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**TITLE:** Reporterism as Social Death in Rafael Delgado's *La calandria*

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**ABSTRACT:** "Reporterism as Social Death in Rafael Delgado's *La calandria*" examines the novel from a new historicist standpoint. After describing the changing role of women in Porfirian Mexico, I show how, in the *La calandria*, reporterism is represented as allowing for women to look beyond their particular social milieu, with disastrous effects. This reading thus provides a corrective to current scholarship on Delgado's novel that has not pointed up the importance of the theme of journalism in the novel. In Delgado's text, both opposition journalism and sensationalistic reporting are intimately associated with warfare and even death itself: newspapers are characterized as having the ability to odiously revive the political debates thought to have been previously banished to Mexico's bellicose past—particularly those first seen during the War of Reform (1857-1861). I analyze how Delgado, via an ingenious metaphor, shows how corrupt politics, immorality, and, essentially, death, are dissembled behind reporting, celebration, and enlivening behavior: beyond the superficial, social appearance of opposition and sensationalistic journalism—namely the eye-catching headlines, the fetching photos, and the alluring stories—Delgado suggests that a morbid element resides in the shadows.

**KEYWORDS:** Mexico, 19th Century, Rafael Delgado, Feminism, Journalism, Porfiriato, Public Sphere

**RESUMEN:** En "Reporterism as Social Death in Rafael Delgado's *La calandria*" analizo la novela de Delgado desde un punto de vista neohistoricista. Después de describir la manera en que las mujeres fueron introducidas en el mundo laboral durante el Porfiriato, examino la representación del reporterismo en *La calandria*. Así, muestro que el reporterismo (entendido como periodismo sensacionalista) se representa en la novela como una manera de ascender socio y económicamente. Sin embargo, este intento de ascender, a fin de cuentas, es insuficiente. Dicha interpretación, enfocándose en el papel de la prensa en *La calandria*, va contra acercamientos previos a la novela. En la novela de Delgado, la prensa opositora tanto como la prensa sensacionalista se asocian con la guerra y la muerte: en los periódicos, los debates políticos del pasado se reaniman, así degradando la esfera pública. En suma, Delgado sugiere que—más allá de los titulares llamativos y las columnas entretenidas—los periodistas albergan la muerte.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** México, siglo XIX, Rafael Delgado, feminismo, periodismo, porfiriato, esfera pública

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# Reportership as Social Death in Rafael Delgado's *La calandria*

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Within the American academy, Porfirian Mexico (1887-1911) is largely an unexplored period both in terms of its literary and cultural history. Art produced after the 1910 Mexican Revolution and alongside the consolidation of the revolutionary state is privileged on both sides of the border, and both inside and outside the ivory tower. What were the primary concerns of *letrados* writing in the Mexico of Porfirio Díaz? What were the types of political discourses that writers elaborated? Finally, how did Porfirian times understand gender?

With the following, I aim to answer these questions via a careful study of Rafael Delgado's *La calandria*. I contend that in *La calandria*, reportership—the quick-paced world of publishing off the cuff, sensationalistic newspaper articles—is represented as allowing for working-class women to look beyond their particularly inauspicious and hardscrabble social milieu, but with disastrous effects. Delgado presents reporters as rouses who heinously lure impecunious females into thinking that they, too, can assume an active and affluent role in public life. Ultimately, sensationalistic reporting is likened to a death cult. By examining *La calandria*, I argue that for Porfirian writers, defining the character of public life was fundamental. The novel attempts to prove that sensationalistic reporting revives old conflicts, renews battles, and promotes the noxious politics that ravaged Mexico during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Rafael Delgado's *La calandria* was originally published in serialized form between

January 15 and June 15, 1890 in *Revista nacional de ciencias y letras*, becoming an instant success (Sandoval, 1995 267). The novel—Delgado's first—was so well received that it immediately secured the author a membership in the prestigious Academia Mexicana de la Lengua, counterpart organization of Spain's Royal Academy. A second, bound edition of *La calandria* was published soon afterward in 1891 by the Imprenta de *El Tiempo*, which also produced the Catholic newspaper where Delgado routinely published articles. In its day, the novel was praised for its realism—literary movement whose objectives dovetailed well with positivism.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the *La calandria* was celebrated for its *costumbrista*, Mexican themes, which were described as judiciously coupled with the novel's traditionally Hispanic tone. The author considered Mexican literature as an extension of Spanish letters and accordingly, in the prologue to the 1891 edition of *La calandria*, Francisco Sosa describes the novel as a boon to Mexican literary nationalism. The novel “enriched our national literature with a book which we can present to strangers as proof that in our country there are intelligent exploiters of the literary style most in vogue today” (as quoted in Cabrera xx). Delgado's good name lasted into the twentieth century, when literary figure Cayetano Beltrán Rodríguez elevated Delgado's talents even beyond those of Federico Gamboa, whom Beltrán Rodríguez considered hopelessly “Frenchified”—*afrancesado* (Rodríguez 137). However, with the spiritual sea change

brought about by the Mexican Revolution, critics took umbrage with what they saw as Delgado's unabashed defense of the bourgeoisie: "Para Delgado, la alegría más grande era la virtud tradicionalista, la virtud de la clase media" (Brushwood 381). In 1947, Mariano Azuela, assuming a shriller tone, warns "[l]as novelas de Delgado son fundamentalmente burguesas, escritas para la burguesía por un burgués satisfecho y contento de la clase a que pertenece" (34). Brushwood, too, incorrectly reads Delgado's fiction as apolitical: "Los libros de Delgado son novelas de costumbres, y no contienen tesis políticas" (382). In recent years, Adriana Sandoval has offered important clarifications about Delgado's novel, arguing for the author's masterfulness, and rectifying the unsatisfying Postrevolutionary interpretation of Delgado as an *afrancesado*. Sandoval's *A cien años de "La calandria"* correctly situates Delgado's novel firmly within the *costumbrista* mode and Delgado's political and cultural concerns explicitly in Mexican society (1999 72). Even the novel's full title—*La calandria, novela mexicana*—speaks to Delgado's commitment to national themes. Here, I build upon Sandoval's scholarship, yet train a keener eye to the novel's historical milieu. Before analyzing how the novel deals with necessitous women, yellow journalism, and public life in Porfirian Mexico, I shall first briefly study gender roles during the Porfiria-to vis-à-vis the era's changing socioeconomic conditions.

Under the Díaz administration, the Mexican economy expanded at a remarkable pace. The era was characterized by the growth of established urban centers like Mexico City, Veracruz, and Orizaba, the privatization and subsequent monopolization of rural land, and the consistent relocation of laborers. From the 1870s to roughly 1910, Mexico City increased its area five times over (Caistor 28); between 1877 and 1910, it was estimated that the capital's population grew from 230,000 to roughly half a million inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

Internal immigration fuelled much of the population growth: most individuals arrived to the Mexican capital from the countryside (Alba-Hernández), leaving behind rural life out of economic necessity (Haber 20). A disproportionate number of these immigrants were women and, among these, many were single or widowed who, bereft of the financial support of a male, were forced to enter the workforce.<sup>3</sup> Many of this new urban class—frequently of indigenous origin—found work as *cigarreras*, *tipógrafas*, and *costureras*.<sup>4</sup> Both Villalobos Calderón and Towner separately estimate that by 1895, women represented roughly one-third of the workforce among what Towner refers to as the "transformation industries"—namely textiles and tobacco—and over 40 percent among service industries.<sup>5</sup> Vallens provides a similar figure, stating that by 1895, there were 189,293 women in the industrial work force, or about 26.5 percent of the total.

Women's entrance into the labor force transformed social conceptions regarding the frontiers between the public and private spheres.<sup>6</sup> Female sexual morality was interrogated as women workers entered spaces traditionally deemed masculine.<sup>7</sup> Mexico City's altered demographics and especially the new visibility of women in the workplace and in public spaces did not go unnoticed by Porfirian society.<sup>8</sup> The fact that women began to inhabit the urban, non-domestic workplace was deeply upsetting for some. Oftentimes, middle-class Mexicans insisted that women's 'natural' place was in the home, and were troubled by the relaxation of public morals that they perceived had taken place during the Porfiriato (French 529-30). Some even believed that being a public, working woman was tantamount to being a prostitute.<sup>9</sup> This logic is perhaps rendered most clearly in Julio Ruelas's fantastical illustration of Socrates getting his eyes gouged by a prostitute, his riff on the Phyllis legend. (see Figure 1)



Figure 1. Julio Ruelas: El hombre más sabio puede verse dominado por la fuerza femenina. *Sokrates*. Three elements in the image are noteworthy: the fact that the woman is gouging Sokrates's eyes shut, the woman's hairy armpits, and her sexy stockings. Thus, she seemingly represents a *costurera*, a manly woman, and a prostitute, concepts closely related in the Porfiriato. SOURCE: *Revista Moderna*. Año V, núm 16. 1902. Print.

That Delgado was so perturbed by the introduction of women to the workplace was not mere happenstance; rather, I argue that his fiction was indebted both to his time and place. The writer was born in Córdoba, Veracruz in 1853 and spent most of his life in Veracruzan towns like Xalapa, Córdoba, and especially Orizaba, which became the fictionalized setting for many of his novels. The author christened the city with the pseudonym “Pluviosilla,” due to its significant rainfall.<sup>10</sup> In terms of commerce, population growth, and manufacturing, Veracruz was arguably the state that was most transformed during the Porfiriato; between 1895 and 1910, the population grew nearly 5 percent and the state began to industrialize (Knight 41). With the final quarter of the nineteenth century and under the five-term control of Díaz’s political ally, Governor Teodoro A. Dehesa Méndez (1892 to 1911), both the port city of Veracruz and the Valley of Orizaba saw a remarkable growth of wealth from the increased amount of manufacturing.<sup>11</sup> Fundamental to these changes was the construction of the Mexico City-Veracruz railway (the Ferrocarril Interoceánico), completed in 1873.<sup>12</sup> The train line passed through the lush Valley of Orizaba, which enjoyed access to many waterways used

to garner hydropower.<sup>13</sup> Veracruz’s economic focus shifted from agriculture to industry.

Between 1890 and 1910, the Mexican textile industry grew by leaps and bounds. Six new textile factories were constructed in Mexico City between 1884 and 1906, and in Veracruz, the new access to the railroad sparked a manufacturing boom (Porter 38). In addition to the existent factory Cocolapan, in and around Orizaba were built the textile factories of San Lorenzo (1881) and Cerritos (1882), where many single and impecunious women found industrial work. For the first time in their lives, they became wage laborers. In most of the Orizaba factories, women who were married (or, at least those who admitted to being married) were not given jobs. After all, a fluid mass of workers—willing to slave away long and lonely hours—was needed to optimize production and diminish the probability of problems (García 51). The influx of mechanical production was fundamental to changing gender relations: “no single force affected the work women could or could not do quite so much as industrialization” (Porter xvii).

All told, in Porfirian Mexico, the transformation of gender roles was deeply associated with class considerations, and many were not pleased with women’s newfound social and professional roles.<sup>14</sup> Literary examples of men perturbed by working-class women’s inroads into the public life are various.<sup>15</sup> Porfirian intellectual Francisco Bulnes denounced working women as more detrimental to society than a “Barcelona anarchist,” for Bulnes, wage-earning women would ultimately lead to class conflict, obviously incompatible with the peace, progress, and order that the Díaz administration so assiduously tried to cultivate (Porter 71). With labor relations and ideas of gender in flux—so the theory went—the composition of marriage and the family could not be far behind.<sup>16</sup> Even as many positivists held fast to traditional ideas of the nuclear family,<sup>17</sup> as Bliss notes, “unpredictable labor cycles, crowded living conditions, inflation, low wages, and the dangers and pleasures of urban life put new tensions on family relationships”

(25).<sup>18</sup> The transformation of the social position of lower-class women was so drastic that a concomitant change in the legal character of marriage and the family was inevitable.<sup>19</sup>

Women become 'public' in yet other ways. Prostitution was noticeable in Díaz's Mexico and thought indicative of the age's decadence. Probably with an eye towards Lara y Pardo's 1900 statistics, Tuñón estimates that during the Porfiriato, twelve percent of all women residing in Mexico City were registered prostitutes, while many more worked "off the radar" (Tuñón Pablos 77). More dubious (but more telling) are the figures provided by Ramírez Plancarte. Writing immediately after the fall of Díaz, he estimates that half of all females in Mexico City were sex workers. No matter if promiscuity was more real or more imagined in the Porfiriato, it was undeniably transformed alongside the lived social world of wage laborers. As Bliss claims, prostitution was the easiest way for rural girls to assimilate to the urban environment; French, in turn, hypothesizes that the boom-and-bust cycles of mining during the Porfiriato also aided in creating a workforce in constant flux (534). No matter their motivations or individual ordeals, "the prostitute reigned as a particularly cogent symbol of Mexico's dangerous classes" (French 530), as evinced by the era's bestselling novel, Federico Gamboa's 1903 *Santa*: "Through their overt and sometimes ostentatious displays of 'perverse' sexuality, prostitutes threatened elite conceptions of gender and family, conceptions at the foundation of Porfirian modernity" (Overmyer-Velázquez 107). Attempts were also made to regulate prostitution during the Porfiriato and throughout the Republic (Bliss 16). In 1895, the Consejo de Salubridad declared prostitution in Mexico's capital as "very serious" (Estrada-Uroz 22; Campo 63).

In yet other ways Díaz's Mexico was characterized by a perceived slackening of sexual morals and more publically visible women. For instance, the era saw the proliferation of photography, cinema, and newspapers—visual media whose images, salacious or otherwise—could be mechanically reproduced.

Each of these mediums of communication were seen as possible vessels for pornographic material: before 1896, no one in Mexico had seen images moving across a screen<sup>20</sup> and before 1902, no Mexican publication had been printed in color.<sup>21</sup> In terms of the arts and media, the last decade of the Porfiriato was characterized by the ascendance of the ocular. In the nineteenth-century mind, the contemporaneity and technologically savvy nature of cameras, newspapers, and films engendered a unique chain of associations regarding visual stimulus. First, little distinction was made between photographs and films: both were part of a broader and spectacular visual zeitgeist. "Los periodistas asociaron también las películas con las fotografías y escenas teatrales" (Reyes 21). Secondly, cinema was oftentimes understood as an extension of the press: "El hecho de ver al cine como prolongación de la prensa parece tener su origen también en el positivismo, o, mejor dicho, si se quiere, en el espíritu científico del positivismo que por aquellos años invadía a la sociedad mexicana" (Reyes 22). Photographs, *tandas* productions,<sup>22</sup> cinemas,<sup>23</sup> newspapers, novels,<sup>24</sup> cigarette box wrappers,<sup>25</sup> and even postcards were deemed invasive, immoral, or pornographic (González Navarro 70; 117). As a final note on the Porfiriato's newfound interest in visuality—and its link to changing labor relations and working women—worth mention are José Guadalupe Posada's broadsheets, which frequently illustrated heinous crimes committed within families; offenses promulgated by women proved especially popular. In sum, in the Porfiriato—and especially in the epoch's last decade—Mexico witnessed a transformed sense of gender, due in a large part to the existence of working women and novel visual mediums. The era saw, in turn, a bevy of cultural critiques that cast society as deeply decadent. As Xorge Campos explains, the Porfiriato was not a bashful age: "[I]o cierto es que el pudor pasaba por una crisis" (60).<sup>26</sup> In Delgado's novel, the anxieties surrounding the new possibilities of public life allotted to lower-class women are also associated with sensationalistic journalism.



Delgado's novel recounts the pitiful life of the beautiful Carmen, a poor girl who lives among a humble community of laundresses in San Cristóbal. Carmen's mother, a wash-woman named Guadalupe, is moribund at the novel's opening. Carmen's father, who maintains no relation with Carmen apart from some financial support, is Eduardo Ortiz de Guerra, one of the town's richest and most politically liberal citizens. Carmen's half sister by her father, Lola, also lives in town; she, on the other hand, is properly cared for by Ortiz de Guerra.

The novel's first pages present the primary storyline, when a common bit of gossip about Carmen's father is confirmed to be true: local mogul and old-guard liberal, Don Eduardo Ortiz, is the father of the beautiful and poor Carmen (1). The matter, however is only brought up behind closed doors. When Guadalupe dies after fighting a chronic disease, one of Pluviosilla's juiciest bits of gossip is once again thrust to the fore: Will Don Eduardo Ortiz finally take her (Carmen) under his wing, thereby transforming her from a ragged laundress into a proper, elegant, and wealthy lady? Delgado's tale is more than just a working-class girl's fantasy about living the high life; rather, it points up some of the most pressing debates surrounding Porfirian era positivism. More philosophically, the death of Guadalupe renews what has been a contentious matter among the laundresses: To what extent is the beautiful Carmen inherently special? What has played a more determinant factor in her life: nature or nurture?<sup>27</sup> Can and should she assume a role as a more 'public' woman? Will her status as the legitimate daughter of Ortiz de Guerra become common knowledge? Will the working-class Carmen, in light of her mother's death, be allowed to join her father's socio-economic class? During the rest of the novel, these are the main questions needing resolution.

On one hand, Carmen's 'natural' characteristics situate her among the upper classes: her father is rich, she is beautiful, and her gorgeous singing voice has inspired companions

to nickname her "la calandria." On the other hand, Carmen has been 'nurtured' among poverty; her deceased mother, Guadalupe, was a simple laundress, and in the small parochial community where she lives, Carmen is courted by Gabriel, a respected but poor carpenter. This polyvalent character of Carmen's state is reflected in her nickname. A "calandria"—that is, a "lark"—is indeed an attractive bird known for its warble. Nevertheless, in colloquial usage, 'calandria' regularly had a pejorative connotation, intimating cowardliness, illness, or idiocy. Finally, in Mexican Spanish, a "calandria" also means "a carriage," and thus emphasizes Carmen's (social) mobility.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, the opportunity to move up the social ladder, to take part in a society life populated with handsome *cattrines*, liquor, lascivious newspapermen, and publicity ultimately seduces her. After her mother's death, Carmen, now doubly orphaned, is cared for by the good Doña Pancha, Guadalupe's fellow laundress in the shared house in San Cristóbal. Unfortunately, Carmen soon tires of the cloistered drudgery of the laundresses, and begins discussing her status with her party-going friend, Magdalena. Like her namesake—the Bible's Mary Magdalene—Magdalena, too, is described as unchaste. Magdalena, a mulatta, carouses and canoodles with a court clerk moonlighting as an opposition journalist, Pepe Muérdago, who writes for the sensationalistic, rabble-rousing newspaper, *El Radical*: the periodical specializes in running others' names through the mud via slanderous articles, political harangues, and injurious speech. Carmen soon finds herself in an indulgent world of gaudy jewels and Jacobin journalists who break hearts and ruin reputations, activities vastly more entertaining than watching Gabriel hammer away at his carpentry. She is wooed by Alberto Rosas, an aristocratic playboy who, between glasses of champagne, lounges about gossiping with his friends—legal clerks who also publish a rag sheet, *El Radical*. By the novel's end, Carmen is Rosas's latest victim,

her name sullied in newsprint by Alberto and his crony journalist friends. After having her name tarnished by the roguish Alberto Rosas (it is intimated that he deflowered her) the good Father González takes Carmen under his wing, letting her reside with him removed from the center of town, thus curtailing her amorous life, and ending her failed attempt to ascend to a higher socio-economic status. Hoping to spring her from the house, Alberto Rosas—with the help of his journalist friend, Jurado—publishes an untrue newspaper article alleging that Father González has seduced Carmen into a tawdry countryside sexcapade, thus ruining her reputation. One day, Carmen finds herself perusing Rosas's library. Although Father González had previously warned her that some readings aren't suitable for a sensitive, moral girl, her dissatisfaction and boredom while living in Rosas's house gets the best of her: she is tempted by the written word. Eventually, she finds a newspaper opened to a story about a young Chihuahuan woman who, not unlike Carmen, has had her honor compromised. In order to escape public opprobrium, the young woman is reported as having committed suicide by poisoning her coffee, mixing in a bit of sugar and whiskey to make it more palatable. Carmen, moved by the story, chooses the same fate. "¡Qué simpática! Tuvo razón [...] era preferible morir" (210). Her death is inspired by a newspaper, which had effectively invaded her domestic sphere, its heinous horror stories becoming contagious. Carmen—the working-class girl who dreamed of being high class—is found dead, and the novel ends.

The novel's conclusion, when Carmen is prompted to commit suicide after reading a newspaper, is a very literal example of my broader argument here: in *La calandria*, loose words—particularly sensationalistic reporting—is associated with death. But our story does not end there. Throughout the novel, Delgado forwards a metaphor that situates the heinousness of death, war, and destruction as being dissembled or 'dressed up' to appear enlivening and sweet. Just as Carmen adds whiskey in order to occlude

the vile taste of the poison she puts in her coffee, sensationalistic reporting, too, even though it evinces the appearance of vigor, life, and sweetness, is a known toxin. Delgado's clever conceit—his claim that sensationalistic journalism's virulence is rendered publically palatable by dissembling it with sugary, sensationalistic news stories—operates in even more subtle ways that point beyond this simple plot twist. Before detailing how Delgado's work represents independent journalists essentially as members of a death cult who conceal their true nature behind mellifluousness, I shall first characterize the journalists that appear in *La calandria*.

The journalists described in *La calandria* are, above all, profoundly superficial. They live in a world of loose words and ephemeral interpersonal relationships. Carmen's wooer, Alberto Rosas, is described as a "calavera" and a "catrín" who tempts Carmen with his gift of gab: "El refinamiento de sus maneras y su lenguaje culto fueron desde el primer momento poderoso atractivo para la huérfana" (94). Similarly, Rosas's journalist friends in *El Radical*—Juan Jurado and Pepe Muérdago—exemplify ludic language, divorced from reality and the nuanced knowledge of books. Articles in *El Radical* are bereft of any political or social pertinence: "El periódico, falto de artículos de fondo y sobrado de coplas, iba decayendo" (176). Furthermore, the paper has made its name with rabble-rousing, inflammatory articles aimed at defaming the Catholic church: "¡Qué suficiencia la suya para desmenuzar los dogmas y las instituciones católicas! [...]. En las primeras cuartillas lanzaba una tremenda filípica contra el Vaticano" (177). Real erudition is little concern for Rosas and his buddies; rather, they prefer the speed and sensation of undisciplined gossip: "Para el tinterillo no tenía escollos el idioma, ni arcanidades la ciencia, ni oscuridades la historia, ni había libros, ni era necesario estudiar. ¿Libros? ¡Quiá! ¡No tenía tiempo de leerlos!" (177). Nor does the crooked and cocky reporter even need legitimate sources to produce his columns: "Para Jurado no había dificultades: fingía comunicados, fraguaba

correspondencias, inventaba redactores incógnitos y colaboradores asiduos” (177). *El Radical*, its writers, and Rosas are powered by empty words, signifiers meaning little to nothing.

Case in point is the appropriately named Pepe Muérdago; like his namesake, “mistletoe,” he demands kisses and yet remains prickly. When Carmen asks Magdalena about him, all she can offer are physical traits. “—Bonitos ojos, buen cuerpo, frente grande [...]” (57). Muérdago, also armed with a biting pen, continues the noxious legacy *El Radical* is known for:

Este no tenía escrúpulos [...]. Muérdago no respetaba el buen nombre de nadie, y hubiera sido capaz de calumniar a su propia madre, siempre que de ello resultara que los que le oían dijeran que tenía chiste y que a nadie le perdonaba una falta. [...]. Ya los concurrentes y parroquianos de la cantina le decían, en son de chanza, que había heredado la encomienda, y hasta solía llamarle con el apellido del director de *El Radical*. (167)

Finally, Muérdago and Jurado—court clerks who also write *El Radical*—are often referred to as “parasites” (167), since they feed on other living creatures: namely, subsidies from political parties. Mistletoe, moreover, is known to be a parasitic plant.

In the novel’s final pages, the *El Radical* bunch—Rosas, Jurado, and Muérdago—drink champagne in their favorite watering hole, still gossipmongering about Pluviosilla’s latest hubbub. They appear as the high priests of the sensationalistic press whose odious journalistic practices and crass courtship rituals will inevitably continue to prove a dark counterweight to the deeds of virtuous souls like Father González.

Throughout the story, these men are described as irresistible, and neither Carmen nor Magdalena can resist their courtship. Carmen, wanting to escape her working-class

conditions, is proud of having attracted the attention of Rosas, and she tells herself that her relationship with Rosas is actually more ‘natural’ than hers with Gabriel. “Esto es lo más natural—pensaba—no hay desigualdad entre nosotros; soy tan decente como él” (95). Alberto Rosas and his detestable coterie of kindered spirits, via their ability to publish the private, become a synecdoche for the possibility of climbing the social ladder, of breaking down accepted hierarchies.

Thus, when the novel opens, Magdalena—or, as some call her, Malenita (her nickname associating her with “mals”) has recently moved in with the appropriately named, rougish Don Juan Jurado, who financially supports her.<sup>29</sup> Jurado’s house becomes the epicenter for the nocturnal, drunken revelries of *El Radical* crowd (87). Carmen is progressively influenced by Magdalena’s skewed reasoning, and her fixation on climbing the social ladder. Indeed, the first night that Carmen spends in the mulatta’s (and Jurado’s) house, she finds herself tempted to wander the streets at night, indicative of her desire for a more public life.<sup>30</sup>

In yet other ways, Magdalena allows herself to be carried away by sensationalistic reporting. Particularly scintillating is how Magdalena finds immense joy in Jurado’s journalistic screeds levelled against the Catholic church:

Ordinariamente la tomaba con los clérigos, y contra ellos desahogaba todas sus iras, máxime cuando empuñaba la pluma después de una reyerta con su romántica compañera. Entonces escribía por estilo jocoso unos sueltos con mucha sal y pimienta; párrafos que eran una delicia para Magdalena. (177)

Their relationship is based on a perverse, cyclical feedback system. While Jurado’s articles assume a vitriolic tone after an argument with Magdalena, his journalistic spleen, in turn, arouses her; these sensations she wants to relive



again and again. In order to do so, however, a quarrel has to ensue between lovers. Jurado and Magdalena have undone the boundaries between eroticism and anger, between their public lives and private selves: personal, sexual desire has invaded spaces of civil discourse. Delgado's point is clear: with journals like *El Radical*, erotic lives—that which should be private—make inappropriate inroads into the public sphere; dirty laundry is aired to provide cheap delight, as the domestic disputes between Don Juan and Magdalena inspire the public headlines of *El Radical*.

Thus, in *La calandria*, words evince the power to both woo and wound. Carmen looks to Alberto Rosas, a good friend of various sensationalistic reporters, in hopes of catapulting herself beyond her own socio-economic class. Carmen's friend, confidant, and mentor, the malevolent mulatta, Magdalena, provides Carmen with a model for such uncouth behavior. From the novel's opening pages, we learn that Magdalena is herself being supported financially by the court clerk-cum-renegade journalist, and one of *El Radical's* head newspapermen, Don Juan Jurado. She parades about dressed in extravagant and salacious clothing. "Muy atacada, reventando el corsé, dentro de un vestido de color de plomo, adornado de azul; valiosas joyas en las orejas, rosas blancas en la cabeza, y guantes amarillos" (57). In sum, and in keeping with Porter's definition, Magdalena is a *buscona*—namely, "a woman dedicated to seeking something not rightly hers: a petty thief, pilferer, or kept woman [...] associated with the prostitute" (63). Magdalena lives with Jurado, dresses like a strumpet thanks to his money and thus—just like the columns of *El Radical*—the journalist makes 'public' that which should remain 'private,' in this case, Magdalena's sexuality. In keeping with their lust for public life and distinct lack of modesty, the couple are a spectacle wherever they go: at parties and at the reveling cafés where they stage their late night communions among liquor and loose-lipped informants. Jurado, we are told, "lucía siempre buena alhajas" to

parties (68). Magdalena, meanwhile, exudes the opulence of a beautiful bird. "La singular y feliz pareja cruzó ante los pisaverdes. Magdalena, colgada del brazo del tinterillo, parecía un pavo" (57). Respectable people do not make such public displays of themselves: by letting the inside out, *El Radical* journalists have given in to a licentious, topsy-turvy world. Finally, and appropriately, Jurado's house becomes the epicenter for the nocturnal revelries of *El Radical* crowd, where the court clerk hosts drunken parties.

Other examples of wounding words are found throughout *La calandria*. After having cohabited with Alberto in a hovel at the edge of town, Carmen's reputation is ruined. When she finally comes to her senses, she is whisked away by Father González to reside with him in the countryside, in hopes that there she can recuperate both her health and her honor. González has been asked this favor by her biological father, Eduardo Ortiz, who still unwilling to publically acknowledge his daughter. In the country, she lives a spartan life: per Father González's recommendations, she attends mass, cooks, and cleans. "No dejaba nunca de comparar el acto importantísimo de limpiar el alma con la diaria faena mujeril" (154). Although the cottage at Xochiapan is generally a hermetic and upright space, appropriate for a young woman to regain her virtuousness, even there reading materials are proscribed. Not even in Xochiapan, so far removed from the corrupting impulses of the city, is Carmen safe from the intrusive attacks of sensationalistic or overly-liberal prose. While in Padre González's library, we see Carmen and the father disagree as to what constitutes an ethical text:

Algunas veces, para matar el tiempo y ahuyentar el fastidio, tomaba el periódico, un periódico que, al decir del padre González, era excelente, sapientísimo; pero que a la joven le parecía cansado, soporífico. En vano buscaba en las columnas del grave y discreto diario cuentos entretenidos, novelitas cortas, poesías amorosas. ¿La poliantea semanal? ¿Cosa más insulsa! (144)

Although most of the reading materials in González's library are wholesome, he cannot help but warn her: "Carmen, no tome usted ningún libro sin mi permiso. No todas las obras que hay allí—añadió, señalando la recámara—son a propósito para una joven" (145). This didactic capacity of reading is also seen later on in the novel during a conversation between Tacho and Gabriel.<sup>31</sup> During the Porfiriato, and especially in Delgado's novel, both reading and writing could be dangerous activities; newspapers and novels were examined scupulously for their moral agenda.

There are yet other scenes in *La ca-landria* in which words—and newspapers especially—are represented as invasive, even reaching the remote countryside town of Xochiapan. During her rural sabbatical, Carmen persuades one of the local schoolboys, Ángel, to secretly carry a letter to her former lover, Gabriel, whom she asks to free her from Father González and take her back as his lover. After many days away, Ángel finally brings back a note to Carmen, passing it to her through her bedroom window. Overwhelmed with joy, Carmen re-enters her room and begins to read the letter:

Carmen cerró poquito a poquito la vidriera, y se acercó a la lámpara. En vuelta en un pedazo de periódico venía una cartita muy mona, que en la nema tenía dos letras azules enlazadas con mucho arte: A.R., que la Doncella leyó: R.A. [...] Era de Alberto. (154-55)

Delgado's metaphor is crystal clear: newspapers are invasive, almost preternaturally so. The all-too-public world of scandals and crimes, along with journalism's intrusive nature—ingeniously symbolized by Rosas's clever delivery system—can even enter the supposedly sacred domestic sphere. We never learn how Alberto has come to intercept the letter from Carmen, how he found her child messenger, Ángel: it is as if journalism itself evinces a type of black magic, an ability to transgress the most formidable walls, thereby violating the sanctity of the home.

With Carmen in the countryside and under the guidance of Father González, the gossip playbody, Alberto—along with his pernicious journalist friends in *El Radical*—makes one final attempt to lure the beautiful songstress back to Pluviosilla and under his control. Rosas and his journalist cronies succeed in subjecting the young and beautiful Carmen to public scrutiny by publishing a sensationalistic (and false) story about her relationship with Father González. Ironically, in the same moment that Carmen gets what she had previously fought for—public recognition—her life reaches its lowest point. Muérdago and Jurado—prompted by Rosas—pen two articles in *El Radical* detailing an untrue and incendiary story about how Father González has seduced Carmen in a sexy rendezvous in his tucked-away manor in Xochiapan:

Exornóle con frases equívocas y picantes alusiones a la elocuencia del clérigo, a quien acusaba de seducción y mancebía. No mentaba al cura, ni a Carmen, pero tan claras eran las indicaciones, las señas tan exactas, que no cabía duda de que se trataba del padre González. Así lo dijo en Pluviosilla todo el mundo, luego que circuló el periódico. El articulista abogaba por un joven trabajador, honrado, y modelo de ciudadanos patriotas, víctima de las arterias del eclesiástico. (197)

The article, a shameless lie, suggests the exact opposite of the truth: Father González, not the writers of *El Radical*, is characterized as a seductive wordsmith. It is this moment when Carmen's biological father, Eduardo Ortiz, finally realizes that maintaining a 'free' press is not all desirable: "¡Esto es infame! ¿Éstos son los frutos de la libertad de la prensa? Esto es inicuo" (199). The wordplay with "frutos" is telling, as Delgado sardonically suggests that the reporters who have so skillfully promoted death are actually described as fecund—"fruto" being the product of one's labor. Although Ortiz at first believes that the reading public will restrain judgement, seeing as Father González is a priest, it is proposed that he is mistaken.

Reporters actually feed on priests.<sup>32</sup> Rogue journalists successfully distress damsels and ruin religion.

Delgado crafts other literary devices in order to underscore the point that sensationalistic reporting is deeply vacuous, even harmful. The author employs what I will refer to as a ‘metaphor of superficiality’—which is not only associated with those who scribe independent journalism but also, with those who harbor a predilection for reading rag sheets. The metaphor first appears in the second chapter of Delgado’s novel, with the death of Guadalupe. Here, the local parish priest, Father González, visits Carmen’s biological father, Don Eduardo Ortiz, in hopes of renewing the family ties between the newly orphaned Carmen and her father, or at least, securing her financial livelihood. The meeting is emblematic of two opposing visions for Mexico: one vision being liberal and anti-clerical, the other being traditional, devoutly Catholic and—according to Delgado—nationalist. Eduardo Ortiz uses sophisticated words in order to cover up a crass past characterized by war and death.

From the first lines of Chapter 2, with the description of Eduardo Ortiz’s residence, it is suggested that Ortiz inhabits a small, mean, and inauthentic world. “Un aposento chico, pintado a imitación de papel tapiz” (6). The recent laquer on Ortiz’s writing desk unconvincingly covers up the piece of furniture’s worn appearance. “Barniz no alcanzaba a disimular la antigüedad del mueble” (6), and the rug on the floor is “ya muy pálido y usado” (6). This information should surprise the reader. The image offered is not what we had expected after the first chapter; although wealthy, Ortiz de Guerra is an unpardonable miser, indeliably trapped in the past. Ortiz’s superficiality also is made manifest in the way that he expresses himself.

De palabra suelta y viva, con esa ligereza de los hombres actuales, tan faltos de fondo y gravedad como superabundantes de audacia, muy deseados en los círculos

de la política, y que, por lo insustancial y versátil, son el encanto de lo que hoy suele llamarse una *escogida* sociedad. (6)

Not unlike Rosas, Jurado, and Muérdago, Ortiz is also more lip than mind, more rhetoric than reality. Ortiz has surrounded himself with the cheap words, tacky embellishments, and the impossible ideals of the 1857 Constitution crowd—those liberals who still have not accepted what Delgado inevitably believed to be the truths of the Díaz administration’s positivist-inspired politics. *La calandria*’s second chapter, in sum, showcases a superficially polite yet remarkably fierce showdown between two representatives of two very different worldviews and political perspectives: while Father González sees little conflict between maintaining a modern and orderly state alongside the Catholic church, Eduardo Ortiz represents the old school Constitutionalists—unwilling or unable to change with the times. Ortiz de Guerra—whose personality, we should note, also matches his ‘bellicose’ name—was even a soldier for Miguel Miramón, a pro-Maximilian monarchist during the War of Reform (1857-1861). Sandoval, too, notes correctly that Catholics are represented positively in Delgado’s in texts: more enlightened and modern than non-believers.<sup>33</sup> Tellingly, Don Eduardo, at 48 years of age and thus already an old man in Porfirian Mexico, wears an old-fashioned, Spanish-style beard—“[b]arba de corte español” (6). The good Father González, on the other hand, is indelibly youthful: “[U]n joven de aspecto noble y hasta aristocrático, de pulcro vestido y franca mirada” (5). While everything about Ortiz situates him in the past—he is a walking anachronism within a modern Mexico—Father González is ‘timely.’ He even makes sure he arrives on time to his engagement with Ortiz by keeping a keen eye on his wrist watch described as “una preciosa repetición ingelesa” (5). And yet there are even other reasons to dislike Eduardo Ortiz. Most notably, he commits a fatal faux pas by trying to strike up conversation with Father

González about Spiritism. “La doctrina espiritista es muy seductora” (10). Moreover, he is described a heartless capitalist. “Don Eduardo tenía cerrada la puerta de su alma a otros afectos y ternuras” (8). If the topic of conversation is not related to making money, he is not interested. “Lo que no fuera el *negocio*, apenas merecía su atención, y era una farsa indigna de la gente juiciosa” (7).

The origins of Ortiz de Guerra’s wealth are also hidden. While some believe that Don Eduardo made his fortune from the lottery or a customs house in the Gulf of Mexico, “[n]adie sabía de cierto el origen de su fortuna” (8). Eduardo paints a shadowy figure, the problematic zeitgeist of a new world where social status is not based on honor, name, or intellect, but rather, the size of one’s bank account: he represents not essence but appearance. And of course, yet other aspects of his personal history are kept secret; he does not completely recognize his daughter Carmen, whom he explains flippantly to Padre González as the product of “errores juveniles” (12). Carmen was, as previously mentioned, born of the poor laundress, Guadalupe. There is a deep rupture between Ortiz de Guerra’s private indiscretions versus his public identity; appearances are just that—appearances, and little more.

Perhaps the most odious aspect of Eduardo Ortiz is his predilection for loose talk and sensational forms of writing, all of which color his political and religious beliefs. Essentially, he is cast as an atavistic element blind to the supposedly rational politics of Porfirian society. Thus, when Father González enters Ortiz’s inner sanctum in Chapter 2, he finds the businessman at his desk, the epicenter for Ortiz’s lax language and suspiciously won riches. His office presents us a diptych of dubious objects: “Una montaña de papeles y de periódicos sobre la mesa” (6). And, just beside that desk, another table: “Una mesa destinada a contar dinero” (6). Finally, and as already noted above, Ortiz highlights his own Christian faith but then clumsily attempts to engage Father González in

conversation about spiritualism, philosophy promoted by Alan Kardec. A trendy amalgam of spectralism, Eastern philosophy, and anti-empiricism, Spiritism obviously does not jive with Father González’s orthodox Catholicism.<sup>34</sup> Thus, like much of what Ortiz says and does, form and content simply do not match up: he’s a real phony.

Eduardo Ortiz de Guerra’s office, with its tacky, imitation wallpaper is not the only example of an unsuccessful cover-up job. Oftentimes, the metaphor of superficiality—one’s attempt to hide their own wretched morals—is directly related to reporters and reporting. The sensationalistic journalists of *El Radical* even use a map of Mexico in order to decorate the dancing hall where they host their festivities. Interestingly, the maps are from American speculators, and thus underscore Delgado’s message: the reporters, in both decoration and deed, are selling out the country. They are *vendepatrias*—traitors through and through:

Para llenar las cabeceras del salón, los decoradores echaron mano de dos mapas, espontáneamente facilitados por el dueño de una fonda, de esos mapas que a bajo precio venden los especuladores yankees; uno de México, y frontero a éste, otro de Estados Unidos, que ostentaba en los ángulos un retrato de Washington, con el consabido lema de el primero en la paz, el primero en la guerra, etc., etc., otro de Lincoln, una vista del Niágara y otra del Capitolio, mapas pregoneros de la invasión pacífica de nuestros amables primos de Allende el Bravo. (89)

Rosas, as well as his reporter goons, attempts to dissemble his scheming, but ultimately the coterie’s aggression and anti-Mexican perspectives are made palpably apparent.

Creeping behind inauthentic and sloppy speech reside images of death, which are pervasive in *La calandria*. Deaths bookend the story, with Guadalupe’s death in the first pages and Carmen’s death as the tragic conclusion. Words and especially journalism cover up the

constant specter of death. Although the novel's baddies—Alberto Rosas, Jurado, Muérdago—present themselves as envincing liveliness, festivity, and socialiability with their parties and rousing newspaper articles, they are, in fact, associated with morbidity in Delgado's *La calandria*. Delgado proposes that slack language and especially, sensationalistic reporting, by reviving the political issues that were more pertinent during the War of Reform—namely anti-clericalism and civil liberties—actually revives death. Just below the surface of the glossy things seducers and reporters say, violence, death, and destruction are kept alive.

This point is underscored in adept ways through the novel. Particularly striking is Chapter 12, which narrates the slaughter of six chickens and a turkey for the party thrown by Magdalena, Carmen, and attended by Alberto and *El Radical* bunch. The party is Carmen's first meaningful encounter with Rosas, at which time she lets herself go, imbibing far too much alcohol. Moreover, the ordering of Chapter 12 and 13 imitates the extended metaphor that I have attempted to prove here: that is, the celebratory images of Chapter 13, effectively "cover up" or dissembles the scenes of death found in Chapter 12—namely, the slaughter of fowl. I shall presently detail with greater specificity this novel act of concealment.

Delgado invites us to think about how these heinous characters are, like fowl, worthy of execution. As Conway proves, Porfirian Mexico was wont to use different types of fowl to critique 'aberrant' or 'immoral' social behaviors. Thus, in Chapter 11, Magdalena—while hanging on the arm of her boyfriend—Jurado, appears like a turkey: "Magdalena, colgada del brazo del tinterillo, parecía un pavo" (57). In the next chapter (12) Magdalena and other young belles, in preparation for the party, slaughter various fowl.

Primeramente procedió Magdalena a ejecutar seis pollos y un pavo. Los primeros murieron a manos de Paulita, en un santiamén, extrangulados brutalmente. El pavo, un hermoso

pavo, lascivo, cebado con almendras y nueces, quedó reservado a la ferocidad valerosa de Magdalena. (91)

A few important observations should be made. First, Magdalena's savagery is celebrated, but only ironically. The display is shockingly brutal. Second, the turkey is described as both beautiful and lascivious, two traits not usually associated with birds; better said, the turkey is anthropomorphized and thus, tasks us to think about the other (human) characters in the novel it intimates. Tellingly, in the next pages, Alberto Rosas's neck is emphasized twice:

La conversación era de lo más animada. El escribientillo, cautivo dentro del círculo brillante de su cuello de celuloide, tirándose a cada momento de los puños y jugando con la doble cadencia de reloj, escuchaba a Carlota que hacía gala de ingenio y charlaba con Arévalo a quien azuzaba Magdalena en contra de su amiga. (64)

Delgado thus creates a chain of associations between chapters: attention is brought to the neck of those associated with death, those who should perish, but do not. The narrator's rage against the wordsmith is displaced onto the fowl that will later be served at their party. But two pages later, Delgado again references the neck area of another writer for *El Radical*—Don Saturnino Arévalo. Again, description focuses on his collar—a *synecdoche* for his neck, which is appropriately characterized as "rebellious." Better said, he, too, needs his neck wrung:

El parlanchín tendió la mano a la muchacha con una efusión verdaderamente juvenil. Mientras le tocaba el turno, el poeta arregló sus cabellos, se compuso la corbata, castigó la rebeldía de su cuello, y estirándose los puños, decididos a vivir ocultos bajo las mangas de la levita, se inclinó ante la Calandria, con un movimiento que, en concepto de escribientillo, era de las más alta corrección, haciendo sonar las suelas de sus botines de charol contra los almagrados ladrillos. (66)



The true colors of *El Radical* crowd cannot be hidden so easily. While they intone their honeyed words to woo women, the crooked newspapermen consistently get lumps in their throats. This privileged place of both speech and of punishment—namely their neck, tellingly and consistently gives them problems. They, like the turkeys before them, deserve to be fatally punished.

Death haunts these scenes in other ways, located beyond a facade of pleasantries, elegance, and romance. During preparations for the party and immediately after Magdalena has sacrificed the fowl that the party-goers are set to eat, Gabriel wraps his arms around Carmen, caressing her, but in an almost harmful way. “Gabriel delirante la estrechó entre sus brazos, con tanta fuerza que la joven con acento de fingido disgusto, exclamó: “¡Gabriel [...] por Dios! ¿me quieres matar?” (63). Gabriel sardonically replies that he would kill her should she find her way into the arms of another. Carmen’s riposte illustrates both her unease and her irony: “¡Qué linda manera de querer!” (63). Again, Delgado intimates that underneath his “querer” remains the constant fear of death: darkness resides just below the surface of words and deeds.

All that is unwanted, all that is evil, all that is heinous is described time and again as being covered up by the supposed sweetness of melifluous words, especially those of sensationalistic reporting. A few final instances are emblematic of how Delgado employs the metaphor of superficiality to expose the darkness that lurks just under words. For example, Magdalena—who we have already noted is very much enamored with melifluous words—fondly remembers those verses that *El Radical* journalist Arturo recited, appropriately, at a funeral:

- No, Arturo—dijo Magdalena—no se deje caer para que lo levante [...]. Hace muy bonitos versos, Carlota. Arturo es muy modesto. Jurado dice que son de mucho mérito [...]. En *El Radical* han salido muchos [...]. ¿Se acuerda, Arturo, de aquellas décimas que leyó en el teatro?

- ¡He leído tantas! ¿Cuáles?  
- Las que leyó usted en la velada fúnebre, en julio [...] las décimas a Juárez [...]. (66)

Here, Magdalena defends the role and function of reporting and especially, the talents of Arturo. What cannot be hidden, however, is the fact that he read his verses at the most morbid of events—a funeral. On the following page, Arturo is shown secretly gloating, even while he ogles Carmen’s legs. This extended metaphor, in which reporting is equated with superficiality, also suggests that death resides just below the surface of appearances.

This extended trope is literalized when Magdalena shows up at the party where Rosas and his fellow sensationalistic journalists are making merry. Here, the noxious mulata dons clothing paid for directly by funds garnered via *El Radical*:

Magdalena, lista, maliciosa, burlona, rodeada de los mozos más apuestos, era la reina del baile. ¡Y qué lujosa que estaba! ¡Con razón! Si la muy ladina se gastaba en trapos buena parte de los cincuenta duros con que un gobernante, afecto a sahumeros periodísticos, subvenía a la publicación de *El Radical*. (90)

Magdalena represents everything that Delgado asks us to find offensive: she is a mulata, a gossip, and a bad influence on Carmen. Yet, here we see her effectively dressed up by dirty money and sensationalistic reporting: her moral and physical ugliness is subjected to the greatest cover-up. She appears radiant, adorned with luxury, but is actually nothing but appearance: she evinces a sweet superficiality that occludes subsidized journalism’s darkness.<sup>35</sup> The metaphor of fowl and superficiality is employed one final time in the novel in order to express how sensationalistic reporting covers up a cult of death:

Mugían los bueyes en los sotos; los pájaros cantaban en los barrancos y en los repliegues frondosos del monte; una bandada de pericos, posada en

las ramas de un árbol muerto, charlaban sin parar; en el portal piaban los polluelos alrededor de la clueca, buscando el nido y el cesto que debía abrigo durante la noche, y las aves rapaces, en vuelo lento y cansado, regresaban a sus peñascos. (151)

Here, Delgado provides another innovative metaphor, describing how the “birds continue to chirp” even while poised on the branches of a dead tree; essentially, those reporters for *El Radical* continue to express themselves—they incessantly “sing”—yet are ultimately sitting upon a structure bereft of life. The old, deadly political battles that characterized the War of Reform are still dredged up by reporters. They may sing sweetly, yet death is just below the surface.

Thus, in the pithiest version of Delgado’s extended metaphor, sensationalistic reporting is represented as constantly reviving the violence that had afflicted Mexico during the Reform War. Muérdago, journalist for *El Radical*, in turn, aims to publicize his friend, Jurado’s military past:

Muérdago que a nadie perdonaba, y que por decir un chiste desollaría vivo a su mejor amigo, solía decir de los anales bélicos de Don Juan que eran las memorias póstumas de un coronel in partibus. A saber este dicho, cómo hubiera reído el buen padre González. Jurado no quería morir sin que la nación tuviera noticias de sus méritos y servicios, y sin duda que estaba en su derecho para pregonar tantas glorias a los cuatro vientos de la tierra. ¡Cómo había de ignorar la Humanidad, que el periodista fue compañero de armas de aquel campeón ilustre, que le sacó de una escuela rural para llevarle a los campos de batalla, de aquel Don Jacobo Vaca, cuyas hazañas y proezas historió el inimitable ¡Facundo! (196)

Muérdago wants the world to have news of these former warmongering exploits. Words become a vehicle for beating the war drums to summon a battle Mexico had already overcome.

To conclude, in *La calandria*, oppositionist journalism inspires characters in the worst ways. Papers like *El Radical* are represented as invasive, heinously didactic, licentious, and anticlerical. Sensationalistic reporting collapses boundaries between the domestic and public spheres, as well as the frontiers between classes. Most particularly, they wickedly inspire working-class women to look beyond their socioeconomic conditions. Journalistic production has the dangerous power to propel private issues into the public spotlight and make the unknown, known. Delgado’s novel ends with Rosas and his usual *El Radical* bunch—Muérdago and Jurado—talking about Carmen’s suicide. “[A] quel suicidio como la cosa más natural del mundo” (213). Even death itself, for these reporters, is described as natural; it is the “pan de cada día” for these Lotharios, these rabble-rousers, these hack writers.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>See “El realismo en la literatura.” *Álbum de la mujer*. March 21, 1886. Año IV. Tomo VI. No. 12, 114.

<sup>2</sup>See Ávalos Torres 82. Veracruz grew from 29,164 to 48,633 inhabitants between the 1900 and 1910.

<sup>3</sup>Porter notes:

Civil status influenced who sought work and where. Unmarried, widowed, and divorced women worked to support themselves, as well as to contribute to household income. The 1900 Federal District census found that 10 percent of the population was widowed, 79 percent of whom were women. In this same year, almost half the population of the Federal District was either single or widowed, a fact much lamented by municipal authorities. They compared what they termed “horrible” statistics to those of the United States and Europe, and found Mexico wanting. Municipal authorities feared the lack of family integrity (that is, the lack of male heads of household) and identified it as the cause of social instability and an apparent “lack of morality” in Mexico. (6)

<sup>4</sup>See Macías-González and Rubenstein 85; Porter 8.

<sup>5</sup>See Towner 90. Also, Villalobos 26.

<sup>6</sup>González Montes and Tuñón explains:

tanto las mujeres de la clase media ilustrada como las de la clase obrera, comenzaron a participar más en el mundo público, de tal modo que a finales del Porfiriato, las mujeres de la clase media empezaron a ocupar puestos en las oficinas públicas y en los comercios" (100).

Also, Ramos concludes:

"La aparición de la mujer trabajadora urbana significó un cambio importante para las "buenas costumbres" de la época [...]. En suma, la obrera se vio atrapada entre las prescripciones de una moral burguesa, según la cual la mujer no debería de trabajar, y la necesidad objetiva de trabajar. (113)

<sup>7</sup>When women entered factories in the 1880s, they inhabited a space that had been construed as masculine. Within public discourse, the "mixing of the sexes" that resulted posed a danger to female sexual morality and respectability. However, many observers also recognized the need of women to work and sought to protect their rights as workers. Those rights were defined as both economic and moral. (Porter xix)

<sup>8</sup>Julio Sesto bemoans the novel feminine potential to leave the domestic space, and is startled by the remarkable sight of parades of women leaving Mexico City factory floors on the midday lunch break: "Hay que ver a las muchachas desamparadas de México, pasando una acibarada adolescencia en los talleres y las fábricas; hay que ver aquella pletora resignada que invade al mediodía las calles de Nava y Necaitlán" (254).

<sup>9</sup>One of the dominant discourses of the Porfiriato apprehended proletariat workers, wet-nurses, and prostitutes as equally dangerous for society: these were all public women, finally freed from the domestic sphere. In various newspapers of the 1880s, it was suggested that "[t]he very conditions of work turned virtuous women into prostitutes" (Porter 54).

<sup>10</sup>Delgado's nickname for Orizaba, suggesting a "pluvial" place seemed apt to Mexican diplomat and novelist Federico Gamboa, who wrote in his *Mi diario* "¡vaya un apellido ni mejor hallado ni más justo!" (159).

<sup>11</sup>For the relation between Dehesa and Díaz, see Koth 38.

<sup>12</sup>See García's *Un pueblo fabril*.

<sup>13</sup>Again, the article by Koth in *La Revolución Mexicana en Veracruz* does well to explain Veracruz's—and Orizaba's—importance in terms of manufacturing during the Porfiriato. He signals the waterways of Orizaba as fundamental for the creation of the factories (50).

<sup>14</sup>Horacio Barreda published a series of articles titled "Studies on Feminism" in the *Revista Positiva* in 1909, in which he argued that woman's entrance to industry degraded them.

<sup>15</sup>See Speckman Guerra's article for a discussion of literary representations of Porfirian women.

<sup>16</sup>As Porter explains:

[p]ublic discourse on woman's entrance into factories began in the early nineteenth century as a discussion about changing gender roles. "Mixing the sexes," as many referred to it, posed a moral danger [...] the existence of working woman served as metaphor in the service of class distinction. (50)

<sup>17</sup>Many in Porfirian Mexico held fast to traditional concepts of femininity and family:

[a]lgunos de los estereotipos que manejaron los Positivistas, los liberales e incluso los socialistas mexicanos influenciados significativamente por Proudhon fueron: el eterno femenino y la debilidad de la mujer. Es decir, la visión dicotómica que consideraba como verdad científica la división entre lo biológico y lo cultural, lo privado y lo público, lo inferior necesariamente sujeto a lo superior; la mujer correspondía a la primera parte del binomio y al varón la segunda. (Saloma Gutiérrez 10)

<sup>18</sup>Even those who promoted women's education during the Porfiriato—like Gabino Barreda—"conceb[ía] la familia como la condición fundamental de existencia de la sociedad, incluso llega a afirmar que la sociedad se compone de familias y no de individuos [...]. Barreda pensaba que la verdadera libertad de las mujeres consistía en que no fueran esclavizadas ni oprimidas por el trabajo fuera de su hogar. (11-12)

<sup>19</sup>“Al incorporar a las mujeres de los sectores populares al mundo del trabajo, en la práctica rompieron con esto modelos de mujer y de familia” (Saloma Gutiérrez 6). García Díaz explains:

La mecanización de la industria trajo consigo la incorporación de las mujeres y los niños al proceso fabril y el alargamiento de la jornada hasta más de 14 horas, y contribuyó así a la desintegración de los lazo familiares, pues redujo la vida familiar a las horas de comer, de dormir y [...] a los domingos porque normalmente ése era el día que el obrero dedicaba a sus amigos. (68)

<sup>20</sup>See Reyes for a historical study of the early cinema in Mexico.

<sup>21</sup>See Mraz’s text (especially Chapter 1) for a study of visual culture during the Porfiriato.

<sup>22</sup>Besides González Navarro, see: “Los espectáculos y la criminalidad.” *La Voz de México*. 26 July 1900 1 Print. Also, an untitled article in *El País* from 23 February, 1910, describes tandas audiences as comprised of “viejos verdes” and “libertinos.” Also “La pornología en la escena.” *La Voz de México*. October 13, 1908 1 Print.

<sup>23</sup>See Reyes for the rise of cinema in Mexico. The reaction on part of the moral authority was also significant, and sometimes cinemas that persisted in showing immoral film were shuttered. This anxiety over the passions and lasciviousness of cinemas lasted into Revolutionary times. See, for instance: “Llévame al Cine, Mamá [...]” *Multicolor*. September 19, 1912 1 Print. The article laments the immorality of the cine.

<sup>24</sup>See Salado Álvarez’s 1909 publication *Sobre la inmoralidad en la literatura: disertación compuesta*.

<sup>25</sup>Cosío Villegas mentions the obscene cigarette wrappers: “El presidente de la República y la sociedad protectora de la moral pública y doméstica, pidieron a los fabricantes de cigarros retiraran de la circulación las estampas obscenas” (413).

<sup>26</sup>A more complete citation from Campo may be worthwhile here:

El gobierno del Distrito Federal ordenó en 1903 la consignación de quienes en lugares públicos se entregaran “a exclamaciones y ademanes contrarios a las buenas costumbres.” También se combatió con energía, aunque no siempre con buen éxito, la literatura pornográfica. Lo cierto es que el

pudor pasaba por una crisis. Antes, los desnudos artísticos eran cosas de Inquisición; en el último tercio del siglo XIX se veía con naturalidad que circularan entre toda clase de personas. Antes, rara vez se encontraba la huella del arte en un desnudo; en el Porfiriato los más de los desnudos se consideraban artísticos. (60)

<sup>27</sup>In Chapter 4, we learn that Guadalupe “exhaló el último suspiro” (12) a few minutes after Father González performed the last rites for Guadalupe. In the tightly-knit community, “se hablaba de todo” [...] “y de si Carmen, la infeliz huérfana, era o no el vivo retrato de doña Lolita Ortiz” (14). This debate was a hot topic for the positivist-minded society of Porfirian-era Mexico. See González Ascencio and the dissertation by Weatherhead.

<sup>28</sup>See “Calandria” in RAE: “Persona que se finge enferma para tener vivienda y comida en un hospital.” Sánchez Mora says “calandrias” are known for “cobardía y debilidad” (147). Finally, Pérez notes that the Mexican expression “desde lejos se conoce el pájaro que es calandria” is a [r]efrán popular cuyo sentido paremiológico descansa en la expresión “desde lejos se conoce” cuyo objeto es el ancho mundo de los pendejos” (336).

<sup>29</sup>Magdalena is herself being supported financially by the renegade journalist, and one of *El Radical*’s head newspapermen, Don Juan Jurado (13), and thus goes about dressed in salacious clothing (57).

<sup>30</sup>No tenía sueño: de buena gana se hubiera ido a vagar, sin rumbo, por calles y plazas. (104)

<sup>31</sup>“-¡Eso! ¿Sabes por qué es todo eso,

Enrique? Porque Gabriel siempre está leyendo novelas, y las historias ésas ponen a las gentes como locas [...]. El día menos pensado te envenenas con fósforos. Yo por eso no leo nada.

-Tú dirás, Tacho: el otro día llegó éste, bravo como un torito de Atenco.. ¿Sabes por qué? Porque en las entregas que estaba leyendo había una muchacha tísica que se enamoró de un oficial, y el soldadito se burló de ella, la abandonó después, y [...]. ¡ojos que te vieron ir! Parecía la mera verdad, que era cierto, y que la muchacha era algo de éste. Y estaba furioso [...] se quería comer crudo al oficial. Ya se ve, éste es de los que lloran en las comedias. Ya te vas pareciendo a Magdalena [...]” (86)

<sup>32</sup>González explains to Ortiz, “Usted sabe muy bien que hay periodistas que viven de comer curas” (199).

<sup>33</sup>“A diferencia de muchas novelas realistas francesas, en donde los sacerdotes son los representantes del pasado, de lo retrograde [...] en La calandria estos papeles son precisamente los opuestos” (Sandoval 1999, 194).

<sup>34</sup>He (the Father) refers to this new ‘science’ as “magia moderna” (10). Both the reader and the Father are in on the joke, and understand Eduardo Ortiz’s spectacular aloofness; he however, entrenched in his ways, simply does not get it. See Schraeder for complete study of the spiritist movement in Mexico, which would be popularized on the national level with Francisco I. Madero’s presidency in 1911.

<sup>35</sup>Only González divines that El Radical’s melifluous words are not sweet, but rather, sour: “El clérigo, perdido en las escabrosidades de la prosa olímpica del tinterillo, olvidaba que algo y no almíbar, traía para su persona aquel periódico” (197).

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