

## GALDÓS AND 1812

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It is a real honour for me to be here today. I would like to thank the University of Sheffield and, in particular, Dr Rhian Davies, Director of the Pérez Galdós Editions Project, for inviting me to give the twelfth Galdós Lecture, and to pay homage to the previous eleven speakers, illustrious *galdosistas* all. I would also like to thank the Spanish Embassy for their support for the excellent work on Galdós that goes on at this University, and for the presence here today of Mr Fidel López Álvarez, Minister Counsellor for Cultural and Scientific Affairs, and Mr Francisco García Quiñonero, Language and Education Advisor at the Education Office of the Embassy. It was due to the support and encouragement that we received from the Embassy that Adam Sharman and I were able to host a Conference on the 1812 Spanish Constitution in Nottingham back in March, a Conference in which a number of colleagues and friends from the University of Sheffield, present here today, also participated, and it was then that my interest in Galdós and his vision of 1812 started to take shape. But I must admit that I have had quite a Galdosian year in another sense too. He acted very much as a guide for my wife and me during a recent four-month research stay in Madrid, showing us around the city and revealing to us the function and character of the area in which we lived, namely Cascorro. It was thanks to Galdós's *Guía espiritual de España* [Spiritual Guide to Spain] (1915) that we learned about the role of the neighbouring Calle de Toledo in feeding and clothing Madrid and, after having experienced the Rastro beneath our balcony on every Sunday morning during our stay, we now fully understand why he referred to the weekly street market as the "Academia de los libres estudios" [the Academy of free study] (Pérez Galdós 1975: 184).

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I have little doubt that, had he been alive, Benito Pérez Galdós would have been heartily celebrating two bicentenaries this year: that of the birth of his beloved Charles Dickens on 7 February 1812 and that of the promulgation of the Cadiz Constitution, just five weeks later, on 19 March 1812.

Charles Dickens, whose *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* Galdós would translate into Spanish in late 1867 and early 1868, was, together with Balzac, one of the contemporary writers who would exert most influence on the young Galdós as he sought over the decade or so after this date to discover his own voice as a novelist. It is easy, therefore, to imagine Galdós making a pilgrimage in 2012 to Dickens' birthplace museum in Portsmouth or to his houses in Doughty Street, London or Higham in Kent and doing so with the same mixture of excitement and reverence that he felt on his trip to Stratford-upon-Avon in September 1889, when he became one of the growing

band of cultural tourists to visit the house of Shakespeare's birth (see Pérez Galdós 2007).

It is also easy to imagine him sitting in front of his computer on the morning of Saturday 17 November 2012 and watching the broadcast of the Inaugural Meeting of the XXII Ibero-American Summit, which brought together the Spanish and Portuguese Heads of State and Government, twelve Latin American Heads of State, one Vice-President and six Foreign Ministers in the Palacio de Congresos in Cadiz, little more than a kilometre away from the Oratorio de San Felipe Neri, the Church where the Cadiz Constitution had been proclaimed in 1812. Galdós the political commentator and patriot would almost certainly have felt a great sense of pride on hearing the leaders of so many Latin American countries praise the 1812 Constitution and describe it as the first liberal Bill of Rights or, in the words of the Peruvian President, Ollanta Humala, as a milestone in the search for social inclusion. Many of the Presidents naturally referred to the Constitution as a document that had encouraged the Latin American colonies' own struggles for independence, and yet Rafael Correa, President of Ecuador, claimed that it had set out to be "el canto plural de Iberoamérica" [the plural song of Ibero-America], while the President of Costa Rica, Laura Chinchilla, described the events of Cadiz 1812 as "el primer encuentro fraternal entre España y América Latina, y también de América con América" [the first fraternal meeting between Spain and Latin America and of Latin America with herself].

Galdós would also probably have subscribed to the "Declaración de Cádiz" that came out of that XXII Ibero-American Summit a week or so ago, the first article of which states that "La Constitución de Cádiz de 1812 marca uno de los hitos históricos fundamentales del acervo constitucional iberoamericano, cuyos principios de libertad individual, democracia, soberanía popular, separación de poderes, legitimidad e igualdad jurídica nos permiten reconocernos como iberoamericanos",<sup>1</sup> although he might also have been taken aback to find out about the shift not only of economic but also, increasingly, of political power that has taken place between Europe and Latin America over the past two hundred years and to hear his king, a Bourbon, say: "Iberoamérica está en alza. El Continente crece. [... En cambio,] a este lado del Atlántico hemos visto surgir situaciones difíciles causadas por la crisis económica y financiera. Nuestras miradas se vuelven hacia vosotros. Necesitamos más Iberoamérica."<sup>2</sup>

While his political brain would have been absorbed by the speeches, his novelist's eye and ear would have taken in the pageantry of the scene in the Palacio de Congresos: the splendid décor of the room, with the title of the Summit, "Una relación renovada" [A relationship renewed], emblazoned in both Spanish and Portuguese across the wall behind King Juan Carlos I, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and Foreign Minister José Manuel García Margallo; the flags of the 22 Ibero-American nations arranged like waves between the long tables where the dignitaries were sitting; the ranks of advisers seated in two rows behind the principal representative of each nation and fielding the

occasional enquiry and mobile phone call; the comings and goings of representatives and secretaries; the growing awareness that the timetable was not being adhered to and that lunch was going to be late; the king, acting on this awareness and diplomatically reminding the remaining speakers—just before the Cuban representative started to talk—of the need for brevity; and, in the absence of a wider audience, the discreet presence of the microphones and television cameras. In short, Galdós would have revelled in the diplomacy and theatricality of it all, almost definitely finding in the proceedings of that morning a worthy homage to the heroic achievements of the politicians of Cadiz two centuries earlier.

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There is no doubt that the 1812 Constitution occupied a special place in Galdós's heart. In order to understand just what it meant to him, I shall be referring today to two moments in Galdós's career when he dealt with the Constitution in some detail: first of all, a short article from 1865 and then, secondly, and at greater length, the novel entitled *Cádiz* [Cadiz], which he wrote and published a decade later, towards the end of 1874. Both these texts belong to the early part of Galdós's career—and to a period of great change both in his political views and in his activities as a writer.

The article, entitled “El 19 de marzo de 1812” [The 19<sup>th</sup> of March 1812], appeared in the Madrid newspaper *La Nación* on 19 March 1865, the fifty-third anniversary of the promulgation of the Constitution, when our author was just 21 years old (see Shoemaker 1972: 43-44). Galdós had first arrived in Madrid in the autumn of 1862 in order to study Law at the University there, but his interest in writing and some useful personal contacts from his native Canary Islands gradually opened the doors of certain newspapers and journals. Between February 1865 and October 1868, he would write regularly for *La Nación*; in the late 1860s and early 1870s, he would also collaborate on, and sometimes even edit, other publications, such as *El Debate* and the *Revista de España*. In *La Nación*, Galdós specialized in articles on music, the theatre, and the customs and mores of the people of Madrid, but he would also discuss political matters, making no attempt to hide his own opinions. He became known for his anti-clerical views and also for his fierce criticisms of the political corruption of the final years of the reign of Queen Isabel II, sentiments which are very much on show in “El 19 de marzo de 1812”.

As is implied by its subtitle: “Galdós celebra la proclamación de la Constitución de Cádiz, lamentando la triste y tan diferente situación actual” [Galdós celebrates the proclamation of the Cadiz Constitution, lamenting the sad and so different present situation], our article is both a celebration and a diatribe, one that uses the anniversary of the Cadiz Constitution as an excuse to denounce the current political state of the nation. Galdós is in fact unstinting in his praise for the 1812 Constitution, pointing out that it had been fashioned in the forge of the war against the Napoleonic invaders and claiming that it was “el código político más venerable y más sabio que ha producido la

gran revolución moderna” [the most venerable and wisest of all the political codes that have been produced by the great modern revolution] (Shoemaker 1972: 43). It was the product of true patriotism, of those brave men and women who in Cadiz—a modern-day Sagunto or Numancia—had withstood the attacks of the besieging French and celebrated the “Consagración definitiva de las libertades de un gran pueblo” [the definitive Consecration of the liberties of a great people]. Patriotism and liberty: these are the values that both gave rise to and were enshrined in the Cadiz Constitution. While the heroic people of Spain were fighting to wrest the nation from the hands of the foreigner, their representatives in Cadiz—Argüelles, Muñoz Torrero, Calatrava, Quintana and many more—were creating a political and legal framework that was so wise and upright, says Galdós, prefiguring what the leaders of the Ibero-American nations would say in November 2012, “que dejó asombrados a los pueblos más inteligentes de Europa, y mereció ser adoptada para sí por naciones extranjeras” [that it filled the most intelligent peoples of Europe with wonder and was deserving of being adopted by foreign nations] (p. 43).

Out of his praise for the past, Galdós soon extracts his barbed attack on the present. While the noble Spanish people had been fighting against the invader in 1812 and formulating its new Charter of Liberties in Cadiz, its king, Ferdinand VII, was not at its side but was, unbeknownst to it, rather living it up in his French exile. This criticism of the Bourbon Monarch acts, of course, as an indirect denunciation of the present behaviour of his daughter, Queen Isabel II, who was seen by many in 1865 as presiding immorally over an immoral political regime. Galdós then rams home his point with a series of powerful contrasts between 1812 and 1865:

La libertad que asentaron [aquellos insignes varones] sobre tan robustos cimientos la verían vilipendiada: el sistema constitucional objeto de un afán más solícito, manchado de impureza; la administración tan sabiamente organizada, devorada por el desconcierto y la anarquía; la prensa en ignominioso calvario; las torpes y reaccionarias influencias en impuro pedestal; y hasta la misma dignidad del Parlamento, de aquel Parlamento que cuando ellos lo llenaban era obedecido por la Regencia, acatado por los generales y los gabinetes extranjeros y reverenciado por el pueblo, arrastrando una existencia tristísima, separado del sentir de la Nación, maltratado por los ministerios, y sirviendo de campo a escandalosas escenas. (p. 44)<sup>3</sup>

The language is that of a passionate and perhaps impetuous twenty-one-year-old, and some of the notions—including the idea that the noble people of Spain were united behind the politicians of Cadiz—are either ingenuous or disingenuous. But the article still gives an insight into the position of those who in 1865 opposed the Bourbon Monarchy because of its corruption and the political system because of the constant meddling of the Army, the ineffectiveness or dishonesty of Parliament, and the muzzling of the press. Little surprise, therefore, that Galdós should ultimately welcome with such enthusiasm and excitement the Revolution of September 1868, which brought about the abdication of Queen Isabel II and a change of political régime. Indeed, his descriptions of the events of that time, including his trip to

Zaragoza with General Serrano and Vice-Admiral Topete and, above all, of the ideas and actions of his personal political hero, General Juan Prim, betray a joyfulness that, in our novel, *Cádiz*, as we shall soon see, he also imaginatively projects onto the men and women who experienced the events of 1812 in Cadiz.<sup>4</sup>

The following six years, often known as the “Sexenio Revolucionario” [Revolutionary Sexennium], were deeply unstable both for Galdós personally and for Spain.<sup>5</sup> The writer more or less hitched his wagon to that of General Prim, believing that Spain’s future lay in a monarchy rather than a republic, but a monarchy that would be democratic in nature and whose members would not belong to the Bourbon dynasty which had recently given Spain the disastrous Ferdinand VII and Isabel II. Galdós attended and reported on many of the sessions of the Parliament that drew up the Constitution of 1869, an experience that without doubt enabled him a few years later better to understand the parliamentary mechanisms and debates of 1812, and, as he did so, his distrust of both the old Liberal parties and, above all, the new Republicans, intensified. Indeed, by 1870, Galdós had come to believe that only Prim and his chosen candidate for the Throne, Amadeo of the House of Savoy, could save Spain from the anarchy he associated with the more radical elements on the left. The assassination of Prim at the end of that year, just days before the arrival of Amadeo I in Madrid, left the new king in a deeply vulnerable position. Galdós supported Amadeo right until the king was forced to abdicate in February 1873, with the result that the writer was left ideologically adrift during the First Republic of 1873-1874. He felt that the Federal and Republican deputies in Parliament were politically inept, recoiled in horror from the violence both of the newly-resurgent Carlists and of the Cantonalist movements in the East and South of the country, feared the activism of the new working classes, and yet felt unable, at least for the time being, to throw in his lot with the Bourbon Monarchist conspirators, the ones who would finally bring the Republic to an end in the very last days of 1874.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the political disappointments and isolation, it was over these years between 1868 and 1874 that Galdós turned himself into a novelist. He never stopped being a journalist during this period, but he decided that he also needed to try out a different mode of writing, one that was less dependent on the immediate and the contingent, could draw on his knowledge of the customs and mores of his society, illuminate the origins and consequences of political decision-making, and also, in the words of Pedro Ortiz-Armengol (1995: 257-58), capture what the people—and not just the politicians—thought and felt. Galdós’s first novels—*La Fontana de Oro*, which he started to write in 1868 and published in 1871, and *El audaz*, which he wrote between 1871 and 1872—had already dealt with the political struggles of the early nineteenth century, more specifically the early 1820s and 1804 respectively, but it would be with the first series of the *Episodios Nacionales* [National Episodes], written between 1873 and 1875, that Galdós both perfected his use of the historical novel and moved towards his mature novelistic style. After this first series of *Episodios Nacionales*, he would go on

to write four more, between 1875 and 1879, 1898 and 1900, 1902 and 1907 and 1907 and 1912, creating overall a sequence of 46 historical novels that stand alongside the 30 or so more “contemporary”—and better-known—novels that he would write from 1876 onwards. Together, these five series of national episodes tell the history of Spain from the battle of Trafalgar in 1805 until the Restoration of the Bourbon dynasty in the mid 1870s, with the first series, to which *Cádiz*, our novel, belongs, covering the period between 1805 and the end of the Peninsular War in 1814.

The overall aim of the *Episodios Nacionales* is to tell the recent history of Spain through a mixture of historical fact and fictional detail, and to do so in such a way as to uncover the archaeology, the roots, of the present moment, that is, to shed light on what Adriana Lewis Galanes (1968: 297) has called “el pasado formativo de la España contemporánea” [the formative past of contemporary Spain] and Ricardo Gullón (1987: 51) “las líneas precursoras de lo presente” [the precursory outlines of the present moment].<sup>6</sup> Given the importance of 1812 for Galdós, and the fact that he had already referred in the Preamble to *La Fontana de Oro* in 1871 to “la gran época de reorganización que principió en 1812 y no parece próxima a terminar todavía” [the great period of reorganization that started in 1812 and is still giving no signs of being near to completion] (Pérez Galdós 1969: 10), we could be forgiven for imagining that the novelist would have located his *terminus a quo* in the events and Constitution of Cadiz. But he in fact starts instead with the battle of Trafalgar in 1805. The reason behind this decision may lie in the possibility that it was his meeting with a veteran of Trafalgar in Santander in 1872 that gave Galdós the idea of writing a fictional account of the recent history of his country.<sup>7</sup> But it is also clear that Galdós was very aware of the fact that the Constitution of Cadiz had been born of a specific context, one of violence and conflict. The opening novels in the first series of the *Episodios Nacionales* focus on this violence and conflict: the violent wars that pitted Spain against England in *Trafalgar* and against the invading Napoleonic forces in the rest of the novels that make up the series, but also, and just as tragically, the conflict within Spain herself between those who supported the French and those who fought against them, and, amongst the ranks of the latter, between the more liberal and the more traditionalist elements in the opposition to Napoleon.

Galdós looked back at this tumultuous period in Spanish history, this crucible of modern Spain, as he saw it, and knew only too well that the violence and conflict of the period had continued over the intervening years, causing havoc and instability and often spilling over into civil war. He could not therefore avoid contemplating the early decades of the nineteenth century through the prism of these intervening years, a fact that helps to explain his use throughout the first series of *Episodios Nacionales* of the first person narrator, Gabriel de Araceli. Gabriel is seen as a boy in the first novel, *Trafalgar*, and gradually grows up over the following ones, with his picaresque and amorous exploits taking place against the background of his participation in the great events of the time. But, crucially, Gabriel narrates the events from his old age in the 1870s. This fictional character therefore inhabits the same

historical moment as Galdós, with the result that the novelist can subtly incorporate into Gabriel's own retelling of the past a perspective that, as we shall see, really belongs to the present, that is, the early 1870s.

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*Cádiz*, our novel, was written in September and October 1874 and is the eighth novel in the first series of the *Episodios Nacionales*. It is set entirely in Cadiz between February 1810 and March 1812, as the city was being besieged by French troops. As with all the *Episodios Nacionales*, it carefully interweaves real historical fact with fictional stories and adventures. At the heart of the novel there is a continuing love saga. Gabriel de Araceli, our hero and narrator, has long been in love with Inés, the illegitimate daughter of his protectress the Countess Amaranta. Inés is in fact living presently at the house of another Countess, María de Rumblar, who wishes to make her into the fiancée of her son and heir, Diego. This Countess de Rumblar, a political and religious traditionalist, keeps Inés and her own two daughters, Asunción and Presentación, almost locked up at home, surrounding them with clerical figures such as the real-life reactionary deputy Blas de Ostolaza. Gabriel occasionally tries to see Inés but has to do so with care: he is a close ally of the Countess Amaranta and her friend Flora, both of whom are renowned for having a more liberal outlook on life, and is himself known as an adventurer and a liberal. Although he finally uses his friendship with Diego to get invited to the Countess de Rumblar's salon, he has to pretend to be pious so as to be able to justify his presence there, and Galdós extracts a good deal of anticlerical humour at this point in the novel from Gabriel's words and disguise.

But the situation is complicated by the presence in Cadiz of an English nobleman, Lord Gray—often known in the novel as “milord” or, on occasions “miloro”—, who is dashing and brave and attracts the interest of many of the local young noblewomen, and often that of their mothers too, who see in him a possible match for their daughters—as long, of course, as Lord Gray's rumoured conversion to Catholicism comes about sooner rather than later. The main thrust of the narrative is propelled by a misunderstanding that has farcical as well as tragic consequences: Gabriel's mistaken belief that Lord Gray has actually won the heart of Inés and his decision, therefore, to treat the Englishman as a rival in love. While this amorous *enredo* unfolds, we hear indirectly about Gabriel's and Lord Gray's brave involvement in the fight against the French and we are also immersed in the hustle and bustle of a city, Cadiz, which, despite the siege, is busy creating the institutions and structures of a future liberal society. We visit the Calle Ancha, where all members of society, from beggars to aristocrats, jostle and interact with soldiers, politicians, Churchmen, businessmen, journalists and bureaucrats and turn the central Cadiz thoroughfare not only into the “corazón de España” [the heart of Spain] but also into a new public space, product and reflection of the nascent liberal society of politics, commerce and public opinion (Pérez Galdós 2003: 255-71 [p. 256]). And finally, of course, we also visit the Teatro Cómico in

San Fernando and then the Oratorio de San Felipe Neri in Cadiz proper, where the Cortes (Parliament) met between September 1810 and September 1813, and we hear the debates that lead, at the very end of the novel—and at the very moment that Lord Gray, the violator of the local social codes, is being disposed of—to the promulgation of the Constitution on 19 March 1812.

Perhaps the most fascinating and surprising character in this fascinating and surprising novel is the fictional Englishman Lord Gray. Galdós is in fact being very playful, perhaps even subversive, in the creation of this character and in the role he assigns to him. Given the fact that Lord Gray is an English nobleman, one might expect him to be a true friend to the Spanish, a representative of the British forces fighting against Napoleon in the Peninsula, a reflection perhaps of the Duke of Wellington himself or of more liberal friends of Spain such as Lord Holland—or even of his near-namesake Lord Grey (with an e, rather than an a), who would later make his name as the architect of the 1832 Reform Bill. But he is not like that at all. He is an ally in the sense that he too fights against the Napoleonic troops, but he is very much the outsider in the novel, more so in fact than the French themselves, whom we hear firing in the distance but never actually meet. Lord Gray is in reality a Byronic figure (we are told at the outset that he had arrived in Cadiz six months earlier with Lord Byron, who had then left for the East [p. 123]), and has Romantic, exoticizing attitudes towards Spain. Spain, for him, is—or should be—a country of *majas* and *toreros*, of the medieval and the quixotic, of animal instincts and violence (pp. 134-38 and 246-54). It is definitely not, in his mind, a place of or for the modern or the new. He goes there for adventure, for excitement, to slake his sensual thirst, to enjoy the violence and the war. In some senses, he is a foreign forebear of Ramón del Valle-Inclán's Marqués de Bradomín, at least in his sensuality, perversity and ruthless pursuit of his own pleasures. Some of the most remarkable passages in the novel deal with this man's ideas and exploits. When Gabriel and we first meet him, he rants about his native England, saying that he detests commerce, London, the hypocrisy of a nation that claims to love freedom and yet trades in slaves, and the character of his compatriots, which is “egoísta, seco, duro como el bronce, formado en el ejercicio del cálculo y refractario a la poesía” [egotistical, dry, hard as bronze, formed in the exercise of calculation and resistant to poetry] (p. 134). We also see him extolling the virtues of the Spanish during a hallucinatory drinking session with Gabriel (pp. 246-54), and, towards the end of the novel, we find too that, in his search for the “authentic” Spain and for ever more stimulating experiences, he has in fact abandoned the trappings of wealthy society and chosen to live for a short while as a beggar amongst the down-and-outs of Cadiz (pp. 309-17).<sup>8</sup>

Lord Gray's main concern is that the future Constitution, which is being discussed in the Cortes, will make Spain more like England, will change her out of all recognition, will cause her to lose her medieval spirit and force her to become modern, mercantile and materialistic. As he says during his drinking bout with Gabriel:



Hermoso país es España [...]. Esa canalla de las Cortes lo va a echar a perder. Huí de Inglaterra para que mis paisanos no me rompieran los oídos con sus chillidos en el Parlamento, con sus pregones del precio del algodón y de la harina, y aquí encontré las mayores delicias, porque no había fábricas, ni fabricantes panzudos, sino graciosos majos; ni polizontes estirados, sino chusquísimos ladrones y contrabandistas; porque no había boxeadores, sino toreros; porque no había generales de academia, sino guerrilleros, porque no había fondas, sino conventos llenos de poesía; y en vez de lores secos y amojamados por la etiqueta, estos nobles que van a las tabernas a emborracharse con las majas; y en vez de filósofos pedantes, frailes pacíficos y que no hacen nada; y en vez de amarga cerveza, vino, que es fuego y luz, y sobrenatural espíritu... ¡Oh, amigo! Yo debí nacer en España. Si yo hubiera nacido bajo este sol, habría sido guerrillero hoy y mendigo mañana, y fraile al amanecer y torero por la tarde, y majo y sacristán de conventos de monjas, y abate y petimetre y contrabandista y salteador de caminos... [...] Amo todas estas fortalezas que ha ido levantando la historia, para tener yo el placer de escalarlas; amo los caracteres tenaces y testarudos, para contrariarlos; amo los peligros, para acometerlos; [...] gusto de que me digan “de aquí no pasarás”, para contestar “pasaré”. (pp. 247-48)<sup>9</sup>

Here we get the true measure of our Lord Gray. Spain has become his personal playground and, as his words suggest, he revels in being subversive: truly mad, bad and dangerous to know. He adores the existence of the complicated Spanish religious, social and moral codes because he can then take great pleasure in transgressing them. As the novel progresses, we realize that his main aim, as well as to enjoy the war, has become to seduce and run off with Asunción, one of the Countess de Rumblar's daughters. And the end of the novel focuses on the resolution of this situation, as Gabriel takes upon himself the responsibility of destroying this dangerous external threat. By doing so, the liberal Gabriel is acting on behalf both of himself and of his ideological enemies, the Countess de Rumblar and her reactionary allies, and, for a brief moment, therefore, just as the Constitution of 1812 is being celebrated around Cadiz, the seemingly irreconcilable factions of Spain unite in their drive to expel this foreign body from their midst.

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But, alongside this fictional tale of jealousy, rivalry and revenge, of transgression, retribution and expulsion, there is also in *Cádiz* the story, the historical story, of the Cortes and of the gradual creation of the Constitution of 1812. Over the course of the novel, we in fact witness a series of key political events. In Chapters 8 and 9, we watch the grand opening of the Cortes in the Teatro Cómico in San Fernando on 24 September 1810 and hear parts of the opening speech of the new Cortes themselves, that of the liberal priest Diego Muñoz Torrero. When that speech announcing the programme of the new government and explaining the nature of its new revolutionary ideals came to an end, says our narrator Gabriel from his vantage point six decades later, “el siglo XVIII había concluído” [the eighteenth century had come to an end] (pp. 182-98 [p. 193]). Later, in Chapters 17-19, we attend further debates in the Cortes, now housed in the Oratorio de San Felipe Neri in Cadiz, and hear, amongst others, the voices of the liberal deputy Manuel García Herreros and of the reactionary nemesis of the Countess de Rumblar's daughters, Blas de Ostolaza (pp. 272-94).<sup>10</sup> And, although we do not return to the Cortes on 19

March 1812 to hear the proclamation and reading of the Constitution itself, the sounds of celebration that night form the backdrop to Gabriel's dispatching of Lord Gray (p. 406).

In these grand set-pieces in the Cortes, Galdós makes full use of his experience as a reporter in the Parliaments of the 1860s and 1870s, revealing a keen eye both for colourful detail and for historical accuracy. He has obviously been back to some of the sources in his zeal to capture the opening session and the debates themselves with a degree of realism and fidelity to historical truth.<sup>11</sup> And yet the real interest of the novel does not lie in those debates themselves. As a political animal—and as a liberal—, Galdós is fascinated by the ideological differences at play and is obviously impressed with the work of the more progressive elements in Cadiz. And yet what he is more interested in in *Cádiz*—and the reason why he is actually writing a novel and not a history book—is the way in which the Spanish people lived out and responded to this historical moment and tried to understand and make sense of the momentous political and cultural change going on around them. As I have said elsewhere, his interest is not so much in ideology as in what could perhaps be called political anthropology: the lived experience of a particular—and, in this case, particularly epoch-making—historical and political moment.<sup>12</sup>

This aspect of the novel can be seen most clearly at work in the two set-pieces I have already mentioned. The first of these takes place in Chapters 8 and 9 and comes to a climax with Gabriel watching the opening of the Cortes in the presence of his protectress, Countess Amaranta, and her close friend, Flora. The interest in this scene is not so much in what the politicians and orators actually say as in the way in which the audience behaves and responds. Amaranta and Flora, like all voyagers into an unknown land, are desperately trying to make sense of what they have never seen before, and, like a thousand intrepid discoverers before them, they try to understand the new in terms of the old, the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar.

Galdós has placed us in a good position from which to appreciate and understand their confusion. They have, after all, heard about the Solemn Mass and Te Deum that has just taken place in a local church to accompany the coronation, not of a king, but of the new-fangled entity called the Nation (pp. 184-86), and they have also just witnessed a procession, not of holy images, kings or princes, but of “un centenar de hombres vestidos de negro, jóvenes unos, otros viejos, algunos sacerdotes, seglares los más” [a hundred or so men dressed in black, some young, others old, some priests, the majority laymen] (p. 184), a procession of deputies that has been greeted by the people of Cadiz with the same joy that it shows on bullfighting days (p. 182). And now they've ended up in a theatre, with the new deputies sitting on seats arranged along the edges of the stalls and, on stage, a bishop seated on his throne and accompanied by four other men and a series of secretaries (pp. 187-88).

No wonder, therefore, that Flora and Amaranta start to read the events that they are witnessing in terms borrowed from the Church, the theatre and

other spectacles, including bullfighting. Flora cannot wait for the men to start “preaching” and is glad to see that there are many clergymen present, with their “picos de oro” [silver tongues], while Amaranta, who has recognized some of the politicians who frequent her own salon, feels that “los seglares” [the laymen] will be more entertaining (p. 188). When one of the men onstage takes a piece of paper out of his pocket and gets ready to read it, though, Flora remembers that she is in a theatre and sees him no longer as a priest officiating Mass but as an actor who’s probably forgotten his lines (p. 189). And, when the two women get impatient with the slowness of the proceedings, they express their wish to see the men argue and even fight, and their raised and excited voices swell the general din that is reminiscent of the *corrida* (pp. 190-91).

When Muñoz Torrero finally makes his speech, the whole theatre falls silent. Flora and Amaranta do not fully understand what the orator says, but they do pick up on the fact that the Cortes will from now on provide the orders and that the king will obey. Flora tries to ground this somewhat abstract notion in her present and immediate experience, saying “De modo que, según ‘la soberanía de la nación’, el gobierno del reino está dentro de este teatro” [So, according to the “sovereignty of the nation”, the government of the kingdom is here, inside this theatre] (p. 194), but what she and the rest of the public seem most impressed by is the spectacle itself, one that, according to Flora, will have a particular advantage: “Así todas las picardías que se cometan en el Gobierno se harán públicas, y el número de los tunantes tendrá que ser menor” [So all the mischief that the Government gets up to will be made public, and there are bound to be fewer rogues] (p. 194). At a later stage, though, when there is some doubt over whether the representatives of the absent King Ferdinand VII will swear allegiance to the new Cortes, the general public up in the gods starts becoming agitated, making Amaranta observe that the people feel that they are watching a *sainete* or one-act farce and that they will soon want to get involved in the performance (p. 196)—a potentially threatening possibility, of course, that Galdós does nothing to hide in the novel.<sup>13</sup>

The second set piece, which takes place in Chapters 17-19, shows how the fictional and the historical, the personal and the collective, fuse in an intensely moving way. In these Chapters, Gabriel, through no plan of his own, ends up accompanying Presentación, one of the Countess de Rumblar’s daughters, to the Cortes at a time when both characters’ minds are more focused on their respective love concerns than on the debates going on in the Oratorio de San Felipe Neri. They push their way into the crowded building and sit this time, not in the more “respectable” area reserved for the powers-that-be and the well-off, but with the more “popular” element enjoying the spectacle from the *tribuna pública* [public gallery]. And spectacle it is, especially for Presentación, for whom this is the first visit to the Cortes. As with the previous set piece with Flora and Amaranta, Presentación asks Gabriel for guidance in order to understand what she is witnessing, and the result is an exchange of questions and answers that allows Gabriel to correct

Presentación's natural tendency to reach for analogies from Church, theatre or bullfighting and to convey to her the true significance of what is going on down beneath her:

Yo observé la estupefacción de la muchacha, y le dije:

—¿Le gusta a usted este espectáculo?

—Muchísimo. Nos habían dicho que era muy feo, pero es bonito. ¿Quién es aquel señor que está en medio del redondel?

—Es el presidente. Es el que dirige esto.

—Ya, ya... Y cuando quiera mandar una cosa, sacará el pañuelo y lo agitará en el aire.

—No, señora doña Presentacioncita. Así pasa en los toros; pero aquí el presidente se vale de una campanilla.

—Y el diputado que va a hablar, ¿por dónde sale? ¿Por detrás de aquella cortina o por esa puertecilla?

—El diputado no sale por ninguna parte, que aquí no hay toril ni telones. El diputado está en su asiento, y cuando quiere hablar se levanta. Vea usted: todos esos que ahí están son diputados.

La muchacha, a cada nueva conquista hecha por su inteligencia en el conocimiento de las cosas parlamentarias, más sorpresa mostraba, y no distraía su atención del Congreso sino para hacerme preguntas tan originales a veces, y a veces tan inocentes, que me era muy difícil contestarle. Carecía en absoluto de toda idea exacta respecto de lo que estaba presenciando; y aquel espectáculo la conmovía hondamente, sin que las ideas políticas tuviesen ni aun parte mínima en tal emoción, hija sólo de la fuerte impresionabilidad de una criatura educada en estrechos encierros y con ligaduras y cadenas, mas con poderosas alas para volar, si alguna vez rompía su esclavitud.

Era tierna, sensible, voluble, traviesa, y por efecto de la educación, disimuladora y comedianta como pocas; pero en ocasiones tan ingenua, que no había pliegue de su corazón que ocultase, ni escondrijo de su alma que no descubriese. Por esto, que era sin duda efecto de un anhelo irresistible de libertad, aparecía a veces descomedida y desenvuelta con exceso.

Poseía en alto grado el don de la fantasía; la falta de instrucción profana unida a aquella cualidad, la hacía incurrir en desatinos encantadores. No sólo en aquella ocasión, sino en otras varias, observé que al separarse de doña María y al sentirse libre del peso de aquella gran losa de la autoridad materna, desbordábanse en ella con desenfadada impetuosidad, fantasía, sentimiento, ideas y deseos. Presenciando la sesión, no cabía en sí misma; tan inquieta estaba, y tan sublevados sus nervios y tan impresionados sus sentidos.

—Señor de Araceli—me dijo después que por un instante meditó—¿y esto para qué es?

—¿El Congreso?

—Sí, eso es; quiero decir que para qué sirve el Congreso.

—Sirve para gobernar a los pueblos, juntamente con el rey.

—Comprendido, comprendido—repuso vivamente agitando su abaniquillo—. Quiere decir que todos estos caballeros vienen aquí a predicar, y así como los curas de las iglesias predicán diciendo que seamos buenos, los procuradores de la nación predicán otras cosas; viene la gente, los oye y nada más. Sólo que, según dicen los que van de noche a casa, los diputados predicán que seamos malos, y esto es lo que no entiendo.

—Esos discursos—le contesté risueño—no son sermones, son debates.

—Efectivamente; me ha parecido que no son sermones, sino que uno dice una cosa, otro otra, y parece como que disputan.

—Justamente. Disputan; cada uno dice lo que cree más conveniente, y después...

—El disputar me gusta mucho. ¿Sabe usted que me estaría aquí las horas muertas oyendo esto? Pero me agradecería que hablaran fuerte y se insultaran, tirándose los bancos a la cabeza.

—Alguna vez...

—Pues yo quiero venir ese día. ¿Se anunciará por carteles en las esquinas?

- Nada de eso. La política no es una función de teatro.  
 —¿Y qué es la política?  
 —Esto.  
 —Ahora me parece que lo entiendo menos. (pp. 275-77)<sup>14</sup>

We see Presentación here both enjoying and trying to understand this amazingly rich and novel spectacle that she is witnessing. But, as this passage already suggests—above all when we read about her limited and limiting education and her desire to break free from her chains—, Presentación is not just witnessing events in a passive way but is starting actively to participate in them, and her enquiries, as a result, start to go far beyond the simple question of spectacle. She is deeply moved by the things she hears because she hears them in the context of her own life, her own desires, her own needs. She, like her sister and also her close friend Inés, is, after all, a young woman who is being kept semi-prisoner by her overbearing mother and the *tertulianos* who visit her house nightly, men like Ostolaza, the ultramontane and absolutist deputy who despises the Cortes and its talk of freedom and also warns the Condesa de Rumblar against offering too much freedom to her daughters. When Ostolaza gets up to speak in this selfsame session of the Cortes, Presentación's personal story and that of the nation to which she belongs, the novelistic and the historical, suddenly become one. She revels in the ridicule heaped upon this orator by the common people around her, their mockery of a man who is telling them to their face that he despises them and their rowdy and rabble-rousing ways. And she suddenly understands, in her own naïve and yet, at the same time, profound way, what this liberty that is being preached about may actually mean, and that it may just have something to do with her own happiness, as well as with that of the nation:

- ¿Y en qué consiste eso que dicen de que con Cortes hay libertad?  
 —Es una cosa difícil de explicar en pocas palabras.  
 —Pues yo lo entiendo de este modo... Pongo por caso... las Cortes dirán: ordeno y mando, que todos los españoles salgan a paseo por las tardes, y vayan una vez al mes al teatro, y se asomen al balcón después de haber hecho sus obligaciones... Prohíbo que las familias recen más de un rosario completo al día... Prohíbo que se case a nadie contra su voluntad y que se descase a quien quiere hacerlo... Todo el mundo puede estar alegre siempre que no ofenda al decoro...  
 —Las Cortes harán eso y mucho más.  
 —¡Oh, Sr. Araceli, yo estoy muy alegre!  
 —¿Por qué?  
 —No sé por qué. Siento deseos de reír a carcajadas. Siempre que salgo de casa, y voy a alguna parte donde puedo estar con alguna libertad, me parece que el alma quiere salirse del cuerpo y volar bailando y saltando por el mundo; me embriaga la atmósfera y la luz me embelesa. Todo cuanto veo me parece hermoso, cuanto oigo elocuente (menos lo de Ostolaza), todos los hombres justos y buenos, todas las mujeres guapas, y me parece que las casas, la calle, el cielo, las Cortes con su presidente y su preopinante me saludan sonriendo. ¡Oh, qué bien estoy aquí! (p. 282)<sup>15</sup>

This extremely moving scene actually forms the emotional and the political and anthropological heart of the novel, since it allows us to catch a glimpse of the true joy that, its author believed, was felt by a certain sector of the Spanish population thanks to the promise of freedom, of new structures, of participation, of a new nation. Galdós gives us here one specific example, a

rather Romantic and touching one, of what it meant “in that dawn to be alive”, of the very heavenliness of being young at a time of such profound cultural, as well as political, change, and of what the lived experience of those great abstracts “liberty” and “happiness” might actually look and feel like.<sup>16</sup>

But there too is the rub: the joy felt by Presentación and others, including Galdós, as he thought back to his own experience of the 1868 Revolution, was not shared by all sectors of Spanish society in 1812. *Cádiz*, it is true, ends with a brief truce and alliance between Gabriel, the *liberal*, and the Countess de Rumblar and some of her allies amongst the *serviles*, as they close ranks against the transgressive foreigner. But they all know that that alliance is an expedient and a temporary one that will almost inevitably break apart as soon as circumstances change—just as the return of Ferdinand VII after the expulsion of the French, as Galdós himself knew only too well, had in fact led, not to the unification of the nation, but to an ever-growing and increasingly violent rift between progressives and traditionalists.

Just as worryingly, though, the novel acknowledges that freedom is indeed a delicate flower even amongst those who, in 1812, were supposedly in favour of such an ideal. It is not just that we know that poor Presentación, after her joyful encounter with freedom, will have to return to the ideological prison-house that is her home, where she will once again be put in her place by the stifling clichés of absolutist rhetoric and forced to lie in order to hide her true feelings. It is also that, as she herself was in raptures in the Cortes, she was surrounded by the massed ranks of the people in the *tribuna pública*, many of whose responses to the reactionary deputies’ intolerant and condescending speeches were much less playful and much more violent than Presentación’s own. Before she even reaches home, therefore, and just after hearing the beautiful words that have moved her so deeply, Presentación is also witness to the spontaneous violence that erupts around her in the public gallery and the street outside, as those Gabriel refers to as “la hermandad de la porra” [the brotherhood of the club or the stick] (p. 290) get ready to try and lynch the representatives of tradition.

This little tableau, which occupies just a small corner in just one chapter of *Cádiz*, is in fact one of the most significant moments in the novel. Galdós is looking back at 1812 Cadiz from the dangerous, unstable autumn of 1874. And looking back too with a full awareness of the vicissitudes of Spanish history over the intervening 62 years: the derogation of the 1812 Constitution by Ferdinand VII and the absolutist intolerance of this once “desired” king; the civil wars of the 1830s that pitted Carlists—ultramontane Catholic defenders of the absolutist Old Régime—against Liberals; the corruption of Liberal politics under Isabel II; and the chaos, confusion and violence, as he saw it, of the First Republic. From this perspective, Galdós knew that the national unity that the men of Cadiz and he too, more than half a century later, longed for had proved a chimera and that now, towards the end of the unstable Revolutionary Sexennium, the old liberal values were being betrayed yet again by fanatical politicians and undermined by the irruption into the *res publica* of popular violence at the hands not only of the newly-active Carlists but also of

uncontrolled elements within the Democratic and Federalist movements that were running the Republic.

In the scene at the Cortes, Galdós was giving expression to the self-same political and social anxieties that haunted the work of so many nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thinkers, from Thomas Carlyle and Matthew Arnold to Ernest Renan and José Ortega y Gasset, as they contemplated the possibility and dangers of incorporating the popular classes into a more representative and democratic system. With *Cádiz*, the conservative liberal Galdós of 1874 projected such anxieties back into the moment when a modern, liberal Spain had been born—or had perhaps ended up, he now feared, being still-born. It would take another twenty or thirty years, and the joys and frustrations of the Bourbon Restoration that started in 1875, for Benito Pérez Galdós to realize that the energies of the have-nots could in fact be a positive force in the construction of the juster, more progressive and inclusive society that had been dreamt up, in embryonic form, by the true *liberales* of Cadiz.

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Dr Roberts is one of the UK's leading scholars on Spain's literature, culture and intellectual history of the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries. His research on Unamuno, in particular, is widely known and admired on both a national and international scale, but his research interests are broad and comprehensive and he has published on other authors, including Juan Ramón Jiménez and Federico García Lorca, and on cinema. His research is always scintillatingly perceptive and enlightening, and his lectures always engage his audiences with his infectious enthusiasm.

Dr Roberts is currently working on a research project, which will result in a book on Miguel de Unamuno's time in exile (1924-30), but, fortunately for us, he has managed to combine this with research on Galdós's views of 1812, as portrayed, in particular, through his historical novel *Cádiz* and we are delighted that he has accepted our invitation to deliver the Twelfth Galdós Lecture.

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<sup>1</sup> "The 1812 Cadiz Constitution represents one of the fundamental historical landmarks in the Ibero-American constitutional heritage, whose principles of individual liberty, democracy, popular sovereignty, separation of powers, legitimacy and equality in the face of the law allow us to recognize ourselves and each other as Ibero-Americans." The full text of the "Declaración de Cádiz" can be found on the website of the Secretaría General Iberoamericana, at the following address: <http://segib.org/>. All the translations into English are my own.

<sup>2</sup> "Ibero-America is on the way up. The Continent is growing. On this side of the Atlantic, [by contrast,] we've seen difficult situations emerging due to the economic and financial crisis. We now look towards you. We need more Ibero-America" (King Juan Carlos I, cited in Miguel González, "El Rey pide ayuda a Iberoamérica para superar la crisis económica", *El País* (Madrid), 16 November 2012).

<sup>3</sup> "Those famous men would see the freedom that they built on such robust foundations being vilified; the constitutional system that they had tended so carefully ending up stained and impure; the administration that they organized so wisely being eaten away by uncertainty and anarchy; the press suffering its own ignominious martyrdom; immoral and reactionary influences being placed on a rotten pedestal; and even the dignity of Parliament itself, of that Parliament which, with those men running it, had been obeyed by the Regency, respected by the generals and foreign cabinets and revered by the people, being treated so badly, cut off, as Parliament now is, from the feelings of the Nation, mistreated by the ministries, and turned into no more than a stage on which scandalous scenes are played out".

<sup>4</sup> Galdós talks of the joy of the 1868 Revolution in many places, including his *Memorias de un desmemoriado* (1916): see Pérez Galdós (1975: 193-270 [pp. 198-99]).

<sup>5</sup> For a description of Galdós's experiences, evolving political views, and writings of this period (1868-1874), see Ortiz-Armengol (1995: 219-84). For an excellent overview of Galdós's political and philosophical position, including his evolving thoughts on the nation, on history, and on liberalism and tradition, see Mora García (2006, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Mora García (2002) writes that Galdós's earliest novels, including the first series of *Episodios Nacionales*, represent "la alternativa novelística a lo que en el campo filosófico se llama filosofía de la historia" [the novelistic alternative to what philosophers call the philosophy of history]. Classic studies on the origins and nature of the *Episodios Nacionales* include Hinterhäuser (1963); Glendinning (1970); Casaldueiro (1977); Dendle (1986).

<sup>7</sup> See Ortiz-Armengol (1995: 261-67).

<sup>8</sup> On Lord Gray as a subversive character, see Triviños (1987: 244-53).

<sup>9</sup> "Spain is a beautiful country [...]. That rabble in the Cortes are going to ruin her. I fled England so that my fellow-countrymen could no longer burst my eardrums with their screams in Parliament, with their street vendors' cries about the price of cotton and flour, and here I found the most wondrous delights, because there were no factories or fat factory owners but rather gracious *majos*; no snooty coppers but really earthy robbers and smugglers; because there weren't boxers but rather bullfighters; because there weren't trained generals but guerrilla fighters; because there weren't inns but convents that were full of poetry; and, instead of dried out Lords who've been desiccated by all that etiquette, there were those nobles who go to taverns in order to get drunk with the *majas*; and, instead of pedantic philosophers, peaceful friars who do nothing; and, instead of bitter ale, wine, which is fire and light, and supernatural spirit... Oh, my friend! I should have been born in Spain. If I had been born beneath this sun, I would have been a guerrilla fighter today and a beggar tomorrow, and a friar at dawn and a bullfighter in the afternoon, and a *majo* and a sacristan in nuns' convents, and a priest and a dandy and a smuggler and a highwayman... [...] I love all these fortresses that history has raised, so that I can have the pleasure of storming them; I love tenacious and obstinate personalities, so that I can annoy them; I love dangers, so that I can tackle them; [...] I get pleasure from hearing the words 'you will not go beyond this point', so that I can reply 'I will do so'."

<sup>10</sup> For an analysis of the speeches and oratory employed in the Cortes de Cádiz, see Albaladejo Mayordomo (2008, 2009, and 2013 [forthcoming]).

<sup>11</sup> On the historiographical sources Galdós drew upon, especially his use of the Conde de Toreno's *Historia del levantamiento, guerra y revolución de España* (1835), see Esterán (2003: 40-53). On the legal research that Galdós carried out in order to prepare *Cádiz*, see Roca Roca (1993). On Galdós's use of political rhetoric in the novel, see Cifo González (2012).

<sup>12</sup> See Roberts (2013 [forthcoming]). The rest of this lecture is a slightly expanded version of the final third of that forthcoming chapter.

<sup>13</sup> Nor does the prescient Gabriel, who responds to Amaranta's comment by saying "Sí, señora. Ese nuevo actor que se mete donde no le llaman dará disgustos a las Cortes" [Yes, my lady. That new actor that is sticking its nose where it doesn't belong will create all sorts of problems and sorrows for the Cortes] (p. 197).

<sup>14</sup> "I noticed the girl's astonishment and said:

'Do you like this spectacle?'

'Very much indeed. We'd been told that it was really ugly, but it's nice. Who's that gentleman who's there in the middle of the ring?'

'That's the president. He's the one in charge.'

'I see... And when he wants to give an order, he'll get his handkerchief out and will wave it in the air.'

'No, Miss Presentacioncita. That's what happens in bullfights; but here the president uses a little bell.'

'And the deputy who's going to speak, where will he appear from? From behind that curtain or through that little door?'

'The deputy won't appear from anywhere, there are no bull pens or curtains here. The deputy is sitting on his seat, and when he wants to speak, he'll stand up. Look: all those men over there are deputies.'

The more the girl's mind captured as far as Parliamentary practice was concerned, the more surprise she showed, and she only stopped concentrating on Congress in order to ask me questions that were sometimes so original and at others so innocent that I had great trouble answering her. She had no idea whatsoever of what she was witnessing; and that spectacle moved her deeply, even though the political ideas played no part at all in that emotion, which was simply the result of the strongly impressionable nature of a being who had been educated in a narrowly enclosed space and weighed down with bonds and chains, and who yet possessed powerful wings to fly, if she could ever break free of her enslavement.

She was tender, sensitive, fickle, naughty and, thanks to her education, able to put on a mask and act out like the best of them; but her naivety was such at times that she was unable to hide the deepest reaches of her heart or soul. This characteristic, which was doubtless created by her irresistible longing for freedom, made her sometimes appear immoderate and excessively self-possessed.

She possessed the gift of fantasy to a high degree; the lack of secular education combined with that quality caused her to make charming mistakes. Not only on that occasion but on several others besides, I observed that, when she was away from Doña María and felt free from the weight of that great burden of maternal authority, fantasy, feelings, ideas and desires overflowed in her with an unbridled impetuosity. Watching the session, she was beside herself, so restless was she, with her nerves so excited and her senses so affected.

'Mr Araceli', she said to me after meditating for a moment, 'what is all this for?'

'You mean Congress?'

'Yes, that's it; I mean, what is Congress for?'

'It's about governing peoples, together with the king.'

'I understand, I understand', she replied, vigorously fanning herself. 'It means that all these gentlemen come here to preach, and, just as the priests in the churches preach and tell us to be good, the nation's lawyers preach other things; the people come along, listen to them and that's that. It's just that, according to what our visitors tell us each night, the deputies preach that we should be evil, and that's what I don't understand.'

'Those speeches', I smiled, 'are not sermons but rather debates.'

'That's right; I thought that they weren't sermons, but rather someone says one thing, another says another, and it looks like they're arguing with each other.'

'Exactly. They're arguing; each of them says what he believes it best to say, and then...'

'I love arguments. Do you know, I'd spend every spare moment here listening to all of this? But I'd be happy if they shouted and insulted each other, and threw the benches at each other too.'

'On occasions...'

'Well I want to be here when that happens. Will they announce it on posters on the street corners?'

'No, of course not. Politics isn't a theatre performance.'

'So what is politics, then?'

'This is.'

'Now I think I understand it all less than I did before.'

<sup>15</sup> "And what does it mean when they say that with the Cortes comes freedom?'

'That's something that's not easy to explain in a few words.'

'Well, this is how I understand it... For example... the Cortes will say: I order and command that all Spaniards should go out for a walk in the afternoons, and that they should go to the theatre once a month, and should go out onto their balconies once they've done their chores... I ban families from saying the whole rosary more than once a day... I forbid anyone being married off against their will or not being allowed to get married if they wish to do so... Everyone has the right to be happy as long as they respect decorum...'

'The Cortes will do all that and much more.'

'Oh, Mr Araceli, I'm so happy!'

'Why?'

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‘I don’t know why. I feel like laughing out loud. Whenever I leave home and go somewhere I can be free, I feel as if my soul wants to fly out of my body and dance and skip through the world; I find the atmosphere intoxicating and the light captivating. All I can see seems lovely to me, all I hear (except what Ostolaza’s saying) seems eloquent, all the men seem just and good, all the women beautiful, and I feel that the houses, the street, the sky, the Cortes with their President and their previous speakers are smiling and saying hello to me. Oh, how good I feel here!’”

<sup>16</sup> It would seem that this moment of political fervour had provided Presentación, and indeed Gabriel, with an experience that was emotionally akin to Wordsworth’s first experience of the French Revolution, since “Bliss was it [for them] in that dawn to be alive, / But to be young was very heaven!” (Wordsworth 1904, 208).