

***Novelar a lo santo?* Reimagining the Spanish Inquisition and its Relationship with Golden-age Exemplary Short Fiction (ESF)**

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In 1965, Henry Kamen published his groundbreaking *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision*. This work revolutionised scholarly understanding of an institution which in northern Europe had for four centuries been maligned as ruthless, pervasive and oppressive. Kamen's enduring contributions are demonstrated by the fact that his study has now enjoyed four editions, with the latest published in 2014. Kamen argues that even the most extensive Inquisitorial *Índices* of 1583 and 1640 "were not by their nature repressive weapons, and served more to dissuade Spaniards from reading foreign authors whom none but a few could have read anyway." (Kamen 2014, 133). Kamen's landmark study has since led to further investigations into an array of aspects relating to Inquisitorial practice: he argues that Inquisitorial censorship of imaginative fiction was generally sparse, and Ángela Morales Tenorio observed in 2010 that the Inquisition was "bastante templada" in its censorial approach towards the *novela* (Morales Tenorio 2010, 105). However, a holistic analysis of the institution's approach towards a genre which may be most accurately referred to as exemplary short fiction (ESF) has not yet been attempted.

Tracing its origins back to the scurrilous fourteenth- and sixteenth-century *novelle* of Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) and Matteo Bandello (c.1480-1562) respectively, native Spanish exemplary short fiction has its roots in Miguel de Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares* (1613), which did not adopt the Italianate convention of a frame-story. Cervantes' work was followed by a suite of collections of usually-framed short stories, the most intensively-studied of which are María de Zayas y Sotomayor's *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares* (1637) and her *Desengaños amorosos* (1647), but also include Juan Pérez de Montalbán's lesser-known unframed *Sucesos y prodigios de amor* (1624), a collection of eight *novelas* which achieved similar success in terms of number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century editions. The present article seeks to examine the Inquisitorial censorship of ESF (or more accurately, lack thereof), arguing that the *Santo Oficio*'s approach was highly theologically-pedantic and largely unconcerned with topics such as *buenas costumbres*, even if its *Índices* claimed otherwise. Overall, it will argue that ESF constituted a vehicle of creative expression which was able to evade Inquisitorial barriers, publish theologically-challenging material and address social taboos.

Despite the publication of the extensive *Índice de Zapata* in 1632, Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares* was never subject to either state censorship (which was normally carried out pre-publication) or Inquisitorial censorship (which normally occurred post-publication). This *Índice* censored just one work of ESF (the dénouement of 'La mayor confusión', a *novela* in Montalbán's *Sucesos y prodigios de amor*), as well as a small number of short phrases in three dialogue-based miscellanies (*misceláneas dialogadas*) from the first decade of the 1600s, albeit not the intercalated *novelas*. These included Agustín de Rojas Villandrando's *El viaje entretenido* (1603), Gaspar Lucas Hidalgo's *Diálogos de apacible entretenimiento* (1603/4) and Antonio de Eslava's *Noches de invierno* (1609), none of which were censored previously in the *Índice de Sandoval* of 1612 (Mechtild 2015).

A systematic review of both paratextual aspects of *Sucesos y prodigios* as well as Inquisitorial orders to prohibit and expurgate the previously-mentioned works in the *Índice de Zapata* is necessary in order to understand the theologically single-minded approach the Inquisition took towards censorship of ESF. The most intensively-studied is the expurgation and ultimate prohibition of the dénouement to 'La mayor confusión' through three rare

Inquisitorial *censuras* in 1626, 1629 and 1630, which Victor Dixon explored in a seminal 1958 article (Dixon 1958). This *novela* is a flagrant story of incest, perhaps (in the minds of twenty-first-century readers) one of the most extreme examples in all Spanish golden-age cultural production. In the 1624 princeps of *Sucesos y prodigios de amor*, a mother (Casandra) seduces her son (Félix), bearing a daughter (Diana), whose identity she hides from her son. Félix, meeting Diana at a later stage and both being unaware that they were both father and daughter and biological siblings, marry and live happily together.

An analysis of paratextual aspects may help to explain why *Sucesos y prodigios* escaped pre-publication censorship entirely and avoided Inquisitorial attention for two years post-publication. The legally-required preliminaries to *SPA* were granted in less than four months, compared to the year which elapsed between the granting of the *Novelas ejemplares*' first *aprobación* and the signing of its *tasa*, demonstrating the relative ease with which Montalbán's work was published. Sebastián de Mesa, whom Montalbán describes as "cura de San Justo, comisario del Santo Oficio y varón de gran talento y lección continua", granted the ecclesiastical *aprobación* for *SPA* on 27th February 1624, and makes a similarly conventional claim to exemplarity to that found in the *aprobaciones* to the Cervantes' collection: "no hallo en él cosa contra nuestra santa fe católica y buenas costumbres, antes lo ejemplar está tratado con decoro, buen lenguaje y elegante estilo" (Giuliani 1992, 3). This formulaic statement, which echoes Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo's *aprobación* in the *Novelas ejemplares* in particular, accompanies Lope de Vega's *censura* of 8th March 1624, which he completed at the behest of the *Consejo Supremo de la Inquisición* (Giuliani 1992, 3).

Lope's *censura* also frames the exemplarity of *SPA* in terms of its inoffensiveness: "No tienen cosa alguna en todo su discurso que disuene a nuestra fe ni a las buenas costumbres." The dramatist also emphasises the *prodesse* aspect of *SPA* whilst minimising its *delectare* function, asserting that "el estilo es elegante, sentencioso y grave, con muchos avisos y reprehensiones para todas edades; y donde particularmente puede ver como en espejo muchos discretos ejemplos la corta experiencia de los tiernos años". Additionally, Montalbán's mentor quotes Horace's *Ars poetica* directly, arguing that *SPA*'s exemplarity is grounded in its adherence to the principles of verisimilitude: "en acercarse a la verdad los excede, por el precepto horaciano que *ficta voluptatis causa, sint proxima veris*." Finally, Lope states that *SPA* is also worthy of a *licencia* because of its value to the honour of the Castilian language: "que en este tiempo importan mucho libros que vuelvan por la honra de la lengua castellana, tan ofendida en la prosa de voces y locuciones violentas." Luigi Giuliani interprets the phrase "prosa de voces y locuciones violentas" as an allusion to the *culteranismo* against which Lope and his supporters were fighting at the time of publication (Giuliani, 1992, 4), but the quotation as a whole also ties into well-established seventeenth-century notions that fiction should contribute towards Castilian's linguistic exemplarity.

Lope's approval, unlike Mesa's and the *aprobaciones* to the *NE*, therefore goes beyond legal obligations, ringfencing *SPA* behind a façade that not only incorporates the standard requirements for book publication (protection of the faith and *buenas costumbres*), but which also frames the collection's exemplarity in terms of three other topical notions of early-seventeenth-century Spain: that fiction should instruct; that it should be verisimilar; and that it should be linguistically exemplary. Lope's embellishment of this legally-required preliminary text into a protective barrier around the exemplarity of *SPA* sets the tone for the seven discretionary laudatory poems which follow. All of these ostensibly laud Montalbán, but also praise Lope to such an extent that he could be considered the primary beneficiary of these odes. The first of these is written by Montalbán's mentor himself, but the second (by Joseph de Valdivieso) also attributes the quality of Montalbán's writing to his association with Lope: "Las locuciones floridas, / Las elegantes purezas, / las delgadas agudezas / y las dulzuras lucidas / admiro en ti, traducidas / de Lope." Tirso de Molina, author of the fourth laudatory poem,

makes an explicit link between mentor and disciple through a metaphor: “Su memoria inmortalizas, / porque cuando Fénix quede todo fama, en ti se herede / el parto de sus cenizas”, whereas “Anarda” (the poet Ana Castro Egas) also attributes Montalbán’s success to Lope’s nurturing: “Heliodoro sois y Apolo / de aquesta verde floresta, / planta, en fin, de Lope puesta, / Lope, Fénix, sol y solo.” The other three laudatory poems (by D. Gutierre, marquess of Careaga; the poet Frutos de León Tapia (1588-1626) and Francisco de Quintana, a friend of the author) also emphasise Montalbán’s exemplary qualities, often linking the perceived quality of *SPA* with the writer’s young age at the time of publication. Overall, the seven laudatory poems build upon Lope’s *censura*, and demonstrate that the extent to which an author could call upon friends and contacts to exalt the exemplarity of a work could enable it to (at least temporarily) bypass official forms of censorship.

Lope’s praise-giving *censura* and the multiple laudatory poems are not unprecedented within the ESF genre, but Montalbán’s decision to include a lengthy dedication of each of the eight *novelas* of *SPA* themselves to a different individual is a strategy unique to the author. The first story, ‘La hermosa Aurora’, is dedicated to the poet Francisco de Borja (1582?-1658); the second, ‘La fuerza del desengaño’, to the Benedictine friar Plácido de Tosantos (1562-1624); the third, ‘El envidioso castigado’, to Pedro de Tapia, *oidor* of the *Consejo Real* and Inquisitorial official (1582-1657); the fourth, ‘La mayor confusión’, to Lope de Vega himself; the fifth, ‘La villana de Pinto’, to the previously-mentioned don Gutierre, marquess of Careaga; the sixth, ‘La desgraciada amistad’, to Juan del Castillo, secretary to Philip III; the seventh, ‘Los primos amantes’, to the previously-mentioned Francisco de Quintana; and the eighth, ‘La prodigiosa’, to Antonio Domingo de Bobadilla, *veinticuatro* (viceroys) of Seville.

The eight *novelas* are therefore addressed to a wide range of prominent figures of early-seventeenth-century Castile. The dedication of ‘El envidioso castigado’ to an official working in both state and Inquisitorial capacities, as well as ‘La prodigiosa’ to a state figure, indicate Montalbán’s wish to ingratiate himself with both authorities, thereby minimising the likelihood of *SPA* becoming a target of pre-publication or post-publication censorship. However, the dedication of ‘La mayor confusión’ to Lope is the most interesting, since it is particularly likely to have been one Montalbán made at least partially out of fear of later Inquisitorial attention. In this *dedicatoria*, Montalbán complains that his critics often falsely attribute his works to his mentor (“pensando deslucir algunas obras mías y viéndose convencidos a que están escritas con acierto, se las atribuyen a v. m.”), and expresses his wish that this *novela*, which he claims is based on a real-life occurrence (“cuyo caso tiene mucha parte de verdad”), be recognised as his own. Montalbán therefore seeks Lope’s protection, although he laments “ya no me espanto que a mí me atropellen, siendo una hormiga”. If Montalbán’s real fear was to become an Inquisitorial target, the strategy of dedicating ‘La mayor confusión’ to his own mentor and signatory of the *censura* worked temporarily.

If the laudatory poems and *dedicatorias* included in *SPA* are analysed with reference to Mesa’s *aprobación* and Lope’s *censura*, it becomes apparent that these paratexts complement the legally-required preliminaries; and together, that they form a protective barrier around the exemplarity of the collection. This strategy - whether conscious or unconscious on Montalbán’s part - was at first highly effective, since *SPA* successfully evaded pre-publication censorship, and just two days after Lope wrote his *censura* the Castilian *privilegio* was granted on 10th March 1624, followed on 6th June by the *fe de erratas* in which Francisco Murcia de la Llana states that he found no discrepancies between the *original de imprenta* and the printed copy. Finally, the *tasa* was signed on 12th June 1624, which constituted the final approval required to publish *Sucesos y prodigios*.

If the goal of the paratextual contributions of Montalbán’s mentor and friends was to emphasise the exemplarity of *SPA* and to protect it from censorship, the author himself seems largely unconcerned with signalling its virtues in his author’s prologue. Like Cervantes,

Montalbán distances himself from the *novelle* tradition, asserting that “no tiene parte en ellas ni Boccaccio ni otro autor extranjero”, and avoids telling the reader what his *novelas* contain, merely stating “Ellas te dirán lo que son, y de ti fio que las darás lo que merecieren.” This evasive approach is reminiscent of the *NE*’s reluctance to define its own exemplarity in the Prologue, but the similarities to the Cervantine collection are superficial, and do not extend to complex metaphors (as in the prologue to the *NE*) or satire of the conventions of the prologue genre (as in the prologue to *Don Quixote*). Overall, Montalbán’s prologue complies with the *captatio benevolentiae* readers expected of this type of paratext, with the author taking a humble, even self-deprecating attitude towards his own collection: “Lector amigo [...] Lo que te suplico es que si hallares algunos defetos así en el estilo como en la sustancia, los mires piadosamente, disculpándome contigo los pocos años”. Montalbán’s prologue to *SPA* is therefore a conventional device which exists in the ‘afterglow’ of the *NE* but which does not perform the same indispensable framing function to the one found in Cervantes’ collection.

As previously mentioned, ‘La mayor confusión’ - perhaps because *Sucesos y prodigios* was afforded temporary protection by Montalbán’s creation of an exemplary ‘cordon sanitaire’ around his work - was surprisingly not censored by the *Consejo de Castilla* pre-publication, and for two years after the Inquisition requested Lope de Vega, Montalbán’s mentor, to write one of the *aprobaciones* to the work, received no further Inquisitorial attention. The first *censura* of 21st October 1626 condemns the dénouement to ‘La mayor confusión’; the second of 11th August 1629 reveals a theologically-pedantic approach towards six short phrases in the same *novela*; and the third of 11th January 1630 responds to a now-lost piece by Montalbán defending the censored passages, attacking Félix and Diana’s marriage once more. In the first *censura*, Fray Juan de San Agustín of a former monastery named San Felipe de Madrid states:

[La final de ‘La mayor confusión’ es] notoria[mente] de Doctrina falsa, y escandalosa, contra la constitución moral de las conciencias: porque sobre manifiesta nullidad de matrimonio se dan por licitos los accesos carnales: lo qual también es doctrina temeraria por la contrauención al común sentir de todos los Doctores, y tiene parte de lujuriosa en quanto se atribuye a Religiosos de la Compañía y Catedráticos de Salamanca y Alcalá. (Díaz 1948, 1-2).

Arguing that —contrary to what the monks Félix consulted had advised him in the *novela*— doctrine rendered Félix and Diana’s marriage null and void based on their blood relationship, Fray Juan then orders that the dénouement to the *novela* be expurgated (“lo que va rayado se debe expurgar”). However, Fray Juan did not request that the *novela* as a whole be prohibited, which does not correspond with stipulations made in Inquisitorial *Reglas* incorporated from the 1564 Tridentine Roman Index of Prohibited Books into its own *Índice* of 1612, and repeated in later *Índices* including that of 1632 in which *Sucesos y prodigios de amor* appeared (Sanchez 1612). *Regla VII* of the 1564 Roman *Índice* dealt with sexual morality, explicitly prohibiting “lo lascivo” and “lo obsceno contra la fe y contra los costumbres”. In this respect, it is surprising that Fray Juan did not simply order the prohibition of ‘La mayor confusión’, and is the first indicator of an Inquisition which took an inconsistent approach towards *buenas costumbres* in exemplary short fiction. Later in his *censura*, Fray Juan comments “aun si V.A. lo manda ver todo atentamente podrían ocurrir otros defectos que no se deban tolerar”, demonstrating that he did not review Montalbán’s work thoroughly, and delegates the systematic scrutiny of the collection to others.

Montalbán would only make a minor concession to Fray Juan, revising the dénouement to ‘La mayor confusión’ for the 1628 third edition of *SPA* merely to state that Félix did not have to believe his mother Casandra about his familial relationship with Diana, and that he could therefore continue to live with his wife. In the meantime, Montalbán had obtained a

doctorate in Theology in 1626 at Alcalá de Henares (Dixon 1958, 21), demonstrating that despite having extensive knowledge of doctrine, he did not feel the ending to his *novela* needed to be amended in line with Fray Juan's *censura*. It appears that in slightly amending the dénouement Montalbán at least temporarily placated the Inquisition, for it would be three more years until the next *censura* of 'La mayor confusión' would be written by another representative of the institution, Fray Gabriel López. Basing his arguments on somewhat-thin support from theological principles, López ordered that just six phrases be expurgated from four of the eight *novelas*.

The first of these is to be found in 'La hermosa Aurora', where López condemns the phrase "aunque sea verdad que lo que no se ha visto ni tratado no puede amarse" because "esta proposición [es] absoluta[mente] pronunciada además de ser falsa en philosophia; pues aunque dice el Philosopho *nihil volitum qui precognitum* basta relación y notiçia de otros para q[ue] amemos una cosa como lo enseña la experi[encia]." The second phrase is located in the same *novela*: "para que con esta ocasión se dejase ver la deidad", which López expurgates because "Proposición es esta mal sonante, y escandalosa [...] puede dar ocaasión de ruina espiritual atribuyendo Deidad a una criatura." Third, in 'El envidioso castigo', López attacks the phrase "La voluntad se precia de tan libre que apenas el cielo la sujeta" because "tomando aq[uella] palabra çielo por lo material y orbe celeste de ninguna manera el çielo puede sujetar a la voluntad y lo contrario es error, por[que] de él solamente dependen las causas naturales y no las libres." Fourth, in 'La villana de Pinto', López opined that the phrase "apenas un hijo que le dio al cielo pisó los umbrales de la vida cuando acrecentó el número a los ángeles" was unacceptable because "supuesto q[ue] qu[ando] naçe un niño no sale [crist]iano del vientre de su madre, ni en gracias de Dios, sino en pecado original, es esta dura proposición y escandalosa." Fifth, in 'la desgraciada amistad', López condemned the phrase "si no me acordase que nací cristiano me hubiera hechado sobre mi propia espada" as he believed it was "p[ro]posición dura y escandalosa y conuiene en su lugar decir *si no me acordara q[ue] nazi de Padres [crist]ianos o que soy [crist]iano.*" Last, in the same *novela*, the friar advised the expurgation of the phrase "y juntamente dio la mano de esposo, y llamando en su ayuda al cielo y a la Virgen" because "aquel darse las manos (según el contexto de la Novela) no fué legitimo desposorio, sino junta de amor torpe".¹

López' theologically-pedantic approach towards the expurgation of *Sucesos y prodigios de amor* demonstrates that he was primarily concerned with the upholding of Christian doctrine, the traditional preserve of the Inquisition since its establishment, but was largely unconcerned with issues of *buenas costumbres*, including sexual morality. Given the multiple examples of incest both in 'La mayor confusión' and 'Los primos amantes', the latter of which relates a love story between cousins, the fact that López sought to single out these particular phrases provides further evidence of a gap between Inquisitorial theory (as expressed in the *Reglas* in its *Índices*) and practice. A year later in 1630, however, the same Fray Juan de San Agustín who had written the first *censura* in 1626 prohibited the ending to 'La mayor confusión', and referred the matter to Juan de Pineda (1558-1637), who held the post of *catedrático de Escriturística de los Estudios Reales de Madrid* and who added more than 1,000 works to Inquisitorial indices during his term of office (Díaz 1948, 5).

In 1632, *SPA* would be included in the *Índice de Zapata*, which prohibited the dénouement to 'La mayor confusión': "se quite desde [...] *Puso fin al papel don Félix*, hasta el fin de la Novela. Y que conforme a estas se deve corregir las demas impresiones." (Zapata 1632). The *Índice* made no mention of the six phrases which Fray López had identified for expurgation, which Montalbán never removed or changed. Neither would Montalbán ever fully

¹ All these phrases (which are extracts of the full text) are taken from Díaz, 'Los *Sucesos y prodigios de amor*', pp.2-4.

obey the mandate to prohibit the ending to ‘La mayor confusión’: he revised the ending to ‘La mayor confusión’ twice more for the 1633 and 1635 editions of SPA, but neither obey the 1632 index’s mandate to omit it entirely. In the 1633 edition, Félix tells Diana the truth of the incestuous nature of their relationship, dies from grief after twenty days, and his wife enters a convent; and in the 1635 edition, Félix approaches the more-vague “hombres doctos” for advice, then lives out his life with a clean conscience. Although the order to prohibit the ending featured on all subsequent Inquisitorial *Índices* until the final one of 1790, editions with the respective endings to ‘La mayor confusión’ of the 1628, 1633 and 1635 editions continued to circulate freely, and printer-booksellers did not begin to omit it until after the publication of the *Índice* of 1707, demonstrating that the Inquisition lacked the power to enforce its own mandates.

Whilst Montalbán’s collaborative and transactional relationship with the Spanish Inquisition provides further evidence that the *Santo Oficio* was not the ruthlessly-repressive institution scholarship once considered it to be, the most surprising aspect of the saga is that the author was appointed *notario* of the Inquisition in 1633 (Dixon 1958, 21). It was therefore not necessarily the case that Inquisitorial censorship of one’s own writings would close the door to future employment by the same institution, which demonstrates that the Inquisition was tolerant and flexible in its recruitment practices.

A similarly-tolerant approach may be seen in the Inquisition’s approach towards the previously-mentioned other three works containing ESF which featured on the 1632 *Índice de Zapata*. Mechtild Albert argues that the decision of the Inquisition in the *Índice* of 1632 to prohibit publication of Hidalgo’s *Diálogos de apacible entretenimiento* (1603/4) entirely is indicative of the aforementioned definitive shift in Inquisitorial thinking in the 1630s “desde los malos saberes y proposiciones heréticas a las *buenas costumbres* y al buen gusto”, or in other words from a rigid emphasis on censoring specific topics such as witchcraft and astrology (*malos saberes*) and theologically-problematic content to expurgating more general but less well-defined notions of moral decency (the previously-mentioned *buenas costumbres*) (Albert 2015, 43). Surprisingly, Seville cleric Sebastián Vicente had denounced the *Diálogos* to the Inquisition as early as 1609 because it offended both religion and *buenas costumbres*: its third chapter featured “una cena con entretenimientos de chistes y dichos blasfemos y escandalosos”, but Vicente also argued that “todo el dicho libro a cada paso cuenta deshonestos y chistes para enseñar a motejar de loco, y otras cosas contra buenas costumbres en que se ofende nuestra Santa Religión Christiana” (Alonso Asenjo, Madroñal 2010, 26-7). This complaint was seemingly ignored by the Inquisition, which permitted the title to be re-edited two more times with a final edition in 1618, demonstrating that the Inquisition of the 1610s did not necessarily act on *denuncias* and that it appeared unconcerned at this time about *Diálogos*’ threat to religion and *buenas costumbres*.

Even when censoring material it considered to be offensive to religion or sexual morality, the Inquisition’s approach towards Rojas’ *El viaje entretenido* reveals a largely-inconsistent practice. Its *loas* (short dramatic pieces) had already attracted limited pre-publication censorship by a certain Fray Agustín Osorio because they contained “algunas cosas, no tan honestas y requetadas como pide el decoro Cristiano”, (Cayuela 1996, 22). but new editions of the work were still issued in 1604, 1611 (two editions), 1614, 1615, 1624 and 1625 (Pierre Ressot 1972, 36). The twenty expurgations applied to Rojas’ work in the 1632 *Índice de Zapata* were repeated in the *Índices* of 1640 and 1667 and in all eighteenth-century *Índices*. No expurgations were made to the text of the only *novela* (‘cuento de Leonardo y Camila’) intercalated within the miscellany structure of *El viaje entretenido*. Further inconsistencies may be observed in these twenty expurgations. Jacques Joset observes that, whilst they did target passages offensive to the Christian religion and *buenas costumbres*, the censors of *El viaje entretenido* “borraban cosas sin importancia en cuanto a doctrina y moralidad” while leaving

passages such as an irreverent play on words about bishops untouched (Joset 1977, 205). Overall, the Inquisition's approach towards *El viaje entretenido* is similar to that taken in *Sucesos y prodigios de amor*, one which expurgated rather than prohibited, and whose logic in choosing what to censor is often hard to determine.

Even when censoring a specific topic such as necromancy (outlined in *Regla VIII* to the 1632 *Índice de Zapata*, which ordered the prohibition of all works containing necromancy and other “malos saberes”), a discrepancy between theory and practice may be observed in Inquisitorial approaches to censorship. The *Índice de Zapata* ordered just five small expurgations to Antonio de Eslava's *Noches de invierno* (1606). Ángel Alcalá provides further detail:

Uno trata de la quema de la librería del marqués de Villena a mediados del XIV por orden de don Lope de Barrientos, obispo de Cuenca; otro elimina la calificación «gran nigromántico»; otro tacha ciertas normas para facilitar el embarazo, y se mandan borrar palabras como hada, hados, de las que este texto abusa (Alcalá 2001, 113).

As with sexually-immoral matters, the 1632 *Índice* had ordered that works containing necromancy be prohibited (“prohibense totalmente”) rather than merely expurgated, demonstrating once again that the Inquisition in practice only partially adhered to its own *Reglas*. In other works of ESF, however, such as María de Zayas' previously-mentioned *Desengaños amorosos* (1647), the more-extensive treatment of necromancy featuring both real and false necromancers was never expurgated by the Inquisition, illustrating that Inquisitorial practice was inconsistent between works of ESF as well as within individual titles.

The delayed Inquisitorial prohibition of Hidalgo's *Diálogos* and expurgation of Rojas' and Eslava's miscellanies, which occurred in 1632 rather than the first decades of the 1600s when they were published, is perhaps more understandable when one considers that it happened during a state suppression of new *novelas* introduced by the *Junta de Reformación* in 1625 which would last until 1634. Although the ban applied only to new collections rather than reprints, it is plausible in this anti-*novela* climate that the Inquisition would make a tokenistic attempt to target a handful of works from the previous reign of Philip III. However, rather than transforming, as Julio Alonso Asenjo and Abraham Madroñal propose, post-1632 into “*definitivamente* en tribunal censor de la moralidad colectiva” (my italics) (Alonso Asenjo, Madroñal 2010, 27), the Inquisition continued to display an indifferent attitude towards ESF as evidenced by the absence of public statements or censorship of the genre in subsequent *Índices*. The inconsistency of Inquisitorial censorship of ESF paints a picture of an organisation whose primary concern was the upholding of doctrine, and although the censorship of Rojas' and Eslava's works demonstrates a limited interest in protecting *buenas costumbres*, individual representatives of the *Santo Oficio* were highly-inconsistent and inefficient in applying Inquisitorial *Reglas*.

Whilst the previous study of the few examples of Inquisitorial censorship of ESF has made key points about its theory and practice, a survey of works which were not targeted by the institution also has potential to enlighten us further about the functioning of the organisation. However extreme Montalbán's ‘La mayor confusión’ may be, its choice of subject matter was not an isolated case. Enrique García Santo-Tomás highlights that incest was not an uncommon theme in the short story genre from the 1620s to the 1660s, citing multiple examples of works which address the topic, including another love affair between two cousins in Gonzalo de Céspedes y Meneses' *Los dos Mendozas* (1623); a relationship between stepmother and stepson in Alonso de Castillo Solórzano's *El premio de la virtud* (1631); and even sexual desire between siblings in Andrés del Prado's *El señalado* (1663) (Santo-Tomás 2020, 82-3). Overall, Santo-Tomás argues that authors' treatment of incest, rather than being merely self-indulgent

excess, constituted “a self-reflexive trope to comment on both the state of the novel[a] and on the readership who promoted its growth” (Santo-Tomás 2020, 73). Whether used for its shock value or in a more sophisticated self-reflexive manner, this profusion of incest-related content during these four decades – which went totally uncensored by Inquisitorial authorities – demonstrates the Inquisition’s lack of interest in upholding *buenas costumbres* in ESF throughout the seventeenth century.

Another example of a taboo relating to sexual immorality is addressed by Cervantes in his *Novelas ejemplares*. In ‘La fuerza de la sangre’, Rodolfo rapes Leocadia, resulting in her becoming pregnant and giving birth to a son, and the pair later marry in what is presented as an exemplary resolution to the situation. This infamous incident was never censored by Inquisitorial authorities, most likely because, according to seventeenth-century doctrine and law, Rodolfo’s wedding to Leocadia exonerated him from punishment and resulted in both parties being forgiven for their sin of premarital sex (Lappin 2005, 160-62). Unlike in Montalbán’s ‘La mayor confusión’, where the consanguinity of Félix and Diana directly infringed Christian doctrine, in ‘La fuerza de la sangre’, no theological principles were breached. Whilst perhaps shocking to a twenty-first-century reader, when the Inquisition is conceived of as an institution primarily concerned with upholding doctrine, it is therefore understandable why it did not censor Cervantes’ *novela*; and rather than merely prohibiting ‘La mayor confusión’ as a whole, was only concerned with censoring the dénouement where father-daughter and brother-sister live happily together in marriage.

To conclude, through studying the only four seventeenth-century works which contained ESF to be censored by the Spanish Inquisition during the seventeenth century, this study has demonstrated that the institution’s approach was highly-inconsistent, and that there was often a discrepancy between Inquisitorial *Reglas* and censorial practice. In the case of censorship of Montalbán’s *Sucesos y prodigios de amor*, a transactional and collaborative approach between author and Inquisition may be observed in which Montalbán, rather than merely obeying Inquisitorial orders, made several minor concessions to the institution’s demands to censor the dénouement to ‘La mayor confusión’ in the guise of three alternative endings. The three *cenaduras* made by representatives of the Inquisition reveal a highly theologically-pedantic approach which was single-mindedly concerned with the upholding of doctrine, and which explains why the theologically-acceptable incidents such as the rape of Leocadia by Rodolfo and their subsequent marriage in Cervantes’ ‘La fuerza de la sangre’ went uncensored. Overall, there are many examples of content in the ESF genre which challenge *buenas costumbres* but were not filtered out either by the state pre-publication or the Inquisition post-publication. This suggests that ESF was a means of creative expression which, given the general lack of interest in the genre on the part of the *Santo Oficio*, could evade Inquisitorial barriers, publish material which offended doctrine, and address taboos which even twenty-first-century readers would likely find morally unacceptable.

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