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## Empire, Nation, and the *Indiano* in Galdós's *Tormento* and *La loca de la casa*

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EMPIRE, NATION, AND THE *INDIANO* IN  
GALDÓS'S *TORMENTO* AND *LA LOCA DE  
LA CASA*

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**ABSTRACT** This essay analyzes the *indiano* character in *Tormento* and *La loca de la casa* by Benito Pérez Galdós. Utilizing in part the concepts of the stereotype, hybridity, and mimicry as theorized by Homi Bhabha, I argue that the *indiano* exposes gaps and fissures in colonial discourse present in these texts, functioning to betray anxiety about Spain's national identity and waning imperial status. Ultimately, normative constructions of metropolitan masculinity are rejected in favor of the *indiano*'s embodiment of hybrid subjectivity, one with the potential to "regenerate" Spain. In *Tormento*, the *indiano* is a positive figure but impossible to reconcile with the nation, while in *La loca de la casa*, the *indiano* is presented as a viable path through which national regeneration may take place.

By the 1820s, the Spanish American independence revolutions almost completely dissolved the Spanish Empire, leaving only Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico still under Spanish rule. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it was a mere shadow of its former expanse, yet the notion of empire still had an important function in the Spanish cultural imaginary. This is the basic premise that underlies Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*: that empire and imperial concerns are "constitutively significant" in European texts, even when those texts are not about empire (66). Although Said notes that he does not discuss the Spanish Empire (xxii), some of his ideas are applicable to nineteenth-century Spain and the realist novel. Spanish nineteenth-century literary production, in a broad sense, could be seen

as a way of “coming to terms . . . with the nation’s colonial history even as [producers and consumers of that literature] struggled to construct a definition of Spain as nation” (Coffey 49). Benito Pérez Galdós’s work during the last quarter century in particular is a good place to see this process at work. As Mary Coffey has argued, Galdós’s fiction from the 1870s through the end of the century shows a gradual inclusion of colonial issues. The first series of *Episodios nacionales*, set during the independence revolutions (but written in the 1870s), contain few colonial references; indeed, they may represent an attempt by Galdós to “[present] a vision of Spain without its colonial legacy, thus positing the notion that Spain could, and indeed should, redefine itself as a nation and not an empire” (64). By the 1880s, however, people and issues related to the colonies are mentioned with more frequency. As Coffey has convincingly demonstrated, by the last decades of the nineteenth century, Galdós began to depict the former and current colonies as places that offered a fresh perspective on the problems Spain faced, implicitly showing how important colonial history and the colonial experience were to the “process of defining national identity” (64).

The articulation of Spanish national identity was in many ways still tied to a colonial project during the nineteenth century. Historian Christopher Schmidt-Nowara has argued that the “retrenched colonialism” of this period was linked to the development of the ideas of citizenship and nationalism, and was thus essential to “imagining” national identity (“La España ultramarina” 191–92). Between 1824 and 1898 Spain was actively engaged in colonial expansion in Africa, and also sustained a vigorous colonial project in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines (Álvarez Junco 499–524; Schmidt-Nowara “Imperio” 32–33). Part of the “imagining” of a Spanish nation (to paraphrase Benedict Anderson) was that the colonies were seen as an integral part of Spain and should be treated as such. Spanish American history was viewed by many as another part of Spanish history; the colonies were “la España ultramarina.” This differs somewhat from colonial models used by England and France, where the colonies were never imagined as part of the “motherland,” but as property to be exclusively exploited and subjugated—a largely economic model of domination (Schmidt-Nowara, *Conquest* 3–4).

In the Spanish case, the remaining American colonies had strong cultural, historical, and economic links to the metropolis. Puerto Rico and especially Cuba were important economic markets for goods produced on the Peninsula. In turn, wealth returned to Spain in myriad ways. One of these was in the form of men who returned and invested in enterprises linked with the

colonies (Schmidt-Nowara, “La España ultramarina” 195). Many of these men, or *indianos*, had similar stories: they were often from poor or working-class families who left Spain when young, made their fortune in the Americas, and then returned to Spain when older. There are spectacular stories of *indianos* who rose to prominence in Peninsular society; for example, the Cantabrian Antonio López y López returned to Spain and invested in Barcelona’s manufacturing sector. He was eventually bestowed the title Marqués de Comillas (195).

Galdós was undoubtedly aware of this connection between Spain and the Americas. His maternal uncles and some of his siblings emigrated to the Americas; some of his family was intimately connected with Cuba (Coffey 51; Ortíz-Armengol 90). These familial ties and the constant transatlantic trade between the Canary Islands and the Americas certainly would have influenced the author. In his collaboration with the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Prensa* he mentions the wave of emigrations in several different articles, commenting in 1887 that the flow of people and goods to and from the Americas and Spain was mutually beneficial:

La emigración a las Repúblicas de sangre española me ha parecido siempre conveniente, y España misma recoge un día y otro los frutos de esa magnífica simiente que derrama en las naciones nuevas fundadas por nuestra raza. Exportamos a hombres e importamos capitales, de lo cual resulta que cada país recibe lo que más le hace falta, con lo cual se satisfacen necesidades sociales y se contribuye al progreso general. (Bly 23, n. 18).

Even more pertinently, Galdós suggested that the *indiano* might be Spain’s best hope for a renewal. In a 1914 article titled “España y América” in the illustrated newspaper *La Esfera*, he wrote about the return of *indianos* to Spain with a decidedly regenerationist slant:

Sin prejuicio de fomentar la hispanización de América, celebremos como un hecho indudable y feliz la americanización de nuestra Península. Ciego está quien no lo vea. A lo largo de la región septentrional de España . . . tenemos una espesa población americana compuesta de individuos que el vulgo llama *indianos* con mucha propiedad, porque ellos son Las Indias conquistadas antaño por nosotros, que hogaño son la riqueza, la inteligencia y el trabajo que vienen a conquistar y civilizar a la madre caduca, adue-

ñándose de su suelo y fundiendo el vivir moderno con el atavismo glorioso.  
 (“España y América”)

The *indiano* and his place in Spanish society had been on Galdós’s mind well before these two articles were written. During the last decades of the nineteenth century he had included the *indiano* figure in several of his novels, making this character one of the most visible references to the Americas in the *novelas contemporaneas*. Several novels feature *indianos* in secondary roles: José María Manso in *El amigo Manso* (1882) is perhaps the best known. However, the novel *Tormento* (1884) and the play *La loca de la casa* (1893) are unique among Galdós’s works because they feature the *indiano* as a main character.<sup>1</sup> In both texts the plot follows a similar pattern: the *indiano* returns from the Americas and attempts to integrate into Spanish society through marriage.

Criticism on *Tormento* has traditionally focused on the interrelationship of *folletín* drama and realism (Andreu, Sieburth), and the falseness and masquerade of bourgeois society (Aldaraca, Rodriguez, Wright). Critical analysis of *La loca de la casa* has included examining women’s gender roles and power in the play (Condé, Jagoe). While the figure of the *indiano* has been studied by a number of critics, there is no work as yet that analyzes specifically how the *indiano* stereotype is intertwined with anxieties about empire and national identity in late-nineteenth-century texts, a significant lacuna. John Sinnigen has postulated that the function of Galdós’s descriptions of colonial experience is to further explore national culture, rather than to describe colonial life (116). Luisa Elena Delgado also asserts that “[e]l análisis de la representación del indiano, lo Americano, lo colonial, lo bárbaro y lo salvaje nos dice mucho más sobre la sociedad madrileña, española, europea, que sobre la americana” (312). Both of these critics are correct in the idea that the representation of the colonial in these texts is not an exact accounting of the

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1. *La loca de la casa* was originally conceived as a play rather than a *novela dialogada*; however, the first version is listed among his *novelas contemporaneas* (Condé 1–8). Hal Carney concludes that the second (stage) version of *La loca* is probably the result of editing in order to see this play on the stage. The first, longer version of *La loca* also does not have any of the features of a *novela dialogada*, unlike the trio of novels *Realidad*, *El abuelo*, and *Casandra* that have commonalities in form (483). Both Condé and Carney concur that the shorter stage version does not have any significant cuts that alter its meaning from the first, longer version. My own comparison of both versions leads me to agree with them, and I have elected to use the shorter stage version here, in keeping with its original conception as a stage play.

colonial experience; rather, it is indicative of a colonial discourse linking the metropolis and the former colonies in a hierarchical binary in which the metropolitan is recognized to be superior in every way to the colonial. Yet, as David Huddart notes, “colonial power is [perpetually] anxious” because it never achieves that ultimate difference between the metropolis and the colony. That anxiety—“the tension between the illusion of difference and the reality of sameness”—is what leads to gaps or fissures that undermine the aims of colonial discourse (6). Utilizing in part the concepts of the stereotype, hybridity, and mimicry as theorized by Homi Bhabha, I argue that the *indiano* character portrayed in these texts exposes those gaps and fissures, functioning to betray anxiety about Spain’s national identity and waning imperial status. Ultimately, normative constructions of metropolitan masculinity are rejected in favor of the *indiano*’s embodiment of a hybrid subjectivity, one with the potential to “regenerate” Spain. In *Tormento*, the *indiano* is a positive figure but impossible to reconcile with the nation, while in *La loca de la casa*, the *indiano* is presented as a viable path through which national regeneration may take place.

There is no eliding the fact that the *indiano*, whether real or a fictional character, was usually male. Indeed, if we have learned anything at all from recent work in postcolonialism and gender/queer theory, it is that there is no such thing as theorizing identity categories in isolation. This is in part what Anne McClintock argues in *Imperial Leather*: that the tropes of race, class, and gender identifications are neither irreducible nor substitutable for one another; rather, understanding empire requires an understanding of the “formative categories of imperial modernity” as articulated; that is, “they come into existence in and through relation to each other—if in contradictory and conflictual ways” (5). My essay promotes a reading of the *indiano*’s enmeshment in the “articulated categories” of race, class, and gender in the context of Spain’s diminishing imperial status. By doing so, I shed light on a neglected aspect of Galdós’s work and its connection to the Americas.

### *The indiano and empire*

Empire has always been a “gendered enterprise” (Connell 187). For most European countries, the adventure narrative set in the colonies worked to produce a normative masculine subject. The hero overcame obstacles in a hostile environment and thus the adventure narrative effectively functioned

as a conduct book for young men and boys (Holden and Ruppel xv). In the Spanish case, however, there are few examples of colonial literature (and thus the colonial adventure narrative).<sup>2</sup> The *indiano* is one of a small number of visible markers of colonialism in late-nineteenth-century Spanish fiction. It was through their experiences that ordinary Spaniards could glimpse the colonial experience.

However, references to the colonies in Spanish literature were not always so sparse. The *indiano* figure has appeared in Spanish literature since first contact with the Americas. In early modern literature, the *indiano* was a stereotypical character, appearing in over thirty plays. The term *indiano* as used in these plays meant two distinct things: (1) people born in the colonies who came to Spain to find partners and get married, or (2) men who were born in Spain but traveled to the colonies in order to make their fortune, returning when older to marry into the aristocracy and thus ascend the social ladder (Simerka 7). In both of these situations, but especially the second, the *indiano*'s social mobility and his acquisition of wealth through work instead of blood ties contributes to his liminal status and marks him as "other" in early modern drama (40). In particular, these plays address how the colonies impacted the metropolis through a character who, for all intents and purposes, transgressed the rigid boundaries of social status in early modern Spain with the wealth acquired in the Americas (Mariscal, Simerka). The *indiano* is thus represented in early modern Spanish culture as a hybrid character at the juncture of gender, class, and ethnic identity constructs (Mariscal 65). These insights into the *indiano* figure resonate with his representation in literature three centuries later.

The *indiano* character has been looked at in several different ways in Spanish nineteenth-century literary studies. Guadalupe Gómez-Ferrer Morant's "El indiano en la novela realista" is to date the only attempted global examination of the *indiano* in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Spanish fiction. Several different aspects of the *indiano* are examined by other critics, including Delgado and Vernon Chamberlin. However, it is James Fernández who suggests that far from being a stock character, the *indiano* is an

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2. In keeping with postcolonial theory conventions, I define the literature of colonialism as fiction that is set in the (former) colonies, written by metropolitan authors. Eduardo López Bago's *El separatista* (1895) and Galdós's *La vuelta al mundo en la 'Numancia'* (1906) and *Aita Tettauen* (1905) are some of the better known examples of this type of literature from the turn of the century in Spain.

“extraordinarily charged figure” in which Spain’s “problematic relationship to the New World, or to modernity . . . may be explored,” arguing that instead of relying on a “bitter master narrative” of “Imperio/Desastre,” we as critics should begin to productively question the place of the *indiano* within nineteenth-century Spanish culture (3–35). Fernández briefly explores this topic in Clarín’s short story “Boroña” (40–41).

The *indiano* stereotype in late-nineteenth-century culture is similarly encoded to earlier stereotypes. The first idea usually associated with the stereotype is that he is from Spain but marked in some way as “other” by his stay in the colonies. Although in real life *indianos* were ethnically Spanish, they were more often than not from the periphery—Galicia, Asturias, the Basque country, and Cataluña. In fiction the *indiano*’s Spanish origin is taken for granted and usually explained. When he returns to Spain he is marked in some significant way as “other.” In *Tormento*, Agustín Caballero’s origin is never fully explained, except that he is Bringas’s cousin and had once had family in Cadiz. In *La loca de la casa*, José María Cruz is of markedly humble origins, the son of a carter that the Moncada family employed. Both *indianos* left Spain when young to make their fortune in the Americas. Their otherness is signaled visually through their skin, their failure to properly mimic social conventions, and their self-earned fortunes, which are a marked contrast to the inherited wealth of the aristocracy and the aspirational ideals of the bourgeoisie and lower classes.

The second idea usually linked with the *indiano* is that of social mobility made possible by money, which also signals their difference from traditional Spanish society. The wealth that the *indiano* brought back to the metropolis made social mobility achievable, and made the stereotype of the wealthy and ostentatious *indiano* pervasive in Spanish culture. In 1899, Felix de Aramburu y Zuloaga wrote about the *indiano*’s flamboyant displays of wealth:

Aquel indiano que se pavonea por la quintana cubierto con ancho *jipijapa*, vestido de fino, adornado con dorada cadena y botones y anillos que deslumbran, atareado en convertir en humo y cenizas vegueros bien olientes, orgulloso de ver redimidos de la servidumbre de la gleba a los que le dieron el ser, salió de la aldea hace veinte años más pobre que las arañas . . . ¿Por qué no ir a donde él fue para volver como él volvió? (297)

The writer links the idea of ostentatious wealth with the capacity to earn it—an attractive prospect for rural peasants who often had no other escape

from poverty. In late-nineteenth-century fiction, wealth helps the *indiano* gain social mobility by easing integration into bourgeois society through marriage, often depicted as a transaction in an economy of desire in these texts (Fernández 35). This is mainly seen as a desire for prestige and social capital; in other words, a union to a well-connected bourgeois or aristocratic family whose fortunes have diminished (35). Marriage is the deal by which the *indiano*'s offspring's future and legacy is secured, and by which the impoverished family secures its financial future and survival. Both *Tormento* and *La loca de la casa* reflect this aspect of the *indiano* stereotype.

The *indiano* functions as a way to construct identity in the texts discussed below. The *indiano* stereotype represents a "fixed" colonial identity about whom everything is already known: he is a colonial subject returned to the metropolis, wealthy, and a social climber. As Bhabha theorizes, the colonial stereotype is basically a form of anxious colonial knowledge: "vacillat[ing] between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated" (66). The force and power of this vacillation or ambivalence are located at the visible level; the visible aspect of racialized colonial discourse contains the power of objectification (of the other) but also the threat of identification (of the other within the self). As Bhabha argues, "[t]he visibility of the racial/colonial Other is at once a *point* of identity . . . and at the same time a *problem* for the attempted closure within discourse. . . . To put it succinctly, the recognition and disavowal of 'difference' is always disturbed by the question of its representation or construction" (81). In the texts discussed, the representation of the *indiano* is done in largely racialized terms: they have the "physical signs of colonialism" visible on them (Coffey 60).

Paradoxically, however, the *indiano* stereotype also functions as a site of masculine identification for men in these texts. Rather than embodying an Other from whom constructions of Spanish masculinity can be differentiated, the *indiano* is a successful subject (in contrast to the other men in the texts), enmeshed in a complex web of racial, class, national, and gender identifications—a complexity that stems from the process of hybridization of cultures that he represents. Hybridization, as Bhabha uses it, refers to the idea that cultures are not distinct and separate but are always in contact with each other, always ongoing and changing rather than fixed or static (Huddart 6–7).

The hybridity of the *indiano* is also marked by his identification, of himself as well as by others, as both Spanish and colonial—an identification that

is both disorienting and destabilizing. In a discussion of Said's concept of Orientalism and the post-Enlightenment "rediscovery" of Spain's Arabic past in the late nineteenth century, Susan Martin-Márquez remarks that

[w]hile some of the Spanish elite reveled in self-exoticization, others responded anxiously by projecting their "own" alterity onto the "usual suspects" in Africa and the Middle East—but also onto other Spaniards. In this sense, Spain is a nation that is at once Orientalized and Orientalizing . . . For Spaniards, this positioning on both "sides" of Orientalism—as simultaneously "self" and "other"—may bring about a profound sense of "disorientation." (8–9)<sup>3</sup>

This is particularly pertinent given the climate in Spain (and by extension Europe) surrounding race at this time. After the first wave of decolonization in Latin America earlier in the century, Spain's re-energized colonial ambitions regarding Morocco and Equatorial Guinea often cited the country's long connections with Africa as a way to legitimize its project (Martin-Márquez 50–51). However, by affirming its connection with Africa, Spain also confirmed long-held beliefs by other countries (and internally) that Spain was indeed "African" and thus not nominally part of Europe, and by extension not fit to participate in the colonization of the African continent (50–60). While the *indiano* is constructed as "other" (colonial), he is also continually recognized as "self" (Spanish). The position of being both self and other, both colonial and Spanish, leads to a process of "disorientation" of masculine identity in these texts, destabilizing prevailing constructions of masculinity and introducing alternate hybrid constructions of masculinity that are located in the interstices of national and colonial cultural identities.

It is this aspect of identification of the other within the self that an examination of the *indiano* may illuminate. Because of Spain's long history of colonization in the Americas and Africa, its recognition of the colonies as part of Spain (*la España ultramarina*), and its unique position of being both Orientalized and Orientalizing, structures of colonial identification (for example the stereotype) depart from the usual "differentialist logic of ostensibly Western constructions of subjectivity" (Martin-Márquez 9). The discourse of race

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3. See Kirsty Hooper (172), Michael Iarocci (21), and Ignacio Tofiño-Quesada (143) for more on this.

that structures the representation of the *indianos* in these texts participates in this ambivalence, because although they are constructed as colonial Other, they are also from the metropolis. The recognition of difference/otherness in this case is always already “disturbed” because the *indiano* is also recognized as self.

Mimicry, as Bhabha theorizes in the essay “Of Mimicry and Man,” is the exaggerated copying of metropolitan cultural norms by the colonized. In repeating these norms, the exaggeration of the repetition points to a difference between colonizer and colonized: “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite* [italics in the original]” (*The Location of Culture* 86). Colonial discourse assumes the colonized are almost like the colonizer, but not exactly the same. Otherwise there would be no ideological justification for the colonizer’s superiority. However, there is an ambivalence created in the not-quite-perfect repetitious mimicry of the colonizer’s cultural norms by the colonized. By imperfectly mimicking the colonizer’s culture, the “mimic man” implicitly questions the authority of colonial discourse, and in turn the representation of difference (90).

The context of Bhabha’s essay is the English colonization of India; the “mimic man” with whom he takes issue is Thomas Babington Macaulay’s 1835 essay “Minute” in which he describes a class of Indians that are educated according to English standards—a go-between class between the natives and the colonizing English. The problem here, as Huddart notes, is that this class became too similar to the English for comfort: “the resemblance was a reminder of the shaky foundations of racial stereotypes, and therefore the unjustifiable nature of colonialism” (61). Although the context in nineteenth-century Spain is not the same, the concept of mimicry is useful for the purposes of this essay. The mimicking of metropolitan culture by someone from the former colonies leads to the idea that what is thought to be “‘national’ is no longer naturalizable” (Bhabha 87). As we will see in these texts, the idea of the “national” or what is Spanish can no longer go unquestioned, as it is represented in terms that fundamentally undermine it. In both *Tormento* and *La loca de la casa* the representation of the colonial/metropolitan binary points directly to the authority of colonial discourses that structure those representations, making that authority questionable and eventually untenable. The *indiano*, as “mimic man” who imperfectly mimics metropolitan society (ultimately rejecting it), is at the intersection of national

and colonial identities, an “in-between” space which produces new ways of thinking about their articulation.

*Tormento, or the Impossibility of Incorporation of the Other*

Agustín Caballero is a wealthy *indiano* who returns to the metropolis to find a wife and settle down. He left Spain when he was fifteen, and spent thirty years of his life in Mexico and Texas, making his fortune in Brownsville, Texas, selling contraband arms to the Confederate Army during the American Civil War. Caballero describes Brownsville as a disorderly mixture of languages and races, a liminal space where things are neither one nor the other (Delgado 306):

Aquella ciudad de pesadilla, aquella Brownsville, que no es mejicana ni inglesa; donde se oyen mezcladas las dos lenguas formando una jerga horrible, y donde no se vive más que para los negocios; pueblo cosmopolita, promiscuidad de razas . . . ¡qué desorden moral y social! Americanos, indios, mejicanos, hombres y mujeres de todas castas, revueltos y confundidos . . . Aquello era un infierno. (165)

It is specifically juxtaposed to the metropolis, where Spanish society represents order, civilization, and morality. Caballero’s return to Madrid is accompanied by a desire to implement those qualities in his life: “Ahora en la vieja España, pobre y ordenanda, encontraré lo que me falta” (166; also 234–35).

Race is linked, figuratively and explicitly, to Caballero. He is repeatedly identified numerous times as a “salvaje” and “caribe,” and race is often a prominent feature of his descriptions in the text: “El color de su rostro era malísimo: color de América, tinte de fiebre y fatiga en las ardientes humedades del golfo mejicano, la insignia o marca del apostolado colonizador que, con la vida y salud de tantos nobles obreros, está labrando las potentes civilizaciones futuras del mundo hispanoamericano” (143). In this passage it is obvious that Caballero displays his otherness physically on his skin, and that the colonial discourse which structures his representation repeatedly calls attention to this difference. Yet there is also a certain vacillation about race discernible here: although his color is seen in negative terms, he is positively connected with the civilizing work of the “apostolado colonizador,” suggest-

ing a tension between race and identity. The fact that the colonizer's work is building future civilizations—i.e., civilizing savages—is indicative of the colonial discourse used in the novel to mark the differences between the metropolis and the former colonies, and also participates in the ambivalence surrounding construction of the *indiano's* subjectivity.

Another example of these contradictions is the way Caballero tries to mimic metropolitan mores, only to fail because of the underlying hypocrisy that characterizes this society. Caballero highlights how the Americas have molded his character (145) and at the end of the novel, he acknowledges his efforts to mimic metropolitan cultural norms to be lies: “Quisiste ser el más ordenado de los ciudadanos, y fue todo mentira. Quisiste ser ortodoxo: mentira también, porque no tienes fe. Quisiste tener por esposa a la misma virtud: mentira, mentira, mentira” (337–38). The performance of those norms in this society is paramount: “aquel hombre, que había prestado a la civilización de América servicios positivos, si no brillantes, era tosco y desmañado, y parecía muy fuera de lugar en una capital burocrática donde hay personas que han hecho brillantes carreras por saberse hacer el lazo de la corbata” (143). In a small but telling detail, the narrator tells us that other *indianos* have tried to conform, or mimic, societal norms, without much success—Caballero is just the latest to do so (143–44).

Part of the difference between metropolitan society and Caballero is his entrepreneurial spirit and his self-earned fortune. His fortune was built on hard work and individual effort; it is a stark contrast to the dependence on favors on which the Bringas family relies. Economic discourse underscores much of what Caballero does in the novel. His (as well as José María Cruz's in *La loca de la casa*) economic prowess is symbolic of the justification provided for the European's role in the Americas: to make money and “civilize” the American continent (Delgado 309–10). Caballero's encounters with Amparo and his formulation of a plan to marry her can be read as an economic transaction in which he “buys” a wife: as he imagines saying to Amparo: “Donde tanto abunda el género (perdóneme usted este vocablo comercial), fácil es encontrar lo bueno” (166). Caballero uses money to “buy” his entrance into this society. He not only bribes Bringas and his wife with free tickets to the theater but also tries to buy their acquiescence to his marriage to Amparo with other gifts; he “fuses” the notions of free enterprise success with that of the traditional system of patronage and favors typical of the Isabelline monarchy (Labanyi 140). He characterizes the frontier space as disorderly, but even more, on an economic level, as fraudulent: “Allí no

había religión, ni ley moral, ni familia, ni afectos puros; no había más que comercio, fraudes de género y de sentimientos” (165). Fraud, however, is what he encounters in Madrid when he discovers that Amparo’s previous relationship with Polo makes her unsuitable as a wife (Labanyi 157). Indeed, fraud describes much of Madrid society, in which appearances are so much more important than reality.

Pedro Polo, a priest and Caballero’s rival for Amparo, is also linked to Spanish colonialism. Polo is described in the novel as a conquistador, a man more comfortable in the colony than in the metropolis: “Él había nacido para domar salvajes, para mandar aventureros; quizás, quizás para conquistar un imperio, como su paisano Cortés” (199). Polo is part of those colonial discourses which point to Spain’s imperial past and present a romantic image of the Americas as a distant, unspoiled place full of “savages” to be conquered. At the beginning of the novel, Polo has never been to the colonies. However, due to his dalliance with Amparo, he is sent to the Toledo countryside by his friend, the priest Nones, then to the Philippines to become “civilized,” a reversal of the *civilización/barbarie* binary (Delgado 308):

Pues vas a empezar por salir de Madrid . . . Quiero que empieces por ponerte en estado salvaje . . . Desde que logres esta felicidad, serás otro hombre, y si no se te quitan todas esas murrias del espíritu, me dejo cortar la mano . . . Mientras tú estás allá . . . *civilizándote*, yo en Madrid me ocupo de ti, y te consigo, por mediación de don Ramón Pez, mi amigo, un curato de Filipinas. (Galdós, *Tormento* 220–21; italics in the original)

The word “salvaje” in this instance is equated with the primitive and more “natural” state, as opposed to the savage state (Delgado 307). The colonial discourse in the text presents this reversal as a natural extension of the difference between the colonies and the metropolis: those representations of masculinity that cannot adhere to “civilized” society must be shipped out, to do the civilizing work of the “apostolado colonizador.” However, it is ironic that while Caballero returns to the metropolis to become “civilized,” Polo must leave the metropolis in order to do the same, destabilizing in turn what it means to be “civilized,” and by extension, undermining the binary opposition which gives positive meaning to the metropolis as opposed to the colonies.

Caballero is not scorned by the narrator for what this society perceives as his faults; rather, he serves as an implicit model to which to compare other

representations of masculinity in the text. For example, Francisco Bringas cannot stand up to his wife, Rosalía, whose barely controlled consumerism puts the family at economic risk. Pedro Polo's inability to restrain himself and live within the confines of Church doctrine and bourgeois morality is also condemned. The only representation of masculinity that has viability and is sympathetic, to both the narrator and the reader, is Caballero. His attempt to integrate himself fails because Madrid society is fraudulent—it is not what it seems. Qualities ascribed to the colonies include the corruption of customs, faithlessness, and moral and social disorder (Galdós, *Tormento* 165); however, those qualities are seen throughout the text as representative of Madrid society. The Bringas family's knack for exploiting their relationships, the lack of faith shown by the priest Pedro Polo, the sexual dalliance between himself and Amparo, and the hypocrisy and utter lack of compassion shown by Marcelina Polo show that the moral disorder thought to be in the colonies is actually in the metropolis. If disorder and fraud exist in the metropolis, which has been upheld as the antithesis of the colonies, then the distinctions between the two are blurred and the authority of colonial discourse is revealed to be relative instead of absolute.

If this is the case, then the idea of national identity is also in question. *Tormento* fundamentally questions this, very significantly right before the Revolution of 1868, when the monarchy and the *ancien régime* economic system based on favors and patronage are in peril. At the end of the novel, Bringas—principal upholder of the old system—laments, “la revolución viene . . . La nación se estrella, se descalabra. ¡Pobre España!” (330). The revolution is certainly coming, but in another sense than the one Bringas means. The destabilization of constructions of metropolitan masculinities—masculinities in part based on exploiting the monarchical personal favor system and the bureaucracy (personified by Bringas)—give way to a new form of masculine identity that is based on free enterprise and self-reliance. At the same time that Bringas decries the end of the old metropolis, Caballero rejects it and welcomes change (330). Unfortunately, there is no place for Caballero and the representation of hybrid masculinity he embodies in the metropolis, and he has to leave Spain with Amparo in order to find the order and stability he craves.

### La loca de la casa, *Regenerationism*, and the *Incorporation of the Other*

In *La loca de la casa*, Galdós's 1893 play, the *indiano* Jose María Cruz (Pepet) returns from Mexico with the desire to marry one of the Moncada daughters.

The play represents a change for Galdós in that it is set in Santa Madrona, a fictitious town on the outskirts of Barcelona. The Moncada family is part of the Catalan industrial elite and owns estates and factories, although now they are in dire financial straits. The Moncada daughters, Gabriela and Victoria, have been promised to the Marquesa de Malavella's sons, Daniel and Jaime. Soon after the play begins we learn that Victoria broke her engagement to Daniel to take her vows and enter the convent. Gabriela, who is promised to Jaime, is the first to catch the *indiano*'s eye. After an unsuccessful bid for her hand, Cruz is then manipulated into considering the other sister, Victoria, by Victoria herself, who ends up leaving the convent to "sacrifice" herself to marriage to him and thus save the family from bankruptcy with the *indiano*'s money. The play encapsulates many of the themes that would come to preoccupy Galdós's work in his later years: the "new" woman, traditional gender roles, and regenerationism (Jago 156–63).

*La loca de la casa* was considered controversial at the time because Victoria's negotiations with Cruz were thought to be "unwomanly" and "masculine" by contemporary critics. A review of the play in *El País* in 1893 called negative attention to Victoria's behavior in this respect: "Fanática religiosa, transige sin violencia con el mundo, y a pesar de sus embriagueces místicas . . . vuelve al siglo, se doblega unas veces, otras se impone, pacta, calcula, mide y hasta *filosofea* con pujos de socialista. Esto no es real, esto no es humano, esto no es una mujer; a lo sumo es un caso patológico o psicológico" (Blas de Santillana).

Lisa Condé notes that reaction to the play was divided into approval of the first two scenes, in which Victoria plays the "sacrificial victim," and disapproval of the third and fourth scenes, where she asserts herself and negotiates with Cruz over her marriage and impending maternity (16). Because of Victoria's behavior, critics have seen a profeminist undercurrent in Galdós's later work, arguing that the conflict between Victoria and Cruz is a gendered power struggle and that Galdós is "exploring the way towards the creation of a 'mujer nueva'" in this and other texts (Condé 12). However, other critics see in this play a return to an "antiemancipationist agenda" and conventional gender roles (Jago 159). I argue that the return to conventional gender roles for women also includes a reevaluation of men's roles, at a time when traditional male roles were starting to be questioned in the wider cultural arena.

Cruz is presented as a nominally positive antithesis to other representations of masculinity in the text. In this play even more pointedly than in *Tormento*, the *indiano* is represented as the only viable construction of mas-

culinity. The play could be read as another version of the “prodigal son” who returns to his roots and makes good. However, the positive characterization of the *indiano* in this play can in part be due to the influence of regenerationism (the belief that Spain was decadent, exhausted, and needed regeneration) on Galdós at the time.

Critics usually link regenerationism with the watershed year of 1898. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, regenerationists such as Lucas Mallada (*Los males de la patria*, 1890), Ramiro Maetzu (*Hacia otra España*, 1899), and Ricardo Macías Picavea (*El problema nacional*, 1899) wrote about the numerous national shortcomings that caused Spain’s decadence, and the need for Spain to regenerate itself and pull out of its long decline. M. Ángeles Varela Olea has shown how Galdós incorporated regenerationism into his work as far back as the 1870s (180–81). In “Observaciones sobre la novela contemporánea en España,” Galdós praised the middle class, labeling it the source of inspiration for his novels, as well as the hope for a renewal of Spain, while criticizing the aristocracy and the working classes (167).

As Eamonn Rodgers explains, beginning in the 1890s his attitudes towards these classes had started to change. Rodgers argues that Galdós came to believe the moral regeneration of society had to ultimately come from both the aristocracy and the working classes, as the bourgeoisie had exhausted its potential: “[I]f measures of reform are to be effective, the aristocracy must shed its hollow attachment to its effete brand of ‘civilization’, become more modest and practical, and recognize the essential community and interdependency of the whole nation. For its part, the working class must be educated to become responsible citizens” (483).<sup>4</sup>

This is the type of reform illustrated in *La loca de la casa*. Cruz, with his wealth and pragmatism, represents the *pueblo*, the working class that will renew the upper classes: “yo, que fui y quiero seguir siendo pueblo, deseo que el pueblo se confunda con el señorío, porque así se hacen las revoluciones . . . sin revolución . . . quiero decir” (100). Indeed, the fusion of the working class with the aristocracy is apparent in the multiple mentions of paternity and the wish for progeny that Cruz often mentions: “Hijos, sí . . . y criados robustos, sanotes, para que aventajen a estas generaciones tísicas”

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4. Varela Olea discusses how in Galdós’s work references to *el pueblo* usually encapsulate traditional values (174). She also discusses *La loca de la casa* in relation to regenerationism, but does not take into account Cruz as *indiano* and what this could mean in terms of regenerationist thinking (256–62).

(61). Paternity becomes reality when at the end of the play Victoria is pregnant with the child that will be the union of the aristocracy and the lower classes. In this play it is not only a working class man but an *indiano* from the colonies who is presented as a solution for Spain's regeneration.

The *indiano* stereotype structures the representation of Cruz, as it does in similar fashion for Caballero. He is constructed as the colonial other, referred to as a "savage" multiple times in the play: "salvaje" (48), "bruto" (51), "bárbaro" (58). Yet his characterization is more debasing than that of Caballero: Cruz is an "animal" to most of the other characters, repeatedly referred to in animalistic terms. For example, he is described as a gorilla by Jaime: "Sabrás que mis amigos le llaman 'el gorila', porque, moral y físicamente, nos ha parecido una transición entre el bruto y el 'homo sapiens'" (38). Chamberlin sees the animal imagery as a way for Galdós to talk about the leveling of social classes, a topic which generated much interest at the time (33).

However, the multiple animal references have another dimension. Jo Labanyi has written about how *Fortunata y Jacinta* can be read as a colonial miscegenation narrative:

*Fortunata y Jacinta*, in constructing Fortunata as a "savage" and superior breeder, takes the form of a miscegenation narrative: that is, a colonially conceived blueprint for the nation based on the "improvement of the race" through the white man's fertilization of the "native" female. This colonial concept of miscegenation, being based on the white man's coupling with the native female, supposed that female "others" can be incorporated into the nation, but the reverse—the "incorporation" of the native male via his coupling with the white female—is unthinkable. (192)

The "unthinkable" is exactly what occurs in *La loca de la casa* with the marriage of the native male (Cruz) with the white female (Victoria). Cruz is doubly marked as "savage": not only is he the colonial outsider, but he is also from the lower classes, which are commonly seen in nineteenth-century discourses as lacking culture and therefore "primitive" (192–93). It is through Cruz's and Victoria's marriage—the marriage of lower class and aristocracy, colony and motherland—and their offspring that this new "blueprint" for the nation is realized.

There are two moments where Cruz is marked racially as other. The first instance is in the first act, when Eulalia notices tattoos on Cruz's forearm

and exclaims “Qué horror de pintura en la misma piel!” (55). Cruz explains that it is a custom in the navy, and someone else remarks, “Y de tribus salvajes” (55). The second instance is also in the first act, after Cruz explains his upbringing and philosophy of life. Eulalia, who is his only advocate (albeit for her own reasons—to save her brother’s family from ruin) reprimands him for not presenting himself in the best light: “Pero usted, bárbaro inocente, ¿por qué se complace en ennegrecer y afear su carácter?” (58). Cruz replies in very explicit and racialized terms: “¿Qué quiere usted, que me eche polvos en la cara del alma? Si soy negro, ¿a qué he de blanquearme con harina de arroz, que, apenas puesta, se me caería, dejándome, además de negro, sucio?” (59). Cruz’s reply shows that he is conscious of the family’s perception of him. More importantly, perhaps, references to race and skin again mark the *indiano* as the colonial other, but also highlight the vacillation of racialized colonial discourse. Cruz is from Santa Madrona; as the son of the *carrero*, he grew up on the estate and worked for his father and the Moncada family. His position as both colonial other and Spanish self marks a “disorientation” which forces a reconsideration of self and other, working class and aristocrat, and normative masculine roles.

The differences between Cruz and the other men in the play are brought up early. Cruz makes a crucial distinction between the upper classes and himself in that he has built up his fortune through hard work, unlike the Moncada family who calls any talk of money “abominable” (53). The aristocrats (especially Daniel and Jaime) are “señoritos de carrera” (50) who do not possess any practical business knowledge; they are “[d]e estos que todo lo esperan de los libros, de los discursos . . . Se morirán de hambre si no pescan una dote” (62). Even the patriarch of the Moncada family, don Juan de Moncada, is not exempt from his criticism, as he has failed in his business dealings and his factories are going bankrupt (41–42). The criticism of metropolitan constructions of masculinity goes deeper, however. Although Cruz is continually referred to as a savage and an animal, the real “savage” behavior in this play comes from Daniel, who, overcome with fury, attacks him with an ax (134–35). The one person who should represent the epitome of civilization—the would-be priest—is instead the instigator of a violent attack against Cruz, in essence destabilizing the *civilización/barbarie* binary which structures the various representations of masculinity in the play.

Cruz refuses to mimic customs and behavior in order to fit into society, unlike Caballero. Instead of mimicry, Cruz emphasizes even more his distance from metropolitan culture and does not hide how he became wealthy

(50–59). Cruz brings his capitalist philosophy to the table when he highlights, much the same way that Agustín Caballero does, how the Americas shaped his character: “Como me he formado en la soledad, sin que nadie me compadeciera, adquiriendo todas las cosas por ruda conquista, brazo a brazo, a estilo de los primeros pueblos del mundo, hállome amasado con la sangre del egoísmo, de aquel egoísmo que echó los cimientos de la riqueza y de la civilización” (56). Cruz’s insistence on not covering up his difference is linked with the way he himself interprets his “savagery”: as a logical consequence of having to fight for his wealth, not as a deviation from civilization (Delgado 309). Because of his own struggles, he believes that there should be neither handouts nor charity; rather, everyone should work for what they want, just like he did (55–56). This is the principal cause of friction between Cruz and the society into which he wants to integrate: he believes that charity weakens society and promotes a “survival of the fittest” philosophy which is out of step with the current trend among the aristocratic class of giving alms to the poor (56–57). This causes his confrontations with Victoria, who eventually does become his wife—but only after negotiating with him the terms of their marriage. In fact, it is through these negotiations that both she and Cruz accept that they must change in order to make the marriage work: the aristocracy (Victoria) must become more practical, and the *pueblo* (Cruz) must become more educated and accept the responsibility of being part of society, which includes helping those in need.

At the end of the play, Cruz finally acquiesces to Victoria’s demands and donates part of his fortune to the construction of a hospital for the poor. Victoria uses her pregnancy to bargain with him, and because of this the play was considered controversial when it was first presented to the public. The critic Joaquín de Zuazagoitia concluded after a showing in 1926 that “[Cruz] cae vencido por una feminidad más fuerte que su varonía” (1). But when one considers the construction of masculinity of the *indiano* in this play, this bears some examination. Cruz never surrenders to Victoria, as some critics have suggested. Rather, the end of the play shows Cruz and Victoria making concessions to each other and reaching a point of mutual agreement. Moncada tells Cruz that “Eres hombre vencido y domado. Victoria hace de ti lo que quiere.” However, Cruz replies, “Eso no. Mientras más la quiero, más me afirmo en ser lo que soy. Es que, teniéndome por indomable, me agradan los latigazos de la domadora. Ni yo puedo vivir sin ella ni ella sin mí” (168). It is telling that in the reviews of the play, Cruz’s character was well received by audiences. The reviewer for *El País*, who had written such a scathing

opinion of Victoria's role, in the same review had a different take on Cruz's character: "Pepe, ya es otra cosa. . . . Personifica la humanidad saliendo de su estado nómada y elevando a dogma el derecho de propiedad, fundamento de las sociedades civilizadas" (Blas de Santillana). The incorporation of the Other into the nation is shown to be possible when the Other embodies those qualities that are lacking in Spanish society. Cruz brings capital and a strong work ethic into the Moncada family; he embodies a hybrid construction of masculinity—both Spanish and colonial, working class and aristocratic—that is a positive force in the play.

José María Cruz in *La loca de la casa* represents a construction of masculinity that may be a solution to the possible regeneration of Spain. In *Tormento*, Agustín Caballero's positive representation of masculinity carries with it an implicit rejection of bourgeois values. Both of these *indianos*, inhabiting the "in-between" space between metropolitan and colonial identities, communicate Galdós's view that a regeneration of Spain might work by fusing the best qualities of the former colonies with the middle classes and the aristocracy of the home country. As Bhabha notes in his introduction to *The Location of Culture*,

These "in-between" spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative signs of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. It is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. (2)

Galdós seems to have intuited this very notion in his representations of the *indiano* in these texts.

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