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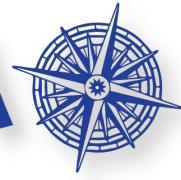
Recommended Citation

Miller, Gabrielle, "*Mi hijo es mío, puñales!* Excessive Paternal Devotion in Benito Pérez Galdós's *Torquemada* Novels" (2020). *Decimonónica*. Paper 77.

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¡Mi hijo es mío, puñales! Excessive Paternal Devotion in Benito Pérez Galdós's *Torquemada* Novels

Gabrielle Miller

While Margaret Mead's provocative statement that "motherhood is a biological necessity, but fatherhood is a social invention" may be inherently problematic, it successfully underlines "the role of the father" as a culturally-inscribed rather than universal construct (cited in Garbarino 13). In industrialized Western countries of the nineteenth century, the dominant gender ideology of the so-called separate spheres defined the "good father" as a "distant breadwinner" who, as unequivocal family patriarch, provided for his family's material needs through monetarily-compensated work (Lupton and Barclay 14). Unsurprisingly, the dominant model of fatherhood that emerged in Spain in the second half of the nineteenth century fits this cultural paradigm. For example, while Manuel Alonso Martínez argues in his 1875 treatise on the family that both parents are responsible for their children's welfare (41), he is careful to cast the father in the role of provider: "El derecho de la madre y del hijo a alimentarse, vestirse y tener una morada, supone pues *deberes correlativos en el padre*" (37, his emphasis). An influential jurist and politician, Alonso Martínez is also the principal author of Spain's 1889 *Código civil*, which in article 154 legislates *la patria potestad*, guaranteeing a father's absolute paternal authority over his underage children (Muñoz López 15; 42).

In contrast to the *don Juan* prototype, whose decadent masculinity is perhaps most eloquently illustrated through the aged, outmoded Lope Garrido of Galdós's *Tristana* (1892), Spanish hygienists in the final decades of the nineteenth century encouraged men to exercise moderation in their sexual activity.¹ Rather than aggregated sexual conquests, mainstream hygienic discourses posit fatherhood as an essential component of manhood: men without children would "find [themselves] caught in a web of perpetual boyhood" of unrealized masculinity (McKinney 97). In his widely read *Higiene del matrimonio o el libro de los casados* (1853; 1865; 1876; 1892), Pedro Felipe Monlau decries the "inferioridad moral" of *el solterón*, and insists that the demands of fatherhood extend beyond the biological reproductive function: "El hombre no sería lo que es...si fuese lícito darle la vida al solo impulso del instinto y de los goces, sin quedar ligado con él por afección alguna, y sin pensar en lo que será de él un instante después de nacido" (573). Paternity, in other words, civilizes the sexual impulse: as citizen, man dedicates his otherwise anxiety-producing male libido to the continuation of modern, bourgeois society. Fatherhood within the institution of

marriage therefore constituted a patriotic duty: “los padres están obligados a...hac[er] de [sus hijos] individuos virtuosos, buenos cristianos y hombres útiles a la sociedad y al Estado” (574). Expounding at length on “el *derecho de propiedad* como anexo de la paternidad” (his emphasis, 575), Monlau also insists on the intimate link between a father’s patriarchal authority and the preservation of a liberal economy, with its revered property rights. Through its affirmation of the twin bourgeois values of family and economic liberalism, fatherhood in the Spanish Restoration era was seen as an essential component of mainstream patterns of masculinity, a means through which to affirm one’s virility and identity within Spain’s dominant class.

Fatherhood in Benito Pérez Galdós’s *Torquemada* novels (1889, 1893-95), however, does not secure the titular protagonist’s masculinity nor cement the bourgeois identity that Francisco Torquemada aspires—with considerable success in the later novels—to emulate. The *Torquemada* tetralogy recounts the protagonist’s meteoric social and financial ascendancy through Madrid’s bourgeois ranks: a humble if ruthless usurer in the series’ first novel, in the final volume Torquemada ultimately dies as the wealthiest, most influential aristocrat in Madrid, albeit desolate and miserable. A constant throughout the novels, as we will see, is the moneylender’s obsession with his male progeny. Granted, Spanish fathers in the second half of the nineteenth century were expected to demonstrate a certain level of paternal affect, even developing sentimental rather than solely authoritative bonds with their children (Crespo Sánchez and Hernández Franco, “Construcción” 239). Nevertheless, the excessive paternal affection that characterizes Torquemada’s quasi-religious admiration of his firstborn Valentín, which culminates in the usurer’s plan to “resurrect” his deceased son through his marriage to Fidela Águila, deviates significantly from the “extreme moderation” expected of the men who aspired to belong to the Spanish bourgeoisie (McKinney 74). While Torquemada’s children have attracted considerable scholarly attention, few critics have considered the nature of the protagonist’s relationship with his sons.² In doing so, they risk overlooking how the usurer’s emotive and impassioned enactment of fatherhood problematizes his masculinity throughout the series.³ I argue that when read against the dominant discourses of paternity elaborated above, the overwrought emotionalism that characterizes Torquemada’s fatherly affection threatens to emasculate his character, even as he ascends the rungs of bourgeois respectability. In this essay, I posit Torquemada’s excessive paternal behavior as a narrative site which, through its textual portrayal of the protagonist’s partial deviance from mainstream expectations of male comportment, foregrounds gendered anxieties about effeminate masculinity at the Spanish *fin-de-siècle*.

While fatherhood in the *Torquemada* series represents the primary motif through which narrative anxieties vis-à-vis Spanish masculinities are expressed, it is worth underlining that the narrator of *Torquemada en el Purgatorio*—the third novel of the tetralogy—reveals textual anxieties about the future direction of Spain’s dominant political and social class by problematizing the masculinity of the next generation of bourgeois elites.⁴ Reminiscent of Juanito Santa Cruz of *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1887), Pepe Serrano Morentín, Juan de Madrid, and señor de Zárate—his first name is not revealed—are extremely well-connected, young men who ingratiate themselves to Torquemada out of self-interest rather than friendship; Morentín, an untrustworthy friend to Rafael as well, goes to great lengths to seduce the moneylender’s wife, albeit unsuccessfully. Despite their lofty social standing, all three men

lack the work ethic and ambition, distinction, and sense of honor that characterize the aging José Ruiz Donoso, a loyal friend to both Torquemada and the Águila siblings. Donoso, who functions within the text as a somewhat nostalgic metonym of an older generation of bourgeois gentlemen, contrasts sharply with Morentín, who is described by the narrator as exceptional only in his mediocrity, lacking in conviction, and proud only of his *aventuras* with married women. Moreover, the novel's narrator emphasizes that unlike Donoso, Morentín “era hombre...muy de su época, o de sus días, informado espiritualmente de una vulgaridad sobredorada, con decena y media de ideas corrientes” (Pérez Galdós 293).⁵ Meanwhile, nearly everyone but Torquemada flees from Zárate, who represents the insufferable “moderno pedante”: “seco, difuso, desabrido, tormentoso, incapaz de divertir a nadie” (314). An insufferable *sabelotodo*, Zárate only deigns to converse with the protagonist to ostentatiously exhibit his encyclopedic, albeit shallow, knowledge. Like Morentín and Zárate, both portrayed as wholly unproductive individuals, *el licenciado* Juan de Madrid—the nature of his degree is never divulged—contributes nothing to Spanish society or to its indebted economy beyond his malicious accounts of Madrilenian high society (263-64). The text thus portrays Morentín, Zárate, and Juan de Madrid as wholly ineffective in the so-called public sphere, recalling Nerea Aresti's definition of Spain's crisis of masculinity at the *fin-de-siècle* as a perceived “pérdida y consecuente ausencia de virilidad” (“Hombria perdida” 20).

Moreover, in the novel all three men are also emasculated through their penchant for gossip regarding the Torquemada-Águila family. Gossip was indelibly linked to effeminacy by preoccupied Spanish regenerationists at the turn of the century (Cleminson and Vázquez García 179); Spanish decadence, meanwhile, was viewed as “the general process of ‘devirilization’ and effeminization of the population” (177). While Juan de Madrid gains repute as the “cronista tan diligente como malicioso de los *Dichos y hechos de don Francisco Torquemada*” (263), Morentín, mistakenly convinced of his powers of seduction, spreads false rumors of Fidela's infidelity. Where Juan de Madrid's and Morentín's penchant for gossip problematizes their masculinity, Zárate is also rendered effeminate by the narrator, who scornfully labels him “un consumado histrión” when he bursts into uncontrollable tears following Torquemada's speech at his honorific banquet. In representing Spain's youngest generation of “leaders” as effeminate, *Torquemada en el purgatorio* echoes the concerns of regenerationist authors preoccupied with the decadence of Spain's ruling class.

In the *Torquemada* tetralogy as a whole, however, fatherhood becomes the principal textual site at which narrative anxieties surrounding masculinity are exposed. In *Torquemada en la hoguera*, the pride that inflames Torquemada's heart manifests itself through an effusive, unbounded love and adoration of his firstborn son: “A medida que el chico avanzaba en sus estudios, don Francisco sentía crecer el amor paterno, hasta llegar a la ciega pasión” (17). When read against nineteenth-century Spanish discourses on parenting, Torquemada's emotive devotion to Valentín more closely resembles maternal than paternal conduct. Writing in 1873, social commentator Joaquín Sánchez de Toca contrasts fatherly love with “el incomparable celo de esposa y de madre,” writing, “[e]l cariño del hombre [como padre], por el contrario, es más reflexivo, más serena su razón, menos ardiente su imaginación, menos vivo su sentimiento” (85). Unlike mothers, fathers are also not traditionally viewed as overly involved in the daily minutia of parenting, as Micaela Ferrer de Otálora's speech at

the 1882 *Congreso Nacional Pedagógico* makes plain. Through a series of rhetorical questions, she expresses—without complaint—the expectation that their extensive workplace responsibilities release fathers from the intimate duties of childcare:

La naturaleza, ¿a quién confía los primeros pasos del niño? ¿Cuál de los dos, padre o madre, reúne condiciones de carácter más simpáticas al párvulo? ¿A quién llama éste en todas sus necesidades y aflicciones? [. . .] El padre, ¿interviene mucho en la dirección del pequeñuelo? ¿Le dedica muchas horas, o se concreta a acariciarle tal cual vez sobre sus rodillas cuando regresa al hogar después de cumplir el ineludible deber del trabajo? (180)

While fathers were expected to spend time with their families inside the home, rather than frequent with undo regularity casinos, bars or other potentially disreputable public spaces (Crespo Sánchez and Hernández Franco, “Cambios” 141), in 1883 Francisco Alonso y Rubio insists that “el hombre tiene altos deberes de cumplir en la esfera social [. . .] Por lo tanto, no puede dedicarse con la intensidad y celo que sería menester a los cuidados de la familia” (68). Historically in Spain, at least in the second half of the nineteenth century, it is clear that the mother bears primary responsibility for her children’s daily nurturance.

In this context, Torquemada’s obsessive control of Valentín’s health and wellbeing contrasts sharply with the serene father figure elaborated above:

Cuidaba [Torquemada] de [Valentín] como de un ser sobrenatural, puesto en sus manos por especial privilegio. Vigilaba sus comidas, asustando mucho si no mostraba apetito; al verle estudiando recorría las ventanas para que no entrase aire, se enteraba de la temperatura exterior antes de dejarle salir para determinar si debía ponerse bufanda o el *carrík* gordo o las botas de agua. (20)

It is curious that Torquemada would not entrust these mundane domestic tasks to Valentín’s sister, Rufina, who at age twenty-two already “governaba el hogar casi tan bien como [su madre]” (13). Of course, the moneylender, unlike his daughter, does not resemble the idealized *ángel del hogar*. Nevertheless, when read against contemporary discourses outlining fatherly duties and obligations, Torquemada’s paternal portrait—excessive involvement in the minute details of his son’s welfare; impassioned emotions of amorous affection evoked by Valentín’s prodigy and later illness—more closely resembles contemporary expectations of maternal love and devotion than stoic fatherly regard.

Torquemada’s impassioned pride in Valentín’s talents manifests itself through an exaggerated emotionalism—often accompanied by narrative humor—that has not escaped critical notice. While Narcís Oller writes in an 1889 letter to Galdós, “[l]a contraposición del cariño veheméntísimo del padre con los impulsos de la sórdida pasión del usurero es de un efecto altamente dramático y ha sabido Ud. pintarla con verdad y calor extraordinarias” (cited in Shoemaker, 262), William Shoemaker argues that Oller’s romantic sensibilities prevent the Catalan author from detecting “las emociones algo más complejas” that Torquemada harbors toward his firstborn son. For Shoemaker, the “complexity” of the

usurer's paternal relationship stems from his excessive pride in Valentín's talent; the firstborn's exceptionality, according to Shoemaker, functions within the text as a target of Galdosian humor (262).⁶ Urey, meanwhile, adds that the usurer's "extreme" paternal conceit acquires moral implications, "linked, from chapter one on, with his un-Christian behavior" (*Galdós* 104-05).

Yet Torquemada's fervent affection for his firstborn son also risks feminizing the protagonist, whose emotionalism and uncontrolled passion recall traits traditionally associated with femininity. When Valentín's professors affirm his mathematical prodigy, proclaiming that through his genius the boy "asombrará y trastornará el mundo" (19), the narrator wryly describes Torquemada's unbridled burst of emotion: "Cómo se quedó Torquemada al oír esto se comprenderá fácilmente. Abrazó al profesor, y la satisfacción le rebosaba por ojos y boca en forma de lágrimas y babas" (20). As is well known, nineteenth-century Spanish medical and social discourses consistently gendered intellect and rationality as masculine and emotional sensitivity as feminine. Elaborating on what he terms "la *polarización de los sexos*," for example, Monlau asserts: "Predominan en la mujer las facultades afectivas, así como en el hombre las intelectuales" (110, his emphasis; 112). Torquemada's effusive, tearful embrace of Valentín's professor illustrates his utter inability to control his highly sensitive "affective faculties" whenever his male progeny is involved.⁷ As nineteenth-century Spanish discourses "attempt to relegate [the emotions] to a feminine intimate sphere" (Delgado et al. 2), we might read the narrative humor that consistently accompanies Torquemada's emotive expressions as evidence of the narrator's discomfort with male exhibitions of emotion.

Humor functions within *Torquemada en la hoguera* and the series as a whole as a means to distance the narrator from his effeminate male subject and to ridicule the possibility of emotive male behavior, thus preserving and reinforcing normative models of moderated, rational masculinity. Even when Torquemada expresses grief at Silvia's passing, the narrator cannot resist diluting the moneylender's sorrow with a touch of humor: "[Torquemada] púsose más amarillo de lo que comúnmente estaba" (12).⁸ Meanwhile, when Valentín falls ill, the narrator describes the protagonist's inner turmoil in similarly colorful terms: "Con el no comer y el mal dormir y la acerbísima pena que le destrozaba el alma estaba el hombre *mismamente* del color de una aceituna" (32, his emphasis). Similarly, the outrage Torquemada expresses in the early hours of Valentín's sickness is completely undermined by his comedic lack of scientific knowledge: "¡Ah! Los malditos miasmas tenían la culpa de lo que estaba pasando. Tanta rabia sintió don Francisco, que si coge un miasma en aquel momento lo parte por el eje" (29).

As we can see in the moneylender's confused notion of contamination theories, much of the humor in *Torquemada en la hoguera* also stems from the protagonist's ignorance of both scientific and religious doctrine. In such cases, his comical lack of logic and rationality distances Torquemada further from Spain's hegemonic masculine ideal. Torquemada's attempts to reason through the existence of God are comical not only for their lack of logic but also in their frantic emotionality: "[L]a Humanidad no debe de ser Dios, sino la Virgen... Claro, es hembra, señor... No, no, no..., no nos fijemos en el materialismo de la palabra. La Humanidad es Dios, la Virgen y todos los santos juntos... Tente, hombre, tente, que te

vuelves loco...¡Ay Dios, qué pena, qué pena!” (31). The narrative portrayal of Torquemada’s excessive pride is equally risible in its hyperbolic vision of paternal grandeur: “Esto era para volverse loco. Más natural sería el desquiciamiento universal que la muerte del portentoso niño que había venido a la tierra para iluminarla con el fanal de su talento” (38). The unrestrained exaggeration that undergirds Torquemada’s theological confusion and dogged insistence on his son’s exceptionality prevents the reader from fully sympathizing with the moneylender’s plight. By highlighting his dually emotional and irrational response to tragedy, the narrator emphasizes the inherent “unmanliness” of Torquemada’s undignified desperation.

In a reversal of gendered expectations, it is Rufina rather than her father who represents a model of not only Christian but also rational acceptance of death’s inevitability: “[Rufina] era valiente, mucho más valiente que su padre, el cual, cuando volvió en sí de aquel tremendo síncope...cayó en profundísimo abatimiento físico y moral” (72). Only hours after Valentín’s passing, “atacado de un nuevo paroxismo de dolor” (72), Torquemada voices his wholly irrational desire to resurrect Valentín, “resucitarle costara lo que costase” (73). While Rufina urges her father to resign himself to God’s will, Torquemada bellows “con toda la fuerza de sus pulmones, hecho un salvaje, un demente” (71) and turns his beard white by tearfully kissing the chalkboard on which Valentín drew his equations. In his unbridled grief, the protagonist’s utter lack of emotional and corporal control radically deviates from what McKinney terms “the hegemonic ideal of male restraint” in Restoration Spain (13).

Throughout *Torquemada en la hoguera*, the narrator often criticizes the moneylender’s lack of courage in the face of tragedy, emphasizing Torquemada’s emotional fragility and underlining his refusal to embrace the rational realization that death constitutes an inevitable part of life. While the usurer, like his daughter, hardly sleeps throughout Valentín’s ordeal and makes constant trips to the pharmacist personally, he is unable to witness his son’s violent fits and unearthly, peacock-like screams: “[e]l padre no tenía valor para presenciar tan doloroso espectáculo y huía de la alcoba trémulo y despavorido. Era hombre que carecía de valor para afrontar penas de tal magnitud y sin duda por causa de su deficiencia moral” (37). When Valentín’s condition improves slightly, Torquemada in his excitement loses control of both his body and his emotions: “no cabía en sí de sobresalto y ansiedad. Estaba el hombre con los nervios tirantes, sin poder permanecer quieto ni un momento, tan pronto con ganas de echarse a llorar como de soltar la risa” (64). Relieved of his masculine rational faculties, Torquemada begins to resemble the feminized body of a hysteria patient, as described by Catherine Jagoe: “Las pacientes se caracterizaban como presentando una emotividad y sensibilidad exageradas, con altibajos excesivos” (344). The prolonged epileptic fit Torquemada suffers following Valentín’s passing—provoked again when Fidela dies in *Torquemada y San Pedro*—further recalls a hysteric attack.

In the second novel of the series, the protagonist deviates most radically from both religious and societal norms through the cult-like veneration of his deceased firstborn, in which “he worships Valentín as both his son and the son of God” (Schwyter 68). While the protagonist likens his ritualistic cleaning of the altar to saying mass, convinced that his solemn movements “tiraban algo a lo sacerdotal” (115), in practice Torquemada’s careful maintenance of his son’s shrine recalls the devotion of single or widowed women dedicated to *vestir santos*. The

fantasized conversations shared between father and deceased son further evidence the moneylender's exalted imagination, yet another feminine-coded trait in nineteenth-century Spain (Miller 372). Only with an "imaginación viva y soñadora," as Ángel Pulido Fernández describes the supposedly feminizing faculty (410), might Torquemada even in dreams sustain conversations with the ghost/god-like Valentín. Moreover, his enraptured contemplation of Valentín as a deity resembles a mystical trance: "[N]o se le aliviaba sino comunicándose con el retrato por medio de una contemplación lenta y muda, una especie de éxtasis, en que se quedaba el hombre como lelo abiertos los ojos y sin ganas de moverse de allí, sintiendo que el tiempo pasaba con extraordinaria parsimonia" (115).

In the second half of the nineteenth-century, mysticism was pathologized throughout Europe and in Spain by doctors following Jean-Martin Charcot, who first linked the practice to hysteria (Dupont 3). While French doctors diagnosed male hysterics, Spain's more conservative doctors tended to view hysteria as exclusively inflicting women (Jagoe 342). Despite the Spanish tradition of both male and female mystics, then, *Torquemada en la cruz's* textual parody of mystical reverie further emasculates the protagonist's relationship with his son.

Throughout the rest of the series, humor continues to underline the ridiculousness of Torquemada's paternal aspirations, performing a disciplinary function by rendering comical an emasculated model of fatherhood. As in the previous novel, the narrator of *Torquemada en la cruz* weaves comedic elements into his depiction of father and idolatized son in a twin effort to laugh at and distance himself from the moneylender's imaginative (feminine) machinations. When Torquemada gleefully assumes that Valentín, having "decided" to come back to life, will do so "resucitando, como quien dice, al modo de Jesucristo," not only does his son's image scornfully respond "Hombre, no;...Tú, ¿qué estás pensando?" (146), but goes on to claim of his mother that "[e]l Grandísimo Todo me dijo que era fea...y vieja" (147). Torquemada's internal debate of whether to rebirth Valentín by marrying one of the Águila sisters, this time with Donoso as an imaginary interlocutor, is equally humorous: "Pero no puede ser. Dispense usted, amigo mío; pero no hay forma humana de que se realice ese... ¿cómo se dice?, ¡ah, sí...!, *desiderátum*. Yo le agradezco a usted mucho el *desiderátum*, y estoy muy envanecido de saber que..., muy satisfecho, y, a la verdad, también tengo yo unas miasmas de *desiderátum*...; pero hay una barrera..., eso de las clases" (149). While such humor forms an integral part of the narrative's richness, the laughter evoked by Torquemada's eccentric behavior decidedly reinforces how men of a certain standing should *not* act.

The narrator of *Torquemada en el purgatorio* similarly employs humor to distance himself from the absurdity of Torquemada's conviction that Fidela's child will be none other than his prodigious son reborn. The moneylender urgently asks his pregnant wife, "¿no sientes tú ahora algo como si te subieran de la caja del cuerpo a la cabeza, *vulgo* región cerebral, unas enormísimas cantidades, cuatrillones o cosa así? ¿No sientes un endiablado pataleo de multiplicaciones y divisiones, y aquello de la raíz cuadrada y la raíz cúbica?" (357). While this scene undoubtedly pokes fun at Torquemada's lack of education, the protagonist's blind irrationality and mystical faith in the rebirth of his firstborn resembles "feminine" superstition rather than "masculine" scientificity. As readers, we are encouraged to laugh at Torquemada's unmitigated fatherly emotion even in the intimacy of the bedroom, recalling

Delgado et al.'s observation that in the nineteenth century, "what was engraved in the heart often clashed with what was socially appropriate and had to be successfully confined to the private sphere, or discarded altogether" (10). Perhaps this explains in part why, as Torquemada gains greater class status, he neglects to care for his firstborn's shrine, which reappears in *Torquemada en el purgatorio* in a state of disrepair.

As Torquemada ascends the rungs of middle-class respectability in the second novel of the series, he begins to pay greater heed to bourgeois norms of comportment, striving to imitate his friend and mentor Donoso, the consummate gentleman. Loyal and generous friend, faithful husband to a long-suffering wife, uncorrupted yet well-connected within the national and international worlds of high finance, Donoso emblemizes an exemplary model of masculinity rarely if ever denigrated or ironized by the series's narrator. By following his friend's example, Torquemada is at least externally successful in his transformation in the third novel of the tetralogy. As evidenced by the overwhelming success of the Marqués's speech in *Torquemada en el purgatorio*—a reception which, given the narrator's quipping editorials, suggests a not-so-veiled critique of the upper echelons of Spanish society gathered in audience—the Marqués de Saldeoro cuts a clearly masculine figure as the epitome of financial success in the public eye, despite certain deficits in cultural capital. Nevertheless, what Rhian Davies has termed the "civilization of Torquemada" (53) not only involves the refinement of his clothes and speech, as she and other critics have observed, but also requires the emulation of masculine models of emotional control and moderation.

Throughout the series, Torquemada consistently fails to exercise emotional self-restraint whenever his male progeny is involved. After almost shedding tears of gratitude at Donoso's reassurance of his connubial compatibility with the Águila sisters—"a Torquemada le faltó poco para que la emoción le hiciera derramar lágrimas" (153)—the moneylender soon flies into a fit of rage at the sisters's measured reaction to Donoso's proposal. As his friend begs, "[m]oderación, mi querido don Francisco," Torquemada expresses his indignation through coarse expressions that deviate considerably from "la máscara de finura" he otherwise attempts to maintain (160). Of course, the protagonist's fury not only stems from his instinctive self-pride but also the unresolved question of which Águila sister, Fidela or Cruz, will accept his hand in marriage. While Sara Muñoz-Muriana has rightly observed that in *Torquemada en la cruz*, marriage performs a corrective function (51), unbeknownst to Donoso and the Águila family Torquemada harbors a secret motive for remarrying: he is convinced that his son will be reborn through his union with one of the aristocratic sisters. The moneylender's enraged question of "¿cuál de las dos?" (154) is therefore intimately linked to his fervent paternal ambitions.

We might expect Torquemada—not yet a refined gentleman—to explode at Tía Roma's criticism of his attempts to negotiate with God and the saints in a vain effort to preserve Valentín's life. However, in *Torquemada en el purgatorio* fatherly pride coupled with the looming threat of disillusionment cause the Marqués to quite literally attack his son-in-law Quevedo, a doctor who professes grim prognostications concerning Valentín's II's health: "[a]l oír la palabra *fenómeno*, [Torquemada] no tuvo calma para contenerse, entró, de un salto, abalanzóse al pescuezo del joven facultativo [Quevedo], y apretádoselo con la sana intención de estrangularle, gritaba, ¿Con que mi hijo es fenómeno?... ¡Ladrón, matasanos!

El fenómeno eres tú, que tienes el alma patizamba y comida de envidia” (411). Torquemada’s outrage not only signals his refusal to accept, at least initially, evidence-based observation as a line of rational inquiry; it also demonstrates his inability to adhere to masculine norms of measured decorum when his blind faith in his sons’s exceptionality is questioned. So often linked to paternal dreams and disappointments, Torquemada’s angry outbursts, with their linguistic backsliding to the vulgar language of the *pueblo*, serve throughout the series as a reminder of the moneylender’s humble beginnings and concomitant difficulty in ascribing to bourgeois models of emotive decorum.

In his illuminating analysis of Alas’s *Su único hijo*, Bryan Cameron suggests that Bonifacio Reyes’s paternal ambitions manifest his desire for personal regeneration through a “chain of fathers and sons” (159). If Torquemada considers Valentín II a Messianic figure for the Spanish nation (Schyster 72), he also views his son as a personal savior, an opportunity for regeneration through patrilineal succession. As the title of the third novel suggests, the former usurer experiences as almost hellish Cruz’s annihilation of his “bello ideal”: “emplear de nuevo sus considerables ganancias, reservando solo una parte mínima para el gasto diario” (354). Readers of *Torquemada en la hoguera* will remember that the usurer would incorporate Valentín into his business dealings, relying on the mathematics prodigy to verify his calculations: “[s]u padre mismo, que era un águila para hacer en el filo de la imaginación cuentas por la regla de interés, le consultaba [a Valentín] no pocas veces” (19). Implicit in this alliance is Valentín’s tacit support of his father’s *tacañería*. This suggests that, while he fears Cruz’s assertion that his children “serán Águilas, y tendrán todo mi ser, y mis pensamientos” (349), Torquemada fervently hopes that Valentín II will inherit his miserly ideology, providing not only a much-needed ally in the failing struggle against his sister-in-law but also a means through which to extend his particular financial predilections to future generations.

However, when Cruz compares her nephew to the Príncipe de Asturias and insists that the baby have not one but two wet nurses, Torquemada realizes that Valentín II, as male heir, will not only fuel his aunt’s lofty ambitions but also render her authority absolute: “la fascinación que Cruz ejercía sobre él era mayor y más irresistible después del nacimiento de Valentín. Ya se comprende que éste le servía a la tirana de la casa para solidificar su imperio y hacerlo invulnerable contra toda clase de insurrecciones” (406). While the law grants *patria potestad* to Valentín II’s father, in practice it is Cruz who exercises that fatherly right. This realization literally renders Torquemada speechless; he can only helplessly sputter his disagreement with the indomitable Cruz, who attempts to reassure him, “¿Cree que yo aumentaría el gasto si viera que sus ganancias mermaban lo más mínimo?” (407). Reduced to tears, Torquemada once more becomes the target of narrative levity: “El tacaño lloraba, sin duda porque se le atragantó la última sopa de chocolate” (407). Once again, humor functions within the novels to create distance between the overemotional Torquemada and a narrator who seems rather uncomfortable with the idea of a crying man unable to wield authority over his family and finances. In another instance of textual gender bending, it is the childless Cruz, rather than don Francisco, who asserts herself as the paradoxical feminine patriarch of the Torquemada-Águila family.

On his deathbed in the stifling sumptuousness of his ducal palace, Torquemada continues to conceive of Valentín II as a potential means of resistance to Cruz's financial control. Having previously signed a will dividing his money evenly between Rufina, Valentín II and the Catholic Church—as per Cruz's suggestion—Torquemada instructs Donoso and Father Gamborena to disinherit his daughter and leave the vast majority of his money to his incapacitated son. Given his son's extreme disabilities—and resultant disinterest in material expenditure—the Marqués realizes that Valentín II constitutes the perfect vessel to preserve and practice his father's aforementioned *bello ideal* of uncirculated capital accumulation. He explains to Donoso:

Claro, con un buen consejo de familia, que cuide de alimentar al niño y tenerlo aseado, se pueden ir acumulando los intereses y aumentando el capital. Y luego, en la mayor edad, el hombrecito mío ha de ser todo lo que quiera, menos pródigo [...] Será cazador y no comerá más que legumbres. [...] [E]sconderá el dinero en una olla para que no lo vea ni Dios... ¡Oh, qué hijo tengo y qué gusto trabajar unos cuantos años, muchos años, para llenarle bien su hucha! (657)

While the narrator immediately dismisses Torquemada's paternal declarations as evidence of his "desorden cerebral" (657), the supposedly delirious protagonist has, in fact, outlined a practical financial plan perfectly in line with his unorthodox economic preferences. If it seems unlikely that Donoso would alter his friend's already-established *testamento*, the narrative leaves this particular detail untied, as though to recollect the Marqués's avaricious plans vis-à-vis his son is an embarrassing topic best left unexplored. Don Francisco's inability to fully adhere to mainstream ideologies of masculinity and economics thus coalesce in the unlikely figure of Valentín II: the fruit of Torquemada's irrational belief in his prodigious son's reincarnation, his second son nevertheless represents an albeit unrealized opportunity for the moneylender-turned-Marqués to capitalize once and for all on his *bello ideal*.

In refusing to moderate his miserly impulses, Torquemada departs significantly from the conventional practices of consumption that underpin Spain's capitalist market economy. Both Torquemada's preference for frugal expenditure and his passion for generating money for non-consumerist ends represent a form of avarice roundly condemned by nineteenth-century Spanish economists, for whom the circulation of money was paramount (Fuentes Peris 36). Santiago Diego Madrazo affirms in *Lecciones de economía política* (1874-76): "Tanto la avaricia como la codicia, además de ser contrarias a la Moral, lo son también a las leyes económicas" (491). Conservative economist José España Lledó concurs: "Una sociedad en la que solo se anhelase acumular capitales, sería una sociedad sin encantos" (31). In his refusal to relinquish his covetous instincts, Torquemada not only fails to embody the bourgeois *hombre fino*—Jesús Cruz reminds us that "in *sociedad de buen tono* there was nothing worse than being stingy" (31; *his emphasis*)—but also deviates from mainstream expectations of the bourgeois family man. In Mariano de Rementería y Fica's well-circulated conduct manual, "el marido avaro...es un monstruo, un ente peligroso con el cual no se debe comunicar, y de quien nunca se huirá lo bastante" (73). España Lledó adds, "El verdadero amor a la familia es el enemigo mortal de la codicia y de la miseria [miserliness], y supone el buen uso de la riqueza" (31). Through his unwillingness to embrace capitalist

consumerism in collaboration with his sister-in-law, Torquemada abandons one of his central responsibilities as father and family breadwinner. Cruz's usurpation of her brother-in-law's patriarchal authority thus stems directly from the inherent inflexibility of Torquemada's avarice which in turn hinders his ability to exercise culturally accepted models of paternal masculinity.

While fatherhood in nineteenth-century Spain constitutes a means through which to pursue an "authentic masculinity," as Akiko Tsuchiya has noted in her analysis of paternity in Clarín's *Su único hijo* (119), Torquemada's enactment of fatherhood throughout the tetralogy consistently feminizes the protagonist, revealing his failure to modify near-maternal passion for his firstborn son, control emotional outbursts of anger and tearful frustration, and reign in his vivid imagination. The narrator's humorous if uneasy treatment of the protagonist's feminine-coded behaviors is certainly indicative of the series's expression of textual anxieties regarding masculinities-in-crisis in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the undeniable sincerity with which Torquemada expresses his paternal passions and preoccupations as well as the frustration borne of his impotence within the Águila household underlines the inherent difficulty—if not impossibility—of ascribing to gendered and economic models of masculine comportment that attempted to regulate nineteenth-century conceptions of Spanish manhood. Perhaps unexpectedly, Torquemada's impassioned and effusive performance of fatherhood throughout the tetralogy not only problematizes reified notions of gendered difference, but also interrogates questions of paternal authority and masculine authenticity at the Spanish *fin-de-siècle*.

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Notes

¹ Spanish liberal thinkers would continue to propagate moderation as a masculine ideal in the 1920s and 1930s as well, in direct opposition to the outmoded Don Juan model. Nerea Aresti describes “una cruzada contra el ideal representado por el Don Juan,” adding that this antiquated masculine type was widely denounced for “su falta de autocontrol, así como por su inclinación a la poligamia y a la irresponsabilidad paterna” (“Masculinidad” 59).

² Sara Schyfter identifies both Valentíns as ironic Messiah figures while Vernon Chamberlin argues that Valentín II embodies the negative consequences of “la nivelación de clases sociales” (44). Where Diane Urey reads his deformities as allegory for the deficiencies of Spain’s restored monarchy (“Identities” 194), Teresa Fuentes Peris reads Valentín II’s excessive appetite as indicative of Spanish society’s anxiety-laden view of degenerates as unproductive leeches that consumed societal resources (76; 61). In his dissertation analyzing representations of masculinity in several of Galdós’s novels, José Ismael Souto Rumbo analyzes Torquemada’s enactment of fatherhood in the first novel of the tetralogy. He argues that the text validates the protagonist’s relationship with his firstborn as a possible “experiencia de la paternidad” (143) that recuperates fatherhood as an important component of Spanish masculinity in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, Souto Rumbo does not take into account the narrative irony that is pervasive throughout *Torquemada en la hoguera* and the rest of the *Torquemada* series, and thus misses, in my view, key textual moments in which the protagonist’s enactment of fatherhood is ridiculed or otherwise criticized by the narrator.

³ As George Mosse and Rita Felski, among others, have demonstrated, European bourgeois societies in England, France, and Germany expressed considerable gendered anxiety not only owing to the so-called “woman question,” but also because, as Felski explains: “Masculinity, it seemed, could no longer be taken for granted as a stable, unitary, and self-evident reality” (cited in Tsuchiya 92). This was certainly the case in Spain, where negotiations of and anxieties over masculinity and definitions of manliness were intimately tied to Spanish attempts to forge a post-imperial, national identity (Aresti, “Hombria perdida” 19-20). As a Spanish realist author who viewed himself as participating in Spain’s nation-building project, Pérez Galdós negotiated “normative ideals” (Tsuchiya 233) of masculinity in his novels, as attested to by numerous recent dissertations analysing masculinities in Galdós.

⁴ Few critics have approached the *Torquemada* tetralogy through the lens of gender studies. While Gilbert Smith does not question Torquemada’s performance of masculinity in the text, he does usefully highlight the “curiously androgynous” traits of Bailón, Rafael, and Gamborena, and points to a narrative tendency to “feminiz[e] the male” (213) within the series. In her landmark essay on the *Torquemada* series, Urey observes that the “characters, customs, objects, and events” portrayed in the series are in their linguistic construction inherently polyvalent, reliant on a multiplicity of discourses that consistently disrupt notions of fixed identity and meaning (“Identities” 196). Similarly, Luisa Elena Delgado writes of the tetralogy: “Entre la realidad y la ficción, entre el pueblo y la burguesía, entre materialismo y espiritualismo, las dicotomías que marcan la existencia de Torquemada y determinan su alienación se integran en un texto que...suspende su resolución” (65). Conspicuously absent from both analyses is a consideration of gender as an equally unstable category or problematized dichotomy in the novels.

⁵ This and future quotes from the tetralogy are cited from Alianza Editorial's edition of the *Torquemada* novels.

⁶ While Carmen Blanco Villalba and Jennifer Lowe argue that readers should take seriously narrative descriptions of Valentín's genius given that so many witnesses attest to his talent (158; 92), Juli Highfill calls into doubt his prodigy.

⁷ Although Francisco Javier Crespo Sánchez and Juan Hernández Franco find that fathers were expected to show an interest in their children's education and moral conduct during this time period ("Cambios" 134), Torquemada's display of exaggerated emotionality and enthusiastic embrace of Valentín's professor constitute an excessive reaction to his son's genius.

⁸ I differ from Carmen Blanco Villalba's reading of this scene; she argues that this passage lacks narrative irony (156).

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