THE UPWARDLY-MOBILE MALE "ANIMAL" IN 
LA LOCA DE LA CASA AND THE TORQUEMADA TETRALOGY

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The aim of the present study is to examine the main animal imagery system in La loca de la casa and the Torquemada series to demonstrate how Galdós uses animal-human comparison to present and comment on the accelerated leveling of social classes in Spanish society. Additionally, the biological result of interclass marriage, entered into by characters who have been delineated by differing animal metaphors, will be shown as an extension and ultimate expression of this metaphorical matrix.

In her perceptive study, "The Consumption of Natural Resources: Galdós's Fortunata y Jacinta (1886-1887)," Jo Labanyi has called attention to the fact that the colonial outlook and control mechanisms are already fully established and operative back home in the Madrid ambience of Fortunata y Jacinta, at a time when the bourgeoisie viewed the lower classes as "savages lacking in civilization." Thus, this novel, Labanyi says,

... can be read as an exercise in nation formation construed on colonial lines, since its vast documentary canvas incorporates into the nation those inhabitants (the working classes and women) whose position and allegiance are in doubt, both by compiling an archaeological archive that makes them knowable and by incorporating Fortunata (a working class woman) into 'society' through her sexual liaisons with men of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. Contemporary medical manuals contained sections on demography and race, noting that the 'inferior' races were best adapted to healthy reproduction, and recommending miscegenation in the colonies as a way of 'improving the stock.' Fortunata y Jacinta, in constructing Fortunata as a 'savage' and superior breeder, takes the form of a miscegenation narrative: that is, a colonially conceived blueprint for the nation based on the 'improvement of the race' through the white man's fertilization of the 'native' female. This colonial concept of miscegenation, being based on the white man's coupling with the native female, supposes that female 'others' can be incorporated into the nation, but the reverse — the 'incorporation' of the native male [.. .] is unthinkable [emphasis added]. Thus Fortunata can be 'improved' (up to a point) while her uncle José Izquierdo has to be 'contained' within the frame of historical paintings for which he becomes and artist's model. The ultimate goal of improving the male stock is achieved through the fruits of miscegenation: Fortunata's child has to be a male, and he will be fully incorporated into 'society' while Fortunata, having served her purpose, is denied full assimilation by being made to die. (192-93)

Interestingly, however, in several novels written in the decade following Fortunata y Jacinta, Galdós turns his attention to what was formerly considered "impossible" — but was actually happening in Spain, as gender roles were reversed, and takes the images of unions between superiors and inferiors to the extreme metaphor of breeding between animals of different species.
We shall examine these novels in chronological order beginning with *Torquemada en la hoguera*, which was written in 1889 at the invitation of José Lázaro Galdiano for the first number of his long-running cultural review *La España Moderna*. In the opening chapter of *Torquemada en la hoguera* the narrator initiates the use of animal imagery in the characterization of Francisco Torquemada when he calls the eponymous protagonist a “feroz hormiga.” Then he adds that together Torquemada and his wife constitute “una pareja que podría servir de modelo a cuantas hormigas hay debajo de la tierra y encima de ella” (I, 907). Subsequently, when Torquemada collects rent from his tenants he strikes these frightened people as “la fiera” — from whom they can usually expect “refunfuñidos de perro mordelón” or a “gruñido de ordenanza” (IV, 916).

Animal imagery intensifies with the onset of the fatal illness of Torquemada’s beloved son, Valentin. The title protagonist reacts to this circumstance with a “bramido” and pounds the wall (V, 919). When Valentín utters a terrifying “grito áspero, estridente, [. . .] el grito meningeo, semejante al alarido del pavo real” (VI, 923), Torquemada redoubles his efforts to influence the outcome of the illness by trying to undo past wrongs. Not everyone cooperates with him in his endeavor. Most notably, Tía Roma, an old acquaintance, gives him no satisfaction at all, reminding Torquemada that he mistreated his wife, forced her and the children to exist, “ladrando de hambre,” in a veritable “cubil,” while he gave his livestock more and better food: “los cerdos y las gallinas que criáis con la basura son allí las personas y vosotros los animales” (VIII, 932). Understandably, Tía Roma has no compunction in labeling Torquemada “perro más que perro” (VIII, 933). And when Valentín dies, Torquemada falls to the floor with a “rugido y espumarajos” and has a terrifying “pataleo” (IX, 834).

In *Torquemada en la hoguera* animal imagery is an important aspect of Galdós’s artistry in the delineation of his protagonist, who, as the narrator had told us early on, has been able to pass from pueblo to middle-class status: “pasito a paso y a codazo limpio, se había ido metiendo en la clase media, en nuestra bonachona clase media [. . .] que crece tanto, tanto que , ¡Ay dolor!, que estamos quedando sin pueblo” (I, ii, 909). In the following three novels of the series, the reader will be witness to Torquemada’s ascension into the aristocracy, the final step in his participation in the nivelización de clases sociales—with animal imagery continuing to be an important part of Galdós’s novelistic technique.

However, Galdós did not immediately proceed to the other three novels in the *Torquemada* series. Among other endeavors in the four-and-a-half-year interval, Don Benito wrote, but never published, “El sacrificio, diálogo dramático.” This recently discovered manuscript, nineteen pages in length, is considered by critics to be an abandoned prelude to *La loca de la casa*. The latter first appeared in novel form (1892) and subsequently was adapted, with the same title, for theatrical performance (1893). Because some features of “El sacrificio” and several from *La loca de la casa* reappear in the final three novels of the *Torquemada* series, it seems appropriate to examine each of these at this juncture.
Lisa Condé sums up the importance of "El sacrificio":

The undated manuscript entitled "El sacrificio (Diálogo dramático)" consists of a dialogue between two sisters, Victoria and Carlota, and their father don Augusto, divided into three scenes of one act. Certainly the genesis of La loca can be seen to lie here, the theme of sacrifice clearly being the crucial link and the martyr—the heroine—being in each case a novitiate nun named Victoria. The other character link is that of a deceased Rafael, although in the case of "El sacrificio" he was Victoria’s sister’s husband, while in La loca, he was her brother. (285)

Most importantly for the present study, in "El sacrificio" there is no focus on or mention of social leveling—and there is no animal imagery. However, as Galdós redeveloped this plot and these themes in La loca de la casa, he turned again to animal imagery. This work has been considered a paraphrase of the traditional Beauty and the Beast fable. In this novel, Victoria de Moncada (Beauty), daughter of a bankrupt aristocrat, relinquishes her novitiate and offers herself in sacrificial marriage to José María Cruz (the Beast) in order to save the family financially. The bridegroom, even before going to the New World to amass his fortune, had been forcefully conditioned to think of himself in animalistic terms. As a boy, he lived on the Moncada estate as "poco menos que un animal doméstico" (I, ix): Victoria and her sister sometimes hitched him up to a small cart and made him pull them about, as he whinnied like a horse. They called him "bestia," "zángano," and "borrico" and commanded him by whipping, pulling the reins, and shouting "arre." On one occasion, they even made him eat barley like a horse (II, vi, 1637). Moreover, Cruz’s own father treated him even worse than the family donkey:

Tratábame mi padre con rigor excesivo. Recuerdo que teníamos un burro, al cual yo quería como si fuera mi hermano. Mi padre le trataba con más cariño que a mí, que me lastimaba. Los palos que al animal correspondían, hubiéanlos yo recibido en mi cuerpo para aliviarlo a él. (V, 1626)

Thus it is understandable that Cruz’s one great desire became that of acquiring a fortune so that he could return to Spain and become owner of the Moncada estate, "como rehabilitación gloriosa y triunfante de aquellas tristezas de mi niñez, donde fui criado, casi igual a las bestias (I, ix, 1626). Now back in Spain, Cruz appears to the local aristocrats as "el gorila” (I, vii, 1625), "el gorila, porque moral y físicamente nos ha parecido una transición entre el bruto y el homo sapiens" (I, ii, 1618). The generic words "bestia," “fiera,” "monstruo," and "animal" are applied to Cruz by many characters throughout the novel (at least twenty-eight times). Although Cruz refers to himself as a “bestia herida” (I, xi, 1628), others see him more as a “res brava” (I, ii, 1618), “boa” (I, iv, 1620), “dragón” (III, iii, 1649), “lobo” (III, vii, 1652), “tigre de malas pulgas” (IV, iii, 1663) and “feroz vestiglo” (III, vi, 1651). Nevertheless, the aristocrats are attracted to him because he is also a much needed
“becerro de oro” (I, v, 1621), or to state it differently, they believe it can be advantageous to be kind to such an “asno”— if his saddlebags are loaded with gold (I, vii, 1623).

Cruz is well aware of his distinction. He speaks with pride of how he amassed his fortune: “con ruda conquista, brazo a brazo, a estilo de pueblos primitivos” (I, vii, 1625). If he were to lose his wealth, he is confident that he could quickly rebuild it, adding, “[Y] con rugidos, dentelladas y zarpazos de fiera, andando a cuatro patas, la defendería de quien intentara quitármela” (III, xvii, 1658).

With both parties highly motivated, the marriage of Cruz and Victoria does take place. The bride hopes to be one of those rare women, “convirtiendo las bestias en seres humanos” (II, xvii, 1644). Thus the suspense of the novel is sustained by the constant question of whether or not Victoria will be able “humanizar la fiera” (III, i, 1647). The task is not easy, for when appropriate, Cruz has no compunctions about telling his new wife, “[S]i mis escamas o aletas de dragón infernal te pinchan y raspan y cortan, a mí ...el plumaje de tus alas de ángel también me...me punza, me roza, me hiere” (IV, xvii, 1672). Nevertheless, Victoria confides to a friend that she is making progress—but it is like having to use “la pata de un elefante” for a powderpuff (III, viii, 1653). In spite of repeated difficulties and a brief separation, genuine love does develop; markers along this path include instances of Victoria using affectionate modifiers, as she refers to Cruz as “pobre animal” (IV, viii, 1665), “pobre monstruo” (IV, xi, 1669), and “monstruo querido..., dragoncito mío” (IV, xvi, 1675). Love and marriage do change Cruz to the extent that he is willing to endow a hospital and allow his wife to engage in some “nivelando, [. . .sí.], nivelando” of his wealth as she helps “los que nada tienen” (III, xvii, 1659). However, he refuses to concede in the final scene of the novel that he is “vencido y domado.” Rather, he affirms that marital love and his own self-confidence make it possible for him to enjoy “los latigazos de la domadora” (IV, xvii, 1677).

Although Galdós had said in “La sociedad presente como material novelable,” his inaugural speech to Real Academia Española (1889), that one could not predict the outcome of the leveling process in Spanish society (222-23), he did choose to present a positive outcome in the novel La loca de la casa and then go on to demonstrate this thesis to the theater-going public.

La loca de la casa (drama)

In modifying the novelistic version of La loca de la casa to the slightly shorter stage adaptation, Galdós kept the only specific mention of leveling to that of wealth (III, x, 129). In spite of the constraint of space he retained nearly all the significant animal imagery, but sometimes in the shortening process certain animal imagery ended up in an earlier-numbered scene. For example, in Act III the reference to Cruz’s “dentellada del tigre” is no longer in scene twelve but rather in scene seven (119), and his “rugidos, dentelladas y zarpazos de fiera” have moved from scene seventeen to eleven (128). A more important change which Galdós did make, however, concerns the designation “gorila” for the indiano protagonist.
In the drama this metaphor does not occur a second time. Animal labels are acceptable when talking about Cruz, but in a face-to-face conversation with him on the public stage, it is politic to assure him that he is (only): "un diamante en bruto. Le faltan las facetas" (I, vii, 53). The diamond metaphor, here used to soften and replace an animal designation will recur in the Torquemada series when Galdós next explores the possibilities of negative results in social leveling.

Torquemada en la cruz

In the year following La loca de la casa, Galdós returned to the Torquemada series with Torquemada en la cruz. In Torquemada en la hoguera animal imagery—all lowly and earth-bound—was quite appropriate and concordant with Torquemada's social status and personal deficits. Now, however, Galdós has Torquemada interact with people who are characterized by animal imagery at a polar opposite: the Aguilas. Torquemada is well aware of the symbolism in the patronymic of this formerly high-flying aristocratic family. Moreover, both he and they had received a suggestion from the late Doña Lupe de Jáuregui ("la de los pavos") that a marriage of the now-widowed Torquemada to one of the poverty-stricken Aguila sisters could be beneficial to all concerned. In fact, Torquemada admits to himself that when Doña Lupe was expiring, "[Para] aplacarle el delirio, yo le aseguraba, me casaría, no digo yo con todas las señoras Aguila mayores y menores, sino con todas las águilas y buitres del cielo y de la tierra" (I, ii, 941). Accordingly, he decides to pay a visit to "el nido de las Aguilas" (I, iii, 943), which Galdós had changed in the galley proofs from "la casa de las Aguilas" (Davies 53) in order to maintain his imagery chain. After this visit, Torquemada evaluates himself in animalistic terms: "Hoy te has portado como un cochino, [... como] un puerco." It is now necessary, he thinks, to change and "presentarse ante el mundo, no ya como el prestimista sanguijuelera que no va más que a chupar, a chupar" (II, vii, 951). Torquemada's perception of a need for a change is also shared by the head of the Aguila family, Cruz. The latter feels that she will have no problem integrating Torquemada into the family: "Ya me encargaré de pulirle bien las escamas. Debe de ser docilote y manso como un pececillo" (II, iii, 981). Further, she feels that her future brother-in-law will accept "todas las ideas que le voy echando, como se echa pan a los pececillos en un estanque" (I, iii, 981). However, her brother, Rafael, holds a contrary opinion. Expressions of his fierce opposition are facilitated by repeated use of animal comparisons as he aggressively refers to Torquemada as "monstruo" (II, iv, 982); "bestia" (I, iii, 994; II, xi, 1001; II, xii, 1004); “animal” (II, viii, 994); “cerdo” (II, v, 984); “jabalí” (II, viii, 984); “sabandijo” (II, ix, 995); “asquerosa sanguijuelera” (II, viii, 994); and “salvaje y grotesca alimaña” (II, xi, 1004).

Even Torquemada's own daughter, Rufina, perceives that her father is “una fiera para la cobranza” (I, vi, 952) and the narrator twice refers to the miser's living quarters as "huronera" (I, vii, 988) and once as "madriguera" (I, xi, 960). José Donoso (who becomes a friend, encourages the proposed marriage, and aids in Torquemada's social adaptation)
advises him: “La sociedad tiene sus derechos, a los cuales es locura querer oponer el gusto individual. Tenemos derecho de ser puerhos sórdidos [. . .]; pero la sociedad puede y debe imponernos un coranvobis decoroso” (I, xii, 965). Further, he says, “Usted me parece una persona muy sensata, de muy buen sentido, sólo que demasiado en su concha. Es usted un caracol siempre con la casa a cuestas. Hay que salir, vivir en el mundo” (I, xi, 993). He also warns Torquemada not to be a “buey suelto” (possibly an echo from Pereda’s novel El buey suelto, where bachelorhood results in a lonely, unhappy old age). When the marriage is finally about to take place, Donoso once again has recourse to animal imagery, as he congratulates himself: “Había cogido a la fiera con lazo, y de la fiera hacía, con sutil arte de mundo, un hombre, un caballero, quién sabe si un personaje” (II, viii, 993).

Torquemada, for his part, realizes where he fits into the scheme of things. In a time when even “la Monarquía [está] transigiendo con la Democracia,” he perceives that la aristocracia, árbol viejo y sin savia, no podía ya vivir si no lo abonaba (en el sentido de estercolar) el pueblo enriquecido. ¡Y que no había hecho flojos milagros el sudor del pueblo en aquel tercio de siglo! ¿No andaban por Madrid arrastrados en carreteles muchos a quienes él y todo el mundo conocieran vendiendo alubias y bacalao, o prestando a rédito? ¿No eran ya senadores vitalicios y consejeros del Banco muchos que allá en su nifiez andaban con los codos rotos, o que pasaron hambre para juntar para unas alparagatas? Pues bien: a ese elemento pertenecía él, y era un nuevo ejemplo del sudor del pueblo fecundando. (I, xvi, 972)

Earlier Torquemada had thought that the marriage might not be possible:

Hay una barrera..., eso de las clases. Pronto se dice que no hay clases; pero, al decirlo, las dichosas clases saltan a la vista. [. . .] La idea que me digan: “¡So! Vete de ahí populacho, que apestas,” me subleva y me pone a morir. Y no es que yo huela mal. Bien ve usted que me lavo y me aseo. Y hasta el aliento, que, según me decía Doña Lupe, tiraba un poco para atrás... se me ha corregido con la limpieza de la boca. Y desde que me quité la perilla que parecía un rabo de conejo, tengo mejor ver. Dice [. . .una amiga] que me parezco algo a O’Donnell cuando volvía del Africa [. . .] Sin embargo mi corteza es muy dura, áspera, y picona como lija., No puede ser, no puede ser. (I, xiv, 968)

And when the marriage between Torquemada and Fidela del Aguila does take place near the end of the novel, it is clearly ill-omened. The bride becomes violently ill immediately following the vows and cannot accommodate her new husband in the wedding bed. The groom, for his part, drinks too much, which causes all traces of social veneer to vanish, as he proclaims:

Nivelización siempre [. . .] Yo soy noble: mi abuelo castraba cerdos, que es, digan lo que quieran, una profesión muy bien visto en los pueblos cultos. Mi tataratío, el inquisidor, tostaba herejes y tenía un bodegón para vender chuletas de carne de persona. Mi abuela, una doña Coscojilla, echaba las cartas y adivinaba los secretos. La nombraron bruja universal. (II, xv, 1013)

Torquemada’s climactic, inebriated, all-inhibitions-removed mention of nivelización
confirms the importance of social leveling in the novel. Also his further statements reveal once again his social origin and personal shortcomings. The continuous, variegated, and vigorous animal metaphors leading up to this point also indicate that the subsequent volumes of the series will have hard-fought personal conflicts and forced adjustments.

**Torquemada en el purgatorio**

Animal imagery continues in the third *Torquemada* novel as the now-remarried protagonist rises ever higher in social, financial, and political circles. One of the most interesting aspects of the animal imagery in this novel is the variety of metaphors applied to Torquemada as various characters perceive his “animality.”

His wife Fidela, for instance, treats him as a house pet: “Ella le llamaba a él su *borriquito*, pasándole la mano por el lomo como a un perrazo doméstico, y diciéndole: *Tor.* Tor..., aquí ...fuera...ven...la pata..., ¡dame la pata!” And Torquemada is pleased to oblige by extending his hand, “recibiendo mucho gusto de tan caprichoso estilo de afecto matrimonial” (I, ii, 1021). Later the “pata” metaphor is repeated when Torquemada angrily complains that his life is now (in an echo of the novel’s title) truly “un purgatorio.” Fidela responds, “No seas bárbaro ...Ven acá. Siéntate a mi lado. No manotees, ni te pongas ordinario, *Tor.* Mira así no te quiero. Ven acá...dame la pata, tomándole una mano. Aquí quietecito, y hablando a lo caballero, sin decir gansadas ni porquerías” (II, x, 1070). However, when his wife tells him that Cruz is planning to acquire for him at great expense a title of *marqués*, he explodes verbally and throws himself into a “frenético paso de fiera por la habitación” (II, x, 1071).

Fidela’s affection for her husband does not deter her brother’s friend, the *señorito* Morentín, from incorrectly believing that he will be able to seduce Fidela—because she is married to “ese pavo de corral” (U, iii, 1087). Bourgeois businessmen, such as Ruiz Ochoa and *los sobrinos* de Amáiz, who visit Torquemada in his home, characterize him differently. For them he is “el cerdo, que olfateando la tierra, descubría las escondidas trufas, y allí donde le veían hocicar, negocio seguro” (I, iii, 1022). The narrator describes business dealings as an essential part of Torquemada’s being when the usurer returns from a summer vacation: “Entró de lleno en la onda de sus negocios, como pato sediento que vuelve a la charca” (II, viii, 1065).

Animal imagery also helps to communicate the intensity of the conflict between Torquemada and Cruz and to express vividly the private thoughts and feelings of each. Cruz is the dominant party, with “fuerza brutal” (II, xiii, 1046), and she charges into Torquemada’s office like a bull: “[y] ante embestida tan arrogante, don Francisco se quedó aturdido, balbuciente, como torero que sufre un revolcón y no acierta a levantarse del suelo” (I, xiii, 1044). On another occasion she brazenly tells Torquemada, “No me importa que usted relinche cuando le quiero llevar por el camino bueno; que quieras que no, por el camino derecho ha de ir usted” (II, ii, 1051). Torquemada had undoubtedly perceived Cruz’s attitude earlier, when he thought to himself, “[P]ara qué me habré yo dejado traer a este *elemento*
The answer is that Cruz has been able to open new entrepreneurial vistas for Torquemada, in part, because she wants to "dorarle las rejas de su jaula" (II, xii, 1076). On another occasion when Cruz feels a bit of empathy for Torquemada (as she recalls that he has, after all, done much for the Aguila family), she nevertheless still thinks of him in animal terms. She wonders if, instead of "llevándole a grandezas sociales que repugnaban a sus hábitos y a su carácter [...] ¿No era más humano y generoso dejarle cultivar su tacañería y en ella se gozara, como réptil en la humedad fangosa?" (II, vii, 1063). In spite of this momentary softening, Cruz is motivated primarily toward "mayores alturas, con majestuoso vuelo de águilas, despreciando las miserias de abajo" (II, ix, 1068).

Torquemada’s brother-in-law, Rafael, who had previously opposed the moneylender’s entrance into the family with the rhetorical attacks of his animal metaphors, continues this practice in Torquemada en el purgatorio. He still believes that the wild-boar analogy is appropriate, as he angrily observes to Morentín, “[N]uestro jabalí, cegado por la vanidad y desvanecido por su barbarie, se desarrolla en la opulencia como un cardo borriquero en terreno cargado de basura” (I, x, 1039). In addition to referring to his sisters as “dos pobres hormigas en un agujerito” (I, iv, 1025), he lashes out at Torquemada’s “orgullo de pavo...; no digo de pavo real, sino de pavo común, de ése por Navidad se engorda con nueces enteras” (I, v, 1027). Rafael’s aggressive anger is still apparent when he later tells Torquemada (with a repeat of a La loca de la casa metaphor) that he will do well with his upcoming banquet speech. Just remind the audience, Rafael says, that he is their Biblical “becerro de oro,” and that they should carry him through the streets for adulation, as he is telling them:

Y mientras vosotros me aclamáis con delirio, yo mugiré, repito que soy becerro, y después de felicitarme con vuestro servilísimo, viéndoos agrupados debajo de mí, me abriré de las cuatro patas y os agraciaré con una evacuación copiosa en el buen entendido de que mi estiércol es efectivo metálico. Yo depongo monedas de cinco duros a mis admiradores. Y vosotros os atropelláis para cogerlo; vosotros recogeréis este maná precioso. (ΙΠ, v, 1093)

Apparently not at all offended, Torquemada praises Rafael’s suggestion and says that he would like to give such a speech, but he lacks the skill: “Verás como el pobre becerro no pronuncia más que un mu como una casa” (ΙΙΙ, v, 1094). Nevertheless, Torquemada does subsequently deliver his speech with great success, during which Morentín feels compelled to exclaim: “Pues tiene un no sé qué de elocuencia este animal. Rebuzna oratoriamente” (ΙΙΙ, viii, 1101).

Before Torquemada en el purgatorio closes with Rafael’s suicide, there is a considerable degree of conciliation between the two male opponents. Rafael, who had previously considered himself “el mayor enemigo del becerro” (ΙΙΙ, v, 1094), now admits to Torquemada that it was a mistake for him to struggle with his sister Cruz (“luchando como dos leones” [ΙΙ, xi, 1108]) concerning Torquemada’s admission to the family. In most
respects, Rafael concedes, his brother-in-law has been a great success. Torquemada, in turn, protests that he is indeed “un bruto,” but a “bruto sui generis,” and says, “fuera de los negocios, Rafaelito, convengamos en que soy un animal.” Rafael responds, “¡Oh! No tanto: usted sabe asimilarse las formas sociales; se va identificando con la nueva posición” (III, xi, 1108).

When Rafael exits the Torquemada series, the defective child born of the Torquemada-Cruz marriage remains. Although Rafael had believed that “el matrimonio absurdo, antinatural, entre ángel y bestia, no tendría sucesión” (III, iv, 1090), he was wrong and openly confesses to his brother-in-law, “[M]e pareció que la Naturaleza no querría sancionar una unión absurda, ni dar vida a un ser híbrido” (III, x, 1107-08). The extent to which this “criatura híbrida” (III, xi, 1109) is animal-like will be one of the major concerns in the last novel of the Torquemada tetralogy.

**Torquemada y San Pedro**

The first sustained use of animal imagery in Torquemada y San Pedro concerns the protagonist’s second son, also named Valentin. Repeatedly the narrator describes him as more like an animal than a human being. He is first seen arrastrándose a cuatro patas sobre la alfombra. La niñera que era una mocetona serrana, guapa y limpia, le sostenía con andadores de bridas, tirando de él cuando se esparrancaba demasiado y guiándole si seguía una dirección inconveniente. Berreaba el chico, movía sus cuatro remos con animal deleite, echando babas por su boca y queriendo abrazarse al suelo y hocicar en él. (I, vii, 1126)

Additionally, he is macrocephalic,14 with elongated ears and twisted legs. His linguistic ability is “salvaje, primitiva, de una sencillez feroz, [...] no más que pa... ta... pa” (I, vii, 1127). He prefers to play with small live animals, but this activity has to be suspended because of his cruelty to them. Subsequently, he delights in imitating various animals. Only from his mother, who considers him a “diamante en bruto” (I, ix, 1030), will he permit any affectionate touching. When Padre Gamborena, the family chaplain, attempts to pet him, Valentin bites him with “dientes muy afilados”—because “Su última defensa era la mordida y a la pobre niñera le tenía las manos acribilladas” (I, viii, 1127).

The effect of having brought such a creature into the world is devastating for both his mother and father. When Padre Gamborena exclaims, “Me ha mordido su hijo [...] ¡Vaya un hijo que os tenéis!” Fidela, “con tristeza,” replies, “Muerde por gracia, [...] no lo hace con mala intención” (I, ix, 1132). When heartbroken Fidela’s health continues to deteriorate, Doctor Quevedo has Valentin brought to his mother’s room. He climbs into her bed “y por ella se paseó a cuatro patas, imitando el perro y el cochino; y ya se corría hacia la cabecera para dejarse besar por su mamá, ya bajaba hasta los pies, mordiscando la colcha y haciendo gru, gru” (I, xiii, 1140). Empathizing and bonding with her son, Fidela knows how to keep him playful:
Agitaba ella los pies dentro de las sábanas para que él hocicara en el bulto con saltos y acometidas de bestia cazadora, y ya se esparrancaba, ya husmeara el aire descansando sobre los cuartos traseros y erguido sobre los delanteros, ya, en fin, sentábase para frotarse el hocico con movimientos de oso cansado de divertir a la gente. Pero su principal diversión era asustar a las personas que rodeaban el lecho, y a su mamá misma, ladrándolas, y embístiéndolas de mentirijillas, con la boca abierta en toda su pavorosa longitud. Verdad que nunca se los comía, pero les hacía creer que sí a juzgar por las voces de espanto con que acogían sus furores. (I, xiii, 1140)

As Fidela’s condition worsens and time nears for the viaticum to be brought, “le dió [a Valentín] echarse como un perro a los pies de su madre, y de amenazar con gruñidos a cuantos al lecho se acercaban, enseñando los dientes, y preparándose para morder al que se dejara, ya fuese su mismo papá o su tía.” Fidela’s response is “¡Qué bravo! ¡Cómo se defiende a su madre! Esto se llama inteligencia, esto se llama cariño” (I, xiii, 1141).

After Fidela’s death, Valentín declines markedly: “[D]esde la primera hora de su orfandad pareció querer asentar sus derechos de salvaje independencia berreando ferozmente y arrastrándose por las alfombras. Parecía decir: ‘Ya no tengo interés ninguno en dejar de ser bestia, y ahora muerdo y aúllo, y pataleo todo lo que me da la gana” (II, iii, 1152). As did his wife before him, Torquemada continues to love their unfortunate son: “[A]maba a su hijo, sentíale unido a sí por un afecto hondo, el cual no se quebrantaría aunque le viese revolcándose en un cúbil y comiendo trochas de berzas. Le quería y se maravillaba de quererle, desconociendo u olvidando las leyes de eslabonamiento vital que establecen aquel amor” (II, iii, 1152). Further, when for consolation Torquemada tries to remember his first son, who was charming, physically attractive, and intellectually brilliant, he can conjure up only the mental image of his second son. The latter seems to speak to Torquemada:

Pero, papá, no me atormentes más. ¡Si soy el mismo, si soy propiamente el uno y doble! ¿Qué culpa tengo yo de que me hayan dado esta figura? Ni yo me conozco, ni nadie me conoce ni en este mundo ni en el otro. Estoy aquí y allá ...Allá y aquí me toman por una bestia, y lo soy, lo soy... Ya no me acuerdo del talento que tuve. Ya no hay talento. Esto se acabó, y ahora padrecito, ponme en una pesebrera de oro una buena ración de cebada y verás qué pronto me la como. (Π, iii, 1152)

Subsequently, the narrator reports: “En tanto iba creciendo el heredero, y su cabeza parecía cada vez más grande, sus patas más torcidas, sus dientes más afilados, sus hábitos más groseros, y su genio más áspero, avieso y cruel. [. . .] salía más apegado a la tierra y la animalidad” (III, vi, 1161). He is, seemingly, as accursed as was the snake in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3,14).

Understandably, Torquemada must now distance himself emotionally from Valentín (“aquel desdichoso engendro” [II, vi, 1161]). The omniscient narrator tells us that “Aunque le amaba también como sangre de su sangre y hueso de sus huesos, veía en él una esperanza
absolutamente fallida [emphasis added] y su cariño era como cosa oficial y de obligación” (III, vi, 1161). With no desire now to keep up his physical appearance, Torquemada neglects both personal hygiene and the impression he projects. His unkempt beard, for example, now features “matices de pelo de conejo, de crímenes de rocín” (II, iii, 1151).

Moreover, in his relationship with Cruz, he continues to sees himself in an inferior position. Now he is like a “conejillo” in danger of being devoured by the “serpiente” (II, iii, 1153). Consequently, his best defense is to become “como un puercos espín, que se convertía en una bola llena de pinchos en cuanto se le tocaba” (II, iii, 1153). Seeking consolation outside his home, he makes a nostalgic return to the neighborhood of his earliest days in Madrid, “como caballería que olfatea la pesebre” (II, viii, 1166). He is greeted by “aquel pedazo de animal,” a long-time friend by the name of Matías Vallejo, in whose pueblo-class bodegón Torquemada now eats, “gruñendo como un cerdo” (II, x, 1172). His “gruñidos” continue after he is brought home with what turns out to be his final illness. Before expiring, his speech descends into “bestial lenguaje” (III, vii, 1190), and his body gives off “un olor ratonil” (III, ix, 1194). Nevertheless, he still remembers his perception of the symbolism in his in-laws’ patronymic, as he now denounces Cruz as “cernical más que águila” (II, vii, 1190). And he is also able to give echo to one of the most important aspects of the novel—and one most pertinent to the present study: “Vivimos para nivelar” (III, vii, 1190).

In attendance at Torquemada’s bedside is the family chaplain, Father Gamborena. The latter is an “eminente naturalista, [...] nada tocante a la fauna érale desconocido” (I, v, 1122). This former missionary had regaled the Aguila family with adventuresome stories of his colonial experiences in (non-Spanish) Africa and Asia—where the raw, primitive law of the jungle affected human outlook and behavior. Thus it is appropriate for Galdós’s narrator to characterize Padre Gamborena as a militant, aggressive “león de Dios” (I, v, 1121). And this fitting leonine imagery continues during the climactic struggle to save Torquemada’s soul, when Gamborena, so experienced in dealing with “fieras humanas” (III, v, 1184), “se preparó a luchar como un león, [...] no se dejaría quitar la presa” (III, ix, 1193).

European nations, long accustomed to treating the indigenous peoples in their colonies as an inferior level of civilization, applied this same value system to their own lower classes in the nineteenth century. An important stimulus in this process was Darwinism. Now, as it was possible to consider life forms as evolving from a lower to a higher plane, so too was it possible to assume a continuum ascending from animality through human savagery to the final goal of being socially civilized at the European level. Father Gamborena, long experienced in dealing with the wild animals and savages in Africa and Asia, reflects this experience, as he joins other characters in trying to change (“civilize”) Torquemada. To Cruz’s request, “aplacar a esa bestia, [...] domarle, [...] y vencer[le], “Gamborena replies, “Tu salvaje, [...] prometo que le amansaré” (I, iv, 1119).

In summation, one sees that animalistic imagery is important to Galdós, both in La loca de la casa and the Torquemada series, as he presents and comments on the rise and
marriage of the upwardly mobile male "animal." In the first instance Galdós presents a positive outlook as the marriage partners from different classes adjust to one another, find marital happiness, and discover a positive future in their expected child. Subsequently, in the Torquemada tetralogy, where members of both social classes are characterized by animal imagery, a mating of two different kinds of animals—lowly earthbound and the winged—produces, in accord with Darwin's theory of "hybrids," a subhuman monster. Darwin saw the hybrid as usually a weakened, sterile creature, with scant prospects for longevity (199-201, 223). Thus, similarly, the animalistic offspring of Torquemada and Fidela, "con [...] aquel contraste irónico entre su monstruosidad y la opulencia de su cuna" (II, iii, 1153) cannot be a positive symbol concerning the future. Galdós seems here to be communicating the great risks of la nivelización de clases sociales, which indeed may not be beneficial in every instance for Spanish society.

In addition to their primary role as appropriate, vivid, and variegated adjuncts in the presentation and development of the problematic relations between social classes, Galdos's animal imagery, sounds, and gestures also have other functions. As Isabel Román has pointed out (based on Nimetz's notion of "comic hyperbole" [117]), they achieve humor and tend toward the grotesque (210-13). Additionally, they help to present and intensify the main conflict of the work and aid in revealing the intensity of the antagonisms between individual characters. Moreover, animal imagery helps in the differentiation of individual characters, as they may choose different animal metaphors to apply to the same given character, thus revealing as much or more about the giver of the animal label than its object. The kind of imagery chosen and bestowed also allows for a wide range of emotions expressed toward the animal-labeled object, be it affection, admiration, or aggressive anger. Especially interesting are those instances in which a character is aware of the animal imagery applied, thinks about it, and may even discuss it with the character who originated it. Unique, among all the studies of animal imagery in Galdós's novels to date, is the phenomenon of two characters who incarnate the verbal labels applied to them and actually procreate a subhuman, animalistic offspring. Because this creature is born, ironically but significantly, on 25 December, it is not inappropriate to consider a parodie Biblical reference to that date: "In the beginning was the word, [...] and the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John: I.1-9).
NOTES

1 As early as 1868 the reading public was being entertained concerning the phenomenon of social leveling. In a series entitled “Paso de la fuente castellana—Por el coche, facha, y traje se conoce el personaje,” the magazine *El Museo Universal* has a cartoon-like pen sketch that humorously contrasts the declining aristocracy and the rising newly rich (XII, [junio] 214).

2 To my knowledge, critics have not studied systematically the animal imagery in the *Torquemada* series. Rhian Davies, for example, points out that Don Benito added some animal imagery as he corrected the galley proofs for *Torquemada en la Cruz* (53). Isabel Román (following Nimetz [17]) devotes three pages to showing how animal metaphors, gestures, and sounds relating to Torquemada produce a comic effect and tend toward the grotesque (210-13). Peter Earle has focused on Torquemada’s change and social adaptation, but has very little on animal imagery (29-43).

3 Galdós had earlier suggested in *Lo prohibido* the dehumanizing effect of a character’s moments in *in extremis*, when his narrator says concerning José Carrillo: “Sus gritos eran la exclamation de la animalidad herida y en peligro, sin ideas, sin nada que distingue al hombre de la fiera” (I, xiii, 2, 1756).

4 Maryellen Bieder has offered persuasive evidence that “El sacrificio” was penned by Galdós, and *galdosistas* are indebted to her for publishing the manuscript (12-13).

5 For an analysis of “El sacrificio,” see Lisa Condé (283-97).

6 Lewis E. Brett was among the first to perceive the interrelationship between *La loca de la casa* and the *Beauty and the Beast* fable (810), with which Condé (*Theater*, 170, n.2) concurs.

7 Condé comments: “The many animal images attributed to Cruz in this play reinforce the ‘Beauty and the Beast’ analogy in his forthcoming marriage” (170, n.12). Additionally, she says that the “animal/child” concept [of Victoria regarding Cruz] is not uncommon in women’s attitude toward men” (172, n.11).

8 For details concerning other aspects of this play, see the “Introduction” (1-21) and “Notes” (passim) of Condé’s excellent edition.

9 In addition to changing “la casa de las Aguilas” to “el nido de las Aguilas” on the galley proofs, Galdós also introduced a “certain amount of animal imagery” and animalized verbs to the extent that Torquemada, for example, “bramó” rather than “murmuró” (Davies 53)

10 Obviously not all of Galdós’s animal images pack the same punch, but even when they tend more to be idiomatic expressions of the language, we have included them, because Galdós did choose to use them, rather than some other kind of imagery, and they accord with the overall tone, as well as the consistency of the stronger animal metaphors.

11 “El buey suelto” often translates as “bachelor” (Klibbe 67). In her *Diccionario*, María Moliner lists “el buey suelto bien se llama: expresa que la libertad es agradable” (I, 426).
Galdós had earlier shown similar marital affection with playful animal imagery in *Lo prohibido* (Chamberlin 62).

Galdós also engages in word play concerning animality when Morentín challenges Fidela for having labeled him “un magnífico animal.” She insists on this designation, because “Animal es lo que no tiene alma.” Thereupon Morentín quips, “Precisamente es lo contrario, ... A...ni...mal, con ánima, con alma” (I, x, 1036).

Earlier Galdós had Isidora in *La desheredada* produce a macrocephalic child, whom many critics consider a reflection of her overly ambitious fantasies. Likewise, here macrocephalism may ironically reflect Torquemada’s grandiose notion that he could reincarnate his deceased son, which was his only reason for remarrying.

Galdós was well aware of Darwin’s theories, and gave evidence of an early “costumbrismo darwinista” in his 1860s contributions to *La Revista Del Movimiento Intelectual De Europa* (Hoar 71). Subsequently, specific mention of Darwin occurs in *Doña Perfecta*, when Don Inocencio tries to lure Pepe Rey into a discussion of “darwinsismo,” but Pepé refuses to discuss “las doctrinas de Darwin” (IX, 114-15). In *Lo prohibido* the narrator says, concerning Sánchez Botín: ‘[A]quél nos venía a revelar el discutido y no bien probado parentesco de la estirpe humana con animales. Viéndole y tratándole, me entusiasmaba con el transformismo y me volvía darwinista” (II, iv, 1868). In *Miau*, Mendizábal is perceived as “[E]l hombre gorila [ . . . ] , aquella transición zoológica, en cuyo cráneo parecían verse demonstradas las audaces hipótesis de Darwin, [ . . . era] digna de la vitrina de cualquier museo antropológico” (XII, 587).
WORKS CITED


“Paseo por la fuente castellana — por el coche, facha y traje, se conoce el personaje.” *El Museo Universal.* XII (1886): 216.


