.

Throughout *Fortunata y Jacinta*, Pérez Galdós carefully designates neighborhoods in Madrid as appropriate for certain social groups, each with definite boundaries. As Fortunata exhibits altered speech and hand gestures associated with the area of the city where she was raised— those that instantly

identify her to Juanito as “del pueblo” (182, I)⁴⁷— reverting to this behavior as she relocates to the neighborhood, similarly Juanito displays the ability to adopt speech patterns and dress that are different from those which are typical of his native section of Madrid. Enamored of Fortunata after initially meeting her, Juanito affects the manners of speech and dress of her neighborhood. He, seemingly with no effort, “daba a la *elle* el tono arrastrado que la gente baja da a la *y* consonante; y se le habían pegado modismos pintorescos y expresiones groseras” (187, I)⁴⁸. A few months later, Juanito effortlessly abandons these affectations as his interests change: “Juanito empezó a abandonar aquellos mismos hábitos groseros que tanto disgustaban a su madre” (190, I)⁴⁹. For the socially-comfortable Juanito, the possibility of easy transition from one identifiable neighborhood to another is underscored by this transformation. Unlike for Fortunata and others of her social class and neighborhood, the social boundaries of Madrid are, for Juanito, mere playthings.

⁴⁷ “low-class” (43)

⁴⁸ “dragged certain syllables in a low-class way and had picked up some colorful expressions and uncouth words” (46).

⁴⁹ “Juanito began to break those uncouth habits that disturbed his mother so” (48).

Juanito's movements uncover discrete, well-established social boundaries, and his unfamiliarity with social classes outside of his own. After his marriage, when Juanito hears about Fortunata's return to Madrid, he becomes obsessed with finding her. Frantically he searches streets, restaurants, brothels, becoming increasingly desperate.

Cada día más dominado por su frenesí investigador, visitó Santa Cruz diferentes casas, unas de peor fama que otras, misteriosas aquéllas, éstas al alcance de todo el público. No encontrando lo que buscaba en lo que parece más alto, descendió de escalón en escalón, visitó lugares donde había estado algunas veces y otros donde no había estado nunca. (442, I)⁵⁰

Unlike Dickens's Bucket, an inspector whose official, job-related searches demonstrate his familiarity with all areas of his city, Juanito's journey reveals his unfamiliarity with the city. Juanito shows his desperation by venturing to places that he does not know, something that someone of his social class would not normally do, repeating his visits to certain places, and assuming a random approach. He is not systematic in his pursuit the way someone aware of diverse neighborhoods would be, but instead reveals his ignorance once he is removed from the security of his native locale.

⁵⁰ "More obsessed every day by his investigative frenzy, Santa Cruz visited various houses, some of worse reputation than others, some mysterious, others open to everyone. Not finding what he was looking for at the seemingly highest level, he gradually descended, visited places where he had been several times before and others he had never been to...." (222-23).

In *Bleak House*, Snagsby is taken to a part of London with which he is unfamiliar, and his reaction emphasizes the extent to which he has confined his previous activities within proscribed boundaries. A small fish in the larger scheme of things, his name indicates that he is tangled, yet he does not fully comprehend what he is tangled in, as he is repeatedly carried along by the actions of others. When Snagsby and Bucket walk through the city together, Snagsby's manner is placed in direct contrast to Bucket's, revealing the different levels of comfort that the two characters feel while traversing different regions of the city. Bucket's awareness as he walks through the streets and the ease with which he moves are jarring to Snagsby.

As they walk along, Mr Snagsby observes, as a novelty, that, however quick their pace may be, his companion still seems in some undefinable manner to lurk and lounge; also, that whenever he is going to turn to the right or left, he pretends to have a fixed purpose in his mind of going straight ahead, and wheels off, sharply, at the very last moment. (Dickens, 357)

Bucket's "undefinable" gait, "a novelty" to Mr. Snagsby, for whom the desire to "lurk and lounge" are as curious as the possibility that Bucket may have a purpose in any part of the city. Snagsby, by contrast, is disturbed and surprised by certain aspects of the city; unlike Bucket, he is not indiscriminately at ease.

When they come at last to Tom-all-Alone's, Mr Bucket stops for a moment at the corner....Between his two conductors, Mr Snagsby passes along the middle of a villainous street, undrained, unventilated, deep in black mud and corrupt water – though the roads are dry elsewhere – and reeking

with such smells and sights that he, who has lived in London all his life, can scarce believe his senses. Branching from this street and its heaps of ruins, are other streets and courts so infamous that Mr Snagsby sickens in body and mind, and feels as if he were going, every moment deeper down, into the infernal gulf. (358)

The description of the street adopts Snagsby's viewpoint; the street is "villainous," the water "corrupt." Snagsby's visceral reaction— he "sickens in body and mind"— reinforces his disbelief— "he can scarce believe his senses"— at the state of the neighborhood, physically affected by his environment, sickening "in body and mind." That Snagsby has "lived in London all his life" and yet is in Tom-all-Alone's for the first time demonstrates the very clear delineation of the boundaries of the neighborhood. Furthermore, what Snagsby focuses on are attributes that could be ameliorated if the society were to care about these parts of the city.

Unlike characters whose environments reflect their inner natures, Fortunata actively changes based on the environment in which she finds herself. When Fortunata is first engaged to Maxi, she is quite unhappy in her situation; an interest in furnishing the apartment evinces her eventual acceptance of her new situation: "De este modo vino a mostrarse complacidísima con la salida próxima, y dijo mil cosas oportunas acerca de los muebles, de la vajilla y hasta de

la batería de cocina" (634, I)⁵¹. Fortunata becomes, in this moment, a model wife, invested in this new role, not merely pleased, but showing that she is "complacidísima," not making a few suggestions, but giving "mil cosas" as comments, all of them "oportunas." Don Evaristo comments on Fortunata's malleability when he states that "Será siempre lo que quieran hacer de ella los que la traten" (139, II)⁵². Later, while staying with Feijóo, Fortunata adapts her language and mannerisms to correspond with the neighborhood in which she is living.

En el tiempo que duró aquella cómoda vida volvieron a determinarse en ella las primitivas maneras, que había perdido con el roce de otra gente de más afinadas costumbres. El ademán de llevarse las manos a la cintura en toda ocasión volvió a ser dominante en ella, y el hablar arrastrado, dejoso y prolongando ciertas vocales, reverdeció en su boca, como reverdece el idioma nativo en la de aquel que vuelve a la patria tras larga ausencia. (113, II)⁵³

⁵¹ "And so she came to show great contentment at the prospect of leaving soon, and made dozens of helpful comments about the furniture, the china, and even the kitchen utensils" (361).

⁵² "She'll always be what people who know her want to make of her" (521).

⁵³ "During the time she lived that comfortable life, she picked up her old habits that she had lost because of her contact with more refined people. Once again she put her hands on her hips almost all the time, and her way of slurring her speech and dragging certain vowels took control of her mouth again, just as one's own language streams out easily when returning to one's native land after a long absence" (502).

Returning to this lower-class part of town, she easily assimilates and melds with her neighbors. Throughout the novel, Fortunata effects similar transitions, particularly eager to disregard her life with Maxi whenever Santa Cruz reenters her life. Placed into such an environment easily negates all of Maxi's 'teachings,' raising the question of Fortunata's ability to truly escape from her past. As Fortunata remarks to Juanito, "soy siempre pueblo" (690, I)⁵⁴; and she is later reminded that "pueblo naciste y pueblo serás toda tu vida" (205, II)⁵⁵. Fortunata is a product of her environment and her social class, influenced by the city, attracted to higher-class men, but unable to sustain life in higher-class neighborhoods; her lower-class status is confirmed by the locations of her homes— always set apart from or on the fringes of upper class districts.

In *Bleak House*, Mr. Guppy finds himself unhappily barred from entering a house: "In all these proceedings Mr Guppy has so slight a part, except when he gives his evidence, that he is moved on like a private individual, and can only haunt the secret house on the outside; where he has the mortification of seeing Mr Smallweed padlocking the door, and of bitterly knowing himself to be shut out...." (533). Guppy is a law clerk at Kenge and Carboy's firm who seeks Esther

⁵⁴ "I'll always be one of the people" (405)

⁵⁵ "you were born with the common people and you'll be common all your life" (569)

as his wife, proposing to her on multiple occasions. Anxious to advance in the world through marriage as well as through his position in the law firm, Guppy seeks knowledge that will prove valuable. Here, outside on the street, he is physically separated from the inhabitants of the house. The house is, to him, “secret,” a place he can only “haunt,” implying a prolonged time period. Guppy is emotionally shut out as well, mortified and bitter. Guppy’s exclusion reminds us that he is merely a clerk, with a physical and emotional boundary between him and the inhabitants of the house. Guppy’s separation from the information contained in the house reinforces his position and the boundaries it carries.

Pérez Galdós incorporates clothing and mannerisms as a means to identify the social classes of characters; this identification extends to their association with particular neighborhoods. When Juanito artificially espouses attributes seen as “belonging” to a different social class than that of his parents, his mother, Barbarita, relates these characteristics to specific locations in the city, “los barrios de Puerta Cerrada, calle de Cuchilleros y Cava de San Miguel” (189, I)⁵⁶. Barbarita’s displeasure at the thought of her son frequenting these neighborhoods is connected to her view of their typical inhabitants, who, she makes clear, ought to respect defined social boundaries. Evidence that the

⁵⁶ “the Puerta Cerrada, Cuchilleros, and Cava de San Miguel neighborhoods” (47).

perceived barriers have been crossed, “Barbarita no dudaba en calificar de encanallamiento” (187, I)⁵⁷. The neighborhood native to Fortunata and Estupiñá, an eccentric old man and friend of the Santa Cruz family, is a novelty to the young Juanito, who initially visits as a kindness to the ill Estupiñá. With the description of Estupiñá’s apartment building, Pérez Galdós interjects Juanito’s judgment of a section of the city with which he is unfamiliar.

Juanito la emprendió con los famosos peldaños de granito, negros ya y gastados. Efectivamente, parecía la subida a un castillo o prisión de Estado. El paramento era de fábrica cubierta de yeso y éste de rayas e inscripciones soeces o tontas. Por la parte más próxima a la calle, fuertes rejas de hierro completaban el aspecto feudal del edificio. Al pasar junto a la puerta de una de las habitaciones del entresuelo, Juanito la vio abierta y, lo que es natural, miró hacia dentro, pues todos los accidentes de aquel recinto despertaban en sumo grado su curiosidad. (182, I)⁵⁸

To its inhabitants, the building is their comfortable home, while Juanito sees something “negro” and “gastado,” graffiti “soez o tonta.” Highlighting his role as an interloper, the young man “naturally” feels comfortable looking in corners

⁵⁷ “Barbarita didn’t hesitate to classify as corruption” (46).

⁵⁸ “Juanito turned to the sooty, worn, famous granite staircase. As a matter of fact, it did seem like the ascent to a castle or a state prison. The stairwell was covered in plaster, with inane or obscene graffiti scratched on it. On the side near the street, heavy grillwork completed the feudal aspect of the building. On the next level, as Juanito went past the door to one of the rooms, he saw it was open and naturally peeked in, because everything about the place greatly stirred his curiosity” (43).

where he has not been invited. When the description of the building centers on Estupiñá, the author displays a different point of view. The stone staircase is, in that passage, characterized as “como de castillo de leyendas....como las del Escorial” (180, I)⁵⁹. With contrasting descriptions of the staircase, Pérez Galdós conveys the division between the social classes in the city.

Pérez Galdós’ depictions of the physical grime of Madrid incorporate a critique of certain members of society and their unwillingness to see beyond appearances and social class. Their judgment, a type of blindness, is especially evident when Guillermina and Jacinta journey to the slum with the goal of finding a specific child who Jacinta thinks may be her husband’s illegitimate son. Guillermina notices Jacinta’s preoccupation with the child, and offers to help her locate the boy.

Jacinta’s fears originate during a conversation that she has earlier with Ido and Guillermina. Ido discusses “El Pitúsín,” “un nene de tres años, muy mono por cierto, hijo de una tal Fortunata, mala mujer, señora, muy mala....” (305, I)⁶⁰. Jacinta’s attention is immediately drawn to the mention of Fortunata’s name, since Jacinta has for some time suspected Fortunata to be intimately connected to

⁵⁹ “reminiscent of a castle in a fairy tale...like the one at El Escorial” (42).

⁶⁰ “a three-year-old, and a very cute one at that, son of a so-called Fortunata, a bad woman, Señora; very bad....” (125)

Juanito. The extent of her suspicions comes to light when she reacts to the mention of Fortunata's name in connection to a mysterious child: "Jacinta estaba aturdidísima, como si hubiera recibido un fuerte golpe en la cabeza" (305, I)⁶¹. A few chapters later, still unable to confront her feelings and desperate to uncover the truth, Jacinta journeys with Guillermina to the slum where the child is, believing that if she sees the child with her own eyes she will be able to come to a conclusion as to whether or not Juanito is the father.

Jacinta is consumed with jealousy at the prospect of a child, not only because it means that Juanito has been intimate with Fortunata but also because she herself does not have a child with Juanito. Guillermina, familiar with the area of the city, proceeds with purpose and practicality, while "Jacinta estaba algo corrida" (322, I)⁶². The subsequent description of the tenement reflects Jacinta's perception of the way of life she encounters, one which colors the narration; the corridor is "mucho más feo, sucio y triste" (322, I)⁶³, later "más estrechas y miserables," markings "más necios y groseros," offenses to Jacinta's senses which compound to physically sicken her, producing "un olor

⁶¹ "Jacinta was stunned, as if she'd just received a sharp blow on the head" (125).

⁶² "Jacinta was somewhat abashed" (136)

⁶³ "much uglier, dirtier, and more dismal" (137)

nauseabundo" (323, I)⁶⁴. The sights and smells fuel her fear of the people she sees:

Pasaron junto a las dos damas figuras andrajosas, ciegos que iban dando palos en el suelo, lisiados con montera de pelo, pantalón de soldado, horribles caras. Jacinta se apretaba contra la pared para dejar el paso franco. (323, I)⁶⁵

Jacinta instinctively recoils based on what she sees. The inhabitants lose their individuality, as she attributes to them qualities of dirt and grime that she perceives in the surroundings, and literally incorporates the residents into the structure of the building. "Nueva barricada de chiquillos les cortó el paso" (324, I)⁶⁶, is her designation of the children; they meld into their surroundings as one, an object, a "barricada." The slum-children represent their part of the city by their extreme dirtiness, "la cara y las manos llenas de chafarrinones negros" (324, I)⁶⁷, which they have accentuated and carried. Jacinta and Guillermina are overwhelmed by the scene, a reaction confirmed by the narrator: "Los

⁶⁴ "more cramped and shabbier"; "more stupid and obscene"; "foul-smelling" (137)

⁶⁵ "Ragged figures, blind men tapping sticks on the floor, crippled creatures with furry heads, soldier's pants, and horrible faces, passed the two ladies. Jacinta pressed against the wall to make way for them" (137).

⁶⁶ "Another barricade of kids blocked their way" (138).

⁶⁷ "their faces and hands full of black stains" (138)

pequeñuelos no parecían pertenecer a la raza humana” (324, I)⁶⁸. These children themselves are, just like the slum neighborhood Tom-all-Alone’s in *Bleak House*, associated with hell, described as “diabilillos o engendros infernales” (324, I)⁶⁹. Jacinta’s assessment of the children as a mass parallels the mass of people in Dickens’s London- not individuals, but part of the structure of the location. Yet the narration continues, and her superficial evaluations are exposed with a shift in perspective to describe Nicanora, the wife of Ido: Her face was

hociuda y desagradable. Si algo expresaba era un genio muy malo y un carácter de vinagre; pero en esto engañaba aquel rostro como otros muchos que hacen creer lo que no es. Era Nicanora una infeliz mujer, de más bondad que entendimiento, probaba en las luchas de la vida, que había sido para ella una batalla sin victorias ni respiro alguno. (326, I)⁷⁰

Jacinta objectifies people, attributing qualities to them and the places they inhabit which are based on the visual clues of dirt and grime. Even though the characters all inhabit a prescribed space, the city of Madrid, Jacinta has not ventured to explore an area outside of her social milieu, unlike Guillermina. Jacinta is repelled by humanity; instead of working to help, her initial response is

⁶⁸ “The little things didn’t look as if they belonged to the human race” (138).

⁶⁹ “miniature devils, or some such infernal offspring” (138)

⁷⁰ “snoutish and disagreeable. If it expressed anything, it was a very bad temper and an acrid disposition; but in this, her face, like so many others, was deceiving. Nicanora was a miserable woman, kinder than she was intelligent, worn out by the trials of life, which for her had been a battle with neither victories nor rest” (139).

repulsion and a desire to remove the boy. Jacinta's understanding of helping is to give clothes and other objects that people of her own social class would appreciate. Guillermina, on the other hand, sees the need for an orphanage and other infrastructures. Jacinta's judgment of the tenement as inferior is revealed through the description of her reaction that highlights the gulf between the social classes.

* * *

Social Outsiders by Choice

On occasion, Pérez Galdós's describes characters reacting to outside intrusions in ways which reflect their exclusion from mainstream society. In *Fortunata y Jacinta*, the noise of the city streets interferes with conversation: "Al llegar aquí, D. Evaristo tenía que alzar mucho la voz para hacerse oír, porque en la calle se situó un pianito de manubrio, tocando polkas y walses" (112, II)⁷¹. Feijóo, an old retired colonel and friend of Fortunata who attempts to help her while she is apart from Juanito, is forced to adapt his voice to be heard over the outside noise, required to change as a result of the city's intrusion. Fortunata and Feijóo's intended conversation is put on hold. The jubilee in the streets

⁷¹ "Upon reaching this point, Don Evaristo had to raise his voice considerably in order to be heard, because down in the street someone had started to play a crank piano-polkas and waltzes" (501).

contrasts with the subdued interior of the apartment. Feijóo attempts an intimate conversation, but the mood changes because of the proceedings outside which intrude unbidden upon their intimate moment. The interruption foreshadows the end of their time together, indicating that, perhaps very soon, Fortunata will be forced, against her desire, to enter the city outside of her apartment. Fortunata is not part of the commotion in the streets, an outsider who has chosen to remain inside after leaving her socially-acceptable marriage. Instead of venturing outside and interacting with society, she elects to remove herself from the social pressures outside of the apartment, paradoxically an outsider by refusing to be outside.

Fortunata and Maxi, their unhappy marriage unraveling, have a sober conversation about the future and the inevitability of death, during which Fortunata reveals her preference for dim interior light, “meciéndose en la dulce oscuridad” (274, II)⁷². Preferring to hide her inner thoughts from Maxi, Fortunata’s desire for the physical space to be less illuminated parallels her emotions. Pretending to be interested in the conversation, she turns to her own thoughts, comfortable in the darkness: “Fortunata decía a todo que sí, y aparentando ocuparse de aquello, pensaba en lo suyo, meciéndose en la dulce

⁷² “rocking herself in the gentle, warm, dark atmosphere” (622)

oscuridad y la tibia atmósfera de la sala" (274, II)⁷³. Not only does Fortunata hide the truth about her feelings from Maxi, leaving him in the dark, but darkness inside the house hides her from the outside world. Artificial light from outside enters the house, shattering Fortunata's security in the darkness, and suggesting the intrusion of pressures from the outside world.

Por los balcones entraba muy debilitada la luz de los faroles de la calle. Dicha luz reproducía en el techo de la habitación el foco de los candelabros, con las sombras de su armadura, y esta imagen fantástica, temblando sobre la superficie blanca del cielo raso, atraía las miradas de la triste joven, que estaba tendida en una butaca con la cabeza echada hacia atrás. (274, II)⁷⁴

The appearance of the exterior light is unsettling, creating shadows and "esta imagen fantástica," and indicating that, although Fortunata desires to withdraw from the influences of the city, the society outside of the apartment, she is unable to do so. Fortunata, who is ill at ease with the outside world, uncomfortable with her place in society and her marriage, would prefer to remain distanced and isolated. Since she rejects the city's sights and sounds, it is clear that Fortunata

⁷³ "Fortunata agreed with everything he said and, feigning interest, privately turned to her own thoughts, rocking herself in the gentle, warm, dark atmosphere of the room" (622).

⁷⁴ "The light from the street lamps filtered in weakly through the balcony windows, reproducing on the ceiling the candelabra and the shadows of its branches, and this fantastic image, quivering on the smooth, white ceiling, attracted the sad young woman reclining in the armchair, head leaning back, eyes fixed on the ceiling" (622).

desires to disconnect herself from the city, preferring to remain in the darkness she constructs.

* * *

On the Edge

Near the end of *Bleak House*, Lady Dedlock, regretting the life she chose while unaware that Esther's father was alive, flees from her home. The description of her travel, when she is "sought in all directions but not found" (857), conveys her state of mind. The rough weather of London literally pushes her further away from her life with Sir Dedlock. The narrator reveals that

traversing this deserted blighted spot, there is a lonely figure with the sad world to itself, pelted by the snow and driven by the wind, and cast out, it would seem, from all companionship. It is the figure of a woman, too; but it is miserably dressed, and no such clothes ever came through the hall, and out at the great door, of the Dedlock mansion. (864)

With the designations "deserted" and "blighted," Dickens imparts the extreme state of Lady Dedlock's despair. Contrasted with the "Dedlock mansion," recalled at the end of the passage, we are compelled to juxtapose previous descriptions of the London home- with its rooms that are "brilliant in the season" (23)- with the location not only geographically removed from London, but also distant in comfort, with its "wretched huts" (864). Lady Dedlock's emotions are reinforced by the designation of the world as "sad," the snow which, in another context might fall beautifully, here pelts, while the wind drives. Dickens also

reminds us, with this description, that Lady Dedlock's situation is due to her choice. Her loneliness, her apparent condition of being "cast out," is qualified by "it would seem," a reminder that she does indeed have many friends and relatives who care for her. Lady Dedlock seeks anonymity, which the city structure, with its defined social boundaries, is peculiarly equipped to provide. Transformed into the non-specific "lonely figure," Lady Dedlock is placed in conditions that reflect her rejection of her life with Dedlock, and alert the reader to her upcoming death.

The description of Esther's pursuit of the desperate Lady Dedlock confirms her mother's loneliness, despair and secrecy. We understand the certainty of her fateful decision when Lady Dedlock flees to a part of the city with which she is unfamiliar. Esther observes: "The river had a fearful look, so overcast and secret, creeping away so fast between the low flat lines of shore: so heavy with indistinct and awful shapes, both of substance and shadow: so deathlike and mysterious" (870). As Esther and Bucket pursue the elusive Lady Dedlock, even the landscape seems to be evading their capture, the river "creeping away so fast between the low flat lines of shore," a river that has a "secret look." Just as the pair struggles with their search, when all seems hopeless, the river that Esther sees is "heavy with indistinct and awful shapes,"

both reflecting Esther's fears and foreshadowing the event of Lady Dedlock's death.

In *Fortunata y Jacinta*, Pérez Galdós captures a moment of innocence, layering the passage with indications of future complications. Newly married, Juanito and Jacinta leave Madrid, a city where, as Juanito recounts, he engaged in raucous behavior before their marriage. The couple's train journey suggests Juanito's self-professed journey away from his youthful indiscretions which took place in the city. As they gaze out of the window of the train, their physical separation from Madrid reinforces Juanito's statement to keep "lo pasado pasado" (211, I)⁷⁵. This expressed hope seems possible while the pair is removed from Madrid, cocooned in the train compartment. Yet Pérez Galdós interjects additional meaning into the description.

Arrimados marido y mujer a la ventanilla, miraban la lluvia, aquella cortina de menudas líneas oblicuas que descendían del Cielo sin acabar de descender. Cuando el tren paraba, se sentía el gotear del agua que los techos de los coches arrojaban sobre los estribos....Jacinta estaba contenta, y su marido también, a pesar de la melancolía llorona del paisaje. (212, I)⁷⁶

⁷⁵ "let bygones be bygones" (62).

⁷⁶ "Pressing against the window, husband and wife looked at the rain, a curtain of tiny oblique lines that kept coming from the sky without ever falling, it seemed. When the train stopped, they could hear the water dripping off the roofs of the cars onto the running boards....Jacinta was content and so was her husband, in spite of the landscape's weepy melancholy" (62-63).

The rain on the window, present without appearing to fall, portends the heartache that will follow Jacinta even when its source is hidden from her. The train stopped, the presence of rain surrounding their enclosed universe, reinforces the sadness and tears that await Jacinta when her journey away from the city ends. Pérez Galdós establishes the couple in this moment as happy with themselves, even while he suggests that, once exposed to their outside environment, they will have a more turbulent time. Removed from Madrid, they can avoid the sadness that accompanies the city and the pressures of its social environment.

* * *

There's No Place Like Home

Both authors people their novels with characters who maintain no determinable home, and are unidentified with a particular neighborhood. Their fluctuating locations in the cities identify them for the reader as inhabiting the margins of society.

In *Bleak House*, Jo is undeniably part of the complex society of London, performing helpful tasks such as sweeping the dirty street, running occasional errands, and serving as a witness. Yet he is also repeatedly rejected by society, which offers no meaningful assistance to the young orphan. Sitting on Blackfriars Bridge after being sent out of the Reverend Mr. Chadband's house

with mere scraps of food, his status is confirmed— Jo is set apart from the regular populace of London. The boy is placed in direct contrast to “the crowd flowing by him in two streams” (315) and the river flowing below him; Jo has no home or defined destination. The Church’s lack of assistance, demonstrated by his treatment by the Reverend, is evident in his physical separation from the cross at the top of the Cathedral: “And there he sits, munching and gnawing, and looking up at the great Cross on the summit of St Paul’s Cathedral, glittering above a red and violet-tinted cloud of smoke” (315). It taunts him with its allure of grandeur, and of possible relief, described as “golden” and “crowning,” yet remains “so high up, so far out of his reach” (315) an impossible goal for one such as Jo. Dickens presents religion as failing those it should be protecting, leaving them with an overwhelming sense of hopelessness. The London smoke reappears here, with “the great Cross on the summit of St Paul’s Cathedral, glittering above a red and violet-tinted cloud of smoke” (315); Jo’s access to religion, to salvation, is limited by the corrupt society, represented by the fog once again obscuring vision. Moral corruption consumes the inhabitants of London and results in Jo’s abandonment. The crowd flows by, organized into two streams of purposeful Londoners, but Jo is not part of either. While Jo is indeed requested to “move on” by many characters at many points throughout the novel, he is not going where the masses are, but to some undefined

destination. Jo remains outside of the general social activities, evidenced by his continued presence on the street. Jo's interlude on Blackfriars Bridge perfectly illustrates his lack of a formal place in London society. Suspended on the bridge between the city's banks, observing from the sidelines, Jo is distanced from the general population.

Jo's character in *Bleak House* is further developed through his movements in the city, which are dictated for him. Continuously told to "move on," Jo is offered no particular destination. Like Mauricia, an acquaintance of Fortunata's in the convent, Jo has been abandoned by society, forced to wander without direction. Society has denied Jo a future: "A progress will require not just readiness, but direction" (Peltason, 674). Jo displays his frustration with this futile activity when he exclaims: "'I'm always a moving on, sir,' cries the boy, wiping away his grimy tears with his arm. 'I've always been a moving and a moving on, ever since I was born. Where can I possible move to, sir, more nor I do move!'" (Dickens, 308). Understanding that he has no place in the city, the accommodating young boy continues to seek some acknowledgment by society, yet society's determination to cast him aside prevails.

'He won't move on,' says the constable, calmly, with a slight professional hitch of his neck involving its better settlement in his stiff stock, 'although he has been repeatedly cautioned, and therefore I am obliged to take him into custody. He's as obstinate a young gonoph as I know. He WON'T move on.' (308)

The constable's calm retort conforms to the treatment of Jo dictated by society- Jo's geographic boundaries are limited, as are his social boundaries. Directed by others, Jo is unable to change his actions or his future.

In both *Bleak House* and *Fortunata y Jacinta*, certain characters are placed in situations where they have access to factions of society into which they were not born. These outsiders, however, are described as interacting with the cities in ways that reinforce their inability to ever successfully alter their social status.

When Jo is wandering through the city in *Bleak House*, he is frequently refused entry to all buildings not located in Tom-all-Alone's, "the houses not yet being open" (258). He does not have control over his destination or his life, forced to remain a wanderer in a city that has no place for him. Brought to Bleak House for aid, the feverish Jo is discussed by Jarndyce, who asks Skimpole, a selfish, amoral, childish friend of Jarndyce, his opinion on the matter. Skimpole exclaims immediately, without hesitation, "You had better turn him out" (493). Skimpole represents society's instinctual reaction, which is to remove the problem of the unhoused poor from sight. Skimpole thinks nothing of Jo's future, remarking: "I have not the least idea what he is to do then. But I have no doubt he'll do it" (494). While Skimpole is financially cared for by Jarndyce, Jo only has himself for support. Forced to remain on the streets, lacking a home, Jo

'moves on' according to the dictates of the society. The way that Jo moves through the city reveals his docile character, as well as the character of the general society, which incorporates individuals like Skimpole. Jo's relationship to the city reveals that an individual in his position is unable to alter the existing social structure.

Some characters are unable to find a place in the city, as stronger societal forces expel them, leaving them doomed to wander. In *Fortunata and Jacinta*, Mauricia, restrained in the convent, is released when her health begins to deteriorate. Entering the city outside of the convent walls, Mauricia is filled with wonder and delight at the sight— for her it represents freedom instead of duty and the stifling nature of the convent. Her joy at seeing the city streets, exclaiming “mi querida calle de mi alma” ((*Fortunata y Jacinta*, 655, I)⁷⁷, is tempered by confusion, as she realizes that she has no home, no clear direction, rehabilitation, or sincere support. “Respiró después con fuerza, paróse mirando azorada a todos lados, como el toro cuando sale al redondel” (655, I)⁷⁸. Mauricia appears to be out of her element outside in the city, drawing attention to herself with her appearance. “Luego, orientándose, tiró muy decidida por el paseo

⁷⁷ “Oh, my ever-lovin' street!” (378).

⁷⁸ “Then she breathed heavily; she stopped and looked around confusedly, like a bull that has just entered the ring” (378).

abajo. Era cosa de ver aquella mujerona descalza, desgarrada, melenuda, despidiendo de sus ojos fiereza, con un lío bajo el brazo y las botas colgando de una mano. Las pocas personas que por allí pasaban, miráronla con asombro....” (655, I)⁷⁹. Mauricia, barefoot, con “ojos de fiereza,” has no apparent restriction on her movements. For her, the lack of boundaries serve as strong statement about her place in the society. Far from unnoticed, passersby look at Mauricia with awe— “Las pocas personas que por allí pasaban, miráronla con asombro;” she does not slip into the crowd and travel inconspicuously. Society wants her to conform, but she instead draws attention to herself as different, a member of a society that offers her no place. Mauricia’s wandering the streets of Madrid confirms that there is no obvious place for her in society.

The city environment obscures the individual identity of certain characters, as they become subsumed by their surroundings. In *Bleak House*, Charley is depicted as a small creature in a large environment; at the conclusion of the reader’s first experience with the young orphan, she enters the busy street, quickly removed from sight.

We kissed Charley, and took her down-stairs with us, and stopped outside the house to see her run away to her work. I don’t know where

⁷⁹ “Then, getting her bearings, she thrust forth downhill. It was a sight worth seeing – that barefoot woman, bold and wild-haired, her eyes agleam with savagery, a bundle under her arm, boots dangling by their straps from her hand. The few people passing by looked at her in awe” (379).

she was going, but we saw her run, such a little creature, in her womanly bonnet and apron, through a covered way at the bottom of the court; and melt into the city's strife and sound, like a dewdrop in an ocean, (254)

relates Esther. Charley is very small, yet her "womanly" clothing reminds the reader that she carries responsibilities of a much older person. The first image of Charley is her acting in place of her mother: "The child he was nursing, stretched forth its arms, and cried out to be taken by Charley. The little girl took it, in a womanly sort of manner belonging to the apron and the bonnet, and stood looking at us over the burden that clung to her most affectionately" (245). The city's social structures provide no other recourse for her and her siblings than for Charley to work; with this description, Dickens highlights the anonymous role assigned to Charley, who, melting into the general population, blends with the "strife" of the city's poor. Characterized as "a dewdrop in an ocean," Charley's fresh innocence contrasts with the enormity of the ocean, a harsh, unforgiving environment.

* * *

Blurring Social Boundaries

Guillermina Pacheco, an intimate friend of the Santa Cruz family, is identified as a member of the same social class as the Santa Cruz. Pérez Galdós

has established city neighborhoods as an indication of characters' social class; Guillermina "vivía en la inmediata" (262, I)⁸⁰ to the Santa Cruz's, and her easy familiarity with the family, in whose home she "tenía su lugar fijo" and others "la miraban ya como se mira lo que está siempre en un mismo sitio y no puede estar en otro" (263, I)⁸¹, confirms her status. Unlike others of her social standing, who are, in the ordinary course of their lives, content to stay in parts of the city with members of their class, and who, when they venture outside of these boundaries are in turn curious and surprised with the way in which other people live, Guillermina intentionally and frequently moves between established neighborhoods. Her movements through the city present a strong statement by Pérez Galdós and serve as a narrative tool.

Scouring the city for funds for her orphanage, Guillermina broadens her geographic wanderings in ways which mark her as very different from her social peers. "Iría de puerta en puerta con la mano así," (266, I)⁸² she recounts, encountering people "a quien no había visto" (266, I)⁸³ as she crosses geographic

⁸⁰ "lived next door" (96)

⁸¹ "had her place" , "considered her a permanent fixture" (96)

⁸² "I'd go from door to door with my hand out" (99)

⁸³ "never seen before" (99)

and social boundaries. These activities are extraordinary within the context of the Madrid portrayed in *Fortunata y Jacinta*, highlighting their purpose as equally extraordinary. Interest in assisting the city's poor prompts her family and friends to refer to Guillermina as "excelsa pariente" and "sin igual mujer" (264, I)⁸⁴ even while she is also perceived as somewhat peculiar and tiresome, and "loca" (265, I)⁸⁵. While other "señoras nobles" (264, I)⁸⁶ aid the poor "por vanidad, a veces de mala gana" (265, I)⁸⁷, Guillermina has "la pasión de la beneficencia" (264, I)⁸⁸. The extent to which this passion is unusual is supported through the city's structure, with its well-defined neighborhoods, and the way that Guillermina, who, as she states, "noté que aquel valor tan deseado entraba en mi" (266, I)⁸⁹ to break through the established boundaries.

⁸⁴ "sublime relative" , "peerless woman" (97)

⁸⁵ "crazy" (98)

⁸⁶ "aristocratic ladies" (98)

⁸⁷ "out of vanity, sometimes without even liking the work" (98)

⁸⁸ "a passion for beneficence" (97)

⁸⁹ "felt the courage I was longing for flooding through me" (99)

With *Guillermina*, Pérez Galdós presents a contrast between a lone, “crazy” individual who is prepared to risk social rejection in order to aid the obviously-needy people of Madrid, and the general society— people as well as institutions— who are portrayed as unwilling to provide meaningful assistance. Removed from the general notice of *Guillermina*’s social peers, the “propia miseria” (272, I)⁹⁰ of the “gente baja” (187, I)⁹¹ neighborhoods exist unseen and unrecognized by them, confined to discrete parts of the city.

In *Bleak House*, Dickens, while exposing social prejudices, introduces objective characters who show an awareness of the entire society and its ills. Certain characters are not constrained by the social boundaries in the city, but instead are comfortable and familiar with all areas and use the structure of the city to their advantage. Mr. Bucket, whose job as a detective naturally immerses him in the heart of London, adapts to his surroundings, successfully managing the city undeterred by outside influences or complications. He views himself as unconstrained by his surroundings: “Time and place cannot bind Mr Bucket,” who is resilient and ubiquitous, unlike many of the other inhabitants of the city: “Like man in the abstract, he is here to-day and gone to-morrow – but, very unlike man indeed, he is here again the next day” (803). Dickens overtly casts a

⁹⁰ “human misery” (103)

⁹¹ “low-class” (46)

moral judgment with Bucket's character. Bucket's physical relationship with London, his interest in crossing every geographic boundary, introduces a glimmer of hope, in the comfort of the inspector who is actively aware of the scope and temper of the society.

Bucket not only observes, he acts as a responsible caretaker— possible as a result of his comfortable presence. Taking advantage of hidden corners and dark passageways, he meticulously traverses the city, winding his way into seemingly private locations with ease. “This evening he will be casually looking into the iron extinguishers at the door of Sir Leicester Dedlock's house in town; and tomorrow morning he will be walking on the leads at Chesney Wold....” (803). Bucket has immersed himself to the extent that he is a trusted figure: “He makes for Sir Leicester Dedlock's, which is at present a sort of home to him, where he comes and goes as he likes at all hours, where he is always welcome and made much of, where he knows the whole establishment, and walks in an atmosphere of mysterious greatness” (805). Bucket keeps his destination and route secret, “he comes and goes as he likes,” “casually looking.” His ubiquitous presence, though, is far from casual. With his garnered knowledge, Bucket is armed with essential information in emergencies, his seemingly dispassionate air transformed into careful support. By eliminating the boundaries of interior and exterior spaces for this character, Dickens demonstrates that true help is available

to those willing to break down social and economic barriers, and for those who are free from emotional attachments.

Mr. Tulkinghorn, Sir Leicester Dedlock's manipulative lawyer, similarly travels seamlessly between different locations, crossing social boundaries:

From the verdant undulations and the spreading oaks of the Dedlock property, Mr Tulkinghorn transfers himself to the stale heat and dust of London. His manner of coming and going between the two places is one of his impenetrabilities. He walks into Chesney Wold as if it were next door to his chambers, and returns to his chambers as if he had never been out of Lincoln's Inn Fields. He neither changes his dress before the journey, nor talks of it afterwards. He melted out of his turret-room this morning, just as now, in the late twilight, he melts into his own square. (661)

Tulkinghorn, a master of both environments, moves throughout the city as if it has no boundaries; his social status and occupation allow him— and his inclination incites him— to wind his way into every part of the city. But while Bucket often directly inserts himself into different burrows of the city, Tulkinghorn sneaks, demonstrating their distinction of purpose. Personal gain motivates Tulkinghorn, while Bucket acts for the gain of individuals and the general society. Both Bucket and Tulkinghorn, are masters of the city environment, connected to people in many different locations and able to easily switch between locations, yet for differing ends.

Bucket and Tulkinghorn exist in contrast to each other, with their drastically different motives for crossing the city's social boundaries.

Tulkinghorn journeys to all parts of the city in order to collect secrets that he can use for his own personal gain, secrets that grant him power over others in the city. Tulkinghorn's ever-increasing power gives him an air of superiority, and he prides himself in being a gentleman of power. While at the Dedlocks', he takes "a pinch of snuff" (647), an action which demonstrates his ease while in the Dedlock house, and also his desire to maintain the air of a gentleman. Mr. Bucket, on the other hand, travels across social boundaries not for selfish reasons, but in pursuit of altruistic ends. While crossing boundaries is also advantageous for Tulkinghorn's job, the lawyer's actions draw a distinction between the two characters.

What characters notice and who they converse with as they make their journeys through the streets reveals their understanding of their fellow human beings. Woodcourt displays comfort with all neighborhoods of the city, showing himself, like Bucket, to feel responsible for the entire society, not only a selective part. Woodcourt notices his surroundings, looking to help and not just merely pass by, a trait especially evident when Woodcourt is walking by Tom-all-Alone's:

A brown sunburnt gentleman, who appears in some inaptitude for sleep to be wandering abroad rather than counting the hours on a restless pillow, strolls hitherward at this quiet time. Attracted by curiosity, he often pauses and looks about him, up and down the miserable byways. Nor is he merely curious, for in his bright dark eye there is compassionate

interest; and as he looks here and there, he seems to understand such wretchedness, and to have studied it before.... (711)

Woodcourt's "compassionate interest," his natural generosity, his experience as a doctor, mark his motives in blurring social boundaries. While Snagsby sees hopelessness and destruction in Tom-all-Alone's, Woodcourt sees possibility.

Estupiñá shows himself to be familiar with many different inhabitants of the city, a valued member of the Madrid community who is trusted by many. "Conocía a cuantos almacenistas y tenderos había en Madrid; todas las puertas se le franqueaban, y en todas partes le ponían buena cara por su honradez, sus buenas maneras y principalmente por aquella bendita labia que Dios le había dado" (172, I)⁹². Estupiñá's good nature is a trait that grants him entrance into the lives of all of the main characters of the novel, especially Juanito, for whom he acts almost like a father. Estupiñá does not merely pass through the city, but interacts with, and assists, its inhabitants, revealing his compassionate nature. However, unlike Woodcourt, Estupiñá is "totally unaware of the service he is providing, both before and when it happens" (Bly, 118). Drawing Juanito into his lower-class neighborhood by friendship, Estupiñá's character prompts a broadening of the young man's social boundaries. This occasion acts as a

⁹² "He knew all the wholesalers and shopkeepers in Madrid; all their doors were open to him, and he was well received everywhere because of his honesty, good manners, and, above all, that gift of gab with which God had blessed him" (37-38).

narrative force that serves to draw certain characters together, notably Fortunata and Juanito. While Estupiñá's helpful acts are much more passive than are Woodcourt's, his status as a friend to members of different parts of the city and his work to maintain these relationships alters the behavior of characters who are normally constrained by their social status.

* * *

Where They End Up

Esther's character development is traceable through her relationship with the city. At the beginning of her time in London, Esther is led through the city by Miss Jellyby, as I have discussed earlier. Here, Esther is passively disinterested in direction and in how to navigate through the city, content to allow her path and destination to be dictated by another. Subsequently in the novel, Esther continues under the care and control of another, especially Mr. Jarndyce, living in his house- and then, looking out the window, permitting herself to glimpse the possibility of a life based outside of Bleak House. And at the end of the novel when Woodcourt expresses his interest in her, she is at last able to assert an independent decision about her future, solidified by her physical removal from Jarndyce's home.

Throughout *Fortunata y Jacinta*, Maxi struggles to understand the world around him and to be understood by others. At the end of the novel, he is placed

in an insane asylum on the outskirts of the city, removed from society. He exclaims:

¡Si creerán estos tontos que me engañan! Esto es Leganés. Lo acepto, lo acepto y me callo, en prueba de la sumisión absoluta de mi voluntad a lo que el mundo quiera hacer de mi persona. No encerrarán entre murallas mi pensamiento. Resido en las estrellas. Pongan al llamado Maximiliano Rubín en un palacio o en un muladar.... lo mismo da. (*Fortunata y Jacinta*, 541-2, II)⁹³

Maxi accepts his physical confinement, but remarks that his mind is now finally free to exist entirely in the imaginative world he enjoyed while physically wandering through the city streets. Madrid, and the society it defines, holds no place for Maxi- his character develops into one whose inability to function in the reality of familial and casual social relationships is marked by his final placement in the city: on its extreme outskirts, removed even further by the walls of the asylum.

And at the conclusion of *Bleak House*, we wonder “whether there is any hope for the survival of English society” (141), writes Schwarzbach. Esther and Woodcourt leave for the country, recreating a “Bleak House,” but without the corrupting city environment. The band of individuals helping Jo, acting contrary

⁹³ “These fools think they’re deceiving me! This is Leganés, the insane asylum. I accept it; I accept it in silence, to prove the total submission of my will to whatever the world wishes to do with me. But they won’t be able to confine my thoughts within these walls. I live among the stars. Let them put the man called Maximiliano Rubín in a palace or a dung heap-it’s all the same to me” (818).

to the general population, has been proven unsuccessful in its efforts to alter the prescribed social order. Collin McKinney, in *Mapping the Social Body*, reveals this same dissatisfaction with the resolution of *Fortunata and Jacinta*, “The order that is restored through the deaths of Mauricia and Fortunata or the enclosure of Maxi in Leganés may appear on the surface to restore order but, contrary to the principle of physiognomic reliability, the superficial order does not guarantee order within. Below the surface the disorder and tragedy remain” (135).

With characters who continuously challenge the proscribed social and geographic boundaries of Madrid and London, however, Pérez Galdós and Dickens interject threads of hopeful change. Guillermina and Bucket prominently continue their efforts to draw attention to the complexity of the societies, and model possibilities for social transformation. Does any reader anticipate that, while “disorder and tragedy remain” below the surface of these societies, Esther and several other characters in *Bleak House* will not be driven in some measure by the remembrance of Jo’s pathetic death? or that Jacinta and several other characters in *Fortunata y Jacinta* will not alter their social awareness as a result of Mauricia’s dramatic end?

Conclusions

While my discussion has included more than a few of the characters in *Fortunata y Jacinta* and in *Bleak House*, there are— in both novels— an array of wizened aunts, voluble clergymen, penny-pinching cousins, shaggy laborers, and beanpole girls to mention just a few, who also populate their urban environments. The sheer quantity of characters reflects the density of the cities, with each character leading a distinct life and playing a discrete role in the social

whirl of Pérez Galdós's Madrid or Dickens's London. The authors organize the multitude of characters through details about their homes, workplaces and places of worship, the streets they travel, and the ways in which they move around the cities. As Jacinta's fury colors the markets, so the thoughts and emotions of additional characters enliven settings. Weevle's unease recalls the spectacular combustion that undoubtedly left behind some residue in his new lodgings, just as other characters' movements highlight connections by their own less-creepy interior spaces in both novels. Street activities recede in importance for many in the way that Maxi's preoccupations eclipse his surroundings, and features of both cities leap into prominence as does the cross atop St. Paul's Cathedral during Jo's rare pause, his moment of observation from Blackfriars Bridge. Dickens and Pérez Galdós propel their narratives by means of a rich use of complicated locations that they selectively illuminate to create cohesive stories.

Raymond Williams emphasizes the diversity and chaos that are emblematic of large cities.

For a city like London....could not easily be described in a rhetorical gesture of repressive uniformity. On the contrary, its miscellaneity, its crowded variety, its randomness of movement, were the most apparent things about it, especially when seen from inside.... (153-4)

In both novels, the authors communicate the "crowded variety" with numerous

characters who inhabit London and Madrid in myriad ways. As we revel in the quirks of individual characters, Pérez Galdós and Dickens convey insights into the broader societies and explore connections between characters and relationships between sections of the cities.

The juxtaposition of extreme wealth and poverty in 19th Madrid and London provides a particular opportunity for the authors to explore social responsibility.

One of the great mysteries of the Victorian period is how stark realities....needed to be 'discovered' by people who could hardly avoid daily contact with them . Yet such discoveries nevertheless were frequent: how often in Victorian letters, diaries, articles or novels do we come across the horrified confession, 'I had not known such things existed'? (Schwarzbach, 124-5)

Pérez Galdós and Dickens place this social reality— what Schwarzbach in 1979 perceived as a mystery (and with which we are likely to concur)— in context.

The actions and inactions of a multitude of characters, depicted by the authors in relation to the cities, provide insight into the general societies.

Dickens, at the outset, presents a London where influence is ever-present. Nameless individuals contribute, in small amounts, to the grime of the city, and find themselves obscured by fog. Specifically-identified characters increase the city's dust by inattention, as is the case with Tulkinghorn, and create obfuscation, like the generations of lawyers handling the Jarndyce case. Dickens presents

characters who, unintentionally or overtly, contribute to the general environment. Even when individual characters are unaware of their direct involvement, the London that Dickens describes confirms their influence.

The social order of London is, we have seen, reflected in geographic boundaries that denote identifiable groups; characters acknowledge delineations by their surprise with the conditions of Tom-all-Alone's, by their discomfort with the presence of homeless Jo in middle-class neighborhoods. Yet, while Dickens defines social boundaries, he also communicates that these demarcations are not absolute- characters may elect to ignore, neglect, and shut out others, but, in the London of *Bleak House*, connections between all characters are constantly present. Houses may hold secrets, but eventually all secrets are uncovered- Nemo's true identity cannot hide forever in the "foul and filthy" (Dickens, 165) rented room; Lady Dedlock's unhappiness eventually spills outside her front door. Events result from connections that covertly, and often unpleasantly, overstep geographic and social boundaries.

Characters in *Bleak House* who purposefully cross boundaries are seen to help individuals; yet while portrayed as admirable, these characters don't aid society in general. Jo enjoys a few hours of cosseting before he dies; Charley and her siblings, by the end of the novel, have a secure existence, but assistance is not routine, nor is it undertaken by institutions or by the broader society. Dickens

leaves the reader with a city where every individual exerts influence, beneficial or detrimental, but where most residents remain aloof from social responsibility.

In *Fortunata y Jacinta*, Pérez Galdós uncovers social boundaries that are based on economic, familial and social connections. With characters who are variously comfortable with their social groups, strive to alter their social status, or flirt with unfamiliar neighborhoods, the author also reflects the social groupings of Madrid by defined geographic regions. Discretely offered and obvious connections between characters, unveiled through the settings, reveal social order as well as social tensions. On the way to Fortunata's burial near the end of the novel, a summary of her life is deemed enticing enough for "un drama o novela, aunque a su parecer el tejido artístico no resultaría vistoso sino introduciendo ciertas urdimbres de todo punto necesarias para que la vulgaridad de la vida pudiese convertirse en materia estética" (*Fortunata y Jacinta*, 535, II)⁹⁴.

Of course, the appeal of her story is its un-warped aspect; carrying the reader from the apartment building on Cava de San Miguel with its chicken-feather entrance to the darkened doorway opposite the more-refined, distinctly unvulgar Santa Cruz residence and back again, the journey of Fortunata's tragic love unfolds through her character's relationship with the buildings and streets. We

⁹⁴ "a play or a novel, although in [the judge's] opinion the artistic texture wouldn't be especially attractive unless it were warped in places so that the vulgarity of life might be converted into esthetic material" (812-813).

appreciate the unlikelihood of Juanito's constancy in the context of the social barriers that are, in this city, impermeable.

Pérez Galdós presents characters who, with their actions and inactions, influence and define the society, yet the influence here leaves a city that remains essentially compartmentalized. Juanito aggressively crosses social and geographic boundaries to pursue Fortunata, but without this activity, their social worlds would only superficially intersect. Fortunata and her child intrude on Jacinta and her family due to Juanito's actions, which also provide the incentive for Jacinta's visits to the slums. Even Guillermina crosses social boundaries and effects positive social change in an obvious, noisy way, an undertaking so extraordinary that her contemporaries term her a "saint." Pérez Galdós, exposing areas of social need, presents, with Guillermina, a character who helps more than individuals with her orphanage, and creates new opportunities for many unfortunate children with an institution that will continue past her lifetime. The geographic areas that so deliberately acknowledge social distinctions continue to represent, at the end of *Fortunata y Jacinta*, boundaries that— barring extraordinary action— exist without the direct influence of divergent social groups. In Pérez Galdós's Madrid, unlike in Dickens's London, influence between social groups is predominantly active and overt.

London and Madrid. While Pérez Galdós and Dickens detail the physical settings for these two novels with specifics— Chancery Court and the Puerta del Sol could only be in these cities— the authors take their settings far beyond bricks and mortar. Injecting their descriptions with the subjective viewpoints of their characters, mining and manipulating the settings, bringing the buildings and streets to life, ever-changing, and different for every character at every moment, the authors present cities that are far from static. As characters evolve and interact, and themes are introduced and develop, we come to appreciate the powerful narrative forces that Dickens and Pérez Galdós create with the city settings.

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