EMILY JOY CLARK

Rocambor, Malilla, and Matrimony: Gambling in Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera's Naturalist Novels

Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera, autora decimonónica peruana, produjo novelas populares como Blanca Sol *y* Las consecuencias*. Estos textos tradicionalmente han sido analizados desde la perspectiva de sus tropos naturalistas y su recepción polémica. Sin embargo, este ensayo demuestra que las novelas también emplean temas financieros, como las apuestas en juegos de cartas, para hacer preguntas sociales relacionadas con juegos amorosos, con las desigualdades de género en las relaciones amorosas y el trabajo, y con la economía peruana. La crítica no ha explorado lo suficiente los juegos de cartas y de amor en estas novelas y cómo crean paralelos con las desigualdades económicas y sociales dentro de un ambiente naturalista.*

Palabras clave: *Perú, siglo diecinueve, finanzas, juego, mujer*

Nineteenth-century Peruvian author Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera produced widely-read novels such as Blanca Sol *and* Las consecuencias*. These texts have traditionally been analyzed in conjunction with her polemical reception by contemporaries and their naturalist depictions. However, this paper demonstrates that the novels also employ financial topics, such as gambling, to raise larger social questions surrounding games of love, gender inequalities in relationships and the workforce, and the Peruvian economy. Cabello de Carbonera's representation of gambling and love games in parallel to social and economic inequalities has not been sufficiently explored by critics and connects directly to other naturalist tropes in her fiction.*

Keywords: *Peru, nineteenth century, finances, gambling, women*

In several of her popular novels, particularly *Blanca Sol* (1888) and *Las consecuencias* (1889), Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera (1842-1909) leverages financial speculation and gambling as symbolic activities highlighting national fiscal anxieties and the gender inequalities present in nineteenth-century Peruvian society. These texts, which depict the downfall of their female protagonists as a result of pecuniary mismanagement in their romantic relationships, elucidate monetary concerns in Peru after the War

of the Pacific, changing views on luck, love, and leisure, and on structural inequities for women in the workforce. Although Cabello de Carbonera primarily considers women of higher socioeconomic status in these novels, she reveals a broader societal problem of women's limited options for earning money. In the serial novels *Blanca Sol* and *Las consecuencias*, the female characters are left with few possibilities when they or their husbands push their families to financial ruin through gambling and wasteful spending. I argue that gambling emphasizes Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera's concerns with the economy and women's minimal financial power, and parallels games of the heart in marriage, love, and prostitution, making this trope a marker of women's roles in relationships and society. Although Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera's naturalist novels are widely read, further analysis of key symbols in her fiction is needed. This study thus endeavors to advance scholarship on Cabello de Carbonera's fiction by scrutinizing textual representations of gambling and games to reveal their relationship to romance, women's work, and economics.

Mercedes Cabello's creative use of the gambling motif is likely linked to her biography and her socio-cultural context. The seminal author was born in Moquegua, Peru, where she spent her youth reading books from her father's library and taking private lessons in French and other subjects. As her leading biographer Ismael Pinto Vargas notes, Cabello's good but limited education provided her with the tools for her writing, which was also partly self-taught (98).[1] When she came of age, Cabello moved to Lima, where she advanced her literary career and met her husband, Urbano Carbonera. Her new spouse was a "jugador contumaz y mujeriego infatigable," according to oral tradition that Pinto Vargas chronicles (589). The couple separated as a result of Urbano Carbonera's infidelity and reckless spending, and this likely influenced Cabello de Carbonera's later work (Pinto Vargas 81).

Cabello de Carbonera nurtured her interests in writing despite her difficult situation at home, and she was soon inducted into distinguished literary clubs. Her popularity grew through an affiliation with Juana Manuela Gorriti's *Veladas literarias* and the prestigious *Ateneo de Lima*, a prominent group of *Limeño* writers.[2] The author's compositions during the 1870s and 1880s on women's intelligence and education, such as "Estudio comparativo de la inteligencia y la belleza de la mujer" (1892) and "Necesidad de una industria para la mujer" (1875), were of particular importance for changing women's social scripts in upper-class Peruvian society.[3] Her earliest novel, *Sacrificio y recompensa* (1886), follows a more traditionally romantic plot line, but her later writings, such as the novels *Eleodora* (1887), later rewritten as *Las consecuencias* (1889), *Blanca Sol* (1888), and her final novel, *El conspirador* (1892), exhibited striking

naturalist and positivist sentiments. Cabello de Carbonera's disparate treatment by her contemporaries is cited by both critics and biographers. It is well known that, after suffering years of institutionalization in an asylum for the mentally ill, the author died in relative obscurity vis-à-vis the Peruvian intellectual world.[4] Her novels discuss taboo social topics for women writers at that time, such as politics, social class, prostitution, and gambling. While prostitution, women's education, and some other social concerns have been surveyed by scholars (see Ana Peluffo and Armanda Lewis), the ubiquitous theme of gambling in her novels has escaped thorough analysis.

Since gambling figures as a key plot device not only in Cabello de Carbonera's fiction but also in the works of other key authors of the period, it merits further consideration.[5] While Lee Skinner's instructive article "Material Lusts: Socio-economic Desires in Nineteenth-century Spanish America" examines the relationship between wealth differentials and matrimony in *Blanca Sol*, gambling is largely off the table in her analysis (804). Recently, I have argued elsewhere that anxieties about the danger of men's mismanagement of money appear in some fiction penned by Peruvian women during the 1880s to highlight their lack of financial power; namely, gambling and counterfeiting could place women at risk if they lacked work opportunities and skills (Clark, "Risky Business" 436-37). This idea plays out not only in texts by lesser-studied authors such as Teresa González de Fanning, whose fiction I have also analyzed, but also among heavyweight naturalist novelists, such as Clorinda Matto de Turner and Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera.[6] Finally, critics such as Martha Irene Gonzales Ascorra have described the role of gambling as a naturalist trope in *Las consecuencias* but have not thoroughly explored its symbolic meaning (110). Here, I will demonstrate that gambling functions in *Blanca Sol* and *Las consecuencias* to reveal women's unjust social and economic positions in a volatile economy, to expose the dangers that financial risks posed to them, and to draw connections between gambling and games of love through financially-driven marital or sexual arrangements.[7]

Various societal factors likely made gambling and finances topics of interest. Although they lacked control over family income, nineteenth-century housewives were expected to make judicious decisions about household expenses.[8] Catherine Davies, Claire Brewster, and Hilary Owen have described how women were beholden to their husbands' financial expenditures, although they still had to make ends meet (19). Ironically, while women were restricted from working in some trades, their household budgeting put them in a position of somewhat precarious financial responsibility, and these concerns appear in their textual products (Clark,

"Risky Business" 438). In her fiction, Cabello de Carbonera links household finances and marriage to women's roles and economic standing in society. As Armanda Lewis argues regarding Cabello de Carbonera's novels, "[v]irtue is no longer bound to sexual modesty, and morality is not independent of economic status, since both involve a woman's ability to contribute in a practical way to the nation" (433). In households of lower socio-economic status, women were placed in even riskier situations financially, as they often lacked the means, opportunities, or education to secure their futures. Without obvious work prospects, women could be pressured to marry or to turn to prostitution (Goldman 228).[9] Cabello de Carbonera thus wields gambling as a tool to highlight dangers to women's safety and their contributions to a nation where they were denied skills and rights to financial independence.[10]

In addition to exposing the risks to women's safety, gambling also emphasizes the risks of commercial activities, social class shifts, and international investments in Peru. The country weathered dramatic financial swings following independence, owing to factors such as the War of the Pacific, mining, the *guano* trade, and foreign investment in railroad and infrastructure projects. As José Deustua argues, Peru was in economic crisis during the 1880s because of a series of high-cost business decisions, the *guano* market debt, and war (183). The *guano* business, which pushed Peru towards a modernized economy, facilitated the establishment of national banks, and solidified "a banking and mercantile bourgeoisie," collapsed when *guano* supply was exhausted in the 1870s (Muecke 31). New business ventures, including wool exports and railroads, were critical to Peru's economy during the 1860s and 1870s (Bulmer-Thomas 60); nonetheless, these endeavors permitted foreign businesses to gain control of much of the country's transportation and trade in the 1880s (Deustua 160). As I have previously argued, these fiscal changes likely influenced writers' perspectives on economic risk, and here I will show how Cabello de Carbonera's discussion of such economic topics connects to gambling (Clark, "Risky Business" 437).

Naturalism's rising influence also played a role in gambling's popularity in fiction. As naturalist authors endeavored to portray human suffering and depravity from a darker perspective, gambling, traditionally viewed as a vice, was an appealing trope.[11] In keeping with the naturalist aesthetic committed to exposing the degradation of society and the concomitant inability of characters to escape their circumstances, the appeal was gambling's link to addictive behavior that could cause the downfall of an estate.[12] Notably, societal critiques of gambling were often directed at those of lower socio-economic status, while problems among the wealthy were

ignored (Aguirre 310).[13] Moral progress was connected to material progress in Peruvian bourgeois debates, as Carmen Mc Evoy contends, and gambling conceptually associates ethical and economic matters (76). While prostitution and gambling may have been scandalous topics, the two themes were linked in their treatment of women's limited financial power, as they underscored the hypocrisy of a society that prevented women from controlling their lives yet punished them when they ran out of options.[14]

Finally, in addition to highlighting women's lack of financial power, national economic concerns, and a naturalist aesthetic, Cabello de Carbonera uses gambling in her novels to parallel romantic games. In both *Blanca Sol* and *Las consecuencias*, betting on relationships (both literally and metaphorically) connects to gambling money at cards, marking the risks involved in love and marriage for women who lacked the ability to control their financial solvency. Ultimately, as J. Jeffrey Franklin writes of nineteenth-century British literature, "[m]oney in general and gambling in particular were so troubling" because they "emphasized the association between value and values" (35).[15] As Franklin notes, gambling serves to expose material wealth and its problematic relationship to "work and marriage" (35), a theme highlighted in Cabello de Carbonera's fiction that is in line with Skinner's observations about finances and matrimony (Skinner 804). Game playing therefore serves to critique the difficulties of marriages and relationships for monetary purposes (Franklin 35).

Let us now turn our attention to examples found in Cabello de Carbonera's fiction that bring gambling's role into focus. *Blanca Sol* focuses on the downfall of the upper-class protagonist caused by her luxurious lifestyle, her lack of practical skills, and the games she plays. Gambling emphasizes the mismanagement of household funds, the protagonist's romantic games, and financial instability at a time when many women were not taught practical trades to earn wages. Similarly, the novel *Las consecuencias*, a rewriting of *Eleodora* (1887), presents and critiques gambling in ways that illustrate both its larger relationship to the economy, social class, and divisions of labor, and the liability that men's games pose to women. *Las consecuencias* retools Ricardo Palma's "Amor de madre" to adapt the gambling theme to a naturalist aesthetic and a declining Peruvian economy.

Cabello de Carbonera's seminal novel, *Blanca Sol*, shows how women were placed into a type of commodities exchange as part of matrimony and sexual relationships, much as Lee Skinner has described (77). Gambling highlights this commodities market while emphasizing social and economic forces on both a national and a household level. From *Blanca Sol*'s first pages, the author details the title character's scant common sense

surrounding finances, as she learned to prioritize money and luxury at the expense of propriety and love. Tracing Blanca's poor upbringing and decision to wed for money, the story culminates in her monetary ruin and descent into prostitution to financially support her children. At the text's outset, the narrator describes Blanca's naturalistic, predetermined path: "[a]prendió, por ejemplo, a estimar el dinero sobre todos los bienes de la vida, 'hasta vale más que las virtudes y la buena conducta', decía ella" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Blanca Sol* 8). As the exposition plays out, Blanca's first suitor has bad luck in his investments and "en poco tiempo se vio adeudado y enredado en desgraciadas empresas" (13). Her solution is to distance herself from him, as she strategically endeavors to find a wealthier potential spouse. The gendered discussions of economics in relationships in the novel's first pages pave the way for gambling's role as a plot device as the narrative progresses.

Blanca subsequently marries Serafín Rubio for financial motives, but she continues to flirt with interested men for her diversion. J. Jeffrey Franklin describes the parallels between financial speculation and love: "[m]arriage … is as much a publicly observed transaction as stock investment, and female and male characters take part in speculations of both kinds" (55). Multiple scenes of household parties present characters flirting and gambling, which parallels both the chaotic financial state of the Rubio household and Blanca's speculative games of love with her husband and her suitors. Cabello de Carbonera describes one such *soirée*: "[y] mientras ella jugaba al amor, D. Serafín jugaba a las cartas, aunque siempre disgustado y horriblemente contrariado pensando que su esposa estaría bailando y coqueteando con sus numerosos adoradores" (*Blanca Sol* 52). Readers are invited to speculate on both the morality and the financial stability of the Rubio family in this description, raising the novel's larger questions surrounding women's roles in relationships and finances. Blanca's romantic diversions and her husband's card playing both act as risky games (as connoted by the verb *jugar*), and Cabello de Carbonera will demonstrate that these behaviors are hazardous for those who lack economic power in her society, including women.

Blanca's introduction to gambling at cards occurs while playing romantic games with her love interests. Luciano, one of the many men competing for the protagonist's attention, is a serious gambler, and Cabello de Carbonera takes the opportunity to educate her readers about the perceived vices of alcoholism and betting when describing his character:

> Era asiduo y constante parroquiano de todos los establecimientos públicos frecuentados por la juventud elegante y alegre donde, con daño de la salud … se

> venden con nombres aperitivos brebajes que no abren el apetito y sí enferman el estómago, y a más, van generalizando el horrible vicio de la embriaguez … En el *cachito*, Luciano había monopolizado los ases del dado con lo que alcanzaba beber doble y gastar sencillo. (*Blanca Sol* 55)

Here the narrator depicts Luciano's penchant for dice play, which is rendered less as a gentleman's parlor game and more as a money-making endeavor historically played in casinos and taverns, with cheating made easy by weighting the dice.[16] Later, Luciano directly associates his betting to his love games with Blanca by using gambling terms to describe their relationship as similar to wagering on animal fights or horse racing: "bien pensado, el asunto lo merecía. ¡Una apuesta lanzada en uno de los hoteles de Lima, ni más ni menos que si de una jugada de gallos o de una carrera de caballos se tratara! ¡Y era él quien debía divulgar tal infamia, tal deslealtad!" (*Blanca Sol* 64). Just like winning money at a fight or a race, Luciano believes that playing love games and betting on sexual relationships is a worthwhile pastime, highlighting the danger that sexism in relationships presents to women portrayed as commodities to be wagered on or bought.

Blanca's other love interest, Alcides Lescanti, actually makes a bet with his friends (another form of gambling) that he will win her attentions and vanquish her honor within a month (*Blanca Sol* 61). The donjuanesque trope of staking money on winning a woman's heart emphasizes the game-playing and monetary aspects of love and sex that Cabello de Carbonera highlights in *Blanca Sol*.[17] As the book describes, "[t]odos hicieron apuestas interesantes y valiosas más o menos como las anteriores dándoles a las palabras de Alcides el carácter de un reto importante" (61). The men decide that within a month, "nos reuniremos aquí en la misma intimidad de hoy y premiaremos al gran vencedor, al héroe de la apuesta" (61). This scene, of course, helps craft the financial link to sexuality and masculine hegemony that Cabello de Carbonera critiques in her fiction, in line with Skinner's observations regarding the commodification of women (Skinner 77).

In addition to playing games of the heart with suitors who aim to exploit her, Blanca also takes monetary risks at the actual gambling table, contributing to her financial ruin and forecasting her decision to prostitute herself at the end of the story. The connection between games of love and money is laid bare through scenes of flirtation while gambling, and calls to mind the idea of prostitution, since female gamblers often had negative reputations owing to women's restricted claims to money and public space. While gamblers depicted in nineteenth-century Latin American fiction were typically male (such as Genaro in *Regina* and Enrique in *Las consecuencias*), women gamblers did appear both in the fictional realm and in reality. Such women were often labeled as disreputable because, as David Schwartz

notes, women historically *were* found in gambling houses as waitresses, prostitutes, or even dealers at casinos (266). The association between prostitution and gambling houses as well as the tragic or difficult ends met by some notorious female gamblers (suicide or prostitution) in the Americas may have contributed to its negative image, as Schwartz documents in the context of the United States and Mexico (267). Beyond this, as Ana Peluffo argues, money connects to prostitution and other public female roles, since "el concepto de la 'mujer pública' es en la época republicana altamente sospechoso (sea esta costurera, prostituta o literata) y es justamente esta cercanía semántica entre distintas formas de identidades femeninas 'peligrosas', lo que genera en el sujeto literario el paradójico deseo de establecer fronteras y distancias" (49). It is thus likely that Cabello de Carbonera's presentation of Blanca's connection with financial topics (first at the gambling table and later as a prostitute) also serves to query larger societal divisions surrounding women's activities in public space and the work force.

The fact that men ultimately controlled women's financial positions is emphasized by Blanca's monetary losses when she gambles but finds the deck stacked against her. After hearing that Alcides bet on winning her affections, Blanca wagers on cards: "Bajo la influencia de estas emociones, más de pasión que de odio, acercóse a una mesa donde algunos *fuertes* jugadores jugaban el muy conocido rocambor; estos eran fuertes no tanto por la maestría de su juego, cuanto por las gruesas sumas que cruzaban en las apuestas" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Blanca Sol* 65). As Oswaldo Voysest explains, *rocambor* was a three-player game where participants tried to trump each other's cards each round ("Blanca Sol" 65). Historically, "[e]l juego se remonta a finales del siglo XVIII y fue conocido primero como rocambor [*sic*] … y, por último, simplemente como tresillo" (65). *Rocambor* traditionally involves one player going up against two others at a time, as Joan C. de Gispert describes, and Blanca is at a disadvantage, as she is surrounded by more experienced players. Here, Blanca's forfeitures at the card table parallel both her slipping household finances and the loss of her heart in the romantic games she plays. Notably, when Alcides arrives at the table, the "rey de espadas" is played, which has the connotation of being a card that could wound one's heart and honor, thus suggesting the threat that he presents to Blanca in money and love (Cabello de Carbonera, *Blanca Sol* 65).[18] Blanca and Alcides go head to head and bet a large sum of money (4,000 *soles*), making Blanca nervous: "ella sintió gran perturbación, cual si esa especie de fuerza magnética que se desprende del jugador que está en suerte, hubiérala repentinamente abandonado" (67). As readers might expect given the dramatic tension and Blanca's fleeting luck, Alcides wins

the hand, and Blanca subsequently loses tremendous sums to her suitor (67). The narrator claims that her romantic emotions enabled her prolonged play, and Don Serafín pays her debts, relieved Blanca has lost only cash and not her heart. Readers, however, realize that she has relinquished both, as the love games parallel her gambling, and both place her in jeopardy (68). With the couple's extravagant spending, the narrator reveals that their "ruina es inevitable" (69). Paying gambling arrears is also painted as a question of masculine identity and gentleman's honor. Don Serafín wonders "¿qué se diría de mí?" if he does not pay, so he mortgages the family's property to make good on the debt (69).[19]

The comparisons between gambling, games of the heart, and the family's impending financial ruin recur when Alcides, Blanca, don Serafín, and other friends again play *rocambor* in the Rubio household, showing how financial wagers of the public sphere have encroached upon the domestic space. Susan Kirkpatrick has examined divisions of public and private domain in the Hispanic world to argue that women became authorities of moral and domestic terrain during Romanticism, while their public activities remained regulated (4). For Cabello de Carbonera, then, gambling in the domestic space may also serve as a corruption of the angelic domain that could endanger women. While at times Blanca is depicted negatively as a corrupt pariah, at other moments, readers are able to sympathize with her attempts to break free from social constraints (Peluffo 48). Blanca, notably, leads these games in money and love but does not realize here, as elsewhere, that she will be victimized by society through gossip, exploitation, and debt. The narrator comments that "ella era fuerte en este juego" and explains how game play emulated the flirtation between Alcides and Blanca, spurring gossip about them: "Mientras Blanca y Alcides, mutuamente enamorados, jugaban a las cartas, la voz pública elevaba a éste de su condición de admirador a la de verdadero amante de la señora de Rubio" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Blanca Sol* 83). The implication is that women who are engaged in card play may be engaged in other pursuits deemed inappropriate, thus connecting money with sexuality. The protagonist, therefore, wagers her money alongside her honor in the eyes of society.

Of course, Blanca's gambling and love games also serve to decry the larger problem of women's lack of education and their economic marginalization. In effect, "[e]conomic dependence meant that women's husbands mediated women's claims to social citizenship rights" (Davies, Brewster, and Owen 19). For this reason, Blanca has no way to remedy her financial ruin other than romantic relationships. Discussing Josefina, a servant who seems to function as a foil to Blanca, Cabello de Carbonera exposes women's lack of opportunities and makes a biting comment about

society's twisted priorities: "El aspecto humilde, casi miserable, de la casa en que vivía Josefina dejóle comprender que allí moraba la virtud y el trabajo de la mujer espantosamente mal remunerados y desestimados en estas nuestras mal organizadas sociedades" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Blanca Sol* 89). Josefina appears to demonstrate the virtue of work, and she initially supports herself through her profession (90). Nonetheless, Josefina ultimately also plays love games by bettering her social standing through her union with Alcides. As women lacked work options, marriage and prostitution were among the limited possibilities they had to secure their financial futures.[20]

On a broader level, the narrator also makes various observations about Peru's economic volatility. She cites the dangers of societies in which people display "homenaje al dinero, [y] los necios son autoridades," demonstrating her greater concerns with finances in *Limeño* society at large (*Blanca Sol* 59). This point is also argued by Lucía Guerra Cunningham who has noted that in *Blanca Sol,* "en el plano del correlato histórico concreto, se sugiere la caída y bancarrota del Perú que conduce al acto de seguir vendiéndose a los capitales extranjeros" in parallel to the protagonist's descent into prostitution (Guerra 38). Gambling, another example of financial risk in the novel, furthers this argument. Don Serafín, in addition to gambling, is also portrayed as inept but socially posturing for higher governmental posts throughout the novel. Thus, as Don Serafín is affiliated with the government, the Rubio family's greed, gambling, and spending also corroborate Guerra Cunningham's assertion that the novel censures reckless national economics (Cabello de Carbonera, *Blanca Sol* 18). Blanca stokes her husband's ambitions because, knowing the extent of government corruption, she feels he is better than other rogues in office: "Y ¿por qué no? – se decía a sí misma – Si tantos otros tan ineptos como mi marido, y además pícaros, han llegado hasta la silla presidencial" (40-1). The novel's association between family and national corruption, also highlighted by Nina Scott, is thus demonstrated by parallels between the Rubio family's risks in gambling and spending and national financial risks (Scott 240).

Ultimately, with Blanca's gambling, lavish spending, and competitions with her admirers, the Rubio household crumbles as she loses her bets at cards and in love. Because she lacks work skills and education, Blanca cannot save her family from ruin once their finances are in disarray and her attempts to win Alcides fail. Her spouse spends their remaining money paying off debts incurred by gambling and parties, and he loses his sanity, attempting to strangle Blanca: "como la fiera que se lanza sobre su presa, así él asiéndola fuertemente por el cuello la arrojó contra uno de los muebles pretendiendo estrangularla" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Blanca Sol* 165). In this

violent scene, the tragic consequences of gambling one's heart and capital shock readers into considering women's precarious roles in relationships and society. The outcome of financial mismanagement, as I have argued regarding González de Fanning's *Regina*, in which the protagonist perishes when she is sucked into her husband's counterfeiting machine, is physical harm to the female protagonist (Clark, "Risky Business" 450). Although she escapes her husband's further abuse when he is confined in an asylum, in the end Blanca turns to prostitution out of desperation, a further possible source of physical harm. She throws a party and invites her former suitors, to whom she has lost everything, with a plan to pay her debts with her body: "Y durante la cena ella dirigíase esta pregunta: – ¿Qué pierdo esta noche? – Y se contestaba a sí misma: ¡Nada, puesto que el honor y mi reputación los he perdido ya! Pero si no pierdo nada puedo ganar mucho, mucho… ¡Mañana habrá dinero para pagar mis deudas!..." (Cabello de Carbonera, *Blanca Sol* 182). Despite Blanca's difficult decision, the narrator reminds readers that a marriage without love, as was Blanca's, is simply "la prostitución sancionada por la sociedad" (118), a point highlighted by Peluffo, who argues that the author wishes to show women's lack of options for social climbing (49). Blanca's reflection also connects matrimony and money in a dramatic fashion. In this way, Cabello de Carbonera condemns society for stacking the deck against women, while also citing the risks of betting with the heart and pocketbook in such a social system.

Blanca's society taught her to value money and vanity over morality and practical skills, and Voysest emphasizes Blanca's materialism as the novel's key topic ("Blanca Sol" xvii). Importantly, Cabello de Carbonera also describes how the game was rigged against Blanca by the limited education provided to women: "¿Qué culpa tenía ella, si desde la infancia, desde el colegio le enseñaron a amar el dinero y a considerar el brillo del oro como el brillo más preciado de su posición social?" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Blanca Sol* 204). Of course, these monetary and romantic risks also threaten society when the family disintegrates and Blanca must prostitute herself to support her children. According to parallels between the family and the nation that critics such as Doris Sommer have established, Cabello de Carbonera also clearly demonstrates how faulty financial and educational systems set women up for disaster (5). The conclusion places blame on Blanca Sol's poor decision-making and her lack of practical faculties and skills in monetary management. Many critics have highlighted the novel's insistence on education and critique of materialism, but the novel also clearly highlights problems with women's financial positions, which are embodied in Blanca's spending, relationships, and gambling. The links between gambling and romance resulting in marriage or prostitution emphasize women's lack of

financial options in an unequal society, thus questioning larger social structures and gender norms.

As Mónica Cárdenas Moreno argues, *Las consecuencias* (1889) intentionally seeks to further promote the bold statements made in *Blanca Sol*, rather than to apologize for offending its readers: "[e]n este contexto, *Las consecuencias*, en vez de ser una novela que revela el *mea culpa* de la novelista, reafirma el paso que ésta había dado en *Blanca Sol*" (xi). Accordingly, in *Las consecuencias*, gambling is central to the novel's development, and Cabello de Carbonera does not shy away from the sordid details of her protagonist's downfall. As in *Blanca Sol*, González de Fanning's *Regina*, Matto de Turner's *Índole*, and other novels of this ilk that seek to denounce women's lack of power over their financial lives in Peru, the meager education and poor choices of the protagonist, Eleodora, put her in harm's way as she suffers her husband's gambling losses. Gambling serves as a major plot device that other critics, such as Martha Irene Gonzales Ascorra, have cited (110). Here I will decipher gambling's meaning beyond that of surface-level theme by analyzing game playing (both in love and cards), gambling's connection to societal and family stability, and problems with women's roles that are exposed through financial risks.

In *Las consecuencias*, mistakes in choosing a partner and scant monetary options for women cause Eleodora's life to crumble when her wayward husband, Enrique, becomes addicted to gambling and murders both Eleodora and the man to whom he nearly wagers her honor. As in *Blanca Sol*, the novel advocates that women need practical skills so that both spouses can realistically take responsibility for family finances. Like Blanca, Eleodora also falls into financial ruin and sacrifices to protect her children. The novel leverages gambling to highlight fears of household and societal monetary mismanagement, gender inequalities, and addiction. Through this novel, Cabello de Carbonera critiques gambling and financially-motivated romantic relationships as chancy, given women's lack of control over their finances.

To provide some crucial background, the plot line of *Las consecuencias* is loosely based on Ricardo Palma's aforementioned "Amor de madre" and serves as a longer, fictionalized extension of his *tradición*. The adaptation of the text to 1880s Peru allows Cabello de Carbonera to offer political commentary and criticize the country's financial and social situation. I focus on *Las consecuencias*, rather than its earlier rendition as *Eleodora*, as it contains more gambling details. However, the fact that the text has two versions highlights Cabello's concern with themes of gambling, finances, and women's roles in society.[21]

Las consecuencias opens with a scene of Eleodora's father, Señor Alvarado, gambling while debating the merits of card games such as *rocambor* and *malilla* (Cabello de Carbonera, *Las consecuencias* 97). While *rocambor* and dice play were depicted in *Blanca Sol*, *malilla* was also popular in the nineteenth-century Hispanic world; it is a trick-based game that involved players facing off in a group of four, with pairs competing.[22] *Rocambor* and *malilla* were considered appropriate games "de buena sociedad," despite the fact that they still involved betting (García Granthon 9). The narrator presents Señor Alvarado's concerns that *malilla* has fallen out of fashion, but should continue to be played: "sus antepasados jugaron malilla, y él creía que debía seguir jugándola, sin dejar de reconocer que estaba pasada de moda" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Las consecuencias* 97). His affection for traditional card games parallels his adherence to other societal traditions, such as his views surrounding the role of women. Eleodora's father has sheltered her because he "[j]uzgaba que mejor que ilustrar la inteligencia, debían los padres consagrar sus cuidados a velar por la inocencia y candor de sus hijas," and, as a result, she lacks the skills and common sense to protect herself from her father's patriarchal reign and from that of her future suitors, as Gonzales Ascorra argues (105). Señor Alvarado thus risks his daughter's future, as he refuses to educate her, demonstrating, as in *Blanca Sol*, men's control of family income and women's limited education. This places Eleodora in jeopardy, since her father and her future spouse gamble on her future using family funds.

Like in *Blanca Sol*, the protagonist is ill-equipped to handle the risks that men pose to her in games of the heart. Enrique Guido, a wayward gambling addict, is interested in the protagonist both romantically and monetarily. Enrique's characterization highlights his danger to Eleodora, as his obsessions appear alongside their budding love affair: "estaba esperándola *él*, el hombre que ella había empezado a amar con la vehemencia del primer amor: allí estaba Enrique Guido. Este era un joven algo donjuanesco por lo enamorado, *jaranista* y jugador, tan jugador que al decir de sus conocidos, jugaba 'el sol por salir'" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Las consecuencias* 113). As Eleodora seeks more information about her suitor, she learns that he has the reputation of being "incasable," a warning that she will not heed as he continues to pursue her (114). As in *Blanca Sol*, gambling mirrors love games, and Enrique is talented at both, being "donjuanesco" and a "jugador" in games of cards and the heart (*Las consecuencias* 114). The narrator describes him thus: "Don Enrique Guido era uno de esos botarates calaveras para quienes el juego y el amor son pasatiempos necesarios, pues que viven, como dicen los franceses, *au jour le jour*, sin pensar en el mañana" (115). The young man does not consider the consequences of his actions, like the

novel's title suggests, and ultimately his games put his future wife in danger. Cabello de Carbonera explains Enrique's reckless betting and pursuit of women thus: "dióse á todos los placeres y se entregó a todos sus vicios" (115). Don Guido rapidly spends his inheritance of a quarter of a million soles prior to his marriage, portending his behavior after his wedding to the novel's protagonist (115). Eleodora, in turn, becomes his financial redemption, foreshadowing her sacrificial redemptive role for the family's honor at the novel's end.

As in *Blanca Sol*, spending, best exemplified by gambling, is a serious danger to household financial stability. Enrique's allegiance to the card table diminishes his honor and respect in *Limeño* society, most likely because he does not play with the upper class who were beyond reproach, as Aguirre states (310). High society is scandalized by his behavior and resorts to calling him *ño*, a shortening of any title he might have claimed as "Don," and so he passes his time in casinos with other gamblers (Cabello de Carbonera, *Las consecuencias* 116). Like *Blanca Sol*, *Las consecuencias* is thus concerned with characters' falls from wealth. The narrator states: "Al fin sus vicios y calaveradas condujéronle hasta el extremo de perder el gusto por la buena sociedad, y se dio a vivir en compañía de tahúres y jugadores … él iría arrastrado por esa vorágine irresistible del vicio por la cual, cada día más, se sentía atraído" (117).[23] As Enrique loses his old friends, he is left with the "pésima reputación de jugador y tahúr" (117), and he pursues Eleodora to save himself "pecuniaria y socialmente" (118), believing that "el amor de una buena esposa, podía salvarlo" (117). Unfortunately, as Eleodora's safety and financial solvency will be bound to her spouse in patriarchal society, Enrique will destroy her life.

Enrique courts Eleodora by habitually waiting for her after he leaves the *Club de la Unión* where he gambles all night (*Las consecuencias* 119). As I have written regarding Gónzalez de Fanning's *Regina* (Clark, "Risky Business" 443), the "tapete verde," or green covering for gambling tables, is here mentioned as a harbinger of corrupt activities that cause the downfall of young men of *Limeño* high society through less-than-reputable games (Cabello de Carbonera, *Las consecuencias* 119). The two characters begin a secret correspondence as Enrique's gambling addiction worsens: "sus orgías alargáronse y sus horas de juego fueron interminables. Sus últimas monedas habían pasado sobre aquel tapete verde que para él tenía irresistible atracción" (147). Enrique's bad luck at cards forecasts the misfortunes that will befall him and Eleodora in their life together. The narrator declares, "Cuando no jugaba, meditaba; pensaba que había sido perseguido por la mala suerte, no sólo en el juego, sino más aún, en ese otro juego de la lotería de la vida" (149). Here, the text lays bare Enrique's

obsessions alongside the parallels between gambling and existence through the chaos of chance in life's lottery, or the danger found in chance and probability.

Much like his tricks at cards, Enrique employs dangerous ruses in games of the heart. For instance, he lures Eleodora to his house where she must agree to marry him in order to avoid damaging her honor. Enrique's servant Juan brings word to Eleodora that he is planning to commit suicide, and she feels she has no choice but to intervene, thus "cumpl[iendo] el destino que me arrastra" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Las consecuencias* 174).[24] Once Eleodora risks her honor to go to Enrique's abode as a result of his mind games, he forces her to stay and quickly abandons her for the card table under the guise of planning their marriage (186). He loses 30,000 *soles*, and the narrator describes Eleodora's torture on their first night together in this way: "Las horas que don Enrique pasó en la casa de juego … fueron para la desgraciada Eleodora horas de mortal angustia y horrible padecer" (205). Nonetheless, the two marry and Eleodora's family ostracizes her, as her father is too haughty to accept a son-in-law of ill-repute, despite the fact that he himself also gambles. Enrique's interest in improving his social standing through gambling and love games is corroborated by Cárdenas Moreno's observation of critiques Cabello de Carbonera makes of social climbing and gambling: "El arribismo es constantemente criticado en las novelas y mucho más cuando va unido al vicio del juego, el despilfarro y la utilización del matrimonio para el sostenimiento de dichas costumbres" (169).

Although Enrique is cast as a villain, he also appears as a victim, since he is desperate enough to consider suicide because of his addiction. Descriptions of his physical changes suggest the threat he represents to Eleodora and to himself, and he compares quitting gambling to taking his life, foretelling the novel's conclusion: "si un jugador, al que le va mal en el juego, puede dejar de jugar, ¿por qué un desgraciado a quien le va mal en la vida, no ha de poder cesar de vivir?" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Las consecuencias* 163). Enrique becomes sick and ragged-looking, which shocks the protagonist: "[e]l rostro no era para verlo; a ella le produjo el efecto del de un borracho o loco, tan demacrado y descompuesto estaba" (259), and the novel's gamblers are further depicted as "siniestras, demudadas, cadavéricas" (194). Beyond merely looking ill, Enrique epitomizes threat to the protagonist, as he is described as possessed by a "fiebre delirante" (132) and "enfurecido y amenazante" (260). The idea of gambling as an addiction or sickness is a key facet of the narrative, as González Acosta indicates (105). Gambling's portrayal as a malady also connects to Juan Carlos González Espitia's argument that infirmity reflects social entropy that undermines

nation-building, suggesting that gambling is a menace to the characters and their society (15).

While Enrique is depicted as a physically-ill addict, women in gambling spaces are associated with the perceived social ill of prostitution, like in *Blanca Sol*. *Monte* and dice, portrayed as pernicious games of the era, are the pursuits of choice in spaces where the gamblers were fond of "comprar el amor con las buenas tiradas del dado" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Las consecuencias* 196).[25] This statement, of course, foreshadows the novel's conclusion where Eleodora's body will be proposed by gamblers as capital in prostitution, not unlike the conclusion of *Blanca Sol*. Alongside allusions to prostitution, Cabello de Carbonera also genders game play in the casino: men are the card players and women play games of love for money. The author reminds readers of this division with a refrain that highlights femininity's inverse association with monetary power: "[e]ntre mujeres jugadoras, los hombres son castos; porque la jugadora no pertenece al sexo femenino sino por sus vestidos" (*Las consecuencias* 195).

Gambling also elucidates concerns with politics, investing, and industry in *Las consecuencias*, linking the anxiety surrounding gambling's monetary volatility to business transactions in Peru. The political subtext of the novel, particularly in its descriptions of Señor Alvarado and his business machinations while playing cards, casts parlor games as harbingers of national political and financial instability. Gambling acts as an activity shared between men in a setting where they orchestrate corrupt power dealings from which women are excluded. The narrator describes, for example, how "se colocaban al derredor de la querida mesa, y entre las invariables palabras de – juego – paso – juego más, se alternaban diálogos referentes al inagotable tema de la situación política del país" (99).[26] The power players of the country, "y los Ministros que caían, y los que debían ser nombrados, y las finanzas del gobierno siempre censurables, formaban el sabroso condimento del diario rocambor" (99). As Cárdenas Moreno observes, these characters highlight the financially corrupt government of Manuel Pardo and the time period of the *Guerra del Pacífico* (99). Most notable in these descriptions, however, is the association between men's parlor gambling and government finance, a parallel that Cabello de Carbonera seems to highlight for readers who may subsequently view gambling's corrupting influence in the home as a representation of its role in the economy in activities such as business and politics.

Later, when Enrique and Eleodora travel to her family's estate, the narrator contrasts gambling with farming practices, thus commenting on divergent strategies for financial solvency. Depictions of agricultural productivity as "valiosa" and as a "rico vellocino de oro" provide alternative

visions of modernity when compared with gambling's danger, perhaps promoting lower-risk manufacturing and agriculture over political and economic ploys and gambling (Cabello de Carbonera, *Las consecuencias* 233). On a broader level, while gambling in high-class establishments allowed men to discuss the nation's political problems and finances and simultaneously make business transactions, as Leigh Mercer has argued of Spanish Realist texts in *Urbanism and Urbanity* (2013), Enrique's addiction and rejection of typical labor (such as farming) demonstrate what can go wrong for upper class gamblers (108). In these examples, the perils of gambling match those of poor financial decisions on a societal level.[27]

Predictably, *Las consecuencias* concludes with the protagonist's near prostitution and murder by her husband as a result of his gambling and violence. After Enrique squanders their property, he invites cardsharp friends into their home. The penetration of the domestic space by the naturalistic gambling act imperils the family's safety, again highlighting women's unequal positions in Peruvian society, as in *Blanca Sol*. Eleodora senses the impending fall of the family's repute alongside its finances, and she hopes that "[e]l día que él no tenga ya dinero, no podrá jugar más" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Las consecuencias* 261). Nonetheless, Enrique wagers and mortgages her properties "para pagar a los acreedores," and he will go so far as to use his wife as capital in his games (260).

With a naturalist embellishment on Palma's "Amor de madre," in *Las consecuencias*, Enrique's gambling opponent Ricardo attempts to seduce Eleodora by leveraging Enrique's debt to control her, again laying bare the connection between sex and financial risk in games exhibited in *Blanca Sol* (281). When Eleodora refuses to play into his hands, he directs Enrique to bet on her honor so he can take her, by force, as payment. Ricardo wishes to control Eleodora's body and reputation through gambling: "quizá iba él a alcanzar por la fuerza lo que no había alcanzado por el amor. Y, después de todo, como lo esencial era humillarla, poco le importaba que en definitiva, no llegara él a otro resultado que al de poder decirle; eres mía, tu marido acaba de jugarte ni más ni menos que apuntándote a una carta" (*Las consecuencias* 284). The culmination of Enrique's gambling thus causes danger to Eleodora's physical safety, as her body enters into the game's transaction as property to be prostituted by her husband. Enrique nearly accepts Ricardo's bet before Eleodora rushes out after overhearing the proposal. Aghast at his wife's appearance, Enrique murders Ricardo in cold blood and stabs Eleodora, showing the frightening consequences of his reckless betting and women's precarious physical and financial standing in Peruvian society:

> [Y] aunque él estaba ya a punto de acceder al pedido de Ricardo, al imaginarse que su esposa podía haber escuchado las últimas palabras de casi asentamiento que él había dicho: comprendió toda la enormidad de la ofensa de Ricardo, y la idea del castigo y la venganza apareció en su mente. Una oleada de sangre inundó su cerebro; y fuera de sí, apoderóse del pequeño puñal que estaba sobre la mesa y asestó dos puñaladas a su amigo … Eleodora, en el colmo de la angustia, gritó: – ¡Enrique, basta, perdónalo! – Y tú también – exclamó D. Enrique, asiendo furioso a su esposa y tirándola a sus pies. El puñal brilló en el aire y se hundió en el pecho de Eleodora. (*Las consecuencias* 287)

As she lies dying, Eleodora fabricates a story that she and Ricardo committed adultery so that Enrique's crimes will be justified in the eyes of the law. While this plan succeeds in maintaining the honor of her children (as they are supposedly not the offspring of an assassin), she perishes with her integrity tarnished.[28] Unlike Blanca, who participates in both card games and romantic games that cause her descent into prostitution, Eleodora chooses not to gamble in cards, but the risks she undertakes through games of romance with a gambler still cause her demise, as he wagers her money and her body. Both of Cabello de Carbonera's female characters thus sacrifice their bodies and reputations in a corrupt society for their children's futures. When dealt a bad hand, the two leverage the little power they possess to protect their offspring: Blanca, by prostituting herself to feed her family, and Eleodora, by crafting a falsehood on her deathbed to ruin her own reputation but salvage that of her progeny.

The story ends with Enrique's suicide, with gambling being cited as the cause, in a strikingly similar fashion to González de Fanning's *Regina* (24). As the narrator declares: "Dos días después … Su cadáver fue encontrado, atravesado el cráneo por una bala, y en la carta que dejó escrita decía: no puedo vivir un día más; mi muerte *voluntaria*, y la de mi adorada e *inocente* esposa, son *las consecuencias* de mi maldito vicio por el juego" (Cabello de Carbonera, *Las consecuencias* 293). The family's destruction shows the problems in Peruvian society that gambling, restrictive gender roles, and social games posed. Cabello de Carbonera's text thus highlights issues both on a micro-level in households with financially-motivated romances and traditional gender roles, and on a macro-level in a society with rigged, chancy games of gambling, relationships, and finances.

As evinced, in both *Blanca Sol* and *Las consecuencias*, Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera uses gambling and game playing to demonstrate her legitimate concerns regarding the inequality of women in Peruvian society. Although gambling tropes are popular in naturalist fiction, in Cabello de Carbonera's novels, the ruin that risky gambling and games may cause is shown in relationship to female protagonists whose financial futures are largely dictated by power structures that lie outside of their control.

Through the symbolic act of gambling, Cabello de Carbonera highlights economic volatility, financial games and games of the heart, and the gender inequalities present in her world.

Sonoma State University

NOTES

1 Advanced education was difficult for women to obtain in the nineteenth century due to gender inequalities in society (Mazquiarán de Rodríguez 94).

2 See Juana Manuela Gorriti's collection *Veladas literarias de Lima* (1892). This volume gathers critical works from preeminent writers who participated in her literary circle and demonstrates Gorriti's influence on a generation of women writers during her exile.

3 Francesca Denegri signals that Gorriti's *veladas* provided a space to explore intellectual ideas, foster dialogue, and nurture the written word, thus molding the female participants into active members of public intellectual life (122).

4 Cabello de Carbonera was criticized by authors who previously supported her and was institutionalized for her deteriorating mental condition (Tamayo Vargas 64). Cristina Matthews explains that the controversial themes in Cabello's novels and their challenge to the gendered status quo caused forcible reactions among other writers (486).

5 See, for example, *Martín Rivas* (1862) by Alberto Blest Gana or Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Herencia* (1893), both of which use gambling as a tool to comment on social class mobility, among other themes.

6 Matto de Turner's popular trilogy depicting female protagonists questioning social problems (*Aves sin nido*, *Índole*, and *Herencia*) contains important economic themes. Lisa Burner has discussed key economic topics, including wool exports in *Aves sin nido* (101). Gambling in Matto's fiction provides a point of cross-reference to Cabello de Carbonera's novels, as both authors describe economics and the gendered division of labor.

7 When I use the terms "romantic games" and "games of love," I am referring to emotional games in relationships and flirtations, but also more broadly to financially-motivated tricks or transactions in romantic relationships and to literal wagering between characters in romantic relationships, all of which are developed in parallel to each other in Cabello de Carbonera's fiction.

8 Many women had taken on the responsibilities of home finances, such as budgeting, and the Colombian Josefa Acevedo de Gómez's *Tratado sobre economía doméstica* (1848) describes women's roles in maintaining thriftiness. She tells of how siblings drove a household to ruin, offering a warning to

women about their hand in financial management: "Jamás rehusaron dar prestada una cantidad a un petardista, jamás se excusaron a una apuesta, nunca dejaron de contribuir con su cuota a una rifa" (73). The family is saved by the daughter's good financial planning (83).

9 As Emma Goldman describes regarding the economics of marriage and prostitution, "[m]arriage is primarily an economic arrangement" (228), and "the economic and social inferiority of woman is responsible for prostitution" (179).

10 Nina Scott signals that Cabello de Carbonera's discussion of family serves as a "national allegory" for women's presence in nation building (240). Unhealthy gender roles in financial management, then, also negatively impacted the nation.

11 Gambling's mathematically-dictated randomness paralleled the uncontrollable addiction of its sufferers, something that likely appealed to naturalist writers who believed in irrepressible human urges directed by biologically and scientifically predictable forces. Gambling houses were also connected to criminality in naturalist narratives, as Juan Pablo Dabove has shown (204).

12 Oswaldo Voysest argues that Cabello de Carbonera's naturalism highlights the human condition ("Naturalismo" 385). However, Cabello de Carbonera's naturalism also treats social questions like women's roles in the economy.

13 As Carlos Aguirre describes: "el delito, la prostitución, el alcoholismo, el juego de azar y otros 'vicios' similares fueron … convertidos en un problema social" (309). Gambling existed across social class strata, although its reform was often focused on those of lower or precarious socio-economic status.

14 Topics in Cabello's novels ruffled feathers in high society, as critics such as Mary Berg have traced (344).

15 Gambling and game-playing questioned society as "gambling infiltrated two central Victorian registers of value – work and marriage – functioning as the problematizing link between these two areas and money" (Franklin 35).

16 Cheating was commonly accomplished with imbalanced dice, as described in *How Gamblers Win, or the Secrets of Advantage Playing* (1865).

17 See, for example, *Don Juan Tenorio* by José Zorrilla.

18 This card would also be among the best cards Alcides could play, as kings and swords are strong in *rocambor* (the ace of swords is the highest card), and other swords are strong if chosen as the trump suit, according to Gispert's documentation.

19 As Jessica Richard suggests, gambling debts had to be paid to maintain social status, and "gambling was a crucial, though to some, controversial, component of a gentlemanly identity, as the concept of debts of honor shows" (11).

20 As Flora Tristán writes regarding prostitution and marriage in *Paseos en Londres* (1840), relationships were linked to women's weak financial position

and lack of education relative to men: "si vos la admitiéseis a recibir la misma educación, a ejercer los mismos empleos y profesiones que el hombre, ella no sería más frecuentemente que él propensa a la miseria. Si vos no la expusiéseis a todos los abusos de la fuerza, por el despotismo del poder paterno y a indisolubilidad del matrimonio, ella no estará jamás colocada en la alternativa de sufrir la opresión y la infamia" (67).

21 Mónica Cárdenas Moreno's comparative introduction to the reprinting of *Eleodora* and *Las consecuencias* does a good job of examining differences between the versions. My purpose is not to replicate her analysis, but it is of scholarly value for readers who wish to learn about the progression of Cabello de Carbonera's argument.

22 *Malilla* is still played today and is defined in the 1822 *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* as "Juego de naipes que comúnmente se juega entre cuatro, repartiendo toda la baraja. Cada mano hay un palo de triunfo, que es el de la última carta. Los nueves son las cartas superiores en sus palos respectivos, y se llaman también malillas" (509). According to John McLeod, the game originally had French origins and is a trick-based game like some other popular games in Hispanic culture (such as *mus*).

23 Of note, the language here is similar to that used by other naturalist authors describing descent into perceived vice, such as González de Fanning in *Regina* (1886).

24 Note that Juan is a character of African descent, and, although the novel does not detail historical events related to slavery in Peru, it does broach the nineteenth-century conversation on race. *Las consecuencias* carries racist characteristics of its time period, as Juan is problematically characterized. Cabello primarily explores rather than upends class stratification based on race and familial wealth in this novel.

25 *Monte* was a popular game in nineteenth-century fiction, as is demonstrated by a survey of the literature, such as Rosario Orrego's *Alberto, el jugador* (1860), which I have analyzed elsewhere (Clark, "Gambling" 92). The game was trick-based and placed control in the dealer's hands. It was popular in casinos and is represented as high stakes with the house at an advantage.

26 The *paso* and *juego* directions likely allude to the play of *rocambor*, in which players can skip turns. As Carlos García Granthon describes, "Rocambor es un juego de estrategia político-militar," which connects to its characterization in *Las consecuencias* as a game where risky national decisions are made (9). Here, the act of gambling at cards parallels the government's risky decisions.

27 Such societal parallels are in line with Guerra Cunningham's assertion that Cabello de Carbonera's works possess an "objetivo edificante y moralizador que … contribuye al cumplimiento de la ley del progreso en la evolución de la humanidad," with the solution to problems based on science and reason (28).

28 As Guerra Cunningham asserts, this scene is designed to show women's virtue, shifting the popularized adultery motif around to employ it in a positive fashion for the female character, in contrast to its typical appearance in realism and naturalism (33).

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