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Imperial Anxieties and Urbane Transgressions: The *Indianos* of Benito Pérez Galdós's *Lo prohibido*

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Chapter eleven of *Lo prohibido* (1884-5), "Los jueves de Eloísa," presents a detailed description of a lavish Restoration era dinner party. As narrator-protagonist José María Bueno de Guzmán outlines the sumptuous dishes, elegant décor, and coy intrigues taking place among the elite society members present, Eloísa's husband, Pepe Carrillo, lies dying in an adjacent room; his cries of agony cause the distinguished guests to drop their forks and run to his aid; that is, *all but one*. Colonial entrepreneur Don Alejandro Sánchez Botín remains seated and, as the obese man continues to eat, the sounds of his chewing loudly reverberate against the grief-filled silence (195-96). While this brief moment forms part of the novel's larger critique of the hypocrisy and immoderate consumption of the rising middle-class in nineteenth-century Spain, Botín's portrayal would have also resonated with contemporary readers well-versed in *buen tono*, the rules of polite social etiquette, comically undermined by the character throughout the novel.

Strategically located halfway through the narrative, this scene points to urbanity as a subtext utilized by Galdós to formulate a marked difference between metropolitan and colonial characters in the novel. Examining a variety of *manuales de urbanidad* published throughout the nineteenth century, this article reads *Lo prohibido* alongside precepts of social decorum to demonstrate how Galdós points to the Americas as leading to a cultural and bodily degeneration of metropolitan male subjects tied to the colonies, specifically through *indianos* Sánchez Botín and Marqués don Pedro de Fúcar. Omnipresent beneath the narrative surface, notions of (in)urbanity signal these characters' flagrant transgressions of social etiquette, enacting the discourse of degeneration that, since the inception of Spain's empire in the sixteenth century, was linked to pejorative changes in men who travel to, stay in, or maintain close contact with the Americas. Evincing the connections between paradigms of masculinity, realist fiction, and conduct literature, set against the backdrop of waning empire and corrosive capitalism spurred by colonial monies, Galdós's overwhelmingly cynical representations of these characters revisits tropes of colonial difference that make up early imperialist rhetoric and persist into the nineteenth century. In accordance with this discourse, his portrayals of men tied to the colonies depict a dangerous colonial Other operating within metropolitan society.[1]

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From dress and personal hygiene to bodily posture and speech, discipline defined the ideal nineteenth-century bourgeois male. As late as 1898, *La elegancia en el trato social* continued to posit a man of high society as one who lives by a strict code of social decorum: "El hombre de buena sociedad es indulgente, modesto, cortés, generoso . . . Enfrena sus apetitos, refina sus gustos y sus costumbres . . . es, en fin, un verdadero hombre honrado" (Bestard de la Torre 34). As this formulation illustrates, proper etiquette rested upon the qualities of modesty, generosity, and temperance, and above all, the ability to demonstrate these traits in a variety of public and private social interactions. *La elegancia*, like many other *manuales de urbanidad* of the era, provided readers with a type of popular do-it-yourself, self-help guide for shaping social identity, an "image management" dating back to sixteenth-century court conduct literature (Armon 27). As Jesús Cruz demonstrates, these texts held sway with middle-class readers as men and women who successfully emulated the standards outlined within acquired the cultural capital of refinement—moral character, proper conduct, and knowledge of manners—to fashion themselves into the perfect bourgeois subject (*Rise of Middle-Class Culture* 27). These texts' maxims encompass virtually every aspect of social and personal life and, in delineating the standards of permitted and prohibited behavior, leave little room for transgressions in the traits comprising the consummate urban(e) subject. While this ideal is an invented portrait of unachievable social perfection, conduct manuals nevertheless provide an index of normative masculinity, a baseline of comparison to consider how the physical descriptions and reprehensible actions of characters like Botín and Fúcar question, and, more often than not, completely undermine norms of urbanity. Considering the implications that these fictional deviations hold within the context of Spain's waning empire, the two *indianos* become a dialogic site of enunciation centering on paradigms of the male body that deviate from standards of self-discipline, masculine physical beauty, and moral virtue.

Conduct manuals targeted an audience of male and female readers alike, exemplifying another "source of gender discourse" affected by the emergence of Spain's middle-classes (McKinney, *Mapping* 76). In much the same way as *el ángel del hogar* represents prevailing ideals of female docility and domesticity during the period, *el hombre fino*, or the refined man of etiquette literature, embodies the paragon of masculine perfection equally central to bourgeois social ideology. Using *el hombre fino* as the "general model of masculinity prevalent during the time" (*Mapping* 77), a close reading of the "collective discourse" between *manuales* and realist fiction illuminates the ways in which the colonial characters of *Lo prohibido* deviate from cultural ideals of urbane masculinity (Mercer 17). Moving beyond the relationship between urbanity and space, representations of characters linked to the colonies and their deviations from the cultural ideals of masculinity in vogue manifest imperial (gendered masculine) anxieties. Placing standards of masculine moderation alongside Galdós's portrayals reveals the implications of these deviations within the context of a waning empire, evincing a dangerous decadence resulting from emigration and an influx of American capital, as well as the problems of imperialism that continue to plague the metropolis.

Manuales de urbanidad offer the key social constructions of bourgeois manhood challenged by emigration, social mobility, and excess within the emergence of the middle-class. Published during the same time as Galdós's *Novelas contemporáneas*, between 1829 and

1900 Spain experienced a boom in the printing of conduct literature with about three hundred books on civility, good taste, and etiquette appearing—almost seven times that produced in the previous century (Cruz, "'*El hombre fino*'" 347). *El hombre fino al buen gusto del día* (1829), *Manual de la elegancia y de higiene* (1849), *Nuevo manual completo de la buena sociedad* (1854), and *El buen gusto en el trato social* (1890) illustrate how writers imported works from France and England, translating and adapting them to fit the Spanish context. Widely read, these books quickly sold out, resulting in new editions of the same text with minor revisions and, in some instances, new manuals written as continuations of prior works.[2] Dates of publication progressively span key moments in the trajectory of Spain's imperial power, moving through imperial decline to the loss of its remaining colonial possessions.

Typically, conduct manuals begin by defining the concept of urbanity then present the social advantages of proper etiquette. Texts address different activities and outline appropriate behavior in various types of communiqués (visits, letters), as well as personal diversions (games, strolls, theater, dances). A large portion of each text details, in script-like fashion, what one should do or say in specific scenarios of convivial life (dinners, weddings, funerals, baptisms). Authors often use the terms *cortesanía*, *decoro*, *urbanidad*, *finura*, and *buen tono* interchangeably to mean refined social etiquette and proper manners. For example, *La cortesanía: nuevo manual práctico de la urbanidad* (1850) equates courtesy and urbanity, defining the two as: "Constituyen la cortesanía ó urbanidad las reglas convencionales que el buen uso forma y que la educación y el asentimiento general van sancionando, con arreglo á las cuales debe el hombre conducirse en la sociedad" (5). While manuals typically formulate urbanity as a set of strict rules for readers to memorize and follow, the concept rests on the conscious performance of bodily carriage and behavior, self-regulated by the individual, in accordance with the dominant gendered standards of the era.

As María Fernanda Lander points out, etiquette manuals conveyed normative social behavior as texts aimed to produce an imagined community of middle-class readers who conformed to the same rules of decorum ("El *manual de urbanidad*" 84).[3] Purporting to create social cohesion, urbanity was primarily a display of class: "Sea cual fuere el lugar que ocupe el hombre en la escala social, le es indispensable conocer las reglas de la urbanidad correspondientes á su clase ó estado . . ." (*La cortesanía* 8). Within this discourse, texts aimed to impose bourgeois social control, a dominance that entails not only a formulation of class, but also gender. If as Lander asserts, that *manuales* gave readers a double pleasure in seeing their ethical and moral views portrayed and confirmed in writing, this "pleasing image" of the perfect nineteenth-century individual is unquestionably bourgeois; yet the subject described is also a highly racial and gendered construction—implicitly white, heterosexual, and predominantly male (86). Despite never achieving complete consolidation, the rising middle classes were instrumental in establishing the socially acceptable ways of being a man. Conduct manuals, written largely by and for this group, serve as compendiums of the normative patterns of behavior particular to Spanish masculine identity during the era. Guidelines for "*el hombre del mundo*" or "*el verdadero elegante*" posit "*el hombre fino*" as the paragon of male bourgeois perfection, evidencing the cultural demands for nineteenth-century men to conform to idealized standards of masculinity.

Promulgating gendered constructs of manhood, manuals stress that an ideal man must demonstrate markers of refinement easily observable to others. Cruz divides these visible signs into three areas of social performance: (1) *behavior*—where men excel at the art of conversation, exhibit prudence and generosity, and avoid indiscretion and exaggeration; (2) *distinction*—where men dress in the latest fashions, attend to their personal grooming, and use approved accessories; and (3) *sociability*—where men evidence very specific manners, speech, and posture, inside and outside the home (*Rise* 30-34). Fashioned by codes of proper conduct, the masculine subject becomes a social construct that hinges on a performance of gender. Texts divide this performance into hierarchies of normative conformance to and non-normative deviance from codes of male behavior, inherently rendering variants as subordinate. Thus, as a regulatory discourse of the social elite, urbanity posits normative masculinity as a significant part of the cultural code of bourgeois hegemony being conveyed to the same middle-class audience reading *Lo prohibido*.

Galdós utilizes contemporary discourses of urbanity to draw opposing constructions of masculinity that explicitly pit *el hombre fino* of popular conduct literature against *indianos* Botín and Fúcar. When examined alongside etiquette manuals, the physical descriptions and reprehensible actions of these colonial traders undermine masculine norms of moderation, virtue, and order central to bourgeois ideology, drawing the two as lacking the modesty, empathy, and temperance espoused by conduct literature. Moreover, as morally degenerate men whose excessive consumption of food and commodities does not conform to ideals of masculine moderation, Botín and Fúcar's transgressions of urbane etiquette fall into three main categories: physical grotesqueness, excessive consumption, and a calculated manipulation of *buen tono*. Belonging to the upper echelons of society, arguably the novel's entire cast of characters defy the moral codes of urbanity at some point, especially against the institution of marriage. Yet their dress, speech, and stylized manners conform to the principles of decorum despite their actions conveying the opposite of the discipline and moderation espoused by conduct literature. José María clearly manifests a lack of self-restraint through the methodical seduction of each of his married cousins, an excess of sexual energies that leaves him physically spent at the end of the novel. At the heart of Galdós's narrative is also the exorbitant spending of José María's lover Eloísa to maintain the appearance of an aristocratic lifestyle. Despite these protagonists standing out for what Jo Labanyi terms "excess consumerism," the novel's secondary characters also exhibit a lack of restraint—one that more closely (mis)aligns with precepts of urbanity that focus specifically on dining habits and the physical appearance of the male body (132). In this way, Botín and Fúcar become more than just humorous figures; their inurbanity takes on a larger meaning in connection with the novel's intercalated allusions to Cuba, colonial finance, and worsening colonial relations that situate the plot of the novel within Spain's imperial decline.[4]

Botín and Fúcar represent an intriguing intersectionality of gender, literature, and empire as a discourse of urbanity illuminates their transgressions of the paradigms of bourgeois propriety. The overwhelmingly male cast of *Lo prohibido* highlights the centrality of masculinity to the narrative.[5] Akiko Tsuchiya has demonstrated how, in defying the stability of the self and traditional gender divisions, José María's progressive disintegration of masculinity anticipates the crisis of the subject in the coming century (281). While prefiguring a crisis of masculinity experienced throughout the larger European context, the novel's

secondary characters also demonstrate another type of crisis as they display types of manhood discordant to the era's social standards. While it can be argued that many Galdosian protagonists depict non-normative masculinities, these *indianos* similarly become highly transgressive because of their repeated violations of the rules of social etiquette and subsequent failure to meet the dominant model of middle-class manhood as their representations point to gender anxieties related to notions of metropolitan decadence, colonial loss, and colonial effects on men. Within the novel's dense web of male characters, Botín and Fúcar stand out due to their links to colonial profiteering. Their deviations metonymically stand for the decadence of the Spanish empire, as they establish a pattern of men linked to the Americas who challenge the norms of metropolitan bourgeois masculinity in Galdós's early realist fiction.[6] Urbanity elucidates the ways in which the two highlight the hypocrisy of metropolitan society, emphasizing the centrality of gender inherent in the figure of the *indiano*, and strengthening the disruptive nature of their articulation the "colony in the capital," shown by Lisa Surwillo to reveal the centrality of the colonies to the metropolis while, at the same time, unmasking the corruption of empire (70). Their formulations as an inurbane Other suggest that close contact with the Americas alters metropolitan manhood, effecting a dangerous crisis of masculinity linked to the larger crisis of imperial demise taking place during the novel.

Galdós draws characters linked to the colonies as a "countertype" that fails to meet dominant ideals and, as such, is represented as inferior for not meeting the hegemonic standard (Mosse 6). Throughout the novel, men form a sliding scale of urbanity, with colonial figures at the very bottom. Medina best embodies the tenets of moderate conduct due to his ability to control his passions. Together, the *indianos*' excess and Medina's moderation call attention to the hierarchies among Spanish men present in the narrative as characters form a spectrum of *conformance to* and *transgressions from* norms of manhood. At the bottom lies Botín, the inferior "orangután" or "chinche" described by the narrator as "uno de nuestros primeros reptiles, y sin género de duda el primero de nuestros antipáticos" (446). Occupying the lowest rung in the progression of human evolution, the entrepreneur is: "lo peorcito de la humanidad [. . .] aquél nos venía a revelar el discutido y no bien probado parentesco de la estirpe humana con los animales." This dehumanization, further complicated by the narrator's unreliable perspective, underscores the colonial figure as at the extreme opposite of Medina, who exemplifies the *hombre fino* of conduct literature.

Within Galdós's critique of Restoration society's artificiality, urbanity highlights a manipulation of imagery to bolster notions of colonial corruption. Don Alejandro Sánchez Botín, "una persona antipática, entrometida y de una vanidad pedantesca," is one of the novel's most hated characters (220). Because he possesses none of the redeeming traits of proper conduct, Botín is detested by polite society. Whereas manuals emphasize that a refined man inspires respect and admiration in others, Botín's lack of proper dining etiquette and gross physical appearance provoke disgust as his repulsive looks and revolting behavior at the dinner table violate the conduct befitting a bourgeois gentleman. In a plot that centers on José María's sexual exploits, the narrator hardly exemplifies moral rectitude. However, the descriptions of his dress, speech, and posture, especially during the scenes of his elegant dinners, evince how the metropolitan subject aligns with the tenets of urbanity, while his

colonial counterparts explicitly do not. Despite upholding the superficial traits of social etiquette, the narrator, through his biased perspective, consistently uses the traits of inurbanity to mark men with colonial ties as the Other.

As Mary Coffey proves in tracing the trajectory of changing nineteenth-century metropolitan reactions to the *indiano*, this figure was already "othered" as an attempt to distance the metropolis from Spain's colonial experience, "incluso el efecto de la emigración en las regiones del norte, el tráfico de esclavos y el mito de las riquezas fáciles de conseguir en las Américas" ("El costumbrismo" 298). Part of this "otherness," aside from no longer belonging to the metropolis due to their time in the Americas, is an attempt to protect the metropole from "el contagio cultural con el colonialismo." Thus, by the time Galdós composes *Lo prohibido*, *indianos* were already perceived in the cultural imaginary as not meeting the idealized model of metropolitan masculinity, particularly in race and language.[7] For instance, Agustín Caballero (*Tormento*) and José María Cruz (*La loca de la casa*) are characterized by their lack of linguistic prowess.[8] However, rising above their blue-collar backgrounds, the two proffer much more positive portrayals of *indianos* respected for their rags-to-riches trajectory as their exemplary work ethics clash with the falseness of the metropolitan social system, exposing its hypocrisy.[9] Yet, through this very same difference, Caballero and Cruz critique the laziness of the upper and middle classes; unlike Botín and Fúcar, they are lauded for their individualism and self-reliance gained through hard work as opposed to the luxuries afforded by name and class privilege. Exposing the ineptitude, corruption, and hypocrisy of metropolitan society, these *indianos* posit physical and moral weakness in terms of degeneration as Caballero and Cruz offer solutions that echo regenerationist literature's ideas concerning the decadence of Spain's upper classes, stressing the importance of labor to combat the defects of national character: *pereza*, *indolencia*, and *apatía* (Mallada 37-44). As Coffey asserts, Galdós complicates the stereotype of the *indiano* with portrayals that vacillate between positive and negative representations of characters formed by their colonial experience; as works engage with these subjects' effects on the metropolis, some provide positive lessons for social change (*Ghosts of Colonies Past and Present* 247, 257-58). Introducing urbanity into the equation further emphasizes the portraits of the *indianos* in *Lo prohibido* as even more distinct, strengthening the division between men with colonial connections versus those who remain in the metropolis without overseas travel or riches from colonial exploitation. This marked difference illustrates a critical reprisal of colonialism in a desire to reject the ugliness of empire as Botín and Fúcar are presented specifically as detrimental figures of manhood who differ from Galdós's depictions of *indianos* in later works.

Much like José María Manso and Agustín Caballero, who have recently returned from the Americas where they have become extremely wealthy through sharp business acumen and years of physical labor, Botín and Fúcar have amassed substantial fortunes in the colonies and continue to maintain profitable ventures there. Although they are not *indianos* in the strict sense of having left Spain, lived for a time in the Americas, and returned wealthy, the two are integrally tied to the Indies. Through their financial interests, the entrepreneurs implicitly travel back and forth from the metropolis and come in constant contact with colonial men; this, combined with their role in the influx of colonial monies into the Peninsula's political and economic economies, inextricably fuses the characters to the Indies.

As Montesinos notes, the plot of *Lo prohibido* hinges on "la locura crematística," or uncontrolled spending on luxury items, by male and female characters alike (61). Yet, beyond the adultery and sexual degeneration linked to the circulation of money, we must also consider the importance of the colonial element present in the work. As Surwillo illustrates, references to colonial finance explicitly connect the problems of empire and Spain's "conspicuous and uncontrolled consumption" afforded by colonial capital (88). Within the novel's colonial subtext, Botín and Fúcar expand the centuries-old definition of an *indiano*. As *negreros*, the two operate within the continual expansion of the transatlantic figure; having built their riches on the exploitation of colonial bodies and imperial finances, they are unique to Galdós's *oeuvre* as entrepreneurs *indiano*-like in nature: "Galdós's *negreros* are not simply slave traders, but are generalized to comprise a particular type of *indiano*, whose corruption and perversion of liberal ideas have infused conservative Restoration politics with the worst impulses of colonial exploitation" (91).

While their liminal identity rests on the accumulation of colonial riches, an analysis of urbanity extends Surwillo's reading of Botín and Fúcar's "corrupting influence of colonialism on the capital" (90). In her study of *El amigo Manso* and *Lo prohibido*, the critic repeatedly returns to the notion of *corruption*: the ways in which colonial capital "corrupts nation formation" (66), the "corrupt colonial base" that underlies metropolitan society (67), the effects of a "corrupt colonial administration" (68), and even the "corrupting force of the *negreros* on literature itself" (69). As such, *Lo prohibido* functions as a portrait of the complex metropolitan response to imperialism and its immorality; urbanity forms another integral part of Galdós's representations of the pernicious influence of the colonies. Whereas Surwillo interprets the role of *indianos* as a critique of capitalist consumption, an analysis within the intersectionality of gender goes beyond the corrosive impact on the metropolis by an imperial capitalist system with deep roots in colonial slave trade to focus on the key social constructions of bourgeois manhood challenged by emigration, social mobility, and excess that also interrogate the novel's engagement with the consequences of colonization.

Given that urbanity imposes specific conduct that must be observable to others, this notion operates within physiognomic discourses of the era that posited an individual's exterior as a reflection of inner character (McKinney, "Men in Black" 80-81). Manuals reiterate that a man demonstrates his virtue precisely because of the correlation between morality and comportment (Bestard de la Torre 10). Whether in dress, speech, or bodily cleanliness, appearance and behavior reveal interior qualities, given that the relationship between the physical and inner virtue exerts a reciprocal influence (Rebolledo 6). For this reason, an adherence to the rules of polite etiquette exteriorizes the value society places on a man and, at the same time, manifests his inner character as urbane behavior becomes an indispensable measure of a man's worth, as well as that to which others ascribe to him. In addition to outward behavior, nineteenth-century constructions of masculinity focus on the male body, highlighting physical appearance as symbolic of inner virtue (Mosse 27). In Spain, physiognomic theory functioned as a powerful source of reading another's identity; from facial hair to nose shape, the body became a "legible text" within a "science of appearances," likewise comprising a view into middle-class hypocrisy (McKinney, "Pogonology" 70-71). Along these lines, Botín brazenly defies the tenets of *urbanidad individual*, defined as the responsibility each man has to conserve and perfect his body (*Urbanidad* 34-35). Galdós

draws the character as lacking the self-vigilance a man must constantly maintain in order to present a visually pleasing image to others (37). Like Guzmán, an urbane gentleman must be tall, slender, and move with graceful and measured bodily movements that make him look thinner (*La cortesanía* 88). On the contrary, Botín is short, fat, and can hardly walk. Bloated from overeating, he bursts beyond his own corporal limits: "Era un viejo verde que, después de comer, aparecía abotagado, pletórico; y sus ojos vidriosos, grandes, muy parecidos a los besugos, y tan miopes [. . .] decían que allí no había más que apetitos, usurpando el lugar del alma" (221). The narrative gaze emphasizes the correspondence between the colonial entrepreneur's exterior and interior ugliness, marginalizing him as an animalistic Other as the comparison to a red snapper, a fish common to the Atlantic coastal regions, alludes to the *indiano*'s fortune from colonial trading. The image of Botín's bulging eyes emphasizes gluttony, obesity, and a perverse nature as the character becomes like the very food he consumes.

Galdós builds upon the relationship between physical and inner beauty to posit the *indiano* as the antithesis of virtuous masculine character and bodily control. Botín's misshapen torso and physical grotesqueness parallel the depravity of his moral fiber: "Era un vicioso, al decir de la gente; mujeriego de la peor especie, de un paladar sensorio tan estragado como lleno de caprichos. Vivía separado de su mujer y tenía muchos cuartos" (220-21). The relationship between outer corporality and inner immorality makes explicit the destructive influence of the colonies. Corrupted by the vast amounts of money made from the Americas, the businessman lacks a moral conscience as he lives off the proverbial fat of the land: literally, in terms of his obesity, and figuratively, through illegal graft from exploiting his position as *diputado* in the Spanish parliament. Portraying a man who refuses to abide by the precepts of fidelity to family and healthy physical productivity, a destructive hedonism governs Botín as he relentlessly pursues Eloísa with "hipócrita misterio y groseras ofertas de dádivas" (221). Beyond comedic effect, these representations become significant when placed in the wider context of imperial crisis as Galdós depicts colonial contact altering metropolitan men morally and physically, a degeneration manifesting the "corrupting" influence of colonialism: "Throughout the nineteenth century, fears ran through the Peninsula that European Spain would become the victim of its colonial agents: a monstrous nation-state" (Surwillo 95). Botín suggests physical and ethical decay wrought on metropolitan male subjects by colonial contact, an ironic "inverted conquest" of masculine degeneration as Spain remains far from an "unchanged imperial center" (Mejías-López 6).

Galdós complicates this portrayal by conceiving of the colonies not only as corrupting the metropolis, but also equally revealing the ugliness of imperialism. José María is pointedly described as a man whose fortunes are unconnected to colonial commerce; as half- English and half-Spanish, the roots of his fortune rest in European viticulture. Within the novel's imperial framework, he does not uphold the tenets of morality, however, he is not shown violently defying notions of physical appearance and social graces. Within the link between immorality and appearance, imperial anxieties coalesce on the male body. Moving away from older aristocratic forms of masculinity based on concepts of purity of blood and honor, the images contained in *manuales* depict a bourgeois manhood based on beauty. As these texts promulgate normative ideals that revolve around primarily physical stereotypes that symbolize a man's inner virtue, paradigms of masculinity contained in manuals repeatedly

focus on men's *visible* traits. Highlighting the importance of a svelte physique, texts warn against obesity, an "esceso [*sic*] de grosura," presented as an illness that negates masculine beauty (Rebolledo 55). Increasingly focusing on the male body, fitness and stature became "central to the bourgeois ideal, and each manual included prescriptions for la toilette, the process of attaining a fit body and elegant appearance" (Cruz, "'*El hombre fino*'" 358). As Elena Iglesias-Villamel notes, physical activity defined the ideal bourgeois man (65). Unlike Cruz or Caballero, Botín does not comply with any of these characteristics. Far from physically fit, his lack of exercise results in a grotesque body unlike the ideal strong, active man. His lack of bodily equilibrium pits him as the complete opposite of the ideal bourgeois male, questioning his virility and, by extension, his ability to contribute to national progress.

Botín's corporeal transgressions are as detestable as his immoral business practices. As he gorges himself on food, the entrepreneur similarly feeds on Cuba's debilitation, exploiting the island, as well as his own countrymen for personal financial gain: "Tres veces había desempeñado en Cuba pingües destinos, y cada vez volvía con media isla entre las uñas, repetía la sagrada formula 'España derramará hasta la última gota de su sangre en defensa'" (220). Spouting a false rhetoric of patriotism, Botín is likened to an animal *devouring* Cuba, reiterating excessive consumption. Galdós caricatures the businessman, who, throughout the novel, is shown either seated at the banquet table or in reference to food and eating: "Decíase de él que no iba allí más a comer, y que tenía distribuidos los días de la semana entre siete casas acreditadas por la habilidad de sus cocineros." The first to arrive and the last to leave, the *indiano* ignores others' hints about his unwelcomed presence: "pero él no entendía de indirectas, y se pegaba a la casa como una ostra" (221). The image alludes to the sensual and earthly pleasures of Botín's gluttony; connoting fertility, the oyster symbolizes wealth made through maritime trade and alludes to the trope of the Americas as a land of endless natural resources. Moreover, the metaphor reiterates the character's large appetite and slovenliness; like the mollusk, Botín lazily engulfs the dishes placed before him as he becomes a barnacle-like parasite, fastened to the social system of visiting and hosting. Instead of complying with the rules of proper visitation and dining etiquette, the trader mocks the prescriptions of urbanity by feeding off his hosts' generosity and manipulating banquet decorum, ignoring the *deber de la reciprocidad*— the duty of reciprocity that demands an invitation to be given in return, according to societal norms.

When Eloísa must liquidate her belongings to pay off her massive debts, it is Botín, out of all the characters, who buys her dining room furniture: "empezó por comerse los manjares y ha concluido por tragarse la mesa de roble y las hermosísimas sillas talladas" (372). Appropriating her luxury items as if they were foodstuffs, the character's unrestrained consumption alludes to the censures of urbane etiquette, for some form of the aphorism "Hemos de comer para vivir y no vivir para comer" appears in every conduct manual as men are instructed to avoid gluttony (Bestard de la Torre 309-10). Galdós's character embodies this vice: "Llevaba en los faldones del frac bolsillos de hule para almacenar allí dulces, jamón, fiambres y otras golosinas. Decían que jamás almorzaba; que al levantarse se tomaba un gran tazón de agua de malvas, preparándose así para el gran hartazgo de la noche" (220). Even the *indiano*'s use of pockets becomes overly excessive as stuffing them with food to later gorge upon perverts the sartorial function of his clothes in a ludicrous, grotesque manner.

Portrayed as a man who lives to consume, Botín comically references the precepts of urbanity that call for a moderate intake of food and drink. To readers well-versed in urbanity, he spoofs prescriptions for temperance that caution men to never eat too much or too little: "En el comer deben evitarse los extremos: comer mucho es glotonería; comer muy poco indica falta de confianza ó afectación de melindre mujeril" (*Urbanidad* 71). In addition to regulating the amount of food eaten, dinner guests must *never* discuss the dishes being served nor look at them with obvious hunger (*Urbanidad* 72-3; Oriol y Bernadet 40). Instead, Botín's conversation centers exclusively on the items (to be) eaten: "Llegaba en esto hasta la mayor grosería, y cuando no ponían *menú* escrito, preguntaba a los criados qué había, con objeto de reservarse para lo más de su gusto" (220). Readers can envision the fat man stuffing himself when polite etiquette dictates that hunger should never be displayed (Oriol y Bernadet 38). On the contrary, the *indiano* carries gluttony to an extreme perversion by making food his one true religion: "Para él, la mesa era verdadera *Misa*, el holocausto del estómago" (220).

These transgressions would be farcical to readers familiar with contemporary etiquette; yet, Botín's gluttony takes on a larger meaning in connection with the novel's colonial context. Galdós employs tropes of immoderation to critique Spain's coloniality in an effort to distance the metropolis from the colonies. Portraying the Ultramar as a source that exacerbates existing problems, uncontrolled consumption "renders visible the functioning of empire within a nation aware of its dissolution, although denying its demise" (Surwillo 90). Inurbanity forms another integral part of the failures of masculinity perceived as contributing to the breakdown of Spanish imperialism. As Botín undermines norms of discipline and productivity with his overindulgence, his depiction signals colonial contact as transforming metropolitan subjects into men with malformed bodies and unchecked desires. Gluttony serves as a cyclical cause and effect resulting from a problematic imperialism doomed to failure as Galdós depicts imperial failure as a masculine breakdown caused by an excessive consumption that has made men weak. Given that the traditional gendered constructs of empire posit a successful enterprise as one built on culturally exalted forms of masculinity, Botín's gluttony serves as a narrative discourse of the failures of the male body that stand for the larger body politic. The downward spiral into licentiousness allegorizes colonial exploitation as a destructive influence that fosters male decadence. As the empire devours American natural resources, Galdós proffers the end of imperial domination as inevitable, perhaps necessary, if men governed by greed, immorality, and immoderate desires occupy positions of power. In this way, Botín's portrayal complements Guzmán's, as the author questions if men, *consumed* with *consuming*, can rule effectively. As the narrator-protagonist frames this portrait, he recognizes his own superficial performance of urbanity that masks his own moral degradation; his reprehensible immorality is only redeemed by his bodily poise and social graces.

The contrast between physical form and lack of urbanity points to corporal deviations as the most flagrant violations for a bourgeois man. Botín's comrade, Marqués don Pedro de Fúcar's body also reflects enormous wealth, likewise emphasizing the destructive influence of colonial riches. Reappearing from *La familia de León Roch*, Fúcar's portliness is similarly described as violating the standards of urbane masculinity:

> [A]ndaba lentamente a causa de su obesidad. Había en su paso algo de la marcha majestuosa de un navío o galeón antiguo, cargado del pingüe esquilmo de las Indias. También él parecía llevar encima el peso de su inmensa fortuna, amasada en veinte años, de esa prosperidad fulminante que la sociedad contemplaba pasmada y temerosa. (154)

The metaphor of Fúcar's body as a ship laden with wealth elicits awe for the monies he brings to the Spanish economy as the *indiano*'s obesity mirrors the fortune he has gained from colonial exploitation and slave trafficking. Like Botín, Fúcar's transgressions of urbanity draw the reader's attention to the relationship between gross physical form and immorality caused by money acquired through questionable American commerce. As the colonial experience simultaneously facilitates and unmasks imperial corruption, *indiano* wealth continues to be perceived as damaging to Spanish society (Coffey, "El costumbrismo" 300).

Beyond money, Fúcar's appearance is minutely described in *Lo prohibido*: "bastante viejo; pero se defendía bien de los años y los disimulaba con todo el arte posible. Era abotagado, patilludo, de cuello corto, y parecía un cuerpo relleno de paja por su tiesura y la rigidez de sus movimientos" (210). Like Botín, the trader fails to meet physical standards of masculinity as he exhibits a similar lack of harmony between the physical body and the moral self. However, Fúcar does not completely abandon his looks to the ravages of time. Characterized as an old man ridiculously clinging to his youth, his use of cosmetics is the worst violation of urbanity that a man can commit: "viejo que tenía el prurito de remozarse y reverdecerse más de lo que consentían sus años y su respetabilidad" (144). The use of *prurito* emphasizes disdain for the *indiano*'s daring social impropriety, recalling pride, arrogance, and vanity as three of the many vices against which urbanity manuals caution because these qualities cause aversion, even hate, in others (Bestard de la Torre 9). According to the tenets of bourgeois respectability, men should look and act their age; immoderate dress and pretentious beauty are forms of disrespect to both others and established social hierarchies. Instead, Fúcar is the only character to use cosmetics to appear younger and more virile: "Se teñía las barbas; y como los tiempos no consienten la ridiculez de la peluca, lucía una calva pontifical" (210). In regard to the physiognomics of facial hair, McKinney cites contemporary admonitions against men who dye their beards, for if men can lie by altering their appearance, then they can ostensibly lie about anything ("Pogonology" 74). The bearded face conveyed manliness during the era, yet, Fúcar's use of hair dye hints at his status as a vain imposter of masculine norms.

As in all precepts of urbanity, moderation is key: "El aseo moderado es una virtud, pero cuando se exajera [*sic*], se convierte este cuidado en pequeñez de espíritu: el buen gusto rechaza la delicadez excesiva" (*Urbanidad* 43). In sections about beauty, manuals approve of the use of cosmetics for men if applied within reason. Fúcar's appearance represents another form of excess that does not convey the *buen gusto*, or respectability, of his social stature, but rather, signals the falseness of his moral character. Beneath a painted veneer of bourgeois respectability, his make-up becomes a mask that covers his unethicalness: "un adefesio que había sido negrero en Cuba y contrabandista por alto en España, y que, por añadidura se teñía la barba" (331). Surwillo likewise points out that: "In his cosmetics, he is much like Spain itself, embellishing the surface of its economic relations, making what is old, decrepit,

and from a former age appear young, vigorous, and contemporary" (92). Reading the character's portrayal through the lens of urbanity further highlights the link between slavery and Fúcar's (over)use of beauty products. This frame underscores the cause-and-effect relationship between the metaphor and its referent, as Fúcar's particular form of inurbanity accentuates the amassing of colonial capital by dubious means as the cause of uncontrolled consumption, connecting male decadence and imperial corruption, and proving that the *negrero*'s vile source of money links slavery with the "monstrous imperial economic system" of Spain's empire on the verge of ruin (90). Inurbanity accentuates the amassing of colonial capital as the cause of a lack of temperance in the metropolis, again signaling coloniality as injecting Spain with a dangerous masculine immoderation, as well as a deviousness that, together, comment on the hypocrisy of imperial practices as Fúcar demonstrates the tenuous line between true and false urbanity: "Se ha dicho que la Urbanidad es la máscara bajo la cual se ocultan los hipócritas" (*Tratado de Urbanidad* v). Fúcar reveals Guzmán's hypocrisy in also manipulating these standards, for much like make-up, urbanity is a mask that can be readily donned for personal gain. Galdós further complicates normative codes by suggesting that men with cunning ambition can hide their hypocrisy, or *urbanidad falsa*, behind an ingenuous façade of "true" urbanity. As the *negrero*'s unscrupulous business practices reveal the ignoble "ethics of empire," *Lo prohibido* posits the dissolution of Spanish power through the corrupt and perverted morality of men like Botín and Fúcar, as well as through the representations of their bodies made monstrous by unbridled consumption (Surwillo 89-90).

Undermining the masculinization of empire central to imperial discourse, violations of the standards of male comportment become synonymous with the idea that a weakening of (ideal) masculinity results in a loss of peninsular power. Through repulsive looks and inurbane behavior, Galdós's *indianos* of *Lo prohibido* posit the disregard for norms of proper behavior as one small part of the larger dissolution of Spain's model citizenry, an ethical and physical inadequacy effecting a crisis of masculinity crucial to discourses of degeneration prominent in the aftermath of 1898. Posited in the 1890s as a feminization of the Spanish national character, Galdós probes tropes of male decadence in his early fiction as Botín and Fúcar deviate from the prevailing norms of conduct literature and, in doing so, reveal money and comfort to be the new signs of male virility. These particular characters embody the changing reality of capitalism in which economic prosperity threatens previous notions of manly stability. In addition to undermining the desired constancy of the male body, their depictions demonstrate physical productivity as no longer defining nineteenth-century masculinities, but rather consumption. While this unchecked decadence could potentially represent a form of anti-virility, Galdós's treatment becomes much more ambiguous when considering the notion of urbanity. Self-control defines the ideal middle-class man; yet, when examined in connection with conduct manuals, these characters' decadent masculinities display a new type of virility based on the acquisition of capital and the consumption that unchecked opulence permits.

Etiquette manuals illustrate how the dominant model of Spanish bourgeois masculinity depended upon the tenets of bodily self-control and moderation. Nevertheless, within a world of economic competition, Galdós demonstrates a primacy of consumption that undermines the stability of urbane masculinity based on a disciplined body. Read alongside conduct literature, Botín and Fúcar reveal that the conventions of urbanity no longer function

in a changing world where material surplus increasingly measures masculine success. Exposing the decadence within Spain, the two prove social etiquette to be just as false as the appearances of grandeur purported by other characters like Rosalía Bringas, Eloísa, or José María (Manso and Guzmán). Through these representations, the author speaks to the decadence of failing empire, questioning the future of the post-imperial Spanish nation as textual references point to Spain's former imperial identity as a part of the past (Coffey, *Ghosts* 104). Within his portrayals of colonial men, Galdós not only perceives the influence of the Americas as one that perverts peninsular standards of moderation, but also as one that reveals metropolitan norms to be absurd and empty. What results is a monstrous deformity of masculinity that challenges the ideals of conduct literature and exposes the gap between ideals and reality. Through portrayals of decadence, excessive consumption, and bodily grotesqueness, Galdós's colonial characters in *Lo prohibido* demonstrate that codes of urbanity are inherently unstable masculine stereotypes that do not signify a reality. Pointing to the dangers of an economy fueled by excessive desires facilitated by colonial capital, the novel's *indianos* demonstrate that *el hombre fino*, the ever perfect and utterly admirable refined man, is no longer a viable form of middle-class masculinity when excess has become the new norm.

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Notes

[1] This notion extends Simerka's work on the liminal identity of the *indiano* as sixteenth-century works address the issue of empire through representations of colonialization's consequences for the metropolis (*Discourses of Empire* 40). Likewise, Mariscal dialogues with the *indiano* as Other as an "attempt to come to terms with the impact of colonialism on the metropolis" ("The Figure of the *Indiano*" 56).
[2] For example, first published in 1829, *El hombre fino al gusto del día o Manual completo de urbanidad, cortesía y buen tono* underwent successive yearly editions, culminating in the *El hombre fino* in 1889.
[3] Much like the *costumbrista* collections Coffey examines in her analysis of *indiano* types, these texts also reflect the development of "una comunidad imaginada" that equally reveal metropolitan attitudes toward colonialism ("El costumbrismo decimonónico" 296-97).
[4] Sinnigen affirms that indirect references to Cuba serve to emphasize metropolitan problems (38-89, 115). Coffey traces a gradual process of coming to terms with the nation's colonial history within these brief and often overlooked references ("Un curso de filosofía práctica" 49).
[5] Iglesias-Villamel notes that the novel's memoir format makes masculinity hyper-visible for the reader, affirming that, within a focus on women and normative heterosexuality, Galdós brings masculinity to the narrative forefront in order to push readers to question the role of manhood in a universe created by realist fiction (34-35).
[6] Coffey examines Galdós's early novels for references that reflect the historical reality of imperial decline as the nation moves toward a post-colonial reality (*Ghosts of Colonies Past and Present* 232). She asserts that these references normalize continuing relations between Spain and its former colonies as an accepted, yet peripheral, part of metropolitan daily life as Galdós critiques the metropolis's attitude toward colonial subjects as well as middle-class hypocrisy.
[7] Copeland outlines the *indiano*'s hybridity as a trait that marks him as Other (227).
[8] As Delgado demonstrates, this lack marks the liminality between civilization and barbarity in these *indianos*. Monstrous for their lack of social graces, the 'savagery' of Caballero and Cruz reveals the inadequacies and anxieties of the metropolis (303-13).
[9] Gómez-Ferrer Morant points out that Cruz highlights the inherent problems of Spanish society: handouts, nepotism, inertia, and apathy (31). Conlon also agrees that Cruz's insider's view serves as a form of social criticism (76).

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