



Ghosts of Colonies Past and Present

*Spanish Imperialism in the
Fiction of Benito Pérez Galdós*

Mary L. Coffey

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Acknowledgments

There is an undeniable audacity in attempting to write a book that addresses the broad topic of Spanish imperialism in the work of an author who enjoyed such a long, prolific career and whose fiction has attracted the attention of so many scholars. *Ghosts of Colonies Past and Present* is the fruit of an entire career in Hispanic Studies, a field that has changed remarkably in the last two decades. This year marks the centenary of Galdós's death, and it is fitting to look back and reassess his career and his impact on the society of his time and on ours today. I can only hope that readers will find this an informative perspective from which to draw conclusions about the past and present. This was not an easy book to write, and I am indebted to many people for making it possible. To acknowledge all the support and encouragement I received from so many would result in a text of equally galdosian proportions. For that reason, I will attempt to be brief.

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In closing, I hope readers of this book will draw connections between the struggle of Spaniards to reimagine themselves after the loss of empire and our own time. We are experiencing seismic shifts across the globe that will undoubtedly have profound and lasting impacts on nations, on institutions, on cultural identities, and on the health of the planet as a whole. Whether we have the ability to direct these shifts toward positive outcomes remains to be seen. I continue to believe that literature offers

valuable lessons to attentive readers, and I hope that this book will add, in small measure, to a body of knowledge that might actually help us navigate the stormy waters of our present environment. Galdós, in his study of Spanish history and culture, came quickly to the conclusion that greed and self-interest lead to devastating results for all, both in the moment and for subsequent generations. It is a lesson we must relearn as we strive for a world beyond the postcolonial.

Introduction: Managing the Loss of Empire

CHAPTER I

The Problem of Spain's Colonial Legacy

Benito Pérez Galdós (1843–1920) was one of Spain's most prolific authors, having published 78 novels, 23 plays, 15 short stories, and an extensive corpus of journalism over a career that spanned a half century. Stephen Gilman considered Galdós to be “Spain's first authentic nineteenth-century novelist” (*Galdós and the Art of the European Novel* 24), and many critics have favorably compared his literary production to that of other great European novelists, such as Charles Dickens, Honoré de Balzac, and Leo Tolstoy.¹ Galdós's commitment to writing about Spain's past and its present, in his historical novels – the *Episodios nacionales* [National Episodes] – and his realist novels of contemporary Spanish life in the late nineteenth century – the *novelas contemporáneas* [contemporary novels] – has no counterpart in European literary history. Given the author's prolific output, writing a book about Benito Pérez Galdós's treatment of Spain's imperial history is a daunting task. Part of the challenge lies not just in the extensive number of works but also in the generally accepted opinion in contemporary Galdós studies that the author's intense focus on the metropolis precluded a lack of engagement with Spanish imperialism. The noted historian Michael Costeloe, for example, in his study of peninsular Spain's response to colonial revolution, has claimed that Galdós “makes only passing and superficial reference to the wars in America, and permits his characters almost no opinions on what Spaniards felt about the loss of empire” (2). Nevertheless, when one looks closely in Galdós's fiction for references to the Americas,

¹ See Harriet Turner's “The Poetics of Suffering in Galdós and Tolstoy” (*Studies in Honor of Gilberto Paolini*, Mercedes Vidal, ed. Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta Press, 1996); Timothy McGovern's *Dickens in Galdós* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000); Charles Ley's “Galdós comparado con Balzac y Dickens como novelista nacional” (*Actas del Primer Congreso Internacional de Estudios Galdosianos*, Las Palmas: Excmo Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, 1977); and Fredric Jameson's *The Antinomies of Realism* (London: Verso, 2013).

to Spanish imperialism, to the colonial experience, even if only from the perspective of the metropolitan citizen, the evidence is undeniably present. References are not always straightforward or reflected in purely historical terms. They are, as is often the case even in realist fiction, metaphorical and evocative in nature, addressing issues associated with empire and colonialism in unexpected ways. Galdós's fiction reveals, if one takes the time to examine the references within the larger context of the author's *oeuvre*, that Spanish national identity in the nineteenth century remained deeply enmeshed within the framework of imperialism and the country's colonial legacy.

Costeloe's comment aside, the argument that Galdós's fiction, which so clearly engages with concepts of Spanish national identity, evidences a powerful engagement with empire should not be particularly contentious, since virtually no formulation of national identity in nineteenth-century Europe could escape connections to empire, even if those connections were often overlooked by critics. As Edward Said has clearly noted,

As a reference, as a point of definition, as an easily assumed place of travel, wealth, and service, the empire functions for much of the European nineteenth-century as a codified, if only marginally visible, presence in fiction, very much like the servants in grand households and in novels, whose work is taken for granted but scarcely ever more than named, rarely studied ... or given density. (63)

An examination of Galdós's work for evidence of empire has not been undertaken in any systematic fashion. This study constitutes an attempt to address that gap in scholarship. When we take the time to focus on some of the casual details in Galdós's novels and then link those details over time and across the author's literary career, we begin to see that the author's fiction exhibits a lifelong engagement with Spain's imperial past and its impact on the nation's present. The point of this volume is to demonstrate how Galdós's fiction constitutes part of a unique psychological process of coming to terms with the loss of empire and the resultant change in Spain's stature on the global stage. While I have attempted to address the trajectory of the author's thinking with respect to Spanish imperialism, I place special emphasis on Galdós's early works as examples of fiction that not only established his novelistic career and his stature in Spanish letters but also provided a fundamental framework for understanding how his more mature fiction engaged with issues of national identity and of Spain's imperial past and present, and the way those issues hovered, ghostlike and almost invisibly, over or just below the surface of his portraits of life in Spain throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century. Before addressing more specific aspects of Galdós's fiction and

the manifestation of his engagement with Spanish imperialism in his narratives, it is important to situate this argument within the larger framework of Spain's imperial history and its place in modern Spanish national consciousness.

Narratives, National Consciousness, and Imperial Trauma

Spain's defeat in the 1898 Spanish–American War, often referred to as “el desastre,” is commonly identified as a definitive moment of national trauma, what Álvarez Junco has referred to as “el despertar de aquella somnolencia que había durado casi un siglo” [the awakening from that somnolence that had lasted nearly a century] (585). Despite the fact that Spain's imperial influence had been on the wane since the latter part of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth, the loss of Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, and Guam sounded the death knell of the country's global empire. Throughout the nineteenth century the metropolis had attempted to ignore the growing restlessness of its remaining colonies, and the events of 1898 finally forced metropolitan citizens to recognize that Spain was no longer a colonial power or a significant force in world politics. Yet the tendency to focus on 1898 as the critical moment for the end of Spanish empire overlooks the importance of events in the early part of the nineteenth century, when Spain lost control over a significant portion of its colonial territories in the Americas. Indeed, the moment of national trauma associated with imperial loss should be more accurately situated much earlier, specifically within the first decades of the nineteenth century, when Spain fought Napoleon's army in the Peninsular War of Independence, when the colonial *juntas* began to envision greater autonomy and self-governance, when the prospect of independence gained currency for colonial citizens, and when the Spanish American wars of independence were undertaken and eventually won. In his 1944 induction into the Real Academia de Historia, Melchor Fernández Almagro gave a speech entitled *La emancipación de América y su reflejo en la conciencia española* in which he noted that, if Spaniards were asked when empire was lost, a majority would say 1898, and that those who might identify an earlier date would be hard pressed to be more specific about when that loss occurred.

Siendo innegable – y, desde luego, nadie lo niega, a poco que se fije la atención en el gran suceso – que el Imperio ultramarino de España, propiamente dicho, se perdió en la batalla de Ayacucho, dijérase que 1824, pese a todo, es año que pasa inadvertido en la común y elemental cultura histórica de nuestro pueblo. (10)

[Being undeniable – and of course, no one does deny it, given the little attention paid to that great event – that the overseas empire of Spain, properly speaking, was lost at the battle of Ayacucho, it could be said that 1824, in spite of everything, is a year that goes unnoticed in the common, elemental cultural history of our people.]

It is true there are no public acknowledgments in Spain of 1824 as a date worth historical remembrance, and this is not surprising, considering what the date means for metropolitan citizens. To conclude that “el español de la calle, el de la tienda o de la covachuela, el de la sobremesa familiar, no sentía afectado por la querrela exigentísima que se tramitaba en las Indias por el hierro y por el fuego” [the Spaniard in the street, the one in the store or in the hovel, the one engaged in after-dinner conversation, didn’t feel affected by the entrenched conflict taking place in the Indies by means of iron and fire] misses perhaps, the complexity of what was at stake (Fernández Almagro 14–15). In fact, attitudes within the metropolis relative to colonial loss and the end of empire had already begun to take shape during the early decades of the nineteenth century, and they continued to develop through subsequent decades. Unquestionably the imperial losses in the 1820s began a process of self-reflection that reached its height, if not its culmination, with 1898. But, rather than consider the period between colonial losses as one of somnolence, as does Álvarez Junco, it is more useful to imagine the decades between losses as a period in which the national trauma of losing the empire manifested itself in subtle and unconscious ways in popular culture. For that reason, when thinking about how the metropolis managed the reality of imperial loss, it makes more sense to expect that the process of introspection and re-evaluation would be long, drawn out and complex. In truth, much of nineteenth-century Spanish literature offers evidence that literary producers and consumers were deeply involved in a process of coming to terms, slowly but steadily, with the nation’s colonial history even as they struggled to construct a new definition of Spain as a nation.

Over the course of my academic career I have been struck by how much of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spanish culture involves defining a sense of national identity. In addition to understanding what it means to be Spanish in the present moment or, with respect to the nineteenth century, the nature of Spanish identity in comparison to the rest of Europe, much of Spanish culture demonstrates a concern with the nation’s past, its former status as a global empire, and the profound contrast between the past and the present. As Javier Tusell noted in *España: una angustia nacional*, his meditation on the anxious national

response to the centenary of 1898, “La persistencia en la interrogación acerca de lo español en ocasiones parece bordear la obsesión” [The persistence in the questions about what is Spanish on occasion seems to border on obsession] (53). Two anecdotes, one scholarly in nature and the other dealing with contemporary Spanish popular culture, serve to illustrate Tusell’s observation and help set the stage for our examination of Galdós’s fiction.

In October 1996 a two-day conference entitled “Spanish Nationalism: A Historical Perspective,” led by José Álvarez Junco at Tufts University, brought together specialists in history, political science, literature, and culture, among them Noël Valis, Carlos Serrano, Carolyn Boyd, Enric Ucelay da Cal, Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, Edward Baker, Xosé Manoel Nuñez-Seixas, E. Inman Fox, and Adrian Shubert, to discuss nineteenth- and twentieth-century approaches to Spanish nationalism. In a final round-table discussion, the renowned Spanish political scientist and sociologist Juan Linz, in response to the two days of presentations, turned to the audience and members of the panel and rather spontaneously questioned what seemed to him to be an obsessive preoccupation with Spanish national identity. I am paraphrasing his words here, but essentially his comments were as follows: “Why do we keep asking who we are and what it means to be Spanish? The Swedes don’t do this. The Germans don’t do this. Why are we so anxious about our identity?” His unexpected outburst triggered some initial laughter, but also led to thoughtful musings from fellow panelists Hugh Thomas, Stanley Payne, and Benedict Anderson. Ultimately it stood as a defining moment for the conference. Why was Spanish national identity such a point of obsession for those who study Spain? Why would the question of national identity provoke such a sense of conflict and the need to compare one national tradition with another? As an assistant professor, new to the profession, I found Linz’s point particularly relevant, in part because no one seemed to have an answer.

Years later, in September 2001, TVE1 launched what was to become the longest-running and most critically acclaimed program in Spanish television history: *Cuéntame cómo pasó*. The dramatic series, still on the air in 2020, with additional seasons to come, presents a middle-class Spanish family’s experiences, beginning in the late 1960s, continuing through the 1970s and 1980s, and most recently moving into the 1990s, spanning the last years of the Franco dictatorship, the country’s transition to a constitutional democracy, and the years of the PSOE’s political dominance under Prime Minister Felipe González. The program initially employed the voiceover of an adult looking back at his childhood and remembering key events, a perspective borrowed from the popular American television program *The*

Wonder Years. The series quickly garnered critical and popular acclaim for its realism, as writers and producers made a concerted attempt to present their fictionalized account of the effects of the Franco dictatorship and the transition to democracy within the framework of a verifiable history.² As one critic noted, “La serie no consiste simplemente en una recreación del pasado a través de recuerdos sino que antes de escribir los guiones se procede a un proceso de documentación para que la trama ficticia se fundamente sobre una base histórica sólida” [The series does not simply consist in a re-creation of the past through memories but rather before writing the scripts proceed through a process of documentation so that the fictional plot is based on solid historical evidence] (Sevillano Canicio 349–50). In an interview, the series’ principal writer, Eduardo Ladrón de Guevara, claimed that “Aquellos años fueron ignominiosos y hay que contarlos” [Those years were ignominious, and they have to be told] (cited in Sevillano Canicio 349). Implicit in his statement is the belief that, by providing a historical narrative of the past, viewers would face the painful legacy of the Franco years and learn from history.

In its early years *Cuéntame* focused on Spain’s emergence from Spain’s relative isolation during the Franco dictatorship onto the global stage as a modern European nation, and nowhere was that central message made clearer than in the pilot episode, “El retorno del fugitivo” [The return of the fugitive], which concluded with the protagonists, the Alcántara family, gathered around a new black and white television set watching Massiel become the first Spaniard to win the Eurovision contest with the song “La la la.” The message – that Spain had achieved its desired status as a modern consumer society and member of a community of European nations – was unambiguous. This episode of *Cuéntame* included another fascinating scene that has not been examined in any of the many articles written to date on this monumental television series. The scene takes place in a schoolroom during a history lesson, and it allows the series to make a pointed reference, from its very inception, to a critical moment in the nation’s past that occurred long before the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship. The scene begins with Carlos, the family’s youngest son, passing notes

² See Elena Cueto Asín’s “Memorias de progreso y violencia; La Guerra Civil en *Cuéntame cómo pasó*” (*Historias de la pequeña pantalla: Representaciones históricas en la televisión de la España democrática*. Francisca López, Elena Cueto Asín, and David George, eds (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2009), 137–56); Isabel Estrada’s “*Cuéntame cómo pasó* o la revisión televisiva de la historia española reciente” (*Hispanic Review* 72:4 (2004): 547–64); and Ana Corbalán’s “Reconstrucción del pasado histórico: Nostalgia reflexiva en *Cuéntame cómo pasó*” (*Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 10:3 (2009): 341–57).

to his best friend, Luis, while their teacher, Don Severiano, lectures the class on Spanish history. The boys are passing notes with a sequence of numbers, which allow them to play a paper version of the game Battleship. Luis passes coordinates that result in a hit on one of Carlos's ships just as the teacher's lecture turns, in a moment of brilliant counterpoint, to the history of Spain in the Americas and, in particular, to the events of 1898. Don Severiano rails against American perfidy, thus reminding twenty-first-century Spaniards that no portrait of Spain as a modern consumer nation can avoid a reference to the nation's imperial past.

These two stories illustrate that there are parallel yet connected impulses at work here. One involves the conflicted and perhaps even obsessive nature of the search for national identity. Juan Linz's impromptu references to other European nations and their respective, and apparently unproblematic, national identities reveal that there is something unique about Spain, at least from the perspective of Spaniards. I would suggest that the difference involves Spain's imperial history and the fact that it was the first nation in world history to achieve and then lose a global hegemonic empire. Don Severiano's history lesson in the pilot episode of *Cuéntame cómo pasó* indicates that even more than a century after the Spanish–American War of 1898 the issue of colonial loss still resonates for many Spaniards and remains central to an ongoing national struggle to identify and accept a definition of what it means to be Spanish in today's world.³ The other impulse at work here is the critical role of the representation of history in popular culture. *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, with more than 370 episodes spanning 20 seasons, is a contemporary confirmation of the enduring vitality of historical narratives that are designed to both instruct and entertain consumers of popular culture.

But there are antecedents to the popular culture phenomenon of *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, most notably in the nineteenth century, the period Christopher Schmidt-Nowara has described as Spain's "second empire," in reference to Spain's colonial engagement after the Spanish American revolutions (3).⁴ Indeed, nowhere in modern Spanish literature can we find a more ambitious project for the simultaneous entertainment and instruction

³ See, for example, Javier Krauel's insightful *Imperial Emotions: Cultural Responses to Myths of Empire in Fin-de Siècle Spain* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2013), which explores the complex cultural responses to Spain's loss in the Spanish–American War.

⁴ Christopher Schmidt-Nowara links the changed nature of Spain's colonial engagement to its expansion of Antillean slavery, noting that "Spain was not merely a feeble and decadent drain on Antillean resources, but an active player

of consumers than the historical novels of Benito Pérez Galdós (1843–1920). Spanish history plays a unique role in virtually every one of Galdós’s novels, from his earliest historical fiction – *La Fontana de Oro* (1870) and *El audaz* (1871) – to his *Episodios nacionales* – five series consisting of a total of 46 separate novels that chronicle Spanish history from 1805 to 1880 – to his later *novelas contemporáneas* [contemporary novels]. The first two series of *Episodios nacionales*, written between 1873 and 1879, play a central role in this study given that they cover the historical period in which Spain experienced its early colonial losses in the Americas. These two series, a total of 20 novels, represent an unprecedented effort to answer questions about national identity. The fact that these two series were completed within only seven years signals an obsessive need to chronicle the nation’s history. Historians have long recognized how Galdós’s historical novels participated in the creation of a renewed image of Spain, just as it was experiencing the political tumult of the *Sexenio democrático* [Democratic Sexenio] of 1868–74.⁵ But the question of why Galdós felt compelled to write them at such speed and with such a particular historical focus on the years 1805–34 is harder to answer until we undertake a comprehensive examination of the novels from the perspective of colonial loss. Scholars of Galdós’s fiction rarely address the fact that Galdós’s early novels were written at a time when Spain was already in a military fight to control Cuba, its most important remaining colony. From the perspective of Spain’s imperial history, then, the author’s crafting of early nineteenth-century Spanish history was taking place not only during a period of political turmoil in the metropolis but also as a significant colonial war was being waged in the background. As Ángel Bahamonde and José Cayuela have noted in their study of nineteenth-century colonial Spanish elites, the Ten Years War, from 1868 to 1878, was only the first step in a struggle that would resume in the Little War of 1879–80 and ultimately culminate with the successful

in refashioning Atlantic slavery” (*Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1833–1874* (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1999), 3).

⁵ Historians such as Raymond Carr, José María Jover Zamora, and Carlos Seco Serrano have demonstrated a powerful interest in Galdós’s historical narratives, often citing them in their work. See, for example, Carr’s *Spain 1808–1975* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford UP, 1993); Jover Zamora’s *Política, diplomacia y humanismo popular. Estudios sobre la vida española en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Ediciones Turner, 1976) and *La imagen de la Primera República en la España de la Restauración* (Madrid: Real Académica de la Historia, 1982); and Seco Serrano’s “Los *Episodios nacionales* como fuente histórica” (*Cuadernos hispanoamericanos* 250–52 (1970–71)).

1895–98 Cuban War of Independence (362–63). That first attempt to break free of imperial control, occurring exactly at the time when Galdós was engaged in producing a version of Spanish history designed for the equivalent of a mass market, “marca un antes y un después en la relación entre la elite hispano-cubana y Europa” [marks a before and after in the relations between the Hispanic-Cuban elite and Europe] (Bahamonde and Cayuela 362). Viewed through the lens of empire, Galdós’s early fiction attempts to redefine national identity at a critical juncture in time, during a period when the metropolis was deeply engaged in the process of coming to terms with its traumatic shift in fortunes on the global stage.

Galdós’s Narratives of Spanish Metropolitan Society

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said makes the claim that “Nearly everywhere in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British and French culture we find allusions to the facts of empire, but perhaps nowhere with more regularity and frequency than in the British novel” (62). Largely owing to the work of Said, we no longer read the works of the great nineteenth-century European authors, including those from national traditions other than the French and the British, without recognizing the assumptions about race, gender, and power that are uniquely linked to imperialism. The works of Benito Pérez Galdós, Spain’s most prolific and best-known nineteenth-century novelist, should be no different. Besides providing us with a remarkable look at everyday life, Galdós’s realist and historical narratives are also windows into the nineteenth-century landscape of Spanish metropolitan and colonial interactions. Yet much of the literary production of Spain in the nineteenth century has not received the sustained critical attention it deserves with respect to empire and colonialism. Only recently have Galdós’s novels begun to attract the attention of scholars in this regard.⁶ The present challenge lies not only in

⁶ Literary scholars interested in Spanish colonialism have tended to look at Galdós’s production in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, rather than his early novels or the first two series of *Episodios nacionales*. See, for example, John Sinnigen’s “Cuba en Galdós” (*Casas de las Américas* 212 (1998)); Eva Marie Copeland’s “Empire, Nation, and the *indiano* in Galdós’s *Tormento* and *La loca de la casa*” (*Hispanic Review* 80 (2012)); Lisa Surwillo’s *Monsters by Trade. Slave Traffickers in Modern Spanish Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2014); Michael Ugarte’s “The Spanish Empire on the Wane. Africa, Galdós, and the Moroccan Wars,” in *Empire’s End* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt UP, 2016); Susan Martín-Márquez’s *Disorientations* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP,

making more visible in Galdós's fiction what has been largely unrecognized by contemporary readers and scholars but also in deciding what these textual discoveries might say about the process of forming a new national identity.

Accordingly, Said's simile for the hidden references to empire – “as a coded, if only marginally visible, presence in fiction, very much like the servants in grand households” – is an apt way of describing how we might tease out the meaningful references in Galdós's novels (63). It requires us to pay close attention to subplots and secondary characters and the way they connect to Spanish colonialism. In addition, Galdós's narratives also contain a variety of metaphorical references that serve to elucidate attitudes toward Spain's changing national identity in the nineteenth century. Yet one must approach Galdós's texts from a contemporary, post-colonial perspective in order to recognize not only how his narratives participate in the formulation of a national identity but also how intent they are on separating a sense of national consciousness from Spain's imperial past. Though the very term post-colonial is a complicated one, in my use of it here I specifically mean from the perspective of historical chronology, after the loss of colonial territories.⁷ In other words, from a twenty-first-century perspective, in which peninsular Spain no longer automatically evokes in readers an assumed connection with the territorial immensity and the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Americas, it becomes possible to see, by examining Galdós's narratives, the degree to which nineteenth-century Spaniards continued to make that assumption of shared culture and heritage and, as a result, still struggled to internalize the end of their nation's formerly vast empire.⁸

Part of this process involves contextualizing Galdós's early narrative works as texts that provide a vision of the nation that his readers could

2008); and Alda Blanco's *Cultura y conciencia imperial en la España del siglo XIX* (Valencia: Publicaciones de la Universitat de València, 2012).

⁷ For an explication of the term's complexity, see Anne McClintock's “The angel of progress: pitfalls of the term postcolonialism,” in *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994).

⁸ This is not to say that such assumed connections are no longer made. One only need look at the arguments made by Sebastiaan Faber (“Hispanism, Transatlantic Studies, and the Problem of Cultural History”) and Alejandro Mejías-López (“Hispanic Studies and the Legacy of Empire,” in *Empire's End* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt UP, 2016)) with respect to Hispanism and Hispanic Studies to see that these assumed connections continue to influence institutional structures in the academy.

share. Benedict Anderson has convincingly demonstrated how the rise of the popular press in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in the creation of “imagined communities” of readers whose sense of national identity was formed by what they read. Anderson’s central claim – that print technology and the emerging modern press, as a central purveyor of news, disseminated ideas and images for the consumption of readers – has resonated for scholars, particularly for those interested in the nineteenth century (46). While Anderson focuses primarily on the role of newspapers in developing national consciousness, he and others have also recognized the importance of novels.⁹ Simon During has noted that “it is becoming a commonplace that the institution of literature works to nationalist ends” (138). Both journalism and popular fiction, as essential elements of nascent nineteenth-century print culture, participated in the development of national consciousness by supplying national narratives to a rapidly expanding and largely middle-class reading public. It is also worth remembering that the border between journalism and literature, at least in nineteenth-century Spain, was quite porous. Galdós, for example, like many of his contemporaries, worked as a journalist, a novelist, and a playwright, and it was quite common in the nineteenth century for newspapers and journals to include a combination of news and popular fiction. Realist narratives and historical novels, particularly those that experienced popularity and were more widely circulated, functioned no differently than newspapers in the creation of imagined communities. In fact, critics have consistently noted that Galdós’s fiction participated in the cultural process of nation-building in nineteenth-century Spain.¹⁰ In this sense, his work serves as a metropolitan counterpart for similar narrative impulses in the newly independent nations of Latin America.

The decision to pay close attention to Galdós’s earliest narratives – those written before 1880 – may seem surprising, in part because these are not the works the author is best known for in contemporary academic circles and

⁹ Building off of Anderson’s work, Doris Sommer’s *Foundational Fictions. The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1991) explores the role of popular fiction in shaping national identity in newly-independent Latin American nations, an idea that will be referred to in subsequent chapters.

¹⁰ Amado Alonso notes that “Galdós se puso a escribir novelas porque se sentía con una misión nacional que cumplir: alumbrar la conciencia nacional, influir en el modo social de ser de los españoles y mejorar su índole política” [Galdós began to write novels because he felt he had a national mission to fulfill: to enlighten a national consciousness, to influence the social behavior of Spaniards, and to improve their political nature] (235).

in part because at first glance they seem to focus exclusively on events far removed from Spain's colonial history. But there are, I contend, compelling reasons for this. To begin, Galdós's historical fiction has not received the same degree of sustained critical attention as the novels he produced in the 1880s and 1890s.¹¹ Historians and literary scholars, even those known to specialize in Galdós studies, are more familiar with Galdós's realist novels, with many having read only the occasional volume of the author's *Episodios nacionales*. The author's narratives from the last two decades of the nineteenth century have attracted the largest share of critical attention precisely because of their superb realism. Given the fullness with which Galdós portrayed nineteenth-century metropolitan Spanish society in these realist novels, it is not surprising to find references to empire and colonialism. But these novels take a different approach to the representation of Spanish imperialism, reflecting a largely unconscious incorporation of the details of metropolitan–colonial relations. The early novels, this study will show, display a much more intentional approach to the nation's imperial history.

It may also seem surprising to devote extensive attention to the early series of *Episodios nacionales* rather than addressing all five series with the same degree of detail. With respect to the last three series of *Episodios*, written between 1897 and 1911, there is no question that the author felt motivated to return to the genre precisely when Spain could no longer deny the seriousness of the threat to its continued control of its most important colonies, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. The novels address the country's anxious response to its changed status as an imperial power throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in the Isabelline

¹¹ Ángel del Río's *Estudios galdosianos* (1953) was one of the first attempts to look more holistically at Galdós's historical fiction. But critical analysis of the *Episodios nacionales* truly began to flourish in the 1960s, with extensive studies written by Hans Hinterhäuser (1963), Antonio Regalado García (1966), Alfred Rodríguez (1967), and the three-volume series by José Montesinos (1968). The 1980s saw important contributions by Brian Dendle (1980 and 1986) and Diane Urey (1989). Interest in the *Episodios nacionales* waned altogether in the 1990s and 2000s. More recently, with the exception of Toni Dorca's study of the first series, *Las dos caras de Jano: La guerra de independencia como materia novelable en Galdós* (2015); Enrique Miralles García's *La segunda serie de los Episodios nacionales* (2015); and David George's articles on the second series, "Foresight, Blindness or Illusion" (2005) and "Religious Space and the Public Sphere in *Un voluntario realista*" (2009–10), scholarship has focused almost exclusively on a select number of individual volumes from the later series of *Episodios nacionales*, most of which were published after 1898.

period from 1836 to 1868. These later historical novels, referred to by Brian Dendle as Galdós's "mature" fiction, show an undeniable connection with the events of 1898 and the loss of empire. In recent years, critics have begun to focus more on these later historical novels precisely because the references to empire and Spain's imperial impulses in the mid-nineteenth century are more direct.¹² In the telling of Spanish history from 1836 to the 1880s, Galdós finds the realist framework of the first two series to be increasingly restrictive, to the point where he simply breaks entirely from the style of his earliest historical fiction to venture into the realm of fantasy and the creation of alternative national histories. More will be said about Galdós's turn to fantasy in narrating Spanish history and more recent scholarly exploration of the representations of empire in Galdós's later works in Chapter 6.

That said, the decision to closely examine Galdós's earliest work from the 1870s is predicated on the fact that neither the author's realist novels of the late nineteenth century nor his post-1898 historical novels are his first portraits of post-colonial Spanish identity. The last three series of *Episodios* actually represent a return to the topic of Spanish imperialism. Also notable is the fact that Galdós's realist novels and his later historical novels are not the works that brought him fame as an author. It was the unparalleled popularity of the first two series that allowed Galdós to become the first and only writer of his generation to live entirely off sales of his fiction.¹³ For those reasons, it behooves us to consider how the author's representation of empire might have participated in the early and enthusiastic response to his historical fiction. The references to Spanish imperialism and its effect on the metropolis, evident in these first forays into popular fiction, provide us with a fascinating point of departure for understanding not only the trajectory of the author's opinions with respect to Spain's imperial identity but also

¹² The aforementioned works by Susan Martín-Márquez (2008) and Michael Ugarte (2016), as well as the recent addition of Julia Chang's "Becoming Useless. Masculinity, Able-Bodiedness, and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Spain," in *Unsettling Colonialism. Gender and Race in the Nineteenth-century Global Hispanic World* (Albany, NY: State U of New York P, 2019) all examine aspects of Galdós's representation of Spain's involvement in North Africa and its ill-conceived attempt to recoup part of its former imperial glory in the Moroccan War of 1860.

¹³ See the work of Jean-François Botrel: "Le succès d'édition des oeuvres de Benito Pérez Galdós: essai de bibliométrie (1)," *Anales de literatura española* 3 (1984): 119–57; and "Le succès d'édition des oeuvres de Benito Pérez Galdós: essai de bibliométrie (2)," *Anales de literatura española* 4 (1985): 29–66.

the way the Spanish reading public responded to them.¹⁴ Before he turned his attention to portraits of Restoration society in the 1880s and 1890s and long before he turned his attention once again to the genre of the historical novel after 1898, Galdós was producing narratives that played a critical role in process of reimagining the nation and its imperial identity.

The End of Empire in Early Nineteenth-century Spain

Galdós's fascination with Spanish history is one of the most salient aspects of his literary career. Even before embarking on the first volumes of *Episodios nacionales*, his monumental chronicle of the whole of Spanish history in the nineteenth century, he was drawn to historical fiction. As mentioned, when he began his career as a novelist in the late 1860s, two of the first three novels he wrote and published, *La Fontana de Oro* and *El audaz*, were works of historical fiction. When looking at the extent of Galdós's early literary production of the late 1860s and 1870s, specifically these early historical novels and the first two series of *Episodios nacionales*, one of the first things one notes is the historical period during which the action across these various narratives takes place. The action in *La Fontana de Oro* occurs in and around Madrid during the *Trienio Liberal* (The Liberal Triennium) of 1820–23, when a military uprising against King Fernando VII resulted in a brief period of constitutional government. Set earlier in the nineteenth century, from 1800 to 1808, *El audaz* references the power struggles between King Carlos IV and his son Fernando that would eventually lead to the Peninsular War between Spain and Napoleonic France. Soon after publishing these novels, Galdós turned to the task of producing a wider and more comprehensive portrait of early nineteenth-century Spain, and between 1872 and 1879 he wrote 20 volumes that tell the story of Spain from 1805 to 1834, narrating the history of the Peninsular War and the period of Fernando VII's reign as King of Spain. With respect to metropolitan political history, this is a period of struggle between absolutism and liberalism.¹⁵ But historians agree that this political struggle also had profound implications for the Spanish

¹⁴ According to Madeleine de Gogorza Fletcher, "Initially Galdós intended [the *Episodios nacionales*] to teach the Spanish people their history, and indeed the *Episodios* reached a wider audience than the other novels and sold more copies" (2).

¹⁵ Toni Dorca, in *Las dos caras de Jano. La Guerra de la Independencia como materia novelable in Galdós* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2015), examines the struggle between absolutism and liberalism in the first series of *Episodios nacionales* as an example of the author's juxtaposition of opposites in describing Spanish history.

empire. The period of Spanish history that these novels address is critical with respect to Spanish imperialism because both the Peninsular War and Fernando VII's absolutist monarchy are considered to be key contributors to the loss of Spain's vast territories in the Americas.¹⁶ Galdós's narratives demonstrate a palpable desire to understand the nature of contemporary Spanish national identity by examining the impact of precisely those events in the nation's past that we now understand to have initiated the beginning of the end of the Spanish empire, namely the Spanish American wars of independence during the years 1808–24, with the final defeat of Spain at the Battle of Ayacucho in Peru on December 9, 1824.

Galdós's earliest fiction chronicles a period of Spanish history that witnessed unprecedented changes in the relationship between the metropolis and its colonies. This is not to say that the context of the author's own day, the experiences of the late 1860s and the 1870s, have no role in helping us understand the complex meaning of Galdós's chronicle of the nation's past history. Unquestionably the political turmoil of the author's own time influenced his decision to examine the nation's past.¹⁷ The "Glorious Revolution" of 1868, the resulting abdication of Isabel II, and political

Galdós's use of antithesis, Dorca, argues, underscores a fundamental ambivalence about national identity.

¹⁶ Josep Fontana identifies the reasons for the loss of the American empire as follows: "Su origen arrancaba del vacío de poder que se produjo en España a raíz del destronamiento de Fernando VII" [Its origins were rooted in the power vacuum produced in Spain following the dethronement of Fernando VII] (107), adding that, later, "La restauración del absolutismo en España, en 1814, había cambiado por completo las cosas. No había ya más propuestas negociadores por parte de la metrópoli y en las colonias no podía seguir manteniendo la ficción de una cierta dependencia formal respecto de la monarquía, como se había hecho mientras Fernando VII estaba en manos de Napoleón, sino que había que optar entre la sumisión y la independencia. Y la primera de estas opciones parecía insostenible" [The restoration of absolutism in Spain, in 1814, had completely changed things. There were no more negotiating proposals from the metropolis, and in the colonies, one could not continue to maintain the fiction of a certain formal dependence on the monarchy, as had been done while Fernando VII was in the hands of Napoleon. Instead, it was necessary to choose between submission and independence. And the first of these options seemed untenable] (*Historia de España, La época del liberalismo*, Tomo VI, 110).

¹⁷ In the introduction to *Las dos caras de Jano*, Toni Dorca cites Hinterhäuser's reference to Cicero's maxim, *historia magistra vitae* (history is life's teacher), as an apt phrase that explains that Galdós's interest in writing about Spain's past stemmed from his desire to understand the nation's present (11).

struggles of the *Sexenio Democrático* from 1868 to 1874 all serve as important events for the author's focus on how Spain had arrived at her current set of circumstances. But, rather than focusing on the events of his own time, something he would not address directly for another ten years, Galdós appears to have felt compelled to begin a narrative excavation of Spanish history that originates at the start of the nineteenth century, with the Battle of Trafalgar and the events immediately preceding the 1808–14 Peninsular War with France. His decision to begin his chronicles at that particular point in history corresponds to what many contemporary historians have said about the formulation of a modern Spanish national identity. Javier Tusell, for example, has noted that the Peninsular War “se convirtió para los españoles del XIX en el momento fundacional de una conciencia de Nación” [it became for Spaniards of the nineteenth century the founding moment of the Nation's conscience] (99). This perspective is confirmed by José Álvarez Junco, who, in reference to the Peninsular War, writes, “Era difícil pedir un comienzo mejor al proceso de nacionalización contemporáneo” [It was difficult to ask for a better start to the process of contemporary nationalization] (129). By creating his series of historical novels, Galdós was able to share a particular vision of Spanish national identity with his readers and, by so doing, helped develop a sense of national consciousness. Until now, the primary focus of critical analyses of these works has been on the events that shaped the political struggles within the metropolis, particularly the struggles between progressive political thinkers and absolutist, ultramontane monarchists. Unquestionably the Peninsular War was a time when the political struggle between liberalism and absolutism first took root, and this ideological conflict plays a central role in Spanish politics throughout the better part of the nineteenth century and in Galdós's early narratives. In this sense, the upheavals of the *Sexenio Democrático* are one more iteration of that particular political ideological struggle. But, as this study will show, Galdós's early historical fiction also tells a tale that goes beyond these two political ideologies. By offering a detailed portrayal of Spain's history from 1805 to 1834, the very period in which the Spanish empire effectively lost control over its vast American territories, Galdós's early historical fiction provides a unique window into the process of reformulating a national identity. It is a process that encourages readers to reconsider the importance of empire in the conceptualization of Spanish national identity.

The fact that Galdós's primary focus in these works remains on the metropolis and not on the colonies does not impede our examination of the various ways in which that focus on the metropolis can be equally revealing in terms of Spanish imperialism. One could ask whether an absence of a sustained direct presentation of Spain's colonial history in the

recounting of specific moments in Spanish history reveals a reluctance, a disinterest, or simply an inability to address colonialism directly. These are legitimate questions. Given the psychological nature of the process of reimagining identity, particularly something as intangible and fraught as national identity, the paucity and even, on occasion, the absence of references to empire become important markers of the process of recrafting that identity.¹⁸ While there are moments in his narratives that indicate a reluctance or an inability to address particularly sensitive aspects of imperialism, a close reading of Galdós's early works shows, ultimately, that the author could not ignore the realities of Spain's colonial history. Miguel Artola, in his history of Spain during the reign of Fernando VII, reminds us of the impossibility of such a division in focus.

La historia española de comienzos del siglo XIX difícilmente acabará de ser comprendida si se sigue reduciendo a su escenario europeo, y relegando en todo caso las Españas de ultramar a capítulos bien diferenciados, a modo de apéndices a los que solo de paso se alude en el texto consagrado a la metrópoli. (19)

[Spanish history of the early nineteenth century will hardly be understood if one continues reducing it to its European stage and relegating the overseas Spanish territories to well-differentiated chapters, by means of appendices that only in passing alude to them in a text dedicated to the metropolis.]

And, as Stuart Hall has noted, "colonization was never simply external to the societies of the imperial metropolis. It was always inscribed deeply within them" ("Post-colonial" 246). Moreover, Hall emphasizes that "the 'post-colonial' presents both the colonizer and the colonized with a 'problem of identity'" ("Post-colonial" 256). For Galdós, the process of

¹⁸ Useful for this study is Raymond Williams's insistence on the impact of culture and identity on the lives of individuals. In his essay "Culture, Community, Nation" (*Cultural Studies* 7:3 (1993): 349–63) Stuart Hall reflects on Williams's life and work, noting the way in which Williams's definition of culture, as something 'ordinary' and embedded within 'a particular way of life', allowed him to theorize about cultural production and the psychological aspect of identity: "Later he was to insist that the more specialized forms and conventions of what Cambridge knew as 'literature' were most valuable to be understood as different kinds of 'writing', all related in different ways and forms to wider 'structures of feeling', the way meanings and values were lived in real lives, in actual communities" (351).

crafting a palatable national identity required certain transformations of fact into fiction.

Given that many literary scholars address how works of nineteenth-century Latin American fiction functioned to help establish and cultivate post-colonial national identities, it is curious that there is a lack of corresponding focus on the necessary reformulation of metropolitan identity.¹⁹ Critical examinations of Galdós's historical fiction have typically not focused on the connections between the metropolis and the colonies, nor on the perceptions of Spaniards with regards to Spain's drastic change of fortunes on the world stage. But Galdós's selection of early nineteenth-century Spain as a point of departure, a period with profound consequences for Spanish empire, raises interesting questions about Spanish colonialism. For example, what might these texts tell us about nineteenth-century Spanish perceptions of Spain's position as a global power? What might these novels tell us about popular perceptions of Spain's changing imperial fortunes? Perhaps most importantly, what did the change in the nation's status on both the European stage and the world stage mean for the concept of Spanish national identity? These questions have the potential to reveal much about what it meant for Spain to come to terms with its loss of empire.

Setting literature and cultural production aside for a moment, it is worth noting that until very recently scholarship on metropolitan responses to imperial loss undertaken by historians was limited.²⁰ Perhaps this is not surprising, given that the "structures of feeling" experienced through imperial loss were less likely to be revealed through traditional historiography. The reason for that lies in the fundamental psychological nature of imperial identity. Metropolitan citizens did not need to have direct personal or economic relationships with the colonies, nor did they always need to know the latest news with respect to the political and economic vicissitudes of colonialism to feel themselves a part of an empire. Empire was, I would argue, the resting pulse of Spanish national identity until the end of the eighteenth century. Undoubtedly, the process of managing the psychological consequences of imperial demise in the

¹⁹ Notable examples include Doris Sommer's *Foundational Fictions* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1991); Lee Skinner's *History Lessons: Refiguring the Nineteenth-Century Novel in Spanish America* (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 2006); and Karen Stolley's *Domesticating Empire: Enlightenment in Spanish America* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt UP, 2013).

²⁰ See Timothy Anna's *Spain and the Loss of America* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1983); and Michael Costeloe's *Response to Revolution. Imperial Spain and the Spanish American revolutions, 1810–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986).

metropolis had to have been difficult. Some historians have concluded that the loss of the American territories in the early nineteenth century had little effect on metropolitan citizens. Michael Costeloe claims that, in reference to the loss of the American empire, “most Spaniards do indeed seem to have had little or no interest in these momentous events and at best were indifferent toward the fate of their empire” (2). But it may be that historians have been looking for evidence in the wrong places. Costeloe, for example, looks primarily for evidence in written histories, such as E. de K. Bayo’s 1842 *Historia de la vida y reinado de Fernando VII de España*, or in private memoirs of statesmen (2). When he does not find explicit references to the Americas or colonial loss, he concludes that “for the great majority of Spaniards, the empire had never been of any obvious or tangible importance” (3). This attitude is echoed in the work of other historians. For example, according to Raymond Carr, “The loss of the greater part of the American empire in the twenties had left no psychological scar, for it was lost in a civil war of metropolitan against colonial Spaniards” (387). This perspective has its roots in the discourse of nineteenth-century politicians such as Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, considered the architect of Spain’s restoration of the Bourbon family to the throne in 1874. Antonio Feros has noted that Cánovas, in his 1882 *Discurso sobre la nación*, “characterized the wars of independence in Spanish America not as a war to free colonies from a ‘tyrannical’ metropolis, but a ‘civil war among Spaniards’” (114). Following this line of thought, the individuals involved in the struggle for independence, metropolitan and colonial, were essentially of the same nationality, the same imagined community. But what is fascinating about this concept of a civil war between Spaniards is the implicit evocation of a family struggle, described as a struggle between brothers or, more often, a struggle between parent and child. One need only think of the oft-used term for the metropolis in the Americas – “la madre patria” – as an example. Martin Blinkhorn recognizes this implicit nature of these comments when he notes that the “The Wars of Independence of 1810–1826 were in essence civil wars among ‘Spaniards’ ... and could therefore be regarded by metropolitan Spaniards as a kind of family quarrel” (6).

What otherwise exemplary historians such as Costeloe, Carr, and Blinkhorn have failed to see is that the imagined connections between metropolitan and colonial subjects, at least from the perspective of the metropolis, made this a fight of psychological import and thus not a fight whose manifestations and effects would present themselves in a direct or simple fashion. A fight between family members, and the sense of loss that such a fight entails, is bound to be not only a profound and painful one

but also one that participants cannot immediately acknowledge. Indeed, I would argue that family fights are always the ones that cause the most psychological damage, even as they are seldom discussed. We can theorize that the profound impact of the loss of the colonies on Spanish national consciousness contributes to the paucity of references in the historiography of the 1830s and 1840s or in the memoirs of the Spanish statesmen of that period. This did not mean that public attitudes within the metropolis relative to colonial loss and the end of empire failed to take shape and develop. The essential point of this study is to show precisely that they did materialize, albeit in ways that perhaps historians might not always recognize. In the following section in this chapter I argue that the early nineteenth-century loss of the American colonies failed to register for many nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians precisely because it was a collective trauma that was processed slowly. That process remained ongoing and incomplete throughout the nineteenth century, moving inexorably toward 1898, and it played out in areas of Spanish society and culture that historians often overlook. In fact, the process of addressing Spain's new post-colonial reality was taken up primarily in the literary narratives of popular culture, those products that reflected "structures of feeling" associated with national identity.²¹

From Center to Periphery

Critical to this discussion of Galdós's fiction and its role in helping to create a new sense of national identity for late nineteenth-century Spaniards is the concept of the "imperial turn," which Antoinette Burton has defined as "the accelerated attention to the impact of histories of imperialism on metropolitan societies in the wake of decolonization" (2). This study participates in this trend insofar as it constitutes a re-evaluation of the connections between the late nineteenth-century Spanish metropolis and its former and current colonial empire. Yet the initial drivers of this "imperial turn" in academic scholarship have focused predominantly on either the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European empires of France and Great

²¹ Stuart Hall has pointed out that it is in a lesser-known work by Williams, his 1954 book *Preface to Film*, where Williams first articulates the idea that was to become central to his examination of literature within a cultural studies framework: "But while we may, in the study of a past period, separate out particular aspects of life, and treat them as if they were self-contained, it is obvious that this is only how they may be studied, not how they are experienced" (cited in "Culture, Community, Nation" 352).

Britain or, to a lesser degree, on the colonial histories of other European nations, such as the Netherlands, Portugal, and Germany.²² Curiously, Spain continues to occupy a peripheral position with respect to this area of postcolonial studies, despite the fact that the Spanish empire extended, at the peak of its dominance, across a significant portion of central Europe, the Mediterranean and the Americas. It is as if Spain, as the first of the great European powers to colonize the Americas and the first European nation to establish a global empire, does not fit within the framework of other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European empires. One historian has described Spain as a “hybrid empire” because it was “the fusion of three empires: two old empires that were rooted in medieval Europe and a new empire taking shape in the New World” (Dandeleit 76). Other historians of empire, such as Anthony Pagden, have focused on structural and economic differences in Spanish colonial rule as a way of distinguishing it from the history of French and British imperialism.²³ I would suggest that one of the main differences between Spain and the other European imperial powers is one of chronology and timing. Spain was both the first European nation to establish a global hegemonic empire and the first European nation to lose it. When asked about the absence of Spain in most historiographies of European colonialism, the Spanish historian Josep Fradera has noted that Spain represents a unique challenge.

Historians and social scientists have a poor understanding of the importance of the Spanish empire – not only the early modern empire, but also the reconstructed one of the nineteenth century. Their misconceptions arise from dominant explanatory “paradigms,” the history of which is not unconnected to the history of European colonialism. (Schmidt-Nowara, “After ‘Spain’” 162–63)

In other words, what sets Spain apart from the rest of European nations is the fact that it experienced its rise and fall as a global empire before the empires of other European nations were even fully formed. The impact

²² The very timing of the idea of the “imperial turn,” gaining traction in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, has meant that Britain has received the greatest amount of scrutiny in this regard, and this has limited the effectiveness of its intellectual reach. As Antoinette Burton has noted, “The centrality of Britain to these questions is as much a limitation as it is a possibility when it comes to untangling – and hopefully retangling in productive ways – empire, nation, race, colony, and globe” (10).

²³ See Anthony Pagden’s *Lords of All the World. Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500–c. 1800* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale UP, 1995).

of this loss is rendered in stark terms when one considers what was lost. In his study of European ideologies of empire, Anthony Pagden explores the differences between Spain, France, and Britain in the sixteenth century, concluding that Spain was “the only viable candidate for a true universal empire” (43). Accordingly, the changes experienced by Spain in the nineteenth century are even more noteworthy. Spain was struggling with the loss of empire and the diminishment of its global political power precisely at the time when other European nations were expanding their imperial reach and growing more powerful on the world stage. The result of such timing made Spain’s loss of global standing and political relevance appear that much more acute in comparison with the growing strength of other European nations.

To compound this poor timing, Spain’s imperial losses occurred as the discipline of history itself was becoming codified and professionalized, thus establishing a certain historical perspective that is only now being challenged. Spain’s position on the periphery of modern European history is, in many ways, the result of the very nature of accumulating and communicating historical knowledge. Modern academic historiography, we must remember, began as a phenomenon primarily in the hands of the French and British, who could, by turns, privilege the histories of their own nations at the expense of others. Spanish historiography did not fully develop as an academic discipline in Spain until the second half of the nineteenth century with the work of historians such as Modesto Lafuente, with his 30-volume *Historia General de España*, published in 1850–67, and Rafael Altamira, friend and contemporary of Galdós, who produced between 1898 and 1911 his own four-volume history of Spanish history and civilization, *Historia de España y de la civilización española*. This fact was not lost on Spaniards. Even before the work of Lafuente and Altamira, popular literature in the first half of the nineteenth century in Spain referred openly to the difficulty of having the nation’s reputation formed by the writings of European travelers who came to experience Spain as an undeveloped, picturesque culture.²⁴ Despite the efforts of Spaniards to chronicle their nation’s past and present, the established narratives of Spain

²⁴ In the introduction to *Los españoles pintados por sí mismos* (Madrid, 1843–44), the editor, Ignacio Boix, makes a point of highlighting that the job of producing portraits of Spanish social types should not be left “en las manos ingleses, franceses y belgas” [*sic*] (vi). That Spain is perceived as backward by other European nations is the argument forcefully presented in Mariano José de Larra’s well-known *artículo de costumbres*, “Vuelva Ud. Mañana” (*Artículos*. Enrique Rubio, ed. (Madrid: Cátedra, 2006), 190–202).

as a decadent nation, promulgated by northern Europe, proved difficult to overcome. Michael Iarocci has noted that “the vilification of Spain was sufficiently wide-spread so as to take on the appearance and function of common truth,” adding that these images “elided modern Europe’s roots in the Iberoamerican Atlantic by marking the Spanish empire as modernity’s exterior” (*Properties of Modernity* 15). Richard Kagan has described this process in detail within the framework of American historiography of Spain in his essay on what he terms “Prescott’s Paradigm”: the characterization of Spain as a backward, fanatical, decadent nation incapable of becoming a member of the modern group of western democracies (430, 438). In 1826, one year after Spain’s definitive defeat in Peru, William Hickling Prescott (1796–1859) made the decision to research and write a history of the Catholic kings, *The History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic*, which was published in 1837. He later published books on Spain’s colonial history: *The History of the Conquest of Mexico* in 1843 and *The History of the Conquest of Peru* in 1847. Prescott’s choices of historical topics hew exclusively to issues of conquest, and, while Kagan illustrates the degree to which Prescott’s view of Spain serves to celebrate notions of American progress, it is also worth noting that the timing of Prescott’s interest in Spain corresponds once again to the loss of Spain’s American empire. Prescott’s master narrative of Spain as a backward nation gained traction just as those modern democracies it is measured against – Britain, France, the United States – were increasingly engaged in imperial expansion.

Kagan’s essay, published in 1995, recognized the growing advent of innovative historical scholarship, work that has in recent years changed the nature of our understanding of Spain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²⁵ These recent scholarly accounts powerfully push back against

²⁵ See Josep Fradera’s *Gobernar colonias* (Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 1999) and *Colonias para después de un imperio* (Barcelona: Ediciones bellaterra, 2005); Ada Ferrer’s *Freedom’s Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014); Jesús Pérez Magallón’s *Construyendo la modernidad: la cultura española en el tiempo de novatores (1675–1725)* (Madrid: CSIC, 2002); Gabriel Paquette’s *Enlightenment, Governance, and Reform in Spain and its Empire, 1759–1808* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Jesús Astigarraga’s *The Spanish Enlightenment Revisited* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2015); and Christopher Schmidt-Nowara’s *Empire and Anti-Slavery: Spain, Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1833–1874* (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1999) and “After Spain: A Dialogue with Josep M. Fradera on Spanish Colonial Historiography,” in *After the Imperial Turn* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2003).

traditional narratives that identify Spain as a decadent nation, slow to adopt the structures and practices affiliated with modernity. What Kagan's essay on Prescott also alludes to, but does not state explicitly, is the importance of recontextualizing the significance of Spanish imperialism as an essential component for understanding contemporary Spanish national identity. If we are to revisit Spain's position within Europe and within world history, it is critically important to engage in the "imperial turn" and reconsider the notion of Spanish backwardness. This shift in thinking has been summarized quite effectively by Josep Fradera in his interview with Christopher Schmidt-Nowara published in Antoinette Burton's anthology, *After the Imperial Turn*.

The last twenty years of scholarship on Spain's nineteenth-century empire have turned conventional wisdom on its head. For decades after the Spanish-Cuban-American War of 1898, scholars and intellectuals from various countries represented the Spanish defeat and loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines as confirmation of Spain's chronic inability to keep pace with the modern world. The "Disaster" of 1898 was an inevitable conclusion to the Spanish American revolutions of the 1810s and 1820s, when Spain had lost the majority of its American colonies. Indeed, in most surveys of modern Spanish history, the colonies make their appearance only in 1898 and only as one more piece of evidence of Spain's failed transition to modernity. ... Of late, however, historians from Spain and the former colonies, especially Cuba and Puerto Rico, have found compelling evidence that the nineteenth-century colonial project fundamentally transformed both colonial and metropolitan societies. (Schmidt-Nowara, "After 'Spain'" 157)

The reasons why 1898 became the focus of most studies of historical loss are complex. To begin to understand them, and to move the focus back to the early part of the nineteenth century, it is worth touching upon aspects of Spanish empire, particularly its initial establishment in the New World, and the empire's transition from the early modern to the modern period, in particular its engagement with modernity.

Enrique Dussel has argued that Spain was the first "superhegemonic power," achieving its economic and political peak in the sixteenth century through its "discovery, conquest, colonization, and integration (subsumption) of Amerindia" (4–5). Building on Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems analysis, Dussel emphasizes the point that Spain, through its discovery of the Americas in 1492, becomes the first modern state in the history of the world, thus initiating modernity.

Why does Spain begin the world-system, and with it, modernity? For the same reason that it was prevented in China and Portugal. Because Spain could not reach the center of the interregional system that was in Central Asia or India, could not go east (since the Portuguese had already anticipated them, and thus had exclusivity rights) through the south Atlantic (around the coasts of Western Africa, until the cape of Buena Esperanza was discovered in 1487), Spain had only one opportunity left: to go toward the center, to India, through the Occident, through the West, by crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Because of this Spain bumps into, finds without looking, Amerindia, and with it the entire European medieval paradigm enters into crisis (which is the paradigm of a peripheral culture, the farthest western point of the third stage of the interregional system), and thus inaugurates, slowly but irreversibly, the first *world* hegemony. This is the only world-system that has existed in planetary history, and this is the modern system, European in its center, capitalist in its economy. (9)

The political and economic impact of the European discovery of the Americas was undeniably a monumental occurrence in global history. For that reason, Dussel can make the claim that modernity is “not a phenomenon of Europe as an *independent* system, but of Europe at its center” (4). Today, from the perspective of the twenty-first century, with postcolonial scholarship, subaltern studies, and a shift away from Eurocentrism through a critique of western historicism, it is easy to forget what the establishment of the Spanish empire meant in world history.²⁶ Without question Spain’s fortunes were later dramatically eclipsed by other European powers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as it lost its status as a core power. Spain became, according to Immanuel Wallerstein, first “semiperipheral and then peripheral, until in the twentieth century she tried slowly to begin to move back upward” (I 196). But to focus almost exclusively on the political and economic mistakes Spain made in the management of its empire is to forget what Spanish empire felt like for its subjects, metropolitan and colonial, and for those who witnessed it over more than three centuries. As Anthony Pagden has argued, “The sheer size and potential wealth of the Habsburg empire after the conquests of Mexico in 1521 and Peru in 1533 suggested to many European observers

²⁶ For an exploration of the imperialist underpinnings of European historicism, see, for example, the work of Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2000).

that it could really only be a matter of time before Spain seized control of quite literally the whole world” (44). Pagden, in his comparison between the British, French, and Spanish empires, has emphasized just how critical Spain’s colonies were to its national consciousness.

Of the three European colonial powers, Spain, because it was the only European power to rule over a homogeneous empire with – at least in intention – a single identity, was also the only power to draft an extensive body of legislation for the colonies which at the same time sought to define their relationship with the metropolis ... (137–38)

Pagden mentions the first of these decrees, the *Nueva Recopilación de leyes de los reynos de las Indias* of 1680. The last key legislative document to reaffirm that single identity was the Constitution of 1812, drafted at a time when Latin American independence movements had already begun. The Constitution exhibited the importance of the imperial consciousness by defining Spain, in the very first article of the document, as two sides of the same coin: “La Nación Española es la reunion de todos los españoles de ambos hemisferios” (*Constitución Política de la Monarquía Española* 1).

In his elaboration of Europe’s position within world-systems analysis, Immanuel Wallerstein argues that Spain, once Europe’s “dorsal spine,” was overtaken by other European nations that become the core countries in this new global hegemonic economic system. Spain, he notes, became, “at best a rather passive conveyor belt between the core countries and Spain’s colonies” (II 179, 185). He cites the comment of the seventeenth-century German statesman Samuel Pufendorf that “Spain kept the cow and the rest of Europe drank the milk” (III 213). This metaphor for the transfer of wealth from Spain to the rest of Europe reflects a historical fact thoroughly substantiated by economic historians. Unquestionably the wealth Spain extracted from the New World played an instrumental role in developing modern Europe as a whole, giving it the power to subjugate much of the rest of the world. J.M. Blaut makes the case for this historical perspective.

I am going to argue ... that the date 1492 represents a breakpoint between two fundamentally different evolutionary epochs. The conquest of America begins, and explains, the rise of Europe. It explains why capitalism rose to power in Europe, not elsewhere, and why capitalism rose to power in the 17th century, not later. Fourteen ninety-two gave the world a center and a periphery. (1–2)

The importance of Pufendorf’s metaphor of the cow and its milk lies not only in the sense of what the Spanish empire gave up to the rest of Europe but also what it managed to control. The Spanish empire remained

the principal driver of colonial wealth generation for an extensive period of time, from the sixteenth through the late eighteenth century, when the connections between the Spanish metropolis and its colonies began to resemble those between other European powers and their respective colonial territories, steadily becoming more like trading partners than intrinsic parts of a single nation (Pagden 73). With respect to imperial identity or Spain's position within the greater economic structures of the European world-system, then, what did it matter that for such a long time the Spanish empire funneled wealth to other European nations? For over three centuries, Spain kept the cow. Pufendorf's sarcastic judgment of Spain might be turned on its head, ironically as a commentary on Spain's enduring geopolitical imperial dominance, despite the economic realities that impacted its relationship to other European nations.

Beyond reminding us that the establishment of the Spanish empire was an unprecedented event in world history, Dussel's and Blaut's shared focus on 1492 and their insistence that the discovery of the New World signals the advent of modernity also allow us to rethink the idea, promulgated so thoroughly in French, British, and American historiography of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, of Spain as a backward nation.²⁷ Rather than see Spain as a country that did not match the political and economic development of its European neighbors, we must remember that Spain engaged with the current of European ideas in a unique way precisely because its position on the inevitable trajectory of imperial history was decidedly different from that of England, France, Belgium, and the rest of Europe. This approach to Spanish history is nowhere so evident as in the recent scholarship with respect to Spain and the Enlightenment. Long considered a nation that did not experience a robust engagement

²⁷ Jesus Torrecilla has gone so far as to note that the exclusion of Spain from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century studies of Europe echoes Edward Said's concept of the west dominating and appropriating the voice of non-European cultures, but adds "no quiero implicar con ello que España forme o haya formado parte del mundo oriental, sino simplemente poner en relieve que en el proceso de acaparación de Europa por parte de ciertos países europeos como Francia, la nación ibérica ha quedado con frecuencia excluida del concepto" [I do not want to imply that Spain is or has been part of the Eastern world, but rather simply to highlight that in the process of monopolizing Europe by certain European countries such as France, the Iberian nation has often been excluded from the concept] (11) (*El tiempo y los márgenes. Europa como utopía y como amenaza en la literatura española* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, UNC Department of Romance Languages, 1996)).

with Enlightenment philosophies, as a nation in sharp contrast to France, Great Britain, or other European nations, Spain's engagement with the Enlightenment is now the subject of a thorough re-examination.²⁸ In the introduction to *The Spanish Enlightenment Revisited*, Jesús Astigarraga argues that much of Spanish historiography continues to “undervalue – or, quite frankly, deny – the profound modernizing impact of the Spanish Enlightenment and its unique features” (3). Astigarraga uses language that echoes the vocabulary of Dandeleť’s description of the initial formation of the Spanish empire when he argues that the Spanish Enlightenment, because ideas originating in France, Great Britain, or German passed through “respective national filters” and “mutated from their original sources,” was essentially a “type of co-owned hybrid” (1–2). Astigarraga pushes back against the notion that Spain’s *Ilustración* cannot compare with the Enlightenment in the rest of Europe and that it was little more than “a movement of ideas and superficial and cosmetic reforms that straggled behind rather than liberated and was servile to the former powers of the Old Regime” by arguing that, if this were the case, we would have difficulty interpreting the Revolution of 1808, the Peninsular War of 1808–14, the 1812 Constitution of Cádiz, and the end of Spain’s empire between 1810 and 1825, precisely the events that are the focus of Galdós’s early historical fiction (8). Jesús Torrecilla makes a similar argument, noting that Spain’s engagement with Enlightenment ideas, particularly with respect to Neoclassicism, compares quite favorably with that of its European neighbors, but notes that “El xviii español hay que entenderlo en sus propios términos, dentro de su contexto singular, en el marco de una problemática que es específicamente suya y que determina una serie de respuestas únicas y originales” [The Spanish eighteenth century must be understood on its own terms, within its unique context, within the framework of a predicament that is specifically its own, and that determines a series of unique and original answers] (*Guerras literarias* 12). To this point, Jesús Pérez Magallón has persuasively argued that even in the early eighteenth century Spain was already deeply engaged in a process of constructing a modern imperial identity (54–55).

My argument thus far relies on many of the points made by Michael Iarocci in his insightful and original re-examination of Spanish Romanticism in *Properties of Modernity*. Using Spanish Romanticism as a point of departure, Iarocci addresses Spain’s geopolitical position on the world stage in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, noting the country’s

²⁸ See Jesús Torrecilla’s *España exótica. La formación de la imagen española moderna* (Boulder, CO: Society of Spanish and Spanish-American Studies, 2004).

displacement “to the periphery of the modern within the European imaginary” (xi). Iarocci correctly calls attention to the unique circumstances of Spain as the “first posthegemonic European nation-state” (xi), whose geopolitical displacement occurred just as imperial power was shifting to the north of Europe (204), and he convincingly argues that Spain’s cultural production, in particular the manner in which it adopted, transformed, and hybridized the romantic literary movement, did not result in lesser echoes of British or French Romanticism but, rather, something different, which requires us to rethink notions of modernity (xi–xii). If, as Jo Labanyi has pointed out, we continue to define modernity in economic terms, as the same as modernization, Spain will always be seen as a country that was slow to reach the goal of global capitalism. Instead, she recommends that we redefine modernity “in terms not of capitalist modernization but of attitudes toward the relation of present to past” (90–91). Her point, that the concept of modernity as a rupture with the past leaves no room for memory, is particularly pertinent if we wish to entertain the idea of a national consciousness that remembers a past identity, even if the basis of that identity no longer exists (91). Equally as important, in her recent book exploring the slave trade in modern Spanish literature, Lisa Surwillo asks the essential question: “how might we tell the story of Spanish literature if an awareness of *coloniality* rather than a search for *modernity* were the privileged terms of analysis?” (*Monsters by Trade* 1).

In other words, rather than seeing Spain as a decadent nation, slow to modernity and behind the curve with respect to the cultural developments of the rest of Europe, there are things to be learned by examining Spanish history and culture from the perspective of a nation that was, in fact, experiencing something that no other modern empire had encountered. While other European nations would subsequently experience equally profound changes in their respective empires, Spain had already begun to face those dramatic alterations in its global standing and adapt its national consciousness accordingly.²⁹ Today, from a uniquely post-colonial perspective, we can begin to recontextualize Spain’s role in the world and

²⁹ In her essay “Histories, Empires and the Post-Colonial Moment,” Catherine Hall emphasizes that “In Britain questions about cultural identity have been at the forefront of the national imagination since it became clear that Britain no longer had an empire and had become, in a very particular sense of the term, a post-colonial nation. ... The loss of that power, the recognition that Britain was only a minor player in the great affairs of the globe, has been a long-drawn-out and difficult affair” (67) (*The Postcolonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (London: Routledge, 1996), 65–77).

re-examine the response of its citizens to that history, moving beyond the former historical approaches that tended to characterize Spain as backward and gradually moving toward a different understanding of Spain as a uniquely modern nation. What recent scholarship has shown us is that Spain's response to end-of-empire was a complicated one. For example, to understand the reasons why 1898 and the end of the nineteenth century became the focus of so many examinations of Spain's decline, we need to have a better understanding of what was actually lost at the century's start, to understand what Spaniards might have known about that loss, and to explore the ways in which the experience of that loss might have affected metropolitan citizens. What did imperial loss look like to average citizens of the metropolis in the early nineteenth century? How did Spain's shifting imperial fortunes during the years of Fernando VII manifest themselves in the lives of metropolitan Spaniards? What did Spaniards living in the metropolis, beyond the royal court and the highest echelons of government, actually know about the empire's changing fortunes? And what was the response of metropolitan citizens to those changes?

In the introduction to their anthology of essays on the relationship between Europe and America in the 1820s, Matthew Brown and Gabriel Paquette begin by noting that "The decade of the 1820s occupies an uneasy place in the imagination of those historians who study the relationship – political, economic, and cultural – between Europe and Latin America" (1). They go on to elaborate that, despite the dominant image of dramatic rupture, which one might assume to have been the case after the Spanish American wars of independence, "The dissolution of the Iberian empires did not abruptly sever the links between the Old World and the New, but instead dramatically shifted their terms, creating new political imaginaries and unleashing latent dynamics" (1). Certainly, the Latin American discourses of independence in the early years of the nineteenth century would stress separation and irreconcilable differences.³⁰ But how well did metropolitan citizens understand the nature of those narratives, and to what degree did they accept them? It is important to remember that the first dependable transatlantic cable, which allowed a more rapid flow of information between Europe and the Americas, was not built until 1865–66. Before then, it could take months for news to travel between colonial ports and the peninsula, which no doubt affected both the manner and substance of reactions on either side of the Atlantic. That said, the slow

³⁰ For a discussion of the antipeninsular narrative, see David Brading's *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State, 1492–1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991).

response by the metropolis to political and economic developments in the colonies was not only a result of technology. It was also due to political ineptitude and a fundamental reluctance to address the new reality facing the metropolis. A case in point: it took the Spanish government more than a half century, from 1836 to 1895, formally to recognize the sovereignty of the newly independent Latin American nations.³¹

Metropolitan Awareness of Colonial Loss

Metropolitan Spaniards, through a variety of ways and at different times during the revolutionary period of the early nineteenth century, received information about the events in the colonies, and their attitudes were not as sanguine as some historical accounts might wish us to believe. In fact, evidence shows not only that there was an awareness of the insurrections in the colonies, an awareness that was particularly acute among members of the Spanish military, but also that there were strong opinions about Fernando VII's methods of attempting to quell revolution.³² It is worth remembering that the 1820 revolt against Fernando VII's absolutism, which led to the Liberal Triennium of 1820–23, began as a military revolt on the part of troops who were stationed in Cádiz and destined to sail to the Americas to fight in the Spanish American wars of independence. By the 1820s the eventuality of colonial independence was well established, but information about the political unrest in the colonies was available, in fits and starts, from newspapers and journals even during the early years of the nineteenth century. Despite the political and social chaos of the Peninsular War, news arrived in port cities such as Cádiz and was available in other European cities.

³¹ In his article "The Recognition of the Spanish Colonies by the Motherland" (*Hispanic American Historical Review* 1:1 (1918)), William Spence Robinson details the lengthy diplomatic process, noting that it took until 1836 for Spain to even agree to consider the former colonies as independent sovereign nations (78). In 1836 Mexico was the first nation to be recognized, but the process continued, country by country, throughout the rest of the century, until the last, Honduras, was finally recognized by Spain in 1895. Through detailing the process of diplomatic recognition, Robertson concludes, "It is clear that Spain was loath to admit that she had irretrievably lost her magnificent colonial empire upon the American continent" (90).

³² See Melchor Fernández Almagro, *La emancipación de América y su reflejo en la conciencia española* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1957); and Juan Friede, *La otra verdad. La independencia americana vista por los españoles* (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1972).

London, in particular, served as a hub for information flowing from Latin America and Spain. As Ángel Bahamonde and José Cayuela have shown, London and, to a lesser extent, Liverpool became increasingly active centers for transatlantic banking throughout the nineteenth century (66–67). Along with the increased traffic of goods and capital between the Americas, London, and the rest of Europe came information about the response of the colonies to the Peninsular War.

“... desde que Napoleón conquistó la mayor parte del continente europeo, Londres se había convertido en el faro de la libertad. Su internacionalismo atraía a exiliados de numerosos países, entre ellos a muchos paladines e ideólogos de la independencia de la América hispana.” (Goytisolo 27)

[... since Napoleon conquered most of the European continent, London had become the beacon of freedom. Its internationalism attracted exiles from numerous countries, including many champions and ideologues of Hispanic American independence.]

Nowhere was this more clearly evident than in the work of José Blanco White, the Spanish political liberal whose exile in London placed him in a position to access information coming through British ports. He frequently published information on the political developments in Spain's colonial territories in his weekly paper, *El Español*, between 1810 and 1814 (Jaime Delgado 31–33). Blanco White's dedication to *El Español*, as its principal author and editor, and his unwavering belief in the right of all citizens to political liberty have attracted attention in recent years precisely because of his role in facilitating the diffusion of news from the Spanish-speaking Americas to both English and Spanish audiences.³³ Despite the fact that the paper was banned in the colonies and in Spain, *El Español* remained perhaps the best source of information about political activity in the colonies during the years of the Peninsular War.

Yet there were other sources as well. *El Observador*, a publication appearing in the summer and fall of 1810 in Cádiz, also explicitly addressed colonial demands for independence and, in the Politics section of its September 7, 1810 edition, argued that “jamás América dejará de ser una misma cosa con España, cuyas provincias son todas las del Nuevo Mundo;

³³ See, for example, Juan Goytisolo's book, *Blanco White, El Español y la Independencia de Hispanoamérica* (Madrid: Taurus, 2010), which details the success of the publication from its start in 1810 and Blanco White's determined efforts to inform metropolitan Spaniards about the events occurring in the colonies.

su territorio se extiende a ambos hemisferios, y los españoles tienen por patria la mitad del universo” [America will never cease being a part of Spain, whose provinces are all those of the New World; its territory extends to both hemispheres, and the Spaniards have half the universe as their homeland] (Jaime Delgado 49). The defense of the empire was echoed in other publications at the time as well. Juan López Cancelada, for example, published the weekly *El Telégrafo Americano* in Cádiz between 1811 and 1812 with the purpose of highlighting events happening in the Americas even as the Constitutional Court debated the appropriate legal relationship between the metropolis and its colonies. Curiously, the admittedly limited press coverage of political unrest in the Americas was sometimes met with skepticism.³⁴ Nonetheless, the existence of these publications in Cádiz underscores the importance of news from the American colonies, particularly with respect to the work of the Constitutional Court and the involvement of both metropolitan and colonial citizens in the process of drafting the Constitution of 1812. In the post-1812 environment the press continued to show concern about colonial independence. For example, in 1813, López Cancelada resuscitated his journal for a short period, changing its name to *El Telégrafo Mejicano*, and in July of that year he printed an article with the title “Abandonemos las Américas” [Let’s leave the Americas], noting that if Spain failed to recognize the demands of colonial citizens and undertook a protracted fight the nation could potentially lose “el carácter respetable de nación grande en Europa, los intereses y prosperidad de nuestro propio suelo y, lo que es más, nuestra tranquilidad interior” [the respectable character of a great European nation, the interests and prosperity of our own soil, and what is more, our domestic tranquility] (Jaime Delgado 116).

Popular awareness of colonial rebellion changed when Fernando VII returned to the throne in 1814. With the exception of some scientific and literary journals, Fernando VII’s absolutist policies and the reinstatement of the Inquisition led to a sharp reduction in the number of newspapers that had sprung up across Spain during the Peninsular War, leaving only two

³⁴ The Cádiz daily, *El Conciso*, for example, responded to various reports coming from Mexico, Lima, Buenos Aires, and Montevideo, writing in its January 7, 1812 edition, “Cada vez que oímos hablar de acontecimientos de América o que leemos periódicos extranjeros que tratan de ellos, tomamos una buena dosis de escepticismo y nos proponemos hacer pasar ... lo menos seis cuarentenas a cada noticia” [Every time we hear news from America or read foreign newspapers that write about it, we take it with a dose of skepticism and we propose to let pass ... a good deal of time with each report] (Jaime Delgado 147).

Madrid newspapers, the *Gaceta* and *Diario de Madrid* (Cruz Seoane 84). One could say that, from 1814 to 1820, when independence movements gained strength, a majority of Spaniards remained unaware of what was at stake for the empire. But that degree of ignorance changed with Rafael de Riego's revolt in 1820 and the Liberal Triennium that followed, when Fernando VII was forced to uphold the Constitution of 1812 and work with a government controlled by political liberals. As one scholar of the history of the Spanish press has indicated, during the early 1820s "la prensa resurge súbitamente y va a tener en los tres años de régimen liberal una vida extraordinariamente intensa" [the press suddenly reappears and over the next three years of the liberal regime it will have an extraordinarily intense life] (Cruz Seoane 89). During these critical years, the Spanish press demonstrated a clearer understanding of what was happening in the American territories. Juan López Cancelada's *El Telégrafo Mejicano*, for example, was resuscitated. *El Universal Observador Español*, published from 1820 to 1823, promised to address the events occurring in the Americas and reflected the liberal government's hope that the rebellious colonial territories would be satisfied with a return to the framework of the 1812 Constitution (Jaime Delgado 234–36). Other publications offered alternative opinions, such as *Miscelánea de Comercio, Política y Literatura*, published between 1820 and 1821. That paper certainly recognized what was at stake: "La suerte de las Américas – leemos – es un asunto que debe ocupar la atención de la nación y los cuidados del gobierno, pues se trata, nada menos, que de asegurar la unión de doce millones de almas o de que se separen de nosotros para siempre" [The fate of the Americas, we read, is a matter that must occupy the attention of the nation and the care of the government, since it is nothing less than ensuring the union of 12 million souls or separating them from us forever] (Jaime Delgado 248). But the editors strongly opposed the government's military response.³⁵ The point of referencing these various examples is not

³⁵ Jaime Delgado cites an editorial in *Miscelánea* from May 23, 1820, arguing that only bonds of culture, and not military force, will assure the stability of the empire: "la historia de todas las naciones y de todos los siglos nos prueba que una sociedad grande, poderosa, con recursos propios, separada por una gran distancia de su metrópoli, se mantendrá unida a ella por los vínculos de la sangre, del idioma, la religión y las costumbres mientras no se sienta con fuerzas para defenderse y ocurrir a sus necesidades" [the history of all nations and all centuries proves to us that a large, powerful society, with its own resources, separated by a large distance from its metropolis, will be linked to it by the bonds of blood, language, religion, and customs, as long as it does not feel strong enough to defend itself or to meet its own needs] (249).

to provide an extensive overview of the various newspapers and journals that addressed the Spanish American Wars of Independence but rather to point out that there were, at key moments in early nineteenth-century Spanish history, outlets for news and opportunities for debates about what American independence meant for the empire. Debates in Spain came to an abrupt halt with the intervention of French troops in 1823, the restoration of Fernando VII's absolutist monarchy, the execution of Rafael de Riego, and the persecution and exile of political liberals. For the next ten years, from 1823 to 1833, often referred to as "la década ominosa" [the ominous decade], the restrictions on the press were such that very little news was available, and what was printed reflected a particular government perspective. For example, Melchor Fernández Almagro, in tracking the arrival of military accounts of the Battle of Ayacucho, notes that not only was the information slow to arrive in Spain, without fanfare or even great anxiety, but also that when news of the battle appeared in *La Gaceta*, again one of a small number of newspapers permitted by the Fernandino government, the battle was described by General Pedro Antonio Olañeta as a "revés momentáneo" [momentary setback] (cited in Fernández Almagro 137). Given the paucity of news, it is not surprising that Spaniards did not express a strong emotional response to the losses of the Americas in the 1820s. It would take much more time for the reality of those losses to register in the consciousness of metropolitan citizens. But this does not mean that there was no reaction or that the loss was not felt keenly, but rather that the process would have to wait until after the death of Fernando VII in 1833.

Not surprisingly, the end of absolutism and strict control over the press led to a rapid change in the flow of information in Spain. In the 1830s and 1840s the country experienced a rapid expansion in the number and types of publications. By the end of 1834, for example, 36 newspapers were being printed and distributed in Madrid (Cruz Seoane 142). This virtual explosion in the popular press in the years following Fernando VII's death led to a variety of publications that included news from the Americas on a regular basis. The biweekly *Revista de España y del extranjero*, for example, ran from 1842 to 1848, and in 1845 briefly changed its name to the *Revista de España, de Indias y del Extranjero*. From 1857 to 1886 the biweekly *La América: crónica hispano-americana* regularly published articles addressing opinions about a wide variety of topics relative to America. News in these publications would focus on commerce, on business, and on the cultural links between the metropolis and its former colonies, but they no longer debated strategies to keep the empire together or the potential impact of imperial loss. The moment of rupture had passed, and the metropolitan citizen was left simply to manage the effects of that loss.

Spaniards became more aware of the political and economic developments in the newly independent Latin American nations, and the flow of information across the Atlantic only grew throughout the rest of the century. One could argue that the low rates of literacy in early nineteenth-century Spain limited how much many metropolitan citizens knew about the independence movements in Latin America, and that even the information in the newspapers and journals in the early nineteenth century would have been read and understood by only a select educated few.³⁶ But it would not have been necessary to read about the Wars of Independence to know that the relationship between the metropolis and its colonies was experiencing a radical change. This became evident in the day-to-day economic lives of Spaniards. A brief review of scholarship regarding Spain's economic history in the early nineteenth century also helps illustrate the degree to which the country's loss of the American territories affected metropolitan citizens. Notably, Josep Fradera has observed that it was economic historians who paved the way for a rethinking of Spain's colonial history (Schmidt-Nowara, "After 'Spain'" 161).

In his groundbreaking 1978 study *La quiebra de la monarquía absoluta 1814–1820*, Josep Fontana examined available economic data and concluded that between 1814 and 1820 “cerca de un 60 por ciento del importe de las exportaciones españolas al extranjero (sumando mercancías y dinero) era de procedencia americana” [around 60 per cent of the amount of Spanish exports (including goods and money) were of American origin] (63). Fontana argues that the loss of the colonies and the colonial markets in the early part of the nineteenth century had an enormous negative impact on Spain's economy and led to a 30-year economic depression that lasted throughout Fernando VII's reign and beyond.

A empeorar la situación de unos y otros, de la hacienda y de los contribuyentes, vino la crisis del comercio exterior, consecuencia de la progresiva pérdida de los mercados coloniales, y que redujo drásticamente los ingresos por aduanas y produjo en grave desequilibrio en los sectores más avanzados de la economía española. (384)

[To worsen the situation for one and the other, the taxing office and the taxed, along came the crisis of foreign trade, a consequence of

³⁶ See José María Hernández Díaz's "Alfabetización y sociedad en la revolución liberal española," *Leer y escribir en España. Doscientos años de alfabetización*. Agustín Escolano, dir. (Madrid: Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez, 1992), 69–89; and Jean-François Botrel's *Libros, Prensa y Lectura en la España del siglo XIX* (Madrid: Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez, 1993), particularly section 2.4, "La aptitud para comunicar: alfabetización y escolarización," 303–31.

the progressive loss of colonial markets, and that drastically reduced revenue from customs and produced a serious imbalance in the most advanced sectors of the Spanish economy.]

Yet understanding the economic realities on the ground during the first decades of the nineteenth century is not easy, given the mixed quality and quantity of data available.

The “forgotten decades” of 1814–1840, a period defined largely by the failure of economic historians to discuss it at all, is masked by a curtain of vague, incomplete, and confusing sources that have made research difficult. The most salient change in the economy is, of course, the loss of the American empire. This not only completed the collapse of Spain's trade with America, but cut off the influx of foreign exchange, in the form of American silver, that had financed much of Spain's trade with Europe. (Ringrose 61)

Historians by and large agree that Spain experienced a period of economic hardship that corresponded with Fernando VII's reign and the loss of the American territories, although they differ with regard to the intensity and extent of that economic downturn.³⁷ It is possible to argue that, even if the Spanish economy had moved quickly to identify new markets beyond those of its former colonial empire, the adjustments would have had to have been felt by a large part of the nation's economic sectors, whether agricultural or industrial. One could certainly argue that the economic adjustments that Spain had to make were the result of a unique historical set of circumstances, given the combination of the loss of the American territories and Fernando VII's regressive absolutist policies.³⁸ Ultimately, as David Ringrose has

³⁷ Though David Ringrose disagrees in part with Fontana's analysis, claiming that “when figures are adjusted for changes in price levels, the decline in the real value of Spanish trade becomes much smaller and more transitory” (79), he acknowledges that the Spanish government lost at least 40% of its fiscal resources when it lost control over its American empire (*Spain, Europe, and the “Spanish Miracle” 1700–1900* (1996), 392). This, in turn, led to a rise in government debt issuances that negatively affected private investment in the Spanish economy (Nadal 1975, cited in César Molinas y Leandro Prados de la Escosura, “Was Spain Different?” *Explorations in Economic History* 26 (1989): 393).

³⁸ In their article, Prados de la Escosura and Molinas indicate that Spanish per capita income from 1800–1930, in comparison to a European norm, “could be described as a retarded one,” but add that “Spain did not fit a Third World or a Latin pattern” (385). Spain's per capita income, they observe, fell behind that of its neighbors in the early nineteenth century (387). Accordingly, while Spain

noted, “it may be that the most spectacular consequences to flow from the loss of empire were political and diplomatic” (83). To those two descriptors – “political and diplomatic” – we should also add “psychological,” given the way in which imperial loss affected Spain’s national identity.

Colonial Loss as National Trauma

Underpinning this entire study is the conviction that Spain’s loss of empire constituted a national trauma and that Benito Pérez Galdós, a writer with an extraordinary sensibility for his contemporary culture, attempted to formulate a response that would allow him and his readers to address and potentially transcend that trauma. The result was a series of novels that constitutes examples of what I have chosen to call metropolitan foundational fictions. By coining the term “foundational fictions,” Doris Sommer showed how many nineteenth-century novels written in the newly independent nations of Latin America framed “dreams of national prosperity” within their romantic plots, essentially serving as “nation-building projects invested in private passions with public purpose” (7). I do not believe this is a process limited solely to young nations or to the Americas, given that empires, too, have to reconsider their identity when their fortunes change. Unquestionably, the foundational nature of that nation-building was bound to be dramatically different for Spain. For example, when the nation’s future is not necessarily one of promise and possibility, but rather one that requires the management of loss and diminishment, what might those foundational fictions look like, and what message would they impart to their readers?

To ask questions of this sort invariably leads us to affect studies, the nature of emotions, and the way in which nations and texts can be said to engage with emotions. Sara Ahmed, in describing what she calls “the sociality of emotion” (8), notes that “Rather than emotions being understood as coming from within and moving outwards, emotions are

seen income growth comparable to that of the countries of northern Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Spanish economy was unable to compensate for the initial shortfall in the early 1800s, which led to “the first basis of empirical evidence of backwardness of 19th- and early 20th-century Spain with respect to the industrialized countries” (387). Ultimately the study concludes that there were multiple models of economic development in Europe, and that “Spain followed her own, different way to modernization” (397). See also Álvarez-Nogal and Prados de la Escosura, “The rise and fall of Spain (1270–1850)” (*Economic History Review* (2013)).

assumed to *come from without and move inward*" (9). She also makes the important point that texts have the ability to "name or perform different emotions" (13). In their 2016 anthology, *Engaging the Emotions in Spanish Culture and History*, Luisa Elena Delgado, Pura Fernández, and Jo Labanyi build on Ahmed's work, noting that "emotions are performative" and that they lead to the construction of "'emotional communities' founded on common values and desires" (4). The central premise here is that emotions are both mental and physical phenomena, and it is worth noting that one of the central aesthetic goals of realist narratives is to impart to the reader, through the mental processes of language, a sense of both the physical and the emotional. Foundational fictions – novels whose emotional stories constitute allegorical constructions of national identity – must be, by their very nature, stories designed to cultivate emotional communities. Through the depiction of relationships between men and women, of the choices they make, and of the struggles they endure, these narratives help readers frame the circumstances of their own lives. My argument is that, in the case of late nineteenth-century Spain, a central part of the national narrative involved a reckoning with Spain's colonial history.

With respect to imperial loss, scholars have traditionally situated Spain's moment of imperial trauma at the end of the nineteenth century, with the events of 1898. In this section I will make the argument for why we should consider resituating that moment to much earlier in the century, to the events beginning in 1808 that put in motion the losses incurred during the reign of Fernando VII. From a historical perspective, it is clear that the Peninsular War of 1808–14 led to dramatic changes for the Spanish empire and impacted the nation's consciousness. In his examination of this period Raymond Carr defines the Peninsular War as a decisive event that engendered a particular concept of national identity, one that would prove difficult to square with Spain's history over the course of the rest of the nineteenth century.

If in perspective, the loss of the American Empire was the greatest single consequence of the crisis of 1808, the legacy of the War of Independence moulded the subsequent history of Spain itself. It gave liberalism its programme and its technique of revolution. It defined Spanish patriotism, endowing it with an enduring myth. (105)

The myth of modern Spanish nationalism, he argues, "was created by the fact of resistance to Napoleon," which allowed Spaniards to consider themselves and their nation as a "natural force uncontaminated by Europe" (105). The reference to a national myth is insightful, but I believe that the obsessive need to develop that particular narrative arises less out of Spain's

experience in the Peninsular War and more from what Carr refers to as the “consequence” of that war: namely, the loss of the American empire. The narrative described – that of a nation capable of defending itself against a more powerful and hostile aggressor and regaining its sovereignty – does not quite square with the historical realities of imperial loss. That particular event, I contend, constituted a collective trauma for Spain, one that no compensatory narrative could ultimately change or explain away. Underscoring this tricky reformulation of national identity was the sixteenth-century notion of Spain as an unstoppable global imperial power, which still informed the public through continued references to historical Spanish culture (literature, art, and architecture). By choosing to focus on the image of Spain defending its sovereignty rather than that of a metropolis whose military could not prevent the loss of empire, metropolitan citizens produced a collective response to history that led to the modern Spanish nationalism that Carr describes. In his examination of collective memory, Maurice Halbwachs concludes that “the various groups that compose society are capable at every moment of reconstructing their past. But, as we have seen, they most frequently distort that past in the act of reconstructing it” (182). Moreover, he observes that “society, in each period, rearranges its recollections in such a way as to adjust them to the variable conditions of its equilibrium” (183).

To understand how the loss of the American empire could constitute an example of collective trauma, it is useful to examine the concepts of trauma, both individual and collective. Within the Freudian psychoanalytic context, trauma is defined by the combination of three ideas: “the idea of a violent shock, the idea of a wound and the idea of consequences affecting the whole organization” (LaPlanche and Pontilis 466). As Jeffrey Alexander notes, “According to lay trauma theory, traumas are naturally occurring events that shatter an individual or collective actor’s sense of well-being” (2). Trauma, he goes on to say, “is a kind of rational response to abrupt change, whether at the individual or social level” (3). But collective trauma, which we might also refer to as a kind of cultural trauma, functions somewhat differently. Kai Erikson, in his 1976 study *Everything in Its Path*, makes a clear distinction between individual trauma and collective trauma.

By collective trauma ... I mean a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality. The collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it does not have the quality of suddenness normally associated with “trauma.” But it is a form of shock all the same, a gradual realization

that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared ... “We” no longer exist as a connected pair or as linked cells in a larger communal body. (153–54)

Notable in Erikson's differentiation is the time factor. Collective trauma does not require an abrupt traumatic event. Instead, that initial blow, or wound, can play out over time, in a gradual fashion. What must happen to make a trauma collective, then, is that the event or events that initiate the response must represent a powerful negative change for the community involved. There has to be an awareness, even if it is slow to develop, that this change has occurred. In addition, the affected community needs to experience this change as some kind of loss of self. With respect to Spain, it is worth remembering the frequency with which the empire itself was referred to as “las dos Españas” [the two Spains].³⁹ The loss of the American empire could only have been experienced as a loss of self, in both a political and a cultural sense. This, in turn, raises the question of whether Spain was able to mourn the loss of empire or whether the idea of Spain as an imperial power, as a narcissistic object, led to the more complex experience of melancholia. In their study of collective mourning, Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich point out that an inability to mourn can be preceded by a relationship with the object of loss that “was less intent on sharing in the feelings of the other person than on confirming one's own self-esteem” (63). If we put this into the context of the end of empire, we could imagine a metropolis less concerned with the welfare of its colonial citizens and more invested in its status as an empire. It is an image that

³⁹ In the twentieth century the phrase “las dos Españas” ceased being a reference to the metropolis and the colonies and instead came to refer to the two sides of the 1936–39 Civil War, the Nationalists and the Republicans. Even in this context, scholars of cultural production addressing the transition from the Franco dictatorship to democracy have often used the language of psychoanalysis – of mourning and melancholy – and the concept of “hauntology” to describe the return of the repressed that accompanied the trauma of the Civil War. See Jo Labanyi's chapter, “History and Hauntology,” in Joan Ramón Resina's *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000) and her essay “Memory and Modernity in Democratic Spain: The Difficulty of Coming to Terms with the Spanish Civil War” (*Poetics Today* 28:1 (2007): 89–116). The concept of empire as a spectre that continues to haunt Spanish society is most clearly articulated in Angel Loureiro's “Spanish Nationalism and the Ghost of Empire” (*Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 4:1 (2003): 65–76).

fits with the historical realities of the Spanish court's practice of ignoring colonial problems and dismissing demands for greater autonomy, a practice that only served to aggravate metropolitan/colonial relations and led to the independence movements. Imperial loss, then, would impose a high psychic price on the metropolis, and an inadequate process of working through the impact of that trauma would result in an obsessive preoccupation with "preventing the 'return of the repressed'" (Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich 108).

In his attempt to formulate a theory of cultural trauma, Jeffrey Alexander postulates that "unconscious emotional fears and cognitively distorting mechanisms of psychological defense" play a powerful role in mediating the response to a trauma-inducing event:

Rather than activating direct cognition and rational understanding, the traumatizing event becomes distorted in the actor's imagination and memory. The effort to accurately attribute responsibility for the event and the progressive effort to develop an ameliorating response are undermined by displacement. This psychoanalytically mediated perspective continues to maintain a naturalistic approach to traumatic events, but it suggests a more complex understanding about the human ability consciously to perceive them. The truth about the experience is perceived, but only unconsciously. In effect, truth goes underground, and accurate memory and responsible action are its victims. Traumatic feelings and perceptions, then, come not only from the originating event but from the anxiety of keeping it repressed. Trauma will be resolved, not only by setting things right in the world, but by setting things right in the self. According to this perspective, the truth can be recovered, and psychological equanimity restored only, as the Holocaust historian Saul Friedlander once put it, "when memory comes." (5)

In other words, when a community of individuals experiences a traumatic event the collective response can often be slow to develop and may manifest itself in a repressed fashion. The process will remain traumatic and its effects will continue to be felt until the sense of a loss of one's self is addressed and transcended through a process of remembering. As Arthur Neal has noted, "the degree to which a nation dwells on a trauma depends on the degree of closure that is achieved" (6). Given the manner in which Spain's imperial loss was first manifested and the slow process of recognizing the effects of that loss, one could argue that closure has remained elusive, and this, I would argue, has had a profound effect on the way in which the trauma of imperial loss continued to fester

throughout the nineteenth century in Spain.⁴⁰ Perhaps most important for the purposes of our study of Benito Pérez Galdós and portraits of Spanish imperialism is Alexander's conclusion with respect to how that healing process can happen for a community:

Much as these memory residues surface through free association in psychoanalytic treatment, they appear in public life through the creation of literature. It should not be surprising, then, that literary interpretation, with its hermeneutic approach to symbolic patterns, has been offered as a kind of academic counterpart to the psychoanalytic intervention. (6)

The point is well made, as popular culture and literary narratives offer an optimal site for the psychoanalytic work of collective trauma to play itself out.

To return briefly to Raymond Carr's identification of a national myth that sprang up in response to the Peninsular War, it is useful to identify the elements that are required to formulate a trauma narrative and then to think about how those elements might help us explain both Carr's comments and Benito Pérez Galdós's historical fiction. Jeffrey Alexander's work in this area is again helpful. In his identification of the elements of a traumatic narrative he notes that, beyond the elements of a collective trauma – the existence of an event, its negative effect on a community, and a collective awareness of that event – a trauma narrative must also attribute responsibility and identify a perpetrator (15). It is this last element, perhaps, that has made the collective trauma of imperial loss so difficult for Spain. Who, if not the metropolis itself, was to blame? Alexander also points out that not all collective traumas are recognized and that their lessons often do not become a part of collective identity, mostly because of an inability to directly engage in the trauma process (26–27).

In her study of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of trauma Cathy Caruth begins by observing that Freud, from the very beginning

⁴⁰ In his 1959 study *Pan-Hispanism. Its Origin and Development to 1866*, Mark Jay Van Aken explores attempts undertaken in the early and mid-nineteenth century by political and business sectors of Spanish society, largely conservative, to address colonial loss by re-establishing connections under the declared framework of a shared cultural and linguistic heritage. Despite the illusion of cultural connection, Pan-Hispanism constitutes an approach that Van Aken defines as “a conscious expression of the persistence of the idea of empire” (vii), thus underscoring the difficulty with which Spanish society processed colonial loss throughout the nineteenth century.

of his examination of the phenomenon, connects the concept of trauma with the phenomenon of literature by virtue of his reference to Tasso's epic *Gerusalemme Liberata* as an illustration of the way that trauma functions in the human psyche of many of his patients, as "patterns of suffering" and the "repetitive reenactments" of painful events (1).⁴¹ The connection between literature and the theory of trauma, she argues, is not simply fortuitous: "If Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing" (3). In the same way in which we read between the lines in literature, subtly cognizant of metaphor, of allegory, of the rhetorical nature of language to say one thing on the surface and imply another at a deeper level of meaning, there is a conscious and unconscious aspect to the experience of trauma. Caruth explains this paradox by referring back to the plot of Tasso's epic, noting that "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely not known in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on" (4).

What the parable of the wound and the voice tells us, and what is at the heart of Freud's writing on trauma, both in what it says and in the stories it unwittingly tells, is that trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language. (Caruth 4)

This is the basis of Caruth's concept of the "double wound," which allows us to think about traumatic experience as one that "is not fully assimilated as it occurs" (5). For that very reason, the "double wound" in the context of Spanish imperialism can be read in two ways. It can refer to the initial

⁴¹ Caruth cites Freud's description of a story in Tasso's epic: "Its hero, Tancred, unwittingly kills his beloved Clorinda in a duel while she is disguised in the armour of an enemy knight. After her burial he makes his way into a strange magic forest which strikes the Crusaders' army with terror. He slashes with his sword at a tall tree; but blood streams from the cut and the voice of Clorinda, whose soul is imprisoned in the tree, is heard complaining that he has wounded his beloved once again" (4). See Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle. The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 18 (London: Hogarth, 1953–54).

loss of empire and the various ways in which that loss is remembered and reimagined. It can also refer to the first loss of the American territories as a traumatic event that was simply not understood as such in the moment, given that no nation in world history had experienced anything like it. The emotional punch associated with imperial loss arrived later, with the repetition of colonial loss, in 1898. The experience of the loss of empire, by necessity, required a period of latency.

Nevertheless, as this study aims to show, there is no need to privilege one reading of the concept of the double wound over another in the case of Spain, as either the latent process of unconsciously assimilating colonial loss through cultural production during the nineteenth century or the reliving and remembering of the original moment of trauma in the early years of the nineteenth century by arriving at a second moment of trauma at century's end. Trying to understand the apparent failure of Spaniards to recognize the enormity of Spanish American independence, the historian Melchor Fernández Almagro asks with true puzzlement:

¿No existían, acaso, otros españoles que tomaban partido, en pro o en contra, entendiendo que la hora de la emancipación americana había sonado ya, o estimando que España debía mantener la integridad de su Imperio por la fuerza de las armas, hasta sus últimas consecuencias?
(15)⁴²

[Were there not, perhaps, other Spaniards who took sides, for or against, understanding that the time of American emancipation had already come, or feeling that Spain should maintain the integrity of its Empire by force of arms, up to the ultimate consequence?]

The answer, of course, is yes. The processing of the loss of a part of one's essential identity, in the case of Spain and the American empire, was not limited to the events of 1898, which constituted a palpable and historically recognizable manifestation of the concept of the double wound. The shock of a trauma comes about because one realizes too late that the event threatens bodily life/consciousness. The return of this traumatic experience is an attempt to return to that moment, now with knowledge, to "attempt to master what was never fully grasped in the first place" (Caruth 62). Accordingly, the process of accepting imperial loss played out in popular

⁴² There is a certainly irony in Fernández Almagro's comments, initially presented in 1944, during one of the most repressive years of the Franco dictatorship, when a discussion of the Civil War was simply not possible, and for which the process of historical remembering would require more than a half century.

narratives that allowed Spaniards the time and space to manage the trauma, even while 1898 provided a final moment of recognition.

From the perspective of psychoanalysis in general and the Spanish experience in the early nineteenth century in particular, then, the loss of colonies begins to take on the distinctive features of a collective trauma that must be processed indirectly, largely through the generation of narratives. These narratives can be expected to function in a variety of ways, depending on the degree to which they accept or deny loss. Given the narcissistic nature of the concept of “las dos Españas,” it is not surprising to find that many forms of popular culture in the nineteenth century show evidence of the return of the repressed. Indeed, the “hauntology” of Spanish colonialism hovers over nearly all of nineteenth-century Spanish literature. Spanish panoramic literature – *costumbrismo* – I would argue, is a particular case in point.⁴³ The panoramic literature of social types originated in England with the 1838 collection entitled *Heads of the People* and was quickly taken up in France, resulting in the publication of *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* in various volumes between 1839 and 1842. Other European nations followed suit, and 1843–44 saw the publication of the two-volume collection in Spanish, *Los españoles pintados por sí mismos*.⁴⁴ Whereas the genre ran its course rather quickly in the rest of Europe, it became a staple of popular literature in Spain throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century. The timing of the popularity of *costumbrista* collections of social types corresponds to the decades immediately following the death of Fernando VII and the return of press freedoms, exactly when we would expect to see initial evidence of the psychological process of reimagining national identity in a post-colonial environment. Given how collections such as *Los españoles pintados por sí mismos* participated in the cultural work of reimagining the very identity of the Spanish metropolis, it isn’t surprising that collections of social types eventually became a vibrant genre in the Americas, in both the newly independent nations in Latin America and Spain’s remaining colonies, with such collections as *Los cubanos pintados por sí mismos* (1852)

⁴³ That *costumbrismo* evidences a particular focus on questions of national identity has long been accepted. See Susan Kirkpatrick, “The Ideology of Costumbrismo” (*Ideologies and Literature* 2:7 (1978): 28–44).

⁴⁴ For a thorough overview of European panoramic literature and Spanish *costumbrismo* see Martina Lauster’s *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century. European Journalism and its Physiologies* (New York and London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007); and Margarita Ucelay da Cal’s *Los españoles pintados por sí mismos (1843–1844). Estudio de un género costumbrista* (México D.F.: El Colegio de México, 1951).

and *Los mexicanos pintados por sí mismos* (1854).⁴⁵ Panoramic literature was not the only site of post-colonial refashioning of national identity. The historical novel also played a significant role.

To set the stage for an analysis of Benito Pérez Galdós's representation of Spanish imperialism in his historical fiction, it is worth looking briefly at the vibrant history of the historical novel in nineteenth-century Spain before 1870. Guillermo Zellers's review of the historical novel, *La novela histórica en España 1828–1850*, is a rich text in this regard, given that it focuses on the production of historical fiction precisely during the years following the Battle of Ayacucho until the mid-century mark. The book consists of a brief review of 34 historical novels published over a 22-year period in Spain. The selection of titles appears to be based on relative popularity but also with a view to selecting titles other than those by such authors as José de Espronceda and Mariano José de Larra, given the fact that their stature in the field of Spanish letters has already led to critical evaluations of their work. The 34 novels reviewed in the collection illustrate the way in which the historical novel in the decades immediately following the loss of the American empire provided paths for channeling the emotional response to the profound change in national identity. Of the 34 novels Zellers describes, four narrate stories that take place during the height of Habsburg rule, in Spain or its territories in Italy and the Low Countries. Seven of the novels are set in the nineteenth century, with a focus on the Peninsular War or the subsequent political intrigues during the Fernandino period. Seven have plots directly related to 1492 in Spain or to the conquest of the American territories. Fourteen are set in medieval Spain, before the events of 1492. Notably there are only two novels, both of them set in the twelfth century, that address historical events not related to Spain. What nearly all of them demonstrate is a preoccupation with specific moments in Spanish history that have a particular relationship with empire, from the political history that eventually led to the unification of Spain as a nation and an empire to the struggles associated with maintaining that empire and, to a lesser degree, with the events of the early nineteenth century that so profoundly reshaped the nation.

⁴⁵ I address the relationship between *costumbrismo* and loss of empire in “El costumbrismo decimonónico y la ansiedad colonial, o cómo representar la pérdida del imperio” (*Actas del XVI Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas* (2007). Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2010) and “El imperio pintado por sí mismo: el costumbrismo transatlántico” (*Hispanismos del mundo. Diálogos y debates en (y desde) el Sur*. Anexo digital. Sección V. Leonardo Funes, ed. (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2016)).

Even more telling than the selection of specific titles is the rationale Zellers provides for the vibrancy of historical fiction. In the preface Zellers identifies four reasons for the popularity of historical fiction in Spain in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Las causas principales del renacimiento son cuatro: primera existía naturalmente en el espíritu de los escritores españoles un deseo de restablecer la supremacía del talento nacional que había sufrido los efectos del neoclasicismo francés; segunda, había en la Guerra de la Independencia un incentivo a los sentimientos patrióticos; tercera, en ciertos desterrados había una influencia psicológica que volvió sus pensamientos en retrospectión a las glorias de su patria; cuarta, y la más fuerte de todas, había la influencia de la boga enorme de las traducciones al español que las novelas de Walter Scott ejercieron en los escritores de España. (10)

[There are four main causes for its rebirth: first there was naturally in the spirit of Spanish writers a desire to reestablish the supremacy of national talent that had suffered the effects of French neoclassicism; second there was in the War of Independence an incentive for patriotic feelings; third, for certain exiles there was a psychological influence that turned their thoughts, in retrospect, toward the glories of their homeland; fourth, and the strongest reason of all, there was the influence of the enormous vogue that the Spanish translations of Walter Scott's novels exerted on the writers of Spain.]

The language in this justification for the popularity of the historical novel is remarkable, both for what it reveals and for what it attempts to disguise. I would argue that the desire to re-establish supremacy is barely coded language that points to a perceived need to recoup what has been lost, to hold onto a sense of national consciousness that gave the metropolitan citizen a sense of power and superiority. That Zellers identifies neoclassicism as the villain for having stripped Spaniards of their sense of national talent strikes me as both historically untrue and a fascinating sleight of hand in its attribution of blame. There is, nonetheless, a certain truth in Zellers' words, in, for example, the desire to return to a past perceived to have been glorious, to reclaim a sense of national pride.

What Zellers identifies as the impetus for historical fiction in Spanish literary history is, in many ways, present in the historical fiction of Benito Pérez Galdós. There is no question that the author hoped to provide for his readers a portrait of the nation's past and, in this regard, his historical narratives need to be read as allegories within their own specific historical,

political, and psychological context.⁴⁶ To address these various contexts, *Ghosts of Colonies Past and Present* is divided into three sections. The two chapters contained in Part I focus on Galdós's earliest novels and the first series of *Episodios nacionales*. Chapter 2, the first in this section, shows how Galdós himself discovered, in his initial forays into historical fiction, a path for processing imperial loss. Chapter 3 examines Galdós's portrayal of the Peninsular War in the first series of *Episodios nacionales* as an opportunity for his readers to separate from the nation's former sense of self and reimagine a national identity that is post-colonial in its essence.

Part II is devoted to the second series of *Episodios nacionales*, a ten-volume collection of novels that covers the critical period of Fernando VII's rule and the Spanish American wars of independence. It is, I believe, the least studied and least understood series of *Episodios nacionales*, and it is perhaps the richest with respect to the complex process of managing the trauma of colonial loss. For that reason, my examination of the author's meditations on the impact of Spanish colonial history in this series takes up a large part of this study. Within this section of the book, Chapter 4 explores the series' portrayal of Spanish history, particularly the accuracy with which it illustrates the reasons for Spain's dramatic change in fortunes from 1814 to 1834. By focusing on key events during Fernando VII's monarchy, the chapter provides the required historic background for the fictional aspects of Galdós historical fiction, which prove to be emblematic for our understanding of the author's portrayal of Spain's traumatic response to colonial loss. Chapter 5 takes a decidedly literary turn by virtue of a close reading of character, plot, dialogue, and description at key moments in the second series. This detailed textual analysis demonstrates how these ten novels present and then attempt to manage colonial loss from an allegorical and emotional perspective. Galdós's strategy for presenting the process of managing the first and most significant blow to the Spanish

⁴⁶ Fredric Jameson is one of the few critics to sense the unique way in which Galdós's fictions allegorically represent the nation: "Galdós' novels are more visibly allegorical (in the national sense) than most of their better-known European predecessors: something that might well be explained in terms of Immanuel Wallerstein's world-system terminology. Although 19th century Spain is not strictly *peripheral* after the fashion of countries we are here designating under the term third world, it is certainly *semiperipheral* in his sense, when contrasted with England or France" ("Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text* 15 (1986): 78). His comments, in this regard, hint at a European framework of subalternity without actually addressing the imperial histories (and legacies) of Spain and its northern European neighbors.

empire – namely, the loss of the territories in the Americas – is to present, as mentioned earlier, a sequence of relationships between the protagonist of the second series, Salvador Monsalud, and several women over the course of two decades. The narrative process is deliberate and nuanced, and meaning grows clearer through the slow and steady accretion of textual details. For that reason, Chapter 5 is considerably more extensive than other chapters in the book. This attention to detail is warranted, because it is through a detailed portrait of the relationships presented in the story of Monsalud's maturation from a rash young man to a world-weary adult that Galdós provides his readers with a model of development that can ease the sense of melancholy that colonial loss engendered.

To conclude this study, Part III addresses the trajectory that the author's more mature realist fiction would take after the completion of the early *Episodios*. Chapter 6 looks at Galdós's *novelas de tesis*, as well as a number of his realist novels from the 1880s and 1890s as a natural next step in the author's own psychological process. In addition, this chapter examines, albeit briefly, Galdós's later historical novels as commentaries on the historical difficulties facing Spain in its period of second empire in the nineteenth century. In the final pages of the book I summarize the importance of understanding how Galdós's fiction reveals a complex set of responses to Spanish imperialism, even as I point out the ways in which the early *Episodios nacionales* become recontextualized in a post-1898 landscape.

In some ways, Part III provides an overview of what could easily be the subject of additional book-length studies, given the sheer number of the author's *novelas contemporáneas*, the subsequent 36 volumes that constitute the last three series of *Episodios nacionales*, and the author's numerous post-1900 plays and novels that quite often address Spanish imperialism in a much more direct fashion. I have chosen instead to keep my remarks to a minimum and include references to the growing body of scholarship on the author's later works. In doing so, my goal is to highlight not just that Galdós, like many authors in Spain around the turn of the century, addresses Spain's imperial loss but, more importantly, that his concerns are evident from the first moment he chose to put pen to paper as a novelist to the last narratives he writes. Taken together, the chapters in *Ghosts of Colonies Past and Present* provide a unique look at the trajectory of Galdós's representations relative to Spanish imperialism. By making this trajectory more visible, my hope is that we can better understand not only the processes by which Spain managed the transition from the world's first global empire to a nation on the periphery of Europe but also how a metropolis struggled to find a path to becoming something else after the empire had disappeared. There are, I believe, lessons to be learned.

Part I:

Benito Pérez Galdós and the
Rewriting of Spanish History

CHAPTER 2

Contextualizing the Trauma of Imperial Loss

- Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye.

Homi Bhabha, *Nations and Narration* (1)

With few exceptions, the realist novels of Benito Pérez Galdós focus on the everyday lives of the residents of Madrid, the Spanish nation's capital and the center of its metropolitan empire. His characters represent all social classes, from street beggars to aristocrats; they engage in a wide array of occupations, from politicians, businessmen, shopkeepers, and clerics to housewives, nuns, and household servants; and they live in the various neighborhoods that made up the city's diverse nineteenth-century urban landscape, from the old city center to new neighborhoods being constructed on the city's margins. It is not an exaggeration to say that for nearly a half century Galdós occupied a singular position in Spanish letters owing to his ability to capture the life of the nation's capital in prose. While this chapter focuses primarily on the author's earliest narratives as evidence of his awareness of the way in which Spanish imperialism was an implicit part of the day-to-day lives of metropolitan Spaniards, it begins with a review of the author's family history and the experiences of his adolescence and young adulthood that helped shape his development into a novelist focused on Spanish history. The inclusion of aspects of the author's life helps us to contextualize his earliest novels and the way references to Spanish imperialism are woven into the narrative fabric of his portrayals of Spanish society. Galdós's earliest novels – *La sombra*, *La Fontana de Oro*, and *El audaz* – provide us with a kind of cultural x-ray, a series of snapshots, as it were, of particular moments in the life of both the author himself and the nation whose history he chose to chronicle. These earliest narratives

reveal the subtle ways in which the idea of empire infused the daily life of its metropolitan citizens and affected the nation's psyche.

Colonial Connections in the Galdós Family History

Among the many statues in Madrid's famous Parque del Retiro, there is one of Benito Pérez Galdós, and each May contemporary authors, scholars, and readers gather to celebrate the author's birth and his importance in Spanish literary history. The monument itself, the work of sculptor Victorio Macho in 1919, depicts Galdós in the last years of his life, a blind invalid, seated with an expansive lap rug covering his legs and feet. The massiveness of the statue is designed to reflect the magnitude and power of the author's legacy, as if the trajectory of Galdós's career was itself written in stone. But Galdós's career path, as the premier chronicler of the lives of metropolitan Spaniards in a period of rapid economic and social change, was anything but a sure thing, given his family history and his early years. The fact that Galdós became Spain's premier realist novelist is a remarkable outcome when one considers his origins. Those same origins help explain why his many novels consistently reflect the complexity and depth of Spain's imperial history.

Benito Pérez Galdós was born in 1843 in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, a city on one of the Canary Islands, a subtropical archipelago located 1,200 miles (more than 1,900 kilometers) from Spain's capital and only 62 miles (100 kilometers) from the coast of southern Morocco. Galdós's experience of having grown up on the island of Gran Canaria is a necessary point of departure in our examination of the author's portraits of Spanish imperialism, given the unique opportunities that life in the Canary Islands would have provided with respect to relationships between Spain and its territories in the Americas. The Canary Islands, and particularly the port in Las Palmas, was for centuries a critical stop for ship traffic between the metropolis and the colonies. The economy of Las Palmas was almost wholly dependent upon Spain's imperial maritime traffic, as first conquistadores and then missionaries, émigrés, and businessmen traveled to and from the peninsula and the colonies. In his nearly 1,000-page biography of Benito Pérez Galdós, Pedro Ortíz-Armengol often theorizes about the cultural and social milieu in which the author was raised, at times wondering openly about what the young man growing up on an island off the coast of Africa, in the center of a major maritime port, might have experienced and how those experiences shaped him. This kind of impressionistic rumination in the past might have raised questions about the scholarly rigor of Ortíz-Armengol's chronicle of the author's life. Yet, recent developments in the study of emotions demonstrates that such theoretical posturing has

enormous value.¹ As we consider the degree to which the author's literary works reflect and refract the nation's engagement with its imperial past and present, it is worth looking a bit more closely at the kinds of experience a Canary Island childhood and adolescence in the 1840s and 1850s would have entailed and to speculate on the ways in which they might have influenced the young author's understanding of Spanish empire.

Galdós's awareness of the connections between the metropolis and its colonial territories was established from his earliest years, particularly given the circumstances of his family roots. When Galdós's maternal grandmother, Concepción Medina y Alvarez, married Galdós's maternal grandfather, Domingo de Galdós y Alcorta, in 1786, her father was not in attendance, as he was already living and working in the colonies (Ortíz-Armengol 33–34). The author's grandparents eventually had nine children, five boys and four girls, the last of whom, Dolores, would become Benito Pérez Galdós's mother. Of the five male children in this generation, one became a military officer whose liberal political beliefs led to forced emigrations to London and Paris during periods of Fernando VII's rule, and the other four emigrated to the colonies. One of the author's uncles, Pedro Galdós Medina, was a priest who died young in Arequipa, Perú. The other three, Ignacio, Manuel, and José María, all took up residence in Cuba, never returning to the Canary Islands. Galdós's mother, Dolores, appears to have been particularly close to José María, who was only two years older than she (Ortíz-Armengol 90). From a very early age young Benito Pérez Galdós would have been aware of his uncles' lives in the colonies. But the strong connections between the Galdós family and the Americas that we see in the generation of Benito Pérez Galdós's parents continued to develop among the author's own brothers and sisters. Dolores Galdós de Medina married Sebastian Pérez in 1823, and they, in turn, had an equally large

¹ Recent cultural studies scholarship on the importance of emotion often refers to Raymond Williams's concept of "structures of feeling," discussed in his book *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977). The interest in the function and effects of emotions has grown in the areas of politics and psychology through affect studies: see Sara Ahmed's *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Paul Hoggett's *Politics, Identity, and Emotion* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2009); and Simon Thompson and Paul Hoggett's co-edited volume, *Politics and the Emotions: The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies* (New York: Continuum, 2012). With respect to Spain, see Krauel's *Imperial Emotions* and the aforementioned collection of essays, *Engaging the Emotions in Spanish Culture and History*, Luisa Elena Delgado, Pura Fernández, and Jo Labanyi, eds (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt UP, 2016).

family of nine children, of whom Benito was the youngest. Two of Galdós's older brothers, Domingo and Sebastian, emigrated to Cuba in the 1840s. Domingo eventually returned to Las Palmas in 1851 with his Cuban-born wife, Magdalena Hurtado de Mendoza, and her family, while Sebastian remained in Cuba until his death in 1888.² Of Galdós's five sisters, only one, María del Carmen, married and had children, and her husband was José Hermenegildo Hurtado de Mendoza, the Cuban-born brother of Domingo's wife. He had accompanied his sister and brother-in-law in their move from Cuba back to Las Palmas in 1852. It seems that every marriage in the family was connected, in some way, to Spain's colonial society. Even Galdós's older sister, Tomasa, remained single after her potential spouse emigrated to Cuba "a consecuencia de las escaseces" [as a result of financial need] (cited in Ortíz-Armengol 41).

Galdós would have been only eight years old at the time of Domingo's return, and the arrival of the brother, along with his wife, children, brother-in-law, and mother-in-law, would have undoubtedly made a strong impression. Moreover, Domingo's status as an apparently wealthy *indiano*, having liquidated his holdings in Cuba to bring his money back to Spain, would have likely been a topic of conversation within both the family and the family's social circle. The point of mentioning all the ways in which so many members of Galdós's family served as human connections between life in Spain and the Americas is to highlight the fact that the author, from his very first years, was deeply aware of those connections and the impact they had on all facets of his social milieu. As a child and adolescent, Galdós had first-hand knowledge and experience of the transatlantic movement of goods, services, and human beings in ways that most citizens of the metropolitan peninsula would not have had.

² Pedro Ortíz-Armengol has noted the autobiographical echoes of Domingo Pérez Galdós's return to Las Palmas in the fictional character of José María Manso, the narrator's brother in the novel *El amigo Manso*, who returns to Madrid from Cuba accompanied by his Cuban-born wife and children, her extended family and two black servants (360). Though there is no evidence to prove that Domingo himself was a slave owner, Ortíz-Armengol has found records indicating that Domingo Pérez Galdós's wife and mother-in-law had inherited slaves from James/Santiago Tate upon his death in 1829 (82), and it is clear that the general economic fortunes of anyone who lived and worked in Cuba during this time were bound up in the slave economy of the colony. See also Julián Ávila Arellano's *La historia lógico-natural de los españoles de ambos mundos de Benito Pérez Galdós* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Ediciones del Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, 1992), which explores the author's familial connections with Cuba and his evocation of those connections in his fiction.

There is one other curious biographical detail that might offer additional insight into the author's view of the complexity of metropolitan-colonial relations and the way in which many of his novels address the issue of metropolitan-colonial relations through the lens of gender. Among the extended family that accompanied Domingo Pérez Galdós when he returned home to Las Palmas was Adriana Tate, his widowed mother-in-law, and her daughter, his wife's much younger half-sister, who was nicknamed "Sisita." Adriana Tate was the daughter of James Tate, a Scottish ship captain who had spent his career routinely transporting sugar, honey, and tobacco between the US and Cuba, sailing along the Atlantic Coast. His work required him to move between English- and Spanish-speaking cultures and, though he resided with his family in Charleston, South Carolina, in the early part of the nineteenth century, in 1825 Tate moved with his daughter to Trinidad, Cuba, and became known as Santiago Tate (Ortíz-Armengol 78–79). In 1827 Adriana married Ambrosio Hurtado y Mendoza. Benito's sister-in-law and later brother-in-law were the children of that union. But the daughter that Adriana brought with her from Cuba was in fact the natural daughter of Benito's uncle, José María Galdós de Medina. She was born in 1843, the same year as Benito. When José María legally acknowledged her as his heir, the records indicate a birth name of María Josefa Wassinton de Galdós [sic] and that she was "natural de los Estados Unidos de Norte América" (Ortíz-Armengol 85). As Galdós's biographer tells the story, the family in Las Palmas kept Sisita's true parentage, as the illegitimate daughter of Benito's uncle, a close secret (Ortíz-Armengol 101–02). It does not appear that young Benito knew of the family connection, given that at around the age of 16 he began to take an interest in Sisita. A decision was made to have Benito travel to Madrid in 1862 to study law at university, a career toward which the young man did not seem to have a strong inclination, and it appears to have been a strategy to separate the two and prevent a romantic relationship between first cousins. Shortly after Benito Pérez Galdós left the Canary Islands, his cousin Sisita returned to Cuba at the request of her natural father, where she eventually married and died young (Ortíz-Armengol 105). The point of raising this curious skeleton from the Galdós family closet is to illustrate in stark terms not only how Galdós's family tree echoes the complex interrelationships that existed between the metropolis and the colonies but also the ways in which the young author's own identity and his transition from childhood and adolescence to adulthood developed in the context of powerful human, emotional, and economic exchanges between various parts of the Spanish empire.

The decision to send Benito Pérez Galdós to Madrid in 1862, at a moment in which the opposition to Isabel II and the Bourbon monarchy

was beginning to take shape, had a profound effect on the young man's life trajectory. Instead of following in the footsteps of his uncles and brothers, as soldiers, clerics, or, as most often happened in the family, as emigrés to Cuba, Benito began his studies at the Universidad Central in Madrid, later renamed the Universidad Complutense. He was introduced to the city and its residents by Fernando León y Castillo, a Las Palmas classmate who had arrived in Madrid a year earlier.³ From 1863 to 1867, Benito Pérez Galdós found himself increasingly less interested in studying law and more inclined to a career as a writer, most notably in journalism. Ortíz-Armengol has noted the young author's growing interest in journalism and theater even as he became intensely aware of the scores of young men who came to the capital with political ambitions.⁴ A keen social observer, Galdós was sensitive to the political moment in which he found himself, and critics have acknowledged that his own experiences from that moment undeniably found their way eventually into his literary chronicles of that period.⁵

Beyond the author's own youthful and familial experiences with Spanish imperialism, he would have also recognized that the political events of the *Sexenio Democrático* of 1868–74 were not exclusively felt in the metropolis. What occurred in the nation's capital had ripple effects

³ Fernando León y Castillo would go on to have a long career in Spanish politics, eventually serving as Ministro de Ultramar (Minister of Overseas Territories) under the administration of Praxedes Mateo Sagasta in 1881–83. In 1902 he drafted language for a new French–Spanish treaty, eventually signed in 1912, that expanded Spanish-controlled territories in Morocco. The life-long friendship between León y Castillo and Galdós underscores once again the integration of the colonial–metropolitan links of the time as well as the author's close connections to those making policy decisions at the very highest levels of the government.

⁴ See Stephen Gilman, "The Fifth Series of *Episodios nacionales*: Memories of Remembering," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* LXII (1986): 47–52; and Geoffrey Ribbans, "Galdós's Literary Representations of the Interregnum, Reign of Amadeo and the First Republic (1868–1874)," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 63:1 (1986): 1–17. It is worth noting that Ortíz-Armengol refers to an early theatrical piece Galdós wrote in 1864, *Un hombre de provecho*, whose central character is a "politico sin escrúpulos," reflecting, no doubt, some of the political climbers the young university student encountered in the cafés and tertulias in the nation's capital (160–61).

⁵ Ortíz-Armengol notes that the description of Vicente Halconero Anzúrez, the politically engaged and intellectually voracious protagonist in *España trágica*, the second volume in the fifth and final series of *Episodios nacionales*, published in 1909, is a representation of the author himself as a university student in 1869–70 (161–62).

throughout the empire. The dethroning of the Bourbon monarchy not only heightened the general awareness that the nation's imperial status had undergone substantial change but also served as a moment in which Cuban landowners made their first attempt to gain independence from Spain.⁶ The generals who headed the opposition to Isabel II – Juan Bautista Topete, Francisco Serrano and Juan Prim – were all military leaders with extensive experience in the Americas.⁷ Accordingly, any exploration of the political and social consequences of change for peninsular Spain could not help but reflect a concern for the nation's colonial past and present. As a consequence, the degree to which Galdós was able to connect his aesthetic sensibilities to his goal of faithfully representing contemporary Spanish society allows us to examine his work today for glimpses of how that society understood its changing position within the framework of nineteenth-century global politics.

The Formation of a Novelist

Galdós's novelistic practice was, from the very start of his career, deeply rooted in the representation of the society he witnessed on a daily basis. Spanish contemporary society, particularly Spain's nascent middle class,

⁶ Raymond Carr has noted that the Revolution of 1868, which overthrew Isabel II and the Bourbon monarchy, was accompanied by “a loss of commercial confidence and a budgetary crisis [...] and by a cotton crisis, the result of the American Civil War” (299–300). Moreover, Carr observes that the complex political and historical relationship between the United States, Spain, and Cuba with respect to the slave trade and rigid metropolitan control and opposition to reform led to the Ten Years' War of 1868–78 between Spain and Cuba, considered the beginning of the Cuban struggle for independence. Accordingly, the 1868 Glorious Revolution in Spain, and its political and economic effects, were always, from the very beginning, linked to Spanish imperialism.

⁷ Admiral Juan Bautista Topete served in the West Indies and participated in the Spanish–South American War/Chincha Islands War in 1866 when Spain bombarded the port cities of Valparaíso, Chile and Callao, Peru. Francisco Serrano served as Captain-General of Cuba from 1859 to 1862, under the administration of Leopoldo O'Donnell. Juan Prim, the mastermind of the 1868 Revolution, served as Captain-General of Puerto Rico and later led Spain's expeditionary army in Mexico in 1862. Their respective experiences in trying to maintain a degree of Spanish political and economic dominance in the Americas no doubt contributed to their dissatisfaction with Isabel II and with her approach to the colonial project. Galdós would narrate this period of Spanish history when he turned to the fourth and fifth series of *Episodios nacionales*, addressed in Chapter 6.

proved to be an inexhaustible source of material. Moreover, we know that the goal of the author's narrative practice was above all to portray society as it appeared to him. In his essay "Observaciones sobre la novela contemporánea en España" [Observations on the contemporary novel in Spain], which appeared in the *Revista de España* in 1870, just as he was beginning his career, Galdós comments at length on the artistic merit of such a devotion to realism.

Nada de abstracciones, nada de teorías; aquí solo se trata de referir y de expresar, no de desarrollar tesis morales más o menos raras, y empingorotadas; solo se trata de decir lo que somos unos y otros, los buenos y los malos, diciéndolo siempre con arte. Si nos corregimos, bien; si no, el arte ha cumplido su misión, y siempre tendremos delante aquel espejo eterno reflejador y guardador de nuestra fealdad. ("Observaciones" 112)

[No abstractions, no theories; here it is only a matter of referring and expressing, not of developing more or less rare and elevated moral theses; it's just about saying who we are, the good and the bad, always saying it with art. If we correct ourselves, fine; if not, art has fulfilled its mission, and we will always have before us that eternal mirror, a reflection and observer of our ugliness.]

The fact that, after years of journalism, the author turned to the genre of the historical novel during the tumultuous period of 1868–74 suggests that his response to this period of significant social change and confusion involved a powerful need to connect with readers through a shared vision of both Spain's past and its present, with a view to affecting its future. The author's own language when describing his novelistic practice reveals specific attitudes towards the very idea of Spain's past and present, attitudes that involve a sense of national identity that is bound up with the legacies of empire.

In his often cited 1897 address to the Real Academia Española, "La sociedad como materia novelable" [Society as novelistic material], Galdós examines his own approach to writing and his understanding of the role of literature in an age of social change. This somewhat introspective rumination came later in the author's career, but his approach to realism remains much the same as it was in his earlier 1870 essay, and for that reason provides a useful context for examining his early novels. The principal focus of the 1897 essay is social class, but there are other references that allow us to consider the degree to which the change in Spain's imperial fortunes in the nineteenth century played a role in the author's exploration of Spanish

national identity. For instance, Galdós makes a clear comparison between the nation's past and its present.

Examinando las condiciones del medio social en que vivimos como generador de la obra literaria, lo primero que se advierte en la muchedumbre a que pertenecemos, es la relajación de todo principio de unidad. Las grandes y potentes energías de cohesión social no son ya lo que fueron; ni es fácil prever qué fuerzas sustituirán a las pérdidas en la dirección y gobierno de la familia humana. ("La sociedad" 160)

[In examining the conditions of the social environment in which we live as a source of literary work, the first thing one notices in the crowd to which we belong is the relaxation of all principles of unity. The great and powerful energies of social cohesion are not what they once were; nor is it easy to predict that forces will replace the losses in the direction and governance of the human family.]

The author clearly considers Spain to be in a state of transition. The failing forces of social cohesion that he mentions can be interpreted broadly, as references to the nation's bitter political divisions, the uneven advent of modernity in an economic and industrial sense, and certainly the changes in class structure that are so frequently addressed in galdosian fiction.

But equally striking in this statement is the way in which Galdós refers to the existence of a unified and vigorous national past that has been lost. With its references to dissolving unity, a loss of social cohesion and a lack of leadership, his statement evokes echoes of a former greatness that goes beyond contemporary peninsular politics and shifting class identity. His words posit a Spanish past of greater unity and national coherence, and the fact that Galdós presented this address in 1897, on the eve of the Spanish–American War of 1898, we might read as a tacit acknowledgement of consequent changes in Spain's fundamental identity.⁸ Galdós concludes by stating that, although the path to a better future is unclear, it will be

⁸ In *Hacer las Américas* (Madrid: Alianza, 1992), Ángel Bahamonde and José Cayuela show that in the last decade of the nineteenth century many peninsular Spaniards were much more aware of the eventuality of colonial loss than post-1898 expressions of dismay might indicate. They trace the movement of capital, noting that "basta señalar que en la década de los noventa resulta evidente la pérdida de control de los centros económicos de la isla por parte de las viejas familias productores de azúcar y de los comerciantes y hombres de negocios hispano-cubanos" [It is enough to point out that in the decade of the 90s the old sugar-producing families and Hispanic-Cuban merchants and businessmen lost control of the island's economic centers] (60).

the combination of science and poetry that will eventually point the way to a renewed sense of national identity.

Tenemos tan sólo un firme presentimiento de que esas fuerzas han de reaparecer; pero las previsiones de la Ciencia y las adivinaciones de la Poesía no pueden o no saben aún alzar el velo tras el cual se oculta la clave de nuestros futuros destinos. (“La sociedad” 160)

[We have only a firm feeling that these forces must reappear; but the forecasts of Science and the divinations of Poetry can not or do not yet know how to lift the veil behind which the key to our future destinies is hidden.]

From the beginning, Galdós places himself and his audience together in the process, thereby creating a sense of shared community, one that is heightened by the tenuousness of their shared hopes, reduced to little more than a firm intuition that a renewal of the forces of social cohesion will prevent further losses (“pérdidas”). He then employs a classic metaphor to indicate that the way forward to achieving this future is hidden behind the veil of time. But more important is Galdós’s clear articulation of the joint responsibility of Science and Poetry for eventually identifying the successful path to a more positive future for all Spaniards. Science, as an empirical way of understanding the world, can refer to advancements in knowledge and to the positive changes that result when societies employ that knowledge for the betterment of the people. The reference to poetry, however, is more complicated, though no less important. Rather than envisioning the future, Poetry must predict, or prophesize, what is to come. Galdós is saying that we must see literature as a tool whose very literariness, specifically its ability to create images and employ rhetorical language, will help readers perceive a way forward in plotting a social course toward national renewal. This concept becomes crucially important when we think about Galdós’s works from the perspective of their didacticism. Even when Galdós writes about the nation’s historical past, there is always a connection to the social present, a way in which the lessons of the past need to be understood within the context of the present.

In the rest of his address, Galdós focuses on changes in class structure in peninsular Spanish society. He notes the decline of Spain’s aristocracy and the steady advancement of its working class as the two processes have worked together to form the Spanish middle class. There is no doubt about the author’s belief that literature has an important role in the process of reconfiguring society: “No podemos prever hasta dónde llegará la presente descomposición, pero sí puede afirmarse que la literatura narrativa no ha de

perderse porque mueran o se transforman los antiguos organismos sociales” [We cannot foresee how far the present disintegration will go, but it can be affirmed that narrative literature does not have to be lost because the old social organisms die or are transformed] (“La sociedad” 165). The use of the verb “prever,” harkening back to his earlier reference to “previsiones” in the speech, points to the differences between art and science and heightens the sense that the efficacy of literature lies in its ability to lead society into the future. Towards the end of his speech Galdós writes, “Quizás aparezcan formas nuevas, quizás obras de extraordinario poder y belleza, que sirvan de anuncio a los ideales futuros o de despedida a los pasados, como el *Quijote* es el adiós del mundo caballeresco” [Perhaps new forms appear, perhaps works of extraordinary power and beauty, that serve as a sign of future ideals or a farewell to the past, just as the *Quijote* is the farewell to the knightly world] (“La sociedad” 165). The use of the subjunctive in this sentence does not serve to question whether such a literary work would have the power to accomplish its appointed task. Rather, Galdós is pointing out that such works simply have not appeared. From the standpoint of our examination of colonial references, the sentence is evocative in its identification of a need to relinquish that very same past as a necessary step in the difficult and painful process of charting a new future.

Galdós’s call to say farewell to the past would seem to stand at odds with his career-long preoccupation with writing about Spanish history. If we consider his call as one of cathartic engagement, whose purpose is to define and enclose the past so that it can be better understood and transcended, then his works begin to display a definable trajectory, for both himself as a writer and his readers as fellow citizens. I begin with the author’s earliest published narratives – *La sombra*, *La Fontana de Oro*, and *El audaz* – with the express purpose of identifying in these texts the moments when Spain’s colonial history is evoked in the process of shaping a new vision of Spanish national identity.

Galdós’s earliest forays into the novel were composed in the late 1860s and early 1870s. *La sombra*, written in 1866–67, was published in 1871. Though it was written in 1867–68, *La Fontana de Oro* was Galdós’s first published novel in 1870, and *El audaz* soon followed, written and published in 1871. While both *La Fontana de Oro* and *El audaz* are examples of historical fiction, a genre that would define a significant proportion of Galdós’s literary output, the short novel *La sombra* stands out as a somewhat unusual text within Galdós’s *oeuvre* for its inclusion of apparently fantastic elements, a tendency that rarely appears in Galdós’s fiction until his final years as an author in the early twentieth century. *La sombra* tells the tale of a physician who believes he is being tormented by a shadowy figure capable

of moving in and out of a framed painting. The novel presents several levels of narration that allow readers to question the reality of the story being told, and it is a curious piece of fiction in which the author is clearly exploring narrative techniques. *La Fontana de Oro*, on the other hand, is a more straightforward piece of historical fiction that uses third-person omniscient narration to present a story of political intrigue in Madrid during the period of the 1820–23 *Trienio Liberal* [Liberal Triennium] of Fernando VII's reign. *El audaz* is also a historical novel, thus signaling what was to become an unparalleled commitment on the part of the author to the literary genre of historical fiction. *El audaz*, subtitled *Historia de un radical de antaño*, tells the story of a man whose bitter, anti-aristocratic passions lead him to participate in radical conspiracies against Manuel Godoy and the Corte of Carlos IV in the year prior to the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar. Given its literary genre and the time period it portrays, *El audaz* sets the stage for the next phase of the author's literary career with the *Episodios nacionales*, the first volume of which is entitled *Trafalgar*.

Before exploring the ways in which these three texts present aspects of Spanish colonial history, it is worth thinking more deeply about the dates of composition and publication. As mentioned, *La sombra* was Galdós's first novel, composed somewhere between 1866 and 1867. But it did not appear in print until the author had begun to receive acclaim for *La Fontana de Oro*, written a year after *La sombra*, and published two years later as a book by the Imprenta de La Guirnalda in December of 1870.⁹ To devote himself to writing, Galdós received financial support from his sister-in-law, Magdalena Mendoza Tate, who had relocated to Madrid after the death of Galdós's older brother, Domingo, in March of 1870 (Ortíz-Armengol 239).¹⁰ Galdós clearly made the choice to publish *La Fontana de Oro* before *La sombra*. The tense political history described in *La Fontana de Oro* certainly echoed the emotional import of the momentous events around the time of its publication in 1870–71 (i.e. the election of Amadeo de Saboya as king of Spain and the assassination of General Juan Prim before the newly chosen king could travel from Italy to the Spanish capital). After the successful publication of *La Fontana de*

⁹ Ortíz-Armengol identifies at least three positive reviews, the first by the poet and literary critic Gaspar Núñez de Arce in *El Debate* (May 2, 1871), the second by José Alcalá Galiano in *La Revista de España* soon after, and the third by Eugenio de Ochoa in *La Ilustración de Madrid* (September 30, 1871) (254).

¹⁰ It is notable that Galdós's first literary success was made possible by funds from his brother, who accumulated his wealth through involvement in Cuba's colonial slave economy.

Oro Galdós made arrangements with *La Revista de España*, for which he was worked as a journalist, for *La sombra* to appear in installments in early 1871.¹¹ With one novel slowly gaining traction in bookstores and another appearing in one of Madrid's better-known journals, Galdós had the opportunity to establish a name for himself as a writer. By the spring of 1871 he had thrown himself into the composition of *El audaz*, his second historical novel, which began appearing in installments in *La Revista de España* in the summer and fall of 1871 (Hernández Suárez 37). By late 1871, when *El audaz* was issued in book form, advertisements in the newspaper *El Debate* touted it as the work of the author of *La Fontana de Oro*, thus underscoring that Galdós had begun to acquire name recognition for his historical fiction. Unlike *La Fontana de Oro* or *El audaz*, *La sombra* would not appear in book form until 1890. These dates of composition and publication highlight certain aspects of the author's early career. Galdós's initial acclaim as an author derived from his success as a historical novelist, and this likely led him to continue to produce novels in this genre. In addition, as the next section will make clear, Galdós's first narrative, *La sombra*, was neither the first work the author chose to publish nor a text whose literary life the author wished to extend by quickly publishing it in book form. It is hard to know the exact reasons for this, but the short novel's different style, as a curious tale with multiple layers of narration and plot elements that fall into the realm of the literary fantastic, is likely responsible for its curious place in the trajectory of the author's career. Nonetheless, I believe that it can be argued that *La sombra*, as the author's first narrative, plays a unique role in framing the author's engagement with the history of Spanish imperialism.

¹¹ For a detailed examination of Galdós's journalistic affiliations with the *Revista de España*, see Brian Dendle's article, "Albareda, Galdós and the 'Revista de España' (1868–1873)," in *La Revolución de 1868. Historia, Pensamiento, Literatura*, Clara E. Lida and Iris M. Zavala, eds (New York: Las Americas Publishing Company, 1970), 362–77. Dendle explores the political ideology of the journal's founder, José Luis Albareda, labeling him as a conservative liberal. More important, perhaps, is Dendle's examination of the financial support given to the journal from Cuban slaveowners, the journal's call for caution with respect to emancipation of slaves in Cuba, and Galdós's role as an editor when the journal published frequent articles stressing the importance of maintaining Cuba as a colony. Dendle concludes that "Galdós's editorial responsibility for articles supporting repressive Spanish policies in Cuba, and his defense in the *episodios* of a national integrity which in its historical context meant opposition to Cuban separatism, make Galdós an accomplice to policies which were to lead ultimately to the disaster of 1898" (370).

La sombra: A National Psychoanalytic Case Study

The author's first novel, *La sombra* serves as a fitting point of departure for an exploration of Spanish imperialism in Galdós's fiction, though for all intents and purposes it does not appear on the surface to be a text that addresses either Spanish history writ large or Spanish imperialism in particular. *La sombra* is a short work whose incorporation of apparently fantastic elements stands in sharp contrast to the narratives the author undertook for decades following its publication. But the novel's curious presentation of a fractured psyche can be read as an allegory for a nation's attempt to reassess its own history even as it functioned as a cathartic narrative experiment that helped Galdós commit to writing historical fiction. While the novel is unquestionably a work that experiments with concepts of reality and the way in which narrative techniques can affect a reader's and a character's understanding of truth and fiction, its framing, as a psychological case history, offers a strategy for addressing the protagonist's struggle with the past and his relationship to the world.¹²

La sombra employs layers of narration to tell the story of a man considered by his neighbors to be a "loco rematado" [complete madman] (3). An unnamed narrator begins the novel, introducing the reader to a widowed doctor, Don Anselmo, an art collector who behaves somewhat like a mad scientist, conducting unexplained experiments in a laboratory and rarely venturing out into public. The narrator tells the reader that Don Anselmo's mental illness had surfaced years ago, early in his marriage. The source of the doctor's madness, the narrator tells us, is his belief that the mythological figure of Paris has gained the uncanny ability to move beyond

¹² Critics such as Harriet Turner ("Rhetoric in *La sombra*," *Anales galdosianos* VI (1971)); Germán Gullón ("*La sombra*, novela de suspenso y novela fantástica," *Actas del Primer Congreso Internacional de Estudios Galdosianos* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Ediciones del Excmo Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, 1977)); Marcy Schulman ("Ironic Illusion in *La sombra*," *Anales Galdosianos* XVII (1982)); Karen Austin ("Don Anselmo and the Author's Role," *Anales Galdosianos* XVIII (1983)); Thomas Franz ("The Concentrated Metafiction of Galdós's *La sombra*," *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* (1987)); Hazel Gold ("Painting and Representation in Two Nineteenth-Century Novels: Galdós's and Alas's Skeptical Appraisal of Realism," *Hispania* (1998)); Alan Smith ("*La sombra* y otras sombras," in *Brujas, demonios y fantasmas en la literatura fantástica hispánica* (Lleida: Ediciones Universitat de Lleida, 1999)); and Tim McGovern (*Galdós Beyond Realism* (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 2004)) have examined *La sombra* as a text that presents questions about the boundaries between truth and fiction, reality and imagination, and the nature of mimetic representation.

the frame of one of the doctor's classical paintings into the physical world. This supernatural event occurs shortly after Doctor Anselmo's marriage to a beautiful young woman named Elena. Anselmo mentions that the wedding was "repentina" [sudden] and that "no habían precedido esas relaciones íntimas, furtivas, que enlazan las almas moralmente" [they had not anticipated those intimate, furtive relations that morally link souls] (35). The Doctor himself situates his mental breakdown in the days immediately following his wedding: "Nos casamos no muchos días después de habernos conocido; y de aquí creo yo que provinieron todos mis males" [We married not many days after meeting, and I believe this was the source of my misfortunes] (35). Not long after their marriage, Anselmo begins to suspect Elena of infidelity and claims to hear the voice of a man in her room. When he forcefully enters her boudoir he sees a shadowy figure escaping from the balcony who bears a resemblance to the representation of Paris in the painting. Upon checking the work of art, he discovers to his horror that the figure of Paris is absent. His observation serves to both confirm his fear about his wife's infidelity even as it causes the narrator to believe that the doctor has lost touch with reality. The doctor continues his story, noting that the figure of Paris eventually speaks directly to him, threatening to destroy his marriage. Though others in the household apparently do not see the absence of the figure from the painting, the doctor's wife, in-laws, and acquaintances eventually make mention of a certain Alejandro (another name for Paris used in mythology) who often visits the doctor's home and is assumed by all to be one of his close friends. This fantastic situation, of a man who may or may not be real, who may be both Paris and Alexander, and who seems intent on fomenting the doctor's fury and jealousy, which in turn leads Elena to suffer, becomes intolerable. Elena becomes ill, a response to her husband's apparently irrational behavior, which leads to her untimely death and the permanent enmity of her parents. Even her death does not greatly alter the situation. Doctor Anselmo, increasingly perceived as mad by society, isolates himself, and in his conversation with the narrator admits that the figure of Paris still haunts him.

As with any good fantastic tale, there is no final resolution. At the end of the novel don Anselmo declines to say anything more, and the unnamed narrator reclaims the first-person role in the text. He notes that upon leaving the doctor's house he neglected to ask an important question about whether "la figura de Paris había vuelto a presentarse en el lienzo, como parecía natural" [the figure of Paris has appeared again on the canvas, as it seemed natural] (123). The narrator tells the reader that he momentarily considers returning to the house to actually check the classical painting to assure himself that the figure of Paris was indeed visible, but ironically decides that

“el caso no merecía la pena, porque a mí no importa mucho saberlo, ni al lector tampoco” [the case was not worth it, because it doesn’t matter much to me to know, nor to the reader] (124). While this statement ironically leads the reader to believe that in fact it would matter very much to know whether the figure of Paris was still within the frame of the painting, it becomes clear that nothing about the painting would change the precarious imbalance of the narrative. Neither the narrator nor the reader would, in fact, gain anything by an examination of the painting. Thus, *La sombra* ends by keeping the entire story of personal jealousy and madness within the tenuous balance between truth and fiction, reality and fantasy, that defines the literary fantastic.

La sombra’s publishing history no doubt has influenced its place in Galdós scholarship. Appearing originally in serial form in *La Revista de España* in January and February, 1871, *La sombra* was not made available again to readers until 1890, when it was published in collection with three of Galdós’s short stories.¹³ The collection was reprinted in 1909, though the short novel was clearly not considered one of the author’s best works. In a 1910 interview, for example, Galdós told a journalist that the short novel “no vale nada” [it’s not worth anything] (“Bachiller Corchuelo” 49). Perhaps because the short novel was not a text that the author valued or made readily available to his reading public, perhaps because of its use of fantastical elements, a structural feature out of place with the author’s work through the better part of the nineteenth century, *La sombra* failed to garner much scholarly attention until 1964, when Rodolfo Cardona edited a version for students of Spanish language.

Building on Rodolfo Cardona’s introduction to his edition, a number of scholars have undertaken analyses of this work of narrative fiction. Many consider *La sombra* a work of early narrative experimentation. José

¹³ In addition to *La sombra*, the collection includes “Theros” (1877), “Celín” (1887), and “Tropiquillos” (1884). The short novel and the three stories all contain fantastical or dreamlike aspects, a narrative similarity used to justify the collection. Notably, “Tropiquillos” also contains references to Spanish imperialism, in its presentation of a story of an ill and aging *indiano* who returns to find his childhood home in ruins. He is able to find new energy and health among his countrymen by growing grapes and making wine, but at the story’s end he discovers that the regenerative experience has only been the products of an alcohol-induced dream. Originally titled “Fantasía de otoño,” the story was first published in the Buenos Aires newspaper *La prensa* on December 12, 1884 and reprinted in Spain in *El Imparcial* only on December 18, 1893. In its tale of an aging *indiano* returning to find his home in ruins, “Tropiquillos” contains echoes of Clarín’s melancholy short story, *Boroña*, which also depicts colonial experience as highly detrimental to the Spanish people.

Montesinos, for example, has judged the novel interesting for what it reveals about “la iniciación de Galdós en la novela” [Galdós’s initiation into the novel] (I 50). Most critical responses address the short novel’s use of multiple layers of narration or the tale’s incorporation of the fantastic into its exploration of the relationship between reality and imagination.¹⁴ Critics also consider *La sombra* an example of the author’s growing awareness of the complexity of narrative and point to the fact that some of the fantastic elements in *La sombra* would reappear again in Galdós’s mature fiction of the early twentieth century, particularly in texts such as *El caballero encantado* (1909), the final volumes of the fifth series of *Episodios nacionales* (1910–12), and *La razón de la sinrazón* (1915) (McGovern, *Galdós Beyond Realism* 41; Franz 51; Montesinos I 47).

Rodolfo Cardona was perhaps the first to argue for a psychological reading of *La sombra*. He notes that, although Galdós wrote *La sombra* before the theories of Freud began to change society’s understanding of mental illness, his portrayal of the character of Don Anselmo is deeply psychological in nature.

Galdós’ interest in exploring and fathoming the human soul, his interest in presenting the “mysterious” forces that govern a man’s behavior and the strange forms that these forces assume, an interest which he showed from the very beginning of his career as a novelist, is what made him shift his eyes from the “real” to the “fantastic.” In doing so he came to portray, intuitively, several cases in which something very close to a psychoanalytic process, in the pure Freudian sense, is presented with an amazing fullness of detail. (xviii)

Don Anselmo’s story, then, becomes a type of case study “aimed at explaining the delusions of a psychotic individual” (Cardona xix). Others have taken this perspective and developed it further. Harriet Turner, for example, has argued that the novel addresses “the ambiguous nature of sickness and sanity” (“Rhetoric in *La sombra*” 19), while Rafael Bosch attributes to Galdós a particularly scientific approach to psychopathology that transcends Freudian

¹⁴ See Ricardo Gullón (“Lo maravilloso en Galdós,” *Ínsula* (1955)); José Monleón (“*La sombra* y la incertidumbre fantástica,” *Anales Galdosianos* XXIV (1989)); and Elizabeth Smith Rousselle (“Jealousy as Menacing Narrative and Emotional Fantasy in Galdós’s *La sombra*,” *Letras peninsulares* (2001–02)) for an analysis of Galdós’s employment of fantastic elements in the novella. Sylvia López (“The Gothic Tradition in Galdós’s *La sombra*,” *Hispania* (1998)) and Leigh Mercer (“Shadowing the Gothic: Rosalía de Castro’s *La hija del mar* and Benito Pérez Galdós’s *La sombra*,” *Decimonónica* (2012)) categorize *La sombra* as a Gothic tale.

psychology (35). Paciencia Ontañón has focused on the relationship between Anselmo and Paris as an example of a split personality (“El desdoblamiento de la personalidad en *La sombra* de Galdós”). The text of the story is filled with references to the central character’s mental illness and to discovering what might have been its cause.

From the very beginning of the tale the narrator explains that he intends to present Anselmo in his own words in order that readers might judge him appropriately: “Él mismo nos revelará en el curso de esta narración una porción de cosas, que serán otros tantos datos útiles para juzgarle como merezca” [He himself will reveal to us in the course of this narrative a lot of things, that will be useful data to judge him as he deserves] (4). The goal of the conversations with Don Anselmo is unambiguous: the narrator hopes to understand the cause of the man’s mental imbalance.

Tal vez conociendo algunos detalles de su vida, y prestando atención al incidente que él mismo nos va a referir, sepamos cómo llegó aquel entendimiento a tal grado de desbarajuste, y cómo se aposentaron en su cerebro tantas y tan locas imágenes, mezcladas de discretos juicios, tanta necedad unida a grandes concepciones, que parecen fruto del más sano y cultivado entendimiento. (14)

[Perhaps by learning some details of his life, and paying attention to the incident that he himself will refer to us, we might know how that perception came to such a degree of disorder, and how so many crazy images mixed with discrete judgments, so much foolishness joined with grand ideas that appear to be the fruit of the healthiest and most refined understanding, all became lodged in his brain.]

The narrative takes on what Cardona, Bosch, and Ontañón have identified as an exploration of a character’s mental illness, making the short novel a psychological case history.

But what does *La sombra* have to do with Spanish imperialism? What connections might Galdós’s earliest novel have with the author’s historical explorations of Spanish national identity in the nineteenth century? To that end it is worth looking at specific aspects of the novel, particularly the descriptions of Don Anselmo’s home, from a slightly more allegorical perspective. Nearly every scholar who has written about *La sombra* notes the importance of the descriptions of physical space in the text.¹⁵ Chapter

¹⁵ Alan Smith has noted that “este palacio describe la condición mental de Anselmo” (229). Leigh Mercer has described the palace as “strikingly Gothic” (41), and Tim McGovern notes that the physical settings in *La sombra* are “enchanted” (38).

One contains an extended description of the objects that fill the doctor's laboratory, where the conversations between the narrator and the doctor take place. It is easy to pass over the details of this initial description of the physical setting, but once highlighted they reveal a curious background for the conversations that will take place. The narrator mentions a human skeleton, partially dissected animals, a suit of armor, firearms, a figure of Christ on the cross, spurs, a leather saddle, dried pieces of coral and mother-of-pearl, and even a finely wrought Spanish guitar (6). Together these objects emphasize scientific and cultural exploration, with many of them manifesting connections to the cultural history of both the Iberian Peninsula (the suit of armor, references to Catholicism) and Spain's colonial exploration of other regions of the globe (the dissected specimens, coral, mother-of-pearl). Of particular interest is the description of the Spanish guitar: "Estaba abollada, y una sola cuerda, testigo mudo hoy de su anterior grandeza, podía dar a la actual generación un eco de las pasadas armonías" [It was dented, and a single string, a silent witness today of its former greatness, could give to the current generation an echo of past harmonies] (6). This description, given that it comes so early in the text and has captured the attention of the narrator, merits greater scrutiny. The guitar is used to evoke a once great past, now irretrievably lost, that might offer the reader a glimpse of a different and better time characterized by harmony (6). The description of the one remaining guitar string, "una sola cuerda," becomes a polyvalent reference to both the past production of harmonious musical notes and the possibility of a sane and trustworthy source of information. Indeed, at the moment in which Doctor Anselmo begins his narration he takes one finger and plucks at the remaining guitar string, filling the laboratory with a sound that begins to animate, for the interviewer, all the objects that have heretofore lain lifeless in the Doctor's laboratory (8).

These references certainly raise the spectre of Spain's past. But is it too much to take the narrative's reference to seemingly unconnected objects and weave from them a story of reference to Spanish imperialism? Many readers of *La sombra* have recognized literary references to Cervantes as well as historical undercurrents to the story of Don Anselmo. Francisco Ynduráin, for example, compares *La sombra* to Cervantes's "El coloquio de los perros" (283), and Marcy Schulman, in examining *La sombra* as "a carefully conceived and controlled exercise in irony" (34), ultimately argues that "Similar to the members of the Generation of 1898, Galdós evokes the *Quijote*, as if to seek solace and guidance for a weak and saddened nation" (38). Elizabeth Smith Rousselle has noted that "the informed twenty-first century reader cannot understand why Galdós chose to write *La Sombra* as

his first novel in an atmosphere of literary production defined as a recorder of Spanish national identity,” adding that “At first reading *La Sombra* does not reflect Spanish history but only the profile of a deranged savant controlled by jealousy” (381). She eventually comes to the conclusion that Anselmo’s jealousy serves as a metaphor for Spain “as a country caught in the prison of externalization,” which leaves it unable to embrace “the European trend of individual emotional expression through romanticism” (387).

Joaquín Casaldüero is perhaps the one critic most open about the novel’s connections with Spanish history, beginning with the description of the doctor’s laboratory.

La habitación de Anselmo está llena de cosas. Cuarto pintoresco de un químico-alquimista del siglo XIX ... Estos objetos que se destacan no tienen una función pintoresca sino alegórico-moral, además en la obra galdosiana adquirirán un valor de símbolos. (“La sombra” 33)

[Anselmo’s room is full of things. A quaint room of a chemist-alchemist of the nineteenth century ... These objects that stand out don’t have a picturesque function but rather an allegorical-moral one, and in this galdosian work they will acquire symbolic value.]

He notes the reference to a “reloj parado desde hace cincuenta años” [a clock that stopped 50 years ago] (*Vida y obra* 6), which he considers to be “el indicador del paro de tiempo, del estancamiento de la historia de España” [the indicator of stopped time, of the stagnation of Spanish history] (“La sombra” 33–34).¹⁶ Moreover, while the richness of objects in Anselmo’s palace “produce una impresión de pura fantasía que Galdós subraya” [produces an impression of pure fantasy that Galdós emphasizes], Casaldüero adds that “tanta inverosimilitud cobra realidad al equipararse el palacio a España” [so much implausibility becomes reality when the palace is equated to Spain] (“La sombra” 34). He agrees with Cardona’s psychological reading of the novel, noting that “Es claro que Cardona tiene razón al estudiar el elemento psiquiátrico” [It’s clear that Cardona is right to study the psychiatric element] given that “Galdós se acerca a la historia de España como si fuera en caso patológico” [Galdós approaches the history of Spain as if it was a pathological case] (“La sombra” 35).

¹⁶ If we consider that Galdós is writing this work in 1868, the reference to 50 years prior places us around 1818, a date that can be linked as easily to Fernando VII’s absolutist rule as to the rise of the Latin American independence movements leading to the loss of the American territories.

He cites Anselmo's comment about his illness – “en cincuenta años me ha hecho vivir trescientos” [in 50 years I have been obliged to live 300] (“La sombra” 35) – noting that the reference would place Anselmo in the sixteenth century, in Hapsburg Spain, at the height of the country's imperial expansion. Casaldueiro is unequivocal in this contextualization, arguing that, while Elena represents the Spanish people, “Anselmo podrá encarnar la España institucional, filipina, mientras Paris personificará el espíritu creador de Carlos V” [Anselmo can embody the institutional Spain of Philip, while Paris can personify the creative spirit of Carlos V] (“La sombra” 37). Taken together, these scholars' responses cause us to pause and reconsider *La sombra*. No longer does it seem to be a text whose only function is to provide the nascent novelist with the experience of testing the boundaries of realism and fantasy. These critical comments serve to emphasize that the text of *La sombra* is densely populated by coded references. For some, Galdós's references are to literary history or, more strictly, metropolitan history. But I would argue that Casaldueiro is on to something in his reading of the short novel as containing subtle historical allegories. Rather than connect those references more specifically to Carlos V and Philip II, as Casaldueiro does, I think it is more appropriate to read these allegorical elements as coded indicators of Spain's history of conquest, of its claims to greatness, and ultimately of its imperial past. The phrase equating Anselmo's last 50 years with a 300-year span can be read allegorically as a reference to the extensive history of the Spanish empire as well as the half century between the losses of the metropolis's American empire and the writing of the novel, thus emphasizing the possibility that Anselmo's life is one long introspective engagement with imperial loss.

Unquestionably *La sombra* is a novel of narrative exploration for the author, and in this sense the critics are absolutely correct. But if we read the story of Don Anselmo as a historical moral allegory, as a story of a nation dramatically and negatively impacted by its past, then the role of the narrator, as an individual who wants to make sense of that past, who helps the patient return to the moment of trauma in order to understand its effects and to begin a process of healing, *La sombra* gains enormous importance as a point of departure for Galdós. It is the text's portrayal of a psychological case history – of a narrator who claims the role of analyst and uses a form of talk therapy to help a mentally unbalanced patient find the origin of his illness – that *La sombra* has much to tell us about the author's literary trajectory. This short novel is not a critical work of Galdosian fiction, but rather a symptom of what the author was considering in his own mind. We should read *La sombra* as a text that signals the author's next steps. From the author's perspective, it is a short text that

“no vale nada” [is worth nothing] precisely because it serves as a moment in which the author is working through his own approach to writing, not only from a structural point of view but also from a more allegorical and moral perspective. As a psychological case history, *La sombra* is a narrative that allows Galdós to circle around the idea of returning to a particular moment of trauma in order to facilitate a process of psychic healing. From the perspective of Spanish history, the short novel points to the need to return to a moment in the nation’s past to understand how and why it has come to its current moment of political fragmentation. For that reason, the author’s subsequent steps into the world of historical fiction become that much more comprehensible. Having worked through the psychic aspects of his struggles to become an author, Galdós can move beyond *La sombra* to do what now needs to be done: to examine those moments in Spanish history that have placed the nation on the path that would eventually lead to the dethronement of the Bourbon monarchy and the establishment of Spain’s first Republic. Even more important, when Galdós turns to his first two works of historical fiction, *La Fontana de Oro* and *El audaz*, he feels compelled to explore two periods of Spanish history that put into play the events that would result in the permanent diminishment of the Spanish empire. In this way *La sombra* can be read as a critical point of departure for the author as a writer. It was a narrative that helped him understand that what he and his readers needed to do, in order to understand Spain’s present, was to return to its past.

Probing Spanish History: *La Fontana de Oro*

While *La sombra* is a work that can be read as a fantastic tale, a psychological case history, and even a meta-commentary on the act of writing itself, Galdós’s first work of historical fiction, *La Fontana de Oro*, is much more grounded in traditional approaches to narrative.¹⁷ The novel is firmly set within a defined historical framework, specifically the years of the *Trienio Liberal* of 1820–23 in Madrid. Despite its somewhat traditional

¹⁷ Critical analyses of *La Fontana de Oro* often focus on the degree of historical detail in the novel. See, for example, Stephen Gilman’s essays: “History as News in *La Fontana de Oro*” (*Estudios literarios de hispanistas norteamericanos dedicados a Helmut Hatzfeld con motivo de su 80 aniversario*, Josep M. Sola-Solé, Alessandro Crisfulli, and Bruno Damiani, eds. Barcelona: Hispam, 1975) and “*La Fontana de Oro*: Historical Fable or Historical Prophecy” (*Les Cultures iberiques en devenir: essais pulies en homage a la memoire de Marcel Bataillon, 1895–1977*. Paris: Fondation Singer-Polignac, 1979).

use of omniscient narration and its focus on historical accuracy, the novel presents images of empire that are deeply evocative. In its attempt to portray the nature of the political struggles of Spain's liberal politicians within the hastily established and fragile constitutional monarchy of Fernando VII, the novel employs particular references to Spain's past to demonstrate that the imperial vision of national identity associated with the *ancién regime* has ceased to be viable. Spain's imperial history is reduced in the text to a series of physical artifacts that were once evidence of wealth and power but are now worthless, crowded into dark corners and covered with dust. These references illustrate the consequences of clinging to a past that no longer has relevance and emphasize the necessity of change. The novel foregrounds this need for change in the country's political arena, between liberalism and absolutism, but I would argue that in many of the novel's details it is Spanish imperialism that lies at the heart of the nation's turbulent contemporary history. Behind the metropolitan framework of the political struggles during the *Tienio Liberal* is a powerful history of empire that continues to affect and to frame the perspectives of the nation's citizens.

It is also worth noting that Galdós himself, in his short prologue to the first edition of *La Fontana de Oro* in 1870, made clear his belief that the historical events at the start of the nineteenth century had real implications for his own time, particularly with respect to the Revolution of 1868.

Los hechos históricos o novelescos contados en este libro se refieren a unos de los períodos de turbación política y social más graves e interesantes en la gran época de reorganización que principió en 1812 y no parece próxima a terminar todavía. Mucho después de escrito este libro, pues solo sus últimas páginas son posteriores a la Revolución de Septiembre, me ha parecido de alguna oportunidad en los días que atravesamos, por la relación que pudiera encontrarse entre muchos sucesos aquí referidos y algo de lo que aquí pasa; relación nacida, sin duda, de la semejanza que la crisis actual tiene con el memorable período de 1820–1823. Esta es la principal de las razones que me han inducido a publicarlo. (7)

[The historical or fictional deeds told in this book refer to some of the most serious and interesting periods of political and social turmoil in the great period of reorganization that began in 1812 and does not seem close to finishing yet. Long after writing this book, because only its last pages were written after the September Revolution, it has seemed to me to be useful in the days that we are going through, because of the connection that could be found between the events referred to in the book and what is happening here; a connection born, no doubt, from

the similarity that the current crisis has with the memorable period of 1820–1823. This is the main reason that induced me to publish it.]

Implicit in this direct connection between early nineteenth-century Spanish history and the author's own day is a recognition that the issues facing the nation at the start of the century had not substantially changed in nature. One of those issues was, most certainly, the desire to establish a better form of representative government, which began with the 1812 Constitution of Cádiz and continued with the Revolution of 1868. But implicit is also the issue of the nation's standing as an empire. The first wave of Latin American independence occurring between 1808 and 1826 finds its counterpart in a second wave of colonial struggles for independence begun in the 1860s, most notably with the Ten Years' War in Cuba from 1868 to 1878. *La Fontana de Oro* is, in my view, a novel in which Galdós is also addressing multiple moments of national struggle, past and present, all of which address aspects of Spanish imperialism.

Using the generic framework of the historical novel – a personal fictional story placed within a specific historical context – *La Fontana de Oro* tells the story of a young man and woman, Lázaro and Clara, who meet, fall in love, and then struggle to find happiness within a tumultuous period of history that threatens their hope for a future together. The villain in the story is don Elías Orejón, Lázaro's uncle and Clara's guardian, who is a fervent supporter of Fernando VII and a dedicated mortal enemy of both political liberalism and its adherents. The novel presents Lázaro's and Clara's story amidst the backdrop of a critical three-year period in early nineteenth-century Spanish history, when liberal-minded aristocrats and representatives of the military rose up against Fernando VII and obliged him to agree to rule within the framework of a constitutional monarchy, using the Constitution of 1812 as the model for government. The *Trienio Liberal* of 1820–23 came to an end when French forces, responding to what was seen as an increased radicalism on the part of political liberals in Spain, marched into Spain, effectively overthrew the constitutional government, and abetted Fernando VII in the re-establishment of political absolutism for a span of ten years, “la década ominosa” [the ominous decade], which came to an end only with the king's death in 1833. Critics such as Amado Alonso have argued that *La Fontana de Oro* is deeply symbolic, arguing that Clara represents “la clara e inerme España aherrojada por la educación que se llamaba oscurantista” [the clear and defenseless Spain held back by obscurantism] while Lázaro represents “La España resucitada, ansiosa de completarse con la otra media España” [A resurrected Spain, anxious to join with the other half of Spain] (208). Indeed, *La Fontana de Oro*, a novel that fits perfectly within the framework

of Sommer's concept of a foundational fiction, exemplifies Galdós's narrative technique of marrying fictional plot to allegory.¹⁸ The title of the novel is a reference to one of the best-known meeting places in Madrid for political groups, famous for being the site of impassioned oratory in favor of political liberalism, but, as I hope to explain, it also contains within it a particular allegorical meaning related to empire.

The plot of the novel is not overly complicated. Don Elías is fanatical in his hatred of the political liberals who have claimed governmental power in order to impede Fernando VII's absolutism. In his youth, don Elías served as a butler for an aristocratic family with a long history, the Porreños, until the Peninsular War, during which he fought the French alongside the Spanish guerrilla fighter, Juan Martín El Empecinado. In narrating his past, the novel explains how, after one of his fellow fighters died in battle, don Elías took on the guardianship of the man's daughter, Clara. It is clear that his conservative political ideology and rigid Catholicism result in a life of privation and solitude for the young woman. When the novel opens, don Elías, known by his nickname Coletilla, is covertly stirring up the *exaltado* faction of the political liberals in the hopes that they will engage in street unrest. His ultimate goal is to provoke a conservative crackdown that will result in the fall of the constitutional monarchy imposed upon the king. Owing to his conspiratorial role, Coletilla becomes a target of the radical liberal fringe and, when forced to abandon his home, he turns to the Porreño family. Despite their former wealth and nobility, the Porreños have fallen on hard times. Only three members of the family remain: doña María de la Paz Jesús, the sister of the last Marqués; doña Salomé, the daughter of the Marqués; and doña Paulita, the daughter of the Marqués's brother. All three women are described as spinsters, unable to bear the next generation of Porreños. All three share with don Elías his conservative ideology and his strict Catholic beliefs, and Clara soon becomes as much a victim of their oppression as of that of her guardian. When don Elías's nephew,

¹⁸ Fredric Jameson has pointed out this unique aspect of Galdós's writing as different from that of his British and French contemporaries: "What is important to stress is not merely the wit of the analogy as Galdós uses it, but also its optional nature: we can use it to convert the entire situation of the novel into an allegorical commentary on the destiny of Spain, but we are also free to reverse its priorities and to read the political analogy as metaphorical decoration for the individual drama, and as a mere figural intensification of this last" ("Third-World Literature" 79). Though he is referencing the author's well-known realist novel, *Fortunata y Jacinta*, it is evident that the technique extends into nearly all of the author's fiction.

Lázaro, a young and somewhat bumbling political novice, enters the novel, the fictional component of the narrative moves to the fore. At first Lázaro accepts his uncle's extreme political views, but he begins to question them over time, eventually recognizing in both his uncle and the Porreño women the cruelty of their rigid belief systems and their unjust treatment of Clara, with whom he has fallen in love. Don Elías is so fanatical in his political beliefs that he is willing to sacrifice his own nephew. When Lázaro finally realizes the nature of his uncle's plans, he is able to alert the representatives of the liberal cause, embodied in the figure of the young military officer Bozmediano, who in turn saves the young couple from harm in the nick of time and helps thwart the conspiracy.¹⁹

Unquestionably *La Fontana de Oro* is a historical novel focused primarily on the struggle between conservative and liberal political ideologies. This is a central aspect of Galdós's other fictions set within the period of Fernando VII's reign, which include *El audaz* and the second series of *Episodios nacionales*. But woven into Galdós's narrative in *La Fontana de Oro* are other aspects of Spain's *ancién regime*. Galdós's portrait of Spain's past and present also incorporates elements of Spain's imperial history, particularly in his descriptive evocation of the Porreño women and their home. The three Porreños – Paz, Salomé, and Paulita – live isolated from the rest of the world amidst their religious fervor and the decayed trappings of the family's former aristocratic greatness. These women, who have been given absolute authority over Clara, represent the social forces of the past, which are in many ways more corrosive and

¹⁹ It is important to note that Galdós's original ending of the novel, for editions published between 1871 and 1883, was dramatically different. In this original ending, don Elías discovers Lázaro and Clara attempting to flee the city, and he murders his nephew. Clara, heartbroken, dies several days later. In the 1885 edition and later, however, Galdós portrays Lázaro and Clara as having escaped from Madrid. They eventually marry and raise a family far from the political tumult of the nation's capital. See Joaquín Gimeno Casalduero's article "Los dos enlaces de *La Fontana de Oro*: origen y significado" (1976). Gimeno Casalduero argues that Galdós's original ending reflected a combination of the author's deep pessimism with regards to the hopes for political liberalism after the assassination of General Juan Prim in December, 1870, the same month in which *La Fontana de Oro* was first published, and his desire to more closely align the events of the novel to the historical reality of the return to political absolutism in 1823 (62). For other critical analyses of the novel's dual endings see both Linda Willem, "The Narrative Premise of the Dual Ending to Galdós's *La Fontana de Oro*" (*Romance Notes* 28:1 (1987)) and Florian Smieja's "An Alternative Ending of *La Fontana de Oro*" (*Modern Language Review* 61 (1966)).

more difficult to counter than the political machinations of Don Elías. The negative consequences of their grotesquely exaggerated piety and moral rigidity are highlighted in their particular brand of cruelty toward Clara, whom they unjustly accuse of moral laxity, a charge that leads even Lázaro at one point to doubt her virtue. The novel unambiguously places their actions and those of Don Elías in a negative light, thus indicating for the reader that their beliefs can no longer lay claim to legitimacy in this new century. In addition to being figures who represent the political and social manifestations of the *ancien régime*, the Porreños also serve as a commentary on Spain's imperial history. The Catholic piety claimed by the Porreños, which does not translate into their actions, mirrors the Spanish imperial identity that dominated Spanish history until the early nineteenth century.²⁰ By placing its references to empire almost exclusively into the description of the Porreños and their ancestors, the novel indicates that the very concept of Spain as an empire should be situated in the past and not the country's present or future. By linking Spain's imperial identity with religious, political, and social concepts that have lost their legitimacy, the novel argues for a recrafting of Spanish national identity that no longer references colonial history.

The historical reality of Spanish colonialism is referenced only once in the novel, when Fernando VII, upon learning of Lázaro's initial participation in the realist conspiracy, tells don Elías that he is willing to award the young man with the position of "consejero de Intendencia de Filipinas" [advisor in the Logistics Office of the Philippines] (362). But the most telling references to empire are profoundly allegorical in nature and almost entirely linked to the description of the material objects that clutter the Porreño home. Forced by financial necessity to move out of the family's former palace, the three surviving members of the Porreño family – aunt, daughter, and niece of the last Marqués de Porreño – have moved the family's generations of belongings into a much smaller home on the Calle Belen. The home becomes a cage both for them and for Clara, on whom the

²⁰ In *Lords of All the World*, Anthony Pagden labels this sense of Spanish imperial identity as *Monarchia Universalis*, and notes that "[t]he commitment to a programme of evangelization by the Spaniards, whose sovereign during the period of greatest overseas expansion also bore the title of Holy Roman Emperor, was, in a sense, inescapable" (31), adding that "[e]xcept for brief periods during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this close relationship between Church and State both shaped the government in America and helped to sustain the ideological presence of the crown as the new colonies slowly developed cultural identities and political aspirations of their own" (33).

Porreños intend to inflict their own distinct brand of moral and religious education.²¹

Because they remain situated within the geographical limits of what was once the Madrid of the Hapsburgs, surrounded by objects that testify to the family's aristocratic past, the Porreño women are able to maintain their carefully maintained fiction of former glory. Critics have recognized the allegorical aspects of the house, described as crammed full of old furniture, portraits, and other relics from the family's former palatial home.

The physical and historical nation appears as the clearly allegorical Porreño house. As is remarked by both Casaldueiro and Amado Alonso, this antiquated museum of glory in decline with its perforated religious and ancestral paintings, its broken down furniture irregularly distributed through dusty chambers, and its stopped clock (reminiscent of that of Miss Faversham in *Great Expectations*) is all Spaniards have left to live in and live with. It is a dwelling "venido a menos" inhabited by values "venidos a menos." (Gilman, "History as News" 412)

What is missing from previous analyses, however, is the framing of this sense of former greatness within the context of Spanish imperialism. The majority of the novel's references to Spain's imperial history are linked to the objects in the home, most notably the portraits of each successive Marqués de Porreño. The novel tells us, for example, that the first Marqués de Porreño lost his life in Andalucía, fighting alongside Alfonso VIII of Castille, who is remembered for his role in the thirteenth-century Battle of Navas de Tolosa against the Almohads (139). By connecting the Porreño lineage with what is considered by historians to be the turning point for Christian forces in the reconquest of the Spanish peninsula, the novel marks the family as central actors from the earliest days of the forging of a Spanish national identity. Each successive Marqués is connected to the country's history of conquest and expansion. The novel contains a detailed description of the various portraits of 15 generations of Porreño nobility,

²¹ Although they are able to enter the home of the Porreños, neither Lázaro nor Bozmediano is ultimately able to free Clara, thus metaphorically signaling that the cultural aspects of the nation's past will be much more difficult to dislodge than its political manifestations. To underscore the links between the political and sociocultural forms of the *ancien régime* and to illustrate the power of the latter over the former, when Don Elías's political conspiracy reaches its climax it is the Porreños themselves who cruelly and unfairly expel Clara from their home for perceived violations of their moral order, placing her in real danger as an unaccompanied woman on the streets of the urban capital.

ranging from the time of Philip III to the late eighteenth century; and all of them are described as “sucios, corroídos y cubiertos con ese polvo clásico que tanto aman los anticuarios” [dirty, corroded and covered with that classic dust that antiquarians love so much] (140). In addition to the portraits, the description of the house includes reference to a number of objects with a strong connection to Spanish imperial history. There are “dibujos chinoscos” [Chinese drawings] given to the sixth Marqués de Porreño, brought back from an expedition to India in 1548. There are “vasos mejicanos ... traídos del Perú por el séptimo Porreño” [Mexican cups ... brought from Peru by the seventh Porreño] in 1603 and saved from destruction in 1632 by the eighth Marqués, who served as “consejero de Indias” [Counselor of the Indies] to Philip IV (140). There is even a leather chair from the palace of Carlos II, which is described in the text as a “testigo mudo del pasado de tres siglos” [silent witness to the last three centuries] (141). The effect of these treasures from the past is distinctly negative: “En las habitaciones donde dormían, comían y trabajaban, las tres damas, apenas era posible andar a causa de los muebles seculares con que estaban ocupadas” [In the rooms where the three ladies slept, ate, and worked it was hardly possible to walk on account of the centuries-old furniture that filled them] (140). As metaphors for the nation’s colonial past, these objects restrict natural movement, essentially forcing the women to move through their living space with a decreasing range of motion. Even more important, these objects are no longer useful; the text mentions “arcones” [chests] that are empty, “roperos sin ropa, jaulas sin pájaros” [closets without clothing, birdcages without birds], and, most clear in its allegorical meaning, a clock from the period of Carlos II that has stopped at midnight on December 31, 1800, refusing to enter the nineteenth century (141).

The allegory of the Porreño household needs to be read in a unique imperial context. It is not reducible to the binary of liberalism versus absolutism, which is what drives the fanaticism of don Elías. As evidence of this, the novel is rather explicit in its description of the political ideas of both the last Marqués de Porreño and his brother. The Marqués, rather than being a supporter of Fernando VII, “tuvo la desdicha de sostener a Godoy en la conspiración de Aranjuez, y caído Carlos IV, el príncipe heredero no perdonó medio de hacerle daño” [had the misfortune of supporting Godoy in the conspiracy of Aranjuez, and once Carlos IV had fallen, the inheriting prince did not pardon those who had done him harm] (135). Moreover, his brother Carlos is described as having abandoned Spain altogether as an *afrancesado*, serving in the armies of the Emperor Napoleón only to die in Prague “al volver de la compañía de Rusia” [upon returning from the Russian campaign] (136). Perhaps most telling is the fact that

this noble family's end is explicitly connected to Spanish imperial history. The novel tells readers that "El hijo varón del marqués de Porreño había muerto en el viaje, navegando hacia América" [The son of the Marqués of Porreño had died while traveling, on his way to America] (136). The ages of the Marqués's sister and his surviving daughter allow us to situate the end of the male line of Porreños at the turn of the century, emphasizing its importance as the marker between Spain's imperial past and the start of a period that, if not entirely post-colonial, is certainly a period of second empire. Additionally, because their ages place them beyond the standard range of child-bearing years, María de la Paz, Salomé, and Paula represent a Spanish past that has no viability for the future.

This point is emphasized yet once more, when, at the end of the novel, Paula is determined to claim independence by abandoning her former religious fervor and escaping with Lázaro, unaware of the fact that his affections lie with the younger, more passive, and apparently more feminine Clara. Believing that her physical appearance is not enough to attract Lázaro, Paula tempts him with a box of old coins that she has found in a hidden compartment of one of the family's old pieces of furniture. The sudden appearance of these "monedas de oro" [gold coins] late in the novel, described as *dobloones* [doubloons] and "onzas muy antiguas" [old gold coins], constitutes a powerful evocation of the former economic power of Spanish imperialism (379, 381). Paula offers herself as Lázaro's wife and indicates her intention to share with him this remnant of the empire's imperial past as a means of forging a new life beyond the "sepulcro" [tomb] of the Porreño home (380). Lázaro's horrified response – "¡Imposible, imposible!" [Impossible! Impossible!] (379) – leads her to collapse, and, as she falls, the coins scatter across the floor. On a literal level Lázaro's rejection reflects his love for Clara. But at a metaphorical level his words indicate that the Porreños and what they represent have no currency in contemporary Spanish society. To emphasize the narrative's implicit rejection of empire and to underscore the cultural damage that an imperial vision of national identity entails, the novel then presents the sudden arrival of Paz and Salomé, "como dos espectros" [like two ghosts] who begin a vicious fight over the coins, paying no attention to a prostrate and unconscious Paula (381).

It is worth noting that, in the process of trying to convince Lázaro to run away with her, Paula claims to have recognized "la esterilidad" [the sterility] of her religious fervor (376), arguing instead that perfection can be found in "la vida doméstica con todos los deberes, todos los goces, todos los dolores que lleva en sí la familia" [the domestic life with all the duties, all the joys, all the pain that comes with family] (376). The irony of course is

that this is exactly what Lázaro and Clara attempt to create for themselves in Galdós's second ending of the novel. The couple flee the capital in order to return to a quiet rural life within a smaller sphere of influence. We can read the novel's second *denouement* as an indication that Galdós's response to this period of Spanish history was to create a narrative of appropriately diminished expectations. As a protagonist, Lázaro appears foolish and unaware of the depth and complexity of political intrigue, and he is easily influenced by others. Monroe Hafter, in an early essay on the novel, considers Lázaro to be a highly imperfect hero, noting that "his intelligence and understanding are essentially mediocre" (43). But, as Lázaro gains experience, he slowly comes to recognize the dangers of political radicalism. Lázaro's decision to leave the capital and return to the village of his birth signals something more than an embrace of political moderation. It can also be read as the result of a process of introspection and acceptance. Lázaro has come to recognize his own limitations and made the decision to modify his ambitions accordingly. But even the novel's original ending, where Lázaro dies at the hands of his fanatical uncle, serves to underscore Galdós's message that Spain was not yet ready to move on in the 1820s. This perspective will gain importance when Galdós revisits this period of time in the volumes that make up the second series of *Episodios nacionales*. I would argue that Galdós had yet to find the right character to embody the process of reconfiguring a post-colonial national identity.²²

As a last word on Galdós's first published novel, I believe that the final scene with the Porreños encourages us to rethink the meaning of the title. While La Fontana de Oro was undeniably an actual café in Madrid and the scene of passionate oratory in favor of political liberalism, it does not serve as central a role in this narrative as does the house of the Porreño family, in which much of the action occurs and to which virtually every major character develops a connection. We can see the house on the Calle de Belén, with its connections to Spanish imperial history and the corrosive effects of that history on everyone who enters it, as equally representative of another kind of "fontana de oro" [fountain of gold], one that evokes, through the physical appearance of gold coins, the imperial transatlantic fleets that brought precious metals to the metropolis. In Galdós's novel, however, these coins constitute a false promise that can neither be realized

²² Amado Alonso was perhaps the first to note the comparisons between Lázaro and the character of Salvador Monsalud, the protagonist of the second series of *Episodios nacionales* (208). Yet, as Chapters Four and Five will show, Galdós takes the broad strokes he has painted in *La Fontana de Oro* and produces a much more finely wrought portrait of Spanish society in that series.

by doña Paula nor accepted by Lázaro. Prior historical manifestations of Spanish national identity, whether the political conservatism supported by Don Elías and represented by Fernando VII or the imperial history embodied in the Porreños and their home, cannot lay claim to social, cultural, or even economic progress. Instead, these forms of national identity lead only to sterility and destruction. The appearance in the final pages of the novel of gold as an actual metal, in the form of doubloons from Spain's imperial past, underscores the connections to the novel's title and to the novel's message that Spain's imperial and absolutist past has lost its claim to legitimacy in Galdós's present.

Identifying the Historical Starting Point: *El audaz*

Galdós's third novel, *El audaz*, combines the author's continued exploration of the vicissitudes of human psychology with his enduring preoccupation with Spanish political history. Subtitled *Historia de un radical de antaño*, *El audaz* is set in the year 1804 and tells the story of a young man, Martín Martínez Muriel, who becomes politically radicalized as a result of a false accusation of financial malfeasance brought by a Spanish nobleman against his father, who is found guilty and sent to prison. Muriel's exposure to Voltaire's political ideas and his obsession with clearing his family's name lead him to become entangled in political conspiracies against prime minister Manuel Godoy and the court of Carlos IV. Spurred by his desire for revenge on his father's accuser, the count of Cerezuelo, he manages to gain entrée into the court, where he meets, falls in love with, and eventually kidnaps the nobleman's daughter, Susana de Cerezuelo. Despite the kidnapping, the daughter falls in love with Muriel as well, and she acknowledges that he is right to reject the aristocracy's claims to social and moral superiority. Muriel's obsessive resentment continues to grow, and he becomes involved in a conspiracy to spur a popular uprising against the prime minister. Unbeknown to Muriel, the agents encouraging his involvement in the conspiracy are not liberals but rather agents of the king's son, Fernando, who wishes to take his father's throne. When Muriel is betrayed and captured during the attempted overthrow, the daughter commits suicide. By novel's end, Muriel is imprisoned in a madhouse, believing himself to be Robespierre.

The conspiracy described in *El audaz* is a fictional one, but it presages the history of the prince's two actual attempted *coups d'état* that were to follow. The first, in El Escorial in October of 1807, was unsuccessful. But the second, known as the Motín de Aranjuez, took place in March of 1808 and led to the fall of Manuel Godoy and Carlos IV. While

Fernando VII enjoyed a short-lived ascension to the throne, the fight with his father led to the intervention of Napoleón Bonaparte, who in June of 1808 placed his own brother Joseph on the throne as king of Spain. It is notable that Galdós moves back in time in this second historical novel to the first years of the nineteenth century and the earliest echoes of the Fernandino monarchy. The conspiracies against Manuel Godoy that led to Prince Fernando's ascension to the throne were destabilizing events that weakened the Spanish government, and by extension the Spanish nation as a whole. Specifically, Fernando's selfish quest for power resulted in Spain becoming a major territorial acquisition for the Napoleonic Empire. *La Fontana de Oro* had already identified Fernando VII's absolutism in the 1820s as an outmoded form of nationalism that prevented Spain from experiencing progress. But by moving further back in time to the very beginning of the Fernandino period, Galdós identifies the historical events that created the conditions for Spain to lose its centrality as a European power. Despite the fact that Martín Muriel is, by the end of the novel, locked away in a madhouse, the liberal ideas espoused by French revolutionaries, particularly with respect to class, continued to affect Spanish politics throughout the nineteenth century, particularly during the *Sexenio democrático*, when Galdós wrote *El audaz*. Galdós's readers in 1871 not only knew what was to come after 1804, beginning with the ill-fated Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, but they also were meant to draw parallels between the events at the start of the century and the political struggles of their own moment.

If *La Fontana de Oro* represents a work that illustrates how Spanish imperialism informed concepts of national identity, *El audaz* turns more forcefully to metropolitan politics to examine a point of time in history in which Spain's stature on the global stage, and by extension its sense of national identity, hung in the balance. The novel contains few specific references to colonialism, but the novel's plot helps illuminate the trajectory of the author's approach to the nation's past and the relationship of that past to the present. For readers in the 1870s, *El audaz* functions as a specific kind of historical cautionary tale.²³ Galdós's prologue to the first edition of the book clarifies his goals in this regard and indicates how he hoped

²³ In reference to *El audaz*, Toni Dorca has pointed out the importance of the particular historical period Galdós has chosen to portray: "Al iniciar su carrera de novelista, nuestro autor está convencido de que el germen de las turbulencias posteriores ha de buscarse en la etapa del Trienio" [Upon starting his career as a novelist, our author is convinced that the root cause of later turmoil must be sought in the period of the Triennium] (*Dos caras* 27).

the novel would be received. Consisting mostly of an extended citation of Eugenio de Ochoa's review of the serialized version of *El audaz*, Galdós notes that "aunque me parece que el lector comprende fácilmente, y sin necesidad de que nadie se lo explique, el objeto y tendencia de un libro cualquiera" [although it seems to me that the reader easily understands, without needing anyone to explain to him, the aim and tendency of any book], the eloquence of Ochoa's review makes it worthy of inclusion in the prologue (111). In defining the book's purpose, Galdós cites Ochoa directly: "No se invoque hipócritamente el respeto debido a nuestros mayores y al la tradición de lo pasado: lo pasado es un sepulcro; debemos venerarle, pero enterrarnos vivos en él, eso no" [The respect due to our elders and to the tradition of the past is not invoked hypocritically; the past is a tomb; we should venerate it, but to bury ourselves alive in it, no] (113).²⁴ The point of the novel is to understand history but not repeat it, particularly in the 1870s, when political extremism ran the risk of compromising the potential progress made possible by the Revolution of 1868. As Toni Dorca has pointed out, Galdós very consciously presents Martín Muriel as a cautionary tale with respect to extreme liberalism, presenting the protagonist by the end of the novel as "una criatura satánica" (a Satanic creature) (*Dos caras* 35). But the novel also contains a message about the potentially negative impact of Spain's colonial legacy, and it is in this sense that *El audaz* performs its critique of the imperial structures that had for so long framed Spanish society. As Kathleen Ross has noted, *El audaz* addresses "the hypocrisy of an idealized past" (37). Even if the novel itself makes few direct references to empire, its charge to readers to distinguish between past and present – and in the process to limit the effect of the former on the latter – involves a call to rearticulate the nature of Spanish national identity as something beyond an imperial past defined by conquest, submission, and monarchical absolutism.

It is important to note that the references to Spanish imperialism in the novel are almost wholly inferential. With the exception of one direct reference made with respect to Martín Muriel's father, empire is by and large alluded to only in the novel's presentation of *fin de siècle* European politics. These references are still quite telling. For instance, Martín himself is described from the very beginning as a man profoundly

²⁴ Eugenio de Ochoa's letter to the editor appeared on June 30, 1871 in *La Ilustración de Madrid*. Other positive reviews appeared in *La Nación* (February 2, 1872) and *El Imparcial* (February 5, 1872), both of which are included in the appendices of Íñigo Sánchez Llama's critical edition of *El audaz* (Madrid: Clásicos Libertarias, 2003, 509–15).

shaped by his environment and circumstances. Galdós writes, “Había nacido en un pueblo de la áspera y fragosa sierra que se extiende en el centro de la Península, y de la cual, con las corrientes de los ríos y las ramificaciones de las montañas, parece emanar y difundirse por todo el suelo el genio de las dos Castillas” [He was born in a village in the rough and rugged sierra that extends into the center of the peninsula, and from which, with the currents of the rivers and the branching out of the mountains, the character of the two Castiles seems to emanate and spread throughout the soil] (116). Martín is, in his very core, Castilian, and Galdós is unequivocal in his connection between geography and character: “Muriel había nacido para mandar, para dirigir, para legislar” [Muriel was born to command, to lead, to legislate] (117). This strength of character, this impulse to control that is so closely connected to the region that came to represent Spanish imperial identity, is impacted by events beyond Martín’s control. His family is described as having suffered a series of misfortunes and setbacks that has had a profound impact on their lives. His father, in particular, is a victim not only of “suerte adversa” [bad luck] but also of injustice. Galdós lays out this family history with great detail in the first chapter of the novel, and it should be understood as the fundamental framework for understanding Galdós’s critique of the nation’s past. He begins with a chronicle of the father’s misfortunes, noting at various points the man’s good intentions, his unfortunate bad luck, and the results of legal and social structures that favor some over others (117–18). When staying in Spain seems to offer no hope of improving the family’s situation, Martín’s father travels to the colonies. He returns three years later “con muy escasas ganancias” [with very little profit] (118). His reduced circumstances lead him to the estate of the Conde de Cerezuelo, where he will suffer the injustices that eventually lead to his imprisonment and death.

The reference to Martín’s father in the Americas is brief, but it is important for two reasons. On the one hand, it is a reminder that Spain is still firmly an empire, understood as such not only by the rich and powerful but also by the humblest of its citizens. On the other hand, the father’s failure to achieve economic security in the colonies serves as a way of questioning the value of that very empire for its citizens. The promise of the colonies proves false, and Martín’s father returns to the metropolis empty-handed. There is no palpable social benefit in empire for those who most need it. The father’s story echoes certain aspects of the social type of the *indiano*, defined in nineteenth-century Spanish literature as a Spaniard who, having sought his fortune in the colonies, returns home with his newly acquired wealth and attempts to reintegrate into Spanish society at

a different level of social class.²⁵ But, unlike the narrative associated with this social type, Martín's father returns hat in hand, with little to show for his many years away. In this instance Galdós cleaves somewhat closer to the historical truth of Spanish emigrants, describing more accurately the fate of most of those who sought their fortunes in the Americas.²⁶ Despite some highly visible examples, few, indeed, ever returned with great wealth. By slipping a reference to years in the colonies without any appreciable financial benefit into the father's back story, Galdós is also making a subtle statement about the value of Spain's colonies for the metropolis.

Ultimately, Martín Muriel's attempt to obtain justice for his father fails, and his relationship with Susana de Cerezuelo disintegrates when he decides to participate in a planned uprising designed to bring down Manuel Godoy and Carlos IV. Fernando's agents, who have encouraged the conspiracy, turn on Martín, and his fury and impotence result in a permanent state of political madness. When Susana sees her deranged lover in the streets of Toledo, she recognizes that there is no future for them and, with no path back to her former life, commits suicide by leaping from the Puente de Alcántara into the turbulent waters of the Tajo river. What might have been a symbolic union between two social classes – presented within a gendered framework of an energized male middle class and a feminine upper class reduced to a position of submissive support – ends in madness and death. Galdós's novel points to the problems of empire within the very process of trying to reconceptualize notions of social class. The final paragraphs of the novel are an appropriate illustration of this problem. If, as critics have noted, *El audaz* addresses the dangers of both an idealized past and a mob mentality (Montesinos I 71), the final scene of Martín Muriel, locked away with two other conspirators, Rotondo and La Zarza, who have also lost

²⁵ See my work on the social type of the *indiano* in “El costumbrismo decimonónico y la ansiedad colonial,” as well as Luisa Elena Delgado's “El lugar del salvaje (Galdós y la representación del indiano),” in *Homenaje a Alfonso Armas Ayala*, Vol. 2 (Las Palmas: Excmo Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, 2000), 303–13.

²⁶ In his study *La emigración española a América (siglos XIX y XX)* (Columbres, Asturias: Fundación Archivo de Indianos, 1994), César Yáñez Gallardo notes that approximately 57% of Spaniards who emigrated to America returned to Spain (135), and, of that number, approximately 35% returned within 2–5 years and 27–28% returned after 5–10 years (225). While the data regarding numbers of Spaniards leaving and returning to Spain is quite limited with respect to the years before 1860, Yáñez Gallardo's examination of information in the last three decades of the nineteenth century indicates that Galdós's readers would recognize in Martín Muriel's father the figure of the *indiano* whose experience in America did not result in the accumulation of personal wealth.

their minds, is quite remarkable. The scene not only makes direct reference to the worst excesses of the French Revolution but also points to dangers of imperial desires. La Zarza, for example, imagines himself to be Louis Antoine de Saint-Just, giving impassioned speeches to an imagined crowd of spectators preparing to witness executions in the Place de la Révolution in Paris. Rotondo imagines himself as Napoleón in the process of consolidating his power and jockeying for position among the European imperial powers: “Ajustaré la paz con los austriacos; entretendré con promesas a los prusianos; absorberé la España; conquistaré la Holanda, y decretaré el bloqueo continental contra Inglaterra ...” [I will negotiate peace with the Austrians; I will entertain the Prussians with promises; I will absorb Spain; I will conquer the Netherlands, and I will decree the continental blockade against England] (506). This particular reference, while clearly meant to remind readers of the Napoleonic Wars of the early nineteenth century, also serves as a curious Cassandra-like prophecy from the novel’s 1804 setting. Of the three, however, it is Martín who shows “en todos sus actos el sello de la superioridad” [in all of his actions the stamp of superiority] (506). Still trapped within his fury of the night of the attempted coup, Martín repeats a “lugubre estribillo” [dismal refrain], muttering “¡Cuánto odio esta noche! ... ¡Yo soy dictador! ... ¡Matad, matad sin cesar! ...” [How I hate this night! ... I am a dictator! ... Kill, kill without stopping!] (505). Martín has lost all connections to his former self, an individual once focused on social justice and governmental reform. He has become what he most vociferously opposed, a self-absorbed tyrant willing to punish others for no reason other than his own unjustified anger. In his reference to dictatorship we can also see Galdós’s subtle commentary on both undemocratic leadership and what appears to be a fundamental human impulse to dominate, thus hearkening back to the novel’s introduction of Martín’s character as that of a man born to lead.

By ending his novel in madness and death, Galdós paints a cautionary tale for Spaniards in the 1870s of what can go wrong at critical junctures of Spanish history when possibilities for reform present themselves but are lost due to greed, selfishness, irrationality, and a lack of willingness to compromise. Even more important, I argue, than Galdós’s famed moderation, as evidenced in his portrait of the dangers of extreme beliefs, is the fact that he had found, in the early 1800s, the point of departure for his chronicle of modern Spanish history. As Toni Dorca has quite powerfully argued:

El audaz tiene así el honor de erigirse en la novela fundacional del canon histórico galdosiano, pues en ella se delimita con precisión el marco

temporal que inspira luego la escritura de los tres primeros episodios: *Trafalgar*, *La corte de Carlos IV*, y *El 19 de marzo y el 2 de mayo*. (Dorca, *Dos caras* 30)

[*El audaz* thus has the honor of becoming the foundational novel in the Galdosian historical canon, because it defines precisely the time frame that then inspires the writing of the first three episodes: *Trafalgar*, *The court of Carlos IV*, and *The 19th of March and the 2nd of May*.]

With his first two historical novels, *La Fontana de Oro* and *El audaz*, Galdós is circling around a set of political and historical issues, trying to determine the appropriate historical moment to begin to tell the story that will allow his readers to make sense of contemporary Spanish history. *La Fontana de Oro*, his first successful novel, identifies Fernando VII's monarchy as a critical historical period for Spain and the Spanish empire. While predominantly focused on the political struggles between Spain's nascent liberalism and the country's long-standing absolutist and ultramontane politics, the novel also includes revealing references to the nation's imperial past, painting that period of the nation's history, one long associated with national grandeur, as one that no longer can claim connections to the nation's present. *El audaz* reflects the author's attempt to portray an earlier moment, when Fernando was still Principe de Asturias and scheming to take his father's throne. Galdós goes back in time in this second historical novel to point out that this is the moment when the nation takes a wrong turn. The infighting between Carlos IV and his son provided the critical opportunity for Napoleón, as a self-declared emperor of another European empire, to gain a foothold in Spain and to force Spaniards to turn away, by necessity, from its global connections and the management of empire in order to protect the sovereignty of the metropolis. Galdós points out that the political mistakes of Fernando VII will extract a high cost. The novel constitutes Galdós's recognition of a critical moment for the Spanish nation that will set it on a path toward collective trauma. But this short novel is not enough to tell the entire story, and thus it cannot serve to process the trauma. Galdós now finds himself compelled to write in a more detailed way about both the nuances of that larger political trauma (one that incorporates more directly the loss of imperial power) and the process of reformulating national identity (a new Spain for the nineteenth century).

In short, both *El audaz* and *La Fontana de Oro* set the stage for the author's next critical phase as a writer, when he begins the unprecedented project of telling the nation's history through an extensive series of historical novels that chronicle the entire span of Fernando VII's adult life. The first and second series of *Episodios nacionales* chronicle the events in Europe that

would eventually undercut the ability of the metropolis to reassert itself as a European imperial power, negatively impacting its desire to maintain control over its colonial territories. But perhaps the most provocative aspect of this reading of Galdós's earliest work is the position that *La sombra* occupies in the author's creative trajectory. The author's very first attempt at a lengthy narrative is certainly an experimental piece of fiction that raises a host of questions with respect to the relationship between reality and fiction, between imagination and truth. But my central argument is that *La sombra*, as a psychological case study, provides the author with a useful point of departure for trying to understand Spanish history in the nineteenth century. *La sombra* raises the very issue of trauma, arguing that, to successfully understand and process trauma in a patient, a doctor must return to its moment of origin, to the point in which the subject experiences that fateful event, and painstakingly examine its effects and the patient's responses to it. This, I would argue, is the very *raison d'être* of what was to come next in Galdós's literary career: the first two series of *Episodios nacionales*, a 20-volume set of historical novels that chronicles the history of Spain under Fernando VII.

CHAPTER 3

End of an Empire and Birth of a Nation

Benito Pérez Galdós's first series of *Episodios nacionales*, a ten-volume narrative of early nineteenth-century peninsular Spanish history written between 1872 and 1875, has long been read as a set of patriotic historical novels that chronicle the determination of the Spanish people to overcome foreign domination even as they anticipate the political struggle between absolutism and liberalism. But it is also a collection of historical novels that addresses the painful reality of Spain's declining fortunes as a global empire. Notably, while the first series as a whole begins with the naval battle of Trafalgar in 1805 and concludes with a decisive military victory in 1812, effectively signaling the beginning of the end of Peninsular War and the French occupation of the Iberian peninsula, the story of Spain's transformation from a global empire to a European nation is framed between the first and last volumes, *Trafalgar* and *La batalla de los Arapiles*, reaching its most critical moment in the seventh novel in the series, *Cádiz*.

What emerges when we begin to look more closely at these historical novels is that issues of empire (past and present), Spain's current and former relationship with its colonies, and Spain's position on the global political stage are very much present in the texts, in the form of allegory or, more often, in the form of allusions to colonial reality so commonplace and so subtly situated in the narrative that they are easy to overlook. By examining these important textual details we discover that the author's references, while often indirect, were far from superficial. Taken together they point to an authorial awareness of and concern for what Spain's colonial history meant for its development as a nineteenth-century European nation. Given the profoundly traumatic nature of such loss, the use of oblique references and figurative language becomes an effective strategy allowing readers to accept the past and anticipate the future as

Spain transformed itself from a once-great empire to a European nation-state.

While this chapter focuses primarily on the first series, it is worth noting that colonial references in both the first and second series of *Episodios* addressed a profound public need to understand and process the cultural, political, and economic changes experienced in Spain in the critical period of the *Sexenio democrático*, the years between the 1868 overthrow of Isabel II as monarch and the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1874. This need has not gone unnoticed by scholars (Anna, Martínez Pico, Sinnigen), but it has not always been contextualized as evidence of a postcolonial awareness. For example, in one of the earliest studies of Galdós's historical novels, Alfred Rodríguez writes "what interested Galdós was the 'becoming' of modern Spain" (14). If we turn once again to Edward Said's insight that "empire functions for much of the nineteenth century as a codified, if only marginally visible, presence in fiction" (63), we can begin to recognize the importance that a process of transcending an imperial past might play in a collection of historical novels that offer a detailed portrayal of Spain's history from 1805 to 1834, the very period in which the nation effectively lost control over its vast American territories. Accordingly, if Galdós's narratives are windows into the nineteenth-century Spanish landscape of metropolitan and colonial interactions, the challenge lies in both making visible what has heretofore remained invisible to contemporary critics and then deciding how our discoveries relate to the very idea of the Spanish nation and Spanish national identity.

The most frequently reprinted and read *Episodio* is *Trafalgar*, the first novel of the series, written and published in early 1873 (Botrel, "Le succès" 46). The novel presents in grand patriotic style the events surrounding the fateful maritime encounter between the combined Spanish and French naval forces and the British off the coast of the Cabo de Trafalgar. The protagonist, Gabriel Araceli, is a 14-year-old who will serve on the Cuban-built flagship of the Spanish Navy, the *Santísima Trinidad*. He takes part in the battle and witnesses the tragic loss of life and the destruction of the once great Spanish navy. Galdós situates the start of his monumental chronicle of nineteenth-century Spain in 1805, positing the battle as an appropriate beginning of his exploration of nineteenth-century national identity.

Throughout the entire first series of *Episodios*, Spain is depicted as a nation fighting to expel an occupying force, the very opposite of an imperial power. Instead of a colonial metropolis in its own right, Spain has become the geographical territory across which two other nations, Great Britain and France, fight for their own competing imperial futures. By beginning the

story in 1805, Galdós's series connects nineteenth-century Spanish history to that of two other European nations that wield greater imperial power and constitute threats to Spanish sovereignty. Most importantly for Galdós's readers, the Battle of Trafalgar serves as a prefiguration of future imperial losses. The defeat of the Spanish navy becomes the first step in Galdós's rearticulation of Spanish national identity in the nineteenth century. Critics have noted that in *Trafalgar* Spain derives her honor as a nation that shows stoicism in defeat (Urey, "Galdós's Creation of a New Reader"; Iarocci, "Viral Nation"). Equally important in this stoic defeat, I would argue, is the representation of loss of empire and Spain's diminishment as a global world power. Galdós' works decouple the nation's imperial legacy as it begins the process of reconceptualizing a new national identity.

The novel supports this reading at numerous points. Rarely considered an important character in *Trafalgar*, Gabriel's first master, don Alonso Gutiérrez de Cisniega, evokes the nation's imperial history in very specific terms. Gutiérrez is a retired *guardiamarina* who defended Cuba against the English in 1748, participated in naval expeditions to northern Africa in 1775 and travelled as far south as the Straits of Magellan in the 1785–86 expedition to map the coastline of South America, led by noted sailor and scientist Antonio de Córdova. Although retired, Gutiérrez remains intensely aware of Spain's imperial identity. On the wall of his home he keeps "dos clases de objetos: estampas de santos y mapas; la corte celestial por un lado, y todos los derroteros de Europa y América por otro" [two kinds of objects: prints of saints and maps; the celestial court on one side, and all the sailing routes between Europe and America on the other], emphasizing the nation's catholic imperial past (I 55). This early reference in the novel underscores Anthony Pagden's point that there was, with respect to the conquests in the Americas, a "continuity between the Spanish monarchy and the ancient and subsequent Christian *Imperium romanum*" (32). Gutiérrez de Cisniega occupies a position as a kind of everyman, one that is meant to represent the beliefs and concerns of average Spanish citizens up to this moment in history. He is deeply concerned about the direction being taken by Spain's rulers and worried about their capacity for taking appropriately strong military action. "El honor de nuestra nación está empeñado" [The honor of our nation is at stake], he claims, evoking one of the central themes of Golden Age Spanish drama (I 48). He repeats the words of General Churruca, his former commander and now admiral of the Spanish navy, who has confided in the old sailor his fears with respect to the consequences of the French–Spanish alliance.

Esta alianza con Francia y el maldito tratado de San Ildefonso, que por la astucia de Bonaparte y la debilidad de Godoy se ha convertido

en tratado de subsidios, serán nuestra ruina, serán la ruina de nuestra escuadra, si Dios no lo remedia, y, por lo tanto, la ruina de nuestras colonias y del comercio español en América. (I 48)

[The alliance with France and the accursed Treaty of San Ildefonso, which due to the cleverness of Bonaparte and the weakness of Godoy has become a treaty of subsidies, will lead us to ruin, will lead our squadron to ruin, if God does not remedy it, and to the ruin of our colonies and the Spanish trade in the Americas.]

Churruca's predictions will prove to be correct, and the fact that Galdós, in the early pages of his first *Episodio*, articulates the negative consequences of Spain's treaty with France in terms of a loss of both imperial stature and colonial economic power, highlights the author's 1870s perspective, nearly a half century after the loss of Spain's American territories. Gutiérrez de Cisniega's reference to Churruca's forecast also supports the view that Spain's diminished position in the second half of the nineteenth century is the result of poor government and lack of political leadership.

Don Alonso's perspective is shared by others and reflected in the words of the young naval officer Rafael Malespina, who bemoans the fact that Spain has been unable to steer clear of the conflict between France and England and notes that the English have provoked Spain into a war by confiscating its colonial wealth: "Inglaterra nos obligó a ello, apresando inoportunamente cuatro fragatas que venían de América cargadas de caudales" [England forced us into it, inconveniently capturing four frigates coming from the Americas loaded with riches] (I 58). Malespina also questions the judgment of the Spanish monarchs in elevating Manuel Godoy, a former music teacher and favorite of the queen, to the position of prime minister, adding, "¡Si creará él que se gobierna una nación tocando la guitarra! [He believes he can govern a nation by playing guitar!] (58).¹ Here the text articulates the danger this war represents for the economic benefits of Spanish colonialism. These subtle textual references to colonialism and empire underscore the fact that, while eighteenth-century Spain was still an imperial power with an extensive colonial reach, the ineptitude of the Bourbon monarchs and their ministers threatens to reduce nineteenth-century Spain to a nation more appropriately defined as a colony than a metropolis.

It is worth noting that Galdós's very act of naming his characters supports this reading. Don Alonso's name obliquely points to the character's colonial

¹ The reference to the Spanish guitar as a stereotypical object that encapsulates Spanish culture makes Galdós's earlier reference to the guitar in Doctor Anselmo's laboratory in *La sombra* that much more potent.

connections and the narrative's approach to Spanish colonial history, with the root of his last name Gutiérrez stemming from "Gutierre" "he who rules" and "Cisniega" containing a conjugated form of the verb "negar" (to refuse, to deny). At least one scholar has read this name as a commentary on the sailor's age and inability to participate in the battle (Heuschkel 41). But I would interpret this combination of names somewhat differently. Don Alonso is admittedly too old to participate in the battle, and the sense of the verb *negar* ascribes an active decision to avoid participation. Don Alonso's surname, Gutiérrez de Cisniega, would be better read as a complex commentary on the need to turn away from the older imperial commitment to empire, as represented in the once hale but now aged sailor's extensive journeys to the Americas, in favor of a recognition of a new political reality. This stands in contrast to Rafael's acceptance of his responsibilities, despite the literal pain his participation in battle will engender, thus underscoring his own last name, Malespina. Galdós includes these names as an oblique reference to the negative consequences of Spain's alliance with Napoleonic France, its military engagement with the English, and its failure to address the practical issues of governance, in both the metropolis and the colonies. It is also possible to see in this character's name one of the thematic elements of these early *Episodios*, namely Galdós's desire to present an image of national identity that steadily, throughout the various novels of both series, reduces the importance of Spanish colonialism in the formulation of a modern Spanish national identity.

As if in tacit recognition of the need to reject what don Alonso represents with respect to eighteenth-century Spanish colonial history, Gabriel can no longer stay with the family. The marriage of Don Alonso's daughter Rosita, once the object of Gabriel's adolescent passions, to Rafael Malespina creates an intolerable situation for the young servant. In the early morning hours the day after the wedding Gabriel finds himself in the garden of their new home, deep in meditative thought.

No pude menos de traer a la memoria las escenas de aquellos lejanos días en que ella y yo jugábamos juntos. Para mí era ella entonces lo primero del mundo. Para ella, era yo, si no el primero, al menos algo que se ama y que se echa de menos durante ausencias de una hora. En tan poco tiempo, ¡cuánta mudanza! (125)

[I could not help but recall the scenes of those distant days when she and I played together. For me she was the most important thing in the world. For her, I was, if not the first, at least something that she loved and missed during absences of even an hour. In such a short time, so much change!]

The change in situation and the frustration that Gabriel expects to experience if he remains a servant in the home of the newlyweds convince him to leave the town of Medina Sidonia and head for Cádiz and then Madrid. The marriage of Rosita and Rafael represents a convenient plot element that allows Gabriel to leave Andalusia and relocate in the nation's capital, where the next stage of Galdós's historical chronicle will take place. It is also a curious moment in which Gabriel recognizes that everything has changed. He must abandon his past in order to forge a new future for himself. Curiously, though, the Malespina–Gutiérrez de Cisniega union is described in almost idyllic terms. Gabriel notes that the morning after the wedding “un silencio profundo reinaba en la casa” [a deep silence reigned in the house] and, although it is January, the sun is hot, and the plants all seem to be in full flower (125). What breaks the meditative moment is “el sonido de una fresca voz” [the sound of a fresh voice], unnamed but one which Gabriel recognizes, most certainly that of Rosita (125). Gabriel's response is one of both fear and shame, and it causes him to run. This moment makes subtle reference to marital bliss and all it entails. But it also represents a unity that Gabriel cannot be a part of. The wedding serves as one more reminder that, in order to have a future, one must disassociate with the past, and, as a concluding scene in the first novel of Galdós's telling of Spanish history, this is an important moment. Alonso Gutiérrez de Cisniega and his family are indelibly linked to a particular attitude toward Spanish national identity that is no longer tenable for the protagonist. Gabriel must, by necessity, make his own way in the world and participate in the formation of a national identity that can reimagine that past and redefine the metropolis.

To begin this process, the second volume of the first series, *La Corte de Carlos IV*, takes readers directly to Madrid, the nation's capital and the empire's metropolitan center. Having left the employ of don Alonso in search of a better life, Gabriel has become a servant in the world of Madrid theater. Gabriel meets actors and members of the Spanish court, both historical and fictional, who provide him with knowledge of the activities of the Spanish aristocracy. The decision to place Gabriel in this urban milieu, where he witnesses the premiere of Moratín's *El sí de las niñas* and eventually moves through the royal palace as a servant, endows the narrative with a sense of historical verisimilitude and separates Gabriel from his provincial roots. The novel explores the political intrigues of the court of Carlos IV, in particular the rivalries between those who support Godoy and those who support the king's abdication in favor of his son, Fernando. With respect to Spanish colonialism, this novel moves the series' protagonist and the reader into the sphere of the political power brokers who will ultimately determine the fate of the empire.

Unlike *Trafalgar*, *La Corte de Carlos IV* does not contain the same number nor the same type of references to Spain's colonies. This makes sense precisely because the first novel of the series has already encouraged readers to rethink the nature of Spain's connections with the Americas and to associate the concept of empire with the nation's past. *La Corte de Carlos IV* reaffirms the distinction between metropolis and colony, Spain's present and its past, by subtly referencing the degree to which the royal family and their advisors are unwittingly bringing Spain's imperial history to a close. To begin, the majority of references to America are in relation to the growing fears that the French conflict with the Portuguese will necessitate the removal of all or some of the Spanish royal family from the peninsula to the colonies, prefiguring the historical example of Juan VI of Portugal, who fled to Brazil in 1807. The response of the court, as represented by Amaranta, the Condesa de X, and the Spanish people, as represented by the Madrid shopkeeper, Doña Ambrosia, is uniformly negative to this proposal to protect the monarchy (158, 173). The novel also alludes to Spanish colonialism through references to colonial economy, specifically tobacco, which is mentioned as a luxury item for the aristocracy and those in their circles (146, 152).

La Corte de Carlos IV is the first in the series to present members of the Spanish aristocracy as fundamental participants in the creation of national history, reminding readers that the crucial decisions affecting history and national identity remained in the hands of a select few. Amaranta, the Condesa de X, and her illegitimate daughter, Inés, become central figures in a complex familial subplot throughout the rest of the series. Inés, the object of Gabriel's affection, has been raised unaware of her aristocratic birth, and her father, Luis Santorcaz, has come to detest the Spanish nobility. This plot line hints at the historical process of social change in nineteenth-century Spanish society, and Galdós carefully connects the references to social mobility and a growing middle class to a post-colonial national identity. These connections are most clearly addressed in the novel *Cádiz*, but even in *La Corte de Carlos IV* there are lessons to be learned about the Spanish empire.

For example, as Gabriel's social superior, Amaranta teaches him important lessons about the effects of political intrigue on Spanish empire, even if Gabriel himself does not share the reader's historical perspective and cannot know the importance of what she reveals for the nation's future. At one point in the novel Amaranta presents a parable of Spanish imperial history. This occurs when Gabriel thanks the Countess profusely for her patronage. He reveals his desire to make something of himself and to transcend his lowly birth and poverty. He notes that he has seen others at the court, such as Godoy, who have managed to do this. Amaranta

responds with her parable, and it is significant because it links social mobility to imperial loss. She places the action in an exotic setting in an ostensible effort to distance her story from actual events.

En tiempos muy antiguos y en tierras muy remotas había un grande imperio que era gobernado en completa paz por un soberano sin talento; pero tan bondadoso, que sus vasallos se creían felices con él y le amaban mucho. La Sultana era mujer de naturaleza apasionada y viva imaginación; cualidades contrarias a las de su marido, merced a cuya diferencia aquel matrimonio no era completamente feliz. (I 192)

[In ancient times and in very remote lands there was a great empire that was ruled in complete peace by a sovereign without talent, but so kind that his vassals thought they were happy with him and loved him very much. The Sultana was a woman with a passionate nature and a lively imagination, qualities in contrast to those of her husband, thanks to whose difference that marriage was not completely happy.]

Despite her attempts to place the action in another place and time, it becomes clear to readers, if not to Gabriel, that the story is about the court of Carlos IV. She notes what happens to the empire when a young member of the Guard, a not too subtle reference to Manuel Godoy, becomes a favorite of the Sultan and his wife and is eventually given the position of “gran visir” [grand vizier] (I 192).

En su gobierno, el joven valido hizo algunas cosas buenas; mas el pueblo las olvidaba, para no ocuparse sino de las malas que fueron muchas, y tales que trajeron grandes calamidades a aquel pacífico imperio. El sultán, cada vez más ciego, no comprendía el malestar de sus pueblos, y la Sultana, aunque lo comprendía no pudo en lo sucesivo remediarlo, porque las intrigas de su corte se lo impedían. (I 192–93)

[In his government, the worthy young man did some good things; but the people forgot them, so as not think about anything but the bad things, which were many and of the kind that they brought great calamities to that peaceful empire. The sultan, increasingly blind, did not understand the discomfort of his people, and the Sultana, although she understood it, could not remedy it going forward, due to the court intrigues that impeded her.]

Most notable from the standpoint of our interest in Galdós’s engagement with the representation of Spanish colonial history is what happens when, several days later, Amaranta continues her parable of imperial decline. She tells Gabriel that eventually “el joven genízaro, hecho príncipe y

generalísimo, era cada vez más aborrecido en todo el Imperio” [the young soldier, made prince and general, was increasingly hated throughout the Empire] (I 205). The situation results in a conflict between the Sultan, his wife, and their son, who is willing to kill his parents to take the throne. Everyone’s eyes are suddenly turned to the arrival of the “gran Tamerlán” [great Tamerlane], whose troops are crossing the empire to reach “un pequeño Reino que deseaba conquistar” [a small Kingdom that he wanted to conquer], an unambiguous reference to Napoleon and the passage of French troops to Portugal (I 205). When Gabriel asks whose side the “señor guerrero” [warrior lord] will take, Amaranta can only respond that she does not yet know the end of the story.

Amaranta’s lesson constitutes a deliberate reference to empire on the part of the author. In her critical edition of the *Episodios nacionales*, Dolores Troncoso Durán notes that in the earliest manuscript form of this novel Galdós first used the words *Reino* and *reina* in Amaranta’s tale, but in the definitive manuscript, dated March–April 1873, Galdós made the decision to change these terms to *Imperio* and *Sultana* (I 1368). The editorial change indicates a belief that the ineptitude of the Bourbon monarchs will affect more than the kingdom of Spain. In short, Galdós emphasizes that the actions of Carlos IV, the queen, Manuel Godoy and Fernando all lead to the decline of the Spanish empire itself, a point with which contemporary historians concur (Fontana, *La quiebra* 65, 77).

When the countess reveals she does not know the end of the story, Gabriel naively responds that the Gran Visir should have governed with common sense, “castigando a los malos y premiando a los buenos” [punishing the bad and rewarding the good] (I 206). If this had been done, he declares, “es imposible que el Imperio hubiese venido a tales desdichas” [it’s impossible that the Empire would have arrived at such misfortunes] (I 206). The claim constitutes an oblique comment from the perspective of Galdós’s own time. Amaranta responds, saying “Pero eso ahora no nos importa gran cosa” [But now that doesn’t matter much to us], and turns instead to a discussion of Gabriel’s daily tasks (I 206). Gabriel echoes her comment with a curious response of his own, “Sí señora ... ¿qué importan los imperios del mundo?” [Yes, ma’am ... what do the empires of the world matter?] (I 206).

This exchange also signals the author’s awareness of what was politically at stake for the nation at this crucial juncture of Spanish history. Spain, in this curious tale within a tale, has already been defined as a nation whose colonial history lies in its past. From the perspective of Galdós’s readers, Amaranta’s parable is about a nation whose colonial history cannot be altered. Accordingly, Galdós finds himself in the position of trying to formulate a national identity that will allow his readers to move beyond

the losses in the early part of the century even as they are beginning to recognize the economic and political realities that will result in losses at the end of the century. In the process of navigation, his novels vacillate between references to an imperial past that no longer exists and a colonial present that is seldom acknowledged.

The next eight novels of the first series continue the chronicle of the Peninsular War as it played out across the peninsula, but many of them contain, nonetheless, interesting moments that speak to the process of navigating Spanish imperialism. One example is in Galdós's treatment of the events of May 2, 1808 in the streets of Madrid. In *El 19 de marzo y el 2 de mayo* Galdós juxtaposes two historical events, both involving the actions of street mobs, that serve as a point of departure for understanding the direction his representation of the connections between Spanish empire and the Peninsular War will take in the series. The first is the Motín de Aranjuez, in which supporters of Fernando, the Príncipe de Asturias and heir to the throne of Spain, instigated a mob riot that resulted in the sacking of Manuel Godoy's palace in Aranjuez, the end of Godoy's political influence, and Carlos IV's initial abdication in favor of his son.² The second event is the active resistance of working-class Spaniards to the arrival of French troops in the nation's capital. As Francisco Goya's two famous portraits of May 2 and May 3 illustrate, Spanish men and women took to the streets with scant armaments in a futile attempt to repel the highly trained and well-equipped members of Napoleon's *Grande Armée* only to be overwhelmed, with many taken prisoner and summarily executed in the Parque Retiro the following day. The events of May 2 quickly became a source of national pride, not unlike those of the Battle of Trafalgar, since it was crafted into a narrative that portrayed a moment in which the Spanish people demonstrated valor and honor in the face of inevitable defeat. The patriotism of this moment is used in Goya's painting, in Galdós's novel, and in other representations as palpable evidence of the key characteristics of national identity.

Spanish colonialism plays an oblique yet telling role in Galdós's representation of these two starkly different examples of mob behavior. For example,

² In this volume of the first series Galdós presents an account of the event in which conspirators on the part of Fernando, the Príncipe de Asturias, successfully attempted to overthrow Manuel Godoy and the monarchy of Carlos IV. In doing so, Galdós moves from his purely fictional representation of an attempted coup in *El audaz* to a true moment in Spanish history. By moving more noticeably into actual events of Spanish history, Galdós creates a narrative world in which aspects of his representation of the nation's past appear more like a chronicle than a historical novel.

part of what helps stir up popular support for the overthrow of Manuel Godoy in Galdós's narrative reconstruction of the Motín de Aranjuez is the popular concern, fanned by the Príncipe de Asturias's agents, that the Príncipe de la Paz will use the pretext of protection against Napoleón's incursion to send the royal family to the Americas, thereby consolidating his influence with the Spanish king. When Fernando's attempt to wrest the Spanish throne from his father results in success on March 19 and he enters the nation's capital as king on March 24, Galdós presents the response of the people in such a way as to indicate that the Spanish people see him as an imperial ruler. Specifically, while witnessing Fernando's procession, one elderly Spanish woman says to her neighbor, "Desde que entró en Madrid, al venir de Nápoles, el señor don Carlos III, a quien vi desde este mismo sitio, no ha habido en Madrid una alegría semejante" [Not since Carlos III entered Madrid, having come from Naples, which I witnessed from this very spot, has there been such joy in Madrid] (334). The reference to Carlos III is linked specifically with his successful eighteenth-century acquisition of imperial territories in Italy, thus heightening the comment's importance as reflective of a popular awareness of empire as an intrinsic element of Spanish identity (334). The woman continues her praise of the young Fernando, underscoring the imperial nature of the Spanish throne by noting, "Si es el más rozagante, el más lindo mozo que hay en toda España y sus Indias" [He is the most splendid, the most handsome young man in all of Spain and its Indies] (334).

Whereas this passing comment reveals that in Galdós's evocation of Spanish history even citizens on the streets of the nation's capital recognized the imperial component of national identity, the second event in the novel, the street fighting against the French on May 2, 1808, illustrates what the Spanish people are forced to learn about the changed nature of imperial identity. In a telling moment in his description of the events of the afternoon of May 2 in the streets of Madrid, Galdós presents a portrait of Spanish courage that on the surface serves to echo the patriotic narrative of national identity ascribed to that day's historical events. Paco Chinitas and his wife, La Primorosa, live in Madrid's Rastro district, thus identifying them as not only working class but also representative of "lo castizo": that is to say, as individuals' whose natures reflect an essential Spanish identity. The two, alongside Gabriel Araceli and the historical figures of Captains Velarde and Daoiz, fight valiantly against the forces of the French General Murat in the Parque de Monteleón (now the Parque 2 de mayo). As the troops advance, La Primorosa turns to Captain Daoíz and says, "mientras su merced y yo estemos aquí, no se perderán las Españas y sus Indias" [as long as your lordship and I are here, Spain and its Indies will not be

lost] (378). In a moment of bravura, Gabriel watches her taunt the French soldiers as both sides reload their rifles and canons.

Sus mercedes quieren conquistar a mí, ¿no verda? Pues aquí me tenéis. Vengan acá; soy la reina, sí, señores; soy la emperadora del Rastro, y yo acostumbro a fumar en este cigarro de bronce, porque no las gasto menos. ¿Quieren ustedes una chupadita? Pos allá va. (378)

[Your lordships want to conquer me, right? Well, here I am. Come on; I'm the queen; I'm the empress of the Rastro flea market, and I'm accustomed to smoking with this bronze cigar, because I won't spend anything less. You want a little taste of this? Well, there it goes.]

This passage is important because La Primorosa clearly defines her own identity with that of imperial Spain's. Her ironic use of the honorific term "mercedes" followed by the *vosotros* form ironically indicates just how little respect she grants the French. When she then employs the more formal *ustedes* form, it is from the standpoint of her own role as "emperadora" [empress]. Nonetheless, her imperial pride is about to experience a decided change. Her words of challenge are suddenly cut off with an ellipsis because at that moment the French begin to fire again on the populace.

La heroica mujer calló de improviso, porque la otra maja que cerca de ella estaba, cayó tan violentamente herida por un casco de metralla, que de su despedazada cabeza saltaron, salpicándonos, repugnantes pedazos. (378)

[The heroic woman fell suddenly quiet, because the other young woman who was near her fell, so violently wounded by a piece of shrapnel that disgusting pieces of her broken head, flew out, splattering us.]

Gabriel witnesses her response, noting that she turns pale and serious. For Gabriel it is "un hecho transcendental" [a transcendental event] because, for the first time, he experiences real fear (378). This is, in fact, the moment in which Captain Daoíz calls for the Spaniards to surrender, which is followed by the bloodthirsty slaughter of Daoíz, Velarde, and others, including Chinitas, by the French forces, who Gabriel now openly refers to as "los imperiales" [the imperials] (379). In essence, this passage in *El 19 de marzo y el 2 de mayo* indicates a key moment in which the people of Spain, at all levels, are forced to recognize an imperial power greater than their own and to see themselves no longer as citizens of an empire but rather vassals of a conquered and occupied land. It is another textual indication that Spain's former imperial identity lies in the past and that a new kind of national identity must by necessity be forged.

The fifth volume in the series, *Napoleón en Chamartín*, continues this discourse of shifting the perspective to something new and as yet undefined. The novel introduces readers to the character of Santiago Fernández, known to all as *el Gran Capitán*, a clear reference to Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, the fifteenth-century general responsible for significant victories in the period of the *Reconquista* and Spain's subsequent military expansion into Europe.³ He is similar to the character of Don Alonso in *Trafalgar* in that his glorification of Spain's past is both an evocation of the *ancien régime* and an unambiguous celebration of empire and imperial history. The irony, of course, is that the once great metropolis has been reduced to territory now conquered by another emperor.

¡España vencida por Napoleón! Esto es para volverse uno loco; ¡y Madrid, Madrid, la cabeza de todas las Españas, en poder de ese perdido! De modo que una nación como esta, que ha tenido debajo de la suela del zapato a todas otras naciones, y especialmente a Francia; de modo que esta nación que antes no permitía que en la Europa se dijera una palabra más alta que otra, ¿ha de rendirse a cuatro troneras hambrones? ¿Cómo puede ser eso? ¡Eche usted a los moros, descubra y conquiste usted toda la América, invente usted las más sabias leyes, extienda usted su imperio por todo lo descubierito de la tierra, levante usted los primeros templos y monasterios del mundo, someta usted pueblos, conquiste ciudades, reparta coronas, humille países, venza naciones, para luego caer a los pies de un miserable emperadorcillo salido de la nada, tramposo y embustero! Madrid no es Madrid si se rinde. (606)

[Spain defeated by Napoleon? This is enough to drive one mad! And Madrid, Madrid, the head of all of Spain, in the hands of that good for nothing! That a nation like this one, that has had all other nations, including France, under its heel, that this nation that previously didn't allow one word in Europe to be spoken louder than another, must it now surrender to a few greedy fools? How can this be? Cast out the Moors, discover and conquer all of America, invent the wisest laws, extend your empire across all known territories, build the first temples and monasteries of the world, and then fall at the feet of a miserable would-be emperor who came from nothing, a cheat and a trickster! Madrid is not Madrid if it surrenders.]

³ Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba y Enríquez de Aguilar (1453–1515) not only negotiated the surrender of Granada but also participated in the Italian Wars, eventually becoming the Viceroy of Naples.

El Gran Capitán's tirade clearly indicates an awareness on the part of the character, as well as Galdós as author and, eventually, the many readers of the novel, of the stark reality of Spain's situation at the start of the nineteenth century.

Yet, even to the normally patriotic Gabriel Araceli, El Gran Capitán's strident outbursts seem increasingly irrelevant. Gabriel demonstrates once and for all his disinterest in colonial Spain, preferring instead to focus more practically on his own interests within the boundaries of the peninsula. This is made clear when El Gran Capitán, as a representative of the *Junta Suprema* in Madrid, informs Gabriel that he has been chosen to travel to Peru to represent the *Junta* as the legitimate form of metropolitan government to administrators of the colonial territories: "le advierto que es voluntad de la Junta Suprema que el señor don Gabriel se haga la vela al punto para las Américas, donde pienso que es de gran necesidad su presencia" [I'm informing you that it is the will of the Supreme Board that Mr. Gabriel sail to the Americas, where I think his presence is greatly needed] (I 554). In a comment that seems to belie any true awareness of the historical realities of the American colonies even as it harkens back to an imperial drive more reminiscent of the sixteenth century, the Captain's wife, doña Gregoria, opines that the choice to send Gabriel is likely related to the young man's ability to teach the Spanish language to "los salvajes" [the savages] in order to successfully convert them to Catholicism (I 554). She goes on to attribute the need to send representatives to the colonies to address the growing separation between the American territories and the central government, "Como que pretenden que se vaya prontito para las Américas a arreglar a aquella gente, que anda toda revuelta ..." [As if they think to go soon to the Americas to sort out those people, who are running around up in arms] (I 557). In this sense, Doña Gregoria's commentary corresponds to the actual history of colonial responses to the metropolis. Galdós's placement of this exchange into the mouths of the Captain and his wife signals a desire to situate a recognition of what was at stake for the Spanish empire in the hearts and minds of average Spaniards. Equally important is Gabriel's categorical refusal to travel to Peru; he argues that he can more effectively serve by fighting the French in the north of Spain. By ignoring orders to travel to the Americas, Gabriel rejects Spain's colonial history in order to address the immediate needs of the metropolis. Galdós's reconstruction of Spanish history addresses a set of practical political priorities, one of which posits that it is first necessary to establish national sovereignty before issues of the colonial territories can be successfully considered.

The series is punctuated with novels that detail key battles of the Peninsular War, specifically volumes four, six, and seven (*Bailén, Zaragoza,*

Gerona), and it concludes with a description of the battle of Salamanca in the final volume of the series (*La batalla de los Arapiles*). In these narratives, references to the Americas and to the very concept of empire reflect, once again, the sense that Spain's relationship to key terms has changed. The term *imperio*, for example, is employed exclusively in reference to the French and Napoleon's forces. The only references to the Americas to appear in *Zaragoza* and *Gerona* function to emphasize metaphorically the lack of connection between "las dos Españas" [the two Spains]. For example, in *Zaragoza* there is a single reference to the Puente de América, a landmark blown apart by the French. In *Gerona* the reference consists of Gabriel's emphatic and exaggerated response to Amaranta, who, posing as the wife of a duke and having arranged transportation by boat, has requested permission to travel to Cádiz, without a male escort if necessary: "Eso no lo consentiré, y aunque se tratara de ir a América en el frágil esquife de que hablaba la señora duquesa" [I will not agree to that, even if the Duchess was speaking of going to America in a flimsy skiff] (892). Both of these limited references indicate a sharp reduction in the textual evocations of Spain's colonial history as the series turns its attention to the individual battles of the Peninsular War. No longer presented in direct fashion, the references to empire become increasingly metaphorical and subtle in nature and serve to draw attention to the separation of Spain from its colonial legacy in both space and time. In the first case it is the destruction of a landmark bridge that celebrated empire and in the second case an exaggerated reference to the physical distance between the metropolis and its colonies.

Nowhere is the growing distance between the metropolis and its colonial territories more apparent than in the novel *Cádiz*, the eighth in the series, whose title refers to the 1810–12 national assembly (the *Cortes constitucionales*) and the process of drafting Spain's first constitution. In *Cádiz*, Galdós makes excellent use of the generic aspects of historical fiction in the process of disassociating Spanish national identity from its colonial past. The novel contains a calculated presentation of the *Cortes constitucionales*. As history, Galdós's chronicle of this critically important historical event participates in a curious set of erasures and omissions.⁴

⁴ For most critics, *Cádiz* offers a historical look into the processes of the *Cortes constitucionales*. See, for example, Gilbert Smith ("From *Trafalgar* to *Cádiz*: Galdós, Ortega, and the Hermetic Historical Novel," in *La Chispa '95. Selected Proceedings* (New Orleans, LA: Tulane University, 1995)); Stephen G.H. Roberts ("Toward a Political Anthropology: *Cádiz* by Benito Pérez Galdós," in *1812 Echoes: The Cádiz Constitution in Hispanic History, Culture, and Politics* (Newcastle upon

From the perspective of postcolonial theory, Galdós's selective presentation of history makes *Cádiz* a narrative that "shapes its vision of the future out of the silences and ellipses of historical amnesia" (Gandhi 7). On the other hand, the novel presents a fictional central plot that undeniably defines Spain's empire and its aristocratic social structures as once powerful but now antiquated aspects of national identity. By virtue of this novel's plot structure, readers are encouraged to participate actively in the process of rethinking and reformulating Spanish identity, in relation not just to the rest of Europe but also to Spain's past and present, as a country struggling with the elements that have determined its identity for many centuries.

Through its presentation of the history of the *Cortes constitucionales*, *Cádiz* avoids facts surrounding the colonies, turning instead to the concept of Spain as a nation without a colonial past.⁵ The fact that Galdós's 1874 portrait of this important moment in Spanish history fails to make any reference to the historical reality of Spanish empire in the process of drafting the Constitution of 1812, or to the many debates that took up the topic of increased autonomy for Spain's colonial territories, makes *Cádiz* a literary work that rewrites national history. In this regard, Galdós's 1874 historical novel becomes an illustrative example of José Álvarez Junco's assessment of this period of Spanish history: "el Estado español pasó a lo largo de los tres primeros cuartos del siglo XIX, por una fase crítica, casi fundamental: 'de imperio a nación'" [over the first three quarters of the

Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2013)); and Manuel Cifo González ("Retórica política y novela: *Cádiz* de Benito Pérez Galdós y *El asedio* de Arturo Pérez Reverte," in *Retórica y política: los discursos de la construcción de la sociedad* (Logroño: Gobierno de la Rioja, Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, Ayuntamiento de Calahorra, 2012)). Stephen G.H. Roberts, for example, notes that the novel "functions as a work of political anthropology" by chronicling how people live through and respond to a specific historical moment (214). Cifo González indicates that Galdós's account of the *Cortes constitucionales* lacks historical accuracy (563). Galdós's novel presents scenes in which Gabriel Araceli attends the debates with the daughters of the Condesa de Rumblar, while historically women were not allowed to witness the debates. By and large these critics focus their attention exclusively on the fictional representation of the political debates of the time rather than the cultural milieu or the allegorical elements of the novel.

⁵ References to the idea of nation are more evident in this *Episodio* than in any other of the first series. In total, the term "*nación*" appears 28 times in *Cádiz*, always connected to discussions surrounding the historical process of drafting the Constitution of 1812.

nineteenth century, the Spanish State underwent a critical phase, almost fundamental: “from empire to nation”] (534).

The most notable aspect of Galdós’s presentation of the historical Constitutional Court is the failure to mention either the participation of colonial representatives or their concerns, particularly against the backdrop of the growing independence movements. For instance, one of the most important Spanish journalists in the early nineteenth century, José Blanco White, made the Constitutional Court a focus of attention in his monthly journal, *El Español*, which he published in London between March of 1810 and June of 1814. As an *emigrado*, a political liberal who found it impossible to live in his native Spain, Blanco White was a leading source of information about the growing independence movements in the colonies and became a sharp critic of the Constitutional Court. Despite being banned in Spain, Blanco White’s journal was known to virtually anyone involved with Spain’s transatlantic trade, given London’s role as a banking hub for the metropolis and its colonies. Moreover, colonial subjects were intentionally included in the Constitutional Court. When the Cortes were established, there were 200 representatives from the peninsula and 30 from the colonies (Fradera, *Gobernar colonias* 52). Such participation and engagement of the citizens of the empire in the formulation of a plan for the future was unprecedented in Spanish history, and for some of Galdós’s contemporaries the Constitution of Cádiz “represented the high mark of Spanish and American collaboration” (Schmidt-Nowara, *Conquest of History* 17). It is important to remember that these colonial representatives did not sit on the sidelines. Instead they fully engaged in the debates and the formulation of the Constitution, bringing to the *Cortes constitucionales* a multiplicity of perspectives with respect to empire that reflected practical experience.

No estaban “desconectados” de la realidad. Traían con ellos las *Instrucciones* que sus cabildos habían elaborado para que las expusieran en las Cortes. Estas eran, en muchos casos, no solo *cabiers de doleances* sino auténticos programas de medidas y reformas autonomistas, tanto económicas como políticas, liberales. (Chust, *El País*)

[They were not “disconnected” from reality. They brought with them the instructions that their town councils had elaborated so that they could present them in the Cortes. There were, in many cases, not only lists of grievances but authentic programs of measures and liberal autonomous reforms, as much economic as political.]

The Constitution of 1812 was a document that, as Manuel Chust has so succinctly noted, “se ideó desde las premisas de crear un Estado-nación

transoceánico” [was designed with the premise of creating a transoceanic nation-state] (“La Constitución”).

One cannot say that there was a lack of knowledge or awareness of this historical reality among the intellectuals of Galdós’s own time.⁶ For this very reason, the fact that Galdós’s fictionalized representation of this moment in Spanish political history erases the participation of these colonial representatives should draw our attention to the issue of empire and its future. In its portrayal of the debates *Cádiz* avoids references to participants who historically addressed colonial concerns, thus diminishing an understanding of the Constitution’s importance as a tool designed to rescue and strengthen Spanish empire.⁷ The novel’s pointed omissions allow readers to overlook this fundamental part of Spain’s historical past as they accompany the fictional protagonists in their own process of coming to terms with the need to forge a new Spanish national identity.

The novel’s true engagement with Spanish colonialism occurs instead within the fictional component of the novel, in the continuing story of Gabriel Araceli and his fight to win Amaranta’s daughter, Inés. Gabriel is now a respected military figure, and he serves as the critical link between the historical and fictional components of the novel. He attends the sessions of the *Cortes* during the day and the *tertulias* and social

⁶ In his collection of Blanco White’s essays from *El Español* on the subject of Latin American independence, Juan Goytisolo notes that Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, a contemporary of Galdós, devotes a chapter to Blanco White and his pro-independence journalism in the second volume of his grand work, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*. Goytisolo cites Menéndez Pelayo’s conclusion that “Empresa más abominable y antipatriótica no podía darse en medio de la Guerra de la Independencia” [One could not undertake a more abominable and anti-patriotic business during the War of Independence] (13). Given Galdós’s avid consumption of historiography, it is hard to imagine that he would not have come across information about Blanco White. While Blanco White’s criticism of the metropolis, considered unpatriotic by the conservative Catholic Menéndez Pelayo, might not have fit within the deeply patriotic tone of the first series, it does not explain why Galdós would have felt the need to represent the Cortes constitucionales as a process that did not engage or involve the colonies.

⁷ In describing the deep involvement of noted politician and anti-abolitionist Rafael María de Labra in the centennial commemoration of the Constitution of Cádiz, Christopher Schmidt-Nowara notes that the interest in 1812 did not grow out of a post-1898 sensibility toward Spanish imperialism but rather represents “a strong continuity with the nineteenth-century patriotic imagination and the real sense of trauma experienced by Spaniards in the wake of defeat” (*The Conquest of History*, 18–19).

gatherings in the evenings, where the various debates are discussed and rehashed. Gabriel frequents the aristocratic circle of the ultramontane Rumbler family, headed by the widowed Condesa de Rumbler. A stern Catholic matriarch, the Condesa has taken Inés from Amaranta's side in order to prepare the girl for marriage to her dissolute son. The novel also introduces the important character of Lord Gray, loosely patterned after Lord Byron, who has come to Spain in search of adventure.⁸ A complex figure, Lord Gray is simultaneously an aristocrat with a nostalgic view of Spain's imperial past and a representative of England's growing imperial dominance.

Gabriel's humble beginnings, Inés's illegitimacy, the Condesa's social rigidity, and Lord Gray's appearance all work to highlight the complex connections between social class and the fate of Spanish empire. Unquestionably Galdós is on the side of his protagonist, Gabriel, who represents a new form of social mobility, one that will result in a thriving middle class.⁹ That Cádiz is the birthplace of the Spanish middle class is later made clear in *Los Apostólicos*, the penultimate volume of the second series of *Episodios*, when the highly sympathetic character of Benigno Cordero specifically links this social class to the Constitution of 1812:

La formidable clase media, que hoy es el poder omnímodo que todo lo hace y deshace, llamándose política, magistratura, administración, ciencia, ejército, nació en Cádiz entre el estruendo de las bombas francesas y las peroratas de un congreso híbrido, inocente, extranjerizado si se quiere, pero que brotado había como un sentimiento, o como un instinto ciego, incontrastable, del espíritu nacional. (*Episodios* II 881)

[The formidable middle class, which today is the omnipotent power that does and undoes everything – call it politics, government, administration, science, army – was born in Cádiz between the din of French bombs and the tirades of a congress that was hybrid, innocent, one could say foreign, but had sprouted, like a feeling, or like a blind instinct, unshakeable, from the national spirit.]

⁸ One of the few scholars who has noted the symbolic nature of the character of Lord Gray is Toni Dorca. But, rather than seeing this important character as a figure connected to concepts of empire, Dorca focuses on Lord Gray exclusively as a representation of romanticism ("Visiones de la Guerra" 74).

⁹ In his acceptance speech to the Royal Spanish Academy Galdós famously wrote that the middle class was not only the proper subject of the realist writer but also an essential element of a national prosperity ("La sociedad presente" 163).

In essence, Cádiz in 1810–12 is the time and place in which a new Spain is born, and the literary representation of that moment and its connection to Spanish empire merits careful scrutiny.

If Gabriel represents the new middle class, the character of Lord Gray, Gabriel's antagonist in the novel, serves as a multi-faceted representative of imperialism, both foreign and domestic, past and present. On the few occasions when the Americas are directly mentioned, it is in the context of the extensive travels and activities of the character of Lord Gray, an apparent embodiment of the imperialist drive of other European nations. A charismatic English nobleman, Lord Gray is a romantic adventurer who, having rejected English society, has traveled throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas, all territories of European colonial expansion. Lord Gray has come to Spain in anticipation of the British involvement in the war against Napoleon. His presence in Spain is based as much on his rejection of middle-class British values as it is on his romantic attachment to what he perceives to be Spain's exotic otherness. Lord Gray functions as a character whose imperialism is revealed not only in his travels but also in his assumption of an aristocratic social superiority and his patronizing approach to cultural difference. Moreover, in his definition of British expansion as a noxious result of the rise of England's mercantile middle class, a phenomenon that threatens his own aristocratic assumption of privilege, Lord Gray fails to see his own world view as an essential aspect of cultural imperialism.

Unsurprisingly, it is Gabriel Araceli, the embodiment of a new, middle-class Spain, who is the only one who recognizes this aspect of Lord Gray's character and challenges him. The adversarial nature of their relationship is revealed from the very start. When, for example, Lord Gray indicates his frustration at not being able to fight alongside the Spanish *guerrilleros* [insurgents] against the French, Gabriel defends the initial decision of the *Juntas* to not allow the British to land on Spanish soil, likening such an event to turning over Spanish territories to a foreign government and reminding Lord Gray about the status of Gibraltar (I 909). The nobleman is quite taken with the young Spaniard's brazen challenge, choosing to see in Gabriel's response an antagonism toward England that he both shares and admires. Additionally, when asked about his own disdain for British society, Lord Gray responds with a sharp condemnation of his nation's global expansion, ostensibly blind to the way he benefits from and even enacts those very same aspirations.

Aborrezco el comercio; aborrezco a Londres, mostrador nauseabundo de las drogas de todo el mundo; y cuando oigo decir que todas las altas

instituciones de la vieja Inglaterra, el régimen colonial y nuestra gran marina tienen por objeto el sostenimiento del tráfico y la protección de la sórdida avaricia de los negociantes que bañan sus cabezas redondas como quesos con el agua negra del Támesis, siento un crispamiento de nervios insoportable y me avergüenzo de ser inglés. (I 910)

[I hate commerce; I hate London, a nauseating showcase of drugs from around the world; and when I hear it said that all the high institutions of old England, the colonial regime and our great navy have as their purpose the maintenance of traffic and the protection of the sordid greed of businessmen who bathe their round heads like cheeses with the black water of the Thames, I feel an unbearable twitching of nerves and I'm ashamed to be English.]

One of the great ironies of this fictional character is that Galdós places him in a unique intersection of space and time. Lord Gray powerfully condemns British economic imperialism, even as he fails to recognize that his romanticized notion of Spain conveniently ignores the economic aspects of its imperial past. In addition, he makes this statement during his stay in the port city of Cádiz, thus illustrating a remarkable ability to disregard the importance of Spain's colonial markets to the nation's economic health. It is important to remember that in the last decades of the eighteenth century between 80 and 90 per cent of colonial trade passed through the port of Cádiz and that this trade represented nearly half of Spain's income (Ringrose 85, 93).

Significantly, the references to the Americas in *Cádiz* stand in marked contrast to those made by characters such as Don Alonso in *Trafalgar*. The Spaniards who have raptly listened to Lord Gray's tales of adventure recount his descriptions of the Americas as a land of "unos salvajes mansos que agasajan a los viajeros" [tame savages who entertain travelers] and a place of natural wonders not found in Europe (I 905, 1026). The Americas are no longer referred to as a part of the Spanish empire. Instead, America is described as the antithesis of Europe, as a place of complete and total cultural otherness and the object of foreign, but notably not Spanish, imperialist expansion. Curiously, it is a mistaken concept of cultural otherness that has brought Lord Gray to Cádiz in search of adventure, which heightens the sense that peninsular Spain itself has been transformed from a metropolis into a land of possible conquest. Lord Gray hopes to find in Spain "gente pendenciera, ruda y primitiva, hombres de corazón borrascoso y apasionado" [brave, rough and primitive people, men of stormy and passionate heart] (I 911). His image of Spain, so similar to his early descriptions of other colonial territories, is challenged by the stultifying social expectations of the

aristocratic *tertulias* that he attends, gatherings that he finds to be only too similar to those he abhorred in England.

To satisfy his desire to connect with individuals he believes to embody the essential nature of Spanish national identity, Lord Gray chooses to consort with drunks and prostitutes living on the margins of Spanish society. In one particularly relevant passage, Lord Gray experiences a moment of romantic exaltation when he abandons his aristocratic clothing for rags and the drawing rooms of Spanish nobility for the company of beggars. Gabriel finds him in the streets and must plead with him to return to the more civilized society of Spanish aristocracy. At that moment, Lord Gray turns to the ragged mob and offers them a dramatic farewell speech, saying “Adiós, España; adiós, soldados de Flandes, conquistadores de Europa y América, cenizas animadas de una gente que tenía el fuego por alma y se ha quemado en su propio calor” [Goodbye Spain; goodbye soldiers of Flanders, conquerors of Europe and America, animated ashes of people who had fire for soul and burned in their own heat] (996). Gabriel is scandalized by Lord Gray’s behavior, seeing in his embrace of this segment of Spanish society a blatant rejection of the middle-class values that Galdós’s narrative has presented as both properly ethical and essentially natural. From Gabriel’s perspective, Lord Gray’s words represent a profound misreading of Spanish character. But his words, in their evocation of Spain’s imperial past, signal that Spain is no longer the imperial power it once was. Equally important, the fact that Gabriel narrates this event as an example of Lord Gray’s inappropriate and mistaken conceptualization of Spain signals that from Gabriel’s perspective empire is no longer a descriptor of national identity.

Lord Gray’s misreading of Spanish character reaches its zenith in his relationship with the daughter of the Condesa de Rumblar. As a pious young woman destined to be a Catholic nun, Asunción de Rumblar becomes an object of the Englishman’s perverse donjuanesque obsession. Her seduction and dishonor will become the plot elements that lead to the conclusion of the novel, with a duel between Gabriel and Lord Gray that will result in the Englishman’s death. Despite the literary allusions these plot twists bring to the novel, there is a clear distinction between the romanticized and anachronistic notions of honor that form Lord Gray’s world view and the more realistic decisions that Gabriel makes in his desire to protect both Inés and Asunción de Rumblar.

The contrast between romanticism and realism is made palpable through the novel’s frequent and unmistakable parallels between Lord Gray and the famous protagonist of both Tirso de Molina’s fifteenth-century *Burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* (1630) and José Zorrilla’s 1844 play *Don Juan Tenorio*. One obvious allusion lies in the name of Gabriel’s

love interest, Inés, with the obvious difference being that her innate good sense and rational behavior makes her immune to the aristocrat's advances. Recognizing this fact, Lord Gray nonetheless feigns interest in Inés in order to conceal his true plans with regard to the Condesa de Rumblar's virtuous daughter, Asunción, whose misplaced religious mysticism – itself an element of Spain's former cultural identity – leaves her vulnerable to his romantic overtures. Lord Gray's initial interest in Asunción is provoked precisely by her religious faith. As Lord Gray admits to Gabriel, after he has seduced Asunción and then abandoned her, it was his desire to “coger con mis manos aquella imagen celestial de mujer canonizable; alzarle el velo y mirar si había algo de humano tras los celajes místicos que la envolvían” [take with my hands that celestial image of a saintly woman; to raise her veil and see if there was something human behind the mystical clouds that enveloped her] (I 1041). He erotically describes his romantic dreams of conquest as a desire to “penetrar los misterios de aquella arca santa” [penetrate the mysteries of that saintly ark] (I 1041). He is forced to face reality once he has achieved his goal. Instead of resulting in “una impresión celeste que transportara mi alma a la esfera de las más altas concepciones” [a celestial impression that would transport my soul to the sphere of the highest conceptions], his seduction of the young girl only leads him to conclude, in a phrase that serves as a textual echo of Don Juan's objectification of women, that Asunción is “una mujer como otra cualquiera, como la de ayer, como la de anteayer ...” [a woman like any other, like yesterday, like the day before that] (I 1041).

The subtle evocation of Zorrilla's play helps demonstrate that the conflict between romanticism and realism – as embodied in the characters of Lord Gray and Gabriel Araceli, respectively – reflects a romanticized vision of an imperial past and a realistic vision of a post-colonial present and future. Lord Gray remains a figure linked to maritime travel and imperialist expansion, and this is underscored by his final duel with Gabriel on La Caleta, the principal beach located near Cádiz's ports and its historical center. His death at the end of the novel metaphorically signals an end to a romanticized imperial past. Of particular interest are Lord Gray's defiant last words to the Condesa de Rumblar, “Si tu hija entra en el convento, la sacaré” [If your daughter enters a convent, I'll pull her out] (I 1046). His boast constitutes another unambiguous evocation of Zorrilla's theatrical language. But the fact that he utters these words as he lies moribund on the edge of the sea in Spain's most significant colonial port city evokes other literary and cultural reference points as well. Lord Gray's words may serve to identify him with the character of Don Juan Tenorio as a romantic figure, but the actual plot of the novel, specifically Lord Gray's lack of

repentance and his death, connect him more closely to Tirso de Molina's play, written at the height of Spanish imperial power. Galdós's representations of romanticism and realism signal more than historically situated literary movements; they indicate very different approaches to Spanish national identity. Galdós situates Lord Gray's character and his behavior within a framework of exaggerated romanticism that is itself connected to an imperial notion of Spanish identity, thus making Gabriel's duel with Lord Gray a metaphor for the rejection of romanticized notions of Spain's colonial past.

In its presentation of a historical moment that participates in the formation of a new national identity, *Cádiz* attempts to distance that new identity from Spain's colonial past. If Lord Gray holds an anachronistic and nostalgic view of Spanish imperialism, the character of Don Pedro Congosto takes this perspective to comic extremes. Don Pedro, an aristocrat and a member of the *Cortes constitucionales*, espouses a highly conservative and reactionary political perspective. Though he reflects the historical reality of a particularly conservative faction of the *Cortes constitucionales*, Don Pedro is presented as a comical figure through his insistence on rejecting contemporary fashion in favor of clothing that imitates the styles worn by courtiers from the time of the Catholic kings. As Don Pedro explains, "las modas francesas han corrompido las costumbres" [French fashions have corrupted customs], and he argues for a return to the fashion of Spain's imperial past as a first step toward recuperating the nation's political and cultural grandeur (I 920). That his choice of clothing reflects a desire to renew Spanish imperialism is made undeniably clear when he adds, "Cada uno se viste como quiere, y si yo prefiero este antiguo traje a los franceses que venimos usando hace tiempo, y ciño esta espada, que fue la que llevó Francisco Pizarro al Perú, es porque quiero ser español por los cuatro costados" [Each one dresses as he pleases, and if I prefer this old-fashioned suit to the French ones that we have been wearing for a long time, and I wear this sword, that was the one that Francisco Pizarro carried to Peru, it is because I want to be entirely Spanish] (I 919). From Congosto's perspective, Spanish identity is essentially linked to conquest and imperial expansion. The fact that he wears the sword of one of Spain's most infamous conquistadores from the sixteenth century cements an identification of this nineteenth-century figure to romantic notions of Spain's former glory as a global hegemonic empire. Not surprisingly, Congosto's romanticized notion of Spanish imperial identity, so clearly out of step with the realities of Spain's situation in 1810, finds common ground with the ideas expressed by Lord Gray.

No examination of literary representations of empire can avoid the most profoundly heinous manifestation of European colonialism: the transat-

lantic slave trade.¹⁰ It is here that Galdós most severely tests his reader's credulity with respect to historical accuracy, and I would argue that the obvious inaccuracy of the novel's presentation of the issue of slavery both underscores the very real political landscape of 1874 even as it twists historical truth in a desperate attempt to endow this new formulation of national identity with a peculiar case of historical amnesia. Lord Gray, once again, is the character that comments on slavery, bitterly denouncing his countrymen for their hypocrisy and failure to address this profound injustice: "Se precian mucho de su libertad, pero no les importa que haya millones de esclavos en las colonias" ["They are very proud of their freedom, but they do not care that there are millions of slaves in the colonies"] (I 910). His comment, however, is not entirely accurate, since England formally abolished the slave trade in 1808 and pressed other European nations to do the same (Curtin 35). From the perspective of 1874, when the novel was written, Lord Gray's comment seems designed to trigger a response on the part of Galdós's contemporaries to address Spain's own increased involvement with the slave trade and slavery, particularly in Cuba, in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Curtin 267). When Galdós wrote *Cádiz* the question of slavery was a heated topic of metropolitan political debate due to the increased activity of peninsular abolitionist movements and the 1868–78 Ten Years' War in Cuba, which had pitted Cuban slave owners against the government in Madrid (Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery* 126).

By limiting its treatment of the history of the slave trade to British involvement, without referring to the historical reality of Spain's own investment in the practice, *Cádiz* thoroughly elides Spanish participation in an immoral practice situated at the very heart of European imperialism. The inclusion of the character of Lord Gray allows the author, in a remarkable historical sleight of hand, to avoid Spanish complicity in the slave trade by framing the debate entirely within the framework of the British empire. Moreover, the text's silence with regard to Spanish participation in the slave trade and its oblique disassociation of connections between metropolis and colony find a curious resonance in the actual historical and political relations between Spain and Cuba in the 1870s, which would eventually

¹⁰ Lisa Surwillo's aforementioned study, *Monsters by Trade. Slave Traffickers in Modern Spanish Literature and Culture* is an unparalleled study of literary representations of this dark chapter of Spanish history. Unsurprisingly, her analysis includes an analysis of José Blanco White's abolitionist views in his fictional work as well as a close reading of two of Galdós's contemporary novels, the subject of additional commentary in Chapter Six.

lead to the next critical event in Spain's colonial history. As has been pointed out in the Introduction, the Ten Years' War of 1868–78, occurring even as Galdós was writing his historical novels, profoundly affected the nation's relationship with what had been the crown jewel of its colonies (Bahamonde and Cayuela 362).

Cádiz concludes with a complicated set of parallel plot elements that serve to contrast the romanticized relationship of Lord Gray and Asunción de Rumblar on the one hand and the more realistic yet no less dramatic relationship between Gabriel and Inés on the other. Gabriel, in both a self-interested move to prevent Inés's forced marriage to Asunción's brother and a selfless act to reunite Inés with her mother, has managed to spirit Inés out of the Rumblar family home in Cádiz. The family mistakenly accuses Lord Gray of this act of betrayal and, in a moment of dramatic comedy, don Pedro Congosto comes to the defense of the Rumblar family and challenges Lord Gray to a duel. Aware of don Pedro's ineptitude, Lord Gray and his friends decide to stage a fake duel in which the Spaniard in seventeenth-century garb will believe he has bested the English aristocrat. In the meantime, Lord Gray manages to persuade Asunción to abandon her family and come to him, only to cruelly seduce and then abandon her. When this dishonorable act is revealed, Gabriel seeks out Lord Gray, advising him that, after the mock duel with Congosto, he himself will be on hand to provide the Englishman with a legitimate fight. Thus, the novel presents two separate duels, one of which is comic and another in deadly earnest.¹¹

The metaphorical nature of this set of events points to the novel's subtle message that romanticized notions of empire will prove to be ineffective and illusory in the face of more powerful and realistic concepts of nation. The description of the duel between Lord Gray and Don Pedro is not only farcical but also one of the few times in the text in which we are presented with direct references to Spain's imperial past. Gabriel arrives at La Caleta beach in time to see that one of Lord Gray's lower-class followers, Poenco, has been disguised in an old-fashioned suit of armor and mask and is being instructed on the best way to imitate the Englishman. His task is to dramatically enact a scripted defeat at the hands of Don Pedro. Gabriel notes the elaborate nature of Poenco's costume: "Entre los de Lord Gray vi un figurón armado de pies a cabeza, con peto y espaldar de latón, celada de encaje, rodela y con tantas plumas en la cabeza que, más

¹¹ In this sense, Toni Dorca's assessment of the novel – as one in which "Galdós compone un relato en que lo simbólico domina sobre el realista" ("Visiones de la Guerra" 74) – is insightful.

que guerrero, parecía salvaje de América” [Among Lord Gray’s entourage I saw a figure armed from head to toe, with a breastplate and brass back, covered up with lace, a shield, and with so many feathers that, more than a warrior, he seemed like a savage from America] (I 1043–44). The anachronistic combination of medieval armor and feather headdress serves as an important linkage to colonial history. But the text suggests that it is imperialism in general, including its Spanish and British manifestations, that is being critiqued. Specifically, once the comedy of the duel is played out, with the false Lord Gray falling and declaring “muerto soy” [I am dead!] (I 1044) – in itself a humorous imitation of Golden Age dramas – Lord Gray’s followers surround Congosto, cheering him and carrying him away on their shoulders, leaving the real Lord Gray, Gabriel, and their two appointed seconds behind. As Gabriel watches this cruel parody, he notices that don Pedro’s sword has been left on the beach: “La espada de don Pedro quedó abandonada en el suelo. Era, según antes he dicho, la espada de Francisco Pizarro. A tal estado habían venido a parar las grandezas heroicas de España” [Don Pedro’s sword was left abandoned on the ground. It was, as I said before, the sword of Francisco Pizarro. The heroic greatness of Spain had come to such a state] (I 1045). The reference here is unequivocally to Spain’s imperial past and its history of conquest in the Americas, and the narrative as told from Gabriel’s perspective intimates that the country’s historical greatness has come to an ignominious end.

Ironically, however, it is this same sword that Gabriel grabs when his own more authentic duel with Lord Gray and the real struggle for supremacy begins. Soon after they begin to fight, one of the seconds calls for a halt when he notices the arrival of an unknown person dressed in black. Given dueling’s illegality, he fears this person might represent the authorities. Lord Gray’s response is unequivocal: “que venga el mundo entero a observarnos” [Let the whole world come to watch us] (I 1045). This metaphorically sets the duel, between an antiquated and romanticized representation of imperialism and a younger, more agile and realistic manifestation of national pride, on a much larger global stage. What keeps the scene from being one more romantic glorification of Spain’s imperial past are Gabriel’s actions during and after the duel. When he mortally wounds Lord Gray he casts the sword aside in shock. The figure in black is then revealed to be the Condesa de Rumblar. She praises Gabriel for his actions, while Gabriel himself feels compassion and sorrow and is unable to verbalize his feelings. The Condesa realizes that this moment marks a critical moment with regard to history and her participation in it, stating “Yo no soy de esta época, no ... Desde esta noche mi casa se cerrará como un sepulcro” [I am not of this era, no ... From this night on my house

will be closed like a tomb] (I 1047). She recognizes the stark differences between her own antiquated social class and the reality of Spain's political future. More importantly, the Condesa ceases to insist that others conform to her point of view. Having once demanded that Inés remain in her care in preparation for the marriage to her son, the Condesa now rejects Inés as unworthy and turns her over to Gabriel, willingly relinquishing her power over the young woman's future. From an allegorical standpoint, we can read the confrontation between Lord Gray and Gabriel Araceli and its aftermath as a moment in which romanticized notions of Spain's imperial past lose their cultural capital and their political sway in the face of a new political and social reality. Gabriel wins the duel, and his casting aside of the sword signals that imperialism will be, in the end, responsible for its own demise.

From the perspective of history, *Cádiz* presents many true historical events of the initial months of the *Cortes constitucionales*, but the novel also reveals the author's own historical moment and traces, as it were, a journey back in time from the 1870s and the novel's moment of conception to the period of 1810–12. This is one way in which the novel successfully signals the lasting political effects of the Constitution of 1812 throughout the nineteenth century. Manuel Chust has written that the historical response to this moment in Spanish political history was to frame the event as playing out between “un binomio maniqueo de buenos y males, de americanos y gachupines, sin opciones intermedias entre la independencia y el colonialismo absolutista” [a Manichean binary between good and evil, between Americans and Spaniards, without intermediate options between independence and absolutist colonialism] (Chust, “La Constitución”). From this perspective, the Constitution of 1812 was the first legal document that ironically, through its recognition of *las dos Españas* and the legitimacy of its colonial representatives, signaled the first step of American independence even as it attempted to reinvigorate imperial unity. Accordingly, then, we must ask ourselves what it means that *Cádiz* erases this aspect of the historical reality of the *Cortes constitucionales*. I would argue that, rather than portraying Spain as a once great nation brought low, as Pedro Congosto's character would seem to imply, Galdós presents his readers with a new concept of nation that is separate from the colonial history that once defined it as an empire. Spain is no longer an empire and it serves no purpose to perceive it as such. It is, as the patriotic nature of the first series makes clear, a nation whose primary concern is its own sovereignty in relation to the rest of Europe. Galdós effectively excises the colonies from his historical evocation of Spain's search for a new national identity. The novel allows readers to reconceptualize the very question of borders,

identifying them as strictly national and relative to the peninsula rather than the empire.

Cádiz represents a critical text for defining the trajectory of colonial references in the first series of *Episodios*. From this point forward in the series, Galdós turns his attention back to the battlefields of the Peninsular War. *Juan Martín el Empecinado* and *La batalla de los Arapiles* – the last two novels in the series – evidence far fewer references to Spanish colonial history. The term “*imperio*” in these novels refers exclusively to Napoleon’s Imperial Army, and the major plot line involving Gabriel, Inés, Amaranta, and Luis Santorcaz moves steadily forward toward a positive resolution that emphasizes the necessity of reconfiguring the social class structures that have heretofore defined the *ancien régime*. Yet, if *Cádiz* serves as a turning point for the series’ portrayal of Spain’s colonial past, *La batalla de los Arapiles* provides some concluding references in the series as a whole that illustrate in clear terms the growing perception of Spain as a nation that has attracted the attention of other European nations intent on expanding their own nascent empires.

The final novel of the series, *La batalla de los Arapiles*, contains virtually no references to Spanish colonialism, but this is precisely the point of the first series with respect to Spanish national identity. Spain’s colonial past is erased and a new concept of nation takes its place. The series reaches a culmination both in its recounting of the Peninsular War and in the resolution of the series’ central plot involving Gabriel Araceli, Inés and her parents, Amaranta, and Luis Santorcaz. From the standpoint of Spanish history, the novel focuses on one of the most decisive battles of the war, when the Duke of Wellington’s troops, alongside Spanish and Portuguese forces, won a decisive victory over Napoleón’s army near Salamanca. Gabriel finds himself in the thick of the bloody fighting and, as a metaphor for the end of the Napoleonic empire, he manages to wrest from the enemy the *Grande Armée*’s once feared symbol, the French imperial eagle and its Napoleonic banner, which has been reduced to “una arpillera sin color ... cuya matiz era un pastel de tierra, de sangre, de lodo y de polvo” [a sackcloth without color ... whose hue was a pastel mix of earth, blood, mud and dust] (1324). In defeating the French, Gabriel is able to win Inés as his bride, and he witnesses a touching scene of familial reconciliation between Inés’s parents as Luis Santorcaz lies dying. The defeat of the imperial army and recuperation of national sovereignty is thus linked to a scene in which the parents’ discord is definitively resolved, in admissions of truth and guilt, in acts of forgiveness, and ultimately in death, leaving the surviving members the ability to look forward to the future.

To move from Wellington’s victory to the novel’s final moment of familial *anagnorisis*, in itself a metropolitan version of the domestic

romance, the text must bring Gabriel and the reader face to face with the contrast between Spain's new identity and England's own imperial ambitions. This confrontation centers on the character of Miss Athenais Fly, a young woman of noble birth who accompanies the British troops. Miss Fly claims to have followed her brother to Spain and, after his death on the battlefield, to have found herself captivated by everything Spanish.

... me cautivaban de tal modo la historia, las tradiciones, las costumbres, la literatura, las artes, las ruinas, las música popular, los bailes, los trajes de esta nación tan grande en otro tiempo y otra vez grandísima en la época presente, que formé el proyecto de quedarme aquí para estudiarlo todo. (I 1208)

[I was captivated in such a way by history, traditions, customs, literature, art, ruins, popular music, dances, the costumes of this nation, once great at another time, and once again great in the present, that I formulated a project to stay here and study everything.]

Miss Fly's reading of Spain is certainly based in the same kind of romantic exoticism that was evident in the attitudes of Lord Gray. That both are members of the British aristocracy who travel alone and hold such romanticized views of Spain serves to link them. By the end of the novel readers learn that Miss Fly's story is indeed intimately connected with that of Lord Gray. With a tale that would likely have stretched the credulity of even Galdós's contemporary readers, she confesses to Gabriel that Lord Gray seduced her twin sister, who as a result committed suicide, thus leading in turn to the death of her brother in a duel with her seducer and the subsequent decline and death of her mother. Her thirst for vengeance and her extensive reading of romantic tales compels her to discover the identity of Lord Gray's killer, a figure to whom she attributes grandiose virtues. When she realizes Gabriel's role in Lord Gray's death she imagines herself in love with him and, when she finds Gabriel in a military hospital after the battle of Salamanca, she reveals her story and her irrational passion for him. Not surprisingly, as a wounded and semi-conscious Gabriel listens to her disturbing confession, he harkens back to the events in Cádiz – not to his own fight with Lord Gray but rather to the farcical duel: “mi espíritu hizo inexplicables equilibrios sobre dos imágenes grotescas, y puestos en una balanza dos figurones llamados Poencos y don Pedro del Congosto, el uno subía mientras el otro bajaba” [my spirit imagined inexplicable equivalents between the two grotesque images, and placed on the scale the two figures called Poencos and don Pedro de Congosto, the one rose while the other fell] (I 1329). This textual detail serves to remind both

Gabriel and readers that the romanticized image of Spain held by both Lord Gray and Miss Fly is not only false but also potentially damaging. Miss Fly's obsession with Gabriel has placed both his professional honor and his potential union with Inés at risk. Miss Fly attempts to force Gabriel into marrying her, thus enacting at the level of the fictional characters the existential threat that Spain will gain its independence from France only to lose it once again to England. Both Gabriel's refusal to submit and his steadfast love for Inés eventually lead Miss Fly to reconsider her impressions, concluding that Gabriel is an "alma vacía" [empty soul] who does not live up to her expectations (I 1332). "Yo aparto esa hojaresca y no encuentro nada" [I pull back the layers and I find nothing], she says, adding "Estáis compuesto de grandeza y pequeñez" [You are all made up of greatness and smallness], to which Gabriel responds, in his own affirmation of reality, "como todo, como todo lo creado, señora" [like everything, like everything created, madam] (I 1332). When Miss Fly realizes her inability to transform Gabriel into her ideal, she decides to return to England. Lord Gray does not survive because, despite his nationality, he ironically serves as a substitute representative of Spain's own colonial history, which Gabriel must challenge and overcome. Miss Grey, however, represents England's nascent imperialism, and she returns to her native soil, leaving Gabriel to determine his own future.

To conclude this analysis of colonial references in the first series of *Episodios nacionales*, it is worth noting that these novels reflect as much a narrative of the national psyche as the story of the birth of modern Spain. Galdós's decision to initiate his own historiography of contemporary Spain with the Peninsular War reflects the growing consensus on the part of liberal historiographers such as Modesto Lafuente of the importance of that particular war for redefining national identity, a perspective that contemporary historians such as Álvarez Junco continue to affirm (129). Rather than addressing Spain's colonial past directly, Galdós's first series presents a nation whose hopes of retaining pride in the face of defeat are predicated on a separation from as well as a silence regarding that very past. But ultimately it is not possible to maintain that silence. For as much as the nation's imperial past seems to have disappeared from the telling of history, it continues to hover ghost-like in the text's use of allegory in its fictional plots. The author's fictional representation of Spain as a nation with a potential future uncluttered by the moral dilemmas posed by colonialism and slavery ultimately proves problematic, becoming a notable example of the way Spain's past, like Pizarro's sword, continues to haunt the present, a pattern critics have continued to see in more contemporary Spanish history (Labanyi, "History and Hauntology"). Even the semantic construction of

the term “postcolonial” signals a recognition of that which one wishes to transcend. In the words of one critic, “colonialism returns at the moment of its disappearance” (McClintock, “The angel of progress” 255).

By taking a closer look at these early historical novels, we begin to see how Galdós’s texts work assiduously to separate Spain’s imperial past from its national present. Figures such as Don Alonso Gutiérrez de Cisniega and the Condesa de Rumbler represent the nation’s past and a previous national identity, and their nostalgia for the past only serves to emphasize that it cannot be recouped. Gabriel, as a figure who is both younger and without the experience of empire, enacts the process of developing and defining a new sense of national identity. With respect to empire, the culmination in this process is the novel *Cádiz*, which represents a seminal moment in Spanish colonial history, signaling the beginning of the end. By avoiding direct references to Spanish colonialism in its representation of the *Cortes Constitucionales* of 1810–12, *Cádiz* participates in the process of both eliding colonial losses of the past and, in terms of the economic realities of 1874, anticipating colonial losses to come.

But where does Galdós leave his readers with respect to Spain’s imperial decline? By referencing the need to send peninsular representatives to the Latin American *Juntas* and having his central character refuse to make that journey between “las dos Españas,” Galdós signals that the focus must now turn exclusively to the needs of the metropolis. Also important is the fact that the colonies take a reduced role in the final three volumes of the series, almost disappearing altogether from the last novel in the series. It allows the patriotic historical narrative of the metropolis to continue on without the benefit of its former colonies, thus diminishing their role in the narrative reconstruction of national identity. What comes next, this shift in references tells us, is that Spain must now begin a process of reconceptualizing itself as a nation. Equally telling is the fact that Gabriel Araceli’s narrative tale comes to an abrupt halt before the conclusion of the Peninsular War itself, ending just after the 1813 Battle of Salamanca rather than with the final route of José Bonaparte’s army and court in the Battle of Vitoria in 1814, signaling that neither the war against France (an imperial occupier) nor the process of recognizing Spain’s own changing role on the global stage has reached an end. As the narrator of his own story, Gabriel directs the last words of the series directly to readers, encouraging them to complete the tale by adding their own stories, and this serves as a reminder that even in the 1870s the reconfiguration of national identity, the process of leaving behind the image of Spain as an empire and coming to terms with colonial loss, was still very much a work in progress.

Part II:
A Tale of Two Plots

CHAPTER 4

Historicizing Colonial Loss

In July of 1875, only four months after finishing the first series of *Episodios nacionales*, Galdós released the first volume of the second series, *El equipaje del Rey José*. In this novel Galdós picks up the story of Spanish history approximately eight months after the July 1812 confrontation with the French that Gabriel Araceli narrates in *La batalla de los Arapiles*, the last volume of the first series. The continued pace of publication and the chronology of events portrayed indicate that, despite their separation into two distinct sets of ten novels, the two series represent a single literary project, meant to be read as a comprehensive and unified presentation of Spanish history.¹

Given the enormous impact of Fernando VII's return to the Spanish throne in 1813 on both the nature of political discourse in the metropolis and the relationships between the metropolis and its colonies, Galdós faced a particularly difficult challenge in his attempt to reconfigure Spanish national identity through the fictional representation of this period of early nineteenth-century Spanish history. As was noted in Chapter 1, from the very beginning of his career as a novelist, in *La Fontana de Oro* and *El audaz*, Galdós was drawn to depictions of Spain during the rule of Fernando VII, recognizing the king's role in making this period in history a turning point for the nation. In fact, many years after having written this series, particularly at the time of the 1898 Spanish–American War, Galdós would harken back to the early nineteenth century as the critical moment in Spain's imperial history, one that had long-term repercussions for the metropolis.² When we examine the frequent textual details relative

¹ See Hans Hinterhäuser, *Los "Episodios nacionales" de Benito Pérez Galdós* (Madrid: Gredos, 1963), 25.

² In July, 1898 *Vida Nueva*, one of the many journals that were founded in response to the Spanish–American War, reprinted an entire chapter from the second volume of the second series, *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815*, under the

to colonial loss in the second series, both literal and figurative, it becomes undeniably clear that Galdós portrays this particular historical period as one of political ineptitude and lost opportunities. In these novels Galdós establishes a historical frame that allows him to contextualize the events that led Spain on the path to its profoundly reduced status as a world power.

As a whole, the second series presents a lesson in diminishment, a chronicle of Spain becoming less than what it might otherwise have been. The youthful grand plans of the series' protagonists are slowly and inexorably reduced, through years of disappointment and unfortunate timing, and their lives become channeled into a much narrower framework of the personal and the domestic. This process of diminishment is not portrayed as wholly negative. Instead, this series employs a strategy of resigned acceptance, enacted by the series' characters and projected onto its readers, of the undeniable facts of Spanish history. The national history presented in the second series ultimately reframes the loss of imperial power into a portrait of national stoicism, in which honor can potentially be regained by limiting one's sphere of influence to the strictly local. Galdós ultimately represents the acceptance of the nation's reduced stature as an indicator of positive change. Given the events of Fernando VII's reign during the period of history that these novels chronicle, Galdós by necessity must present the historical reality of colonial loss. But he provides a fictional narrative of the effects of that loss in such a way as to create a more palatable story for popular consumption.

The second series continues the process, begun in Galdós's earlier work, of elaborating a modern national identity for Spain, and it shares with the first series the goal of presenting a concept of the nation that no longer encompasses an antiquated idea of empire. Galdós repeats the initial structuring framework evident in the first two volumes of the first series, *Tragalgar* and *La Corte de Carlos IV*, in which the first novel addresses a major military event and the second novel focuses on the politics of the royal court. *El equipaje del Rey José*, the first volume of the second series, presents events leading up to the Battle of Vitoria, in which the Spanish routed the French Imperial Army as it was retreating back into France. Given the battle's significance for bringing the Peninsular War to a close, it has been argued that the first series, as an extended narrative of the war between France and Spain, could be more appropriately defined as a series

title "Fumándose las colonias," effectively linking political decisions taken by Fernando VII in the first years of his monarchy and the resultant loss of much of the country's American territories to the country's defeat at the hands of the United States at the end of the century.

of 11 novels.³ It is equally useful to consider the carryover of the narrative of the war as an element that links the two series together.⁴ Essentially, the ten novels of the second series represent a chronological continuation of the patriotic reformulation of national identity begun in the first series.

There are, however, notable differences between the two sets of novels that help illustrate the difficulty of Galdós's self-appointed task of imagining this key period of Spanish history for a contemporary audience. The most fundamental of these differences is simply the nature of the historical period and the events that Galdós has chosen to portray. The second series covers a longer period of Spanish history, two decades as opposed to the nine years portrayed in Gabriel Araceli's narrative. The period from 1813 to 1834 represents a period of history without an armed conflict similar to the Peninsular War to provide a central focus. Instead, it focuses on the political events surrounding the struggles between competing political ideologies. The first volume, *El equipaje del Rey José*, portrays the final months of José Bonaparte's monarchy and the eventual Spanish victory over Napoleón. The second and third volumes, *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* and *La segunda casaca*, narrate the return of Fernando VII, his rejection of the Constitution of 1812, the re-establishment of monarchical absolutism, and the rampant corruption of his court. The fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes, *El Grande Oriente*, *7 de julio*, and *Los cien mil hijos de San Luis*, present key historical events of the *Trienio Liberal* from 1820 to 1823, including the forced return to a constitutional monarchy following the revolt of Rafael Riego, the battle between the royal guards and the liberal national militia on July 7, 1822, the subsequent radicalization of political liberals, and the eventual intervention of French troops to end the conflict and restore monarchical absolutism. The seventh volume, *El terror de 1824*, addresses the harsh retribution Fernando VII exacted upon suspected liberal political sympathizers.⁵ Volumes eight and nine, *Un voluntario realista* and *Los apostólicos*, explore political conspiracies undertaken by

³ See Brian Dendle's "A Note on the Genesis of the *Episodios nacionales*" (*Anales Galdosianos* (1980): 137–40). Dendle concurs with Hinterhäuser with respect to the author's intention to write two series from the outset, but he also details the various permutations of Galdós's plan, adding additional titles to the first series and eventually shifting the narration of the end of the Peninsular War to the first volume of the second series.

⁴ Toni Dorca points out the ways in which *El equipaje del Rey José* serves as a critically important bridge between the two series (*Las dos caras* 164–65).

⁵ During the final ten years of Fernando VII's reign – the "década ominosa" – those who opposed monarchical absolutism suffered extreme political oppression

both liberals and increasingly militant right-wing ideologues during the last decade of Fernando VII's reign, as well as the court intrigue surrounding the king's decision to amend the Salic Laws in order to allow his daughter, Isabel, to ascend to the throne. The last novel of the series, *Un faccioso más y algunos frailes menos*, narrates the final months of Fernando VII's rule, the king's death, the formation of an armed and organized political force in support of Fernando VII's brother, Carlos, and his claim to the throne, and the return and reintegration of many political exiles into Spanish life.

Unlike the first series, which illustrated a profound reluctance to engage with the historical facts of Spain's colonial legacy, the second series is compelled to take a different approach. Galdós not only begins to address the effects of imperial loss on the metropolis but also explores possible strategies for accepting it. Even more so than the first series, this group of novels includes numerous textual allusions and metaphors to empire. For the first time in Galdós's fiction, readers are presented with direct references to the irrevocable loss of one of "las dos Españas," specifically the vast territories of the southern and western United States, the Caribbean, Central America, and much of South America.⁶ The most compelling reason for these more direct references is the historical period portrayed in the second series. Although Fernando VI took the throne from his father for three months in 1808, this short period of his rule never becomes a major focus in either the first or the second series. Fernando's virtual imprisonment in France from 1808 to 1813, when Napoleon placed his brother on the throne of Spain as José I, becomes little more than background information in the first series' portrayal of the war.⁷ Instead,

and were often forced to leave Spain for France or England. Eventually the term *emigrado* became synonymous with the Spanish political liberal in exile in Europe.

⁶ It is important to remember that in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries the term "las dos Españas" was used to describe political and ideological divides in Spain, between liberals and absolutists, progresistas and moderados, and later Republicans and Nationalists. But the phrase has particular geographical resonance in the Constitution of 1812, which uses the term to indicate the metropolis and its overseas colonies. The transition of meaning from a metropolitan/colonial reference to a descriptor of political tensions within the metropolis itself, which occurs during the early decades of the nineteenth century, is a linguistic representation of the shifting concepts of national identity that correspond to the loss of empire during these years.

⁷ Fernando VII held the throne for barely three months in 1808 before he was removed by Napoleon and replaced by the French emperor's brother, José Bonaparte. Given the short length of time and the circumstances surrounding his first reign as king of Spain, it makes sense to identify the years 1813–33 as the

the second series focuses on the period of Fernando VII's rule from 1813 to 1833 as the most critically important time for Spanish empire. There are compelling historical reasons for this. When Fernando VII returned to Spain to retake the throne in December of 1813 the country was still a global empire with extensive territories in the Americas. By the time of Fernando VII's death in 1833 those territories were independent nations. Galdós's historical narration is obliged to address loss of empire as a fundamental fact of the period it attempts to portray. Nevertheless, while the novels make reference to historical events associated with the independence movements, the series continues to remain committed to addressing loss through a larger overarching allegorical strategy, as already seen in the first series, of separating the country's colonial legacy from its reconceptualization of Spain as a modern nation in the present.⁸

The protagonists at the center of both the main plot and the subplot of the series are presented in the first volume, *El equipaje del Rey José*. Readers are introduced to the characters of Salvador Monsalud and Juan Bragas, two unlikely friends originally from the small town of Pipaón in the Basque country, now living in Madrid in the last weeks of José I's tenure as monarch. Throughout the series, their respective life trajectories take them on very different paths, even as they periodically reconnect and move on to new experiences, and they constitute the core of two separate plots that frame the series' engagement with Spain's imperial history during the years of Fernando VII.

Monsalud is a young man of illegitimate birth whose limited means have compelled him to become a member of José Bonaparte's royal guard in Madrid. His story, told throughout the series, will be one of poor choices, errors in judgment, and missed opportunities, and Galdós uses this fictional character to present an allegory for understanding Spanish history in the Fernandino period. From the start Monsalud is described as someone driven not by politics but by emotions.

Aunque el joven tenía ideas y no pocas, si bien revueltas y confusas y desordenadas, aún no tenía las que comúnmente se llaman ideas políticas. ... No faltaba ciertamente en su corazón el sentimiento de la

critical years of Fernando VII's rule. Moreover, the third volume of the first series, *El 19 de marzo y el 2 de mayo*, which addresses the three months of Fernando VII's first reign, focuses more on the behind-the-scenes machinations that led Fernando to take the throne and then to lose it to Napoleon rather than the process of actually leading the nation or establishing domestic or international policies.

⁸ See Chapter Five for a thorough analysis of the story of Salvador Monsalud's life and its role as a national allegory in the second series.

patria; pero estaba ahogado y sofocado por el precoz desarrollo de otro sentimiento más concreto, más individual, más propio de su edad y de su temple, el amor. (II 31)

[Although the young man had ideas and not a few, however mixed up and confused and disordered, he still did not have what are commonly called political ideas. ... The feeling of country was not missing in his heart; but he was choked and suffocated by the precocious development of another, more concrete feeling, more typical of his age and his temper, love.]

He is in love with Genara de Baraona, a young woman from an ultramontane family who rejects Monsalud when she discovers that he is wearing the uniform of the royal guard.⁹ She turns instead to Monsalud's rival, Carlos Navarro, who is the legitimate son of Monsalud's father and also a political reactionary. This plot development provides Galdós with the allegorical framework to address the liberal–absolutist struggle that takes place within the metropolis during Fernando VII's reign. Throughout the second series the narrative involving Salvador Monsalud will revolve around his affective connections to others, underscoring Galdós's implicit recognition of the importance of emotions in crafting a history of one of the most critical periods of Spanish history.¹⁰ Many readers of the second series have focused on the enmity between Monsalud and Carlos Navarro as Galdós's commentary on the fratricidal nature of the ideological struggle between political liberalism and absolutism, and have seen this as the dominant message of the second series.¹¹ But the frequent references to

⁹ The spelling here of Genara de Baraona's name reflects that used in Dolores Troncoso Durán's critical edition of the second series (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 2006). In other editions and in many critical essays the name appears as Jenara. When citing from those works, the variant spelling will be reflected.

¹⁰ Monsalud's fictional story reveals the importance of emotions in understanding history, and in this regard, Galdós's work provides fertile ground for those interested in the history and cultural representation of emotion. See Luisa Elena Delgado *et al.*, *Engaging the Emotions in Spanish Culture and History* (2016) for an examination of the role of emotions in modern Spanish literature and culture.

¹¹ According to José Montesinos, “El tema de la segunda serie, enunciado ya de pasada en la primera, es la escisión irremediable de España en dos mitades intratables” [The theme of the second series, already raised in passing in the first, is the irreversible split of Spain into two intractable halves] (*Galdós* I 120). And while it is true that from the perspective of the metropolis the split Montesinos refers to is the fight between those committed to conservative and liberal ideologies, it can also be read at another level as a reference to the loss of empire.

Spain's colonial territories and the concerns raised in the novels about the relationships between the metropolis and the colonies indicate that a larger conceptual framework is required, one that will allow readers to think about the history of imperial Spain. It is in this regard that the character of Juan Bragas de Pipaón becomes critical.

From the very beginning it is clear that Bragas stands in sharp contrast to his friend. While Monsalud is a sensitive dreamer, someone who “llevaba infiltrado en su naturaleza el error constante y todas las deslumbradoras mentiras de la poesía” [carried within his nature the constant error and all the dazzling lies of poetry] (II 32), Bragas is the ultimate realist, able to calculate exactly what is in his best interest, particularly in his role as a low-level public official, which gives him access to information and opportunities for personal gain.

Su carácter difería mucho del de Monsalud. ... Juan Bragas carecía por completo de imaginación y de sensibilidad fina: pero sabía poner las cosas en su sitio, y tenía el mejor ojo del mundo para ver todos los objetos en su tamaño real: poseía, en suma, aquel poderoso instinto aritmético que a ciertas organizaciones, quizás las más influyentes hoy, les sirve para reducir a cantidad y a tamaño, mejor dicho, a una forma visible y fácilmente apreciable todos los hechos de la vida en lo moral y en lo físico. Bragas no se equivocaba nunca: tenía en sus juicios la infalibilidad de las matemáticas. (II 32)

[His character differed greatly from that of Monsalud. ... Juan Bragas completely lacked imagination and fine sensibility: but he knew how to put things in their place, and he had the best eye in the world to see all objects in their real size: he possessed, in short, that powerful mathematical instinct that, for certain organizations, perhaps the most influential nowadays, served to reduce in quantity and size, or rather to a visible and easily understood form, all the physical and moral facts of life. Bragas never made a mistake: he had the infallibility of mathematics in his judgments.]

Bragas reveals himself to be a canny individual, always aware of the political field, concerned with establishing his position within it and protecting himself from the vicissitudes of the personal rivalries playing out among those in power. His infallible exactitude is indicative not of wisdom but rather of a recognition of *realpolitik*. Juan Bragas will use these skills to scale the ladder of political appointments until he becomes one of Fernando VII's unofficial advisors. In this position, he becomes the narrative source for the series' historical framework for addressing colonial loss. Moreover,

Bragas remains, throughout the second series, removed in large part from the emotional events that form the trajectory of Monsalud's life. While Bragas certainly knows and interacts with Genara de Baraona and Carlos Navarro, he is largely a bystander and witness to the drama of Monsalud's life rather than an active participant.

The relationship between these two characters allows Galdós to present Bragas's subplot as the vehicle for understanding the historical realities of the period, while Monsalud's story, in particular through the relationships he has with others, becomes the fictional representation of the effects of history on the Spanish people. In essence, Galdós uses the familial drama of Monsalud's life as a way to allegorically represent the process of nation-building. The situation of the Spanish metropolis in the nineteenth century may have been undeniably different than that being experienced by the newly independent nations of Latin America, but the necessity to reimagine identity was nevertheless equally present. Owing precisely to its changing position in global politics throughout the nineteenth century, Spain required its own form of national romance. On the one hand this new national romance had to reflect the fact that Spain's imperial history was winding to a close even as the empires of other European nations were expanding. On the other hand, unlike the newly independent nations of Latin America, Spain had to substitute one image of national identity for another. For these reasons, the allegory in the second series of *Episodios nacionales* represents the process of coming to terms with the traumatic loss of Spain's once-great empire and its new status as a nation that has become increasingly marginalized even within the geographic framework of Europe. As the story of Salvador Monsalud plays out against the backdrop of the reign of Fernando VII, the second series of *Episodios nacionales* presents a reconfigured national romance designed to break the "earlier attachments" to imperial greatness shared by an imagined community of readers (Sommer 41). In their stead, Galdós's second series substitutes a very different concept of national identity, one that can encompass Spain's diminished status on the world stage. Galdós's representation of this key period of Spanish history, written nearly a half century after the fact, reflects the trauma of imperial loss as well as the effects of that loss over time.

Galdós's approach to the representation of Spanish history indicates a need, for him as an author but most certainly for his readers as well, to reconfigure the popular sense of Spanish national identity in such a way as to be able to account for the undeniable changes in Spanish society that such losses had incurred. Whereas the first series of *Episodios* was able to keep colonial references to a minimum, effectively relegating them to

the margins of the historical narrative and presenting them as attributes of a national past that no longer exists, the second series of *Episodios*, by historical necessity, incorporates them in greater number. It does so directly, with references to decision-making by the king and his advisors, and allegorically, through the plot of a domestic romance. As has been mentioned in the introduction, the issue of trauma becomes central. As Cathy Caruth has noted in her study of narrative and psychoanalytic theory, the experience of trauma has at its core “a kind of double telling, the oscillation between a crisis of death and the correlative crisis of life; between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival” (7). It is the painful awareness that Spain has lost its former political and economic position that drives Galdós’s reconfiguration of Spanish history in the nineteenth century. For this reason, the history that these novels present cannot be “straightforwardly referential,” but instead must arise “where immediate understanding may not” (Caruth 11). It is in the revisiting of the traumatic event through the mediation of allegory that the act of having survived it is processed and accepted.

The concept of “double-telling” that Caruth refers to manifests itself in the second series through the competing plots of Juan Bragas on the one hand and Salvador Monsalud on the other. The narratives in the second series are compelled to address loss in ways that are both tangibly historical and powerfully emotional. In contrast to the first series’ representation of the Peninsular War and Gabriel Araceli’s role in it, the second series explores the historical impact of that war and Fernando VII’s monarchy by channeling the narrative action through two interrelated but different plots that allow readers to explore the nation’s history in a more complex manner. Readers move beyond the dominant perspective of the protagonist of the first series, Gabriel Araceli, and explore the complexities of this historical period through the eyes of multiple fictional characters.¹² It is true that Salvador Monsalud serves as the central protagonist of the series. The majority of the fictional events revolve around his life and the characters close to him. Curiously, Monsalud has never attracted the same level of critical attention that has been given to the character of Gabriel Araceli. The reasons for this lie, I suspect, in the deep complexity of Monsalud as a character as well as the second series’ more sophisticated narrative strategies, which spread

¹² In the first series, the novel *Gerona* is narrated by Andrés Marijuán and not Gabriel Araceli. But Marijuán’s story does not rise to the level of a subplot. Instead Galdós employs Marijuán as a narrator in order to maintain the verisimilitude of the series, which would have been significantly strained had Araceli been physically present at yet one more significant military conflict in the war.

the responsibility of telling Spanish history during the Fernandino years among a wider variety of narrators. Araceli's uncomplicated patriotism and his reliability as a narrator have made him easier to access as a character. Monsalud, because he grows and changes as a result of his life experiences, is a galdosian character whose narrative significance has not yet been fully understood. Nonetheless, I would argue that, given his life trajectory and the losses and struggles that he endures, Salvador Monsalud represents Galdós's first fully realized fictional creation. Moreover, part of what makes the second series such a compelling saga of Spanish colonial history is the interplay between Monsalud's fictional trajectory and the more overt historical references that are connected to the plot involving Juan Bragas.

The importance of the interactive quality of these two plots cannot be overestimated, as together they establish the structure of the ten novels of the second series and provide the necessary range of historical experience to present the complexity of this critical period of Spanish history. Equally significant, the history addressed in this series includes important references to Spain's loss of empire and the effects of that loss on life in the metropolis. Bragas becomes a witness to Fernando VII's momentous and disastrous decisions relative to the Spanish colonies, and his calculating nature serves as an authorial comment on the corrupt environment of the royal court. Monsalud's story, on the other hand, is the heart of the domestic romance, and it not only presents the psychic results of Spain's traumatic loss of global stature but also offers a potential path that will allow Spaniards to begin the process of accepting that loss and moving beyond melancholy and mourning.

"Las dos Españas" in the Fernandino Years

As mapped out within the chronology of Spanish history, the events presented in the second series appear to be limited to the history of peninsular Spain. With respect to imperial loss, however, these novels narrate events that impacted the other half of "las dos Españas," specifically the vast territories of the southern and western United States, the Caribbean, Central America, and much of South America. During the years portrayed in the first two series of *Episodios nacionales*, Latin American independence movements coalesced and grew in strength, despite efforts undertaken by the metropolis to suppress them. In the early years of his monarchy Fernando VII authorized a series of military campaigns the goal of which was to pacify the American colonies; however, a complex set of political and economic realities contributed to their failure. These attempts to regain control over the American territories culminated in the Battle of Ayacucho

in Peru in December of 1824, an event that marked the end of Spanish rule in South America. During the last decade of Fernando VII's life the metropolis experienced the consequent political and economic effects of the loss of exclusive control over and access to American markets. Accordingly, while the second series shares with the first the goal of reconfiguring national identity within a postcolonial framework, it still had to address more directly the actual history and impact of colonial loss on the metropolis. While the first series wrestled with the potent older mythology of Spain's imperial past, attempting unsuccessfully to completely efface it, this set of ten novels employs a different strategy, one that acknowledges the contemporary historical facts surrounding the loss of the Americas and attempts to produce a convincing narrative to make sense of that loss.

From a historical standpoint, the second series of *Episodios nacionales* also had to address the consequences of the Peninsular War for the Spanish nation, and particularly the citizens of the metropolis. One undeniable aspect was the economic and social consequences of a war that devastated the Spanish countryside and led to the death of an estimated 350,000 to 500,000 Spaniards from hunger and illness as well as combat (Fontana, *La época del liberalismo* 79). The loss of cattle and other farm animals and extreme deforestation severely and negatively impacted the country's agricultural productivity just at a time when colonial income was disappearing and the interest on the vast sums of public debt was soaring. Josep Fontana has noted that one possible answer to the economic consequences of the Peninsular War would have been to focus on stimulating the national economy, and he quotes Antonio Bonaventura Gassó, who argued in 1816 that "No hay poder sólido in los estados sin productos y consumos nacionales ... Este poder se hace mayor a proporción de lo que sucede en la circulación interior de los productos propios" [There is no solid power in the states without national products and consumption ... This power becomes greater in proportion to what happens in the internal circulation of the products themselves] (*La época del liberalismo* 83). This was not the approach taken by Fernando VII's government. Instead, as Fontana notes, "Los gobernantes españoles esperaban que los problemas se resolvieran con una imposible restauración de una economía imperial que había entrado en quiebra desde finales del siglo anterior" [The Spanish rulers hoped that the problems would be solved with an impossible restoration of an imperial economy that had reached bankruptcy at the end of the previous century] (Fontana, *La época del liberalismo* 83). In the years immediately following the restoration of Fernando VII to the Spanish throne the monarch's political agenda was fixed on resuscitating a pre-war political and economic status quo in the colonies. But, given the political experience

and relative autonomy of the military juntas during the peninsular war, both in Spain and its colonies, it became increasingly difficult to maintain such absolutist policies. The Fernandino years failed to address the changed status that developed between the king and his subjects through the advent of political liberalism and the growth of the middle class, both colonial and metropolitan, which increasingly expected to be a part of political decision-making. From a metropolitan perspective, the political struggle became framed as a battle between absolutism and liberalism,¹³ but from the perspective of the Spanish colonies in the Americas the struggle was soon framed as one of independence.¹⁴ For that reason, while the second series clearly casts the rivalry between Salvador Monsalud and Carlos Navarro as an allegory for the struggle between conservative and liberal ideologies within the metropolis, it also manages to portray the history of Spain between 1813 and 1834 as a period in which Spain must recognize that it has become a nation wrestling with a colonial history that will result in imperial loss and a sharply reduced role upon the global stage.

The monarchy's backward-looking economic policies were powerfully reflected in the king's response to the newly drafted Constitution of 1812. In April 1814, as Fernando VII was returning from house arrest in France to the Spanish capital, a group of reactionary aristocrats and clergy released the *Manifiesto de los Persas*, which openly called for the re-establishment of absolutism. This document gave the returning king the political cover he needed to reject the Constitution of 1812 and reclaim the throne as an absolute monarch. From both an economic and political standpoint, Fernando VII's return to power in 1814 constituted an attempt to return to a vision of the country rooted to its imperial past, before the War of Independence with France. That such an attempt was doomed to failure is reflected in the very language of the king's decree on May 4, 1814. It calls on citizens to forget the *Cortes constitucionales* of Cádiz and its drafting of the 1812 Constitution, referring to this event in Spanish history in the subjunctive mode; Spaniards should behave, it indicates, "como si no

¹³ In his recent book, *Las dos caras de Jano*, Toni Dorca demonstrates that the absolutist/liberal binary is clearly set up in the first volume of the second series.

¹⁴ Miguel Artola cautions historians to remember to look beyond just the metropolis to understand nineteenth-century Spanish history: "Porque la revolución liberal se produce simultáneamente – bajo distintas apariencias, claro es – en todo ese complejo mundo que luego se llamará *Hispanidad*" [Because the liberal revolution took place simultaneously – under different appearances, clearly – in that complex world that will later be termed the *Hispanic world*] (*La España de Fernando VII* (Madrid: Espasa, 1999), 19).

hubiesen pasado jamás tales actos” [as if such acts had never happened] (cited in Fontana, *La época del liberalismo* 77). The call to forget the events of the *Cortes Constitucionales* is ironic when we consider Galdós’s own historical chronicle of that same period in the first series, given that the author not only focuses on that part of history that Fernando VII would have most liked to erase – the political liberalism that promoted greater representation in Spanish government – but also structures his narrative in such a way as to erase an awareness of peninsular Spain as an imperial metropolis, something that Fernando VII was loathe to do.

Fernando VII may have initially returned to the throne as “el Deseado,” but his insistence on maintaining the political and social structures of the *ancien régime* became not only the defining *modus operandi* of his rule but also the guarantee of its failure.¹⁵ Spain was no longer the same empire it had been even in the waning years of the eighteenth century, and to attempt to return to the past required a denial of economic realities and political exigencies. Moreover, his actions failed to recognize the important changes in governance that were a result of the Peninsular War. For example, when Carlos IV and Fernando VII abdicated the throne in favor of Joseph Bonaparte, who on June 6, 1808 was proclaimed José I, Rey de España y de las Indias, metropolitan Spaniards established a series of *Juntas* in the Spanish provinces to oppose Napoleon’s rule (Artola 96). Colonial citizens, many of whom had in the last decades of the eighteenth century been pushing for secession, followed suit, setting up a series of Revolutionary Councils that declared loyalty to Fernando VII as king even as they assumed control over day-to-day governance. With the exception of the Antilles and Peru, the Councils displaced the authority of the viceroys and the metropolitan Spaniards sent to occupy positions of authority in colonial governance (Artola 354). The Councils, made up of colonial *criollos*, claimed for themselves the authority formerly exercised only by the king, and they began to establish a variety of reforms, not the least among them more open trading policies with the United States and England (Artola 354–55).

Upon his return in 1814, however, Fernando VII insisted on re-establishing royal authority, both at home and in the colonies. His refusal to abide by the Constitution of 1812 had as much to do with his insistence on reclaiming royal authority over Spanish America as it did

¹⁵ For a thorough history of the Fernandino period, see Emilio La Parra, *Fernando VII: Un rey deseado y detestado* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 2018); Josep Fontana, *La época del liberalismo. Historia de España*, Vol. VI (Barcelona: Marcial Pons, 2007); and Artola, *La España de Fernando VII*.

with his opposition to political liberalism. The king's absolutism spurred the drive toward colonial independence, and his decision to attempt the pacification of the colonies through military force led to a decade of conflict that ultimately resulted in the establishment of independent Latin American nations and Spain's diminished status as an empire in the nineteenth century.

Quedó en evidencia después de la reacción absolutista de 1814, que Fernando VII no iba a permitir el proyecto gaditano y doceañista, puesto que suponía, además de la construcción de un estado liberal, la pérdida de su patrimonio real, es decir de todas sus rentas indianas, de sus tierras, de sus obrajes, del tributo, de las minas, de las rentas comerciales, etc. El absolutismo enterró la vía autonomista del liberalismo gaditano y dejó paso solo a la política militar de la reconquista, al enfrentamiento frontal, armado y represivo, lo cual vino a aclarar la confrontación, reduciéndola cada vez más al binomio que la historia tradicional reproducirá: realistas contra patriotas. (Chust, *La patria* 58–59)

[It was evident after the absolutist reaction of 1814 that Fernando VII was not going to allow the 1812 Cadíz project since it meant, in addition to the construction of a liberal state, the loss of royal patrimony in the colonies, specifically income from the lands, the works, the tributes, the mines, the commercial taxes, etc. Absolutism buried the autonomous path of Cadíz liberalism and made way instead for the military policy of reconquest, for a direct showdown, armed and repressive, which came to clarify the confrontation, increasingly reducing it to the binary that traditional history would repeat: royalists against patriots.]

The struggle between the Spanish monarchy and colonial secessionists played out over many years. Despite the early push toward independence in the American territories during the years of the Peninsular War – in Venezuela, Buenos Aires, and Mexico, for example – by 1815 colonial supporters of metropolitan rule had pushed back, and Spain regained control over most of its colonial territories. To put a definitive end, however, to pockets of resistance, in early 1815 Fernando VII sent an expedition of some 10,000 soldiers, employing nearly every military ship available, to northwestern South America (Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Panama). Despite the initial success of this expedition, the efforts of secessionist movements gained strength. As Fontana has noted, between 1811 and 1818 the Spanish government sent a total of 25 separate expeditionary forces, constituting 204 ships and 45,000 troops, to the American colonies

in an attempt to pacify and in some instances to reconquer territories that had declared independence (*La época del liberalismo* 111). When Fernando VII turned to England for support in pacifying the colonies, the British wanted Spain to agree to an end to the slave trade, a general amnesty for independence fighters, a recognition of equality between metropolitan and colonial subjects, free market access to all nations, and an agreement to abandon the use of force in exercising control over the American colonies (Artola 481). Although Spain agreed to end the slave trade, in exchange for a one-time indemnification from Britain of £400,000, the other colonial concessions proved too dear for Fernando VII, and he turned to Russia, which as part of the Holy Alliance with Prussia and Austria was in the process of negotiating with France for reparations after the Napoleonic Wars.¹⁶ This decision initiated a series of events that would have a significant impact on Fernando VII's monarchy, on metropolitan politics, and on the Latin American independence movements.

Fernando VII decreed that a new expeditionary force would be sent to Buenos Aires, but he needed ships to transport troops across the Atlantic. Without informing his ministers of state, finance or navy, Fernando VII authorized Francisco de Eguía and Antonio Ugarte, members of his *camarilla*, his informal inner circle, to purchase a squadron of ships from Russia, a decision that was to prove disastrous. The crown used the indemnification funds from England to purchase five armed battleships and three frigates. The ships were brought to the port of Cádiz, where an expedition force of 14,000 men had been gathered over a period of many months to begin a campaign designed to retake the River Plate area (Costeloe 83). Military leaders such as Antonio Alcalá Galiano were unhappy with Fernando VII's refusal to recognize the Constitution of 1812, and many of the soldiers had been forcefully drafted into the expeditionary force, which led to an atmosphere that, as the writer Ramón de Mesonero Romanos described it, “estaba impregnada de un espíritu revolucionario” [was impregnated with a revolutionary spirit] (cited in Fontana, *La época del liberalismo* 95). To make things worse, the Russian ships were found

¹⁶ Spain's reduced position among European nations was made highly visible at the 1818 Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, when leaders from Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia negotiated the terms of reparations with France after the Napoleonic Wars from 1792 to 1815. Spain was not invited to participate directly in the negotiations, but the issue of Latin American independence movements was discussed. The Congress adopted England's advice that Spain be offered a process of collective mediation that would preclude military intervention or economic sanctions, but Fernando VII ultimately refused the offer (Artola 484).

to be rotting and unseaworthy. As one historian has noted, “El *affaire* de la escuadra rusa, realizado por el monarca y la camarilla a espaldas de la Administración regular, constituye prueba indiscutible de la existencia de esta y de la decisiva influencia que ciertos consejeros ejercían sobre Fernando VII” [The *affaire* of the Russian squadron, carried out by the monarch and his clique behind the back of the Administration, constitutes indisputable proof of the existence of the clique and the decisive influence that certain councilors exercised over Fernando VII] (Artola 502–03).

The slow process of organizing the expeditionary force and the doubts raised about the crown’s competence in managing it, together with the political conspiracies of both the metropolitan *doceañistas* and agents working on behalf of the American independence movements came together to produce an environment ripe for revolution. The revolt came on January 1, 1820, when Rafael Riego, commander of the Asturian Battalion, stationed in the Andalusian village of Las Cabezas de San Juan, south of Seville, declared a military *pronunciamiento* in favor of the Constitution of 1812. While the ostensible goal of the metropolitan conspirators was to force the king to accept a constitutional monarchy, the concerns among the soldiers about fighting in the colonies, amplified by agents of the American independence movements, was an essential component leading to the revolt (Artola 507). As Raymond Carr, citing the *Apuntes* of Antonio Alcalá Galiano, has described it:

Why after earlier failures did the military uprising of 1820, “risky to the point of being ridiculous” in the opinion of one of the conspirators, nevertheless succeed? Alcalá Galiano’s explanation was simple: “the repugnance of the rank and file against embarking for America” for the first time made soldiers and sergeants receptive to “the sublime and generous ideas of their officers.” (127)

Riego’s pronouncement at first appeared to be limited to Seville, but in a matter of weeks similar revolts occurred in La Coruña, Zaragoza, Tarragona, Segovia, Pamplona, and Cádiz, leading to Fernando VII’s acceptance, in March of 1820, of the Constitution and the beginning of the *Tienio Liberal*.

The years 1820–23 were to prove decisive for Spain’s control over its American territories. Political liberals struggled to establish a functioning constitutional monarchy, in part owing to the king’s barely repressed opposition and in part because the liberals themselves began to split into moderate and more radical factions. The moderates tended to be formerly exiled liberal *afrancesados*, and “men of property,” while the radical *exaltados*, as extreme supporters of the Constitution of 1812, formed

armed militias in both Madrid and provincial capitals (Carr 130–31). As the political struggles in the metropolis played out in the early 1820s, the Latin American independence movements moved inexorably forward. As Raymond Carr has noted, “The Revolution of Riego was not merely a *crise de conscience* for Spain and Europe; it was a decisive event across the Atlantic, in that it finally assured the creation of the independent Republics of Latin America” (143).

The growing radicalism of Spanish liberals and its effect on the coherence of Spanish government certainly contributed, albeit indirectly, to the failure of the metropolis’s attempts to negotiate with colonial territories during the Liberal Triennium. But it had a greater effect on the process through its influence on other European nations. Spain’s liberal radicalism fed revolutionary agitation in other parts of Europe, and this worried her neighbors, particularly France. In 1822 Fernando VII lobbied for the support of the Quintuple Alliance (Britain, France, Russia, Prussia, and Austria), which authorized France to intervene on the king’s behalf to re-establish his royal authority in the face of what many, including many moderate Spaniards, considered to be a political regime that had become too extreme. In 1823 France formed a military expedition, the Hundred Thousand Sons of Saint Louis, which crossed into Spain in the spring of 1823. The Spanish constitutional forces eventually fled Madrid, forcibly taking Fernando VII with them, moved further southwest toward Seville and ultimately reached Cádiz by the late summer. The French forces proved successful in routing the constitutional forces, liberating Fernando VII in September of 1823, capturing the leaders of the 1820 revolt, and forcing a large number of political liberals into exile. In November Rafael del Riego was publicly hung in Madrid, putting a definitive end to liberalism in Spain for the next decade. As this was happening, the push toward colonial independence moved inexorably forward, with weak resistance from royalists. For the Spanish metropolis, the culmination of Latin American independence was the December 1824 Battle of Ayacucho in Peru, which was the last significant Spanish American territory controlled by royalists. During this military confrontation some 8,300 Spanish and royalist troops were completely routed by 5,800 Latin American troops. By 1825 England recognized the independence of Mexico and Argentina, and the independence of the South American republics was assured. Spain was left with Cuba and Puerto Rico, to which the Spanish metropolis granted increased mercantile autonomy in the hopes of suppressing a push for independence.¹⁷

¹⁷ Josep Fontana has noted that, despite Spain’s agreement with Britain to end its role in the slave trade, it did not end slavery in Cuba, and the number of slaves

During the final decade of his monarchy Fernando VII never gave up hope of reconquering the lost colonial territories of South America and, as Michael Costeloe notes, “the sycophants, office-seekers, wheeler-dealers and anyone who could come up with a scheme for reestablishing Spanish dominion received a hearing at court” (97). This included a failed expedition in 1829, when Brigadier Isidro Barradas led a group of 4,000 troops from Cuba to Mexico to declare in favor of Fernando VII, only to be overcome by the Mexican army under the command of General Santa Anna.

Many historians, including Costeloe and Fontana, have commented on the relative passivity of the metropolitan response to colonial loss.¹⁸ The expected response would have been impacted, unquestionably, by the degree to which information was severely restricted in the last decade of Fernando VII’s monarchy. The king’s severe repression of liberals, the forced exile of his political adversaries, and the strict censorship exercised throughout the country under a fully absolutist monarchy in the last decade of his reign made it difficult for commentary, either journalistic or historical, to appear to a Spanish public. Information was tightly controlled, and Fernando VII’s absolutist policies would certainly have served as a check on any critique of policy. Moreover, the economic consequences of colonial loss were, as has been discussed, felt unevenly throughout the metropolis. It makes more sense to expect that the emotional or psychological responses to colonial loss would be felt in more

in Cuba grew from 200,000 in 1817 to 450,000 in 1841. This fact, he indicates, contributed to a desire on the part of other global powers to keep Cuba and Puerto Rico under Spanish control, to avoid “un estallido social que podía prender en otras zonas del Caribe y en las plantaciones de las tierras cercanas del sur de Estados Unidos, donde había varios millones de esclavos” [a social explosion that could ignite other zones in the Caribbean and in the plantations of the nearby southern United States, where there were several million slaves] (*La época del liberalismo* 114).

¹⁸ Fontana writes, “La pérdida de las colonias continentales americanas no parece haber suscitado reacciones en la mayoría de los españoles, puesto que no se menciona en los libros de memorias de quienes vivieron estos acontecimientos” [The loss of the continental American colonies does not seem to have provoked reactions from the majority of Spaniards, given that it isn’t mentioned in the memoirs of those who lived through those events] (*La época del liberalismo* 113). Michael Costeloe adds that “The loss of America does appear to have had little impact on general Spanish public opinion at the time when it occurred, despite the relative rapidity with which the monolithic imperial structure disintegrated” (1).

subtle ways in the years after Fernando VII's death.¹⁹ It is not surprising that the response to colonial loss would come to the fore in the later years of the nineteenth century. It is precisely the delayed need to process colonial loss that drives Galdós's compulsion to return to the early years of the nineteenth century and the role of Fernando VII in the first two series of *Episodios nacionales*.

Juan Bragas and the Picaresque Tragedy of Spanish Imperial History

While the second series focuses primarily on the plot line of Salvador Monsalud, that fact might not seem clear to readers when they turn from the first volume, *El equipaje del Rey José*, to the second and third volumes, *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* and *La segunda casaca*. In these two novels Juan Bragas takes on a principal role as narrator, providing a first-person account of the early years of Fernando VII's monarchy from 1814 to 1820. He becomes a critical voice for presenting the events within the royal court and the decisions being made at the highest levels of government. In volumes four through eight he is largely absent, but he reappears in the final two novels of the series, *Los apostolicos* and *Un faccioso más y algunos frailes menos*, allowing the series to comment on the death of Fernando VII and the end of political absolutism. Bragas's story, so prominent in the early volumes of the series and returning, even if in a secondary fashion, in the last volumes, serves as a historical framework that allows the reader to contextualize the events surrounding Salvador Monsalud's life and his network of friends and acquaintances. Most notable about Bragas from a structural perspective is his role as the sole source for much of the information relating to official Spanish history. Galdós is quite deliberate in placing the historical chronicle of Fernando VII's monarchy into the mouth of a character with a pronounced picaresque nature. As Dolores Troncoso Durán has noted, "Galdós no renuncia el atractivo del yo narrador cuando le conviene" [Galdós does not renounce the attractiveness of first person narration when it suits him], adding that "El cínico y oportunista Juan Bragas de Pipaón será útil para poner de manifiesto desde dentro la incompetencia y la corrupción de la primera etapa absolutista de Fernando VII" [The cynical and opportunistic Juan Bragas de Pipaón will prove useful to reveal from the inside the incompetence and corruption

¹⁹ The role of *costumbrista* literature, as a genre that attempted to define national identity in Spain, is an illustrative model of the complex and subtle processing of colonial loss. See my work in this area: "El costumbrismo decimonónico y la ansiedad colonial" and "El imperio pintado por sí mismo."

of the first absolutist stage of Fernando VII] (II 12). Moreover, given that Galdós's readers in the 1870s could be expected to be somewhat familiar with the major events of Spanish history during this period and could look back on Galdós's chronicle from a perspective of relatively recent historical knowledge, the immediacy of Bragas's historical positionality, with his failure to consider the negative impact of the *camarilla's* self-interested advice and the king's subsequent decision-making, only serves to underscore the ineptitude of Spanish government at the highest levels.

Much has been written about Galdós's use of the first person in the first series of *Episodios nacionales*, both with respect to the sense of immediacy that the narrative imparts to readers and the echoes of the Spanish literary tradition of the picaresque.²⁰ The decision to continue with the first-person narration in these volumes of the second series allows Galdós to emphasize these same aspects by having Juan Bragas, at least in the beginning of the series, tell his own story. The fact that Bragas is not of the same moral and ethical character as Gabriel Araceli and therefore is more of a modern representation of the *pícaro*, ironically does not distract from his role as a witness to history and the series' portrait of Fernando VII's royal court.²¹ His authenticity arises precisely from his frequent failure to cover his own tracks, as it were, in his narration of history. Bragas is generally only too pleased with his own manipulations of others, and he often acknowledges his abilities to deceive even as he unwittingly reveals to the reader his own limited comprehension. It allows Galdós to employ Bragas in a dual mode: as a character whom others should not trust but whom the reader can see through. In his prologue to the second series, Galdós notes that his decision to move from the first-person to third-person in subsequent novels in the second series provided him with a way of transcending the "rigidez

²⁰ See, for example, Louis Lande, "Le roman patriotique en Espagne" (*Revue des Deux Mondes* XIV (1976): 936); and Joaquín Casaldueiro, *Vida y obra de Galdós* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1951), 59.

²¹ In fact, Gabriel Araceli reappears in Chapter XXIV of *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815*, reminding readers that Juan Bragas's narrative is more likely to be read similar to those of famous pícaros in Spanish literature: "los lectores ... no podrían menos de ver en [Bragas] un personaje de las mismas mañas y estofa que Guzmán de Alfarache, don Gregorio de Guadaña o el Pobre Holgazán" [readers ... could see in Bragas a character of the same tricks and style as Guzmán de Alfarache, don Gregorio de Guadaña, or the Poor Idler] (II 224). Bragas, upon hearing this, underscores the limitations of his comprehension by noting that he considers "aquellos célebres pícaros de distintas edades los más eminentes hombres de su tiempo" [those celebrated rogues of former times to be the most eminent men of their day] (II 224).

de procedimiento” [procedural rigidity] that made it difficult to sustain “el género novelesco con base histórica” [the novelistic genre with the historic base] (Shoemaker 58). This also indicates that Galdós’s use of Bragas as a narrator is quite deliberate and not simply a carryover from the first-person perspective that informs the first series. Bragas’s role as an eyewitness allows Galdós to present official Spanish history in a relatively direct fashion, even as his use of third-person narration for the story of Salvador Monsalud allows him greater literary license.

After presenting the principal characters of the second series in *El equipaje del Rey José*, Galdós turns in the second and third volumes of the series to an extended presentation of historical events associated with Fernando VII’s monarchy. Covering the period from May of 1814 to February of 1815, *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* offers an insider’s look into the activities of the royal court and the *camarilla* in the first year of Fernando VII’s monarchy. *La segunda casaca* continues that focus, addressing the period from 1815 to 1820, ending with the revolt of Rafael de Riego that forced Fernando VII to accept the Constitution of 1812. As witness and narrator, Juan Bragas provides a sense of authenticity to his narrative even as he emphasizes for the reader the unscrupulous and calculating behavior of the advisors that surround the king. Indeed, Bragas is no different; he is an unprincipled individual, completely focused on his own advancement. He renames himself Juan Bragas de Pipaón, affecting a false degree of nobility.²² As one critic has noted, “Su mezquna ambición, su estudiada amabilidad, su astucia en el arte del engaño, y su veledad política hacen de él un arquetipo del oportunismo y de los sódicos intereses del régimen vigente” [His narrow ambition, his studied friendliness, his cunning in the art of deception, and his political prowess make him an archetype of the opportunism and corrosive interests of the current regime] (Navascués, “Liberales y absolutistas” 494). Accordingly, we read Bragas’s memoirs of this period from dual perspectives. Bragas’s narrative does not bother to mask the calculating behavior of the king’s advisors, and he is

²² In two of his later novels, *Tormento* and *La de Bringas* (1884), Galdós presents the character of Rosalía Pipaón, a descendent of Juan Bragas, and she exhibits the same outsized social aspirations and moral deficiencies as the family patriarch. The Pipaón bloodline provides Galdós with a convenient marker of self-interest and corruption in his subsequent fictions that critique the failure of Spain’s middle class to address social inequities and problems affecting the nation as a whole. See Chapter Six for a discussion of how Galdós uses these characters to extend the historical issue of imperial loss from his *Episodios nacionales* into his later *novelas contemporáneas*.

only partially successful in masking his own machinations. The result is a narrative in which readers are made deeply aware of the duplicitousness and self-interested behavior of those individuals in positions of real power and the damage that results from their actions.

More to the point, with respect to our interest in Galdós's representation of Spanish colonialism, the portrait of Fernando VII, his *camarilla*, and the decision-making in *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* provide a focus on the growing strength of the independence movements in the American colonies and the failure of Fernando VII's policies to avert the imperial losses that will lead to collective trauma for Spain's citizens. The subplot involving Bragas merits scrutiny precisely because it is in the context of Fernando VII's inner circle that the second series addresses, in an unambiguous and literal fashion, the imminent loss of the American territories. For the first time in Galdós's historical novels we have direct references to the growing independence movements in Latin America and the insurrections that threaten Spain's authority over its colonies. Manuel Chust has posited that there were four phases in the history of Latin American independence: the first from 1808 to 1810 and the second from 1810 to 1814, which focused on the growing demands of colonial subjects to have a greater role in self-determination (*La patria* 28). Chust notes that the third phase, from 1814 to 1820, involving the reorganization of absolute monarchies and the determination to destroy any liberal regime, particularly in the Americas, represents "la confrontación sin retorno" [the confrontation with no going back] (*La patria* 29). The year 1814 represented a turning point in metropolitan/colonial relations, one that would inevitably lead to the fourth and final phase of Latin American independence, from 1820 to 1824, that culminated in the loss of the final colonial territories and forever changed Spain's status as an empire. Importantly, both *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* and *La segunda casaca* portray the loss of empire as the result of the jockeying for power within Fernando VII's court, thus presenting the historical reality of imperial loss as a domestic political miscalculation that could have been avoided. To accomplish this, Galdós places Bragas within the king's inner circle as a critical witness to the fateful decisions that will so profoundly affect the nation. Even as Galdós is powerfully aware of the import of these decisions, he presents the moment of decision-making, the act of the king that will change Spain's fortunes forever, as a moment whose importance is not recognized by the individuals experiencing it. The trauma of imperial loss will only become evident after the fact, once the nation has had an opportunity to reflect on the event, on its consequences, and on the fact that it has survived and must now reimagine itself in very different circumstances.

To create the sense of the narrative's faithful representation of history, Bragas's introduction to *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* begins as a kind of confession. The first-person narration, despite any subjectivity that is implied, still constitutes an act of witnessing history. What Bragas will tell us will contain seeds of truth. To heighten the reader's sense that this particular narrative will need close attention, Bragas's introduction of himself to his readers employs the style of the picaresque, evoking those canonical picaresque texts that themselves are products of Spain's most potent period of imperial power. Bragas describes himself as someone who, like Gabriel Araceli from the first series, has risen in social stature and who now looks back on his life. He describes his social trajectory as one that has taken a young man "desde el más oscuro antro de las regias covachuelas" [from the most obscure corner of the low level royal bureaucracy] to "un sillón en el Real Consejo y Cámara de Castilla" [a seat at the Royal Council and Chamber of Castilla], a social transformation due exclusively to "la sola virtud de sus merecimientos" [the sole virtue of his merits] (II 143). But the picaresque quality of the narrative signals to readers that Bragas will reveal more than he intends and that we, as readers, need to question the authenticity of his claims. With regard to the novel's portrayal of Bragas's position within the *camarilla*, we are shown that his "merecimientos" [merits] consist of sycophantic behavior, self-interest and a lack of moral compass. His character is meant to reflect the moral character of the other historical individuals portrayed, like Antonio de Ugarte, considered the most powerful figure in the king's *camarilla*. Bragas's narrative portrays the success of Ugarte and others in undermining the influence and effectiveness of government officials who attempt to inform the king of the true state of affairs and the grave economic and political threats facing Spain. Fernando VII himself is portrayed as unwilling to hear the truth with respect to these challenges facing the empire and susceptible to the advice of those who, in an effort to advance their own agendas, tell the king only what he wishes to hear.

In this sense, Galdós's historical novel provides us with a portrait corroborated by other historical accounts. Miguel de Lardizábal y Uribe (1744–1824), a passionate defender of Fernando VII's rights, who served not only as a member of the regency that coordinated the war efforts against the French during Fernando VII's imprisonment but also as Ministro Universal de Indias for Fernando VII in 1814, described the power of the *camarilla* in the following terms:

A poco de llegado S. M. a Madrid le hicieron desconfiar de sus ministros y no hacer caso de los tribunales, ni de ningún hombre de fundamento

de los que pueden y deben aconsejarle. Da audiencia ordinariamente y en ella le habla quien quiere, sin excepción de personas. Esto es público; pero lo peor es que por la noche, en secreto, da entrada y escucha a las gentes de peor nota y más malignas, que desacreditan y ponen más negros que la pez, en concepto de S. M., a los que le han sido y le son más leales y a los que mejor le han servido, y de aquí resulta que dando crédito a tales sujetos, S. M., sin más consejo, pone de su propio puño decretos y pone providencias, no sólo sin contar con los ministros, lo cual no se hace sin perjuicio de los negocios y del buen gobierno. (cited in Artola 433)

[Shortly after his Majesty arrived in Madrid, they led him to distrust his ministers and ignore the courts, even those experts who could and should advise him. He ordinarily has an audience in which all, without exception, may speak. This is public, but the worst thing is that at night, in secret, he meets with and listens to people of little reputation, and even worse, people who discredit and paint in the blackest terms those who have been and who are most loyal and those who have best served him, and giving credit to these subjects, his Majesty, without further consultation, drafts his own decrees and makes rulings, without consulting his ministers, which one cannot do without doing harm to business and good governance.]

Lardizábal's own experience as a *novohispano*, as someone born in the viceroyalty of Nueva España, and his position in Fernando VII's government in 1814 provides a framework for the novel's representation of the monarch's disastrous mode of governance and its impact on the relationship between the metropolis and the American colonies. Considering Lardizábal's actual historical charge to address this aspect of imperial governance, his words serve to underscore the relative historical accuracy of Galdós's representation of the decision-making process in the *camarilla* with respect to the Americas.

The pernicious effect of these advisors is evident with respect not only to the existence of the independence movement but also to the manner in which the monarchy treated the economic benefits of colonialism. When Bragas introduces readers to the powerful figure of Antonio de Ugarte, he makes a curious reference to empire to describe the heights to which Ugarte aspires. Ugarte, he notes, began his career as a "maestro de baile" [a dance teacher], a career that allows him to dress with a noticeable degree of elegance and urbanity, even though it does not improve his financial status (II 166). When Ugarte finds "una dama burgalesa" [a lady from Burgos], the implication is that the favors of women bring Ugarte to the attention

of others who can advance his position. Bragas writes “Desde entonces todo cambió. Baste decir que Godoy gobernaba a España y sus Indias” [Since then everything changed. Suffice to say that Godoy governed Spain and its Indies] (II 166). The reference to Godoy, the music teacher who became the Queen’s favorite and ultimately served as Prime Minister from 1792 to 1795, signals that Ugarte’s ambition is similarly boundless. But it also creates a link between the metropolis and the colonies, one that is further strengthened when Bragas notes that Ugarte’s climb up the social ladder involved a position with respect to colonial trade. Ugarte, Bragas notes, has accumulated his riches through official appointments that have allowed him to skim money from colonial maritime trade: “se hizo agente de negocios de Indias, de los Cinco Gremios y de la dirección de Rentas. ¡Colosal mina! Antoñuelo tenía talento en la cabeza y dedos en las manos” [he became an agent for business from the Indies, for the Five Guilds, and for the Directorate of Taxes. Colossal goldmine! Antoñuelo had a head for business and nimble fingers] (I 166). Bragas also notes the connection between Ugarte and the Russian ambassador to Spain, Tattischef, which will play a significant role in undermining the crown’s attempts to suppress the insurrections in the Americas. Bragas concludes his introduction to this figure in Fernando VII’s *camarilla* by noting that Ugarte “puso una mano en el corazón de la monarquía, y extendió la otra a los últimos confines de ella en Europa y en América” [put one hand into the heart of the monarchy, and extended the other into its last confines in Europe and America] (II 167).

Ugarte’s connections to Spain’s colonies are presented as even more problematic in the novel’s representation of a fateful late-night session of the *camarilla* that focuses very specifically on the insurrections in the Americas. Bragas first presents a scene in which Fernando VII is given reports on the status of problems in the Americas from his head of government, Pedro Cevallos and his Minister of Finance, Juan Pérez Villaamil, both of whom, like Ugarte, are historical personages who occupied these government positions at the start of Fernando’s monarchy in 1814. The scene unfolds slowly and deliberately, allowing the narrative to prepare the reader for the direct references to the colonies only after learning more about the way in which the *camarilla* functions. Bragas first describes Fernando VII as stretched out in a chair, blowing smoke rings at the ceiling, talking with minor members of the *camarilla*, who stand at attention and carefully monitor their speech, waiting for subtle signals from the king that will indicate how they should respond (II 208). The conversation begins with a calculated reference to gossip implying that the Minister of State, Pedro Cevallos, might be a freemason and involved with liberal conspirators, but

then it turns to the particular favors that members of the *camarilla* routinely request of the king. Bragas has his own favors to ask, one of which will help position him as a potential suitor to Presentación de Rumblar, the daughter of the Condesa de Rumblar from the first series. Bragas sees the benefits of a union with the Rumblar family, but he has not managed to attract Presentación's attention until she comes to ask for his help, as a member of the *camarilla*, to secure the release of her suitor, a young man who has been jailed for his liberal political views and for having the audacity to say that Fernando VII has a big nose. Bragas, however, does the opposite, calling for the would-be suitor's continued incarceration when the king has already promised the young man's father that he would show mercy. He encourages the king to reconsider a moratorium on the collection of a debt that the Porreños, the same family of women from *La Fontana de Oro*, have incurred with the young man's father as a way of satisfying the father's financial interests without releasing the son. By convincing the king to rescind both of his previous orders, Bragas can boast of the power of his access to the king and his ability to advance his own agendas while at the same time revealing the capriciousness of the king's decision-making. The king pays attention to the details of the Porreños' situation and comments, "Porreño se comió su fortuna y la ajena, dióse buena vida, y ahora sus herederos no quieren pagar ... ¡Qué excelente sistema!" [Porreño consumed his own fortune and those of others, gave himself a good life, and now his heirs don't want to pay. What a great system!] (II 212). What the text then presents us with is significant not only for its comment on the nature of the Spanish people but also for its reference to Spanish empire:

– ¡Y sobre todo muy español! añadió el rey de las Españas, con un aplomo humorístico que a pesar mío me hizo reír – Gastar lo propio y lo ajeno, vivir a lo príncipe, y después encastillarse en la grandeza y dignidad de los títulos nobiliarios para rechazar el pago de las deudas como una ignominia ... ¡Oh, qué delicioso país y qué incomparable gente! (II 212)

["And above all very Spanish!" added the King of Spain, with humorous aplomb that made me laugh in spite of myself. "To spend one's own money and that of others, to live like a prince, and then fortify one's self in the grandeur and dignity of noble titles in order to refuse the payment of debts as a form of ignominy ... Oh, what a delicious country and what incomparable people!"]

We, as readers, are meant to see the irony of Fernando's critique of others for behavior so similar to his own. By referring to Fernando VII as ruler of

two Spains, metropolitan and colonial, the text insinuates that both he and the Spanish people in general are guilty of living off the borrowed resources of others. Equally important, with this oblique reference to empire established, the text then turns to a direct discussion of the Americas and the growing independence movements.

The scene begins with the arrival of Antonio de Ugarte, who immediately points out the absence of Juan Pérez Villaamil, the finance minister, and intimates to the king that he should replace him. Ugarte also makes a veiled reference to Pedro Cevallos, the king's lead minister, which encourages another sycophantic member of the *camarilla* to join in. The result is a clever repetition of all the whispered rumours of Cevallos's disloyalty to the king, even as the speakers themselves appear to defend the minister of such charges. At this moment both Villaamil and Cevallos are announced and the men join the group for a more serious conversation about the state of the nation. When Fernando discusses his desire to appoint additional bureaucrats to various well-paying positions, Villaamil raises the issue of cost and advises the king on the state of the nation's finances.

– Señor – dijo Villaamil –, el estado de Erario no se oculta a Vuestra Majestad. El escaso producto de los impuestos no basta ni con mucho a cubrir los enormes gastos, aumentados cada día con la creación de nuevos destinos. El Reino no tiene recursos para costearse su ejército, ni su marina, ni para dotar dignamente la Casa Real ni su regia guardia; España es pobre, pobresísima; necesita los caudales de América para vivir con algún decoro entre las naciones de Europa. (II 216–17)

[– Sir – said Villaamil –, the state of the Exchequer is not unknown to your Majesty. The scarce amount of taxes is not enough to cover the enormous expenses, growing each day with the creation of new positions. The Kingdom does not have the resources to pay its army, not its navy, nor the royal guard. Spain is poor, desperately poor; it needs the riches of America to live with some decorum among the nations of Europe.]

When the king asks about the monies that should be coming into the metropolis from the colonies, Villaamil lays out the facts.

La América está toda sublevada, y las juntas rebeldes funcionan en Buenos Aires, en Caracas, en Valparaíso, en Bogotá, en Montevideo. Si Méjico está aún libre del contagio, los americanismos de Washington se encargan de trastornar también aquel país, del mismo modo que el Brasil nos trastorna el Uruguay, e Inglaterra nos revuelve a Chile. La

insurrección americana exige un gran esfuerzo, un colosal esfuerzo. Es preciso mandar allá un ejército; pero para esto señor, se necesitan tres cosas: hombres, dinero y barcos. (II 217)

[America is in full revolt, and rebel councils operate in Buenos Aires, in Caracas, in Valparaiso, in Bogotá, in Montevideo. If Mexico is still free from contagion, the Americanisms of Washington are bent on upsetting that country too, in the same way that Brazil agitates Uruguay, and England stirs up Chile. The American insurrection requires a great effort, a colossal effort. It is necessary to send an army there; but for this, sir, three things are needed: men, money, and ships.]

While the nation has no lack of soldiers, he adds, there are no adequate ships. With respect to funding, Cevallos reminds the king of the negotiations with Great Britain on ending the slave trade that promise to deliver a handsome indemnity to the Spanish crown. Fernando concludes the meeting by ordering Cevallos and Villaamil to devise a plan to round up recruits, to receive the necessary funding from the British, and to find a way to supply the necessary transport for troops to the Americas. Fernando VII offers Villaamil a cigar, who at first refuses, indicating that he has stopped smoking. Fernando VII insists that he take it, and the minister reluctantly accepts the gift. Bragas feels the elbow of a fellow sycophant in his ribs, indicating that this gesture is, indeed, important. The two ministers then take their leave and the king is left alone with Ugarte and the other members of the *camarilla*. The minister's bleak outlook with respect to the ability of the king to muster the troops and ships necessary to suppress Latin American independence, together with his initial refusal to accept a royal gift – notably a gift of tobacco cultivated in the colonies – essentially seals his fate, a fact that Bragas and his companions recognize without having to say a word. Despite his truthfulness and his commitment to royal absolutism, Juan Pérez Villaamil will be replaced by morning.

The facts of the colonial situation facing the crown must still be confronted, and Fernando VII turns to the leader of his *camarilla*. Ugarte criticizes Villaamil as being too negative, but the king's response to Ugarte, described in the text as “el ex bailarín” [an ex-dancer] as a way of revealing his lack of governmental expertise, is solemn. Fernando VII reflects on the gravity of the decisions to be made, noting, “La verdad es ... que no estamos en Jauja” [The truth is that we're not in the land of plenty] (II 218). The phrase the king uses is in itself curiously symbolic. Jauja, located in a particularly fertile valley of Peru, was a source of abundant resources during the period of Spanish conquest, and over time became a term referring to a mythical place of luxury and idleness. The king's comment becomes a

telling one that both reveals the king's awareness of the monarchy's current financial crisis even as it underscores the current state of metropolitan-colonial affairs.

The references to Spanish empire become much more direct as the conversation continues. For example, in the very next breath Fernando VII states gloomily, in a single sentence, "Hay que despedirse de las Américas" [One must say goodbye to the Americas] (II 218). This, given in the form of a passive declarative sentence, will be the one sentence in the 20 volumes that make up the first and second series of *Episodios* that directly and unequivocally addresses the loss of the American colonies. Ugarte and the other sycophants immediately reassure the king that "toda la insurrección americana se reduce a cuatro perdidos que gritan en las plazuelas" [the entire American insurrection is nothing more than a few lost souls shouting in the public square] (218) – reassurances that, from the contemporary perspective of Galdós's readers in the 1870s, were clearly untrue. Worse, Ugarte offers to oversee the muster of troops, the purchase of their provisions, and their transport to the Americas. His blithe assurance that he can provide an easy solution to the complex problem that worries the king's experienced ministers allows Galdós to comment on the one historical event that Antonio de Ugarte is best remembered for: the costly purchase of a small fleet of rotting Russian ships – negotiated through his friend, the Russian ambassador Tattischef – whose lack of seaworthiness results in their never leaving the port of Cádiz. As another and more troubling sign of Ugarte's corruption and the monarchy's moral failings, when Fernando VII asks Ugarte if he intends to use the indemnification from Great Britain for ending the slave trade to finance the project, noting that the funds are meant to compensate the slaveowners in the colonies, Ugarte responds by saying "¿No vale más dejarles sin indemnización, y conservarles los esclavos y las tierras?" [Isn't it better to leave them without compensation and let them keep the slaves and the land?] (II 219). "Está dicho todo," [No more need be said] responds Fernando VII with enthusiasm, granting Ugarte the powers to draft soldiers and take funds from the royal treasury. Even Bragas understands that the king has fallen for "la seductora sugestión de aquel brujo que prometía los imposibles" [the seductive suggestion of that sorcerer who promised the impossible] (II 220).

Beyond the historical consequences of Fernando's response to colonial insurrection, the language ascribed to him in the novel reveals a curious attitude toward imperial loss. The very phrasing of the king's statement "Hay que despedirse de las Américas" reveals both an attitude of resignation and a lack of true agency. The grammatical structure allows the king

to avoid a discussion of culpability. The response of Ugarte and others demonstrates a profound failure to understand what is actually happening and what is at stake. Bragas, for example, blames “unos cuantos presidiarios con cuatro docenas de ingleses y norteamericanos echados por tramposos de sus respectivos países,” [a few inmates with four dozen Englishmen and North Americans thrown out of their respective countries for being swindlers] (122) when the reality is that Spain has already irrevocably begun the process that will result in the most dramatic change in its national history since 1492.

As readers, we have just been presented with the actions that we know will lead to a profound collective national trauma. Importantly, the failure to understand what is happening and what is at stake is consistent with the theory of trauma. The individual is unaware at the moment of the critical event what it means or that it will, in fact, be the source of trauma. It is only in revisiting the event, reliving it, that the extent of the trauma can begin to be mapped and processed. This crucial scene in *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* slips by the characters themselves, but it resonates for Galdós’s readers. By focusing on the king’s remark and the poor advice that he receives, Galdós is able to place blame for this imperial loss squarely on Spain’s leaders and their incompetent management, a view supported by historians (Anna 151–52). The moment unequivocally portrays the historical short-sightedness of the king and his advisors. More importantly, by revisiting this critical moment of traumatic experience in his project of narrating the nation’s history, Galdós presents a scene that exculpates the Spanish people from direct responsibility for the nation’s colonial failures, an important step toward the goal of reimagining Spain as a nation, not an empire. It is not the average citizen who must take responsibility for the disastrous treatment of the nation’s colonial subjects. Throughout the novel, Galdós demonstrates, through the unscrupulous behavior of the *camarilla*, that middle-class and working-class metropolitan citizens are also mistreated by the king and the *camarilla*. That Bragas should narrate Fernando VII’s apathetic response, when presented with the complex situation in the American territories, only serves to heighten the reader’s recognition of the disastrous consequences of these events for the metropolis and underscores the idea that such a traumatic loss might very easily have been avoided. The loss of empire and the diminishment of the nation are inscribed into Bragas’s narrative as events that, far from being an inevitable consequence of history, were more properly the result of short-sightedness, greed, and simple stupidity at the highest levels of Spanish government.

While the discussion between Fernando VII and his ministers is the only moment in both the first and second series of *Episodios nacionales* to directly

address the historical events surrounding the Latin American independence movements, there are many other indirect and subtle references that indicate that the issue of imperial loss permeates the society portrayed in the novels. One example occurs when Presentación de Rumblar, angry with Bragas for his betrayal, feigns a fascination with Fernando VII in order to set Bragas up for public humiliation. Bragas is unable to refrain from boasting of his connections, and he arranges an audience for her with the king. In typical fashion, he exaggerates the situation to Presentación and implies that the king is also interested in her to such a degree that he is unable to concentrate on affairs of state: “Aquella persona a quien he dado esperanzas de obtener algunos castos favores, está loca de alegría. Hoy no ha habido despacho, y España y sus Indias andarán desgobernadas, mientras aquel desatentado corazón no se tranquilice” [The person to whom I’ve given hope that he might obtain your chaste favors is crazy with joy. Today there is no official meeting, and Spain and its Indies will go ungoverned as long as that neglected heart is not reassured] (II 232). However, Bragas’s attempts to ingratiate himself with the king and to align himself in marriage to the Rumblar family ultimately end in disgrace and his removal from the *camarilla*.

The series’ critique of Fernando VII’s rule continues in the third volume of the series, *La segunda casaca*. In this novel Bragas shares the responsibility for narration with Genara de Baraona, Salvador’s first love. The storyline in this novel begins to coalesce around the events that will lead to the 1820 military uprising of Rafael de Riego and the imposition of a constitutional monarchy on Fernando VII. The inclusion of Genara allows the novel to continue its portrayal of court intrigue, and in this sense her voice becomes an extension of Bragas’s. *La segunda casaca* also serves as a transitional novel that will bring readers back to the main plot of Salvador Monsalud. The novel presents a longer span of time, from 1815 to 1820, addressing the effects of Fernando VII’s absolutism and the growing unrest of political liberals at all levels of Spanish society. As a result of his humiliating and failed attempts to woo Presentación Rumblar and the caprice of the king, Juan Bragas has lost his position at court and for a time he becomes a *cesante*, an unemployed bureaucrat. When he does find another job in the government it is as a low-level functionary. He now spends time with Genara de Baraona, who, having once rejected Salvador, is now unhappily married to Salvador’s principal rival and half-brother, Carlos Navarro. In conversations with Bragas, Genara reveals that she is obsessed with finding Salvador Monsalud, who is rumored to have returned to the capital as a participant in liberal conspiracies. From the purely historical perspective, the novel explores the various conspiracies

against the crown, the activities of the secretive Masonic lodges in support of political liberalism, and the growing unrest of the armed forces charged with suppressing the insurrections in the Americas. At one point Bragas lists the various conspiracies against Fernando VII's absolutism between 1814 and 1819 (II 245–46). The last one he lists is revealed and suppressed by General Enrique O'Donnell, the Conde de La Bisbal, who by 1820 will eventually support the liberal cause. The reference is notable in its identification of the source of revolutionary fervor in the troops bound for the Americas.

En 1819, después de merendar con los conspiradores de Cádiz y los oficiales del ejército expedicionario de América, los arrestó de súbito, haciendo una escena de farsa y bulla, que le valió la Gran Cruz de Carlos III. El ejército estaba furioso. Tenía la fiebre devoradora de la insurrección. Desde Madrid oímos su resoplido calenturiento, y temblábamos. En las logias no había más que militares, infinitas hechuras de aquellos cinco años de guerra, los cuales habían de emplear en algo su bravura y sus sables. Todo indicaba tormenta. Cruzaban el negro cielo relámpagos de amenaza. Nos sentíamos en el cráter de la revolución, y nuestros pies se quemaban. (II 247)

[In 1819, after picnicking with the Cádiz conspirators and the officers of the expeditionary forces destined for America, he arrested them suddenly, making a scene of farce and noise, which earned him the Grand Cross of Carlos III. The army was furious. It was suffering the ravenous fever of insurrection. From Madrid we heard its heated snort, and we trembled. In the lodges there was nothing but military men, the infinite handiwork of those five years of war, who had to do something with their bravery and sabers. Everything pointed to a storm. Lightning bolts of threat crossed the black sky. We felt ourselves in the crater of the revolution, and our feet were burning.]

Bragas's articulation of the unrest and the opposition to Fernando VII's absolutism unequivocally links the military charged with pacifying the colonies with an insurrection against the crown itself. Instead of sailing to the Americas and solidifying Spain's imperial power, the leaders of the Spanish military have raised the threat of revolt within the borders of the metropolis. The Americas are increasingly represented as a place with little relevance to the official representatives of the metropolis, be they bureaucrats or soldiers, and the threat of political upheaval at home looms large for all.

By this point in the narrative, the Americas appear to be separate from the nation. The concept of "las dos Españas" has begun to shift in

meaning so that it now refers to the political struggle playing out within the borders between absolutists and liberals. As a result, the prospect of traveling to the Americas is presented as equivalent to traveling to a foreign country. It is important to note that both Juan Bragas and Salvador Monsalud consider relocating to the Americas, in Monsalud's case more than once. Their reaction to such a possibility reveals the degree to which the Americas no longer represent an intrinsic part of the nation. Bragas, for example, is offered a new position in Fernando VII's administration by Juan Esteban Lozano de Torres, the Minister of Justice, but to his surprise it is as "la superintendencia de Moneda en Méjico" [the superintendent of the Mexican mint] (II 262). Although he has been desperate to regain a position within the government and recuperate his political clout, Bragas responds with shock.

– ¿Indias, señor Lozano?. – exclamé con el mayor desdén –. Ya sabe usted que no me gusta viajar por mar. Puesto que se me trata de ese modo, renunciaré a servir en la administración. Para ir a América y labrarme en cinco años una fortuna, no necesito que el gobierno me dé un destino con visos de destierro. (II 262)

[– The Indies, Mr. Lozano? ... You already know that I do not like to travel by sea. Since I am treated in this way, I will give up serving in the administration. To go to America and work for five years to amass a fortune, I do not need the government to give me a post that smacks of exile.]

Bragas's comments imply that the only compelling reason to travel to the Americas would be to amass a quick fortune and bring it back to Spain. Moreover, he notes, it would not be necessary to do this under the auspices of a government job. His comments present what will become throughout the nineteenth century the standard model for the *indiano*, a metropolitan Spanish subject who travels to the Americas to become rich and brings that wealth back to Spain in order to live in opulence. The *indiano* becomes a stock character in mid- and late nineteenth-century Spanish literature, including many of Galdós's *novelas contemporáneas*. This is one of the moments in the *Episodios nacionales* where the text reflects the perspective of Galdós's 1870s cultural framework more accurately than that of 1819. Regardless of the perspective, Bragas's rejection of the idea also reveals that, despite the mercantile exchange between the American territories and Spain, the connections between metropolis and colony have disintegrated to the point that a position in Mexico, even one that would allow Bragas an extraordinary opportunity to make money, is equivalent to exile.

Bragas correctly interprets the offer as an attempt to remove him from the circle of political power in Madrid. His rivals have effectively convinced the king that it would be beneficial to banish him from the metropolis. The inclusion of this turn of events serves to link Bragas's story back to the central narrative involving Salvador Monsalud.

Unable to reintegrate himself into the *camarilla* and increasingly aware of the growing strength of the liberal opposition to the king's absolutism, Bragas begins to consider backing the liberal cause. If the liberals are successful in forcing the king to agree to a constitutional monarchy, and Bragas allies himself with them, he stands to regain his influence in the court and at the same time participate in the downfall of his rivals. This leads him to reconnect with his childhood friend, now a political conspirator. *La segunda casaca* faithfully presents the historical reality of the initially uncertain future of Riego's uprising, and this leads to a scene in which Bragas and Monsalud, hiding from the authorities, engage in a frank dialogue about the political situation that they, and by extension the nation, find themselves in. Bragas asks Monsalud where he will go if the revolution fails, and Monsalud responds, "Al extranjero, quiero decir; o a América, qué sé yo ..." [Abroad, I mean; or America, what do I know?] (II 341).

That both Bragas and Monsalud must consider the idea of political exile to America serves as a subtle link between their historical and allegorical narratives. Importantly, neither of them will undertake such a journey, underscoring the idea that the colonial experience no longer plays a central role in national history. Their sphere of activity remains within the metropolis, with Bragas as a chronicler of the highest levels of governmental decision-making and Monsalud as a representative of the citizens who live with the consequences of those decisions. Bragas sees the writing on the wall, recognizes the imminent victory of Rafael de Riego's revolt, and conveniently becomes a supporter of the liberals in a craven effort to maintain his access to power and influence through a new circle of political insiders. But the world of the *camarilla* as it has existed since 1814 is destined to change, and, as a reflection of that historical change, Bragas's first-person narration comes to an end.

In the concluding paragraphs of his narrative Bragas notes the ease with which he has been able shift his allegiance from the absolutists to the liberals, using the metaphor of a change of clothing and the idea of a turncoat to refer to what will eventually prove to be a hollow victory and the short-lived dominance of the *doceañista* liberals from 1820 to 1823. Bragas, reveling in the downfall and humiliation of his rivals, notes, "¡Qué bien sentaba a mi gallardo cuerpo la nueva casaca!" adding, "No puedo seguir, no puedo hablar más, porque la alegría embarga en

mi espíritu y ahoga mi voz” [How good this new dress coat felt on my elegant figure! ... I cannot continue, I can no longer speak, because joy overwhelms my spirit and drowns my voice] (II 357–58). The metaphor of the *casaca*, despite its newness, signals business as usual at the level of government. There is little that Bragas can add through the continuation of his narrative, but that does not mean that there is nothing more to tell. The end of Bragas’s first-person account does not signal the end of *La segunda casaca* or, frankly, his own tale in the second series. The narrative, assumed by an unidentified narrator, shifts its attention back to other characters introduced in *El equipaje del Rey José* – Salvador Monsalud, Genara de Baraona, and Carlos Navarro – and focuses once again on the drama of their complex triangle of love and jealousy. This change in plot focus allows the series to turn to the domestic romance involving Salvador Monsalud, which will then dominate the subsequent novels throughout the rest of the second series.

Nonetheless, Juan Bragas de Pipaón continues to appear in subsequent volumes of the series, and a close reading of textual details allows us to see the ways in which Galdós uses him to reference the changes in Spain’s empire. He becomes a secondary character, often in league with Genara de Baraona, who helps link historical events to the life of the series’ protagonist, Salvador Monsalud. More importantly, he allows Galdós to present information that demonstrates the degree to which historical events contributed to the diminishment of Spain on the global stage. To do so, Bragas must develop his capacity to move between liberal and absolutist camps. For example, in *El Grande Oriente*, when Bragas sees which way the political winds are blowing, he chooses to support the liberals who have forced the king to recognize the Constitution and becomes a member of a Masonic lodge in Madrid at the very start of the Liberal Triennium (II 405–06). He returns again in *Los cien mil hijos de San Luis*, appearing in the military camp of the troops loyal to the Constitution of 1812, when he meets with Salvador Monsalud to give him news of his family. He later appears in the camp of the royalists, where he reconnects with Genara de Baraona. His ability to transcend any permanent identification with a political ideology underscores his political opportunism, which is perhaps Pipaón’s most salient character trait throughout the series. His continued employment at various levels of Fernando VII’s administration gives him access to information that he in turn uses for the benefit of himself and his friends, including Monsalud and Genara.²³

²³ In *El terror de 1824*, the seventh novel in the second series, Pipaón is witness to the summary judgment often meted out to individuals who have done little more than

In *Los apostólicos* and *Un faccioso más y unos frailes menos*, the final two volumes in the series that deal with the death of the king and its consequences in the political life of the country and the day-to-day lives of metropolitan citizens, Pipaón again serves to highlight Fernando VII's impact on Spanish imperialism. Juan Bragas de Pipaón, now referred to in the text solely as Pipaón, shows up once again as a well-dressed, overfed, and smug member of the court. He spends time with the family of Benigno Cordero, Galdós's exemplary middle-class Spaniard, even as he moves in and out of court circles and the home of Genara de Baraona. He is clearly still focused on social climbing, and when he makes the acquaintance of Don Felicísimo Carnicero, a royalist who has made his fortune through dealing in ecclesiastical art, he is quick to notice the man's unwed and socially marginalized granddaughter, Micaelita. The references to Don Felicísimo and his family in *Los apostólicos* contain oblique and subtle references to the colonies, and their goal is to connect Carnicero, as a supporter of monarchical absolutism, with an antiquated notion of Spanish imperial power that no longer holds sway. Not surprisingly, Galdós returns to his earlier fiction for inspiration, and he describes a friendly relationship between the art dealer and Salomé Porreño, characters who appeared in *La Fontana de Oro* as the last descendants of a noble Spanish family and equally ardent supporters of Fernando VII. Galdós focuses once again on the physical environment in which these characters live. In a manner reminiscent of the description of the Porreño's home in *La Fontana de Oro*, which was described as a sort of mausoleum of colonial artifacts, readers are given curiously detailed information about Carnicero's family home in Madrid: "Había sido edificada en los tiempos en que la calle Duque de Alba se llamaba *de la Emperatriz*" [It had been built in the time when the Duke of Alba Street was called the Empress's Street] (II 1033). The age and condition of the house is such that it appears on the verge of collapse, held up solely by the will of its wealthy but aging owner.

Carnicero's orphaned granddaughter, Micaelita, is his sole heir, but an event in her past has negatively affected her ability to find an adequate spouse.

Esta Micaelita era, pues, heredera universal del señor don Felicísimo, circunstancia que, a pesar de su escasa belleza, debía hacer de ella un

receive letters from Spaniards who have emigrated to England, and in this role he speaks up to save the lives of characters such as Benigno Cordero, a figure who clearly represents the nascent Spanish middle class who will drive the Revolution of 1868, the political event that leads Galdós to begin his historical chronicle of nineteenth-century Spanish history (II 805–06).

partido apetitoso. Sin embargo, habiendo tenido en sus quince años ciertos devaneos precoces con un muchacho de la vecindad, quedó muy mal parada su honra. El mancebo se fue a América, don Felicísimo enfermó de disgusto, doña María del Sagrario, tía de la joven, enfermó también; divulgose el caso, salió mal que bien de su paso Micaelita, y desde entonces no hubo galán que la pretendiera. (II 1033)

[This Micaelita was, then, the sole heir of don Felicísimo, a circumstance which, despite her lack of beauty, ought to have made her a choice morsel. Nonetheless, having had at the age of 15 certain precocious flirtations with a boy from the neighborhood, her honor was quite damaged. The young man left for America, don Felicísimo became ill with disgust, doña María del Sagrario, the girl's aunt, also fell ill; the story got out, things went badly for Micaelita, and from then on there was no beau who would have her.]

This brief reference to America points to the common, if not frequent, practice of sending wayward sons to the colonies as a means of getting them out of trouble. But it also subtly reminds readers of the imperial structures of everyday life in Spain even as it underscores the negative impact of Spanish imperialism on its metropolitan subjects. Into this situation walks Pipaón, and he sees an opportunity where others have not. Pipaón quietly begins to court Micaelita in the background, while Salvador Monsalud works with don Felicísimo to resolve issues surrounding an inheritance from an *indiano* relative. At this stage in Pipaón's story, his acquaintances, employing ecclesiastical Latin with subtle humor, begin to refer to him as a *Patriarca zascandilorum* [the patriarch of swindlers] (II 1173), thus underscoring his self-serving activities with the Carnicero family, his political infidelity, and the fact that there will be many more like him in the future.

The final volume in the series, *Un faccioso más y unos frailes menos*, narrates the death of Fernando VII, which historically triggered a bitter struggle for power between the king's widow, María Cristina, who wished to have the king's three-year-old daughter Isabel become queen, and the king's brother, Carlos, who as the king's only male relative claimed the right to the throne. This political division led to a series of three civil wars, the Carlist Wars (1833–40, 1846–49, 1872–76), which Galdós would chronicle in his later *Episodios nacionales*, published between 1898 and 1912. Through its focus on the death of the king, the novel brings to a close the various plots woven throughout Galdós's chronicle of the years of Fernando VII's rule, including that of Juan Bragas de Pipaón. In what appears to be the final word on Pipaón in the series, Galdós provides his readers with a remarkable commentary on the state of Spanish empire.

Galdós sets the stage for this final reference by exploring the struggle between supporters of Queen María Cristina and the king's brother Carlos as Fernando VII lies moribund in his royal chambers. Pipaón finds himself in the position of having to choose between the two camps. Don Felicísimo Carnicero, as a representative of the *antiguo régimen*, is clearly in favor of the king's brother, and Bragas has presented himself to his future wife's grandfather as someone ideologically committed to the Carlist cause. But when it becomes clear that Fernando VII, on his deathbed, will overturn the Salic Law, thus ensuring that Isabel will become the next ruler of Spain and that María Cristina will serve as regent, Juan Bragas is forced to make a choice: remain a member of the court or become a part of the political opposition. He distances himself from the Carlist conspirators and decides to swear fealty to the queen and to Isabel II.

Pipaón, después de pasar algunas semanas apartado de las logias mojigatas (¿por qué no se han de llamar así?) volvió a palacio; hízose introducir con no pocas dificultades en la Cámara de la Reina, y allí juró y perjuró que él no era ni había sido *carlino*; que él tenía Su Alteza por uno de los más desatinados locos nacidos de madre; que si sostenía amistades con algunos individuos del bando de la fe, Dios era testigo de las exhortaciones que él (Pipaón) les había dirigido para desviarles de tan peligrosa y antipatriótica senda; *item* más, que sin hacer gala de ello había trabajado como un negro (nos consta que empleó la misma frase) por la causa de su Reina niña, ganando voluntades, disuadiendo a este de sus herejías apostólicas, fortaleciendo el desmayado espíritu de aquel, desbaratando planes, y preconizando en todas partes las excelencias de aquella monarquía ideal, histórica y libre, generosa y fuerte. (II 1174)

[Pipaón, after spending a few weeks away from the sanctimonious lodges (and why not call them that?), returned to the palace; he had himself presented with no small difficulty into the Queen's Chamber, and there he swore that he was not and had never been a Carlist, that he considered His Highness one of the most insane men ever born, that if he maintained friendships with some individuals in that band of faith, God was witness to the exhortations that he (Pipaón) had spoken to them in order to warn them from such a dangerous and unpatriotic path; and even more, that without making it known, he had worked like a negro (we know that he used this very same phrase) for the cause of the young Queen, winning over some, dissuading this one from his apostolic heresies, fortifying the flagging spirit of that one, thwarting conspiracies, and praising everywhere the excellence of that ideal, historic and free, generous and strong monarchy.]

The use of free indirect speech in this passage is both humorous and telling. It makes abundantly clear the manner in which Pipaón curries favor with those that he perceives as having authority. But notable as well is the idiomatic reference to how hard Pipaón has worked to support the interests of Isabel. The reference to slave labor actually merits the intervention of the narrative voice, thus calling specific attention not only to a claim on Pipaón's part that is patently untrue but also to a reality of Spanish empire that is only too easily overlooked throughout the series's presentation of Spanish imperial history.²⁴

The culmination of Bragas' story, however, occurs not with his decision to support the queen but rather with his relationship with Don Felicísimo Carnicero. On the morning of September 29, 1833, Pipaón and Micaelita Carnicero marry. Galdós is specific about the date because later that same day Fernando VII dies. The couple arrive at Micaelita's home, expecting the blessing of her grandfather and a wedding luncheon, only to discover that Carnicero has learned of Pipaón's betrayal of the Carlist cause. He casts his granddaughter and her new husband from his home, swearing that he will disown them. Again drawing on his earlier portrait of the absolutist conspirators in *La Fontana de Oro*, Galdós employs the character of Elías Orejón as the bearer of the news of the king's death. Other conspirators arrive at Don Felicísimo's home, and they outline their plans to place Carlos and his family on the throne. They conclude with a toast to the future.

– ¡Viva Su Majestad el Rey, Su Majestad la Reina y los serenísimos señores Infantes! – exclamó Negri –. De las ruinas del masonismo se levanta el legítimo trono de España.

– Y de Indias ... porque se volverán a conquistar las Indias.

– Se volverán a conquistar – dijo Carnicero, que se notó ágil y dio algunos pasos con cierta ligereza relativa –. Adios, mis queridos amigos. Hasta mañana. (II 1191)

[“Long live his Majesty the King, Her Majesty the Queen, and the serene Princes!” exclaimed Negri, “From the ruins of Masonry rises the legitimate throne of Spain.”

“And the Indies ... because they will conquer the Indies again.”

“They will conquer again,” said Carnicero, who appeared limber and took a few steps with a certain relative lightness, “Goodbye, dear friends. Until tomorrow.”]

²⁴ Also ironic in this scene is the fact that María Cristina, during the period of her regency, would become heavily involved in the Spanish slave trade. See Surwillo, *Monsters by Trade* 62.

Having had too much to drink, Carnicero finds himself alone and unsteady on his feet. The walls of his home begin to spin, and he shouts at them “¡Quieta, España, quieta!” [“Quiet, Spain, Quiet!”] (II 1192). Don Felicísimo looks up and sees a portrait of Fernando VII, hung on the wall 30 years ago, and he begins to speak to the image, haranguing the dead king for having sold out the absolutist cause. In a description that evokes both the image of the Comendador from Tirso de Molina’s play *El burlador de Sevilla y el convidado de piedra* and the figure of Paris from the portrait in the home of Doctor Anselmo in *La sombra*, Carnicero imagines that Fernando VII is reaching out from the frame to grab him and drag him to hell: “La imagen infernal no sólo le atenazaba sino que se lo llevaba consigo, empujándole a profundidades negras abiertas por el delirio y pobladas de feos demonios” [The hellish image not only grabbed hold but also pulled him along, pushing him into black depths opened up by delirium and filled with ugly demons] (II 1193).

Carnicero collapses on the floor, and a cat enters the room, clearly hunting rats. With “bigotes tiesos, el lomo erizado, los ojos como esmeraldas atravesadas de rayos de oro, las uñas amenazantes” [stiff whiskers, a raised back, eyes like emeralds pierced with golden rays, menacing claws], making “los fúnebres maullidos” [funereal caterwauling], the cat leaps onto posts supporting the walls, scales them to gain access to “oscuros agujeros” [dark corners], and eventually knocks down a section of the wall (II 1193). The resultant collapse triggers further damage, and soon the entire house, a metaphor for both the absolutist cause and the concept of Spain as an imperial power, collapses on top of the unconscious Don Felicísimo and kills him. The text renders judgment on this event, indicating that “Nada sabríamos de lo que contiene este sepulcro inmenso en que tantas grandezas yacen, si no existiese el epitáfio que se llama historia” [We would know nothing of what is contained in this immense tomb, in which so many great things lie, if it were not for the epitaph that is called history] (II 1194).

Pipaón arrives on the scene and in typical fashion worries more about the difficulty of digging into the ruins of the house to find the many treasures that lie underneath. He discovers later, to his relief, that Carnicero died before he could alter his will, and Micaelita will, in fact, inherit the old man’s fortune after all. It is a stunning conclusion to Pipaón’s story, one that underscores the outsized luck of the self-interested courtier. The text notes, with wonderful irony, “Hasta en aquel deplorable accidente se manifestó la decidida protección que el cielo dispensaba al cortesano de 1815, apartándole de todos los peligros y allanándole los caminos todos para que llegase a donde sin duda alguna debía llegar” [Even that deplorable accident revealed the decided protection that heaven dispensed to the

courtier of 1815, separating him from all dangers and leveling out all roads to that he might arrive wherever without a doubt he was meant to arrive] (II 1194).

The text's final commentary on Pipaón's story is perhaps even richer. Galdós concludes Juan Bragas's story with a remarkable linguistic reference that has not attracted critical attention but nevertheless asks readers to consider a deeper meaning of Pipaón's life, and the lives of those like him, in terms of Spain's colonial history. An acquaintance of the Carnicero family who knows the details of the old art dealer's relationship with his son-in-law offers up one more remarkable Latin phrase that sums up the story of Pipaón's life: "Divisum cum Jove imperium Pipao habet" [The empire is divided when Jupiter has a Pipaón] (II 1194). The self-interest and greed of individuals like Pipaón, who provide poor advice to leaders, have a powerful role in bringing an empire to ruin. By crafting the character of Juan Bragas de Pipaón, Galdós takes direct aim at those who, in addition to Fernando VII, bear responsibility for the reduced state of Spain by the early 1830s. The loss of the Americas, and resulting change for Spain on the world stage, are the price the nation pays for the corruption, greed, and short-sightedness of its leaders and their advisors. From the perspective of the series' construction of dueling plots, the narrative of Juan Bragas might result in a marriage, but it is a marriage without love, supported financially through Carnicero's dual financial connections to both the Church and the colonies, once again echoing Anthony Pagden's notion of a *monarchia universalis* (29).

CHAPTER 5

A Foundational Fiction for the Metropolis

Allegorizing Imperial Loss

While the story of Juan Bragas de Pipaón focuses on the history of Fernando VII's monarchy and places the blame for the loss of Spain's American empire squarely on the incompetence and greed of the king and his *camarilla*, the story of Salvador Monsalud serves as a useful counterpoint. The trajectory of this character's life produces a deeply evocative allegory that demonstrates the effects of Spain's colonial loss and the resultant change from empire to nation on metropolitan citizens. Salvador's life is presented as a metaphorical tale of the Spanish people who do not appear in the books of history and, as such, it is one that must be told through the frame of literature. Galdós tells this story in a hybrid form, combining the domestic romance and the *bildungsroman*, in which the male protagonist experiences a series of relationships that help him grow from a brash young man to a more circumspect adult. I use the term domestic romance here to refer to relationships of love that are expected to result in marriage and family. Monsalud's journey of self-discovery involves a succession of difficult life lessons, in the form of love affairs, all of which are closely connected to the political history of Fernando VII's monarchy and Spain's loss of the American territories. The insights he gains into the complex nature of human behavior – honorable, altruistic, cruel, self-interested – come at a significant personal cost. The most important lesson he learns has to do with self-knowledge. To find personal happiness, Monsalud must accept his past, his present, and his responsibilities as a member of society. His relationships with women lead the protagonist inexorably to a recognition of the importance of the private, domestic sphere, helping him come to terms with the fact that he can only act effectively within a limited sphere of influence. His eventual acceptance of

a life that must remain, by choice, local and familial, is presented not only as a model of behavior with the potential to heal the wounds inflicted by the struggle between absolutism and liberalism but also as an allegory for Spain's path forward as a diminished empire.

Because Galdós's literary reconfiguration of national identity reflects not only the historical fact of colonial loss but also the psychic effect of that loss on the citizens of what once was an empire, the second series as a whole constitutes an ideal metropolitan counterpart for the domestic romance that characterized the patriotic narrative strategies of many nineteenth-century Latin American novels. In her study of the relationship between politics, nation-building, and the nineteenth-century Latin American novel, Doris Sommer has shown just how thoroughly fictional stories of love, marriage, and family drama served as allegories for nation-building and became, to use her term, foundational fictions for newly independent Latin American nations. By reading the work of Michel Foucault and Benedict Anderson against one another, Sommer argues that for many Latin American novels "the rhetorical relationship between heterosexual passion and hegemonic states functions as a mutual allegory" that serves as a way of creating a shared sense of national identity (31). The foundational fictions of these new nations in the Americas constituted "an exhortation to be fruitful and multiply," and, as a result, the domestic romances in many canonical Latin American realist novels constitute tales that link family relationships with the consolidation of political power and capital, all intrinsic aspects of nation-building (Sommer 6).

The second series of *Episodios nacionales*, written between 1875 and 1879, reflects goals similar to those of the Latin American novels: to establish a sense of imagined community and a shared national identity. These ten novels underscore the complex task that Galdós faced as an author.¹ Rather than simply create a new narrative for what it means to be Spanish, Galdós was attempting to substitute one foundational fiction for another, a challenge that, by necessity, involved addressing the fact that the metropolis was changed, both conceptually and literally. The second series

¹ As a point of reference for this chapter, it is worth noting the titles and dates of the novels in the second series that address Monsalud's story: *El equipaje del rey José* (1875), *El Grande Oriente* (1876), *7 de julio* (1876), *Los cien mil hijos de San Luis* (1877), *Un voluntario realista* (1878), *Los apostólicos* (1879), and *Un faccioso más y unos frailes menos* (1879). Volume seven (*El terror de 1824*) focuses on the character of Patricio Sarmiento, while volumes two and three (*Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* and *La segunda casaca*) address, as Chapter 4 indicates, the life of Juan Bragas.

represents a new form of foundational fiction for a metropolis whose imperial status had been profoundly altered and weakened. For both post-colonial and post-imperial foundational fictions, the process begins with an act of appropriation, the imitation of a literary model from outside the author's literary tradition. Sommer demonstrates, for example, how many Latin American novelists used the works of Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Scott, Stendhal, Cooper, and Balzac as models for their own fiction (296). In the case of Galdós, it is clear that his initial model was the *Romans nationaux* of Émile Erckmann and Alexandre Chatrian, published in France in the 1860s (Lande 936). That neither the Latin American authors nor Galdós used Spanish models for their purposes underscores the fact that this process, by its very nature, required an initial separation from the cultural framework that had hitherto defined the relationship between metropolis and colonies. As Galdós's early *Episodios nacionales* illustrate, while the ability to look at the nation's history required a borrowed literary model, the narrative reconfiguration of this period of Spanish history ultimately requires an intimate connection to the details of national daily life. For that reason, instead of following a protagonist from battle to battle, as occurred in the first series, the second series employs a greater number of protagonists and includes multiple narrative voices in its presentation of a wider portrait of society, with a strong focus on the class of individuals who would come to shape Spain's prominent and increasingly powerful middle class in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Equally important, Galdós's representation of daily life reflects a preoccupation with the romantic entanglements of the fictional characters as a way of allegorizing the effects of history on the Spanish people.

Monsalud's developmental arc through the course of the second series of *Episodios nacionales* also reflects certain aspects of the Freudian family romance, a tale in which a child must grow up and eventually move beyond the authority of parents. Reaching a psychological stage of maturity is generally a natural process for a child, but, when framed as an allegory for the nation, the implications are more fraught. As Freud posits in his description of this process, "the whole progress of society rests upon the opposition between successive generations" ("Family Romances" 74). In Salvador Monsalud's case, the process of the family romance initially involves a rejection of the father that later, with the achievement of a level of maturity, allows him to become an adult, eventually replacing and refashioning the role of the parent. Galdós's version of the family romance in the second series employs a key element of the Freudian model: the use of legitimacy and illegitimacy as ways of managing competition for parental regard. In the case of the second series, it is the illegitimate son

who ends up becoming a parent for the next generation, a true progenitor of Spain's future. The fundamentally allegorical nature of the core narrative plot of the second series is clearly marked by the author's use of names. Both the name of the protagonist – Salvador Monsalud – and the parental substitute that he finds at the series' end – Benigno Cordero – make clear that liberalism has the potential to move the nation forward in a way that absolutism, as represented by Salvador's natural father, Fernando Navarro, and his legitimate heirs cannot. Not only does the father share the name of the monarch under whose watch the nation loses its extensive colonial empire; but his nickname – Fernando Garrote – is also used to emphasize the father's capacity for cruelty and violence. As one critic has pointed out, "El uso del apodo Garrote para el absolutista y el nombre Salvador para el liberal no deja de subrayar la postura del joven novelista en el enfrentamiento," adding that "Cordero simboliza lo mejor de la nueva clase media – trabajadora, tolerante, ansiosa de una sociedad más libre, abierta y justa" [The use of the nickname Garotte for the absolutist and the name Savior for the liberal does not fail to emphasize the position of the young novelist in the confrontation ... Cordero symbolizes the best of the new middle class – hardworking, tolerant, eager for a more free, open and just society] (Navascués, "Liberales" 496). Galdós also plays with the use of morphemes. For example, the initial morpheme "mon," given Salvador's affiliation with the French at the start of the series, can be read as indicative of the framework of a larger world (*monde*). This morpheme is used later in the series to describe Salvador's potential life partner, Soledad Gil de la Cuadra, when she is referred to as "Doña Sola y Monda."² By the time Salvador reaches real maturity at the series' end, his decision to step away from the political fray in order to commit himself to family encourages readers also to interpret the name as a reference to the need to save one's self (*mon*), a concept which is clearly underscored by the protagonist's first name. The protagonist's name contains within it the tension between engagement and withdrawal. This is evident at the start, when Salvador, in describing his anticipated return to his village, Puebla de Arganzón, declares his desires in terms of a rejection of political drama: "Para retirarse a él y decir: «Ya no quiero más mundo»" [To return to it and say, "I don't want a larger world"] (II 33). Also noteworthy is the fact that Salvador's connections with the world are presented as personal

² Galdós uses this name at a particular point in the domestic romance when Sol is alone in the world but longing for Salvador to recognize her as a partner. The name underscores both Sol's unmarried status and the possibility that marriage to her offers the possibility of opening up a new world for Salvador.

and not political. In this regard, he can also be read as an allegory for the Spanish people as a whole, transcending the political ideology that defines other key characters in the series.

We cannot forget the issue of genre in the second series. The realism that constitutes the fundamental underpinning of historical fiction might seem to be at odds with an allegorical reading of the texts. But, as Angus Fletcher has pointed out, “The whole point of allegory is that it does not need to be read exegetically; it often has a literal level that makes good enough sense all by itself,” adding that “this literal surface suggests a peculiar doubleness of intention” that “becomes richer and more interesting if given interpretation” (7). As Monsalud’s life story plays out across a series of events portrayed throughout the various volumes of the second series, readers are presented with more than just the history of Spain. They are challenged to reconceptualize what it means to be Spanish when the fundamental identity of the nation has changed. Through the allegory of Monsalud’s life story, readers are presented with a path forward in the process of reimagining Spanish national identity in the modern world. The protagonist’s path involves avoiding the mistakes of past generations and assuming the role of an adult in a rapidly changing society. Monsalud’s discovery of the importance of marriage and family serves as a reminder of the need to focus internally on the problems facing the metropolis. The series shows that Monsalud will have to traverse a long and difficult path, and he will engage in several affairs of the heart in order to find the correct partner in life. Moreover, he will explore various identities before he discovers the one that is authentically his own. The series’ presentation of Monsalud’s development into a mature adult will link the events in his life with Spain’s political history, and Monsalud’s life tells the story of the fortunes of a nation and the painful process of reconfiguring national identity in the face of war, death, and loss.

At the core of Monsalud’s journey are a number of relationships that contribute to the series’ portrayal of both a Freudian family romance – in which he comes to terms with his relationship with his father and half-brother – and a domestic romance – in which his love affairs play an important role in his growth and journey toward maturity. The Freudian framework can be read as primarily a representation of the struggle between absolutism and liberalism, with Monsalud’s father and half-brother representing one side and the substitute father figure of Benigno Cordero representing the other. Equally important, the series’ domestic romance demonstrates that the loss of empire and the consequent diminishment of Spain on the global world stage are realities the effects of which on Monsalud and his fellow Spaniards are no less powerful than those of the ideological battles of the time.

If we pay attention to the textual details in the second series and if we see the series as a collective whole, one that demands an examination of the affective impact of history on the individuals who live it, we begin to see that Monsalud's various love affairs and emotional attachments to women are a part of a larger allegorical commentary on Spanish empire in the first three decades of the nineteenth century. This is, I argue, what modern readers and critics of Galdós's second series have failed to see, despite the fact that this commentary is perhaps the most essential element of this particular series of historical novels. Genara de Baraona, Pepita Sanahuja, Andrea Campos, Sor Teodora de Aransis, and, ultimately, Sol Gil de la Cuadra all represent important stages in accepting colonial loss. Little has been written about these female characters, in large part, I suspect, because critics have not known what to do with them as characters or how to interpret the protagonist's relationships with them.³ With perhaps the exception of Genara de Baraona, these women can appear to be on the periphery of Spanish history. But, when placed within the framework of a metropolitan foundational fiction, each one of these romantic entanglements can be read as a required step in coming to terms with the profound changes in national identity that were a result of imperial loss. Taken together, they form a unique Spanish foundational fiction, an allegory that maps out the necessary trajectory that Spain's citizens must take in order to assuage the pain and the consequences of imperial loss. From an interpretative standpoint, Monsalud's relationships with women represent what Angus Fletcher calls "rhythmic encoding," a form of allegorical meaning that becomes visible and comprehensible "not by content, but by rhythm" (172).⁴ When we place the protagonist's love

³ General studies of the *Episodios nacionales* by Montesinos, Rodríguez, Hinterhäuser, Regalado García, Dendle, and Dorca have focused primarily on the ideological struggles within the borders of Spain and, as a result, have offered only limited commentary about the various female characters in the second series. More recently, critics such as David George have paid closer attention to female characters, but mostly within the framework of women's roles in late nineteenth-century liberalism ("Foresight, Blindness or Illusion? Women and Citizenship in the Second Series of Galdós's *Episodios nacionales*," in *Visualizing Spanish Modernity* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 46–63).

⁴ While no critical analyses of the second series has focused on the allegorical nature of the relationships depicted, at least one critic has noted, in almost intuitive fashion, this aspect of Galdós's narrative technique: "Por una parte, Galdós no se contenta con narrar lo vivido, sino también lo fantaseado, lo que pudo haber sido y no fue; por otra parte, proyecta sus emociones y sentimientos según ritmos e imágenes que convendrá analizar detenidamente" [On the one hand, Galdós is

affairs in relation to one another, noting the ways in which one leads to the next and how what is learned in one experience translates into changes in the protagonist's behavior in a subsequent affair, these personal experiences generate meaning as an expression of the response to the historical change in the Spanish empire's status.

The initial framework of this allegorical foundational fiction is presented in the early pages of the first volume, *El equipaje del Rey José*. Readers are introduced to Salvador Monsalud, who, at the start of the series, is a young man, “de rostro alegre y franco” [with a happy and open face], and a member of José I's royal guards (II 29). Monsalud is young and untested: “era su figura la de un soldado en yema o campeón verde que aún no había endurecido al sol de los combates” [his body was that of a budding soldier or young champion who had not yet endured the heat of battle] (II 31). As a member of the guard, Monsalud has sworn allegiance to José Bonaparte as king of Spain. Given the patriotic fervor of the first series and Gabriel Araceli's fight against the French, it is curious that Galdós begins the second series by connecting his protagonist with the French. As noted earlier, the text does not condemn Salvador for his support of the French king or identify him as committed to particular political beliefs, but rather portrays his actions as motivated by both the impoverished conditions of his immediate family – which consists solely of him and his mother, Doña Fermina – and “el precoz desarrollo de otro sentimiento más concreto, más individual, más propio de su edad y de su temple, el amor” [the precocious development of another feeling more concrete, more individual, more appropriate to his age and temperament, love] (II 31). The reader learns that Monsalud's uncle has arranged for him to join the guards, presenting the decision as the only option available that will allow him to earn enough to be able to marry his childhood sweetheart, Genara de Baraona. From the very beginning, then, the novel underscores that for Monsalud the driving force behind his behavior is personal and emotional, not political.

To underscore this point, the text also tells us that although members of the royal guard are “aborrecidos y escarnecidos en Madrid, por servir al enemigo intruso, tirano y ladrón de patria” [hated and mocked in Madrid for serving the enemy intruder, tyrant and thief of the fatherland] (II 31),

not content with narrating what has been lived but also what has been fantasized, what could have been and was not; on the other hand he projects his emotions and feelings according to rhythms and images that one should analyze in detail] (Jacques Beyrie, “Trasfondo psicológico y fuentes íntimas de la novelística galdosiana: El caso de la segunda serie de *Episodios*,” *Boletín de la Biblioteca de Menéndez Pelayo* LXIII (1987): 223).

Monsalud's relationships with others initially appear to be friendly and unaffected by his affiliation to José Napoleón. For example, the novel begins with a description of a friendly conversation between Monsalud and a few local residents, and he shares with them the news that José I will soon abandon Madrid and head for the French border. Monsalud's sworn commitment to the French means that he must accompany the king's entourage as it travels north toward France. His childhood friend, Juan Bragas, appears, and the two discuss the imminent journey. Monsalud notes that he will pass through both Pipaón, where his mother resides, and the nearby town of Puebla de Arganzón, where Genara de Baraona lives with her uncle. The young man's thoughts are less with the flight of the French king and more focused on the fact that the journey will allow him to go home, particularly when he learns from Bragas that there are rumors that Genara is engaged to be married to Carlos Navarro, the son of a wealthy local landowner. Carlos is more than just Salvador's rival in love. He and his father, Fernando Navarro, are involved in actively fighting against the French as *guerrilleros* – irregular groups of fighters who used non-traditional forms of combat to oppose French forces during the Peninsular War. The very first pages of the first novel in the series reveal the links between the historical and political drama of the period and Monsalud's amorous relationships.

Not content with creating an allegorical situation in which Monsalud and Carlos Navarro will come to represent opposing sides of the profound ideological divide in Spanish society throughout the better part of the nineteenth century, Galdós also reveals in the first chapter of *El equipaje del Rey José* that Fernando Navarro, a notorious seducer in his youth, is Salvador's natural father. By making Salvador and Carlos unwitting half-brothers, Galdós emphasizes the fratricidal nature of the absolutist–liberal struggles during this period of Spanish history. But, equally as important, this aspect of the plot allows the second series to incorporate the complex psychosexual components of a Freudian family romance, a fact that makes the foundational fiction of the second series as a whole even richer.

Monsalud's relationship with his father, which is essentially limited to the first volume of the second series, constitutes an important first step in the protagonist's maturation process, one that requires him to accept his parentage and to acknowledge his father's limitations and failings. In particular, the second series employs one of the variants to the family romance, "in which the hero and author returns to legitimacy himself while his brothers and sisters are eliminated by being bastardized" (Freud, "Family Romances" 77). In the case of Galdós's *Episodios*, it is Monsalud

who becomes the legitimate hero, while his brother, Carlos, becomes marginalized and separated from the nation's forward progress through his insistence on "revenge and retaliation," which Freud identifies as characteristics of those children who are not successful in liberating themselves from their parents.⁵ In his discussion of the importance of plot, Peter Brooks makes specific reference to the concept of the family romance in his analysis of European nineteenth-century novels, writing that the young male protagonists of these texts often must learn from "older figures of wisdom and authority who are rarely biological fathers – a situation that the novel often insures by making the son an orphan, or by killing off or otherwise occulting the biological father before the text brings to maturity its dominant alternatives" (*Reading for the Plot* 63). Salvador Monsalud is orphaned at the start of the series and, although there are some older men who seem to promise familial wisdom, it is only in the final two novels of the series, in the figure of Benigno Cordero, that Monsalud finds a figure who provides him with a model of familial behavior that he seeks to emulate.⁶

Even the family romance of the second series contains important references to Spain's imperial history. Fernando Navarro, for example, is described as having the appearance of a soldier from a time of older empires: "conquistador de medio mundo y saqueador del otro medio desde Roma a Maestrich" [conqueror of half the world and plunderer of the other half, from Rome to Maestrich] (II 69). He has experience in battle, against Portugal in 1762 and the blockade of Gibraltar in 1779, all military campaigns associated with the protection of Spain's imperial status in the eighteenth century (II 69). Even the origins of his wealth and local authority are associated with empire: "heredó el mayorazguillo, y además algunos pingües dineros que le dejaron dos tíos suyos venidos de las Indias" [he inherited the estate and abundant funds that were left to him by his two uncles, returned from the Indies] (II 70). But his most salient characteristic is his ability to combine his experience, wealth, and authority, together described evocatively as "la llave dorada" [the golden

⁵ In the case of Carlos Navarro, his hatred of Monsalud is also based on his suspicions with respect to Genara's fidelity, which is one other way in which this particular love triangle reflects the framework of Freud's family romance.

⁶ Benigno Cordero's role in the plot of the series corresponds in unique ways to the series' complex framework of the Freudian family romance, particularly with regard to his decision late in life to propose marriage to Sol Gil de la Cuadra. His conflated role of father and husband is discussed at the end of this chapter, and it is key to bringing Monsalud's story to a natural close.

key], to seduce women (II 70). Fernando is reminded by a village matriarch, Doña Perpetua, of his dishonorable treatment of Salvador's mother, who as the daughter of another member of the local gentry was led to expect marriage. Fernando defends himself by framing the act as one of conquest, noting "¿Y qué más penitencia que la muerte en defensa de Cristo?" [And what better penance than death in the defense of Christ?] (II 72). But Doña Perpetua, "abrumada por esta lógica" [bothered by this logic], reminds him of Doña Fermina's suffering, abandoned by Fernando and exposed to the censure of society. When she tells him that Salvador "se ha pasado a los franceses" [has gone over to the French], Fernando rejects his role of father to Monsalud entirely: "ese muchacho no tiene mi sangre" [that boy is not of my blood] (II 73). It is the father's sin against the family – his absence as husband and father – that sets the dramatic action of the main plot of the second series into motion. Fernando Navarro's prioritizing of imperial drives – that is, his preoccupation with battle and conquest over the responsibility to family – will have powerful and negative consequences that will reverberate throughout the entire second series.

By the time Fernando Navarro recognizes his failures as a father, it is too late to avoid the damage. But he is able, in some degree, to affect Salvador Monsalud in a personal way that allows the father to retain his humanity. As the king and his retinue are fleeing northward to France, don Fernando rides out with the *guerrillero* priest, Don Aparicio, intent on proving their mettle in battle. But the two become lost, separated from the other *guerrilleros*, and they are captured, taken to the camp of the enemy, and condemned to die by hanging. As don Fernando considers his imminent death, he encounters Salvador Monsalud, who is unaware of the familial bond that links them. As don Fernando awaits his fate in a jail cell, Monsalud brings him food and water, and the two begin a dialogue. Don Fernando seeks to discover why Monsalud has sworn fealty to the French, noting that he must have been "seducido y engañado" [seduced or tricked], or lured by "las grandezas del Imperio" [the glories of the Empire] (II 89–90). The motivations Fernando ascribes to his son more accurately reflect his own. The language don Fernando uses, the references to seduction and the trappings of empire, connects the political and historical events in Spain with the family romance of Salvador Monsalud and his parents, thus emphasizing the allegorical aspects of the plot. It is precisely at this moment that don Fernando reveals that he is Salvador's father, but the young man attributes the confession to delirium and remains ignorant of his parentage.⁷

⁷ Though Salvador does not recognize don Fernando as his father, he nonetheless understands what will happen when the angry mob of French soldiers come for

In equally dramatic fashion, Don Fernando's legitimate son, Carlos Navarro, remains ignorant of the fact that Monsalud is his half-brother. He shares his father's absolutist ideology and adopts an implacable hatred of Monsalud as a supporter of the French and José I's liberal reforms. As mentioned, the enmity between brothers, unaware of their shared heritage and apparently predicated on their particular political views, represents the tragedy of Spanish politics during the years of Fernando VII's reign. But this metaphor becomes insinuated into the domestic romance when the reader learns that both men compete for the affections of Genara de Baraona, herself a member of a staunchly conservative family. Galdós is careful to connect the ideological struggles of the Fernandino period to the characters' affairs of the heart, thus linking the domestic problems of the nation to its imperial history.

In her book *Imperial Leather*, Anne McClintock references Edward Said's concept of Orientalism and his use of gender as a way of describing the relationship between East and West, acknowledging that "Sexuality as a trope for other power relations was certainly an abiding aspect of imperial power" (14). But she goes on to complicate the straightforward nature of this gendered metaphor of empire: "I remain unconvinced that the sanctioned binaries – colonized-colonizer, self-other, dominance-resistance, metropolis-colony, colonial-postcolonial – are adequate to the task of accounting for, let alone strategically opposing, the tenacious legacies of imperialism" (15). The way forward, she argues, may be found in "overdeterminations of power" and through "the crossroads of contradictions" (15). What is needed, she claims, is the ability to "open notions of power and resistance to a more diverse politics of agency, involving a dense web of relations between coercion, negotiation, complicity, refusal, dissembling, mimicry, compromise, affiliation and revolt" (15). McClintock makes reference to the work of Joan Scott, who has herself noted that the story of gender in history is "about how the subjective and collective meanings

the older man, and he leaves him a loaded pistol. When the mob enter the cell they find only the still warm and trembling cadaver of don Fernando, who has put a bullet through his skull. The son has given his father the option of a less gruesome death; yet this moment between father and son remains a private affair only fully understood by don Fernando and the reader. It is an element of the plot that serves to heighten the drama of the main plot, in part because other characters later mistakenly assume that Monsalud has taken an active part in the older man's death. In *La segunda casaca*, for example, when reference is made by Genara's grandfather, don Miguel de Baraona, to Fernando Navarro's fate, he attributes his death to Salvador, calling him an "infame asesino" [infamous assassin] (II 250).

of women and men as categories of identity have been constructed” (6). These approaches to gender, sexuality, and empire are particularly relevant for the second series of *Episodios nacionales*. Galdós, in telling the story of a critical moment in Spain’s imperial history, chooses to play with those categories of identity to allegorize the nature of Spain’s relationships with its colonial territories, with its European neighbors, with its own imperial past, and with a future that can only move inexorably toward the postcolonial. Monsalud’s story engages in unique ways with the traditional binaries that McClintock identifies and weaves them into a complex narrative of Spain’s imperial history.

The soap opera quality of certain moments in the plot and the shifting motivations of characters might be interpreted by some as a deficiency in the realist framework of the author’s historical fiction. There is no doubt that the structuring of a rivalry between two half brothers for the affection of the same woman, the fortuitous circumstances that bring Monsalud together with his natural father, and, as we will later see, the complex connections between Monsalud and the women who claim to love him can at times strain the credulity of contemporary readers. But it is important to remember the role that melodrama, as a “mode of expression,” according to Peter Brooks, plays within narrative.⁸ Moreover, contemporary studies have noted the role melodrama played in nineteenth-century Europe and Latin America. For example, David Mayer defines melodrama in English Victorian literature as a “social process” that “offers a brief, palatable, non-threatening metaphor which enables an audience to approach and contemplate at close range parameters which are otherwise difficult to discuss” (226). Matthew Bush extends his analysis beyond Europe, noting that “Melodrama is, in fact, a basic building block in the foundation of Latin American literature as it emerges concurrently to the inception of the Latin American nation states and, therefore, serves as the first narrative mode through which the tales of the new Latin American nations are told” (14). Indeed, “Melodrama is, then not the opposite of realism but in ongoing engagement with it” (Gledhill and Williams 10). The use of melodrama in the story of Salvador Monsalud’s life is a strategic one, adding to the allegorical impact of the narrative and allowing Galdós’s readers to engage

⁸ Peter Brooks, in his seminal study of melodrama, posits its origins in France at a moment “that marks the final liquidation of the traditional Sacred and its representative institutions (Church and monarch)” (*The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1976), 15), which echoes the language Pagden uses to describe the fundamental pillars of Spanish empire.

with the emotional journey toward a new and shared sense of imagined community. If we allow the contradictions and complexities of Galdós's melodrama to play out, considering its various occurrences in the plot as various parts to an extended allegory, we can see that Galdós maps out for his readers the difficult passage through denial, recognition, and acceptance of imperial loss.

Most critical responses to the second series have identified the conflict between Salvador Monsalud and his half-brother Carlos Navarro, symbols of liberalism and absolutism, as the central focus of the novels.⁹ But the relationships between Salvador and the various female characters in the series are perhaps even more important. McClintock has argued that "Women are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation" (*Imperial Leather* 354). If we think about Salvador as representative of those Spaniards who wished to transcend the absolutism of the *ancien régime*, his love affairs offer a way of understanding the trajectory of the relationships between self and other, colonized and colonizer, metropolis and colony, colonial and postcolonial.¹⁰ Within the framework of the historical novel and its realist mode, Monsalud appears to learn more about

⁹ Montesinos (I 120) and Regalado García (85) identify the ideological split as the central focus of the series. Both critics make reference to the expression "las dos Españas" without considering the 1812 Constitution's use of the phrase to define the two parts (metropolis and colonies) of the empire. Without recognizing the colonial references within the texts neither critic can successfully explain Monsalud's love affairs. For example, Montesinos writes, "A fuer de héroe romántico, Salvador es un personaje algo impreciso, que alude nuestra mirada, escurridizo a causa de sus propias complejidades y contradicciones," adding, "El Salvador amante es, pues, un personaje elusivo" (136, 141). Alfred Rodríguez echoes Montesino's opinions and, with the exception of Genara de Baraona, he also relegates the female characters to a secondary status (92–93). Yet, when placed within the framework of the allegory of colonial loss, Monsalud's character gains complexity and becomes not so much elusive or imprecise but rather complex and ambivalent in the extreme.

¹⁰ It is worth returning to Fredric Jameson's reference to how we should be reading Third-World literature, a category into which he explicitly places Galdós: "Third-world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic – necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: *the story of the private individual is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society*" ("Third-World Literature" 69). He adds that "psychology, or more specifically, libidinal investment, is to be read in primarily political and social terms" (72).

himself with every new affair, and he moves forward in establishing the ethical framework that will determine his future actions. At the level of the allegorical foundational fiction, these relationships signal the necessary steps toward a coming to terms with Spain's changed status in the world and the process of working through the trauma of colonial loss.¹¹

Monsalud's trajectory begins with his youthful passion for Genara de Baraona, who as a member of the aristocracy supports the *ancien régime's* absolutist politics. When that relationship results in betrayal and rejection, Monsalud finds himself somewhat reluctantly in the arms of doña Pepita Sanahuja, the *afrancesada* who also happens to be Urbano Gil de la Cuadra's wife and Sol Gil de la Cuadra's stepmother.¹² Years later, after Doña Pepita's death, Monsalud believes himself to be passionately in love with Andrea Campos, the orphaned daughter of an *indiano* and the niece of a liberal political powerbroker, don José de Campos. Andrea, as the *americanilla* heiress, represents the series' most powerful allegorical representation of nineteenth-century Spanish colonialism, particularly with regard to the complex relationship she maintains with Salvador Monsalud during the period of the Liberal Triennium. Sol Gil de la Cuadra, meanwhile, has fallen in love with Salvador, and she suffers in silence, watching from the sidelines as Salvador conducts his various affairs. After breaking with Andrea, Salvador is pursued by his former love interest, Genara de Baraona, and becomes the object of the obsessive desire of Sor Teodora de

¹¹ Galdós uses gender to achieve what appear to be contradictory ends. He employs Monsalud's affairs with various women as a way of allegorizing Spanish colonial history. He also uses the protagonist's marriage at the end of the series as a way of establishing a new national identity that attempts to elide colonial history altogether. McClintock has noted this particular paradox as well, indicating that "The family as a *metaphor* offered a single genesis narrative for national history while, at the same time, the family as an *institution* became void of history and excluded from national power. The family became, at one and the same time, both the *organizing figure* for national history and its *antithesis*" (*Imperial Leather* 357).

¹² Curiously, Pepita Sanahuja is one of the earliest of Galdós's characters to reappear in other novels. She plays a role in *El audaz*, as the somewhat petulant daughter of a wealthy family associated with the Court of Carlos IV who delights in all things pastoral. In her article detailing the Goyesque qualities of *El audaz*, Patricia McDermott describes Pepita as "María Antonieta en pequeña escala española," thus subtly underscoring her connections with French empire ("*El audaz*: la historia vista a través del espejo artístico-literario o «el sueño de la razón produce monstruos»," *La historia en la literatura española del siglo XIX*, José Manuel González Herrán *et al.*, eds (Barcelona: Ediciones de la Universitat de Barcelona, 2016), 261).

Aransis, a Catholic nun involved with absolutist conspiracies. But it is only when Monsalud has a near death experience, barely escaping from a firing squad, that he abandons his involvement in politics and turns his attention inward, toward the private sphere of family, a decision that allows him to manage the trauma of his origins and the conflict with his half-brother, and, most importantly, to recognize in Sol Gil de la Cuadra the value and future potential of a more circumscribed and localized domesticity. Rather than being a series of loosely connected novels through which the central character wanders with aimlessness, the second series of *Episodios nacionales* presents a carefully mapped out and chronicled journey for Salvador Monsalud, who must discover who he is apart from the political upheavals of the Fernandino period. He must learn to live with his mistakes, which are not inconsequential, and to break significantly with his past in order to accept the reality that his life will not be played out on a grand stage.¹³

That these affairs serve as allegorical commentary on the loss of empire becomes clear when one looks closely at the author's language. The references to Spain's empire and its colonial territories are noticeably more frequent. They often appear in coded and subtle fashion, particularly in the context of the protagonist's love affairs. Galdós's process is, at its heart, a psychological one, and it behooves us to look at those elements of the text that address fictional, and therefore more creative, manifestations of the author's representation of Spanish history. In her study of the importance of close reading, Naomi Schor offers sage advice about the ways in which we might think about the level of textual evidence and the participation of detail in the creation of meaning. From a psychoanalytic framework, which certainly fits within the narrative of trauma regarding colonial loss, Schor notes the importance of displacement, "Freud's radical intervening formulation of the principle by which libidinal energy can be transferred from the significant to the insignificant" (*Reading in Detail* xlv–xlv). In short, the references to empire are couched in language and in melodramatic plot structures that encourage readers to share the emotional struggles of the protagonist and, through that experience, "recognize the forces at work in situations they may not understand themselves" (Gledhill and Williams 10).

¹³ It is worth noting that Galdós's representation of Monsalud's various affairs, specifically the end of his emotional journal with matrimony to Sol Gil de la Cuadra, a figure who represents the *ángel del hogar* [angel of the hearth], is meant to provide a flawed but nonetheless still viable pathway toward a solution to imperial crisis. His journey reflects what McClintock has identified as the "imperial ideology of racial and gender degeneration and the bourgeois Victorian institution of the sexual double standard" (*Imperial Leather* 284).

The trajectory of Salvador Monsalud's life – a tale of youthful grand hopes, misguided choices, significant setbacks, and painful life lessons – charts the difficult path to achieving self-knowledge and personal happiness. I would argue that the many details that constitute the story of Monsalud's life serve as elements of displacement and, to refer back to Schor once again, “the hypersemanticized detail, in turn, becomes camouflage allowing the repressed contents to the surface (*Reading in Detail* 83). From an allegorical standpoint, the trajectory of Monsalud's life reflects a national process, one in which citizens of the metropolis must find a way to acknowledge the loss of empire and Spain's reduced status in the world of nations. Like Monsalud, Spaniards must then accept the nation's diminishment on the world stage. By coming to terms with the reduced reach of its influence and avoiding the temptation to attempt a return to the past, Spain has the potential of re-establishing itself within the borders of the metropolis, finding a new post-colonial and post-imperial identity that offers the promise of a happier, although less dramatic, familial framework for growth and prosperity.

Imperial Passions

Salvador Monsalud's first love is Genara de Baraona, a staunch opponent of the French and a fervent believer in the cultural norms and values of the *ancien régime*.¹⁴ Raised within a conservative political family, Genara is committed to the ideological framework of absolutism, a fact that complicates her relationship to Salvador Monsalud.¹⁵ But, as a representative of Spain's absolutist and imperial past, she plays a significant role in the political events depicted in the series. Readers are introduced to her in *El equipaje del Rey José*, when she meets Salvador Monsalud after nightfall at the back of the gardens surrounding her grandfather's house. Separated by

¹⁴ Despite her importance in the second series, Genara has received little critical attention. One exception is Rubén Benítez's article “Jenara de Baraona, narradora galdosiana” (*Hispanic Review* 53:3 (1985): 307–27), which looks at several of Galdós's less well-developed female characters in his early works and sees Genara as an example of the author's growing mastery of characterization.

¹⁵ Only near the end of the series does Genara shift in her political ideology, becoming less rigid in her ultramontane views and adopting a more moderate conservatism. Yet this occurs near the end of Fernando VII's reign, when there is no longer a possibility of a romantic relationship between her and Salvador, thus indicating that both in the realm of history and fiction her political loyalties become less relevant for the allegory.

hedged, the young lovers converse without being able to see each other, not only evoking the myth of the ill-fated lovers of Pyramus and Thisbe but also allegorically illustrating the fact that despite their avowed love, these two young lovers do not fully understand the true nature of the object of their desire. Genara asks whether the local gossip about Salvador is true, that he has passed over to the side of the French, telling him that such a development would profoundly change her feelings for him: “si es cierto, Salvador, no volverás a oír una palabra de mi boca, ni me verás. Genara ha muerto para ti. Genara te aborrece” [If it is true, Salvador, you will not hear another word from my mouth, nor will you see me. Genara is dead to you. Genara hates you] (II 57). In truth, Salvador has not politically aligned himself with the French, so he is able, after a moment’s pause, to claim that such an accusation is a lie. But when she specifically asks if he is wearing the uniform of the royal guard, he can only answer her with silence. When he eventually asks her whether such a uniform would prevent her from seeing who he truly is, she responds with words that at first would lead us to believe that she is capable of seeing more than what appears on the surface: “¿Por qué se quiere a las personas? Por el rostro? No lo creas. Se quiere a las personas por las prendas del alma, por el valor, por la honradez, por la generosidad, por la lealtad, por la dignidad, por la nobleza” [Why do people love each other? Because of one’s face? Don’t believe that. People are loved on account of the garments of the soul, for courage, honesty, generosity, loyalty, dignity, nobility] (II 58). Monsalud does not hear her actual words, but, the text tells us, he nonetheless feels them “como saetas” [like arrows], capable of tearing his soul apart (II 58). She adds that if Monsalud were to fight on the side of the French against the citizens of his own nation, “no sólo te aborrecería, sino que me mataría la vergüenza de haberte querido” [Not only would I hate you, but the shame of having loved you would kill me] (II 58). Genara, it seems, will in fact judge her lover by the clothes he wears.

Monsalud finds himself at a crossroads. He is at the point of rethinking his oath to the French and finding a way to defend Spain against Napoleón’s army. He tells Genara, “Soy joven, fuerte y robusto; soy soldado de la patria. Morir por ella y morir por tu amor me parece lo mismo” [I am young, strong, and robust; I am a soldier of the fatherland. To die for it and to die for your love is, to me, the same] (II 59). His words reveal his naive hope that he might be able to step away from the consequences of having joined the royal guard. Given the parallels of the scene to the stories of Pyramis and Thisbe, or even Romeo and Juliet, it is clear that the relationship between these two young lovers is doomed. The trouble comes in the form of Carlos Navarro, Salvador’s half-brother and

a *guerrillero* fighting the French, who appears behind the Baraona estate to compete with Salvador for Genara's favor. In his role as *guerrillero*, Navarro appears to represent the patriotic support of the nation against the incursion of a foreign invader, whom Monsalud in his political ignorance and financial need has chosen to defend. But what Carlos truly stands for, and what becomes apparent in the series, is the intransigence and cruelty of political absolutism. Genara, as the granddaughter of landed gentry, is firmly a part of Navarro's milieu, and it comes as no surprise that when she finally sees Monsalud's uniform she responds with violent anger: "¡Tú francés ... embustero además de traidor! [...] ¡Navarro, mátales, mátales sin piedad!" [You, French! ... cheat as well as traitor ... Navarro, kill him, kill him without mercy!] (II 62). The confrontation is postponed by the arrival of French troops, but it is clear that these two men are destined to be enemies, despite their shared parentage.

Though initially portrayed as shrill and intolerant, Genara, over the course of the second series, moves beyond melodrama and becomes one of Galdós's earliest examples of a complex female character with needs and desires. It is her sexual desire that becomes the catalyst for events at various points in the series.¹⁶ Genara's importance in the series is such that she narrates a significant portion of the sixth volume, *Los cien mil hijos de San Luis*, the only instance in Galdós's career in which he employed a female narrator. Over time, Genara is unable to maintain her anger or to condemn Salvador outright for his political views. The anger she expresses when she first discovers Monsalud in his French uniform quickly shifts to jealousy when she believes she might have a rival for his affection. In the final chapters of *El equipaje del Rey Jose*, when Genara and her grandfather, along with Carlos Navarro, walk among the dead and wounded on the battlefield in Vitoria, Genara fears that one of the bodies might be that of Monsalud. She discovers him alive; yet he is starving and, more importantly, in the company of Doña Pepita Sanahuja, the *afrancesada* he had been charged to protect as the convoy was traveling toward the border. Navarro, intent on killing Monsalud, asks Genara and her grandfather to leave. Her response to Navarro evidences her jealousy: "– ¡Pero aquella mujer, aquella mujer! – exclamó Genara apretando los puños y temblando de ira –. ¿La viste?" ["But that woman, that woman!" exclaimed Genara, clenching her fists and trembling with anger, "Did you see her?"] (II 134). Given that this outburst occurs immediately after she has accepted Carlos

¹⁶ As Rubén Benítez notes, "la pasión fundamental en Jenara es, sin disfraz alguno, una pasión sexual" [the fundamental passion in Jenara is, without any disguise, a sexual passion] (319).

Navarro's proposal of marriage, it is clear that her emotional attachment to Salvador remains intact. Genara's commitment to the ruling structures of the *ancien régime* puts her at odds with her affection for Monsalud. While she serves as a representation of the nation's desire to cling to its former imperial identity, her attachment to Monsalud indicates that the nation is on the cusp of dramatic change.

When Genara and Carlos return to the narrative in the third volume of the series, *La segunda casaca*, the reader finds they have married and moved to Madrid with her aging grandfather, Miguel de Baraona. Six years have passed, and Genara remains obsessed with her former suitor, who apparently has ended his forced exile and returned secretly to the capital to help advance the cause of the liberal revolution led by Rafael de Riego. Miguel de Baraona reveals in a conversation with Juan Bragas that Carlos not only survived the duel but also that Monsalud was saved from hanging by the intervention of Doña Pepita Sanahuja, who used the jewels she had sewn into the lining of her clothing to bribe the guards holding the young member of the royal guard. Having spent six years in France, it appears that Monsalud has returned to Spain and, despite the detention and torture of his mother, Doña Fermina, the authorities are unable to find him. Genara seeks to discover Monsalud's whereabouts on her own, but she explains her motivations to Juan Bragas in terms that raise questions: "El placer de castigarle, de hacerle sentir el peso de una mano justiciera dirigida por mí, dio mayor fuerza a mi voluntad. ¡Era preciso buscarle, burlar sus astucias, sorprenderle, cogerle, destrozarle!" [The pleasure of punishing him, of making him feel the weight of the hand of justice, wielded by me, gave more strength to my will. It was necessary to look for him, to outsmart him, to surprise him, to catch him, to destroy him!] (II 273). The curious mix of emotions in this passage – pleasure and punishment – indicates that, though Genara masks her revenge as patriotic duty, what truly drives her actions is her inability to break her emotional attachment with Monsalud. As a metaphor for the Spain's *ancien régime*, Genara maintains a fraught relationship with the man who represents the citizenry of the nation.

Unsurprisingly, Genara's complex emotions with respect to her former suitor drive a wedge between her and her new husband, the standard bearer of absolutism. Clearly not Genara's first choice as a husband, Carlos has never felt confident in his wife's affections. The combination of his feelings of unworthiness and her preoccupation with Monsalud make their marriage a trial for them both. His doubts increase as time goes by, and he eventually admits to Juan Bragas his belief that Genara is involved with another man. Carlos believes it is Monsalud but declares that "es indigno de que ella le persiga" [he is unworthy of her chasing him] (II 326). Genara is unable to

convince Carlos that his fears are unfounded and admits to Bragas how difficult the marriage has become, “Todo el mundo conoce lo mal que me trata. ... Cada día una cuestión, cada hora una disputa” [Everyone knows how badly he treats me. ... Every day a question, every hour a fight] (II 347). The triangle between Monsalud, Genara, and Navarro reaches a critical point in the final pages of *La segunda casaca* when all three finally come face to face, unsurprisingly at the very moment in which the political tide turns and the liberal revolt of Rafael de Riego gains sufficient traction to effect political change in Madrid. The encounter is carefully choreographed in the plot as to involve nearly every major character presented in the early volumes of the second series. Miguel de Baraona is accosted on the street by a band of young men, and when he falls unconscious to the pavement, he is discovered, in a superbly melodramatic moment, by Salvador Monsalud. After carrying the unconscious man back to his home and helping Genara get him into bed, Monsalud attempts to leave, only to be detained by Carlos and two of his fellow *guerrilleros*. Enraged at finding him at home with his wife, Carlos and his subordinates grab Monsalud, gag him, and bind his hands and feet, unjustly accusing him of having accosted Baraona in the street.

The plot thickens dramatically at this moment, with the political revolt against Fernando VII becoming intimately entwined with the rivalry between Carlos, Genara, and Monsalud. Galdós presents his readers with a number of plot twists, all of which are critical in understanding the complex nature of the allegorical connections between these characters. Carlos leaves Monsalud to attend to Genara’s dying grandfather. Baraona privately reveals to Carlos that some days earlier he saw a man leaving from Genara’s balcony window and that he fears his granddaughter has been unfaithful to her husband. But the old man is wrong. The reference is to an earlier encounter between Genara and Juan Bragas, who had come to request her aid when he feared that his support of the revolutionaries might have been too hasty. When Carlos unexpectedly returned home while Bragas was still there, Genara helped her old friend escape the ire of her husband by hustling him out of her bedroom window. This is what Baraona witnessed, mistaking the fleeing figure of Bragas for that of Monsalud, who is now paying the price for something he did not do. Genara, aware of the injustice, cuts Monsalud’s bindings and leads him to the balcony in her room so that he too, like Bragas, can flee into the night from the irrational vengeance of her jealous husband. By helping Monsalud escape, just as Carlos enters, Genara commits an act of total resistance. There is a moment in which husband and wife exchange a look – “¡Instante más breve que la palabra, acción más breve que el pensamiento” [An instant shorter

than a word, an action briefer than a thought] (II 386). Carlos grabs her arm and throws her to the ground, and Genara responds, “¡Salvaje, haz de mí lo que quieras! ... ¡Ya sabes que te aborrezco!” [“Savage! Do with me what you will! ... You already know that I hate you!”] (II 368). In this moment, Galdós’s allegory of empire and nation reveals the “technologies of violence” at the heart of the masculinized nationalism that Carlos represents (McClintock, *Imperial Leather* 352).

This part of the plot involving Monsalud’s relationship is multifaceted and requires a careful reconstruction of its numerous parts in order to make its point. But it is precisely the complexity that also makes the story work. Carlos, as a representative of an ultramontane reactionary political ideology, is revealed to be cruel and without the ability to understand the events happening around him. Though mistaken, Baraona’s confession has powerful and lasting negative effects on the people he professes most to love. Monsalud is shown once again to be a figure unjustly accused, who is forced to flee from forces beyond his control. But, most importantly, the reader witnesses the irreparable break of the marriage between Carlos and Genara. From the perspective of the domestic romance, the support of Fernandino absolutism is equated to an abusive and vengeful husband and the inaccurate accusations of infidelity from the grandfather. From this perspective, then, Genara’s decision to save Monsalud constitutes a crucial moment in the rupture of the family dynamic, specifically a challenge to patriarchy, just as the historical backdrop of the novel announces the beginnings of the Liberal Triennium in which Spanish liberals are able to institute a more representative form of government.

As Salvador Monsalud’s first love interest, Genara de Baraona is a complex figure whose political and social background render her a difficult object of the young man’s desire. Her marriage to Carlos Navarro invalidates her as an appropriate partner for Monsalud. Within the framework of the domestic romance, it is not simply the union of man and woman in marriage that constitutes the ultimate closure but also the break with the previous generation. The rupture between Carlos and Genara echoes the political upheaval affecting the Spanish nation, but there must be more to the story in order for this allegory to work. Monsalud is not involved with Genara; at this point in the series the threat of adultery exists only in Carlos Navarro’s imagination. However, this is not to say that Monsalud is unattached, and in this regard the text offers some oblique yet tantalizing references that gain in importance as readers continue. Up to this point in the novel, Monsalud’s relationships and the domestic romance presented appear to focus exclusively on the ideological struggle between liberalism and absolutism. But the next stage in Monsalud’s life moves symbolically

beyond the borders of the metropolis and in so doing illustrates the fundamental importance of redefining the metropolis as a nation that has moved beyond empire.

To understand this shift, we must return to the moment in *La segunda casaca* in which Miguel de Baraona falls unconscious in the street. The scene begins with a curious and almost cinematic description of a romantic assignation between unnamed and unknown persons.

Estaba en la calle de Eguiluz. No pasaba nadie por allí. Poco después, al extremo de la calle abrióse una puerta y aparecieron en un oscuro hueco dos personas, hombre y mujer; el uno despidiéndose de la otra, a juzgar por las breves palabras cariñosas que en el silencio de la calle resonaron sin que ningún extraño las oyera. Después de confundirse los dos bultos en uno, efecto sin duda de la oscuridad de la noche, se separaron; la mujer desapareció, y el hombre echó a andar por la calle adelante, hasta que el obstáculo de un cuerpo atravesado en la acera le detuvo. (II 361–62)

[He was in Eguiluz Street. No one ever passed that way. A little later, at the end of the street, a door opened and in its dark frame two people appeared, a man saying goodbye to a woman, judging by the brief affectionate words that in the silence of the street resonated without any stranger hearing them. The two shadows briefly appeared to be one, undoubtedly the effect of nightfall, then separated; the woman disappeared, and the man started down the street, until the body laying across the pavement brought him to a stop.]

The body on the sidewalk is, of course, Baraona; the man is Monsalud; and thus begins the series of events that will lead to the end of Genara's marriage. But what is unexplained here, and what ought to attract the reader's attention, is the narrative's references to Monsalud and his affair with an unnamed woman. The text very purposefully neglects to reveal Monsalud's identity until much later, after he has carried the grandfather into the house and is finally confronted by Navarro, describing him up to that point as simply "el joven," "el portador," and "el otro" ["the young man," "the man carrying him," "the other"] (II 362). By refusing to name him the narrative not only evokes a sense of mystery and intrigue but also manages to distance its description of the young lovers from the events in the house of Baraona, effectively refocusing the reader's attention on what is known and understood and burying the early reference in the reader's memory.

But, of course, this moment in *La segunda casaca* is more important than the narrative originally seems to indicate. It sets the stage for the next phase of Monsalud's life story and the next woman who will be a part of that story.

That Galdós chooses to introduce Monsalud's romantic affair in a scene of dark corners, shadowy figures, and murmured endearments is an indicator of the nature of that relationship. It is one more way in which Galdós painstakingly articulates the complexity of the series' domestic romance.

Gender and Empire

Monsalud's next love affair reveals explicit connections with Spain's colonial history and the loss of the American colonies in the 1820s. The plot presents a protagonist with a growing awareness of duty, and eventually Salvador arrives at a moment in which he must choose between two paths, one that promises physical pleasure and self-indulgence and the other that reflects personal responsibility and sacrifice. Within the context of this choice, Salvador Monsalud must face the consequences of his involvement with two women who both, in different ways, represent connections to physical places beyond the metropolis and illustrate the complex history of Spain as an imperial nation in the early nineteenth century. The title of the novel in the series that presents this next stage of Monsalud's personal trajectory, *El Grande Oriente*, refers to Grand Orient of Freemasonry and the Masonic lodges in Spain as hotbeds of liberal conspiracies against Fernando VII. The historical scope of the novel covers events that occur during the first phase of the Liberal Triennium in 1821, when Fernando VII was obliged to accept the results of Rafael de Riego's revolt and govern under the framework of the Constitution of Cádiz. This results in a growing division between moderate *doceañistas* – supporters of the 1812 Constitution – and more radical liberals, often referred to as *exaltados*. But the title also evokes the idea of otherness, a place beyond the borders of the metropolis, and the novel becomes a key text in the imperial allegory of the second series because it presents two crucial female characters who personify aspects of Spain's experience with the structures of empire.

Ironically, the first woman, doña Pepita Sanahuja, does not appear directly as an actor in *El Grande Oriente* because she is already dead. In *El equipaje del Rey José*, she is one half of the matrimonial couple whom Monsalud is assigned to accompany and protect during the battle of Vitoria. We are told in *La segunda casaca* that doña Pepita played a significant role in saving Salvador at the end of the Peninsular War, buying his freedom from the guards and then helping him flee into France, and, in this sense, she stands in powerful contrast to Genara, who openly called for Salvador's death.¹⁷ When readers are reintroduced to Monsalud in *El*

¹⁷ Though an *afrancesada*, Doña Pepita shares Genara's social standing, the distinction of a loveless marriage, and a desire for Monsalud.

Grande Oriente, we learn that doña Pepita died in France in 1818. But the formerly unnamed aging husband whom Doña Pepita seemed so willing to betray through her flirtations in *El equipaje del Rey José*, now revealed to be Urbano Gil de la Cuadra, has returned to Spain with Monsalud and remains close to his former protector. This fact creates a rather tangled web of connections within the plot. It is impossible to forget doña Pepita's sexual interest in the handsome young member of the royal guard. In *El equipaje del Rey José*, one of the French officers who notices her flirtatious behavior describes what he would do in Monsalud's shoes: "Si esa señora tan garbosa ... me hubiese mirado a mí ... ya nos trataríamos de tú," adding, "si llego a hablar con ella ... en dos horas es mía la plaza" [If that graceful lady ... would have looked at me ... we'd now be using "tú" with each other ... If I get to talk with her, in two hours the village square is mine] (II 109). His comments conflate intimacy and conquest, and the plot itself contextualizes the flirtation between doña Pepita and Salvador within the allegorical framework of empire. But the plot inverts the gender roles, making doña Pepita, the *afrancesada*, the sexual aggressor and Monsalud the object of her desire. The text reveals that Monsalud eventually did engage in an adulterous affair with doña Pepita in France. But, in order to heighten the dramatic consequences of this part of Monsalud's past, the narrative does not reveal this until nearly the end of *El Grande Oriente*. His affair with Doña Pepita will not only destroy his friendship with Gil de la Cuadra, but it will also force him to sacrifice what he believes to be his only hope of happiness. On the level of plot, Monsalud, to stay true to his honor and to attempt to atone for his past mistake with Doña Pepita, must make the choice to abandon the woman he loves and whom he has hoped to marry. This moment is replete with allegorical importance for the domestic romance and for the idea of the series as a foundational fiction. Monsalud's affair with doña Pepita can be read as a culmination of his ill-conceived affiliation with the French, and by extension the Napoleonic empire.¹⁸

Readers learn that the new woman in Monsalud's life is Andrea Campos, the beautiful and sensual daughter of don José Campos, a liberal bureaucrat. Andrea Campos is an *indianilla*, a feminized version of the *indiano*, and as

¹⁸ Doña Pepita, with her connections to Napoleonic France, initiates the steps that will lead to her seduction of Monsalud, and this gender reversal underscores why Monsalud must come to deeply regret the affair. It becomes a moment of weakness in which Monsalud, as an allegory for a masculine Spain, is conquered by a feminized France, thus reversing the "natural" gender hierarchy that Anne McClintock identifies as central to the domestic genealogy of nationalism (*Imperial Leather* 357).

such she clearly represents the complex relationship between the metropolis and its colonies, now on the verge of full independence in 1820 (II 420). It is important to note that Galdós's allegorical representation of this relationship is not one that seamlessly conforms to historical fact, with various characters representing aspects of the complex political connections between peninsular Spain and its American territories. Instead, the allegory in the second series with respect to Andrea Campos, most succinctly presented in *El Grande Oriente*, represents a complex set of reactions to the final loss of empire. As Anne McClintock has noted, "All nations depend on powerful constructions of gender" (*Imperial Leather* 353), and, in this aspect of Galdós's allegory of Spanish imperial history, gender difference is essential. The figure of Andrea Campos, as an allegory for the colonies, allows the figure of Monsalud to shift back to a representative of a masculine metropolis that is forced to experience a powerful emotional loss. By providing a portrait of the emotional and psychic response to the loss of empire, Monsalud's allegorized story stands in stark contrast to the historical portrait given through the secondary plot of Juan Bragas.

The end of *La segunda casaca*, when Monsalud finds the body of Don Miguel de Baraona in the streets of Madrid, provides the first clue of his affair. But Andrea Campos herself is not formally introduced to readers until later in *El Grande Oriente*, a novel that frames the allegory of empire with intention. The novel begins with a history lesson, *in medias res*, in which Patricio Sarmiento, a schoolteacher and political *exaltado*, is teaching his students the history of classical Rome as a parallel to the situation in Spain: "El Senado era una camarilla de serviles y absolutistas que no iban más que a su negocio" [The Senate was a clique of sycophantic absolutists who served only their own interests] (II 373). He moves to the subject of rhetoric, dividing the class into two groups that will practice their oratory skills, promising that "Veremos quién ciñe el lauro de la victoria y quién muerde el polvo" [We'll see who wears the laurels of victory and who bites the dust] (II 375). He identifies the groups as representative of "Roma, a la izquierda; Cartago, a la derecha" [Rome, to the left; Carthage, to the right] (II 375). The history lesson ostensibly identifies the conflict as one between liberalism and absolutism, the historical theme of the second series. But this identification remains purely at the surface level. There are, I argue, deeper connections between the parallel histories of two empires. Sarmiento's comments should encourage us as readers to see that the conflict between liberalism and absolutism is intimately connected to the diminishment of empire. By stressing the connections between past and present and by involving his students in his imagined battle of rhetoric, Sarmiento creates a simulacrum of the battle between imperial Roman forces and those of

its chief rival, thus evoking the fundamental structures of empire. In this sense, the opening scene of the novel sets the stage for what is to come.

The next chapters of the novel begin the process of sharing important plot elements that advance the story of Monsalud's history with women. Galdós provides readers with this information throughout the course of the narrative, parsing out details that allow the reader to gradually gain a full understanding of the protagonist's situation. In this sense the narrative approach is one of slow accretion, mimicking in many ways the process of actually getting to know someone's full story. Accordingly, for purposes of this analysis, it is necessary to present the complexities of the plot. After the scene with Patricio Sarmiento, the novel fully introduces the character of Urbano Gil de la Cuadra and reveals his identity as doña Pepita's husband, an aspect of plot that inevitably serves to recall the earlier flight into France and doña Pepita's role in saving Monsalud. When the action of this novel begins, it is 1821 and Gil de la Cuadra has returned to Spain with his daughter from a previous marriage, Soledad Gil de la Cuadra. They live in the same apartment building as Monsalud, his mother, and Sarmiento. Though Monsalud and Gil de la Cuadra evidence a friendship borne out of their shared struggles from having once been identified as *afrancesados*, they have different political views. Gil de la Cuadra becomes involved with a conspiracy against the liberals, in this case a historically accurate reference to a conspiracy led by Matías Vinuesa, a priest in the royal palace, and abetted by Fernando VII himself. When Don Urbano is arrested, he asks Monsalud to watch over his daughter, who has become quite attached to Salvador's mother, Doña Fermina. Monsalud promises to treat Sol as if she were his sister and then tells the young woman that he will do all he can to gain her father's release. Much of the rest of the novel focuses on Monsalud's participation in the activities of the Masonic lodges as a means to cultivate individuals in the new liberal government who can use their influence to free Gil de la Cuadra. Monsalud's engagement with both moderate Freemasons and the more radical *comuneros* is not so much about political ideology but rather a reflection of his commitment to fulfilling his vow to both Gil de la Cuadra and his daughter. The one official who wields actual power is don José Campos, the uncle of Andrea Campos. By the time the text actually provides readers with Andrea's history and describes the nature of her affair with Monsalud, the plot has thickened and the allegory of empire and imperial relations moves to the fore.

Andrea Campos, the text tells us at the start, is the daughter of a widowed *indiano* who "volvió de Indias el año 12 con una regular fortuna" [he returned from the Indies in 1812 with a substantial fortune] (II 420). Unfortunately, before he can enjoy the fruits of his labor in the colonies,

the father dies, and both the fortune and Andrea are placed under the authority of her uncle, don José, and his sister, Doña Romualda. The year of the return is significant in that it evokes the Constitution of 1812, a document that reflects a moment in which the metropolis attempted to strengthen its ties to the colonies through a carefully articulated process for involving colonial subjects in imperial governance.¹⁹ The father's return to Spain and his subsequent death points to the tenuousness of that project and its ultimate failure. When Andrea is orphaned and left under don José's guardianship, she does not receive the necessary guidance to fit into the social structures of the metropolis. As a consequence of Don José's indifference and doña Romualda's obsessive commitments to the church, Andrea is too often left to shift for herself.

Andrea, cuya crianza en América no había sido ejemplar a causa de la temprana muerte de su madre, tuvo una escuela lamentable en la peligrosa edad del cambio de juguetes, es decir, cuando se decreta la jubilación definitiva de las muñecas y el planteamiento de los novios. Mal atendida por su tío y peor tratada por doña Romualda, a quien aborrecía cordialmente, la joven vivía ensimismada, cultivando con ardor su propia imaginación. Contrajo amistades que una madre prudente hubiera prohibido; intimó excesivamente con las criadas; paseaba en compañía de estas más de lo conveniente, y en cambio de cariño y el agasajo que le negaran dentro de la casa, disfrutaba de una libertad que no conocían las señoritas de aquella época y rara vez las de esta. Por esto Andrea se parecía tan poco a las niñas españolas de su tiempo. Era una criolla voluntariosa, una extranjera intrusa que habrían repudiado Moratín y Cruz. (II 420)

[Andrea, whose upbringing in America had not been exemplary due to the early death of her mother, received regrettable schooling at that dangerous age when one's toys change, that is to say, when the final retirement of dolls is decreed, only to be replaced by boyfriends. Poorly understood by her uncle and treated worse by Doña Romualda, whom she thoroughly hated, the young woman led a self-absorbed life,

¹⁹ In *Gobernar colonias* (Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 1999) Josep Fradera nuances the metropolitan interest in colonial participation by noting the way in which race was introduced in the *Cortes constitucionales* as a criterion for determining citizenship. By excluding indigenous peoples and those of the *casta parda* [brown caste] from being considered citizens, the metropolis could maintain its majority in a representative form of government. This becomes relevant in the racialized description of Andrea as an *indianilla*.

zealously cultivating her own imagination. She developed friendships a prudent mother would have forbidden, was excessively close with the servants, and too often went out walking with them, and, given that she was denied affection and welcome at home, she took pleasure in a degree of liberty unknown to other young ladies of that period and rarely any in this one. For that reason, Andrea appeared so different from other young Spanish women of her time. She was a willful Creole, a foreign intruder whom Moratín and Cruz would have repudiated.]

From an allegorical standpoint, Andrea's identity as a *criolla* and her failure to recognize or follow the social expectations of her Spanish family represents a curious commentary on Spain's relations with the Americas in 1820. The former colonies, not quite formally recognized independent nations yet no longer passive subjects of metropolitan rule, have begun to develop economic and in some cases diplomatic relationships of their own. Despite her excessive liberty, Andrea is metaphorically and literally situated on the periphery of the Spanish nation.²⁰ Equally important in this allegory is the fact that the responsibility for her errors in judgment and mistakes in social etiquette are clearly laid at the feet of her metropolitan family. The absence of parental influence, specifically the lack of a mother in Andrea's early years and the death of her father once she has returned to the metropolis, is only repeated in the behavior of don José and doña Romualda. If Andrea is not like "las niñas españolas de su tiempo," it is unequivocally the fault of those who, charged with the responsibility of raising her properly, have failed in their duty.

The narrator assures us that Andrea has a good heart – "Era la indiana buena y sensible" (II 421) [She was a good and sensitive *indiana*] – but the manner in which such assurance is presented makes clear that her character and her behavior will always be linked to the circumstances of her birth outside the borders of the metropolis. She is described as intelligent and intuitive, but she is not strong enough on her own to resist the temptations of metropolitan society.

Facilmente comprendía la verdad por poco que se la mostraron. Facilmente acertaba con lo justo y honrado, por simple iniciativa de su conciencia . . .

²⁰ The passage's oblique references to Moratín's *El sí de las niñas* and Ramón de la Cruz's popular *sainetes*, as literary works that attempt to depict the essential nature of various levels of Spanish society, serve to remove Andrea even further from consideration as truly Spanish. She is the allegorical colonial child of the Spanish metropolis, which no longer understands her or knows how to control her behavior.

Su desgracia consistía en que le era forzoso abrirse sola y sin ayuda de nadie el áspero camino de la juventud. ... Bueno es hacer constar que la pobre Andrea, avisada del peligro por una intuición poderosa, hizo esfuerzos instintivos para sostenerse erguida y pomposa, vuelta hacia el sol la virginal corola; pero el viento era demasiado fuerte y se dobló. (II 421)

[She easily understood truth, despite being shown so little of it. She easily recognized what was just and honest by the simple initiative of her conscience ... Her misfortune consisted in the fact that she was forced to forge the difficult path of young adulthood without anyone's help. ... It is worth noting that poor Andrea, warned of the danger by her own powerful intuition, made instinctive efforts to stand tall and proud, turning her virginal corolla to the sun; but the winds were too strong, and she fell.]

The metaphorical language in this description makes quite clear that Andrea has done more than simply associate inappropriately with servants or demonstrate an excess of willfulness. Andrea has lost her virtue. She has been conquered in a sexual sense, but by whom is still a mystery. Considering the responsibility of her family to guide and protect her, such a loss can be read as a condemnation of the metropolis, which bears a great deal of responsibility for her fall. Ironically, it is soon revealed that Andrea's lover is, in fact, Salvador Monsalud. This plot twist allegorically places the metropolis in the position of being both Andrea's conqueror and her putative protector.

At this point in the description of Andrea, the narrative takes a sharp turn and begins to contextualize the "americanilla" in such a way as to shift the blame from the metropolis to the colonized subject herself. Andrea is not only an heiress to a fortune made in the Americas, she is also beautiful. But her beauty is presented as a temptation that the metropolis – in the form of Monsalud – cannot resist.

Era tan guapa, que su vanidad (otra desgracia no pequeña) estaba completamente y cada vez más justificada. Habría sido conveniente que ignorara algún tiempo la riqueza de seducciones que tenía en sus ojos, en su boca, en todas partes de su cara morena y alegre, y llena de inexplicables gracejos y atractivos; en su cuerpo delgado, lleno y flexible, de esos que no tienen clasificación fácil en el cuadro ginecológico, y son tales, que para buscarles semejante necesita el observador descender en busca de un ser antipático y que se arrastra: la culebra. (II 421)

[She was so beautiful that her vanity (another not insignificant misfortune) was completely and increasingly justified. It would have

been convenient for him to ignore for a time the wealth of seductions that she had in her eyes, in her mouth, in all parts of her dark and cheerful face, filled with inexplicable grace and attractiveness; in her thin, full and flexible body, like those that have no easy classification in the gynecological chart, and are such that to find something similar, the observer needs to descend, in search of an unsympathetic and crawling thing: the snake.]

This single paragraph constitutes a remarkable descriptive trajectory, beginning with a confirmation of Andrea's considerable physical beauty and then describing the skin color of her face in a way as to suggest a racial hybridity often associated with the *criollo* and the category of *casta parda* [brown caste]. But the hint of a racial otherness, which results in an attractiveness that the narrator himself cannot explain, then leads to a total transformation and a comparison of her sinuous body with that of a snake, all with the purpose of laying the guilt of the temptation at the feet of the object of desire herself. No longer focused on the lack of guidance afforded to her or the difficulty she faces in attempting to find her way in a society with a complex set of rules and expectations, the text begins to focus on Andrea's body as the site of the true interaction between metropolis and colony.

The voyeuristic quality of this passage becomes heightened even further when the narrator explains, once again in a very curious and contradictory manner, that Andrea herself is only too conscious of her own physical attractiveness: "Pero Andrea no tuvo a nadie que le hiciera el sumo bien de engañarla durante algún tiempo respecto a su belleza, y entregose desde muy niña al fascinador deleite de los espejos" [But Andrea did not have anyone to do her the favor of deceiving her over time with respect to her beauty, and she gave herself over, from a very young age, to the fascinating delight of mirrors] (II 421). This aspect of the portrait of Andrea will become increasingly important with respect to Monsalud's process of maturation. What is clear, at this point, is that men in general find Andrea attractive, and she is only too aware of that fact. To drive this point home, the text tells us that in the home of don José there is a print of the "famosa escena de Phryne entre los jueces de Atenas," and that Andrea "sabía de memoria la leyenda grabada al pie con resplandecientes letras de oro" [the famous scene of Phryne among the judges of Athens ... she knew by heart the inscription engraved at the bottom in gleaming gold letters] (II 421). The reference evokes the image of Jean-Léon Gérôme's 1861 portrait, *Phryné devant l'aéropage*, which depicts the moment in which the famous courtesan's body, on trial for impiety, is on full display before the judges

of the Areopagus. The evocation of the classical legend itself, the golden letters that tell the tale, and the image of the female body presented for the male gaze evoke both historical and allegorical references to the constructs of imperial power. Galdós's evocation of the image, however, does not correspond entirely to the standard trope of the female body offered up for the consumption of the male gaze. By describing Andrea's body as like that of a serpent, the text indicates that the power relations are inverted and that the temptation of her beauty should, in fact, be resisted. Galdós uses this metaphor of the female body as he attempts to allegorize the relationship between the metropolis and its colonial empire at the critical moment in history in which those defining territories are separated from and lost to the metropolis.²¹ Her identity as a figure who is a colonial subject but not quite a metropolitan one complicates the representation of desire and loss on the part of the character of Salvador Monsalud, and the facts surrounding his ill-fated relationship with Andrea will frame the rest of the narrative of *El Grande Oriente* and determine much of the action in the subsequent novels of the second series. This failed relationship functions as an essential element in the story of Salvador's path toward maturity and the allegory of the imperial response to colonial loss.

It is worth noting that Andrea is not a truly passive subject in this allegory. In the novel's first scene between the two lovers, Monsalud watches her as she tries on clothing and rearranges her hair in the mirror, "como artista que remata su obra" [as an artist who completes his work] (II 423). Echoing the image of Phyrne, she imagines the gaze of masculine others, thus highlighting the idea that her body serves as a tool to gain what she wants for herself. Importantly, Monsalud is not the only one physically present who admires her beauty. Andrea herself, in staring at her own reflection, participates actively in the gaze. Considering the text's description of her excessive freedom, her fascination with her own physicality and the desire that she engenders in others serves as a way of representing the American territories of the Spanish empire at the moment in which they appear poised to gain greater independence, as representatives of profitable new markets and sources of valuable resources for other nations. But the issue that Andrea must now face is one of marriage. She may have been able to avoid certain aspects of her uncle's authority and sidestep her aunt's social control, but the time has come in which she must select a husband, a figure who will exercise a far greater degree of control

²¹ The novel's presentation of a colonized and potentially colonizing female body is the first but not the only one in the *Episodios nacionales*. See the discussion of *Aita Tettauén*, the sixth novel in the fourth series of *Episodios*, in Chapter Six.

over her activities. The colonial territories will inevitably be connected, by means of treaties and contracts, to other nations with potentially greater political power.

To underscore the allegory, this scene between the two lovers specifically links Spain's vestiges of empire in the Americas to the topic of Andrea's marriage. Salvador begins by informing Andrea that her uncle has offered him a position in the government that would require him to travel to the Americas even as it would provide him with the opportunity to gain significant personal wealth. He is struck by the timing of don José's offer, and he suspects that the uncle has discovered their love affair. Monsalud also suspects that the uncle's goal in encouraging him to leave Madrid is connected to his plans to dangle the possibility of marriage to his niece as a way of attracting suitors who will be able to enhance his own power and influence. Monsalud's reaction to these powerfully felt but as yet unproven suspicions is to propose marriage to Andrea, a step that will tie her to him permanently and render impossible her connections to others. Despite their nearly three-year love affair, Monsalud's interest in marriage is a result of jealousy, and when he asks Andrea to marry him, she reminds him that "Cuando quise no quisiste" [When I wanted to, you refused] (II 425). Andrea admits to her lover that her uncle believes her to be a valuable prize, "Se le figura que yo valgo mucho, que merezco la mano de reyes y emperadores ... tonterías" [He imagines that I am worth a lot, that I deserve the hand of kings and emperors ... silly stuff] (II 426), and she attempts to reassure Monsalud of her love for him even as she pushes off his offer and further provokes his jealousy.²² Monsalud, surprised that his offer of marriage is not immediately successful, tells her "Recuerdo que hace tiempo tú deseabas lo que yo te propongo ahora," adding "Andrea, tú no eres la misma" [I remember that not long ago you desired what I am now proposing. ... Andrea, you are not the same] (II 426).

Based on their conversation, what seems to have changed is that Andrea is no longer completely devoted to Monsalud. The young man begins to suspect that Andrea herself is attracted to the possibility of wealth and status

²² Anne McClintock has detailed the relationship of gender to citizenship, noting that "A woman's *political* relation to the nation was thus submerged as a *social* relation to a man through marriage" (*Imperial Leather* 358), and, within the allegory of Monsalud's role as Andrea's lover, the implications for the colonies become clearer. As long as Andrea remains unmarried, she lacks a clear political relationship to Spain as a nation-state. It is not surprising, therefore, that Monsalud is unsettled by her reluctance to marry him and that her uncle is determined above all else to push her into marriage with his own choice of suitable husband.

that might result from an advantageous marriage. When she seductively tries to distract him from his line of questioning, a small key falls from her pocket, and Monsalud demands to know what she keeps locked up. She brings him a small box made of “*finísima madera negra*” [fine black wood] as well as a dagger “*con puño berberisco adornado de turquesas*” [a Berber hilt adorned with turquoise] that she has inherited from her father, and emphatically claims that if the box contains evidence of her infidelity, he can kill her (II 427). The drama of the gesture aside, the objects serve to identify Andrea, once again, with colonial economy and its products. Inside the box, Monsalud finds his portrait and the letters he has sent to her, which seems to reassure him of the status of their relationship. But he also finds a small case that contains a large diamond and a ten-strand pearl necklace, which can only be the gift of a wealthy suitor. Andrea, recognizing that her lover’s doubts have been confirmed, nonetheless claims to have bought them for herself. Monsalud’s response not only reveals an awareness of the truth but at the same time underscores how desperate he is to deny the reality of the situation: “*Si mintieras, si me engañaras, si estuvieras jugando conmigo, no tendrías perdón de Dios. Quiero creer que no es así. Casi prefiero una ceguera estúpida a perder la idea que tengo de ti*” [If you were to lie to me, if you were to deceive me, if you were to play with me, you would not gain God’s forgiveness. I want to believe that you are not like that. I almost prefer a stupid blindness to losing the idea that I have of you] (II 429). From the perspective of allegory, we can read this moment as one in which Monsalud, as representative of the Spanish people in the 1820s, simply cannot process the colonial desire for independence or accept the potential loss of imperial control.

Andrea tries to distract her lover by throwing the jewels to the floor and wrapping herself in expensive furs and silks, offering her body to him. She stretches out across a tiger-skin rug and tosses flowers at her lover, granting him a view of “*las elegantes ondulaciones de su cuerpo*” [the elegant undulations of her body] as a palpable representation of exoticized feminine desire (II 430). Monsalud cannot remain indifferent to the scene as Andrea, tears in her eyes, leaps into his arms “*como una ondina*” [like a nymph] (II 430). The narrative then breaks off, leading the reader to assume that the two make love. This final scene is particularly meaningful, even in a chapter already rich in allusions to empire and colonialism. Andrea’s boudoir has become a metaphorical port of call for colonial and metropolitan commerce. Wearing a fur garment referred to as a “*citoyenne*,” she lies across her tiger-skin rug among her silk garments with the pearls and jewels scattered among them. The text notes that “*El desorden de aquella escena era encantador*” [The disorder of the scene

was enchanting] (II 429). As Andrea's lover, Monsalud enters this space as one more possible economic partner vying for access to the luxurious products that circulate in this exoticized colonial economy. Andrea, as an allegorical figure, can be read as a representation of the process of strategically negotiating access to colonial markets, albeit markets that may no longer be reserved for the metropolis alone.

It is within the frame of colonial commerce that Andrea's possible marriage to another is presented. Don José is determined to marry his niece to an aging liberal aristocrat, the Marqués de Falfán de los Godos. This anticipated union is not ever conceived of as a relationship of love that will produce a family. The Marqués, an aging aristocrat, does not imagine Andrea as a passionate wife but rather as a partner who will provide him, in his old age, with "las sabrosas insulceses de la amistad" [the delicious dullness of friendship] (II 431). From the perspective of the domestic romance, the rivalry between the Marqués and Monsalud as potential husbands for Andrea highlights the role of passion as an essential component of matrimony. In this case, what the Marqués lacks, Monsalud supplies in abundance. Monsalud's view of their future together is one infused with passion and intimacy, while the Marqués represents little more than friendly companionship. From an allegorical perspective, Galdós prepares his readers for a future in which, rather than being a true partner in an imperial project, the colonies will develop a distanced but friendly relationship with the metropolis. Given the historical moment and what is at stake, it is not surprising that Monsalud's passion for Andrea becomes dangerously excessive.

In contemplating what Andrea has meant for him, Monsalud reveals the extreme degree to which she has dominated his existence and determined his sense of self-worth:

La amaba en globo, con sus defectos, conociéndolos y aceptándolos como se aceptan sin la más leve protesta de los ojos las manchas del sol. Ni por un momento pensó en apartarse de ella por causa de tales lunares, accidentes encantadores que se confundían con las perfecciones, sin que el ciego amor pudiera decir dónde acababa Dios y empezaba Satán. El egoísmo estupendo del amor ahogaba entonces en Monsalud la potencia crítica que en él hemos reconocido. (II 437)

[He loved her in her entirety, with her defects, knowing them and accepting them as one accepts sunspots without the slightest protest of the eyes. Not for one moment did he think of turning away from her because of such moles, enchanting accidents that can be confused with perfections, without blind love being able to say where God ends

and Satan begins. The astounding selfishness of love overwhelmed in Monsalud the critical ability that we have seen in him.]

Andrea has become a part of Monsalud and his conception of the world, satisfying a desperate need to express himself, to act in the world, and to define his position in relation to others. Her loss, as a result, is felt as a catastrophe that plunges Salvador into despair: “Cuando el desengaño llegaba, natural invierno que con orden incontrovertible sigue al verano de la pasión y el entusiasmo, le sorprendía a tanta altura que sus caídas eran desastrosas” [When disappointment came, the natural winter that with incontrovertible order follows the passion and enthusiasm of summer, it surprised him at such a height that his fall was disastrous] (II 435). This is important to remember when we consider the various relationships that Salvador has formed with women in his life. To this point, Andrea has superseded all others in a powerful way. She has allowed Monsalud to achieve an important degree of self-fulfillment, and as a result only a powerful force can destroy their union: “Para que uno y otro se separaran era preciso, pues, que mediase una gran violencia o una traición de ella” [In order for them to separate from one another, it was necessary, then, that it be done through great violence or her betrayal] (II 437).

In presenting the relationship between Salvador Monsalud and Andrea Campos as a loosely structured allegorical representation of Spain's loss of the American territories in the 1820s, Galdós takes notable liberties, choosing to represent the emotional response of both characters to the breakup in such a way as to mitigate the humiliation of loss for the metropolis and to circumscribe the independence gained by the colonies. This is an important part of the allegorical function of the author's new foundational fiction, since part of the process of coming to terms with colonial loss involves the creation of a narrative that can rationalize the loss in such a way as to identify some beneficial outcomes for the metropolis. Specifically, don José asks Monsalud to stay out of Andrea's life and to break off their affair definitively, because he fears that otherwise Andrea will change her mind about her marriage to Falfán de los Godos. To ensure the success of his plans for his niece, he offers to arrange for the release from jail of Gil de la Cuadra. This plot development brings the reader back to Monsalud's earlier relationships to Genara and to Doña Pepita, thus emphasizing the rhythmic encoding that these romantic affairs employ. Equally notable is that fact that Monsalud must deny his true feelings for Andrea in order to fulfill his promise to Gil de la Cuadra and his daughter, Sol. This description portrays the rupture of their metropolitan/colonial union as martyrdom on the part of the metropolis. The violence of this

act is made clear when Monsalud describes in dramatic terms to Sol Gil de la Cuadra a nightmare in which the fantastic figure of a horrifying and monstrous dog demands that Monsalud give him his heart in exchange for the prisoner he seeks to free: “Metí la mano, me saqué el corazón y se lo arrojé a la bestia, que con su feroz boca lo cogió en el aire. Entré, y cuando salía, sacando al señor Gil, vi que el perro mascullaba el pedazo de carne, saciándose en él. ¡Ay, cuánto me dolía!” [I reached my hand in and pulled out my heart and I threw it to the beast, who with his ferocious mouth caught it in the air. I entered, and when I emerged, pulling out Señor Gil, I saw that the dog was chewing on the piece of flesh, sating himself with it. Ay, how it pained me!] (II 439). Two aspects of this moment deserve close attention. First is the fact that the bargain Monsalud has made with Don José, to give up his relationship with Andrea, is perceived as a form of self-mutilation. Andrea has become a part of Monsalud’s psyche, and in that sense her loss can only be experienced as a loss of self, which is by its very nature an experience of trauma. Equally important is the consequent emotion of melancholy and what that will mean for the protagonist. In allegorizing the relationship of metropolis and colonies in Monsalud’s love affair with Andrea, Galdós characterizes with remarkable detail the complex metropolitan response to Spain’s change in imperial status and the resultant effect on shared conceptions of national identity.

As part of his representation of the crisis affecting Spanish national identity in the early 1820s, Galdós narrates more than metropolitan anguish and melancholy. He also imagines a colonial response to rupture. In so doing, he chooses to adapt the plot for the benefit of his metropolitan foundational fiction, presenting Andrea’s response to the situation in a way that shifts the allegory away from the historical facts of the period and toward the psychological needs of the metropolis in processing the loss. Specifically, don José seeks out Monsalud to inform him that their agreement will require more than his putting an end to his visits with his former lover. Andrea, he warns, regrets having agreed to marry the Marqués, and he is sure his niece will attempt to reunite with her former lover. He asks Monsalud to put an unequivocal end to the affair and to ignore messages and notes from the young woman should she attempt to contact him. In agreeing to don José’s demands, Salvador understands that he will have to do more than withdraw. He will have to see his former lover and pretend to no longer care about her. It is a task that emphasizes the feeling that he has lost a part of himself: “– Acabé – respondió Salvador en el propio tono del suicida que dice adiós a la vida” [I am finished, responded Salvador in the same tone used by the suicide victim saying goodbye to life] (II 443). When he agrees to don José’s demands, the narrative makes this

sense of loss dramatically clear, noting, “En aquel momento arrojaba su corazón al perro” [In that moment he threw his heart to the dog] (II 443).

Salvador’s anguish at the end of his relationship with Andrea shows all the hallmarks of a classic case of melancholy, and this becomes particularly relevant from the perspective of the allegory of colonial loss. Melancholy differs from mourning when the experience of loss involves the devaluation of the ego-ideal (Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich 19). In his classic text, *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud notes that “The melancholic displays something else besides which is lacking in mourning – an extraordinary diminution in his self-regard, an impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale” (584). In pondering the loss of Andrea, Salvador expresses a feeling of being different from all others, unable to find satisfaction with life: “Otros viven y son amados; yo no vivo ni soy amado, ni hallo fuente alguna donde saciar la sed que me devora” [Others live and are loved; I do not live, nor am I loved, nor do I find any source to quench the thirst that devours me] (II 434). He bemoans his situation as part of his fate, seeing the loss as a symptom of his own worthlessness: “¿Por qué soy tan distinto de los demás, que en ninguna parte encajo? ¿Por qué ningún hueco social cuadra a mi forma? Mejor es desbaratarse y morir” [Why am I so different from the others, that I don’t fit anywhere? Why do I not fit anywhere in society? Better to fall to pieces and die] (II 435).

The sentiments expressed represent a logical expression of the emotional experience of loss. From an allegorical perspective Monsalud’s words reflect the particular position of Spain within the larger framework of the nations of Europe and the west. Spain is not like its imperial neighbors; it does not fit the model of nineteenth-century imperial expansion. Monsalud’s depressed conclusion, particularly with the verb “desbaratarse” [to fall to pieces] highlights the fractures in the Spanish empire and the inevitable feelings of diminishment that will be experienced by the metropolis as a consequence of Spanish American independence.

It is important to note that Galdós’s allegorical presentation does not include a satisfactory ending for Andrea either, and in this sense the allegory reformulates the colonial response in such a way as to satisfy the powerful collective ego of the author’s metropolitan readers. Galdós’s allegory of colonial loss presents a painful separation between two psyches that places one into a cycle of self-torment and the other, unsurprisingly, on a path that will lead to neither happiness nor independence. Andrea experiences regret and attempts to rekindle her affair with Monsalud. She writes to him, admitting her error: “Arrepentida, arrepentida, arrepentida de lo que he hecho” [I am sorry, sorry, sorry for what I have done] (II 446). Andrea eventually appears in her former lover’s chambers, where he sits with Sol

Gil de la Cuadra. Monsalud has carefully staged this encounter, knowing that only a reciprocal blow to Andrea's own ego will lead her to abandon attempts at reconciliation. Monsalud misrepresents his true feelings, letting Andrea think that Sol Gil de la Cuadra is the new object of his affections. Predictably, Andrea gets angry, insults them both, and flees, crushed and humiliated by their encounter. Salvador then breaks down in front of Sol Gil de la Cuadra and defends his former lover: "¡No es demonio, es un ángel; y no me causa furor, sino que la adoro! ... ¡La adoro, me muero por ella!" [She is not a demon, she's an angel; and she doesn't make me angry. In fact, I love her, I'm dying for her!] (II 464). The depth of his suffering and the allegory of colonial loss is powerfully evoked when he admits to Sol, "Pero tú tendrás a tu padre, y yo jamás, jamás recobraré lo que he perdido" [But you will have your father, and I will never, ever, recover what I have lost] (II 462).

The rupture between Monsalud and Andrea, forced upon them by circumstances neither can entirely control, is one that leads both of them to grief. The most salient question one might ask with respect to this allegorized romance is what motivates Monsalud to perform this act of self-mutilation. Curiously, the text represents his decision as one of personal honor, which is posited as far more valuable than the pleasure and economic comforts that the *indianilla* can provide. Without being made aware of what stands behind Monsalud's obsessive commitment to the release of Urbano Gil de la Cuadra, the motivation for giving up his relationship with Andrea appears tenuous at best to readers. At the start, Monsalud seeks to justify his decision to end the affair.

Trataba de consolarse, imaginando razones positivistas que atenuaran el desconuelo total de su alma, curando además la profunda herida abierta en su amor propio ... Una lógica incontrovertible demostraba que habría sido gran error contraer matrimonio con Andrea: demostraba que en el carácter de la americana había un germen maléfico cuyas consecuencias érale fácil prever a la razón fría. (II 434)

[He tried to console himself, imagining positivistic reasons to reduce his soul-deep grief, thereby curing the deep open wound in his self-esteem ... An incontrovertible logic showed that it would have been a great mistake to marry Andrea: it showed that in the American's character there was an evil seed the consequences of which were easy to see with cold reason.]

At one level Monsalud rationalizes his decision by thinking that if Andrea is swayed by the jewels that the Marqués provides she would inevitably be

tempted into other affairs with men who would offer her equally attractive economic goods. This characterization strengthens that part of the allegory that bitterly paints the Americas as permanent colonies that will never be able to do more than serve the will of some other imperial power. But it doesn't adequately explain the young man's insistence of sacrificing what is obviously so meaningful for him.

What serves as the true motivation is the penance that must be performed to absolve Monsalud of his former sins as a member of the royal guard and his role as an *afrancesado*. Monsalud's earlier comment to Sol Gil de la Cuadra on the irrevocable nature of his loss, which he contrasts to her reunion with her father, leads us as readers to wonder what would, in fact, motivate Monsalud to such a degree. The answer lies in the figure of Urbano Gil de la Cuadra himself, who has initiated the actions of the novel in the very beginning chapters only to disappear into the abyss of a Spanish jail, leaving his daughter to anguish over her powerlessness to act and Monsalud to struggle ceaselessly within the highly politicized environment of the Masonic lodges to gain the old man's freedom. What this allegory demonstrates is that the sins of the past will inevitably return to haunt the present. In this case, Monsalud's sacrifice of his future with Andrea is revealed to be an act of atonement for his past and for actions he has taken while living in France. This part of Monsalud's life is only referred to in the text but never presented in narrative, heightening the sense that it is too shameful to be represented on the page.

The revelation of Monsalud's past is obliquely referenced, but only in the final scenes of *El Grande Oriente* is it revealed in all of its dramatic power. Monsalud gains entry into the jail and gives the old man the uniform of a captured guard to facilitate his escape. But at the last minute the true story of Monsalud's past and his connection to Gil de la Cuadra are revealed. The guard, himself a traitor to the liberal cause and anxious to bring Salvador to ruin, produces letters that show proof of Doña Pepita's infidelity with Monsalud. The letters serve as a condemnation of Monsalud's past actions. His participation in adultery constitutes an act of destruction with regard to the family structure, and upon discovering the truth Gil de la Cuadra collapses in grief. The infidelity that Monsalud had fearfully anticipated in contemplating marriage to Andrea has now been revealed as a fact of his own life and an episode in which the young man has played a central and shameful role. The only thing that can raise Gil de la Cuadra from the floor of his jail cell is the thought of his daughter, Sol, who he, unwittingly, has left in the care of a man who failed to respect the concept of family. What Gil de la Cuadra does not recognize, but what the reader is already cognizant of, is that Monsalud's self-sacrifice is an attempt

to demonstrate repentance. He inflicts pain on himself in order to reunite father and daughter.

The storyline of Gil de la Cuadra and his family, almost entirely overlooked by readers of the second series, allows the author to allegorically connect the concept of family with Spain's colonial losses in the 1820s. Monsalud's adulterous relationship with the *afrancesada* can also be read as a reference to Spain's disastrous involvement with Bonaparte's French Empire. It signals that the price exacted for the Peninsular War with France will be Spain's own American empire. The historical time frame of this loss is notable, as 1814 and 1815, which correspond to the years in which Monsalud would have begun his affair with Doña Pepita, are considered key years for the Latin American independence movements. The definitive loss for Monsalud occurs in the spring of 1821, when he is forced to give up any hope of marriage to Andrea Campos, and this corresponds to the historical reality that the early 1820s mark the end of meaningful attempts on the part of the metropolis to regain authority over its former American colonies.

In the last chapter of *El Grande Oriente* Monsalud is able to return Gil de la Cuadra to the loving arms of his daughter, knowing that the old man will never forgive him for his act of betrayal. But Monsalud stoically fulfills his promise to Sol, turning away from the carriage that will take father and daughter to safety. As he walks away, having performed his penance, he is nearly struck by another carriage, this one carrying the newly married Andrea and her husband. The connection between the two carriages is richly symbolic, and the allegory of Monsalud's past sins and his attempts to atone has come full circle. What is left now is for Monsalud to deal with the losses he has experienced without being trapped by feelings of melancholia. This will prove to be a difficult task, one that the rest of the second series will explore as Monsalud's life story continues to unfold.

The End of Imperial Desire

With *El Grande Oriente*, Galdós presents his most powerful allegorical representation of colonial loss, yet it is clearly not the end of the domestic romance. Throughout the remaining novels of the second series of *Episodios* Galdós continues to present Salvador Monsalud as the central actor in an extended series of metaphors that address the metropolitan response to the irrevocable changes experienced by Spain in the remaining years of the Fernando VII monarchy. The events that occur all point to the difficult and emotionally charged experience of coming to terms with colonial loss and are divided into two essential aspects in the protagonist's life trajectory

as represented in the series. One is Salvador's immediate melancholic response and where his melancholy leads him in the fifth and sixth novels of the series, *7 de julio* and *Los cien mil hijos de San Luis*. But the other relates to a point when Monsalud begins to see a future for himself, and this is the moment in which the plot begins to move toward the direction of resolution and fulfillment. This shift is presented in highly symbolic fashion, through Monsalud's near-death experience with a Carlist nun, Sor Teodora de Aransis, in the eighth novel of the series, *Un voluntario realista*. This dramatic experience produces a significant change in Salvador, and he learns how to frame his world in a very different way. It is this process of reframing that becomes the antidote to melancholy. But to reach the stage in which he can entertain a different kind of life, Salvador must address the deep sense of loss that he now carries within himself. From a psychoanalytical and allegorical perspective, Monsalud must find a way reimagine his identity. His task is to forge a future that recognizes the nation's imperial past even as it makes a conscious decision to transcend it.

The fifth volume of the series, *7 de julio*, narrates the growing political tensions between the *realistas* (royalist supporters of Fernando VII) and the liberals, who have forced the king into agreeing to a constitutional monarchy. The more radical *exaltado* faction of political liberals grows in strength, leading to an armed battle on July 7, 1822 between the local militias who support the constitutional government and the king's royal guards, who have been encouraged by the king and his supporters to attempt a takeover of the government. Long considered a novel devoted exclusively to the political divisions between the two political factions, *7 de julio* also explores the psychological impact of loss. In setting the stage for the events of July 7, the narrative voice unequivocally contextualizes the domestic unrest within the framework of imperial loss: "Las Américas ya no eran nuestras, y en Méjico Iturbide tenía medio forjada su corona" [The Americas were no longer ours, and in Mexico Iturbide had halfway forged his crown] (II 532). The former colonies themselves are struggling with self-governance, and the rest of Europe watches the events in Spain and its former empire, concerned that their own imperial designs and governments may be placed at risk. For Monsalud, the challenge is to move beyond the loss of Andrea and all that she has represented as a link to Spain's colonial history. This novel's treatment of Monsalud's story addresses the initial steps he must take to transcend his grief and find a way to make his life meaningful. The novel insinuates that the path forward is right in front of him, in the shape of Sol Gil de la Cuadra and the familial model exemplified by Benigno Cordero, a character introduced in this volume who will come to play a more important role in the final volumes

of the series.²³ But Monsalud does not yet recognize either the possibility of happiness with Sol or Benigno Cordero's role as a paternal role model.

Throughout *7 de julio*, against the backdrop of the political tensions in the capital, readers are presented with the protagonist's personal struggles. Monsalud lives with his mother and works as a secretary for the Duque de Parque, a member of the liberal government. He is depressed and unsure in contemplating his next steps. Sol Gil de la Cuadra remains in the capital, nursing her father, who continues to physically decline after the revelations about his wife's infidelity. Sol, unbeknown to her father, continues to meet and talk to Monsalud, and in these moments of honest reflection and introspection Monsalud reveals the depth of his concerns about his future. Sol, for her part, nervously contemplates her own marriage to a distant cousin, a member of the royal guard. Salvador encourages this prospect, seeing in it the protection and stability that the young woman needs. For himself, however, he cannot see an easy way forward. At this point he begins to talk about the possibility of emigrating to the Americas (II 545). The possibility, once offered by Don José Campos and roundly rejected by Salvador, begins to take shape in his mind as a way of escaping from everything: his failed affair with Andrea, the growing political tensions between the *exaltados*, the members of the liberal government, and the conspirators for Fernando VII. But from the perspective of the allegory of the domestic romance Galdós's references to a possible escape to the Americas only underscores the rupture between metropolis and colonies. As a representative of the new metropolitan subject, Monsalud's fate is inextricably bound up with that of the country and, despite frequent comments about traveling to the Americas, his future lies within the borders of the peninsular Spain.

With the break between the metropolis and its former colonies complete and irrevocable, Monsalud's task now is to find a new identity, a new way of conceiving his own place in the world. And this task, from the perspective of a foundational fiction, involves finding the right woman and committing himself to marriage and family. In his journey toward self-knowledge Salvador will continue to take false steps, first turning back to both of his

²³ Benigno Cordero is immediately identified in the text as a model Spaniard: "era, como verdadero patriota, hombre de mucha medida y prudencia" (II 560). He reappears in the seventh volume of the series, *El terror de 1824*, unjustly accused of corresponding with exiled liberal conspirators after Fernando VII's return to absolute power in 1823, and this secondary plot serves to emphasize the charity and compassion of Sol Gil de la Cuadra, who claims responsibility for the letters and faces execution in Cordero's place.

former love interests, Genara de Baraona and Andrea Campos, and finally, in an unexpected but important narrative twist, becoming involved with a Catholic nun before he begins to recognize the possibilities for a happy and fruitful life with Sol Gil de la Cuadra. As Sol herself says, clearly aware that Salvador has only to recognize the possibilities already available to him, “Tú no eres feliz porque no quieres. No veo yo que te falte nada” [You are not happy because you don’t want to be. I don’t see that you lack anything] (II 544). What Salvador needs is to abandon his melancholy and to see that he has not, in fact, lost any part of himself in his break with Andrea. *7 de julio* offers a glimmer of hope for a resolution for Monsalud and Sol Gil de la Cuadra when, at the height of the street battles between the royal guards and the Madrid militia, Urbano Gil de la Cuadra’s decline leads him to the brink of death. Sol manages to find Monsalud in the confusion of the streets of the nation’s capital, and the two rush back to the father’s bedside. Gil de la Cuadra is no longer lucid and, mistaking Monsalud for his daughter’s intended spouse, he asks the two to embrace as husband and wife. The emotional ambivalence of the moment is powerful, taking the formerly chaste relationship of brother and sister and transforming it into one in which Sol must simultaneously experience the fleeting happiness of the embrace of someone she loves and the sorrow of knowing that the embrace does not reflect the realization of her dreams. Salvador, in the moment of the embrace, sees in Sol only “un débil y hermoso niño desválido” [a weak, beautiful, and helpless child] (II 585). Sol and Monsalud embrace as the old man takes his final breath, content in his belief that the two are firmly established as the nucleus of a future family.

By providing readers with this dramatic moment, Galdós sets the stage for the rest of the domestic romance that will play out in the subsequent volumes of the second series. Readers have become increasingly aware of the importance of Sol Gil de la Cuadra for Monsalud’s eventual happiness. To refer once again to Peter Brooks’s elaboration of the importance of plot and subplot, the domestic romance that Sol and Salvador represent is repeatedly postponed and frustrated not only to generate the textual energy of the series but also “to ensure that the ultimate pleasurable discharge will be more complete” (*Reading for the Plot* 101–02). Equally important, it is not always the vicissitudes of Spanish politics that impede the union between these two lonely and orphaned individuals, but rather Salvador’s own poor decisions. Until Monsalud recognizes the value of marriage to Sol he will continue to wander throughout the landscape of the Spanish peninsula, searching for a way in which his life will have meaning, until he has proven without a doubt that he is ready to begin the next stage of his life.

Monsalud's short-sightedness and his penchant for suffering, signals of his continuing melancholy, are clearly demonstrated in his inchoate longing for something more. Considering her more a sister than ever before, Monsalud brings the now orphaned Sol to live with him and his mother and, in the turbulence of the political aftermath of the street fighting of July 7, this reconstituted family finds refuge in the palace of Monsalud's employer, the Duque de Parque. The beautiful walled gardens of the palace witness anguished confessional talks between the two. In one moment he again raises the prospect of abandoning Spain altogether and emigrating to the Americas and in the next he intimates that he will take another, unspecified journey, one that he hopes his mother and Sol will prevent him from taking: "deseo que entre mi madre y tú traméis alguna intriga contra mí ... para detenerme, para atarme, porque si no, es posible que haga un gran desatino" [I want you and my mother to work up some plot against me ... to stop me, to tie me up, because if not, I may make a great mistake] (II 593). Neither Sol, Doña Fermina, nor the reader knows exactly what he refers to, but the novel implies that leaving Madrid would be a mistake not only because it would mean abandoning his responsibilities as a son but also because it would prevent him from developing a stronger relationship with Sol.

The plot indicates that, even when the circumstances are appropriate, Monsalud is unable to make the commitment to family. In the final pages of *7 de julio* Sol and her cousin agree to end their engagement, leaving her free to accept other offers of marriage. When she shares this news with Salvador it does not result in a change in his decision to leave. He has informed his mother that he will be undertaking a journey, and he has packed enough of his belongings to make Sol initially suspect that he may indeed be emigrating to America. She thinks, "Si así fuera ... no tendría perdón" [If it were so ... there would be no forgiveness], signaling that a journey beyond the metropolis would result in a permanent familial rupture (II 599). He admits to ambivalence about leaving, telling Sol, "que no quiero marcharme; mejor dicho, que quiero y no quiero," and adding, "Debo quedarme" [I don't want to leave, that is to say, I do, and I don't ... I ought to stay.] (II 600–01). Salvador becomes increasingly moody, and Sol begs him to forget whatever it is that has made him morose. Monsalud admits to her that he cannot help himself: "¡Imagina lo más hermoso, lo más seductor, lo mejor que ha hecho Dios, aunque lo haya hecho para perder al hombre" [Imagine the most beautiful, the most seductive thing, the finest that God has made, even if he did it in order to lead man to ruin] (II 602). The text is purposefully ambiguous in its use of the abstract pronoun "lo." The reference is never made entirely clear, but Sol has

already seen Monsalud in the company of a beautiful woman later revealed to be Genara de Baraona. The reappearance of his former love interest signals that Monsalud's perspective is still fixed on the past instead of the future. Genara, who has decided to separate from her husband, has asked Monsalud to accompany her to the north of Spain, where she will stay with friends. But the curious ambiguity in the neuter article in Monsalud's reference allows the reader to think beyond Genara as a feminine subject or even Andrea as a continuing source of anguish.

His decision to go is ultimately less about his emotional attachment to his former love interest and more about his need to escape from the feelings of loss. Monsalud's frustration and anguish reveal the strength of the historical, ideological, and emotional links to the nation's past, particularly at a time when the Liberal Triennium comes to an end and Spain sees a return to absolutism. The emotions most powerfully evoked in his anguished internal debate about whether he should take this journey with Genara or remain in the bosom of his family is one of melancholy and desperation. Not surprisingly, Salvador leaves in the middle of night, under cover of darkness, illustrating his own tacit understanding that what he is doing is wrong. Salvador is not capable of making the correct decision to stay and care for his mother and for Sol. As he climbs into the waiting carriage, Genara asks him if he now regrets his decision to travel with her, but he insists, "No ... Vamos ... En marcha" [No. ... Let's get going] (II 603). In leaving Madrid, Monsalud is literally running away from his responsibilities, a decision that contributes to the death of his mother and will result in a decade of suffering, wandering, and struggle before he finds a way to regain a sense of family.

The historical events set forth in the next volume of the series, *Los cien mil hijos de San Luis*, are largely told through the first-person narration of Genara de Baraona. The first-person narrative echoes the structure of Juan Bragas's account in the earlier volumes *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* and *La segunda casaca*, and in similar fashion it provides a shift in perspective that allows readers to better understand the involvement of historical figures in French government in unwittingly returning Spain to a dark period of absolutism and political repression ("Galdós and Chateaubriand" 19). The *episodio* begins with a paragraph in an authorial voice, who claims to have found two lengthy fragments of a narrative written by Genara. The first is entitled "*De Madrid a Urgel*" and the second "*De Paris a Cádiz*," essentially mapping out the geographical wanderings of both the narrator, Genara de Baraona, and Monsalud. In the first fragment Genara travels with Monsalud until he is detained by royalist forces and separated from her. In the second fragment Genara recounts her unsuccessful attempts to

find and free him. Monsalud is eventually released, only to find himself accompanying the representatives of the liberal government, including Andrea and her husband, as they are pushed south by the invading French forces, eventually arriving in Cádiz. The vicissitudes of Monsalud's journey allow Galdós to begin to critique both the absolutist and liberal forces as equally guilty of impeding a resolution that will allow Monsalud to settle down and begin the process of redefining himself. Genara, traveling with the French troops, arrives at destinations along the way after Monsalud has retreated further south, missing him sometimes by a matter of mere minutes, which provides a level of narrative irony in recasting the journey from the borders of France to the port of Cádiz as one of amorous pursuit rather than political rout. This once again underscores the way in which Galdós reconfigures Spanish history as a domestic romance.

If *Los cien mil hijos de San Luis* represents an important step in the development of Monsalud's allegorical journey by firmly identifying Sol as the appropriate object of his attentions, it becomes clear that he himself has still not realized it. The series extends the separation between the two, with Monsalud traveling from Madrid to Cádiz in the company of Andrea Campos and her new husband while Sol searches for him in the east, having been purposely misled by Genara with respect to his true whereabouts. In narrating the flight from Madrid to Cádiz, Genara is convinced that Monsalud has renewed his affair with Andrea. But, given the depth of her jealousy and her obsession with her first love, her suspicions cannot be confirmed by readers. Is Monsalud having an affair with the woman he once so passionately adored, or has their relationship shifted into something other than a sexual one? When Genara sees Monsalud, Andrea, and her husband, the Marqués, packing up and leaving Madrid, the scene she describes is highly ambiguous.

Tuve valor para verles partir. Vi a la sobrina de Campos subir al coche, haciéndose la interesante con su languidez de dama enfermita; vi al viejo Marqués engomado y lustroso, como un muñeco que acaba de salir del taller de juguetes; vi a Salvador tomando en brazos y besando con el mayor gusto al niño de la Marquesa ... no quise ver más. ¡El coche partió! ... ¡Se fueron! ... (II 666)

[I had the courage to see them leave. I saw Campos's niece get in the carriage, making herself interesting with the languor of a sick old dame; I saw the rubbery and shiny Marquis, like a doll that just came out of the toyshop; I saw Salvador taking the Marquise's boy in his arms and kissing him with the greatest pleasure ... I didn't want to see more. The coach left! ... They left!]

Is this a scene of a resigned Monsalud helping a former lover, her husband, and their child escape from the approaching French army? Is this a scene of a cuckolded husband with a child who may be actually Monsalud's? It is notable that Andrea does not reappear in the series after *Los cien mil hijos de San Luis*, although her husband, the Marqués, does, albeit only as a member of the aristocratic circles that Genara continues to frequent. There are no subsequent references to his wife or family, which indicates that we should, perhaps, read this scene as less damning than Genara believes, especially given that she is unable to prove her suspicions. But perhaps more important from the perspective of the imperial allegory is that, even after the end of their torrid affair presented in *El Grande Oriente*, Monsalud and Andrea cannot ignore their past. The imperial status of the metropolis and its colonies can be ruptured, but the effects of that relationship linger.

What we can say, however, is that Monsalud remains trapped in patterns of behavior and networks of relationships that leave him melancholic and without a sense of home. This component of the story echoes Peter Brooks' focus on the narrative importance of repetition in Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, specifically with regard to its necessity for moving "from passivity to mastery" (*Reading for the Plot* 98). Monsalud's ill-fated decision to accompany Genara on her journey northwards and then later Andrea southwards provides him with the time to address his melancholy.

If repetition is mastery, movement from the passive to the active, and if mastery is an assertion of control over what man must in fact submit to – choice, we might say, of an imposed end – we have already a suggestive comment on the grammar of plot, where repetition, taking us back again over the same ground, could have to do with the choice of ends. (Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* 98)

Monsalud's travels across Spain in the company of his former lovers form a necessary part of the process of managing his melancholy. At the conclusion of *Los cien mil hijos de San Luis*, Monsalud escapes Cádiz on an English warship, and his flight from Spain signals the definitive end of the Liberal Triennium and a return to a new level of absolutist political repression under Fernando VII from 1824 to 1833. His escape by sea, away from the peninsula, also signals a conclusion to all of Monsalud's prior relationships with women.

The next two volumes in the series, *El terror de 1824* and *Un voluntario realista*, provide a careful narrative counterpoint to the previous six, and they set the stage for the final two volumes of the series, *Los apostólicos* and *Un faccioso más y algunos frailes menos*, in ways that underscore the series' important linkage between Spanish history and the romantic lives of the

central characters. In *El terror de 1824*, for example, Monsalud is completely absent, and readers are given no clue about what has happened to him since his forced emigration from Cádiz. Instead, the narrative returns its focus to events in Madrid and chronicles Fernando VII's persecution of political liberals such as Patricio Sarmiento and the family of Benigno Cordero. Sol, left alone and unassisted, demonstrates her value as a potential partner by insisting on caring for her neighbor, Sarmiento, for whom the end of the Liberal Triennium has meant the destruction of his family and his health. She also rescues Benigno Cordero and his daughter Elena from prison, who have been unjustly accused of treasonous correspondence with exiled *emigrados*. Sol confesses to being the intended recipient of the fateful letters, only barely escaping a death sentence. By having Monsalud disappear from the series at this juncture, Galdós points both to Sol's vulnerability and Monsalud's failure to recognize her needs. He heightens the tension of their potential romantic connection even as he signals that, while Sol may have demonstrated her appropriateness as a partner, Salvador has not progressed far enough along in his own journey to be worthy of her and to merit a satisfactory ending.²⁴

To address the protagonist's need to change, the arc of Salvador's emotional and allegorical journey experiences a marked shift in the very next volume in the series, *Un voluntario realista*. This is one of the most enigmatic novels in the series, and many scholars have struggled to situate it within the plotlines of the other volumes.²⁵ When we consider

²⁴ Critics have accurately described Sol Gil de la Cuadra as an example of the family-focused and self-abnegating *ángel del hogar* [angel of the hearth], the nineteenth-century model of feminine domesticity (Hinterhäuser 318; Alfred Rodríguez 82). For example, Miguel Navascués observes that “Desde su primera intervención, y a través de toda la serie, se presenta con sus admirables virtudes – lealtad, caridad, amor y fe –. Su vida está llena de tribulaciones que ella sufre y supera con una especie de innata *gracia*” [from her first appearance and throughout the series, she displays admirable virtues – loyalty, charity, love and faith – Her life is filled with trials that she suffers and surmounts with a type of innate grace] (“Liberales y absolutistas: Personajes novelescos en la segunda serie de los Episodios Nacionales,” *Revista de Literatura* 49:98 (1987): 506).

²⁵ Alfred Rodríguez, for example, has referred to *Un voluntario realista* as having “a degree of plot autonomy that is unusual outside the unitive nucleus of the series” (82), and Montesinos concurs, noting that the novel “parece tan fuera de la serie por muchos aspectos, que es como una novela aparte” [it seems so outside the series in many ways, that it is like another separate novel] (I 140). Brian Dendle considers the novel “one of the best focused of the episodios,” adding that “History

the allegorical nature of Salvador Monsalud's story in the second series, it becomes clear that this particular novel plays a critical role. Given the novel's importance, it is necessary to provide a brief summary, in the following two paragraphs, of the salient plot twists and turns. The action takes place far from Madrid, in the small town of Solsona, in Catalonia, near the French border. The central characters are Sor Teodora de Aransis – a nun who finds herself attracted to political intrigue and life beyond the convent – and a young sacristan, José “Pepet” Armengol, also nicknamed Tilín, who is in love with Sor Teodora and who yearns to become a figure of greatness, equal to the Spanish conquistadors of the past, despite his lack of education and limited experience.²⁶ The historical backdrop of the novel is an uprising in Catalonia over the spring and summer of 1827 – The *Guerra de los Agraviados* [War of the Malcontents] – which grew out of a belief held by extreme members of the absolutist militia group known as the *voluntarios realistas* [royal volunteers] that Fernando VII's monarchy had grown insufficiently rigorous in its persecution of liberals. In the novel, a rumored threat leads to repressive tactics by local members of the militia. Tilín becomes the leader of one small band that sweeps the countryside, arresting and executing suspected liberals. His troop encounters a man traveling on horseback and, suspicious of the man's political views, Tilín initially takes him prisoner. The man tells Tilín that he is Jaime Servet, a businessman from Barcelona, and, when pressed, claims that he is carrying messages for the realist cause, including a missive for the nuns in Solsona. Illiterate and unable to read the papers he finds in the man's bags, Tilin releases him, and, as he rides away in the direction of Solsona, Servet thanks his lucky stars that he has not been discovered for what he truly is: a representative of liberal

is reduced to the minimum necessary to provide the backdrop for the intrigue” (*The Early Historical Novels* 117).

²⁶ At one point, complaining to Sor Teodora about his nickname, Armengol says, “¡Ay! ¿cree usted que Hernán Cortés habría conquistador a Méjico si en vez de llamarse Hernán Cortés se hubiese llamado Tilín?” [Ay! Do you think Hernán Cortés would have conquered Mexico if instead of being called Hernán Cortés he had been named Tilín?] (II 856). Curiously, Dendle sees in Tilín a figure who echoes the kind of extreme violence displayed in Galdós's first series portrait of the *guerrilleros* in *Juan Martín el Empecinado*, and he describes this as Galdós's critique of “the national disorder that results from the instinctive Spanish gift for irregular warfare” (*The Early Historical Novels* 116). Dendle correctly identifies Tilin as a characterization of a negative aspect of Spanish character, but he does not go so far as to consider it a reference to imperial Spanish identity.

Spanish *emigrados* living in London, sent to reconnoiter the countryside for potential support of a liberal uprising.

Later, in a tavern in Solsona filled with militiamen, Jaime Servet's true identity is revealed when two men, members of the royal volunteers under the command of Carlos Navarro, recognize him as Salvador Monsalud. In an attempt to escape, Monsalud seeks refuge in the local convent, entering the cell belonging to Sor Teodora. He pleads with her to hide him from his pursuers and, though initially frightened, the nun eventually agrees to help. The two are overheard by another nun, who goes to the abbess and tells her that there is "un fuego que no se ve" [an unseen fire] in the convent, metaphorically indicating a sexual interest between Sor Teodora and the mysterious intruder. The metaphor becomes real when the nuns discover that part of the convent is in flames. As the residents of the convent flee in confusion, Monsalud is discovered and captured by Navarro's troops. Sor Teodora, in the meantime, is kidnapped by Tilín, who admits to having been responsible for setting the fire as part of his extreme plans to force her into a future life with him. The following day, as the embers of the conflagration slowly burn out, Tilín ultimately accepts that Sor Teodora will never submit to him. He releases her to a group of royal volunteers who have been charged with executing Monsalud by firing squad for the crime of having started the fire. When Sor Teodora realizes that the mysterious stranger is going to be put to death for a crime he did not commit she conceives of a plan for his rescue. She tells Tilín that the man is actually her brother and convinces him that to atone for his sins and to prove his love for her he should take the prisoner's place in front of the firing squad. The novel reaches its climax when Tilín passes himself off as Monsalud and goes willingly to his death. Sor Teodora is forced to listen not only to the shots of the firing squad but also to the voice of her own conscience, described as "la sombra proyectada por la luz íntima del alma" [the shadow cast by the intimate light of the soul] (II 964), which forces her to admit that her motivation has been her attraction to Monsalud and not her compassion or sense of justice. The novel ends with Monsalud's escape back to France. As he flees by night, he ponders the strange sequence of events as something more appropriately reflective of "los sangrientos desórdenes y rebeldías de la Edad Media" [the bloody disorders and rebellions of the Middle Ages] (II 967), thus tacitly recognizing that the complex plot twists in this particular *episodio* strain the limits of historical fiction.

This one novel stands out from the other nine in the series not only because it takes place far removed from the nation's capital or the other places that witnessed key moments in the troubled history of Spain during the years of Fernando VII but also because the plot itself appears

to have little connection to that same history.²⁷ The violence shown in *Un voluntario realista* is less about the struggle between absolutists and liberals than about the consequences of grand passions. Most critics read the novel as a commentary on the dangers of extreme emotion, focusing primarily on the figures of Tilín and Sor Teodora.²⁸ But what has been overlooked is the unusual framework in which an obsessive young man who models himself on the great figures of Spain's imperial past takes on the identity of the series' protagonist and sacrifices himself, while the series' hero is saved.

From the perspective of plot, Monsalud's adventures in a nunnery and his miraculous escape from a firing squad might seem little more than an implausible tale disconnected from the other volumes in the second series. But there is a compelling reason that this novel stands apart from the other volumes of the second series. To understand its importance in

²⁷ David George has analyzed *Un voluntario realista* as a novel that explores the distinctions public and private spaces, particularly with respect to religion and gender, and he notes that the narrative's description of Solsana makes it "a negative space," the effect of which is "to distance the place from the urban reader by locating the city in the past and by putting in doubt its position or relevance to the present" ("Religious Space and the Public Sphere in *Un voluntario realista*," *Anales Galdosianos* 44:45 (2009–10): 45).

²⁸ Alfred Rodríguez, for example, sees the nun's story as a "tragedy of a thwarted destiny" (91), while Navascués focuses more on the figure of José Armengol: "Con este sacrificio instigado por la monja, Tilín logra (quien sabe hasta qué punto) purificar su pasión desenfadada y expiar su crimen" [With this sacrifice instigated by the nun, Tilín manages (who knows to what point) to purify his unbridled passion and to atone for his crime] ("Liberales" 508). Montesinos echoes these sentiments, but notices, with great insight, the connections between this moment in the *Episodio nacional* and Galdós's first novel: "Un caso curioso encontramos en *Un voluntario realista*, que siempre nos depara sorpresas: Sor Teodora, culpable de la muerte de Pepet, experimenta una especie de desdoblamiento de conciencia ... que nuevamente parece retrotraernos al clima de *La sombra*, y como el novelista aún no marcha muy seguro por estos vericuetos, todo se resuelve –y se nos impone el recuerdo de *La sombra* otra vez– en un trozo ensayístico sobre los males de un monjío en que se incurre por frivolidad, sin verdadera vocación" [A curious case is found in *Un voluntario realista*, which always gives us surprises: Sister Theodora, guilty of the death of Pepet, experiences a kind of unfolding of consciousness ... that again seems to take us back to the climate of *La sombra*, and, as the novelist himself is unable to progress safely through these twists and turns, everything is resolved – and the memory of *La sombra* is imposed on us once again – in a brief commentary about the evil of committing to religious sisterhood for frivolous reasons, without a true vocation] (I 169).

the series, we need to turn once again to Peter Brooks and his discussion of Freudian narrative. We have already noted the way in which Monsalud's love affairs reflect a rhythmic encoding, a kind of "same-but-different" that Brooks links to the power of metaphor (*Reading for the Plot* 91). But Brooks also points to the role of metonymy as a way in which narratives move inexorably to a sense of ending, which, in the context of the human story, is inevitably associated with the end of life. He reiterates Walter Benjamin's point that a man's life "first assumes transmissible form at the moment of his death" (cited in *Reading for the Plot* 95). Monsalud's brush with death, played out in a geography sufficiently separated from society to be almost dream-like and unreal, constitutes a critical moment in which the compulsive repetition that has heretofore defined his life and relationships comes to an end through a metonymic death, and he gains critical perspective with respect to his own story. As Brooks notes:

The organism must live in order to die in the proper manner, to die the right death. One must have the arabesque in plot in order to reach the end. One must have metonymy in order to reach metaphor. (*Reading for the Plot* 107)

Tilín's death, as a substitute for Monsalud, allows not only for the impulse to conquer – as a powerful marker of an imperialist drive – to come to an end. This metonymic death allows Monsalud to see, perhaps for the first time, the arc of his own life and to understand what truly matters for him as an individual. It allows him to move beyond melancholy.

As Monsalud escapes toward the French border once again, the narrative tells us that he has gained "la vista larga y penetrante del profeta" [the long and penetrating sight of the prophet] (II 967). The violence and passion surrounding the story of the nun unsuited to the convent and the sacristan longing to be another Hernán Cortés play an essential role in the allegory of Monsalud as a representative of the Spanish people and the response to imperial loss. Tilín's sacrifice stands as a definitive end to imperial desire. Monsalud himself is not a direct participant in either the passion or the violence, unlike the other relationships in his past. Instead, he becomes a witness, gaining the distance necessary to understand events differently: "Él tenía del historiógrafo el discernimiento que clasifica y juzga los hechos" [From the historiographer he had the discernment that classifies and judges the facts] (II 967). The novel's fundamental role, then, is to provide a metonymic death for the series' protagonist that allows him to gain a very different perspective, one that transcends his melancholy and allows him to establish a new sense of self. In this way, the complex plot of *Un voluntario realista* is much more than a Galdosian

commentary on the dangers of political and emotional extremes. It becomes the turning point in the allegorical masterplot of Monsalud's engagement with the trauma of imperial loss. His former lovers fade from view almost entirely. Genara no longer has the ability to manipulate or cajole Salvador into action. He no longer obsesses over his ill-considered affairs with Doña Pepita and Andrea Campos. By emerging intact from his final engagement with both political conspiracies and prior romantic entanglements, Salvador begins the process of transforming himself into a new kind of Spanish citizen.

Home and Hearth: An Antidote to Empire

The final two novels of the series, *Los apostólicos* and *Un faccioso más y unos frailes menos*, present the last stages of Salvador Monsalud's physical and metaphorical journey toward self-actualization. From a political and historical perspective, the two novels present the growing shift of Fernando's absolutist supporters toward Carlism and the political gamesmanship that will eventually allow Fernando VII's daughter, Isabel, to inherit the Spanish throne. *Los apostólicos* focuses on the period between 1829 and 1833, ending with Fernando VII's death. *Un faccioso más y unos frailes menos* addresses the immediate aftermath of the king's death. The concluding novel in the series describes Salvador's search for his half-brother, whom he finds mortally ill, and, in an emotional deathbed scene, though recognizing Salvador as his brother, Carlos refuses to forgive either Monsalud or Genera for perceived sins. If we consider Salvador and Carlos to represent, as Navascués does, "la division de España en dos campos" [the division of Spain into two camps] ("Liberales" 496), Carlos's death would seem to indicate the end of that division. From the perspective of Cathy Caruth's understanding of the nature of trauma, Carlos's death becomes one more reminder that Monsalud's fate is to survive, and the series becomes "the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival" (7). Historically, however, the conflict is really only beginning, as the groundwork is laid for the Carlist Wars that will play out over the next half century. In this way, the death of Carlos Navarro does not represent the end of the series. Rather, it is Monsalud's survival and the need to bring his story at last to the critical closure that readers have been encouraged to expect: his marriage to Sol. The last novels of the series turn their focus to the culmination of both the family romance and the domestic romance that constitute the allegory of Monsalud's life story.

It is no surprise that in these final novels the character of Benigno Cordero, originally a minor character, moves to the forefront. He plays

an essential role in bringing Salvador's travails, and the second series' commentary on Spain's imperial history, to a close.²⁹ Cordero becomes the catalyst for the final stage of Galdós's metropolitan foundational fiction by linking the domestic romance between Salvador and Sol with a Freudian family romance in which Salvador both gains a new father figure and then takes that father's place in a love relationship. While Cordero has been correctly identified as an idealized portrayal of Spain's nascent middle class, which offers the promise of a new and modern Spain (Navascués, "El mundo moral" 177), his role in the family romance merits close attention as well. Cordero's part in the narrative allows the series to move away from the idea of Spain as an imperial power and toward a reimagined vision of nation in which the concept of family becomes the essential building block for a renewed national identity.

The focus on family is evident from the very beginning of *Los apostólicos*, which begins in the year 1829 yet refers back to the death of Benigno Cordero's spouse three years earlier, leaving the shopkeeper a widower with five children, the youngest barely two months old. Cordero faces the challenges with equanimity and, whenever the stresses of simultaneously managing his business and caring for his young children as a single parent become tough, he returns to an axiom that provides him with an ethical framework for staying the course:

El cumplimiento estricto del deber en las diferentes circunstancias de la existencia es lo que hace al hombre buen cristiano, buen ciudadano, buen padre de familia. El rodar de la vida nos pone en situaciones muy diversas exigiéndonos ahora esta virtud, más tarde aquella. Es preciso que nos adaptemos hasta donde sea posible a esas situaciones y casos distintos, respondiendo según podamos a lo que la Sociedad y el Autor

²⁹ The character of Benigno Cordero first appears in the fifth volume of the series, *7 de julio*, in heroic proportions as a militiaman who defends the government from the Royal Guards' attempted overthrow of the liberal government on July 7, 1822. Galdós portrays him as a simple patriot whose love of country inspires him to action. In *El terror de 1824* he is an innocent victim of Fernando VII's crackdown on liberals, and it is only through the intervention of Sol Gil de la Cuadra that he is saved and returned to his family. By the time he reappears in *Los apostólicos* he has made the conscious decision to refrain from political action in order to focus on the well-being of his family. Alfred Rodríguez, in his assessment of the character, notes that "Cordero's post-revolutionary (1823) decision, subordinating ideals and patriotism to the immediate necessities of daily life, is not surprising, and the merchant's resolve is not without its own particular brand of merit in a historical context of destructive extremes" (91).

de todas las cosas exigen de nosotros. A veces nos piden heroísmo que es la virtud reconcentrada en un punto y momento; a veces paciencia que es el heroísmo diluido en larga serie de instantes. (II 972)

[The strict fulfillment of duty in the various circumstances of life is what makes a man a good Christian, a good citizen, a good father. Life's journey puts us in very different situations, requiring one virtue now and another later. We need to adapt as much as possible to those different situations and events, responding however we can to what society and our Lord demand of us. Sometimes they demand a heroism that is concentrated in a particular moment, sometimes a patience that is heroism spread out over a lengthy series of moments.]

Heroism, it seems, lies not just in the political fight for liberty but also in the perpetual struggle to meet the daily needs of the family. Don Benigno's words constitute a clear articulation of what is now required in order for Salvador Monsalud to find his rightful place in Spanish society and to begin the work of fashioning a new familial framework for the nation.

The last two novels begin the process of setting up Sol Gil de la Cuadra as the essential component for the creation of a model family for the nation's future. But there are still obstacles to overcome. While previously the process toward completing this narrative expectation was frustrated by Salvador's failure to recognize Sol as his rightful partner on this journey, once Salvador has been metonymically reborn and can consciously stop the repetitive cycle of unproductive relationships, the obstacle is not a lack of self-knowledge but rather a final act of substitution, of metonymic replacement that becomes, as Peter Brooks has noted, "the figure of linkage in the signifying chain: precedence and consequence, the movement from one detail to another, the movement toward totalization under the mandate of desire" (*Reading for the Plot* 91). Sol, left orphaned and unprotected in Madrid on account of Salvador's wanderings through the Spanish countryside, becomes a part of Cordero's household, caring first for his wife in her last illness and then his children, stepping into an ambiguous role – neither wife nor daughter – within the family. Salvador now must recognize in Benigno a rival for Sol's affections, one whose age might normally relegate him to fatherly or avuncular status but who recognizes Sol as a potential partner and makes an offer of marriage to her.

To heighten the thematic importance of marriage and family, the historical backdrop is *Los apóstólicos* in 1829, the year Fernando VII marries María Cristina of Naples. Benigno takes Sol to a friend's home to watch from the balcony the arrival of the new queen, and Sol finds herself

unexpectedly in a group that includes Genara de Baraona.³⁰ While many watch the procession from the balcony, Don Benigno remains inside, discussing affairs of state and noting “las tristes noticias que habían llegado de la expedición americana, deshecha y rota en Tampico, con lo que parecía terminada nuestra dominación en aquel continente” [the sad news that had arrived about the American expedition, beaten and broken in Tampico, with which our domination of that continent appeared finished] (II 986). The reference to the Battle of Tampico, when a fleet of ships and Spanish troops were sent from Cuba in the summer of 1829 to attempt a reconquest of Mexico, stands in curious juxtaposition to the words of Genara, who states that she has received letters from Monsalud indicating that he plans to return to Madrid with the intent to wed. The scene tacitly links the final acceptance of colonial loss to Monsalud’s decision to settle down and begin a family. Sol, of course, assumes that Genara is Monsalud’s intended bride, which pushes her closer toward the likelihood of marriage to Cordero.

As Sol is considering the older man’s offer, she has no idea that Monsalud is back in Madrid, still under the name of Jaime Servet, working with Don Felicísimo Carnero – a firm supporter of Fernando VII and Juan Bragas de Pipaón’s future father-in-law – to gain access to the colonial-based inheritance left to him by his uncle.³¹ Ironically, Monsalud’s goals

³⁰ The apartment from which the party can watch the procession down the Calle Mayor belongs to Francisco Bringas, one of Benigno Cordero’s friends and a younger version of the Francisco Bringas who appears in Galdós’s later novel, *La de Bringas* (see Chapter Six for that novel’s engagement with questions of empire). Also notable is that the group gathering at the home of Bringas to watch the procession includes a number of other characters from Galdós’s previous fiction, including the Marques de Falfán de los Godos (who married Andrea Campos in *El Grande Oriente*), Presentación de Rumblar (witness to events depicted in *Cádiz*, from the first series and later Juan Bragas de Pipaón’s love interest in *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815*), and Doña Salomé de Porreño (the last in the line of the Porreño family from *La fontana de oro*). All of these characters have been used in Galdós’s various narrative explorations of the impact of Spanish empire on metropolitan citizens. The fact that the author brings them all together in this particular moment speaks to how the subtle references to empire become linked in bringing the narrative of imperial loss to its conclusion.

³¹ There is a certain irony in the fact that Monsalud’s financial future will be assured because of the transfer of monies from his uncle’s activities in Sonora, Mexico. Don Felicísimo, as the one person who can facilitate the transfer, points to the former connections between absolutist, imperial Spain and its colonies even as the transfer itself implies a break between those connections. It is also worth remembering that the wealth of the Navarros had colonial origins. The series

have never been clearer. In a conversation with Don Felicísimo, Salvador describes his current state of mind and his assessment of the Spanish state of the union in unequivocal terms: “La realidad me ha ido desencantando poco a poco y llenándome de hastío, del cual nace este mi aborrecimiento de la política, y el propósito firme de huir de ella en lo que me quedare de vida” [Reality has gradually disillusioned me and has filled me with boredom, from which my abhorrence of politics is born and my firm intention to avoid it during whatever time I have left to live] (II 1066). He adds:

La civilización ha sido en otras épocas conquista, privilegios, conventos, fueros, obediencia ciega, y España ha marchado con ella en lugar eminente; hoy la civilización tan constante en la mudanza de sus medios como en la fijeza de sus fines, es trabajo, industria, investigación, igualdad, derechos, y no hay más remedio que seguir adelante con ella, bien a la cabeza, bien a la cola. (II 1067)

[In other times, civilization has been conquest, privileges, convents, codes, blind obedience, and Spain has marched with it in an eminent place; today civilization, as constant in its changing means as in the fixity of its ends, is work, industry, research, equality, rights, and there is no choice but to move forward with it, be it at the head or at the tail.]

Monsalud’s goal now, he says, “tener una familia y vivir de los afectos puros, humildes, domésticos” [to have a family and to live with pure, humble, domestic feelings] (II 1068). It is important to distinguish Monsalud’s disillusionment with politics and political conspiracies from his decision to turn his attention to the benefits of family. The metaphorical schisms between absolutism and liberalism, described in the series through the enmity between brothers, are not posited as permanent aspects of familial life but rather as aberrations. It is through the establishment of family that Monsalud hopes to transcend the strife that has marked his life for so long.

When Monsalud finally finds Sol living on Cordero’s small country home outside of Madrid, his proposal comes too late; she has already accepted the older man’s proposal. Adding to the pathos of the moment, Sol gives Salvador a letter, written by his mother shortly before her death. In it, Doña Fermina expresses her hope that Sol will become his wife. His hopes crushed, Monsalud leaves, and Sol, also heartbroken, hides her own grief in her duty to the Cordero household. Given the trajectory of Monsalud’s

presents a curious financial commentary on post-colonial Spain as a country whose economic future is fundamentally predicated on its imperial past.

life and his various love affairs, it is clear to readers that this is not the way this relationship is meant to end. The series has invested considerable energy in leading Salvador and Sol to an appropriate romantic conclusion, and it will require the intervention of Benigno Cordero and a reconfiguration of his relationship to the young pair to fulfill readers' narrative expectations by the end of the series.

This process begins when Cordero is obliged to travel to La Granja in his efforts to get a signature that will clear the way for him to remarry. By chance he meets up with Monsalud, who also has business with the court, and when the topic of Cordero's expected marriage is raised Monsalud's effusive praise for Sol awakens the older man's suspicions that her former protector might still entertain feelings for her. The two engage in a conversation about the nation's future. Fernando VII's health is rapidly deteriorating and it appears that the king's brother Carlos will assume the throne and continue the absolutist policies of his older brother. Given their liberal politics, the two discuss their respective futures. Monsalud asks Benigno if he is considering leaving Spain, to which Cordero replies: "Emigrar no, porque no me mezclo en política. Viviré retirado de estos trapicheos dejándoles que destrocen a su antojo lo que todavía se llama España, y con ellos se llamará como Dios quiera. Un padre de familia no debe comprometerse en aventuras peligrosas" [Leave Spain, no, because I don't get mixed up in politics. I'll live apart from all this skullduggery, letting them willfully destroy what is still called Spain, and with them it will be as God wishes. A family man should not engage in dangerous adventures] (II 1097). Don Benigno expresses exactly the same domestic philosophy that Monsalud had earlier articulated to don Felicísimo. But, without the possibility of marriage to Sol, Salvador has little opportunity now to realize that goal. When Benigno asks Monsalud about his own future, the response surprises the older man, but should not surprise the reader, to whom the narrative has carefully signaled the critical importance of family in any chance Monsalud might have to find happiness.

Yo no soy padre de familia ni cosa que lo valga – dijo el otro dejando traslucir claramente una pena muy viva –. No tengo a nadie en el mundo. No hay casa, ni hogar, ni rincón que tengan un poco de calor para mí; soy tan extranjero aquí como en Francia; soy esclavo de la tristeza; no tengo en derredor mío ningún elemento de vida pacífica; la última ilusión la perdí radicalmente; vivo en el vacío; no tengo, pues, otro remedio, si he de seguir existiendo, que lanzarme otra vez a las aventuras desconocidas, a los caminos peligrosos de la idea política, cuyo término se ignora. (II 1097)

["I'm not the head of a household or anything else worthwhile," he responded with clear sorrow. "I have no one in this world. There is no house, no home, no corner with any warmth. I am as much a foreigner here as in France; I am a slave to sadness; around me there is no peace; I radically lost my last hope; I live in emptiness; I have no other choice, if I want to continue living, than to throw myself once again into unknown adventures, on the dangerous paths of the political idea whose fate is unknown."]

Monsalud's youthful energy, which might otherwise be devoted to caring for a family, has few outlets other than becoming involved, once again, in politics: "hoy que la vida doméstica me es negada por Dios, quisiera tener medios de revolver a España, y amotinar gente, y hacer que todo el mundo se rebelara" [now that God has denied me a domestic life, I would like to have the means to stir Spain up, to get folks to mutiny, and make the whole world rebel] (II 1098). Galdós concludes the penultimate novel of the series with the domestic peace Salvador so longs for hanging in the balance.

The final novel of the series, *Un faccioso más y algunos frailes menos*, begins by relating that Cordero, in a chance accident, has broken his leg, and is unable to return to Madrid. Monsalud is loath to leave his old friend without support and, as his leg heals, Cordero engages in long conversations with the younger man. He reveals his concerns about what might happen to Sol if he were to die unexpectedly, and Monsalud immediately states that he would, in such circumstances, marry her himself. His admission clarifies for Cordero the true nature of Monsalud's feelings, which causes him to rethink his own course of action. When his leg has healed and he returns to his ranch Cordero carefully and gently presses Sol, who ultimately confesses her love for Monsalud. The emotional revelations of both Salvador and Sol are mediated by the figure of Benigno Cordero, who now must take on a very different role in the novel.

Cordero's feelings for Sol shift and become those of a father toward a daughter. He announces "Pues yo quiero hacer de usted una hija ... Ya no somos novios, hijita" [I want to make you a daughter ... We are no longer an engaged couple, my little one] (II 1179). In expressing his change of heart to Sol he reveals that he has already reached out to Monsalud, tested him in extended conversations to assure himself that the younger man is truly worthy of such a wonderful wife, and that he plans to take Sol into the city so that she and Salvador can at last be married. This sudden change signals a corrective in the domestic romance between Sol and Salvador, but the happy ending to their story experiences one more significant delay. When Sol and Benigno arrive in Madrid, they discover that Salvador has

gone in search of his half-brother, Carlos Navarro, and it becomes clear the journey might take many months. Monsalud is compelled to try to heal the familial breach as part of his acceptance of the importance of family over questions of ideology. Cordero conceives of a way to remedy this situation, but the nature of his plan remains unexplained to readers for several chapters. Once revealed, Cordero's solution to the problem of an absent bridegroom points to the narrative's continued engagement with the concept of the Freudian family romance. Near the end of the novel readers are told that Sol is a married woman and, for a moment, it appears that Cordero has married the young woman after all. But then the novel reveals that his role has simply been as a stand-in for the intended groom: "Me he casado por otro ... Soy un marido de fórmula, un marido de procedimientos, y tengo que ocuparme del marido más de lo que yo quisiera" [I have married in the place of another ... I am a symbolic husband, a husband by legal proceedings, and I have to take on the role more than I would like] (II 1227). In this curious situation, Cordero upends the classic framework of the family romance by placing himself in the role of the groom, substituting for Salvador until the younger man can return.³² He remains a father figure, and in an important way he becomes the father that Salvador lost in the very first novel of the series. But, more to the point, Salvador must take Cordero's place and begin the work of a new generation. In the final pages of the tenth volume Monsalud returns home in the middle of the night, and the moment of reunion for the bride and groom is described in intimate and private terms, as Salvador gently opens Sol's bedroom door and says simply, "Soy yo" [It's me] (II 1244). The narrative jumps to the following morning, when Cordero arrives at Monsalud's home and hears the news. Salvador exits the bedroom to receive the well wishes of the man whom he has replaced. The quiet way in which Salvador Monsalud's long journey is finally brought to its close underscores the fact that the choice of the local and domestic, combined with the renunciation of political conspiracies and grand gestures, reflects an undeniable diminishment. But it is one that is necessary and, ultimately, gladly accepted.³³

³² The text indicates that Monsalud's written agreement to allow the marriage by proxy carries the date of April 15, 1834, just days after the Royal Statute of 1834, thus linking the marriage of the series' protagonist to the legal steps that would establish both male suffrage (albeit limited) and a pathway toward a constitutional monarchy.

³³ As one critic has noted, "Su matrimonio con Soledad ... ocurre sin ceremonias, casi como un anticlimax" [His marriage to Soledad ... occurs without ceremony, almost as an anti-climax] (Navascúes, "Liberales" 504).

From the perspective of the family romance, Salvador is able to establish himself as husband, and his marriage implies that he will become a father very much in the mold of Benigno Cordero. The references to Spain's colonial territories, to the possibilities of emigrating, and to the country's imperial past essentially disappear from the narrative, as the focus turns, inexorably, to the nation instead of empire. Soledad's appropriateness as a life partner is linked to her ability to transcend the absolutist/liberal theme so often associated with the second series, her consistency in responding to events with feeling rather than ideology, and her willingness to limit her sphere to the local and familial.³⁴ From the start, Sol has recognized the essential need to accept the experience of diminishment, of a limited sphere of activity, and this is key to the series' foundational fiction. For many critics, Sol is the ideal representative of the *ángel del hogar* [angel of the hearth], the a female character whose gender serves to restrict her agency beyond being mother and wife, and this is a legitimate criticism of the series' representation of women.³⁵ But from the perspective of the new metropolitan foundational fiction, Sol signals a turn away from Spain's imperial past and toward what the nation might become in a post-colonial environment. As Joaquín Casalduero has noted, Sol is nothing less than "el símbolo de la España futura" [the symbol of the future Spain] (*Vida y obra* 52–53). By virtue of her domesticity and her focus on the family, she becomes the appropriate partner in the domestic romance that must, by necessity, be the foundation for a new post-colonial Spain.³⁶ Without

³⁴ Monsalud tells her, "Tú tienes resignación para soportar las contrariedades" [You have the resignation to accept setbacks] (II 545).

³⁵ As Brian Dendle has noted, Sol Gil de la Cuadra "does not rebel against society but rather accepts her dependence on others," indicating that in this regard she is depicted as "childlike" in the series (*The Early Historical Novels* 106). Montesinos also acknowledges that she is one of those female characters that are "humildes, sumisas, calladas, capaces de los mayores sacrificios" and "encarnan el tipo de la perfecta ama de casa" [humble, submissive, quiet, capable of the greatest sacrifices ... they are the incarnation of the perfect housewife] (147).

³⁶ Though critics have acknowledged Sol's conformity with the expectations of the *ángel del hogar*, they still recognize that those same qualities make her a highly positive character. Dendle, for example, notes that "she is nonetheless of greater emotional fortitude than the compulsive Monsalud," adding that she "represents an exemplary type of Spanish womanhood" (*The Early Historical Novels* 106, 120). Hinterhäuser describes her character as one of "una nobleza casi inmaculada" (188). Despite Sol's stereotypical character traits, Montesinos admits that "La presencia de Solita da su encanto a muchas páginas" (I 147), adding that "Soledad será el galardón con que la providencia recompense la renuncia del aventurero"

question Galdós's idealized end involves a particularly gendered concept of nation, and in this regard it is useful to return once again to the work of Anne McClintock. In positing the concept of "nation time," in which "national history is imaged as naturally teleological, an organic process of upward growth," McClintock emphasizes that "it is also domesticated," adding, "Social evolutionism and anthropology gave to national politics a concept of natural time as familial" (*Imperial Leather* 358–59). Galdós's narrative processing of colonial loss, undertaken in the 1870s, is undeniably underway, but it remains incomplete.

In the final paragraphs of the second series, for example, Cordero and Monsalud debate the future of Spain after Fernando VII, under the rule of the young queen Isabel II. Despite Cordero's innocent enthusiasm for a positive change, Monsalud's own experience leads him to be more pessimistic about the nation's future. He notes, "Los días mejores ... están tan lejos que seguramente ni usted ni yo los veremos" [Better days ... are so far in the future that neither you nor I will see them] (II 1245). From his start as a rash young member of the royal guard to his activities as an émigré and conspirator against Fernando VII, and eventually to his decision to devote himself to the responsibilities of a good husband and father, Monsalud's journey outlines a path toward the establishment of a new kind of national identity, and as such it constitutes a decidedly metropolitan foundational fiction. The colonial past is not quite forgotten, given that it forms the basis of the financial security that will allow him to prioritize his family. But the lesson the second series teaches its readers is that the future of the country will not be determined by quick solutions to political differences. As Monsalud says at the series conclusion, "La reforma es lenta, porque el mal es grave y profundo, y solo se ha de curar trabajándose a sí mismo" [Reform is slow, because the sickness is serious and deep, and it can only be cured by working itself out] (II 1245). The nation's problems will have to be slowly resolved by Spaniards themselves, applying themselves to the daily and ongoing work that will eventually lead to "las hermosas novedades de la España de nuestros nietos" [the beautiful innovations of the Spain of our grandchildren] (II 1245). Salvador does not refer to a return to Spain's former greatness but rather a nation that is defined by what is new. He concludes his comments by focusing once again on the importance of "felicidad doméstica" [domestic happiness], convinced that it allows him to manage his frustrations with the politics of his time even as he hopes for a better future for Spain (II 1245).

[Soledad will be the reward with which providence rewards the adventurer's resignation] (148).

Salvador's comments bring the foundational fiction of the second series to its logical conclusion. *Un faccioso más y unos frailes menos* contains one short, final chapter in which the narrator directly addresses the reader and comments on the historical chronicle that the 20 volumes of *Episodios nacionales* present. It begins with the simple phrase, "Basta ya" [Enough already] (II 1245), and notes for the reader that it is time to bring this impressive narrative of Spanish history – from 1805 to 1834 – to a close. The nearly half-century that separates the end of Monsalud's story in 1834 and the 1879 date of composition of the last volume is, the narrator maintains, not enough time to provide an objective distance from any subsequent events: "Los años que siguen al 34 están demasiado cerca, nos tocan, nos codean, se familiarizan con nosotros" [The years that follow 1834 are too close; they touch us, rub elbows with us, are too familiar to us] (II 1245). Unquestionably these historical novels brought Galdós to the attention of the reading public and established his reputation as a writer. For that reason, stepping away from historical fiction was an interesting personal choice. For Montesinos, the decision to bring this "colosal empresa" [colossal enterprise] to a close was due primarily to the difficulty of combining fictional plots within a defined chronicle of history: "Galdós, simplemente, estaba harto de coordinar creación y datos, de hacer alternar personajes históricos con otros de su invención y animarlos a todos a una misma vida" [Galdós was simply fed up with coordinating fact and fiction, of alternating historical characters with others of his own invention, and bringing them all to life] (I 171). One could argue that the fixed framework of history required Galdós to embed his interpretation of that history through the use of allegory and, accordingly, that the decision to shift to realist fiction allows the author to use his fictional characters in a different way. The narrator seems to support such a view, indicating that he plans to use the "tipos contemporáneos" [contemporary types] that he has created in these texts as characters for a different kind of narrative. In fact, the final chapter in the tenth novel of the second series is nothing more than Galdós's announcement that he now intends to turn his attention to fictional narratives that describe contemporary Spanish society. Thus begins the series of novels that will become defined by critics as Galdós's *novelas contemporáneas*. As Chapter 6 will show, references to Spanish colonialism will no longer focus on imagined returns to imperial greatness. Instead, the author's exploration of the lives of its metropolitan citizens will include references to the realities of Spain's decades of "second empire," with the focus on the ways in which the remaining colonial territories in the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba enter into the lives and the consciousness of the children of Spaniards such as Benigno Cordero and

Salvador Monsalud, as the ascendant middle class that will define Spain's future in the twentieth century. Galdós, having charted a pathway forward for the nation's citizens by encouraging his readers to abandon notions of empire and replace them with a national identity that focuses on family, can now begin to tell those stories.

Part III:
The Remnants of Empire

CHAPTER 6

The New Normal in Colonial Relations

The preceding chapters have argued that Galdós's earliest novels and the first two series of *Episodios nacionales* contain plot elements and characters that allowed the author and his nineteenth-century readers to engage with both the historical reality and the psychological trauma arising from Spain's loss of empire in the early nineteenth century. This final chapter focuses on the development of the theme of Spanish imperialism in a selection of Galdós's subsequent works, first within the author's thesis novels and realist novels of the 1880s and 1890s, and then in the later series of *Episodios nacionales* that he felt compelled to return to in 1898, when Spain experienced the second and conclusive blow to its status as an imperial power. The nature of Galdós's engagement with issues of empire during these two subsequent periods of his creative production reflect both the historical reality of imperial decline in the late nineteenth century and the emotional trauma surrounding the Spanish–American War of 1898, the event that marks the second instance of the Spanish empire's double wound.¹ The goal of this chapter is to highlight specific points in the arc of the author's thinking about the nature of Spanish imperialism for a nation moving inexorably toward a post-colonial reality. Specifically, I will show that Galdós's realist fiction of the 1880s and 1890s normalizes ongoing relations between Spain and its remaining and former colonies, depicting them as an accepted and peripheral part of metropolitan daily life, a state of affairs that involved moving beyond the trauma of the first imperial wound. In these novels, Galdós's critique of middle-class hypocrisy and self-interest extends to his observations about the metropolis and its attitude toward colonial subjects.

¹ See Chapter 1's discussion, on pp. 45–47, of Cathy Caruth's concept of the "double wound" as a necessary component of the experience of trauma.

Accordingly, the author moves away from the allegorical approach undertaken in his earliest works. Having advised his readers, through the allegory of the early *Episodios*, to properly recognize the loss of empire rather than to long for its return, and to focus instead on addressing the problems of the nation, Galdós is prepared to produce a new set of narratives that participate in that process. The message that Galdós gives to his readers at the end of second series – indicating the limitation of historical narrative and the creative license provided by realist fiction – signals this important shift in approach. Given the freedom to create portraits of Spanish society populated with fictional characters, Galdós no longer needs to have recourse to allegory. His engagement with aspects of Spain’s colonial history are more transparent, more focused on the reality of his characters’ individual psychology as well as their specific circumstances in late nineteenth-century Spain.

Yet the writing produced after 1898, however, reveals a return to the author’s interest in allegorizing the subject of empire. Not surprisingly, this is the moment in which he returns to historical fiction, writing the 26 novels that constitute the third, fourth, and fifth series of *Episodios nacionales*. We will see that he begins to portray Spain as a nation that might itself lay claim, in varying ways, to the status of being colonized by its former colonies. Clearly the loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines to the United States in 1898 provided the traumatic impetus for the author to return to the specific genre of the historical novel, thus validating the claim that Galdós’s monumental project of chronicling nineteenth-century Spanish history demonstrates, at its core, an attempt to exorcise the ghost of empire.² Yet equally important in his later works is the reintroduction of elements of the fantastic, not seen since *La sombra*, that seem to help the author himself process what was, undeniably, a final blow to Spain’s empire.

² Certainly the author’s financial difficulties, documented in Jean-François Botrel’s “Sobre la condición del escritor en España: Galdós y la casa Editorial Perlado, Páez y Ca., Sucesores de Hernando (1904–1920)” (*Letras de Deusto* 4:8 (1974)) and H. Chanon Berkowitz’s biography of the author, *Pérez Galdós. Spanish Liberal Crusader* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1948), played a role in the decision to return to a genre that had provided him with his first flush of financial success, yet the timing of the decision, at the height of international tensions between the United States and Spain over Cuba, make the connections to Spanish imperialism undeniable.

Late Nineteenth-century Portraits of Empire

It is important to remember that Galdós began his transition from historical novels to realist fiction even as he was completing the second series of *Episodios nacionales*. This new phase of creative production was made possible largely because of the economic success of his historical fiction. The early *Episodios* established Galdós as one of the premier novelists of his age.³ Equally important, these texts, by encouraging readers to think about a national identity apart from Spain's imperial past, allowed the author to focus his attention on contemporary Spanish society. The early historical novels participated in what José Álvarez Junco has called a "proceso nacionalizador," one that encouraged the Spanish people to move beyond a preoccupation with empire in order to be forward-looking in the process of defining national identity in the present (571). The stories of Gabriel Araceli and Salvador Monsalud served as necessary moral examples that stressed the strengthening of fundamental ties of hearth and home. Galdós's call for a recommitment to domestic health, to the building of families, and, by extension, the development of a strong and healthy society, as part of his new foundational fictions for the nation, encouraged readers to shift toward an acceptance of the fact that the nation occupied a new position on the global stage.

When Galdós made the decision to abandon the genre of the historical novel, he was able to produce portraits of the nation based on his own powers of observation and his shrewd insights into human nature. In his concluding remarks at the end of the second series, Galdós indicated his intention to use the fictional characters he had created in a different literary setting: "Pero los personajes novelescos, que han quedado vivos en esta dilatadísima jornada, los guardo, como legítima pertenencia mía, y los conservaré para casta de tipos contemporáneos, como verá el lector que no me abandone al abandonar yo para siempre y con entera resolución el llamado género histórico" [But the fictional characters, who have remained alive in this extended journey, I will keep as legitimately mine for a cast of contemporary types, as those readers who stick with me will see, even as I leave behind firmly and forever the genre called the historical novel]

³ In the late 1870s and early 1880s Galdós wrote letters on private stationery that identified him as the author of the *Episodios nacionales*. The financial success of those early historical novels was significant, allowing Galdós to support himself entirely from his fiction writing, an accomplishment no other nineteenth-century author could claim. Every other major author of the nineteenth century was obliged to engage in other careers to make a living.

(II 1246). His novels, he insists, will focus more on the fictional characters who had, until then, been obliged to develop through their connections to a history that was always already fixed in its outcome. The decision to turn to portraits of contemporary society, on the other hand, would provide the author with the chance to interpret his own historical moment with much greater freedom and allow his readers to use those same portraits as a way to think about the nation's future.

The extensive details of everyday life that characterize Benito Pérez Galdós's fiction in the 1880s and 1890s provide us with rich sources of information about Spanish society. But the author's focus on contemporary Spain and its potential future did not mean that the nation's colonial legacy was absent from his fiction. Evidence of Spain's imperial history, through references to both former colonies and current ones, are abundantly evident in his novels, though they often remain at the level of secondary characters and subplots. This fact is certainly a reflection of the "dreadful secondariness" that Edward Said identifies as the permanent position of the colonized ("Representing the Colonized" 207). The frequency of and the similarities between the references in so many novels indicate that Galdós had a particular perspective that he wished to share with his readers. That said, given the extensive number of Galdós's works published in the two decades of the nineteenth century, it will be impossible to address the colonial connections present in all of them. Instead, this chapter will explore particular ways in which the author represents the historical realities of Spain's imperial status through an analysis of key works. One advantage to this selective approach is the ability to reference the growing body of scholarly work on exactly this component of the author's mature fiction. In recent years, a small but impressive cluster of scholars has begun the process of mining Galdós's realist fiction as a source of information about the definitive end of the Spanish empire.⁴ I begin my analysis by examining Galdós's perspective

⁴ Ángel del Río's 1961 article "Notas sobre el tema de América en Galdós" (*Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 15:1–2 (1961)) is quite likely the first to engage with the topic, and it provides a cursory overview of a number of references in the author's realist novels, many of which I will expand upon in this chapter. But it is only in recent years that scholars have begun to look at the author's mature work from the framework of postcolonial studies, something that del Río could not have done so early on. See, for example, *Empire's End: Transnational Connections in the Hispanic World* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt UP, 2016) and *Unsettling Colonialism. Gender and Race in the Nineteenth-Century Global Hispanic World* (Albany, NY: State U of New York P, 2019).

on contemporary colonial relations in several of the *novelas de la primera época*, and I then turn to the *novelas contemporáneas*, generally considered his finest creations of realist fiction, as works that present a set of patterns that capture the various ways in which the metropolis remained connected to the colonies. If we accept that Galdós's realist fiction faithfully depicts the day-to-day lives of Spaniards in the metropolis, the fact that there are so many references to empire and the colonies must lead us to conclude that Spaniards engaged with the nation's imperial history almost daily, through their relationships with Spaniards traveling to and from the Americas and through commerce with its former colonies and with those territories that constituted its extant, though diminished, global empire, specifically Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. For the most part, these references remain subsidiary to the author's exploration of national issues such as religious intolerance, the growth of the middle class, the status of women, and the rise of urban consumer culture. Nonetheless, the steady drumbeat of colonial references in Galdós's fiction reveals that Spain's colonial legacy continued to be a part of everyday life in the metropolis.

As Galdós was bringing the second series to a close, he had already begun to turn his attention to contemporary settings for his fiction. *Doña Perfecta* (1876), *Gloria* (1876–77), *Marianela* (1878), and *La familia de León Roch* (1878), Galdós's *novelas de primera época* [first novels] or *novelas de tesis* [thesis novels], are realist novels that focus on such issues as religious intolerance and the social conflicts that result when traditions of the past clash with political liberalism and modern scientific advances. These novels constitute a transitional stage in the author's literary production that eventually prepared Galdós for the creation of the novels that continue to attract the bulk of scholarly attention today.

As transitional texts, these *novelas de tesis*, despite their strong focus on contemporary metropolitan Spanish society, share some aspects of the foundational framework seen in the early *Episodios nacionales*. Specifically, they tend to engage with the trope of marriage and family. But, while Gabriel Araceli and Salvador Monsalud find happiness in marriage, these transitional texts present a series of stories in which the protagonists are unable to fulfill the promise of marriage. One need only think of Pepe Rey's death and Rosario's descent into madness in *Doña Perfecta*, the failed romance between Gloria and Daniel Morton in *Gloria*, the heartbreak and death of Marianela in the eponymous novel when Pablo becomes engaged to marry Florentina, or the tragic *denouement* in *La familia de León Roch*, when León Roch realizes the impossibility of a future with the woman he loves. The protagonist's speech at the conclusion of that particular novel,

when he acknowledges his fate to be separated forever from his beloved, contains echoes that are evocative of Spain's post-colonial reality.

Quien no puede transformar el mundo y desarraigar sus errores, respételos. Quien no sabe dónde está el límite entre la ley y la iniquidad, aténgase a la ley con paciencia de esclavo. Quien sintiendo en su alma los gritos y el tumulto de una rebelión que parece legítima, no sabe, sin embargo, poner una organización mejor en el sitio de la organización que destruye, calle y sufra en silencio. (651)

[Whoever cannot transform the world and uproot their mistakes, respect them. Whoever does not know where the limit lies between law and injustice, stick to the law with the patience of a slave. He who feels in his soul the cries and tumult of rebellion that seems legitimate, but who does not know how to put a better organization in the place of one that destroys, say nothing and suffer in silence.]

These novels represent Galdós's first steps in the process of turning toward his own contemporary moment to focus on the problems of the metropolis as it continued the process of reimagining its identity in a new world order. Moreover, we see in these *novelas de tesis* initial references to late nineteenth-century Spain's connections with the colonies that eventually form perspectives that are reiterated throughout the author's later realist novels.⁵

For instance, in *Gloria* and *La familia de León Roch* we see for the first time in Galdós's fiction references to the figure of the *indiano*, a character that will reappear in several of Galdós's mature novels. The term refers to a Spaniard who has left the metropolis to seek his fortune in the colonies, almost always the Americas, and who has returned to Spain, generally as a member of a new and often vulgar class of *nouveau riche*. The *indiano* was a stock figure in earlier nineteenth-century Spanish literature, frequently

⁵ *Doña Perfecta*, Galdós's first thesis novel, written in 1876, is the only one of this group of novels without explicit references to Spain's colonial connections. One can only guess at why this would have been so. Perhaps the author, in turning his attention so clearly to a decision to portray contemporary Spain, as a nation no longer traumatized by colonial loss, made a conscious decision to focus solely on the metropolis. Perhaps the decision to place the action of the novel in a rural setting rather than an urban one limited the potential representation of the impact of colonial connections. It may simply have been that the binary frameworks for the conflict depicted in the novel (tradition/modernity; faith/lack of faith; superstition/science) simply did not allow for a conflict between the metropolis and the colonies.

depicted as ridiculous and almost always described in negative terms. In Galdós's novels the figure gains in complexity and serves less as a commentary on the individual and much more as a critique of metropolitan society.⁶ In *Gloria* the reference to the *indiano* is so brief as to be almost invisible, but on closer inspection it becomes quite evocative. The reference occurs near the end of the novel in a chapter entitled "La visión del hombre sobre las aguas." As Gloria lies moribund, she has a vision of her lover, Daniel Morton, walking on water with their child in his arms – a commentary on the novel's religious themes and the impossibility of their youthful hopes to form a family. While she is in the midst of this vision, her maid, Francesca, who has been charged with watching over her, is dreaming as well: "Francesca soñaba también, más soñaba cosas placenteras, a saber, que había venido su hermano de América, trayendo mucho dinero. Ambos eran ricos y felices" [Francisca was dreaming as well, but she was dreaming of pleasurable things, namely, that her brother had returned from America, bringing lots of money. Both of them were rich and happy] (672). The irony of this confluence of dreams, echoed in the chapter title, lies in the fact that both dreams represent examples of powerful yet impossible wish fulfillment. Moreover, as Francesca is dreaming, Gloria escapes from her room to search out Daniel and her child, and thus bring the novel to its tragic conclusion. The reference functions as a subtle reminder to readers of the hollow nature of the promises of imperial riches, and, as such, it emphasizes the impossibility of Gloria's dream as well. The reference in *La familia de León Roch* is no more promising, given that the figure of the *indiano* is Federico Cimarra, the ne'er-do-well husband of long-suffering Pepa Fúcar. Federico is sent to Cuba to avoid the consequences of his financial misdeeds in the metropolis, only to fall deeper into shady dealings in the colonies. As Pepa reveals to León Roch, with whom she was once in love, "lejos de enmendarse en La Habana, fue de mal en peor" [Far from changing his ways in Havana, he went from bad to worse] (313). News arrives in Spain that Cimarra has stolen money from his father-in-law and taken passage on a steamboat to California – "tierra propicia a los aventureros" [land conducive to adventurers] (355) – only to have the steamboat catch fire and sink, killing all on board. Pepa's newfound status as a widow allows her to rekindle her relationship with León, and the two fall deeply in love. The reports of Cimarra's death turn out to be false, and he reappears in Spain, just as León and Pepa have begun to imagine a life

⁶ See Luisa Elena Delgado's "El lugar del salvaje (Galdós y la representación del indiano)" (*Homenaje a Alfonso Armas Ayala*, Vol. 2 (Las Palmas: Excmo Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, 2000), 303–13).

together. Pepa's father threatens his son-in-law with public exposure of his crimes, eventually getting him to agree to leave Spain and to relinquish his authority over his wife and child. But Pepa's married status destroys León's hopes for the future, once again rendering domestic happiness unattainable. Despite their brief and oblique nature, Spain's colonial connections in these two works are presented negatively, in that they raise false hopes but ultimately bring about profound disappointment.

This perspective is explored once again in interesting ways in *Marianela*, which enjoyed great popularity.⁷ Traditionally, critics have read this work of Galdosian fiction as one that explores the philosophical concepts of beauty through an allegorical representation of Auguste Comte's positivism (Casalduero, *Vida y obra* 204–21; Montesinos I 238; Anderson, "Necessary Sacrifices" 907). The novel also raises interesting questions about the implications of scientific advances. *Marianela*, a young woman disfigured in a childhood accident, serves as a guide to a young blind man, Pablo Penáguilas, and the two have developed a strong bond of love. Pablo's father, however, intends that his son will marry his young and attractive cousin, Florentina. Teodoro Golfín, an ophthalmologist who has received advanced medical training in America, arrives in the village and is able to perform surgery and restore Pablo's sight. In Chapter XX, provocatively entitled "El nuevo mundo," the bandages are removed from Pablo's eyes and he is able to see the world for the first time. He sees Florentina and is struck by her physical beauty, seemingly forgetting his faithful friend, *Marianela*.

Prima mía, mi padre me ha leído aquel pasaje de nuestra Historia, cuando un hombre llamado Cristóbal Colón descubrió el Mundo Nuevo, jamás visto por hombre alguno de Europa. Aquel navegante abrió los ojos del mundo conocido para que viera otro más hermoso. No puedo figurármelo a él sino como a un Teodoro Golfín, y a la Europa como a un gran ciego para quien la América y sus maravillas fueron la luz. Yo también he descubierto un Nuevo Mundo. Tú eres mi América; tú eres aquella primera isla hermosa donde puso su pie el navegante. (207)

[My dear cousin, my father has read that passage in our history, when a man named Christopher Columbus discovered the New World, never seen by any European man. That navigator opened the eyes of

⁷ *Marianela* enjoyed sufficient popularity to have 13 editions published during Galdós's lifetime (Manuel Hernández Suárez, *Bibliografía de Galdós* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Ediciones del Excmo, Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, 1972), 65–68).

the known world so that it could see another more beautiful. I can not imagine him as anyone other than Teodoro Golfín, and Europe as anything other than a great blind man for whom America and its wonders were the light. I have also discovered a New World. You are my America; you are that first beautiful island where the navigator put his foot.]

This is an astonishing textual moment, describing the visual discovery of the physical world in terms of colonial conquest. In curious ways it dramatically erases all moral responsibilities of imperialism and reinforces the traditional gendered dynamics of empire. But the passage also points to the fact that this discovery could not have happened without Teodoro Golfín, whose medical expertise has been gained in America. Golfín himself describes his training and accumulated expertise using the language of empire. After setting his brother up in a good job, Teodoro says, “me marché a América. Yo había sido una especie de Colón, el Colón del trabajo, y una especie de Hernán Cortés; yo había descubierto en mí un nuevo mundo, y después de descubrirlo, lo había conquistado” [I left for America. I had been a kind of Columbus, the Columbus of work; and a kind of Hernán Cortés; I had discovered in myself a new world, and after discovering it, I had conquered it] (134–35). Here imperial conquest is described in unalloyed positive terms, as a metaphor for self-discovery as well as a determined decision to work toward success.

But neither Golfín’s acquisition of knowledge nor Pablo’s new-found visual experience of the physical world are unproblematic. For instance, by linking Teodoro Golfín’s acquisition of advanced scientific knowledge with the language of imperial conquest, the novel raises questions about the consequences of discovery. The medical expertise that restores Pablo’s sight also leads him to abandon Marianela, his faithful companion, for Florentina. Golfín is led to conclude that the miracle of Pablo’s vision has meant something else altogether for Marianela: “La realidad ha sido para él nueva vida; para ella ha sido dolor y asfixia, la humillación, la tristeza, el desaire, el dolor, los celos ..., ¡la muerte!” [Reality has been a new life for him; for her it has been pain and suffocation, humiliation, sadness, scorn, sorrow, jealousy ... death!] (226–27). Discovery, it seems, is never wholly positive. Brian Dendle was the first to notice that Galdós uses the metaphors of colonial conquest and discovery to make that point. Beyond the direct references already cited here, Dendle writes, for example, that the images in the beginning of the novel of the aging scaffolding of the zinc mines near the village appear to Golfín as weathered hulks of shipwrecked vessels, “una premonición de desastre” [a premonition of disaster] (“El

descubrimiento” 30). He also notes the curious inclusion of the date of Marianela’s death, October 12, which is the Spanish *Día de Colón* [Columbus Day]. Dendle concludes that by linking Pablo’s recovered sight as a result of medical advances to Marianela’s suffering and death, Galdós makes the point that “aun los más importantes progresos de la humanidad traen consigo consecuencias graves e imprevistas” [even the most important examples of progress in humanity bring with them grave and unforeseen consequences] (30).

These moments in Galdós’s *novelas de tesis* indicate that portraits of contemporary Spanish society at the end of the nineteenth century will almost inevitably reference the metropolis’s ongoing relationships with its former and present colonies. Moreover, while they are portrayed in the author’s narratives as natural and normal – as accepted aspects of late nineteenth-century Spanish society – they raise valid questions for us today about their value and the impact. This does not change when the author turns in the 1880s to his more sophisticated works of realist fiction, the *novelas contemporáneas*. Like the *novelas de tesis*, these works include a wide range of references to Spain’s colonial connections, and critics who have begun to explore them have recognized that by and large those references continue to emphasize metropolitan problems (Sinnigen, “Cuba en Galdós” 115; Cabrejas 398). But these works display certain patterns of engagement that move beyond strictly metropolitan problems and begin, in subtle ways, to comment on the moral and ethical implications of Spanish imperialism.

One can argue that Galdós’s novels in the last decades of the nineteenth century contain frequent references to empire because colonial connections were simply an undeniable part of Spanish society of the time. Galdós’s fiction from the 1880s focuses on issues such as middle-class morality, the social realities of women in nineteenth-century society, and the political and economic realities of the Bourbon Restoration. With the political stability of the Restoration and the rise of liberalism came the expectation that the nation would begin to address its problems. But when this potential for progress appears to have stalled, Galdós began to examine Spanish society with a more critical eye. Not surprisingly, colonial history is not ignored in this process. Galdós incorporates aspects of Spain’s connections with present and former colonies into his fiction and, as he does so, he offers a sharp perspective on what that connection means for Spain as a modern nation. As Lisa Surwillo has indicated, in the *novelas contemporáneas*, “Galdós depicts a metropolis fully at ease with empire but explicitly criticizes its policies” (*Monsters by Trade* 68). References to colonialism in Galdós’s novels published in the 1880s indicate that the author was keenly aware of the political, economic, and social links

between the colonies and the metropolis. The *novelas contemporáneas* from that decade present characters with colonial experience based on identifiable historical examples. For example, José María Manso, the *indiano* returning from Cuba with a Creole wife in *El amigo Manso*, echoes the life trajectory of Galdós's brother, Domingo (Ortíz-Armengol 103). The Madrid palace of the Marqués de Manzanedo, an *indiano* who by 1875 was unequivocally the richest man in Spain, likely served as the model for the ultra modern and luxurious home that Agustín Caballero builds for his bride in *Tormento* (Bahamonde y Cayuela 202, 216). Throughout most of the *novelas contemporáneas* Galdós depicts a relationship in which Spain clearly benefits from its continued colonial connections, but in a perverse and ultimately morally suspect fashion.

An early example can be found in *La desheredada*, published in 1881. While the central plot of the novel addresses the class aspirations of Isidora Rufete, the secondary characters of Melchor Relimpio and Joaquin Pez reveal a great deal about how Spaniards understood the role of empire in their daily lives. The attitudes toward the colonies are stereotypical in that Relimpio, Pez, and their respective families see the colonies, and in particular Cuba, in opportunistic terms, as sources of easy money and as places for solving the problems of the metropolis. In the first half of the novel, Melchor, the underachieving son of José Relimpio y Sastre, becomes involved in a scheme to sell rotting beans and rice to the government. When this plan becomes a scandal in the press and the public expects him to be sentenced to jail he is instead named, in a moment of Galdosian irony, “oficial primero de Aduanas en Cuba” [first customs officer in Cuba] (299). By means of this subplot, Galdós implies that Madrid's social parasites can be sent off to the colonies to make their negative effects less keenly felt by Spaniards at home. Readers later discover that Melchor remained in the position for a mere 20 days before he was dismissed and sent back to the mainland, a clear sign of the depth of his dishonesty and incompetence. The reference is a brief but significant commentary on the abysmal state of Spain's colonial administration. Later in the novel, Joaquín Pez, member of the famously greedy pisciform family that appears in various Galdosian texts, contemplates taking a job in the colonies to revive his financial situation. Like Melchor, he is destined for a position in customs, and he says, “Los españoles tenemos esa ventaja sobre los habitantes de otras naciones. ¿Qué país tiene una Jauja tal, una isla de Cuba para remediar los desastres de sus hijos?” [We Spanish have that advantage over the inhabitants of other nations. What country has such an Eden, an island like Cuba to remedy the disasters of its children?] (346). In another telling textual detail, the narrative reveals that Joaquín Pez has laid claim to a

title, the Marqués de Saldeoro [salt for gold],⁸ which obliquely evokes Spain's imperial past while at the same time providing an apt metaphor for the imbalance in trade and the poor return the colonies endured. These references show that the colonies, and Cuba in particular, offer the ephemeral hope of a quick and effortless fortune, even as they constitute “una válvula de escape” [an escape valve], a space where one can escape responsibility for actions at home (Sinnigen, *Sexo y política* 80). But Galdós certainly saw this type of relationship as deeply problematic. As the narrative voice in *La desheredada* notes, in reference to Melchor de Relimpio's stint as a customs officer in Cuba, “Parte decidido a concluir la insurrección, para lo cual no procede llevar tropas a Cuba, sino traerse Cuba a España. Habas contadas. Él se traerá, de seguro, las tres cuartas partes de la Isla, o las Antillas todas, dejando vacío al Mejicano Golfo” [The decision was made to bring the insurrection to an end, which does not mean sending troops to Cuba but rather bringing Cuba to Spain. No problem. He'll surely bring three fourths of the island, or the West Indies entirely, leaving the Gulf of Mexico empty] (299). With the grotesque figure of Melchor de Relimpio, Galdós signals not only that the metropolis threatens to extract whatever resources might exist in the colonies for itself but, even more pernicious, that the corruption visited upon the colonies will then manifest itself in metropolitan governance as well.

This stereotypical view of the colonies as a problematic source of wealth is developed in 1882 with the publication of *El amigo Manso*. In addition to being the author's closest fictional approximation to his own family's colonial connections, the novel stands out for its direct engagement with the subject of Spanish imperialism.⁹ It continues to present Cuba as a place where peninsular Spaniards go in search of wealth, echoing the themes in *La desheredada*. For instance, Lisa Surwillo points out that, in this novel,

⁸ Members of the upper middle class, particularly those that carried the favor of Queen Isabel II, were often granted titles, but these were symbolic and without links to the lineage of aristocratic families of previous centuries. In the case of Joaquín Pez, the title is deeply ironic.

⁹ Scholars in recent years have begun to define *El amigo Manso* as one of Galdós's most creative works dealing with Spanish imperialism. See, for example, Eva Copeland's exploration of the relationship between masculinity and empire (“Galdós's *El amigo Manso*: Masculinity, Respectability, and Bourgeois Culture,” *Romance Quarterly* 54:2 (2007): 109–23); Lisa Surwillo's *Monsters by Trade*, which addresses Spain's ongoing engagement in the transatlantic slave trade; and Dorota K. Heneghan's article “The *Indiano*'s Marriage and the Crisis of Imperial Modernity in Galdós' *El amigo Manso*” (*Siglo diecinueve* 22 (2016): 91–108) on the novel's portrayal of the relationship between Restoration Spain and Cuba.

“corrupt colonial administration generates an inescapable rapacity, which threatens to destroy the capital that ostensibly runs the empire” (*Monsters by Trade* 68). But this novel goes further in its representation of the impact of Spanish imperialism by alluding, in curious ways, to the possibility that Spain’s influence on its colonial subjects has been wholly negative, effectively condemning the imperial project in its entirety.

Key to the novel’s plot is the story of Máximo Manso’s brother, José María, who returns to Madrid a wealthy *indiano* with his Cuban-born wife, Lica, and members of her family. Máximo’s description of his brother’s wife and her sister, just arrived by train from Santander, is the beginning of a noticeable articulation of cultural difference: “Ambas representaban, a mi parecer, emblemáticamente, la flora de aquellos risueños países, el encanto de sus bosques, poblados de lindísimos pajarracos y de insectos vestidos de todos los colores del iris” [Both represented, in my opinion, emblematically, the flora of those smiling countries, the charm of the forests, populated by beautiful birds and insects dressed in all the colors of the rainbow] (60). This positive description initiates a start to Máximo’s education relative to Spanish colonialism. At first, Máximo’s imagining of natural beauty as an essential quality of Cuba and the Americas results from his response to the visual image of the colorful fashions worn by Lica and her sister. But the physical difference is also apparent in Máximo’s brother. For example, José María’s face is described as “de color de tabaco” [the color of tobacco] (60), setting him apart from his brother and, by extension, other Spaniards through the color of his skin. Curiously, the differences that Máximo sees in his brother and wife are not the same. While the response to his creole sister-in-law leans toward the positive, his view of his brother grows more negative. This difference, exacerbated by the plot structure, shows Máximo favoring the colonial other over the returning Spaniard.

The family’s first task is to change its image to fit Madrid society by purchasing the latest in available fashion, a physical transformation that is the first step toward social integration. Lica, along with her mother and sister, go on a shopping spree, and Máximo notes that “A los quince días, todos, desde mi hermano hasta el pequeñuelo, no parecían los mismos” [Within a fortnight, all of them, from my brother to the youngest child, no longer looked the same] (61). Notable, however, is the nature of that sartorial change. The women have to adjust to cinched waists and corsets, “prendas falsas” [deceptive garments], and products of “la industria en moldes, prensas y telares” [the industry of molds, presses, and looms] (61), all designed to transform their essential nature into something distinctly unnatural, a subtle commentary on the artificiality of life in the imperial capital. The family’s boisterous and single-minded intent on integrating

into Madrid life becomes a trial for the quiet and retiring Máximo, who eventually confesses, “Volví mis tristes ojos a la historia y no le perdonaba, no, a Cristobál Colón que hubiera descubierto el Nuevo Mundo” [I turned my sad eyes to history and did not forgive, no, Christopher Columbus, who had discovered the New World] (65).

Having achieved his goal of transforming his family’s appearance to meet societal demands, José María turns his attention to Spanish politics, using his wealth to become a *diputado* representing Cuba. He transforms his home into a lively salon, but Lica struggles to fit into the circle of *indianos* and their families that define their social life. The other returnees from Cuba look down upon her, and Máximo explains this by saying that “No veían su alma bondadosa, sino su rusticidad” [They didn’t see her kind soul but rather her rusticity] (76). Máximo attributes this to her rural Cuban upbringing.

El origen humildísimo, la educación mala y la permanencia de Lica en un pueblo agreste del interior de la isla no eran circunstancias favorables para hacer de ella una dama europea. Y no obstante estos perversos antecedentes, la excelente esposa de mi hermano, con el delicado instinto que completaba sus virtudes, iba entrando poco a poco en el nuevo sendero y adquiriría los disímulos, las delicadezas, las practicas sutiles y mañosas de la buena sociedad. (76)

[Lica’s humble origins, her poor education, and her life in a rural town in the island’s interior were not favorable circumstances for making her a European lady. And notwithstanding those unfortunate antecedents, my brother’s excellent wife, with the delicate instincts that completed her virtues, was gradually entering a new path and acquiring the craftiness, the tactfulness, and the subtle and cunning practices of good society.]

Máximo reveals a somewhat backhanded admiration for his sister-in-law in this description. Her humble origins, while described as unfortunate and not of her own making, stand in opposition to the posturing that occurs in the social circles in which she must now move. Her initial colorful beauty, as representative of an exotically other space, is consonant with her initial innocence. But she struggles to adapt, both in her clothing and her manners, to the pretentious milieu of the capital. In this process, she becomes a sympathetic character, one who is more honorable than her husband. Accordingly, Galdós begins to imbue the idea of colonial society as one with a moral value that is lacking in the metropolis. This description of Lica, for example, makes it clear that Máximo sees Madrid society as

fundamentally hypocritical. As Máximo understands the situation, part of Lica's social education in the Spanish capital requires her to overcome her natural goodness in order to acquire the manipulative talents of the society women with whom she is expected to interact. That Lica soon recognizes this new environment as unhealthy, eventually withdrawing from her husband's social life, serves to heighten Máximo's regard for her, even as it sends the message that the metropolis is a corrupting influence. At several points in *El amigo Manso*, Lica, her sister, and her mother profess a deep nostalgia for their former life in Cuba, as a place fundamentally different from Madrid. Lica complains of this new life "en que todo es forzarse una, fingir y ponerse en tormento para hacer todo a la moda de acá, y tener que olvidar las palabras cubanas para aprender otras, y aprender a saludar, a recibir, a mil tontadas y boberías" [in which everything is forced, to pretend and to make one's self suffer in order to conform to the fashion here, and to have to forget the Cuban words in order to learn others, and to learn to greet, to accept a thousand stupid comments and silly things] (142). Though he does not supply direct descriptions of life in Cuba, Galdós nonetheless represents it as fundamentally different, and more honest and positive, than life in the metropolis.

Unlike his wife, José María has no difficulty adjusting to Madrid society. But he is clearly presented in a negative light. He is revealed to be one more example of the stereotypical negative *indiano*, given his ostentation. His wealth, rather than his character, paves the way for him to succeed in the metropolis. José María displays a fundamental disregard of moral behavior by attempting to seduce Irene, his children's governess. Within the framework of marriage, José María Manso is both careless and destructive. Ultimately, Máximo has to threaten his brother with scandal in order to force him to end his pursuit of Irene, even as Lica remains a loyal wife. With this particular plot twist, Galdós does not imply that colonial experience itself has led to José María's immorality. Instead, by implicating other members of Madrid society in the plot to compromise Irene's virtue, Galdós indicates that the corruption of values has become part of the metropolis itself. The seeds of José María's immorality lie in the fact that he is truly a contemporary metropolitan subject. The story of Lica and José María remains secondary, but it does more than provide support for the novel's central plot. It also presents a model of how colonial experience relates to peninsular Spanish society. José María, having been born in Spain, adapts with greater ease to the corrupt and hypocritical social sphere of the nation's capital. Lica, as Cuban-born, is a different kind of Spanish citizen, one who must learn to abandon her social innocence. In other words, not all citizens of the empire are alike.

El amigo Manso represents an early attempt by Galdós to address directly the connections between peninsular society and colonial citizens. Máximo Manso's own problems adapting to a changing Spanish society indicate that the author was still ambivalent about the nature of these connections and their effects. Nonetheless, whereas the binary of self and other, metropolis and colony, has not been transcended, the author has managed to confuse the traditional moral values assigned to them. No longer does the metropolis exercise a civilizing influence on the colonial subject. Although Galdós employs a stereotype of the *indiano*, he complicates it with a positive image of the colonial other.¹⁰ In this sense, *El amigo Manso* does not legitimize the discourse of nation as empire but rather employs a representational strategy that questions its very morality.

It is clear that Galdós remained preoccupied with the contemporary nature of Spain's connections with its former and current colonial territories in his subsequent novels. In 1884, with the publication of *El doctor Centeno*, *Tormento*, and *La de Bringas*, three novels with interconnected plots, Galdós offers to his readers portraits of characters whose personalities are formed by colonial experience or are naturally conducive to what can only be described as an imperialist impulse. Importantly, these characters move up from a secondary status to become essential protagonists, and in this way Galdós makes a series of statements about the nation's ongoing relationship to the concept of empire.

El doctor Centeno, whose action is set in 1863, focuses on the character of Felipe Centeno, who first appeared as a secondary figure in *Marianela*. At the very end of that novel, Felipe leaves his village to pursue an education in medicine, with the hope that he, too, might follow in the footsteps of Teodoro Golfín. *El doctor Centeno* tells the story of Felipe's fortunes in

¹⁰ In her essay "Autochthonous Conflicts, Foreign Fictions: The Capital as Metaphor for the Nation" (*Spain Beyond Spain. Modernity, Literary History, and National Identity*, Brad Epps and Luis Fernández Cifuentes, eds (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 2005), 148–67), Elisa Martí-López refers to Luis Fernández Cifuentes's belief that the Madrid in Galdós's narratives "is both a space of identity and otherness and, consequently, that Galdós's representation of Madrid lacks the strategies of nation building" (159). While I don't disagree with Fernández Cifuentes's observation that Madrid in certain Galdosian texts is "both one's own and someone else's space" (cited in Martí-López 159), I believe that Galdós is still engaged powerfully with the process of nation-building in that his attempts to normalize Spain's imperial legacy within his portraits of metropolitan life ultimately create a metaphorical space in which national identity is, by necessity, still fluid. In this sense, *El amigo Manso* is a key text in Galdós's *oeuvre* because of its direct engagement with the effects of the metropolis on its colonial subjects.

Madrid and introduces Galdós's readers to characters who will reappear in *Tormento*, *La de Bringas*, and subsequent *novelas contemporáneas*, effectively building a framework of individuals who will populate the author's tales of life in the nation's capital. One of these characters is Pedro Polo, a priest whose essential nature might seem at odds with his religious vocation, if it were not for the fact that Galdós clearly links him to the Catholic roots of Spanish imperialism. The novel's introduction of Polo's history is unequivocal in this regard: "Don Pedro Polo y Cortés era de Medellín; por lo tanto, tenía con el conquistador de Méjico la doble conexión del apellido y de la cuna" [Don Pedro Polo y Cortés was from Medellín; therefore, he had the double connection with the conqueror of Mexico of both surname and birthplace] (1312). Young, handsome, and from humble birth, Polo is described as a force of nature and "progresistón" [very progressive] by members of his neighborhood (1306). The text indicates that he shares a set of personality traits that connect him with historical figures famous for their ability to dominate others.

También dice la chismosa Clío que el temperamento de Don Pedro Polo era sanguíneo, tirando a bilioso, de donde los conocedores del cuerpo humano podrían sacar razones bastantes para suponerle hostigado de grandes ansias y ambicioso y emprendedor, como lo fueron César, Napoleón y Cromwell. Sobre esto de los temperamentos hay mucho que hablar, por lo cual mejor será no decir nada. (1313)

[The gossipy Clío also says that don Pedro Polo's nature was hot-blooded, bordering on ill-tempered, from which the connoisseurs of the human body might draw sufficient reasons to suppose him to be plagued by great anxieties, and ambitious and enterprising, as were Caesar, Napoleon and Cromwell. About this kind of disposition there is much to talk about, so it would be better not to say anything.]

Pedro Polo is, in his essential nature, a conqueror, a character whose fundamental impulses are central to the imperial project. Galdós has created a profoundly anachronistic character who represents an aspect of the nation's past that no longer fits into the social framework of modern Spain. Unsurprisingly, he fails as a priest in the nation's capital. He is found guilty of an illicit sexual relationship with an innocent young woman, recently orphaned and placed under Polo's care, whose family name, Sánchez Emperador, only adds to the multiple levels of colonial commentary. As a result of this affair and his splenetic nature, Polo loses his position as chaplain and falls from grace by the end of *El doctor Centeno*. But his story continues in the second novel of the trilogy, *Tormento*, in such a way as

to indicate the conflictive nature of the imperial impulse and the indelible mark that colonial experience inevitably leaves on the metropolitan citizen.

With *Tormento*, Galdós places the issue of Spanish colonialism front and center. For the first time Galdós presents a protagonist whose life has largely been spent outside of Spain. Curiously, Agustín Caballero's 30 years away from the metropolis have been spent in Mexico and Texas, thus expanding the colonial references in the *novelas contemporáneas* beyond Cuba. Agustín is repeatedly described in the novel as "salvaje" (41, 61), and it is clear that he, like José María Manso, displays physical signs of the colonial experience.

El color de su rostro era malísimo: color de América, tinte de fiebre y fatiga en las ardientes humedades del golfo mejicano, la insignia o marca del apostolado colonizador que, con la vida y la salud de tantos nobles obreros, está labrando las potentes civilizaciones futuras del mundo hispanoamericano. (40)

[The color of his face was unhealthy, the color of America, the tinge of fever and fatigue in the hot humidity of the Mexican gulf, the badge or mark of the colonizing mission that, with the life and health of such noble workers, is shaping the future potent civilizations of the Hispano-american world.]

Again, true to the stereotype of the *indiano*, Agustín appears to have returned to Spain with considerable wealth. He is, as his servant says, "capitalista" (9), but he is more than a financier. Agustín actually feels the need to participate in the daily life of his society. He is clearly uncomfortable in the role of idle gentleman. When, for example, he discovers the disorganized state of a friend's business, he throws himself into the physical work of arranging the stockroom. His concern with practical order mirrors his belief in the need for a similar social order.

Like Lica, but unlike José María, Agustín experiences difficulty in fitting into Spanish society. His years in America have forever changed him physically and emotionally. As readers saw in Lica's case of *El amigo Manso*, this inability to reconnect is described in terms that cast Agustín in a positive light, allowing Galdós to criticize contemporary bourgeois Spanish society. Despite the negative description of his life as a speculator in Mexico and Texas, which included selling arms and supplies to the Confederate Army, Agustín is still described as having had a positive role in the economic development of the Americas and thus stands in sharp contrast to what happens in Madrid: "En verdad, aquel hombre, que había prestado a la civilización de América servicios positivos, si no brillantes, era

tosco y desmañado, y parecía muy fuera de lugar en una capital burocrática donde hay personas que han hecho brillantes carreras por saberse hacer el lazo de la corbata” [In truth, that man, who had provided positive, if not brilliant, services to the civilization of America, was unpolished and clumsy, and he seemed very out of place in a bureaucratic capital where there are individuals who have made brilliant careers out of knowing how to knot a necktie] (40).¹¹ Unlike the Manso family, Agustín does not attempt to change himself. At one point he claims, “Ya estoy viejo para reformas” [I’m too old to be reformed] (39), and he admits that life, and not the circumstances of his birth, has made him who he is.

A mí me han hecho como soy el trabajo, la soledad, la fiebre, la constancia, los descalabros, el miedo y el arrojito, el caballo y el libro mayor, la sierra de Monterrey, el río del Norte y la pútrida costa de Matamoros ... ¡Ay! Cuando se ha endurecido el carácter, como los huesos, cuando a uno se le ha pintado su historia en la cara, es imposible volver atrás. Yo soy así; la verdad, no tengo maldita gana de ser de otra manera. (42–43)

[Work, solitude, fever, persistence, setbacks, fear and courage, the horse and the ledger, the mountains of Monterrey, the Rio Grande, and the putrid coast of Matamoros have made me as I am ... Oh! When one’s character has hardened, like bones, when one’s history is painted on one’s face, it is impossible to go back. I am as I am; and truthfully, I don’t have the slightest desire to be any other way.]

Ironically, it is the hardships of his experiences in the Americas that have made him a better man. Through his repeated acts of kindness toward family and friends, his generous treatment of his employees, this particular *indiano* stands apart from the traditional stereotype. Agustín is a role model, albeit imperfect, and as such can be a possible catalyst for change and progress, if he could be reintegrated into metropolitan society.

Agustín Caballero, as his name implies, is presented as a sympathetic character. His fervent desire to find a wife, to settle down and raise a family evokes once again the domestic plots of foundational fiction. When he meets Amparo, an orphan who has been reduced to working as an unpaid servant to distant relations, the Bringas family, he immediately fixes

¹¹ The fact that Galdós completely elides the moral implications of Caballero’s support for the side of the American Civil War fighting for a continuation of slavery is a sign of the author’s failure to address a particularly repugnant aspect of Spanish imperialism.

upon her as an appropriate choice.¹² He is cast as the unwitting rival to Pedro Polo, which invests this plot with a remarkable colonial symmetry. Agustín's character, essentially thoughtful, generous, and kind, stands in sharp contrast to Polo's selfishness, impulsiveness, and desire to dominate. Amparo stands between the two, clearly in love with Agustín but only too aware that knowledge of her past, if revealed, will derail her marriage to him. Without the framework of Spanish imperialism, the relationship between Agustín, Amparo, and Polo might seem ambiguous, and critics have struggled to understand the love triangle, with some accusing Amparo of using first one and then the other of the two men for personal advantage and others interpreting her behavior more generously, as representative of a certain degree of innocence.¹³ But once one understands the imperial impulse in Pedro Polo and the effects of colonial experience on Agustín Caballero, Amparo appears as one more female character whose similarities to the figure of the *ángel del hogar* connect her to the narrative of postcolonialism and its insistence on domestic resolution.

Tormento presents a remarkable commentary on Spain's imperial past and present. For all intents and purposes, Pedro Polo is a figure from the nation's past; he struggles within the metropolis, given his will to control others and his insistence on a maximum degree of personal freedom. He

¹² Geoffrey Ribbons has noted that Amparo's father was Pedro Sánchez Emperador, and that Amparo, as his daughter, would not share that combination of surnames ("‘Amparando/Desamparando a Amparo:’ Some Reflections on *El doctor Centeno* and *Tormento*," *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 17:3 (1993): 495–524). The text repeatedly refers to her as "la hija de Sánchez Emperador," which has led critics to forget that her true name is Amparo Sánchez Calderón. What is most important, however, is that Galdós encourages his readers to think of her as part of a lineage with a linkage to empire, underscoring once again the connections between gender and empire in Galdós's representations of the nation's struggle to transcend colonial loss.

¹³ In a recent article Gareth Wood writes that critical analyses of the relationship between Amparo and Pedro Polo have evidenced strong differences of opinion, with critics such as Alicia Andreu, Peter Bly, Lou Charnon-Deutsch, Rodney Rodríguez, and Eamonn Rogers arguing that the young woman is opportunistic and callous in her treatment of the discredited priest, and others, such as Geoffrey Ribbons, Colin McKinney, and Diane Urey ("Repetition"), arguing in favor of a more generous interpretation of her behavior. By examining the galley proofs, Wood concludes that Galdós was deliberate in creating a complex and realistic portrait of a woman struggling to overcome "a shame that threatens to crush her" ("How to Interpret Galdós's *Tormento*? What the Galley Proofs Tell Us," *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 39:3 (2015): 714).

views himself as someone who “había nacido para domar salvajes, para mandar aventureros; quizás, quizás para conquistar un imperio, como su paisano Cortés” [had been born to tame savages, to command adventurers; perhaps, perhaps, to conquer an empire, like his compatriot Cortés] (112). His family, acknowledging that he is not fit for Madrid society, eventually arranges for him to leave Spain and serve the church in the Philippines. In Pedro Polo, Galdós presents a character who embodies Spain’s imperial past, a character whose extreme temperament cannot thrive in contemporary society but is better suited to dominate other civilizations perceived as underdeveloped in comparison to European nations. At one point in the novel, Amparo imagines Polo in this very role, reflecting a romantic notion of an exotic other:

Veía un hombre bárbaro navegando en veloz canoa con otros salvajes por un río de lejanas e inexploradas tierras, como las que traía en sus estampas el libro de *La vuelta al mundo*. Era un misionero que había ido a cristianizar cafres en aquellas tierras que están a la otra parte del mundo, redondo como una naranja, allá donde es de noche cuando aquí es de día. (194)

[She saw a barbarian sailing in a fast canoe with other savages along a river in distant and unexplored lands, like those that were pictured in the book, *Around the World*. He was a missionary who had gone to Christianize the brutes in those lands that are on the other side of the world, round like an orange, there where it is night when here it is day.]

Significantly, given that *Tormento* parodies the sentimental plots and character stereotypes of the popular *folletín* and consistently depicts Amparo as less than worldly, this image of a conquest whose goal is to civilize that exotic other can be read as a critique of imperialist motives (Sieburth, *Inventing* 105). But, equally as important, Amparo’s vision sets forth an imaginary construct that perceives colonialism as a form of direct engagement that ultimately threatens the European subject with absorption into the imagined other.

In contrast, Agustín’s practical experience in the colonies has endowed him with both wealth and wisdom, but he has also come to understand that the colonial environment is not conducive to his nature. In this regard, he represents a contemporary late nineteenth-century engagement with colonialism. This does not mean, however, that he can be integrated into metropolitan society. By the end of the novel Agustín discovers that he, like Pedro Polo, is unsuited for life in Spain. But his inability to integrate is quite different from that of his rival. The revelation of Amparo’s seduction

has made marriage to her a societal impossibility. Agustín, unable to deny his love for her, comes to understand that he cannot live up to his professed commitment to the three pillars of Spanish society: “familia, estado, religion” [family, state, religion] (288). He leaves Spain for Bordeaux, historically a haven for Spanish *indianos* in the late nineteenth century, taking Amparo with him as his unmarried partner. He rejects traditional societal rules in favor of circumstance and reality, telling himself: “Sal ahora por el ancho camino de tu instinto, y encomiéndate al Dios libre y grande de las circunstancias. No te fíes de la majestad convencional de los principios, y arrodíllate delante del resplandeciente altar de los hechos ...” [Step off now from the wide path of your instinct and commend yourself to the great and free God of circumstances. Do not trust the conventional majesty of principles, and kneel before the shining altar of deeds ...] (300). In contrast to Polo’s future in service to a Catholic God, Agustín bows instead to practical realities and his own emotional needs. He has learned that practical concerns trump ideology, especially when personal happiness is at stake.

While *Tormento* is a biting criticism of Isabelline society, the novel is also a turning point in Galdós’s understanding of colonial experience and its place in Spanish society. No longer simply destinations for profligate sons in need of easy fortune, the former and present colonies are clearly described as places that are truly other, distinct from Spain. The novel implies that returnees from the colonies cannot successfully reintegrate into Spanish society because the metropolis is corrupt and impervious to change. Those with colonial experience are forced to construct a world for themselves, where behavior depends on individual needs and moral judgments are more carefully meted out. According to one critic, “The novel invites us to imagine a better world and a better ending [...] in which the burden of the past [...] does not weigh upon the future, in which an ideal society can be sketched on a blank slate” (Amann 475–76). The novel also presents the conflicted character of Pedro Polo, which raises the nagging concern that perhaps there is some element of human nature, perhaps an element of essentialized Spanish character, that remains connected to imperial impulses. The hope, *Tormento* implies, is that individuals might find their corresponding niche in the world. Whether that niche can be contemporary Spain, however, remains in doubt.

In subsequent novels, Galdós continues to engage with the consequences of Spain’s imperial legacy, underscoring just how ubiquitous the references of the relations between metropolis and colonies remain even as late as the 1880s in Spain. *Lo prohibido*, for example, continues the development of the author’s examination of the Spanish bourgeoisie. The novel sharpens

the critique of metropolitan practices with respect to the nation's remaining colonies and is one of a select few of Galdós's novels that addresses Spain's complex relationship with nineteenth-century slavery. As Lisa Surwillo has noted, this 1884–85 novel is the site where “the tension between pride and unease over colonial practices in Cuba and late nineteenth-century Spanish life is perhaps most subtly depicted” (*Monsters by Trade* 86). Most of the contemporary criticism of *Lo prohibido* has focused on consumerism, particularly from the perspective of the unchecked spending of bourgeois women.¹⁴ Surwillo's analysis moves this reading into deeper territory, linking that economic focus to the practices of colonialism and demonstrating how the novel's description of a “spendthrift society” is able to exist only because of “*negrero* money, the slave trade, and sugar” (*Monsters by Trade* 90).

In other words, *Lo prohibido* depicts an infirm metropolis in counterpoint to its terminally ill imperialism. Clearly, Spaniards have not succeeded in imposing a rigid moral order at home any more than they have been able to do so in the colonies, which they first established through corruption and the slave trade and subsequently ruled through the twinned vices of greed and cruelty. (*Monsters by Trade* 90)

This focus on economic realities has allowed scholars to explore the connections between Galdós's representations of female consumerism and the realities of the nation's imperial and post-imperial status, effectively rendering more visible the ways in which the ghost of empire continued to impact the metropolis well into the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁵

Galdós continues to address the impact of colonialism in his realist masterpiece *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1886–87) with an even greater degree of

¹⁴ For recent explorations of consumerism in the novel, see Lara Anderson (“The Fabricated Shopper: Trade Deficit as Allegory in Late Nineteenth-Century Spain,” *Letras Hispánicas* 8:1 (2012): 100–08); and Diana Arbaiza (“Valores fluctuantes: Crédito, consumo e identidad nacional en *Lo prohibido* de Galdós,” *Decimonónica* 11:1 (2014): 1–13). When we think about the role of women as consumers in the novel and the importance of gender in conceptualizing imperialism, the connections between gender and empire become exponentially richer. See, for example, N. Michelle Murry's and Akiko Tsuchiya's recent anthology, *Unsettling Colonialism. Gender and Race in the Nineteenth-Century Global Hispanic World* (Albany, NY: State U of New York P, 2019).

¹⁵ See, for example, Luisa Elena Delgado, (“Más estragos que las revoluciones: Detallando lo femenino en *La de Bringas*,” *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 48:1 (1995): 31–42); and Marina Cuzovic-Severn (“The (Post) Imperial Rebellion of the Domestic Femme Fatale in Galdós's *La de Bringas*,” *Cincinnati Romance Review* 43 (2017): 17–34).

complexity. Instead of depicting the individual with colonial experience as totally unable to integrate, in this novel Galdós presents a character with the ability to carve out a particular niche for himself within Madrid society. Evaristo González Feijoo, a retired military man with many years of service in Cuba and the Philippines, embodies the possibility of co-existence through a brand of tolerance and understanding acquired through extensive engagement with the world beyond the metropolis.

Su facha denunciaba su profesión militar y su natural hidalgo; tenía bigote blanco y marcial arrogancia, continente reposado, ojos vivos, sonrisa entre picaresca y bondadosa; vestía con mucho esmero y limpieza, y su palabra era sumamente instructiva, porque había viajado y servido en Cuba y en Filipinas; había tenido muchas aventuras y visto muchas y muy extrañas cosas. No se alteraba cuando oía expresar las ideas más exageradas y disolventes. (II 16)

[His appearance revealed his military profession and his natural nobility; he had a white mustache and a martial decisiveness, a soothing presence, lively eyes, a smile between picaresque and kindly; he dressed with great care and cleanliness, and his word was highly instructive, because he had traveled and served in Cuba and the Philippines; he had had many adventures and seen many very strange things. He did not get upset when he heard even the most exaggerated and divisive ideas.]

His colonial travels have taught him the wisdom of a “curso de filosofía práctica” [a course on practical philosophy] when dealing with human nature (*Fortunata* II 89).¹⁶ *Fortunata* is an apt pupil in her relationship with the older man, and she discovers a new way of seeing herself and participating in society, one that gives her agency. She is encouraged by Feijoo to question the social rules of the time, to choose a path for herself that allows her a measure of stability and happiness. The lessons that Feijoo offers *Fortunata* still stress the importance of social appearances, but the novel presents his advice as practical and justified rather than hypocritical. Consequently, his role in the novel is positive and supportive. By means of this sympathetic representation, the reader can conclude that Feijoo’s lessons constitute a valid pedagogy.

Feijoo and his “curso de filosofía práctica” mirror Agustín Caballero and his common-sense recognition of circumstance and facts, but without

¹⁶ I address this aspect of Feijoo’s character in my essay (“‘Un curso de filosofía práctica’: Galdós’s Assessment of Spanish Colonial History,” *Anales Galdosianos* 38–39 (2003–04): 49–67).

the adherence to Madrid's bourgeois morality. The aging gentleman teaches Fortunata that her obsession with being "honrada" [honorable] is inappropriate in her circumstances and, more importantly, irrelevant from a moral perspective. As Feijoo himself states, "no predico yo la hipocresía," adding, "sé que decir *humanidad* es lo mismo que decir *debilidad*" [I don't preach hypocrisy, ... I know that to say *humanity* is the same as saying *weakness*] (II 103). He presents himself to Fortunata as an alternative lover, one who will in fact support her financially and allow her a degree of liberty and self-determination, a modest but comfortable life, and a chance to recover her physical and mental health after her break-up with Juanito Santa Cruz. This period of Fortunata's life is relatively short but immensely important. She discovers in herself, as she listens to this discourse of practical wisdom, the possibilities for redemption and acceptance. Feijoo's ability to circumvent social expectations, knowing when rules can be bent and when they must be followed, comes from a lifetime of experience, most of it outside peninsular society. His colonial connections, notably as a member of the military and not as an *indiano* motivated by financial self-interest, are what allow him to present a reconfigured moral world that can accommodate the complexities of a person such as Fortunata. Curiously, one of Feijoo's trademarks is his personal use of "agua de colonia" [Eau de cologne], a clever Galdosian reference playing off the double meaning of cologne and colony. Fortunata says to him one morning, at the start of their affair, "Cómo huele usted a colonia. Ese olor sí que me gusta ..." [How you smell of cologne. I like that smell] (II 96). This comment appears in close proximity to the chapter's description of Feijoo's service to the empire, ironically connecting the two different meanings of the word. The implication is that this colonial experience and the knowledge gained from it are a part of Feijoo's attraction. Like Agustín Caballero, he returns to the metropolis a better and wiser man. It remains incumbent upon metropolitan Spaniards, like Fortunata, to recognize this wisdom and learn from it.

While his early fiction tends to portray Spanish imperialism as a highly fraught aspect of the nation's past, by the time Galdós reaches the mature stage of his realist portraits of contemporary Spanish society, the characters with colonial experience often demonstrate a particular ethical perspective of the world unachieved by residents of the metropolis. In general, Galdós's *novelas contemporáneas* depict metropolitan life in the nation's capital, and this corresponds to a late nineteenth-century tendency to use Madrid as a metaphor for the nation.¹⁷ In *Tormento*, Agustín Caballero embodies

¹⁷ Elisa Martí-López observes that "Madrid, as capital, struggled throughout the nineteenth century in an attempt to transform itself from a seat of the monarchy

the virtues of honesty, hard work, and self-reliance, all of which he has learned in his life outside of Spain and which stand in sharp contrast to the values of the residents of Madrid. Evaristo González Feijoo functions in a similar way in *Fortunata y Jacinta*. Jo Labanyi has remarked that Feijoo is unlike other characters in the novel, who, in their insistence on reforming Fortunata, reveal a “colonially conceived blueprint for the nation based on the ‘improvement of the race’” (*Gender and Modernization* 192). Labanyi claims that the novel, long considered central to the author’s *oeuvre*, should be read metaphorically “as an exercise in nation formation construed on colonial lines,” given that members of the Spanish bourgeoisie in the novel seem so intent on the mission of civilizing the other, defined within the metropolis by race, class, and/or gender.¹⁸ Feijoo demonstrates that a true engagement with the realities of Spanish colonialism offers the individual, and by extension the nation, the opportunity to reflect, to mature, and to see the world in a different light. That Feijoo alone stands in such contrast to such a large number of other reformers in the novel also points to the question of whether Spaniards were prepared to accept a view of colonial engagement that went beyond notions of conquest. It should come as no surprise that Fortunata’s baby, often seen as the symbol of a future generation of Spaniards who will realize the hope of a stronger and more equitable nation, is given the middle name of Evaristo, as evidence of the importance of this character to the life of the mother.

Feijoo, Agustín Caballero, and other galdosian characters with links to Spanish colonialism encourage Galdós’s contemporary readers to rethink the nature of Spanish colonialism, to accept the existence of the new independent nations, and to ponder the effects of this historical process on the metropolis. In these and other works Galdós presents a fictional world in which Spain’s current colonial holdings and its former territories still contribute to metropolitan wealth but also, on a more profound level, offer potentially positive lessons for social change. It is also important to note that the author’s *novelas contemporáneas* do not employ the rhythmic encoding

to capital city of a bourgeois and national state” (158), and therefore could not serve as a metaphor for the nation. Nonetheless, Galdós’s use of the nation’s capital as the space for so many of his narrative fictions about Spanish life indicates a desire to endow the capital of Spain with the same referential capacity for the nation that was given to Paris and London, for their respective European imperial nations.

¹⁸ The concept of race in *Fortunata y Jacinta* has been masterfully analyzed in Lisa Surwillo’s ground-breaking essay (“Pituso en blackface: Una mascarada racial en *Fortunata y Jacinta*,” *Hispanic Review* 78:2 (2010): 189–204).

that helped build the allegories of his earlier historical novels. By focusing on contemporary Spanish society in full realist mode, Galdós is able to comment on contemporary manifestations of Spanish colonialism by virtue of the fact that they constitute a part of everyday life in the metropolis. There is, undoubtedly, more that can be said about these and other novels that constitute the cluster of realist narratives that form the *novelas contemporáneas*. But one cannot deny that the author is actively examining the social and psychological impact of Spanish imperialism. More to the point, in Galdós's *novelas contemporáneas* the metropolis's link to the colonies becomes a means by which the nation's lack of progress is rendered visible. Galdós's critiques of Spanish society in these texts become ever sharper, eventually questioning the very notion of progress. If one accepts Eric Hobsbawm's description of European nationalisms as beginning with liberal revolutions followed by a period of imperial expansion, thus demonstrating "a proven capacity for conquest" (38), then the fact that Spain fails at both indicates that Spanish nationalism in the nineteenth century "tenía que inventarse una función" [had to create a function for itself] (Álvarez Junco 508). Rather than attempting to repress or transcend the memory of colonial engagement as he did in the early historical novels, Galdós addresses the effects of colonialism on the metropolis, positing the possibility that late nineteenth-century Spanish colonialism might actually provide an antidote to the corruption and decadence of Spanish society, if only metropolitan citizens could be taught to perceive the world on different terms.

By the late 1880s, however, Galdós's perspective on the relationship between the metropolis and the colonies begins to shift, becoming less sanguine about the colonial presence within the metropolis and increasingly concerned about the impact of the metropolis on the nation's remaining colonies. The author begins to question the degree to which Spain's colonial legacy might be nothing more than a measure of some kind of collective national madness. Perhaps one reason for this change was the author's flirtation with a political career. In 1885 Galdós was asked by Práxedes Mateo Sagasta, the leader of the Liberal Party, to stand as a candidate for election to the Spanish Congress. He was to represent the district of Guayama in Puerto Rico, a colony about which he knew little and to which he had few connections. The election was an example of the political corruption associated with the *turno pacífico* [peaceful turnover], with the author's electoral victory predetermined, and Galdós ultimately served in the Liberal Party's long ministry from 1886 to 1890.¹⁹ As a representative

¹⁹ The *turno pacífico* was a tacit agreement between Sagasta and Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, the leaders of the two major political parties, to share governance,

of Puerto Rico, Galdós heard the concerns of his constituents (Armas Ayala 107), and his experience in the *Congreso*, in particular with issues relating to Spain's last vestiges of empire, no doubt influenced his writing and his political activities for the rest of his life. As Galdós himself later wrote about his own election as a *diputado cunero* – a representative from outside the district: “Con estas y otras arbitrariedades llegamos años después a la pérdida de las colonias” [With these and other acts of arbitrariness, we arrived years later at the loss of the colonies] (*Memorias* 60).

Galdós's concerns about Spain's colonial history become more pronounced in work published after 1898, but remain evident in fiction produced in the years leading up to the Spanish–American War as well, indicating that Galdós, like many Spaniards, saw the inevitability of losing the last American territories (Bahamonde and Cayuela 60). Galdós's doubts about the ability of bourgeois Spanish society to effectively address metropolitan issues become tied to his observations about the way in which the metropolis had addressed its responsibilities toward present and former colonies. Critics have explored, for example, how those galdosian characters in the *novelas contemporáneas* unable to conform to the highly codified structures of Spanish bourgeois society are labeled by others as mad even as the narratives themselves demonstrate that the demands of modernity lead to irrational social structures (Krauel 14; Sieburth, “Enlightenment” 35). This narrative recourse to madness becomes increasingly evident in the author's work over time, and Galdós eventually uses the concept to explore the self-referential and contradictory nature of galdosian narrative itself (O'Byrne Curtis 29). But I would argue that Galdós also begins to use the theme of madness as a subtle means of characterizing Spain's colonial past and its colonial impulses. This eventually manifests itself, particularly in the post-1898 works, in a tendency on Galdós's part to revert to the fantastic when attempting to address what is simply too painful to engage with in a direct manner. The shift away from realism becomes a coping mechanism for the author, one that becomes pronounced in the fifth series of *Episodios* and other narratives written in the early twentieth century, the subject of the next section in this chapter.

It is worth noting that Galdós vacillated during the 1890s between narrative tales that demanded multiple volumes, such as *Ángel Guerra*

allowing a predetermined shift from one electoral result to another, as a means of stabilizing the political turmoil of the 1860s and 1870s. That predetermined electoral results required established party bosses in rural and urban areas to control the vote naturally led to corruption and weak representation in government.

and the *Torquemada* series, and shorter works that he later turned into theatrical dramas. In the multi-volume works references to the Americas are generally made within the context of business and trade, echoing the approach taken in many of the novels from the 1880s. But at least two of the shorter works produced during this decade demonstrate a continued interest in the changing relationship between the metropolis and her colonial territories. Two that merit our attention are *La loca de la casa* and *El abuelo*, which appeared in the form of short novels and then were later adapted for the stage. Both of these works are theatrical even in their initial form, thus indicating that Galdós is moving away from the realist style that he so thoroughly immersed himself in during the previous decade. Accordingly, they are also works that encourage readers and audiences to consider, once again, their metaphorical meaning. In this sense, the dates of publication become important as well. The first of the two, *La loca de la casa*, first published as a *novela dialogada* in 1892 and produced as a play in 1893, presents a relationship that employs, albeit with additional complexity, the traditional trope of Spanish imperialism as a civilizing influence on the colonial subjects. The second, *El abuelo*, written and then staged just before and after the Spanish–American War of 1898, paints a very different picture, one in which the end of empire is only too painfully evident. Both works, however, employ the theme of madness to describe the imperial impulse.

In *La loca de la casa* contemporary colonial relations are metaphorically depicted in this work through the marriage of Victoria Moncada, the pious daughter of a Catalan businessman, and José Maria Cruz, “Pepet,” a family caretaker’s son who has recently returned from the Americas with significant wealth. The title of the work refers to Victoria, whose initial religious fervor is described as a type of madness. It ultimately proves useful when her desire for martyrdom is realized through her decision to save her father from financial ruin by marrying Cruz, another example of the *indiano* who has returned to Spain a wealthy man. Despite Cruz’s attempts to integrate himself into the social circles of Barcelona’s upper middle class, others refer to him as “el gorila” [the gorilla] because to refined Catalan society he appears to be “una transición entre el bruto y el ‘homo sapiens’” [a transition between a beast and a human being] (*La loca* 170). Vernon Chamberlin has correctly linked the use of animal imagery in the play to the leveling of social classes, the reversal of gender roles, and the colonial impulse to tame the savage other (35). Although reference is made to his rough nature even as a child, Cruz proudly claims that he has learned to exercise his will in order to extract wealth from the mines of Mexico and California: “no me dejo quitar a dos tirones el que he sabido hacer mío

con mis brazos forzudos, con mi voluntad poderosa, con mi corta inteligencia” [I didn’t allow to be forcefully taken from me that which I knew how to make mine with my strong arms, with my powerful will, and with my limited intelligence] (*La loca* 175). Formed by experiences outside the metropolis, Cruz, like all *indianos*, bears the social mark of colonialism.

Galdós employs the stereotype of the *indiano* and deepens it by injecting the theme of madness into the re-encounter between the colonial subject and the representative of the metropolis. The idea of choosing wealth over emotional attachment is defined early in the play as a sign of *locura* when Victoria’s sister is asked if she is tempted to abandon her fiancé for Pepet’s money and replies in no uncertain terms, “Pero, ¿estás loco?” (*La loca* 171). Yet this is exactly what her sister does. “La loca de la casa” agrees to marry Pepet and give him the social status he desires, as a “suplicio lento” [slow torment] that will serve as “una escuela de regeneración” [a school for regeneration] (*La loca* 190). With time, however, it becomes clear that Pepet’s emotional inflexibility leads him to extremes that manifest in a fury that also resembles a form of madness. For example, when Victoria offers to provide him with an heir for a stipulated price, he exclaims, “Victoria, no me vuelvas loco” [Victoria, don’t make me crazy] (*La loca* 213). By the play’s end, Victoria, as her very name implies, has managed to dominate her *indiano* husband and direct part of his wealth toward philanthropic projects. He begs her, “Pero, por Dios, no lo digas a nadie. Guarda el secreto de mi conquista” [But, for God’s sake, don’t tell anyone. Keep my conquest a secret], metaphorically emphasizing the strength the metropolis wields against its colonial subjects (*La loca* 215). Pepet, as an example of brute colonial potential, needs Victoria’s colonizing force in order to be fulfilled, and concludes, “Mientras más la quiero, más me afirmo en ser lo que soy” [the more I love her, the more I affirm to myself to be what I am] (*La loca* 215). The relationship between the two allows Galdós to posit a curious synergy between Victoria’s religious and civilizing fervor and Pepet’s lack of social manners. It echoes the classic colonial trope of *civilización/barbarie*, which served as an excuse for Spanish imperial expansion. But, at the heart of their relationship, however, is the economic need of the one and the deep resources of the other.

In this sense, *La loca de la casa* echoes the colonial references that Galdós used in his realist novels, portraying the Americas as a source of financial wealth and a place of unchecked capitalism. But *La loca de la casa* also presents Spanish colonial experience within the framework of a necessary struggle, between colony and metropolis, between the working class and the bourgeoisie, between man and woman, and, ultimately, between madness and reason. Victoria’s obsession with martyrdom, initially seen as *locura*, is

transformed into a healthy and rational obsession with business, directing the force of Pepet's wealth into a series of successful ventures, first commercial, then philanthropic, and eventually social and familial. In this way Galdós presents the idea that taming the impulses of Spanish colonialism is a necessary step of Spain's own regeneration. As Victoria says to Pepet at the play's end, "Eres el mal, y si el mal no existiera, los buenos no sabríamos que hacer ... ni podríamos vivir" [You are evil, and if evil did not exist, good people would not know what to do ... nor could we live] (*La loca* 215). The colonial experience is negative in its brute force, but Galdós still portrays it as having the potential to be molded into beneficial form.²⁰ Nevertheless, the hope for metropolitan benefits through interactions with the colonies begins to wane as the events of 1898 grow closer.

When Galdós wrote *El abuelo* in the late summer and early fall of 1897 it was only too clear that the former colonies, now independent nations, offered only a false promise of reconciliation. When the author later revised it for the stage in 1904 the play became a kind of parable for post-colonial Spain, one subtly mirroring the message of the second series of *Episodios* but at the same time eschewing the possibility of a domestic romance. *El abuelo* instead purports to reveal a true definition of nobility, which the main character learns to be *amor al prójimo* [brotherly love] rather than material wealth, aristocratic titles, or social position. References to colonial history are clearly present in the work in both literal and figurative fashion. The historical connections are clearly mapped out through the context of the play's action. The main character in the play, Don Rodrigo de Arista-Potestad, el Conde de Albrit, arrives at his former estate located in "una villa marítima del norte de España" [a maritime village in the north of Spain], a fact that suggests the links between Spain and its colonial shipping trade (*El abuelo* 635). The Conde has recently returned from Peru, having been drawn there by his own grandfather's past as a colonial viceroy and owner of gold mines and by the hope that he, too, might return to Spain with enough wealth to re-establish his family's financial well-being. Yet, as even the rural inhabitants of his village know, "... no le dieron más que sofoquinas, y ha vuelto pobre como las ratas, enfermo, casi ciego" [he got nothing but the stifling heat, and he has returned as poor as a rat, sick, almost blind] (*El abuelo* 636). Unlike in *La loca de la casa*, in this galdosian

²⁰ In her 2012 article "Empire, Nation, and the *indiano* in Galdós's *Tormento* and *La loca de la casa*," Eva Copeland has examined in greater detail the differences in the figure of the *indiano* in these two works, concluding that, while Agustín Caballero cannot be integrated into Spanish society, José María Cruz becomes the vehicle for national regeneration.

text the Americas no longer hold the promise of financial rescue. The Conde discovers that in his absence his only son has died. Worse, he learns that his American daughter-in-law had a series of adulterous relationships and that one of his two granddaughters is illegitimate. The Conde's focus on discovering the truth and thus preserving family honor and nobility drives the play's action forward.

The struggle between the Conde and his daughter-in-law, la Condesa de Laín, moves the colonial references into the figurative realm and certainly evokes the turn-of-the-century struggles between the United States and Spain. Born and raised in the United States, Lucrecia Richmond is, as the Conde tells her, "extranjera por nacionalidad, más aún por los sentimientos, jamás se identificó usted con mi familia ni con el carácter español" [of foreign nationality, even more with respect to feelings, you never identified with my family or with the Spanish character] (*El abuelo* 652). She is a woman with social skills and experience outside of Spain: "habla cuatro lenguas, y en todas ellas sabe decir cosas que encantan y enamoran" [She speaks four languages, and in all of them she knows how to say things that delight and win hearts] (*El abuelo* 638). But, as village inhabitants know, "todas esas lenguas y más que supiera no bastan para contar los horrores que acerca ella corren en castellano neto" [all these languages and others that one might know would not be sufficient to tell the horrible stories about her that are circulating in clear Spanish] (*El abuelo* 638).

The Conde links his unsuccessful journey to Perú with his son's unfortunate marriage by exclaiming, "¡Funesta ha sido para mí la América!" [America has been disastrous for me!] (*El abuelo* 652). The aging aristocrat's grief over his son's death and his obsession with discovering which of his granddaughters is legitimate are described in the play as sources of his irrational behavior, a mixture of both grief and offended honor that manifests for others as signs of madness. For instance, Lucrecia says, "No será extraño que las desdichas, amargando su alma, toda orgullo y altanería, lleven al buen don Rodrigo a la locura" [It would not be surprising that misfortunes, embittering his proud and arrogant soul, might drive good don Rodrigo to madness] (*El abuelo* 650). At one point the Condesa tells him, "Está Ud. loco ... Su demencia me inspira compasión" [You are crazy ... Your dementia inspires compassion in me], to which the Conde replies "La de usted, a mí no me inspira lástima. No se compadece a los seres corrompidos, encenagados en el mal" [Yours inspires no pity in me. One does not sympathize with corrupted beings mired in evil] (*El abuelo* 654).

While *La loca de la casa* concluded with a reconciliation between Victoria and Pepet, a symbolic partnership between the metropolitan sensibilities and colonial wealth, in *El abuelo*, reconciliation and mutual benefit is largely denied.

At the emotional peak of the play, when the Conde and his daughter-in-law fight over the children, the youngest takes the side of her grandfather, agreeing to live with him despite the financial hardship they will undoubtedly face, while the other rejects him in order to continue a life of vain self-indulgence with her mother. The Conde also learns that the granddaughter who remains by his side is, in fact, the illegitimate one, thereby forcing him to reconsider his definitions of nobility and family honor. Seen through a metaphorical, postcolonial lens, the estrangement of the granddaughter and the Conde from the rest of their family underscores the difficulty for both sides in coming to terms with the past. Lucrecia represents a foreigner, not surprisingly from the United States, who has joined Spain's aristocracy. But, whereas the Conde's family is portrayed as part of a class of Spaniards who in the past provided for the well-being of society, it is clear that in the contemporary environment, with Lucrecia as a representative, it has become a class that exploits those who are less well off. Not surprisingly, given the moral differences between these two characters, no accommodation can be reached. But it is important to remember the title, which points not to the relationship between the Conde and his American daughter-in-law but rather to that between the Conde and his grandchildren. The work's reference to generational differences offers a key to an understanding of Galdós's rethinking of the colonial issue. It is only in successive generations that colonial structures and the antipathy they generate can be overcome. Lucrecia may have managed, through deception and greed, to infiltrate the family and alienate one member from another, but it is her own offspring, a succeeding generation, that posits the possibility, however tenuous, of future change.

Galdós's Narrative Post-Mortem for the Spanish Empire

It is not an exaggeration to say that the Spanish–American War of 1898 exercised a profound effect on Galdós and his literary production. The most notable evidence of this is his decision to return to the genre of the historical novel. During the months of April and May of 1898, Galdós wrote *Zumalacárregui*, the first volume of what would become the third series of *Episodios nacionales*. Those dates correspond closely to the beginning of the conflict between the United States and Spain. The U.S.S. Maine was sunk in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898, seriously aggravating tensions, and the diplomatic conflicts grew until April 21, 1898, when President William McKinley authorized a military blockade to support Cuban independence and Spain officially severed diplomatic relations with the United States. The fact that Galdós resumed his commitment to the *Episodios* during the first months of the war

underscores the effect of the nation's colonial history on his motivation to tell the story of nineteenth-century Spain.

Even as Galdós was making the commitment to renew his monumental chronicle of Spanish history, he turned back to the earlier historical novels of the second series as he tried to frame the nation's conflict with the United States and the threat of losing the last of Spain's significant colonies. In Chapter 4 I argued that the story Juan Bragas tells of life in the royal court of Fernando VII, in particular his recounting of the fateful decisions undertaken on the advice of the king's corrupt *camarilla*, represents Galdós's most explicit literary engagement with the loss of the American territories. It is notable, therefore, that on June 19, 1898, virtually in the middle of the 15-week conflict with the United States and immediately after he had published the first volume of the third series of *Episodios*, Galdós published a passage from *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* in the weekly journal, *Vida Nueva*, under the title "Fumándose las colonias" [The colonies up in smoke].²¹ The reprinted passage describes the moment when Fernando VII is faced with the practical impossibility of raising an army sufficient to overcome the strength of the various wars of independence in Latin America, and he concludes with resignation, "Hay que despedirse de las Américas" [We must say goodbye to the Americas] (1). The title of the commentary refers literally to the penchant of the king and his counselors to smoke cigars during their foreign policy conversations but also, with bitter irony, employs metaphor to subtly express a belief that these losses were anything but inevitable.²²

²¹ *Vida Nueva* was a weekly newspaper that appeared only ten times, between June 12, 1898 and August 14, 1898. In its online link to copies of these editions, the Biblioteca Nacional de España includes the following description of the journal: "Nace a sólo un mes de los que se dio en llamar el Desastre – la pérdida de las últimas colonias españoles – y bajo el impacto de este, el dos de junio de 1898, y de ella se ha dicho que es la revista – aunque con gran formato de diario – que mejor representa el espíritu de la generación del 98, formando parte del movimiento finesecular..." [The journal appeared only one month after what has been called the Disaster – the loss of the last Spanish colonies – and due to the impact of that, the 2nd of June 1898, it has been said that the journal – despite its format of a daily paper – best represents the spirit of the generation of '98, forming part of the fin de siècle movement ...]. The publication contained short journalistic pieces from significant nineteenth-century authors such as Galdós, Emilia Pardo Bazán, and Leopoldo Alas, and authors who would become some of the best-known names in the early decades of the twentieth century, including Miguel de Unamuno, Ángel Ganivet, José Martínez Ruiz (Azorín), and a young José Ortega y Gasset.

²² This particular moment in the text becomes a point of authorial attention after the events of 1898, when the second series was reprinted for a new generation of readers.

Clearly the events of 1898 led Galdós to pay closer attention to his earlier references to Spanish colonial history, but they also led him once again to his self-assigned task of chronicling Spanish history. Nearly two decades after his previous foray into historical fiction, a genre the author had defined as incapable of providing the narrative freedom he once sought, Galdós returned to the *Episodios* with renewed vigor. In the spring of 1898 Galdós began the third series, publishing ten volumes within two years.²³ The speed with which Galdós produced this series echoes the intensity of his earlier obsession with narrating Spanish history, and the timing of their publication underscores the degree to which imperial loss drove the author forward in his mission. Having taken back up the mantle of chronicler of Spanish history, Galdós made the decision to keep moving forward in his narrative, eventually producing ten more novels for a fourth series and a final six novels for the fifth and last series. These final 26 historical novels address Spanish history from 1836 to approximately 1880 and, had Galdós completed the final four novels of the fifth series, he likely would have taken his readers to the events leading up to 1898, essentially providing a narrative covering the whole of nineteenth-century Spanish history. Similar to his previous fictions, Galdós continued to weave references to Spain's colonial history into these historical novels.²⁴ Yet it is important to recognize that in his return to the

The 1899 edition of *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* is labeled “esmeradamente corregida” [carefully corrected], with one of the changes occurring in that section of the text when the king consults with his advisors relative to the colonies. Instead of “Hay que despedirse de las Américas,” the author reformulates Fernando VII's comment into a more vigorous and willful expression: “Despidámonos de las Américas” [Say goodbye to the Americas], thus presenting the colonial losses of the 1820s not as a result forced upon the metropolis but rather as an act of metropolitan agency. Such a shift allows Galdós's metropolitan readers to consider Spain's post-imperial status as a result of choice (*Memorias de un cortesano de 1815* 179).

²³ The third series consists of the following titles: *Zumalacárregui* (1898), *Mendizábal* (1898), *De Oñate a la Granja* (1898), *Luchana* (1899) *La campaña del Maestrazgo* (1899), *La estafeta romántica* (1899), *Vergara* (1899), *Montes de Oca* (1899), *Los Ayacuchos* (1899), and *Bodas reales* (1900).

²⁴ Dolores Troncoso Durán's 2017 article “Las colonias en los *Episodios galdosianos*” (*Letras de Hoje* 52:4 (2017)) provides a summary of historical references to the colonies in the later series of *Episodios*, situating them within a framework of the prevailing attitudes to empire in the late nineteenth century. She concludes that “los políticos españoles decimonónicos no hicieron más que seguir el camino suicida que la propia sociedad civil les marcaba” [the nineteenth-century Spanish politicians did nothing more than follow the suicidal path that their own civil

genre of historical fiction Galdós also returned to his strategy of employing metaphor and allegory to signal to his readers just how they might interpret the historical chronicle of the mid- to late nineteenth century in Spain and the failure of the bourgeoisie revolution and its middle-class supporters to remedy the problems facing the metropolis.

Given the belief that colonial loss was the result of both political ineptitude and social hypocrisy in late nineteenth-century Spain, it should come as no surprise that the most important aspect of Galdós's engagement with the topic of Spanish imperialism in the last three series of *Episodios nacionales* is the focus on the mistakes that inexorably led to the events of 1898. No longer concerned with providing pathways for providing foundational fictions that will help Spaniards come to terms with Spain's reduced status on the world stage, nearly all of Galdós's later *Episodios* serve as a type of narrative post-mortem for the Spanish empire. There no longer appears to be a pathway for managing national trauma, and this eventually plays a role in the author's decision to take a sharp narrative turn away from realist prose and into highly allegorized narratives that contain elements of the fantastic. We see this in the final four novels of the fifth series, along with the author's last fictional narratives – *El caballero encantado* (1909) and *La razón de la sinrazón* (1915). Galdós continues to critique Spanish imperialism, but in ways that demonstrate that there is no hope that such a critique will lead to change. In this section of Chapter 6, I will focus on certain texts in the last three series of *Episodios* as well as *El caballero encantado* to show the depths of the author's pessimism and his fear for Spain's future. Critics have pointed out that the hopeful historical expectations presented in the first two series of *Episodios*, written when the author saw the potential of the Democratic Sexenio of 1868–74 and the early years of the Bourbon restoration, help explain his later disillusionment, leading him to incorporate sardonic humor and supernatural phenomena in his final historical novels.²⁵ The use of the fantastic in these later works allows Galdós to address obliquely

society mapped out] (435). Her point corresponds to the message of Galdós's reprinting of the passage from *Memorias de un cortesano de 1815*, that the losses of the colonies, at the beginning as well as the end of the nineteenth century, were the result of a collective social blindness and not necessarily an inevitable result of historical processes.

²⁵ For a discussion of this aesthetic transformation see, for example, Gilman, "The Fifth Series," Francisco Caudet, "Introducción," *Episodios Nacionales Quinta Serie* (Madrid: Alianza, 2007); and Dolores Troncoso Durán, "La quinta serie," *La historia de España en Galdós* (Vigo: Universidade de Vigo, 2012).

but still metaphorically Spain's engagement with its colonies, this time as portraits of the corruption, the insensitivity, and the sheer stupidity of many aspects of Restoration politics.

Galdós begins his examination of how Spain came to lose its vestiges of empire in the third series, picking up the chronicle of Spanish history where the second series ended, focusing on political events in the metropolis between 1836 and 1846, the years of the first Carlist War and the regency of María Cristina.²⁶ The series ends with the wedding of Isabel II and her ascension to the throne. At first glance the third series seems to be entirely preoccupied with the struggles between political factions within the exclusive framework of the metropolis, now the center of a vastly diminished empire. Brian Dendle notes that "In the third series of episodios, Galdós had sought to define the strengths and weaknesses of the national character and to indicate the way to national and individual well-being," and that the fourth series is obsessed with "the religious question" and the role of the church in the monarchy of Isabel II (*The Mature Thought* 89). I have already argued that the second series is the place where Galdós offers a potential pathway to establishing a healthy nation. But what I think Dendle and others have overlooked is the way Galdós also makes clear in his later series the impact of imperial change on the nation.²⁷

With the Spanish–American War of 1898 as an impetus for Galdós's return to the historical novel, it is not surprising that the third series focuses on the military protagonists and the various battlefields of the First Carlist War. By beginning the series with *Zumalacárregui*, Galdós offers his readers a portrait of the reality of warfare, in all its cruelty and violence. The fictional protagonist, José Fago, is confused and emotional, and the events of the First Carlist War lead him into a profound crisis of identity. He

²⁶ The First Carlist War (1833–40) was a civil war that began after the death of Fernando VII between supporters of the regent, María Cristina, who wished to place her daughter Isabel on the throne, and supporters of Fernando VII's brother, Carlos María Isidro de Borbón, who fully expected, the male heir to his brother, to become Spain's next king. The Carlists favored a return to an absolute monarchy, while the Cristinos represented liberals and moderates who supported Isabel. The nineteenth century was to see a Second Carlist War (1847–49) and a Third (1872–76), and many historians consider the ideological struggles of these civil wars as a prelude to the Spanish Civil War of 1936–39.

²⁷ By coining the term "second empire" in his book *Empire and Antislavery*, Christopher Schmidt-Nowara reminds readers that "Spanish colonialism did not end with the Spanish American revolutions," adding that "powerful commercial, agricultural, and military interests in the metropolis were reconcentrated on Cuba and Puerto Rico in the first half of the nineteenth century" (2).

becomes obsessed with the historical leader of the Carlist forces, General Tomás de Zumalacárregui, and eventually he believes himself to be the general. Only hours after Zumalacárregui succumbs to a bullet wound Fago is found dead, with no trace of a cause of death. This first novel of the third series sets the stage for an extended meditation on military leaders and their impact on the nation's history. It also underscores the idea that the obsession with conquest inevitably leads to madness. Fago moves beyond confusion into a state of delusion, which leads to his death. His story sets the stage for the connections between real and fictional characters in the pages of these novels.

In addition to Zumalacárregui, the series presents detailed accounts of historical military figures who fought on both sides of the First Carlist War, principal among them Baldomero Espartero, Rafael Maroto, and Ramón Cabrera y Griñó. The references to these generals are important, not only because they give a defined historical context to the narrative but also because they link the negative impact of the Carlist civil war to former military attempts to maintain Spain's American empire. Baldomero Espartero is a particular case in point, given the fact that between 1815 and 1824 he led Spanish troops in an attempt to hold the line against the Latin American independence movements. Years later, when he took up the mantle as military leader of the *crístinos*, he gathered together other military leaders with extensive military experience in the wars of Latin American independence. This group was referred to as "los Ayacuchos" in reference to the 1824 Battle of Ayacucho, which resulted in the independence of Peru and signaled the end of Spanish control over South America.²⁸ Rafael Maroto, who supported the side of the Carlists and eventually brought the First Carlist War to a close by signing the Convention of Vergara with Espartero, had fought the Latin American wars of independence, serving under General José de Canterac, who directed Spanish troops in the Battle of Ayacucho. Throughout the third series Galdós portrays a series of military leaders whose world views and military experience were uniquely connected to Spain's imperial losses during the reign of Fernando VII. By making them the most prominent historical figures in this series, Galdós's narrative illustrates that the earlier battles for imperial control have been resituated within the metropolis itself. In an examination of *Los Ayacuchos*, the ninth volume of the series, for example, Francisca González Flores has remarked upon the ways in which Galdós connects the wars of independence of the

²⁸ Among the "Ayacuchos" who fought in the First Carlist War were Juan Van Halen y Sartí, José Ramón Rodil y Campillo Gerónimo Valdés, and Martín Zurbano.

1820s to the history of the First Carlist War and, by extension, to the events of 1898.²⁹

La aproximación del primer momento postdescolonizador (tras Ayacucho) al último (tras 1898) al aunar el presente de la narración al del lector, produce una historicidad doble que une en el texto dos momentos históricos: los conflictos coloniales – los momentos de las dos grandes descolonizaciones, el post-1824 y el post-1898 – y los peninsulares – las Guerras Carlistas y el fracaso de monarquía liberal –. (350)

[The connection of the first post-decolonizing moment (after Ayacucho) to the last (after 1898) by combining the present of the narration to that of the reader, produces a double historicity that unites the text with two historical moments, the colonial conflicts – the two moments of great decolonization, the post-1824 and the post-1898 – and the peninsular struggles – the Carlist Wars and the failure of the liberal monarchy –.]

Throughout the third series Galdós appears intent on exploring the effect of colonial loss on the health of the metropolis.

His interest in exploring these effects continues in the fourth and fifth series of *Episodios nacionales*. In these later series Galdós continues to reference Spain's colonial history and the impact of Spanish imperialism on the metropolis. These *Episodios* no longer evidence the patriotic utopianism of the first series, nor do they demonstrate any model of civic behavior that provides a pathway to national healing as was evident in the second series. Instead they serve as “anti-épicas” that question the nation's very ability to

²⁹ González Flores argues that in this novel Galdós proposes two pathways that have the potential to lead to the regeneration of Spain, a topic much in vogue at the turn of the century and reflected in the popularity of the ideas of Joaquín Costa. The first, she notes, is “la vía económica” [the economic route] between Spain, its former colonies and Europe, and the second “la renovación de los valores y conceptos arcaicos que definían lo español ante Europa y el mundo en general” [the renewal of the archaic values and concepts that defined the Spanish before Europe and the world in general] (350). The fifth novel in the third series, *La campaña del Maestrazgo*, demonstrates that such archaic values, as embodied in the violence of General Ramón Cabrera and the curious wanderings of the protagonist, Don Beltrán de Urdaneta, across a Spanish landscape more representative of a medieval past than a modern present, have no place in defining the future of the nation. See Coffey, “¿Un episodio nacional proto-modernista?: *La campaña del Maestrazgo*” (2002).

maintain its unrealistic perception of itself (Álvarez Junco 572). The nation's perceived identity becomes a topic of interest in a cluster of novels in the fourth series and then rises powerfully to the forefront of the fifth and final series. In questioning the ability of Spaniards to realistically see the state of the nation, the author is compelled to move away from realism as a mode of expression and closer to aspects of the literary fantastic. Galdós's final series of *Episodios*, alongside his 1909 novel *El caballero encantado*, places in doubt the very adequacy of realism as a mode of representation to describe the situation that the metropolis has created for itself.

The fourth series of *Episodios*, written between 1902 and 1907, contains numerous references to Spanish colonial history, effectively keeping the changing relationship between the metropolis and its former colonies visible in its chronicle of nineteenth-century Spanish history.³⁰ The series addresses the Isabelline period from 1848 to 1868, often referred to as the “Gran Etapa Moderada” [Great Moderate Period] because of the dominance of the *Partido Liberal Moderado* [Moderate Liberal Party] over the *Partido Progresista* [Progressive Party] (Menéndez Pidal xiii), and in this series Galdós often turns his attention to the very process of writing history and the relationship between the history of the nation and the nature of the Spanish people. For example, two of the central protagonists – José García Fajardo, who eventually becomes the Marqués de Beramendi, and Juan Santiuste – are explicitly involved in the process of recording Spanish history. By creating two characters involved sequentially in the production of Spanish historiography – the first who approaches the task from the perspective of a chronicle of actual events, and the second who eventually loses his own psychological connections to reality and begins to write an imagined history of the nation – Galdós underscores in ironic fashion the problems of the metropolis. In addition, as a way of linking the concept of an essential Spanish character with the process of recording the nation's history, Galdós weaves the stories of various members of the Ansúrez family – Jerónimo and his children Gonzalo, Diego, and Lucila, described repeatedly in the fourth series as “celtíberos” [Celtic-Iberian] – into the lives of both Fajardo and Santiuste. This conscious inclusion of descendents of the earliest inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula into the narration of the Isabelline period, as representatives of what Montesinos describes as “los pueblos primitivos de España” [the primitive peoples of

³⁰ The fourth series consists of the following titles: *Las tormentas del 48* (1902), *Narváez* (1902), *Los duendes de la camarilla* (1903), *La revolución de julio* (1904), *O'Donnell* (1904), *Aita Tettauen* (1905), *Carlos VI en la Rápita* (1905), *La vuelta al mundo en la Numancia* (1906), *Prim* (1906), and *La de los tristes destinos* (1907).

Spain], endowed with “raros talentos ... nobles actitudes ... extraordinaria belleza” [rare talents ... noble actions ... extraordinary beauty] signals to readers a belief in an essential positive national character (III 133). Throughout the series references to empire abound. In *Las tormentas del 48*, for example, José Fajardo briefly considers emigrating to Buenos Aires (IV 49), and in *Narváez*, *Los duendes de la camarilla*, and *La revolución de julio* there are numerous references of the deportation of political rabble rousers to Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines (IV 168, 214, 316, 439, 464, 475, 482, 531). But it is with the appearance of the character of Juan Santiuste in the fifth novel of the series, *O'Donnell*, that Galdós begins to delve more deeply into Spain's imperial legacy.³¹

Santiuste first appears midway through Galdós's chronicle of the Isabeline period, signaling the narrative's shift from initial promise to disappointed hopes. Until this point in the fourth series, Pepe Fajardo, the Marqués de Beramendi, has been the chronicler of Spanish history. But with the acquisition of an aristocratic title and his growing responsibilities to family, Fajardo turns over the task to Juan Santiuste, and his role as both a participant in Spanish history and a producer of a particular narrative of that history becomes central to the rest of the series. By introducing Santiuste, *O'Donnell* sets the stage for later novels within the fourth series, which will explore in keen detail and finely wrought allegory the consequences of imperial loss. To my knowledge, no critical analysis of Santiuste's role in the fourth series has commented upon the fact that Galdós endows his fictional character with colonial origins, describing him as having been born in Havana and brought to Spain as a child (IV 652). He is a Spanish citizen, but his early experiences as someone outside the metropolis permanently mark him as an individual with a unique perspective. For that reason, he becomes an apropos witness to Spain's imperial pretensions. When he takes up the role of historiographer in earnest, it is to narrate events surrounding the Hispano-Moroccan War of 1859–60 in North Africa, clearly portraying it as the result of a disastrous political decision whose rationale involved a deeply misguided attempt to reinvigorate Spain's imperial stature.

³¹ *O'Donnell* tells the story of Teresa Villaescusa, a character who supports the politics of the *Unión Liberal* [Liberal Union]. She represents the potential for bourgeois social and political reform, a potential that later novels in the series portray as having been squandered, when she and the character of Santiago Ibero, himself a representative of a new generation of Spaniards, emigrate to Paris, thus echoing the fate of Agustín Caballero and Amparo Sánchez Emperador from *Tormento*.

Aita Tettauen, *Carlos VI en la Rápita*, and *La vuelta al mundo en la Numancia* constitute a unique trilogy of novels within the larger framework of the other *Episodios nacionales* that allows us to delve more deeply into the author's attitudes toward Spanish colonialism and nineteenth-century contemporary attempts to recoup Spain's imperial past. These three novels explore a variety of imperialist projects that ultimately damage the ability of the nation to establish a more stable and modern national identity. *Aita Tettauen* and *Carlos VI en la Rápita* focus on Juan Santiuste's dual perspectives as both witness and participant in Spanish history. Of the three, *Aita Tettauen* has drawn the bulk of recent scholarly interest, predominantly because it is one of few Galdosian texts to present action that takes place outside of Spain.³² Initially infused with patriotic fervor before traveling with Spanish troops to Morocco, Santiuste quickly comes to see the true horror of war, recounting what he witnesses with fidelity, and he becomes Galdós's fictional counterpoint to the patriotic colonial chronicle that the Spanish author Pedro de Alarcón published in Spanish newspapers in 1860. Over the course of his time in Morocco, Santiuste develops a relationship with an Arab Muslim, El Nasiry, who narrates part of the action in the novel, providing an Arab perspective of the conflict. Susan Martín-Márquez writes that in *Aita Tettauen* Galdós "works to dismantle the dominant structures of vision and power within the colonial context" (123). Michael Ugarte has also pointed to Galdós's anti-imperialist message in this novel and the subsequent volume, *Carlos VI en la Rápita*, which tells of an aborted coup attempt by Carlos Luis de Borbón, Fernando VII's nephew, who had hoped to renew the Carlist cause. Ugarte notes that the parallelism between the "pathetic and risible" war in Morocco and the farcical attempt to revive Carlism constitutes "Galdós's critique of Spanish imperialism," adding that these two texts in the fourth series "highlight the development of the main characters, Santiuste and El Nasiry, who are on a quest to find an identity unencumbered by things Spanish, particularly the Spanish empire" (185). Equally important is the fact that Juan Santiuste's experience of Spain's involvement in North Africa is so unsettling that he eventually loses his own identity, becoming instead "Confusio," a chronicler of "la Historia de España, no como es, sino como debiera ser" [the History of Spain, not as it is, but rather as it should be] (IV 1104). The nation's ill-conceived attempt to reclaim its imperial identity propels Santiuste into a state of madness, and he eventually retreats from the world in order to

³² See, once again, Susan Martín Márquez's *Disorientations* (2008) and Michael Ugarte's "The Spanish Empire on the Wane. Africa, Galdós, and the Moroccan Wars," in *Empire's End* (2016).

write a reimagined version of Spanish history, effectively mirroring Galdós and the production of the *Episodios nacionales* themselves. Santiuste calls his imagined chronicle the *Historia lógico-natural de los españoles de ambos mundos en el siglo XIX*, a title that evokes the concept of “las dos Españas,” encompassing the colonies and the metropolis, as well as the concept of dual tracks of history, one real and the other purely fantastic (IV 1104).³³ Given its relatively direct engagement with Spanish imperial impulses, *Aita Tettauen* has also attracted the attention of scholars who have begun to re-examine the novel’s gendered exploration of identity within an imperial framework.³⁴ It is also worth noting that El Nasiry’s background turns out not to be Moroccan at all. El Nasiry is revealed to be Gonzalo Ansúrez. By offering a character who is simultaneously “celtíbero” and “muselmán,” Galdós makes a statement about the roots of Spanish identity as well as the dangers of defining the self as different from the other, a fundamental aspect of the imperialist model.³⁵

³³ In his reimagined history of Spain Confusio finds himself compelled to move back in time to 1812 and the *Cortes constitucionales* in Cádiz. In this fictional version of Spanish history Fernando VII is put to death and eventually succeeded by a daughter, María Luisa Isabel, from his second marriage to María Isabel de Braganza. Historically, Fernando VII’s second wife gave birth to a daughter who lived for only a few months and then died herself giving birth to a second, stillborn daughter soon after. While Galdós makes no explicit claim in his references to a fantastic reimagination of Spanish history, by beginning with the death of Fernando VII Confusio’s alternative history of Spain implies a different outcome with respect to the loss of the Americas in the 1820s.

³⁴ See Julia Chang’s “Becoming Useless. Masculinity, Able-Bodiedness, and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Spain,” in *Unsettling Colonialism. Gender and Race in the Nineteenth-Century Global Hispanic World* (Albany, NY: State U of New York P, 2019); and Ian Russell’s 2014 article “Dressing Up Anxiety and Pleasure: Cultural Drag in Galdós’s *Aita Tettauen*” (*Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 50 (2016): 629–51). Chang deftly explores Galdós’s presentation of social norms with respect to masculinity and able-bodiedness, and Russell explores “anxiety, pleasure, and the phantom of queerness that hide behind the hegemonic structures of masculine, national identity” (629). By focusing on Galdós’s use of the female body as the site of Oriental otherness and then pointing to the fact that both Santiuste and El Nasiry don Muslim garb, Russell argues that the change in costume “betrays an underlying anxiety that evokes the loss of Spain’s Muslim population and the uneasiness surrounding the wholeness of Spanish identity after the loss of its empire” (640).

³⁵ Susan Martín-Márquez, however, points to El Nasiry’s recognition of his true identity as Gonzalo Ansúrez as evidence of “the insincerity of his conversion but also his deeply entrenched racism,” and writes that Gonzalo’s failure to provide a

In addition to the historical framework of the 1860 war in Morocco, *Aita Tettauen* also demonstrates a return to the trope of gender and empire that we saw in the second series. In this example, written almost 30 years after *El Grande Oriente*, the protagonist, Juan Santiuste, has accompanied Spanish troops on their ill-fated incursion into Morocco in the 1860s, where he has an affair with a Jewish woman, Yohar. Susan Martín Márquez identifies the text's description of her as representative of a trope that situates the imperial drive, with its power dynamics of both race and gender, squarely on the female body, noting that its "reentrenchment of the colonialist gaze through the well-worn trope of the geography of the female body: the native woman, displayed before the colonizer's eyes like a panoramic landscape, doubles for the occupied territory as she is possessed and conquered" (14). This plot element evokes the gendered representation seen earlier in the second series with Monsalud and Andrea Campos, but the difference between these examples of the trope in Galdós's fiction is that Andrea, as an "*indianilla*" rather than a North African Jew, is both Spanish and non-Spanish. This aspect of the novel's plot demonstrates, as well, how Galdós makes use, once again, of the efficacy of allegory in presenting the nation's ill-conceived intervention into northern Africa. By placing Santiuste as a witness to both the war in Morocco and then, in *Carlos VI en la Rápita*, to the spectacularly misguided attempt of Carlos Luis de Borbón to dethrone Isabel II, Galdós links the failures of the 1830s to the failures of the 1860s.³⁶ But it isn't a simple connection between past and present. The events depicted in *Aita Tettauen* and *Carlos VI en la Rápita* highlight how the mistakes of the past (the loss of empire and the anti-liberal politics of the Carlists) are being repeated in almost a burlesque fashion.

true North African perspective "could also be considered one of the more brilliant gestures of Galdós's text, one that suggests the impossibility of a Spaniard ever providing such a viewpoint" (129).

³⁶ On April 1, 1860 the Captain General of the Balearic Islands, Jaime Ortega y Olleta, attempted a *pronunciamento* in favor of Carlos Luis de Borbón y Braganza, the son of the original Carlist claimant of the throne, Carlos María Isidro de Borbón. Ortega arranged to transport 3,600 troops along with Carlos and his brother Fernando from Mallorca to the Catalan coast, and they arrived at San Carlos de la Rápita on April 3, 1860. The troops he brought with him, however, had not been expressly told the nature of their mission and, when they learned that it was a Carlist coup attempt, they took Ortega prisoner. The Captain General was later executed, and both Carlos and his brother Fernando escaped punishment by renouncing all claims to the throne, thus effectively putting an end to Carlist resistance to Isabel II. See Carr (194–95) and Josep Fontana's *Historia de España, La época del liberalismo* (302–03).

While *Aita Tettauen* has attracted more attention in recent years for its Moroccan setting and its portrayal of Islamic and Jewish cultures, very little has been written about the eighth volume in the fourth series, *La vuelta al mundo en la Numancia*.³⁷ This is surprising, given that the novel describes a voyage to the Americas undertaken by yet one more member of the Ansúrez family. It is the only novel in Galdós's entire corpus that places its action in Spain's former colonies. The plot of the novel centers around the anguish of Diego Ansúrez, a widowed Spanish sailor whose daughter elopes with a Peruvian poet. Ansúrez attempts to follow the pair to the Americas by signing on with the crew of the *Numancia*, the crown of Spain's naval forces in the 1860s and the first ironclad ship to circumnavigate the globe.³⁸ The *Numancia* passes through the Caribbean and makes its way south, through the Tierra del Fuego and around Cape Horn, arriving in Lima just in time to take part in the Chincha Islands War, also known as the Spanish–South American War.³⁹ Diego Ansúrez's search for his daughter, now married, allows the novel to metaphorically map the concept of parent and child onto the metropolis's relationship with its former colonies. As one sailor on the *Numancia* makes unequivocally clear, "Estos países son hijos del nuestro emancipados, harto grandullones ya para vivir arrimados a las

³⁷ See Ángel del Río ("Notas sobre el tema de América en Galdós," *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* (1961): 279–96); Carlos García Barrón ("América en Galdós," *Anales de la Literatura Española* (1986–87): 145–52); Mary Coffey ("Galdós Sails to the Colonies," *Revista Hispánica Moderna* (1999): 350–64); and Alda Blanco (*Cultura y conciencia imperial en la España del siglo XIX* (2012)).

³⁸ The *Numancia* was named after the Siege of Numantia (134–133 BC), which resulted in the Roman empire's victory over the Celtiberians. In this particular case, Galdós's penchant for evocative names was satisfied by history itself, and the connection between the Ansúrez family and the Celtiberian past only strengthened.

³⁹ The War was originally triggered by the Talambó incident, essentially a fight between local Peruvians and Spanish immigrants that left one Spaniard dead. The conflict quickly escalated, mostly as a result of poor diplomacy, expressions of imperialist pride on the part of Spain, and fears on the part of the governments of Peru and Chile that the conflict represented a Spanish attempt to re-establish an imperial hold in South America. The conflict resulted in the occupation of the Chincha islands in the spring of 1864, a blockade of the Chilean port of Valparaiso, and a declaration of war on Spain by Peru, Chile, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Once officially at war, Spain bombarded the port of Valparaiso in March 1865, and, in May, the Spanish fleet attacked the Peruvian port city of Callao, with both sides eventually claiming victory.

faldas de la madre ..., y aunque sean algo calaveras, no debe la madre ponerse con ellos demasiado fosca” [These countries are our emancipated children, too big to live tied to the mother’s skirts ..., and even if they are a bit unruly, the mother should not get too gruff with them] (IV 1025). The message, García Barrón indicates, is one of unadulterated imperial presumption: “España debe ser una madre comprensiva, consciente de que sus hijas han heredado tanto sus virtudes como sus defectos. Son países nuevos que tienen derecho a forjar su propio destino pero, como jóvenes que son, es preciso tener paciencia con ellos y no castigarlos con excesiva dureza” [Spain must be a caring mother, aware that her daughters have inherited both her virtues and her defects. They are new countries that have the right to shape their own destiny but, given that they are young, it is necessary to be patient with them and not severely punish them] (151). This is a lesson that Diego absorbs, and he returns to Spain only to find his daughter and her new husband awaiting him, providing a reunion that could only have been accomplished by virtue of his changed perceptions of his role as parent. Alda Blanco identifies *La vuelta al mundo en la Numancia* as a “novela poscolonial” [postcolonial novel] because it is a narrative in which the concept of empire “está en la superficie” [is on the surface] (141). Galdós’s tale of a journey from Spain to its former colonies, she points out, constitutes evidence that for the author, “el legado imperial en América no se esfumó de su imaginación creadora por haber desaparecido la totalidad del ya menguado imperio español en 1898” [despite the total disappearance of the already diminished Spanish empire in 1898, the imperial legacy in America did not vanish from his creative imagination] (141). It is important to note that the fourth series of *Episodios nacionales* still continues the generic framework that we see in the early series, using the scaffolding of history to include a series of fictional characters whose stories constitute an allegorical meditation on the status of the nation. While incorporating allegory once again, the works still rely on an essentially realist framework of historical references. This fundamentally realist framework changes, however, when Galdós moves into the fifth series of *Episodios nacionales*.

Between 1907 and 1912 Galdós wrote his last volumes of this extraordinary chronicle of Spanish history. The six novels that make up the fifth series address Spanish history from 1868 to approximately 1880, with a strong focus on the years of the Democratic Sexenium. Originally meant to mirror the previous four series with a total of ten volumes, Galdós’s energies were flagging, and he never completed them all, though it is clear that he had already formulated a framework of what the full series of ten novels

would address.⁴⁰ This last major narrative enterprise came on the heels of his 1907 announcement of affiliation with the Republican Party, and, indeed, the period from 1907 to 1912 was a time of intense political activity for the author. His political engagement might explain why the fiction from this period reflects a greater focus on political events. The first two volumes of the fifth series, for example, narrate the history of *La Gloriosa*, the 1868 Revolution led by General Juan Prim, which resulted in the removal of Isabel I from the throne. Like the novels of the third and fourth series, *España sin rey* and *España trágica* contain explicit references to Spain's colonial history, in particular the discovery by Vicente Halconero and Segismundo Fajardo, in *España trágica*, of a secret diplomatic document in which Juan Prim has offered to grant Cuba complete autonomy and independence (V 234).⁴¹ It is worth noting that this is the second instance in Galdós's *Episodios* where the historical figure of Juan Prim is directly connected to Spain's imperial legacy. The first reference occurs in the ninth volume of the fourth series, *Prim*. In that earlier text Galdós references the General's participation in Spain's 1861 expedition to Mexico, an event presented to readers as a 'quijotesca aventura,' [quixotic adventure] that mirrors the misguided imperialist impulses behind the Moroccan War of 1860 (García Barrón 147).⁴² What is notable about this second reference to Prim, however, is the way in which Galdós begins to incorporate aspects of the fantastic into his presentation of Spanish history.

España trágica, written in 1909, still maintains, by and large, the realist mode of the earlier *Episodios*. In this novel, however, Galdós begins to experiment with decidedly unrealistic elements, namely a fantastic figure of a woman who may or may not be visible to anyone other than the young

⁴⁰ The six volumes of the fifth series include *España sin rey* (1907), *España trágica* (1909), *Amadeo I* (1910), *La primera república* (1911), *De Cartago a Sagunto* (1911), and *Cánovas* (1912). The four proposed additional titles that would have completed the series, publicized but never written, are indicative of what Galdós intended to address: *Sagasta*, *Las colonias perdidas*, *La reina regente*, and *Alfonso XIII*. See Mary Coffey ("Las colonias perdidas: Un Episodio nacional que no escribió Galdós," in *VIII Congreso Internacional Galdosiano 2005* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Cabildo de Gran Canaria, 2009), 704–13) for an exploration of the author's intended narratives for the unfinished novels of the fifth series.

⁴¹ Simultaneous with *La Gloriosa* in 1868 was the outbreak of the Ten Years' War in Cuba, from 1868 to 1878, which initiated the push for Cuban independence.

⁴² Prim's troops joined with French and British troops, the Tripartite Alliance, sent to Mexico to respond to the inability of Benito Juárez's government to pay its debts to England and France. In the process of negotiations the French delegation accused Prim of wanting to declare himself emperor of Mexico.

protagonists of the novel. Most importantly, the figure appears magically in the narrative to witness in silence the moment when the young protagonist, Vicente Halconero, and his friend enter a café to sit and read the document in which Prim proposes a political pathway to Cuban independence.

En el momento en que Halconero esto leía, la Historia, que con los dos amigos había entrado invisible en la tasca indecente, se dejó ver ..., quiero decir, que espiritualmente hubo de presidir la reunión, y entre los dos jóvenes tomó asiento, sin mostrar repugnancia del ambiente plebeyo y vinoso. (V 238)

[At the moment when Halconero was reading this, History, who, invisible, had entered with the two friends into the lowly pub, allowed herself to be seen ... I mean to say, that she spiritually had to preside over the meeting, and between the two young men she took a seat, without showing repugnance of the plebian and vinous atmosphere.]

This feminine representation of Spanish history appears when Spanish colonial history might have been significantly altered, given that the fictional moment reflects a historical reality. Prim, in fact, did propose Cuban emancipation as described in the document that Vicente reads. This moment also attracts attention because Galdós felt compelled to turn to a magical feminine figure, far beyond the framework of his traditional literary realism, in order to represent not only the sum of Spanish history but also the essence of the Spanish people.⁴³ The use of the fantastic allows the author to explore those painful moments of his nation's history that he cannot effectively address even with allegory. That this muse first appears when leaders contemplate the loss of the nation's remaining colonies points to the end of empire as one of those moments of anguish.

The appearance of Mariclío in *España trágica* and her subsequent development into a protagonist in the fifth series signals a significant stylistic shift in Galdós's approach to addressing Spain's colonial history, and it was a strategy that the author continued to employ in other post-1898 works of fiction. Galdós wrote *El caballero encantado* in the summer and fall of 1909, a time of national turmoil owing to street-fighting in Barcelona between anarchists and the Spanish Army in the late summer of

⁴³ In *Amadeo I*, for example, she appears as "una comercianta de antigüedades y papeles viejos" [a seller of antiques and old papers] (V 344), reading the newspapers and noting the rhetoric surrounding the colonies: "Viene la cuestión de Cuba. ¡Ah!, ante todo la *integridad del territorio* ..." [Here comes the matter of Cuba. "Ah, above all *territorial integrity* ..."] (V 345).

that year, referred to as the Tragic Week. That event had serious political repercussions for Galdós and the Republican–Socialist Conjunction and for Antonio Maura’s conservative party. The riots were sparked by the mass conscription of working-class men for the ill-fated 1909 colonial misadventure in Morocco, a last-ditch effort by the Spanish government to shore up its colonial holdings and its image as a once-powerful empire (Comellas 330). In short, political and social unrest in the metropolis at this time was powerfully linked with problems of empire. I also think it is possible to conclude that by 1909 Galdós was beginning to doubt both the efficacy of his political activism and the ability of the nation – its politicians and its citizens – to effect positive change. If reality could not provide the author with the possibility of imagining a brighter future then the only recourse was to turn to fantasy, and it should come as no surprise that, from 1909 forward, Galdós’s literary production (his last *Episodios*, plays, and novels) incorporate increasingly fantastic elements.

El caballero encantado is a notable example of the author’s turn away from realism. Importantly, it is also one more text in which the author focuses on the possibility of a reconciliation between Spain and America. Not unlike *La loca de la casa*, it is a text with a regenerationist message, addressing the problems of *caciquismo*, the structure of political control by party bosses, and the need to improve both Spain’s agricultural sector and its commitment to political reform. It also links its message of national renewal to Spanish colonialism. Unlike *La loca de la casa*, however, *El caballero encantado* can find resolution only in fantasy. The novel tells the story of the enchantment of Carlos de Tarsis y Suárez de Almondar, a dissolute and spendthrift aristocrat, and a proud Colombian heiress named Cintia. By means of the fantastic powers of “la Madre,” the magical figure of Spanish history, Carlos is transformed into an agricultural laborer named Gil and Cintia takes the enchanted form of a rural schoolteacher, Pascuala. Through various misadventures in his quest to win Pascuala, Gil must experience first-hand the economic and political problems of the poor in contemporary Spain.

While the focus is on the metropolis, it also becomes apparent through the text’s frequent references to Spain’s colonial history that regeneration of the nation cannot happen without a form of reconciliation between the metropolis and its former colonies. For example, Carlos’s maternal grandfather is described as having traded in foodstuffs: “alimentó a tres generaciones de cubanos” [he fed three generations of Cubans] (92). Cintia is a “huérfana millonaria nacida en Bogotá y criada en la Argentina” [orphan millionaire born in Bogotá and raised in Argentina] (101). Carlos has unsuccessfully wooed Cintia in his true form, but the two, brought

together as Gil and Pascuala, decide to marry despite familial objections to their union. When Gil voices his fear to the magical figure of “la Madre” that Cintia/Pascuala has returned to America and is beyond the reach of the muse’s fantastic communicative powers, she replies. “Allá, como aquí, domino por mi aliento, [...] por la vibración de mi lenguaje, que será el alma de medio mundo” [There, as here, I dominate by my breath ... by the vibration of my language, which will be the soul of half the world] (154). It is the Spanish language, she indicates, that links Spanish America and Spain together into one shared history.

As important as this symbolic representation of pan-hispanic unity is, the novel contains other references that address the very origins of national identity and imperial loss. Gil finds himself present at geographical places in Spain with a powerful historical resonance. He participates in the discovery of Spain’s past glory at Numancia, and later he follows Pascuala to Calatañazor, where in the year 1002 Christian forces defeated the armies of Al-Mansur. While working on the archeological ruins of Numancia Gil befriends Regino, a Civil Guard whose elevated language leads Gil to believe that he, too, must be a noble soul under enchantment. When Regino sees Pascuala for the first time, he tells Gil that “[la mujer] me ha vuelto loco” [the woman has driven me crazy] and that he intends to ask for her hand (215). The resultant rivalry over Pascuala leads Gil later to accuse Regino of a specific crime that has led to his penitential enchantment.

Caballero fuiste, sin duda, y estás encantado como yo, penando por tus culpas ... Al mismo escarmiento y expiación estamos condenados: yo por desórdenes de mi vida, de los que afean, pero no deshonoran; tú por delitos contra mi Madre. [...] Regino, mal hombre, ¿piensas que desconozco la causa de tu condenación, y el pasar de caballero y alta figura militar a simple número de la Guardia Civil? Pues, encantado fuiste por entregar a una nación extranjera tierras españolas [...]. (312)

[You were a gentleman, no doubt, and now you are enchanted, as I am, suffering for your sins ... We are condemned to the same punishment and atonement: I, for the messes of my life, the kind that disfigure but do not dishonor; you, for crimes against my Mother [...] Regino, evil man, did you think I don’t know the cause of your condemnation, and the change from gentleman and top military figure to a simple member of the Civil Guard? Well, you have been enchanted for having delivered Spanish lands to a foreign nation ...]

Gil’s accusations are explicit. The act of having lost the war against the United States is portrayed here as a result of individual weakness and

perfidy. Spain, he claims, would not have lost its colonial territories if its leaders had showed bravery and greater personal integrity. Through this statement, set within the cartography of the city of Numantia, the text allegorizes Spain's imperial loss as one with profound effects.

At the end of the novel, Gil and Pascuala are released from their enchantment to put into practice the lessons they have learned through their trials, thus presenting a message to Spanish readers about the importance of the regenerationist project. But it is important to examine more closely the nature of that message. The novel is subtitled "(Un cuento real ... inverosímil)" [a true ... improbable story], ostensibly because of the decidedly non-realist inclusion of enchantment and the symbolic figure of "la Madre" as "el alma de la raza" [the soul of the race] (300). I would argue that the inverosimilitude is primarily manifested in the relationship between Tarsis and Cintia as symbols of Spain and the Americas. Their union and the resultant resolution of the novel's conflicts are as unrealistic as the fantastic elements of the story. Tarsis and Cintia, their identities regained, meet in a social gathering described as "la síntesis social ... armonía compendiosa entre todas las ramas del árbol de la patria" [the social synthesis ... the condensed harmony between all the branches of the patriotic tree] (342). At this gathering, Cintia informs Tarsis that they are parents of a son, Hespero, a clear symbol of panhispanic harmony. She informs him that, despite his lost fortune, she has become even richer through the discovery of a Colombian silver mine, adding that "Nuestros bienes son comunes, y entre nosotros no puede haber ya *tuyo y mío* ..." [Our goods are common, and between us there can be no longer *yours and mine* ...] (344). Galdós's novel takes his readers far from the framework of a foundational fiction and into the realm of metropolitan wish fulfillment, with the colonies now responsible for the well-being of the empire.

As a resolution incongruent with historical realities, the text ultimately requires elements of the fantastic. From a purely metropolitan perspective, the need to battle *caciquismo*, to better manage the nation's resources, and to correct the injustices experienced by certain classes of Spaniards are all aspects of the novel that ring true to a realistic portrayal of the nation's current plight. But the ability to address those problems while at the same time repairing the rift between Spanish-speakers on both sides of the Atlantic is portrayed as absolute fantasy. The text implies that such a reunification is achievable only in a fictional narrative. Spaniards, Galdós implies, are not capable of undertaking this project, noting that "los perversos y los tontos rematados no son susceptibles de encantamiento" [the perverse and the totally foolish are not susceptible to enchantment] (343). The end of the novel announces that "terminan, por hoy, estas locas aventuras hispánicas" [these crazy hispanic

adventures have come to an end, for now] (339), leaving the reader with an overly simplistic resolution of problems and a happy ending that rings false. *El caballero encantado* is a provocative text that challenges readers to address the problems of contemporary Spain even as it portrays the loss of empire as irreversible and central to its decline.

Upon concluding *El caballero encantado*, Galdós turned back to the fifth series of *Episodios nacionales*. At the age of 67, battling health issues that would eventually leave him blind by age 70, Galdós would go on to write only four more installments of the fifth series over the next three years.⁴⁴ His reliance on the fantastic only increases, and the result is a final cluster of novels that provides readers with textual references that indicate a continued obsession with Spanish imperialism. As Ángel del Río has noted, “La preocupación por lo americano se encuadra, en la etapa final de la creación galdosiana, en una inquietud más amplia por entender la extraña realidad histórica que es España” [The concern for America is framed, in the final stage of Galdós’s fiction, as a broader anxiety by understanding the strange reality that is Spanish history] (“Notas” 295). The last four novels are narrated by the character of Tito Livio, the modern Spanish embodiment of the Roman historian Titus Livius, but he is often referred to in the novels as Tito Liviano as a way of emphasizing his lack of depth and distinctly burlesque nature. Stephen Gilman has indicated that Tito “is at once Galdós and not Galdós” (“Fifth Series” 48), and that the author uses this character “both as a scalpel and as an indispensable anesthetic for exploratory probing of his own past wounds” (“Fifth Series” 49).

Issues of empire are tightly woven into Galdós’s final portraits of the undeniable failure of the Revolution of 1868 and the Bourbon Restoration. From a historical perspective, the novels contain explicit references to Spain’s upper class and the slave trade as a source of their wealth (V 318), as well as the political debates in the Spanish Cortes on the need to “reorganizar el régimen colonial y abolir la esclavitud en Cuba” [to reorganize the colonial regime and abolish slavery in Cuba] (V 477). There are frequent references to the insurrection in Cuba: “Las noticias de Cuba traían mayor zozobra al ánimo turbado de los españoles de todas clases” [The news from Cuba brought greater anxiety to the troubled minds of Spaniards of every class] (V 449). Politicians, in particular, are depicted as jingoistic on the topic of the nation’s remaining

⁴⁴ Montesinos points out that these four novels were dictated by Galdós to his secretary, Pablo Nougués, which might certainly have impacted their dramatically different style (III 246). Nonetheless, these four novels demonstrate what Alfred Rodríguez considers to be “a degree of formal unity not employed so extensively since the First Series,” given their first-person narration (176).

colonies, cheering “a la integridad de la patria y a Cuba española” [to the integrity of the country and to Spanish Cuba] (V 428). Galdós’s representation of one of Emilio Castelar’s speeches in the Cortes makes reference to the need for colonial reforms as an essential part of a successful Spanish democracy: “Dos reformas no más necesitamos: la primera es la separación de la Iglesia del Estado; la segunda es la abolición de la esclavitud en Cuba” [We need only two reforms: the first is the separation of Church and State; the second the abolition of slavery in Cuba] (V 593). Despite the famous orator’s exhortations, Galdós and his readers already knew, when they read these novels, that the political hopes raised during the Democratic Sexenium would prove to be as fantastic as the character of Tito Livio himself, and this contributes powerfully to the pessimism of these final texts.

One of the most significant references to the metropolis’s imperial myopia comes in the final novel of the fifth series, *Cánovas*, when Tito realizes Antonio Cánovas del Castillos’s failure to understand the longer-term importance of the Peace of El Zanjón, which General Martínez Campos had negotiated to put an end to the Ten Years’ War in Cuba.

¡Lástima grande que un hombre como Cánovas desestimara el alto ideal que Martínez Campos defendía: error funesto que don Antonio, por falta de valor para imponerse a los patrioterros, entregase el Poder a un hombre que si en lo militar era eminente, en lo político carecía de trastienda y travesura para luchar con las pasiones humanas! ¡Fatalidad inexorable! Cánovas, no atreviéndose a resolver el gran problema antillano, cedía los trastos de gobernar a quien, sobrado de valor para todo, no podía consumir la magna empresa por falta de aptitudes políticas. De este modo, entre un sabio que no quiere y un valiente que no puede, decretaron para un tiempo no lejano la pérdida de las Antillas. (V 763)

[It is a great pity that a man like Cánovas dismissed the high ideal that Martínez Campos defended: a fatal mistake that don Antonio, for lack of courage to stand up to the jingoists, handed power over to a man eminent in military matters but lacking the backroom political instincts to fight with human passions! Inexorable doom! Cánovas, not daring to solve the great Antillean problem, yielded the theatrical props of governance to one who, endowed with an excess of valor, could not carry out the great enterprise due to a lack of political aptitude. In this way, between a wise man who didn’t want to and a valiant man who could not, they decreed for a not so distant time the loss of the Antilles.]

Once again, Galdós posits the idea, through Tito’s comments, that history might have been different, and that, with a different set of leaders, the

political decisions of the late nineteenth century would not have led to the loss of Spain's last colonies by century's end.

The employment of fantastic elements in the final four *Episodios* serves to emphasize the idea that the country could very well have taken a different path, and this stands in contrast to the author's previous flirtations with an alternative Spanish history. While Juan Santiuste's imagined history of Spain as it ought to have been is understood by other characters in the fourth series as the ravings of a madman, Tito Livio's improbable narrative – with descriptions of his ability to be invisible and to shrink to the size of a baby – is ironically presented as perhaps a more faithful representation of the history of the time. Dendle has noted that the problems of the Spanish nation are “symbolized in the diminutive and ineffective Tito” (*The Mature Thought* 172), who, along with the nation, suffers from “el fanatismo del yo” [the fanaticism of the self] (V 446). That fanaticism is revealed in Galdós's descriptions of the religious conservatives who participated in the Third Carlist War (1872–76) and in Tito's own powerful ego. In one powerful scene Tito finds himself in Durango, in the company of Carlists, and he tries to cover up his own political liberalism and anticlericalism by giving a speech in praise of Carlist values. As he warms to the topic, his speech becomes a fiery sermon calling for a return to Spanish greatness in the form of the *Imperio Hispano-Pontificio* [Hispanic-Pontifical Empire] (V 394). The phrase powerfully evokes Pagden's characterization of the early Spanish empire as a *monarchia universalis* (29–30). Tito at first garners great praise for his speech, but later, when he leaves Durango, it becomes clear to combatants on both sides of the war that Tito has played a cruel joke on his hosts, angering the Carlists and amusing the supporters of the First Republic. In this moment in the text Galdós seems to imply that the Spanish people themselves bear the responsibility for the unfortunate trajectory of Spanish imperialism by virtue of their very nature as a people with an untamed impulse to conquer.

Perhaps the most fantastic figure in the fifth series is the female figure of “la Madre,” who helps guide Tito Liviano through his travels and appears at key moments in the historical events portrayed in these last historical fictions. Clearly this figure allowed Galdós to think more creatively about how he might comment on the trajectory of Spanish history in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This figure eventually reappears with the name of Mariclío, the muse of Spanish history, and she figures prominently in the last four volumes of the fifth series. Numerous critics have commented on Galdós's employment of this fantastical figure.⁴⁵ Miguel Enguíanos

⁴⁵ See, for example, Miguel Enguíanos's 1961 article “Mariclío, musa galdosiana” (*Papeles de Son Armadans* VI:LXIII (1961)); Juan López-Morillas's “Galdós y

concludes that the “visión fantasmagórica de la España vivida por Galdós” [the phantasmagorical vision of the Spain lived by Galdós] in the final novels of the fifth series is the result of the author’s own anguish over “los tiempos bobos” [the foolish times], a phrase that the muse, Mariclío, herself uses to describe the period of the Spanish restoration (V 793). Troncoso sees the incorporation of the fantastic as a tool that allows Galdós to include metaliterary comments about the process of writing these final historical novels, confessional statements about how he feels about the events being described, and reflections about the past and present that allow him to allude to the future (“La quinta serie” 94).

The fifth series of *Episodios* concludes with a letter that Tito Livio receives from “la Madre,” in which she discusses Spain’s future. The Restoration, she indicates, has initiated “los tiempos bobos” [the stupid times], which will lead to “años de atonía, de lenta parálisis, que os llevará a la consunción y a la muerte” [years of lethargy, of slow paralysis, that will lead you to consumption and death] (V 793). By the end of the final volume, *Cánovas*, written in 1912, Mariclío can no longer witness the ridiculousness of late nineteenth-century Spain, and she mutters “me aburro ... me duermo ...” [I’m getting bored ... I’m falling asleep] (V 794). These words conclude the author’s extraordinary 46-volume chronicle. Galdós’s vision of Spanish history reaches its nadir, and the deep pessimism is quite likely what kept him from continuing the series. There is little more to be said about a nation that has been so dramatically reduced on the global stage largely as a result of poor political decisions.

To conclude this section of Galdós’s post-1898 works, it is enough to point out that the trajectory of colonial references in Galdós’s texts reveals a growing belief that there was no possibility for the metropolis to learn from its colonial history. The theme of madness, initially linked to the improbability of a reconciliation between metropolis and colony, becomes a central focus of the author’s exploration of national identity. Ultimately, it seems Spanish history can be faithfully represented only through pure fantasy, only conceivable in the structure of what Juan Santiuste, the character from the fourth and fifth series of *Episodios* who himself becomes transformed into the mad historian Confusio, will ultimately define as “la historia como debiera ser” [history as it ought to be].

la historia: Los últimos años” (*Anales Galdosianos* XXI (1986)); and Stephen Gilman’s “The Fifth Series,” and, more recently, the summary provided by noted Galdós scholar Dolores Troncoso Durán (“La quinta serie,” *La historia de España en Galdós* (2012), 79–99).

Conclusion:

Spanish History “para uso de los niños”

Raymond Carr, in his analysis of early nineteenth-century Spanish history, has argued that while “the loss of the American Empire was the greatest single consequence of the crisis of 1808, the legacy of the War of Independence moulded the subsequent history of Spain itself” (105). He goes on to claim that it was Spain’s participation in the Napoleonic wars that gave birth to modern Spanish national identity.

It gave to the administrative unity of Bourbon Spain, ‘the supreme creation of the eighteenth century’, an emotional content. For a generation of European Romantics it created the image of a nation *sui generis*, a natural force uncontaminated by Europe, an image consecrated by the greatest writer of nineteenth-century Spain, the novelist Galdós. A myth of enormous potency, available to radicals and traditionalists alike, grew out of Spain’s unique and proud resistance. Nevertheless, given the strength of local ties, the patriotism that was to mark the great crises remained an abstract emotion, imperfectly felt at the most intimate levels. The patriotism evoked in the *Episodios nacionales* of Galdós is less deeply felt than that of Hardy’s *Dynasts*. For this reason defeat was psychologically disastrous. (Carr 105)

What Carr fails to consider in his explanation of the formulation of a modern Spanish national identity in the nineteenth century – and particularly Galdós’s role in helping promote it through his historical novels – is the fundamental difference between Spain and other European nations within the nineteenth century’s framework of empire. Spain, in fact, was *sui generis* in this regard, and Carr’s claim that the patriotism of Galdós’s historical recounting of history is somewhat less potent than that represented by Thomas Hardy, an author who was narrating what could arguably be considered the most aggressive period of Britain’s own

imperial expansion, loses its relevance when one considers what is being represented in Galdós's historical novels. The separation from the rest of Europe and perhaps even the lack of vigor that Carr notes in Galdós's narratives corresponds to the fact that Spain experienced the establishment, the development, the culmination, and, ultimately, the disintegration of its colonial empire well before that of other European nations. It is precisely for that reason that an analysis of Galdós's representations of the consequences of Spanish imperialism is so instructive. As *Ghosts of Colonies Past and Present* has shown, the author understood this aspect of Spain's identity, and throughout his entire literary career he attempted to demonstrate the links between the metropolis and its current and former colonial territories as a way of understanding exactly why Spain's modern history differed so dramatically from that of other European nations. What has been lacking in Galdós studies until quite recently is sustained attention to Spanish imperialism in the author's fiction, a gap that this volume has attempted to fill.

In perhaps the earliest critical analysis of Galdós's relationship to the Americas, Ángel del Río makes the point that the vast scope of the author's work and the plethora of textual details often serve to obscure the author's preoccupation with Spain's colonial history: "El tema de América no está patente en la obra de Galdós. Hay que leer con atención para encontrarlo, fuera de algunas alusiones que, en una lectura rápida, se pierden entre el cúmulo de personajes y hechos en su vasto cosmos novelesco" [The theme of America is not obvious in the work of Galdós. You have to read carefully to find it, outside of some allusions that, in a quick reading, are lost among the accumulation of the characters and events in his vast novelistic cosmos] ("Notas" 279). It is for precisely this reason that establishing a fuller picture of the author's views with respect to Spanish imperialism is so difficult. It requires an understanding of the author's vast corpus of fiction and a close reading of a large number of texts to tease out relevant details. Del Río goes on to correctly remind us that after 1898 "a ... Galdós no podía escapársele el hecho de que lo americano, en una forma u otra, estaba todavía vinculado a la realidad histórica y social de España" [Galdós could not escape the fact that America was still linked to the historical and social reality of Spain] ("Notas" 279). The last three series of *Episodios* are a case in point.

Unquestionably this study of Galdós's ongoing engagement with the topic of Spanish colonial history throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been made possible by the expanded perspectives provided by postcolonial studies as well as the affective turn in the humanities and social sciences. By allowing us to think about history in emotional and physical terms, the field of affect studies helps expand our understanding of

the layered intersections of history, politics, imperialism, postcolonialism, and gender in Galdós’s texts. Michael Hardt, in addressing the potential of the recent theoretical focus on emotions, explains that “Affects require us, as the term suggests, to enter the realm of causality, but they offer a complex view of causality because the affects belong simultaneously to both sides of the causal relationship” (ix). This ability to make readers feel the effects of history is at the heart of Galdós’s novelistic art, and, as one critic has recently noted, Galdós saw in the novel a “género que sin renuncia a la referencia histórica ... nos permite una relectura del pasado, es decir, sacar una lección moral donde había fracaso en el campo de la acción política” [a genre that without renouncing historical reference ... allows us a rereading of the past, that is, to draw a moral lesson where there was failure in the field of political action] (Mora 127). Galdós’s fiction allows us to better understand the affective nature of colonial loss on the metropolis. While postcolonial studies have focused almost exclusively on newly independent nations and their struggles to establish individual identities, there has been less of a focus on what happens in the former metropolis. Galdós’s fiction makes manifest the equally complex struggle occurring in that space. The fact that he felt compelled to realize his monumental task of narrating nearly all of nineteenth-century Spanish history is evidence enough of the degree of trauma affecting Spaniards in the period of Spain’s second empire.

This study of Spanish imperialism in Galdós’s work, in addition to pointing out the messages in the author’s texts, also raises the questions about the degree to which successive generations of readers actually heeded those messages. While I will not claim in this brief space to provide conclusive answers to this question, there are some facts that serve as indicators. We know from Jean-François Botrel’s examination of the sales of Galdós’s novels that it was the first series of *Episodios nacionales*, closely followed by the second, that enjoyed the highest sales throughout the author’s lifetime and well into the twentieth century.¹ Yet the continued

¹ Botrel estimates that between 1875 and 1905 each title of the first series of *Episodios nacionales* reached approximately 150,000 readers, a figure that he contextualizes by noting that *Galdós’s novelas contemporáneas* generally had an audience of approximately 25,000 readers (“Le succès d’édition (1)” 131). He then tracks the popularity of the subsequent series, demonstrating that the second series was the next most popular set of titles (“Le succès d’édition (1)” 133–35). When taken together with the fact that literacy rates in Spain were fairly low throughout the nineteenth century – increasing from only 24.5% of Spaniards in 1860 to 36.2% in 1900 – the reach of the earliest *Episodios* constitutes a literary phenomenon (Hernández Díaz 72).

popularity of the early *Episodios* was not necessarily due to the author's representation of a Spanish nation coming to terms with imperial loss. Instead, as recent studies have shown, readers began to read and interpret the early *Episodios* as examples of juvenile literature (Fraga Fernández-Cuevas 40). Galdós himself certainly participated in this process by deciding to publish an abridged version of the first series, in early 1909, under the title '*Episodios Nacionales*'. *Guerra de la Independencia, extractada para uso de los niños*. By 1925, the Institución Libre de Enseñanza [Free Institute of Education] included this version of the first series in its catalogue for *La Biblioteca circulante de niños* [The Children's Circulating Library] and later, in the early 1930s, the Second Republic's cultural project, *Las Misiones Pedagógicas* [Pedagogical Missions] included the titles of the first series in its libraries (Fraga Fernández-Cuevas 41). In 1948 Galdós's publisher, Sucesores de Hernando, published another edited version of Galdós's first series, this time "narrados a los niños por su hija, doña María Pérez Galdós" [narrated to children by his daughter, Miss María Pérez Galdós] (Navarro González 165, 175). This publishing history indicates that the first half of the twentieth century saw a steady positioning of the first series as children's literature while the author's subsequent series, even the titles of the second series, slipped away from the memories of the Spanish reading public. But it is also important to note exactly what was extracted from the various novels of the first series to diminish their stature as sources of historical information. The abridged version of the first series places a heightened focus on Spanish patriotism through the foregrounding of military battles of the Peninsular War – Trafalgar, the 2 de mayo in Madrid, Bailén, Zaragoza, Gerona, and Arapiles – while dramatically reducing the first series' focus on the events of Cádiz and overlooking altogether three of the series' ten volumes (*La corte de Carlos IV*, *Napoleón en Chamartín*, and *Juan Martín el "Empecinado"*). As Navarro González has noted, in this version for children Galdós reduces to a minimum the romantic plot of Gabriel's attempts to unite with the object of his love, Inés (168). Instead, the abridged version of the first series alludes to this aspect of Gabriel's story only at the very end, when the protagonist tells his readers that the romantic end to the series – his marriage to Inés – is the just conclusion to his own "*Cuento de Hadas*" [Fairy Tale], as if to say that the romantic element of the series, as a fiction, is no longer worth telling (*Episodios para uso de los niños* 348). It is worth noting that Galdós chose to publish this abridged version of the first series, the most consistent source of revenue among his various novels, in 1909, the year in which he began to turn away from realist prose as a consequence of his loss of faith in the ability of Spaniards to learn from their own history. It is as if the author, disillusioned with Spanish politics

and the failure of the Spanish people to address the nation's needs, chose to strip his early novels of all their literary and cultural complexities, reducing his work to a series of battle scenes designed to stimulate the most elemental of patriotic feelings for youthful (and almost exclusively male) readers. It is also worth noting that Galdós's recourse to elements of the fantastic in the last works of his career bring him back, in curious ways, to the very start of his literary career. Montesinos has noted the connections between the author's narrative approach in his first novel, *La sombra*, and *El caballero encantado*, adding that "Algunos críticos tenían la impresión de que Galdós terminaba por donde había comenzado" (Some critics had the impression that Galdós was ending where he had begun] (I 47). Having found himself back at square one, we might read his decision to remove from the first series those fictional elements that provided a true depth of engagement with Spain's changing fortunes and the consequences of its colonial history as one that confirms his pessimistic outlook for Spain's future.

By the mid-twentieth century it is safe to say that Galdós's *Episodios nacionales* had fallen somewhat from favor in academia and in the public eye. Instead, the author's *novelas contemporáneas* and his *novelas de tesis*, seemed to attract the majority of critical attention. As a young graduate student interested in the popularity of the historical novel across Spain I found myself drawn to that cluster of novels in Galdós's *oeuvre* as examples of texts that might yield new insights through a careful reading of their presentation of Spanish history. In discussions with contemporaries in Spain in the 1990s, Don Benito's works had apparently lost their critical cachet. The author was largely perceived, to turn to Valle Inclán's characterization of the author in *Luces de Bohemia*, as "Don Benito el Garbancero" (82), a phrase that evidences disdain for the author's narrative art but at the same time emphasizes his Spanish populism. His historical novels were largely unread, except for the first series. Even those were seen as overly sentimental and simple in their patriotic content. When I first began my exploration of these historical novels I would encounter amused but puzzled responses from Spaniards born after the 1960s. It seemed quaint that a North American would be so curious about literature so clearly out of date and no longer particularly relevant to a modern, consumer society at the end of the twentieth century. In contrast, however, I would find interest expressed by my friends' parents and grandparents, some of whom excitedly pulled out heavy bound copies of yellowing chapters of the *Episodios* (invariably the first series), printed as *folletines* in the 1950s and 1960s in Spanish newspapers, now accumulating dust in large oak armarios in their overly packed apartments in Madrid, not unlike the Porreño family in *La Fontana de Oro*. But it appears that Galdós's fortunes are changing once

again. In the early twenty-first century we are again experiencing a tectonic shift in the imperial fortunes of the great nations on the global stage.² As a result, Galdós's exploration of the shift from empire to nation has generated new interest in the way in which literary texts reveal much about who we are, and readers are beginning to turn once again to Galdós's foundational fictions in order to understand the process of establishing a sense of identity. The national domesticity of the second series of *Episodios nacionales* is being rediscovered by new generations of Spaniards.³

Readers of Galdós's work have long overlooked the references to Spanish empire and, in so doing, they have lost an opportunity to gain insight into the fraught process of coming to terms with imperial loss and its consequences. I raise this idea here given the fact that the lessons Galdós might teach us seem more important than ever. In the process of looking deeply and broadly into the author's writing, I discovered a reference to a little-known journalistic article that Galdós published on November 28, 1887, entitled "La isla de Perejil y la Marina Español" [Parsley Island and the Spanish Navy], in which he makes reference to the overreaction of the Spanish government and the popular press to Morocco's attempt to lay claim to a small rocky island just off the coast of Morocco and slightly west of the Spanish enclave in Ceuta. Upon hearing the title of that opinion piece, some readers will remember a similar event in 2001, in which 12 Moroccan soldiers laid claim to the same island, triggering a diplomatic crisis between the two countries, eventually involving other European nations and the United States, and culminating with a extensive military operation mounted by Spain to retake the island. That flexing of Spain's military might, yet one more example of a desire on the part of politicians and jingoists to "Make Spain Great Again," led to the subsequent decision on the part of government to build the Juan

² One need only think of the catastrophic failures of the United States government in the face of the coronavirus pandemic or the confusion surrounding the British vote to separate from the European Union and the growing sense that England is finally experiencing its own unique version of 1898, with an inevitable recognition of imperial loss and national diminishment.

³ One example is the 2010 publication of Rebeca Calvo's cookbook detailing the recipes that appear in the pages of the second series, entitled *Las Recetas de Solita: La cocina en los Episodios Nacionales* (Madrid: NN Editores). The cookbook, unconsciously or not, emphasizes the foundational character of Galdós's early *Episodios* and the role of Sol Gil de la Cuadra in the establishment of domestic tranquility and well-being, achieved through the preparation of dishes that are quintessentially Spanish.

Carlos I, a massive amphibious assault ship that is still today the largest vessel in the Spanish navy.

In conclusion, I would highlight the need to recognize the close connections between Spanish nationalism and Spanish literature during the nineteenth century, and, in this regard, there is still much work to be done. To begin, we would benefit from a closer study of the phenomenon of panoramic literature in the Spanish-speaking world during the nineteenth century. The fact that *costumbrismo* gained a sustained foothold as a narrative subgenre in both Spain and the Americas is worth closer scrutiny. I would argue that the reasons for the genre's lasting relevance has much to do with the forging of post-colonial identity. Moreover, there is the work of so many other Spanish writers during the nineteenth century that would, no doubt, yield fascinating information when examined under the lens of imperialism. The short stories of Emilia Pardo Bazán, many of which make reference to the Philippines, for example, have certainly attracted the recent attention of scholars such as Joyce Tolliver.⁴ But, curiously, that approach still seems to be an uncomfortable one for scholars working in the Spanish academy. Additionally, there is much that might be said about the work of other late nineteenth-century authors, such as Leopoldo Alas (Clarín) and José María Pereda, each of whom address Spanish imperialism in equally allegorical terms but with very different perspectives and very different sets of literary outcomes. In short, there is a lot that literature can teach us about what it means to have had, and to have lost, an empire.

In 2013 Spanish historians Antonio Morales Moya, Juan Pablo Fusi, and Andrés de Blas Guerrero directed the publication of a 1,500-page volume on the history of Spanish nationalism. By and large the volume makes reference to a vast array of primary historical documents and historiography. Notably, the volume's section on the nineteenth century, in contrast to other sections, places an emphasis on the concept of Spanish nationalism within the literature of the period. There are entries that explore the contributions of Spanish Romanticism, of the realist novels of Juan Valera, and of the educational initiatives of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza and the Centro de Estudios Históricos to the concept of Spanish

⁴ See, for example, Tolliver's articles "Savage Madonnas: 'La mujer filipina' in the Nineteenth Century Colonialist Imaginary" (*Letras Femeninas* 41:2 (2015): 21–34); "Framing Colonial Manliness, Domesticity, and Empire in 'Página suelta' and 'Oscuramente'" (*Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 46:1 (2012): 3–24); and "Over Her Bloodless Body: Gender, Race, and the Spanish Colonial Fetish in Pardo Bazán" (*Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 34:2 (2010): 285–301).

nationalism. Most pertinent for our purposes here are the two entries that focus on Benito Pérez Galdós and the *Episodios nacionales*, written by Jordi Canal and Dolores Troncoso Durán.⁵ The sections make the point, which now should be abundantly clear, that Galdós's historical fiction novels had an outsized impact on defining the popular imagination of nation and nationalism in Spain from the 1870s until well into the twentieth century. I point out this particular study of Spanish history only to demonstrate the lasting impact of Galdós's work and the fact that, if we are to give credit to these novels as having influenced generations of Spaniards, we must remain attentive to the myriad ways in which the author situated his references to the nation's imperial past and present as ghostly reminders of the impact of the Spanish colonial legacy throughout the period of second empire and beyond. Whether it is ever possible to exorcise that ghost is still an unanswered question.

⁵ Jordi Canal's section is entitled "Hijos de la España del siglo XIX: Benito Pérez Galdós, los *Episodios nacionales* y el patriotismo" (307–21), and Dolores Troncoso Durán's contribution is titled "Nacionalismo en los *Episodios nacionales* de Galdós" (322–37).

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